

Chapter 1 – Outline for the proposed study of: Ideology of ‘neighbor:’ A theology of transformation from a theological-ethical interpretation of Leviticus 19

Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! Qohelet 4:1

Remember the horror from which we come. Never forget the greatness of a nation that has overcome its division. Let us never descend into destructive divisiveness – Nelson Mandela

When we want to effect change, we almost always contact people with influence, prestige, and power. When God wants to save the world, he often selects slaves, prostitutes and sundry other disadvantaged folk – Ron Sider, professor of theology

1.1 – Purpose

Human migration has been a phenomenon since time immortal. Wars, famine, disease, natural catastrophe, etc. have been major causes of this migration. Thus human migration results in people of other cultures being meshed together in society. This often has disastrous effects.

One disastrous effect is resistance to societal transformation. A theology of transformation of society must be based on a system of justice. This system needs to give attention to those that are overlooked or marginalized within a society. Leviticus 19 is a pivotal chapter as it incorporates both ethical and religious responsibilities for the nation of Israel.

As America struggled with and continues to struggle with transformation, so South Africa is struggling with societal transformation. Americans discovered in the early 70s and beyond that government could not dictate transformation. It is correct to say that government can implement certain policies to encourage transformation,

e.g. affirmative action, BEE¹ and so forth. But true, sustainable transformation can only occur when a person's or a nation's collective heart is inclined towards embracing transformation. Forced integration of schools has led to its own unique problems of transformation, as has the integration of suburbs.

Try as a nation might, without a transformed heart the implementation of social transformation is a failed ideology. This has been evidenced recently in the southern state of Louisiana when white students hung nooses from a tree that was deemed as a 'whites' only place after African-American students had lunch under this same tree.² South Africa is experiencing similar transformational growth pangs as witnessed globally through the eyes of the University of the Free State's mock integration ceremony video.³

Until the Christian community realizes the plight of the disadvantaged and marginalized, and acts upon this realization, there cannot be transformation. Government has failed, the education system has failed; has the Church also become impotent in addressing this issue? If God is a God of justice, surely God is a God of transformation. If so, then God's church must be an institution of transformation. Therefore, Christians are to be ambassadors of transformation. Transformation has seemingly failed from a top-down approach.

¹ Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is defined as: "Black economic empowerment is not affirmative action, although employment equity forms part of it. Nor does it aim to take wealth from white people and give it to blacks. It is essentially a growth strategy, targeting the South African economy's weakest point: inequality." <www.southafrica.info/business/trends/empowerment/bee.htm> Accessed on 9/07/09.

² See Associated Content, *The Jena Six: Racism in the South is Alive and Well*, September 10, 2007.

³ See CNN.com, *Whites tricked blacks into consuming urine, university says*, February 28, 2008.

Maybe it's not too late to try transformation from the inside out. CNN.com in a February 29, 2008 article entitled, *S. Africa students sorry for racist video*, reports: "Dr. Zonke Majodina, deputy chairwoman of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), said the country has been in denial and it will take years before the racist mindsets are altered. 'We've taken for granted that just scrapping the old apartheid laws is going to make things work better in our vision for a nonracial South Africa but in fact its not going to happen overnight,' said Dr. Majodina." In reality, is time going to bring about the transformation that any country dreams and desires? America has been waiting since 1865, now 144 years later the remnants of hate and prejudice still exist. Must we wait another 5, 10, 50 or 100 years for transformation to occur?

South Africa seems to have become the 'melting pot' of southern Africa. With thousands of Congolese, Angolans, Somalis, and the current Zimbabwean crisis, South Africa is learning and struggling to assimilate and cope with thousands of immigrants on a daily basis. This same phenomenon is occurring in America.⁴ Hundreds of immigrants a day arrive on our shores. With millions of illegal immigrants already in America, lawmaker and citizen alike are finding it hard to devise a plan of action to deal effectively with these people.

America is essentially a land of immigrants. (South Africans can claim the same status of immigrant if they are true to their history.)⁵ All of us are not too many generations removed from our European or African heritage. Though the former group came at their own free will, the later group was forced to migrate. America

⁴ See washingtonpost.com, *One Nation, Indivisible: Is It History?*, February 22, 1998.

⁵ See *A brief history of South Africa* <www.exploresouthafrica.net/history/index.htm> Accessed 9/07/09. Also see Oakes (1988:11, 12).

has been long known as the 'land of opportunity.' Its national motto is *e pluribus unum* – 'from many into one.' It also has the reputation of being the 'melting pot' due to the great influx of immigrants. This metaphor has changed to 'salad bowl' or 'mosaic' in the present societal context. These waves of immigrants are not being blended together into one 'pot,' but are transforming American Society into a truly multicultural mosaic.

The issue that is resonating in the streets of both South Africa and America is: Who is my neighbor and what is my responsibility to this person? The general purpose of this proposed study is to discover how we are reacting to those in our midst who qualify as a neighbor. Are our communities assimilating in a positive manner to the immigrants who are now becoming an integrated part of our neighborhoods? Are our countries living up to their reputations of being 'melting pots' for those who embark on our shores daily?

A theological-ethical interpretation of Leviticus 19 will be utilized for its religious and ethical mandates for the nation of Israel. It will also be used as a basis for a theology of transformation. The overarching motivation for the original audience will also be challenged. In this chapter of Leviticus, holiness has been accepted as the prime motivation for the nation. But could it be that the primary motivation is something else? The utilization of Leviticus 19:18a seems to indicate that 'to love one's neighbor' is another possible motivation. If this is the case, then the instructions for solidarity, holistic living and a change of ethos would impact the different layers of society on a different level due to this motivational shift.

Another question to be considered is: Who were considered neighbors in Israel? The society itself seemed to be a 'melting pot' of the ancient world. The descendants of Israel and the refugees who fled Egypt at the time of the Exodus, plus the other foreign nationals who participated in the nation of Israel, would have given Israel a 'mosaic' flair. This mosaic of nations within a nation would have created a multi-layered society with multi-faceted relationships. Ideological criticism will be utilized to disseminate how the author imagined this multi-layered mosaic society would have looked like from a religious and ethical viewpoint.

1.2 - Motivation

The researcher has lived as a foreign national in two countries in Africa for the past 12 years. He is interested in this topic due to the fact that many people live as refugees, asylum seekers, economic immigrants and immigrants seeking opportunities to improve their lives and the lives of their families. This study will shed light on how theology and societal dynamics interface and how theology informs society's decisions on how to respond to various circumstances.

This study will also provide an opportunity to engage the Bible from the aspect of transformation. Does the Bible actually speak rationally and practically into the world of the 21st century? And if so, how can society be organized around the principles and concepts being presented in Leviticus 19? These questions and others will be confronted as the Hebrew text is engaged and a theology of transformation is proposed and delineated.

1.3 – Research Questions

The research will determine ancient Israel's ideology of immigrants/neighbors and Israel's theology of transformation. The nation of Israel's history conditioned them to respond in certain ways. The text indicates that there were multiple layers within ancient Israel's society. They were to relate to each of these societal layers in a particular way. The author of Leviticus 19 imagined a society that would be organized in a certain way. This organization of the author laid the foundation for Israel's theology of transformation.

The researcher wants to determine what societal ideologies existed in ancient Israel. Did Israel have a developed or developing class system? How do the various layers of society function? The different terms used to address individuals in society seem to indicate a tier of varying societal relationships. This could be seen in modern society as the designation of permanent resident, temporary resident, asylum and refugee seekers. If this is the case, how are we to relate to individuals who have certain limited legal rights in modern society? The overshadowing question would be: What is the responsibility of the 'occupants' of the land to have toward these individuals?

All of these questions are summarized in one major issue: How does society address the problem of xenophobia? If xenophobia is not dealt with ethically then it becomes a grave human against human disaster. It is proposed that the dynamic of xenophobia can be effectively dealt with through a theological-ethical solution.

Leviticus 19 will be the source from which this solution will be drawn through a pertinent, modern day application.

1.4 – Hypothesis

Xenophobia has become a common, global occurrence. Almost daily there are reports of xenophobic violence taking place somewhere around the planet. Ethnic minority groups are protesting against majority ethnic groups over societal inequalities and abuse. Instead of becoming a fading trend the phenomenon continues to escalate.

Experts have attempted to deal with the phenomenon in various ways: academically, politically and educationally. All of these attempts have tried to define the causes of the phenomenon but have fallen short of the goal of eradicating the problem. If all these attempts have failed, is there not another way that needs to be implemented on a grander scale?

The researcher will propose an alternative method in which to deal with the problem of xenophobia. The method that will be presented is a theology of transformation. This methodology will serve as a moral compass for societal ethos. It will be composed of four components: *Imitatio Dei/Imago Dei* – ethos of equality/dignity, Pedagogical ethos as the portal for social transformation, Solidarity – Ethos of unity amid diversity and the creation of Islands of hope – Christian counter-cultural ethos.

1.5 – Methodology

The researcher will employ ideological criticism in which to examine the texts. The researcher will also view the texts from a synchronic (final form) approach. He will need to pursue a possible dating (or time period) of the texts to establish a historical setting for original audience. This will allow him to be able to gain a better understanding of the socio-historical setting in which the texts were composed.

The use of ideological criticism is beneficial for the interpreter to understand how others, especially the marginalized in a society, hear and understand the Bible. Once a critic is able to enter the ‘mind’ of the marginalized, he or she can then begin to visualize the difficulty they might have in accepting the final form of the text. This can then open dialogue between those of an ‘advantaged’ background to begin to see the distress some texts cause the ‘disadvantaged.’ Ultimately this type of dialogue can begin an ethos change, which can lead to the transformation of a society from the inside out. The researcher will utilize Mary Douglas’s ring composition as the ideological device by which to interpret and understand Leviticus 19.

The approach to meeting the objectives of this thesis will be a study/survey of the literature such as monographs, journals, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, periodicals and other sources as they come available. In light of the recent xenophobic violence in South Africa⁶, a review of articles from local newspapers as well as local magazines will also be employed.

⁶ See the articles *Black SA has turned old friends into foes* by Pius Adesanmi in *Cape Argus* February 22, 2008 p. 15; *Tale of two Mugzas butchered in xenophobic frenzy* by Beauregard Tromp in *Cape Times* May 23, 2008 p. 4; *Tutu told you so, Mr President* by Justine Gerardy in *Weekend Argus* May 24, 2008 p. 19.

1.6 - Outline/Research Structure

Chapter 2 – Ideological Criticism as an interpretive methodology

This chapter will include a brief examination of the researcher's background and those components that have conditioned him to read a text as he does. He will focus on two historical events (Civil Rights Movement and Desegregation) that have conditioned his thinking and he will also critically look at the evangelical denomination (Southern Baptist Convention) that has been a part of his life. In this chapter the researcher will also defend his reasoning for choosing to apply Ideological Criticism. This will come as a result of examining various types of ideological critics. A brief summary of how Mary Douglas's ring composition serves as a function of socio-rhetorical interpretation will conclude this chapter.

Chapter 3 – A Critical Analysis of Leviticus 19

In this chapter the researcher will take a look at the grammatical structure of Leviticus 19. This will include an exegesis of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible. He will also include a literal translation of the text. This will give the foundation for the discussions to follow. A proposed historical setting for the writing of chapter 19 will also be argued. A brief look at archaeological evidence about the societal make-up will be included in the section of the historical setting.

Chapter 4 – Contextualization of the 'neighbor' in selected New Testament texts

In chapter 4 the researcher will argue for another possible emphasis for Leviticus 19. Historically, the emphasis has been placed on 'being holy as YHWH is holy.' By utilizing Douglas's ring composition, new light will be shed on an alternative emphasis for Leviticus 19. In this chapter he will also look at how the New Testament figures – Jesus, the Apostle Paul and James – utilized Leviticus 19 in their socio-cultural setting. The ways in which they applied this in their contexts will shed light upon how the 1st century world contextualized the teachings of Leviticus 19.

Chapter 5 – From Philoxenia to Xenophobia: Denial or Discontent?

This chapter will focus attention on the present day social environment as a result of the recent May 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa. A definition of xenophobia will be given along with an explanation of factors that aggravate the occurrence of xenophobia. The stated causes of the xenophobic outbreak of May 2008 will be given; prophetic voices that warned of the impending violence will also be 'heard;' as well as a composite xenophobic profile will be offered by utilizing the 2006 Southern African Migration Project survey.

Chapter 6 – From Xenophobia to Philoxenia: Once we were blind, but now we can see!

The term philoxenia will be defined through the lens of the New Testament. It will also be conjoined with the African term *ubuntu* as it relates to the idea of hospitality/honor/shame. A section will also look at the reluctance Evangelicals have had in

engaging in social transformation for the past century. Following this, an outline for a proposed theology of transformation will be offered as a moral compass of societal ethos. This outline will consist of four major headings: *Imitatio Dei/Imago Dei*: Ethos of equality/dignity, Pedagogical ethos as the portal for social transformation, Solidarity-ethos of unity amid diversity, and Islands of hope: Christian counter-cultural ethos. This chapter concludes by presenting social and spiritual transformation as *amaqanda ehobe* – depiction of the dynamic interrelationship between social and spiritual transformation.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

This chapter will draw this research topic to its conclusion. In doing this a brief review of how religious creeds and statements of faith have taken a shift from an emphasis on their vertical relationships to a more horizontal focus. An analysis of the *Hitler* effect will demonstrate how we concentrate on our minute differences instead of celebrating our overwhelming similarities. A condensed view of the fallout over the November 2008 election in America will be reviewed. This election, it will be argued, was and is a continuing refinement of American culture. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the research, personal reflections gleaned as a result of this research and as well as future considerations.

Chapter 2 – Ideological Criticism as an interpretive methodology

Ideology has very little to do with 'consciousness' - it is profoundly unconscious. Althusser, philosopher

It has been demonstrated that no system, not even the most inhuman, can continue to exist without an ideology. Joe Slovo, ANC leader

We can choose between the future and the past, between reason and ignorance, between true compassion and mere ideology. Ron Reagan, journalist

2.1 – Introduction

This chapter will be an exploration of the world of Ideological Criticism. This method of interpretation, as applied to biblical interpretation, has many facets. Each of these facets highlights a particular problem experienced by the interpreter, e.g. feminist critics seeking to understand the dilemma imposed by anthropocentric language used in the Bible. The research will also look at a historical event that has, and is continuing to have, a tremendous impact on my worldview and ideologies. The research will as well take a look at the evangelical denomination that has been the primary influence of how the researcher reads the Bible.

2.1.1 – The Road towards Civil Rights

The Civil Rights Movement began after World War II [*circa* 1945(8)] and ended *circa* 1965(8). Hakim (1999b:18, brackets and italics MB) states, “In 1945, we (*Americans*) were a Jim Crowe⁷ nation.” Especially in the South, everything was

⁷Jim Crowe was a minstrel show character of the 1800s. Hakim (1999b:18) states: “Jim Crowe is a term used for rules and practices that discriminate along color lines.”

divided along racial⁸ lines. Restaurants, schools, public toilets, buses, phone booths and hotels were segregated. Even the military was segregated. Hakim (1999b:18) points out that, “In the U.S. armed services, blacks were allowed to die for their country – as long as they did it in segregated regiments”.⁹

The proponents of Jim Crowe segregation stated that in society all things were separate but equal at the same time. This could be no further from the truth. Society was definitely separate but it was far from being equal. Even America’s game, baseball, was segregated. The Negro league had to play in subpar conditions without their own stadium. They had to travel to and from their games any way they could. They also received much lower salaries than their white counterparts (Hakim 1999b:18). The African-American players may have lacked many things, but one thing which they did not lack, was talent. Hakim (1999b:18) states: “Out of 438 known all-star black vs. white games, blacks won 309 and whites won 129.”

In 1896 the Supreme Court gave its ruling on Homer Plessy, whose crime was sitting in a whites-only railroad car. The ruling was based on the 14th amendment.¹⁰

In the eyes of the court all people were equal but they could be prevented from

⁸ People group(s) would be more appropriate than race or racism due to the historical negativity that these evoke. This best describes a group of people with a similar heritage and social orientation. Garrison (2004:344) states: “More specifically an *ethnolinguistic* people group. Refers to a people having a shared sense of ethnic identity (*us-ness*) and a common language” (italics original).

⁹Hakim (1999b:32, 33) states: “In Mississippi, when some black soldiers returned home, they were dumped from army trucks and then beaten. In Georgia, a black man was shot and killed because he had voted...He (*President Truman*) sent proposals to Congress to stop lynchings (*unlawful hangings*), to outlaw the poll tax that kept some people (mostly blacks) from voting, and to end segregation in the armed services. He created a commission on civil rights” (italics MB).

¹⁰ Amendment 14 - Citizenship Rights - All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

mixing. Hakim (1999b:65, italics original) states: “The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision made segregation legal in schools, restaurants, hotels, and public places in the southern states.” Jim Crowe had won the favor of the land’s highest court. The law endorsed the policy of separate but equal. This was a landmark case that was not overruled until 1954¹¹.

The battle to declare that all Americans, regardless of ethnicity, be treated equally was known as the ‘Civil Rights Movement.’ A prominent historical civil rights personality entered the stage in 1954. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. became pastor of the Dexter Street Baptist church in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1955 he received his PhD from Boston University in Systematic Theology. He wanted to pastor a small church in a quiet town. Little did he know the events that were about to thrust him into the limelight of this strategic movement.

Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955, had had enough of the segregation of Montgomery buses. After working all day and not feeling well, she sat in the back of the bus. The front of the bus was for whites only and the back of the bus was for blacks. After the seats filled up she was asked by the bus driver to give her seat to a white man (this was a typical act in Jim Crowe Alabama). She refused and was later arrested and sent to jail. This incident infuriated the local black leaders. After Parks’ arrest, a one-day boycott was organized. Dr. King was asked to lead this boycott against segregation of the public transport system. He was a proponent of

¹¹ The landmark case that was decided unanimously by the Supreme Court was *Brown v. Board of Education*. This ruling by the court stated that ‘separate but equal’ had no place in public education. The “*Washington Post* said the next day in an editorial, it was ‘a new birth of freedom’” (Hakim 1999b:71, italics original). But change can be slow. Many southern schools shut their doors for as many as five years. Others simply refused to integrate. Hakim (1999b:72) continues: “Strong voices were shouting that the southern world they knew and loved would end if they agreed to integrate their schools. (It was the same message that had been used to defend slavery 100 years earlier).”

non-violence and he inspired others to act in non-violence¹². The following year the Supreme Court prompted Montgomery to desegregate buses.

The year was 1963, exactly 100 years after Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation,¹³ and it was decided that August 28 would be the day to march for freedom in Washington D.C. There was an estimated gathering of 250,000 people; two and one half times larger than anticipated. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began to address the crowd, not from his prepared speech, but from his heart. He delivered his famous *I Have a Dream* message.¹⁴ He concluded his remarks with the words of an old Negro spiritual: Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last (Hakim 1999b:104). This dream would not be fully realized by Dr. King.

The year Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize (1964), most blacks in the rural South still did not have the right to vote. Hakim (1999b:121) points out that: “When blacks tried to register to vote in Alabama or Mississippi or some other southern states, they were likely to be beaten, or to lose their jobs – even though the 15th Amendment to the Constitution states that every citizen has the right to vote.” Selma, Alabama would be the next point of conflict for Dr. King and his non-violent revolution for the right of blacks to vote.

¹² Hakim (1999b:81) states: “We are not here advocating violence. The only weapon that we have...is the weapon of protest...[and] the great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right.” This is in stark contrast to the white communities reaction to desegregation. They were vandalizing cars, setting off bombs, using racially charged rhetoric, and lynching ‘trouble-makers.’

¹³ This proclamation declared that all slaves were to be freed. This proclamation also prepared the way for the 13th Amendment to the Constitution (1865), which ended slavery in all parts of the United States.

¹⁴ Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and was asked to be the first non-Anglican to preach at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Hakim (1999b:121) asserts: “Newspaper columnist Ralph McGill, writing in the *Atlanta Constitution*, said Europeans understood King better than most Americans; they saw in him ‘the American promise,’ with its message for the whole world.” King realized his non-violent message had become universal language when he heard Norwegian students singing ‘We Shall Overcome.’

A 58-mile (93 kilometer) march was organized to protest black's right to vote from Selma to Montgomery. Thousands of people joined in this five-day march. This march was highlighted by the incidents of 'Bloody Sunday.'¹⁵ President L.B. Johnson was mortified at the events that transpired on national television on this Sunday. He is quoted as saying: "What happened in Selma was an American tragedy. At times, history and fate meet in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama" (Hakim 1999b:126).

President Johnson announced on national television that he was sending to Congress a voting rights bill. Then he addressed the viewing audience, "*It's not just Negroes. It's really all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And,* he finished with these words from the civil rights theme song, *WE SHALL OVERCOME*" (Hakim 1999b:127, italics original).

On April 4, 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, while preparing for another march. The day before his assassination he said these words: "I would like to live a long life. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. And I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight

¹⁵ On Sunday March 7, 1965 as marchers were crossing a bridge leading out of Selma, Alabama, police barricaded the bridge and beat and tear gassed marchers as they tried to pass. Dr. King addressed a rally before the state capital in Montgomery, Alabama for gaining support for blacks' rights to vote. Congress passes Voting Rights Act of 1965, which suspends (later bans) literacy tests and other restrictions to prevent blacks from voting.

that we as a people will get to the Promised Land...I have a dream this afternoon that the brotherhood of man will become a reality” (Hakim 1999b:159).

He ever had before him the dream of a united America. His dream remains unfulfilled in the beginning of a new century. Many see America as the Promised Land. Many who have come seeking refuge and an opportunity have been met with difficulties and exploitation. I long to see *ubuntu*¹⁶ as part of the fabric of American society. But as long as the ideology of ‘separate but equal’ exists, this expectation of a united, United States may never become reality.

2.1.2 – A Critical Denominational view

The factor that has molded the way I read the Bible has been the denomination that I have had a lifetime association with. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has had a long and colorful past. The SBC split from the Northern Baptist in 1845. The straw that finally broke the camel’s back was the disallowance of a slave owner to become a Home Missionary.¹⁷

¹⁶ This is the Xhosa term for humanity. It encompasses the idea of unity and brotherhood. It also involves helping those who are unable to help themselves. The idea is that of oneness among people. It is the idea of helping the individual with the intention of helping the community. It is the idea expressed in Leviticus 19:34. Sampson (1999:10) states: “Mandela was brought up with the African notion of human brotherhood, or ‘*ubuntu*’, which described a quality of mutual responsibility and compassion. He often quoted the proverb ‘*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*,’ which he would translate as ‘A person is a person because of other people,’ or ‘You can do nothing if you don’t get the support of other people.’”

¹⁷ The two events that solidified the split were the Georgia Test Case and the Alabama Resolution. The Georgia Test Case was construed to determine if a slave owner could become a missionary. McBeth (1990:256) states: “Troubled by rumors that the Home Mission Society would not appoint a slave owner as a home missionary, the Baptists of Georgia devised a test case to determine if the rumors were true. They nominated James Reeve, a slave owner, and raised the money for his salary.” The Alabama Resolution was a response to the Georgia Test Case. McBeth (1990:257, 258) continues: “Troubled by rumors that no slaveholder could be appointed as a foreign missionary, and stung by the Georgia Test Case, Baptists of Alabama issued a militantly worded challenge to the acting board of the foreign mission society. Instead of a concrete case like James Reeve in Georgia, the ‘Alabama Resolution’ asked a series of hypothetical questions with a ‘demand’ that they be answered satisfactorily or Alabama Baptists would withhold their missionary offer-

To truly be able to grasp the deep-seated ideology of slavery (and white supremacy) that existed in the SBC, one must be acquainted with the Georgia Editorial on Race, 1883: ‘Are We Orthodox on the Race Question?’

The fact that we love some more than others does not prove that we have no love for the others. We love the English-speaking people of our own race, and more particularly the *American* English-speaking people of our own race, and still more particularly those known as the “Southern people” of that race...Our affection for peoples shades off according as they are more remote from us, either in race, or in nationality, or in geographical position. But we do not believe that “all men are created equal,” as the Declaration of Independence declares them to be; nor that they will ever become equal in this world, and perhaps not in the world to come, for even there “one star differeth from another in glory.”...We think that our own race is incomparably superior to any other, and that our distant cousins of the Aryan family in India are next best. The people of Terra del Fuego are perhaps the worst...As to the Negro, we do not know where to place him; perhaps not at the bottom of the list, but certainly not near the top...We think that the race-line is providential, and that Providence intended that it should be perpetuated unless a new dispensation should blot it out. It is our opinion that any great intermingling of these races, even without fusion, is a misfortune and an evil...This is our ‘Confession of Faith.’ We think that we are orthodox. If we are not so, we should be glad for some one to point out the heresy (McBeth 1990:285, 286).

In 1968, the SBC gave a statement of the crisis facing America at this time. This is the same year that Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. McBeth (1990:523) states: “The SBC was one of the first major denominations in America to affirm the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation.” The decisions made at the annual meeting of the SBC only reflected the views and ideolo-

ings.” The heated exchange that ensued due to these demands “precipitated the division of Northern and Southern Baptists” (McBeth 1990:258).

gy of those in attendance. Many SBC churches resisted the move toward desegregation and racial equality in America.

I have elaborated on these major events from my past to give the reader a general understanding of the environment and political climate into which I was born. Being unable to choose the environment, I was catapulted amid existent ideologies. The ideology that characterizes these two aforementioned events is the statement of 'separate but equal.' How is it possible for people to be separated politically, educationally, economically and socially and still be considered equal? In my experience it is categorically impossible! This has been the decisive factor in my view of others. Many of these same ideologies are alive and well in American society and religious institutions.¹⁸

¹⁸ In the southern state of Louisiana, David Duke was elected to the Louisiana House as a Republican in 1989. He had also been the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan (the notorious white supremacy group that perpetrated many human rights violations, i.e. lynchings, bombings, cross burnings and other murderous acts against blacks, Jews and whites who supported the Civil Rights Movements) from 1974-1978. He was also invited by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2006 to participate in a Holocaust denier's conference (<http://www.nndb.com/people/210/000024138/>).

Dr. Jerry Vines, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church Jacksonville, Florida, and former president of the SBC, vehemently attacked Islam. The *Biblical Recorder*, Friday, June 14, 2002 documents: "'Christianity was founded by the virgin-born Jesus Christ. Islam was founded by Mohammed, a demon-possessed pedophile who had 12 wives, and his last one was a 9-year-old girl,' Jerry Vines said to applause at the SBC Pastors' Conference" (http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/content/news/2002/6_14_2002/ne140602vines.shtml). This type of religious arrogance serves only to widen the divide between faith groups and slams the door shut on any type of meaningful dialogue.

CNN.com reported April 22, 2007 *First integrated prom for rural Georgia high school*. This high school had historically had two separate proms (matric dances) for black and white in spite of integration. This year marked the first school-sponsored prom for both black and white students. Traditions die hard in the 'Olde South' and only 2/3rds of the students purchased tickets. Many whites still attended their own private party a week earlier (<http://www.cnn.com/2007/EDUCATION/04/22/integrated.prom.ap/index.html>).

The Town Talk reported on September 6, 2006 *Jena High noose incident triggers parental protests*. This came after black students sat under a 'whites only' tree for lunch. Black students met with parents to discuss this incident. Two ropes fashioned into nooses were found hanging from this tree the next morning (<http://www.thetowntalk.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=99999999/NEWS/70916001>). The black students who beat a white student after the racial charged incident surrounding the 'white only tree' were arrested. This has sparked mass protest from the African-American community. Allegations have also been leveled at the justice system, which is accused of punishing blacks more harshly than whites (http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-09-20-jena-rally_N.htm).

I grew up with the understanding that being white was a privileged position. This fostered the belief that those who were not white were not as privileged and did not deserve that which was owed to me. This has been a lifelong struggle. This has bred fear and suspicion of those who were not from the same region of the States and definitely from those of different skin colors. This ideology did not express itself through overt acts of hatred toward others but it did implant within my psyche a 'better than thou' attitude. This was also evident through my understanding of trusting others. If they were not from your family and specifically your immediate family, you were to immediately be suspect of his or her motives – 'trust everyone but trust no one' was a family motto.

The SBC, which has been the primary religious institution that has formed my theology or ideology of the Divine, is the only religious denomination I have ever been a member. It has used the Bible to justify all types of racial injustices. The comingling of the races has been a strong platform for the SBC in my region of the States. It has used Leviticus 19:19 as a proof text for this behavior. It was stated from pulpits that it's not of God for two different kinds of cattle or seeds or garments to mix, and then logically God does not want the different kinds of people (races) to mix either – 'separate but equal.'

When I approach a text I am consistently bombarded by these embedded ideologies of my past. Over the past years I have become more aware of the impact these ideologies have had on my perspectives of people of other cultures. Even the thought of using a hermeneutical method like ideological criticism arouses thoughts of betrayal and heresy, especially the notion of approaching the text with

suspicion. For me, this will be a tremendous exercise of exploring new avenues in the critical investigation of the Scriptures.

2.2 - Ideological Criticism as an interpretive methodology

This section will focus on understanding ideological criticism as a method for biblical interpretation. This section will look at various types of ideological criticism. We begin this discussion with Carroll's use of *Ideologiekritik*. A feminist understanding of biblical interpretation will follow this. Also a description of liberation theology in a South African context will be examined. This will lead to a natural progression in the realm of Black Theology in the same context. A look at two factors from a North American perspective will be considered: Native American and Slave ideology.

2.2.1 – *Ideologiekritik* of R.P. Carroll

Introducing *Ideologiekritik* as a method of studying the Bible is to determine the factors which condition the way a reader reads the Bible. Carroll (1995:26 italics original) reminds the reader "that nobody reads the Bible in a state of innocence or without a considerable amount of ideological baggage controlling any such reading...*Ideologiekritik* is therefore about *the reading processes* involved in the study of the Bible." The person reading and the place from which the reading occurs, all factor into the analysis of the Bible.

The researcher readily admits that many of Carroll's comments presents personal challenges. This has to do with his worldview and the idea of inspiration.¹⁹ He suggests that the reader or scholar should approach the text with a deep sense of ignorance. This seems to be impossible due to the way in which every reader that approaches the text has been conditioned to 'see' a particular text or the Bible in general. He (1995:27) makes an insightful comment: "In my experience I find that biblical scholars in general and American biblical scholars in particular always get very upset when the words 'ideology' and 'Bible' are used in conjunction." This rings true, especially in fundamentalist²⁰ circles, because many American evangelicals border on a form of 'bibliolatry'.²¹ The capitalist would also balk at the use of 'ideology' as another form of 'socialist' indoctrination. Since most American evangelicals would probably fit into both these categories, Carroll's perception is spot on.

Carroll confesses that *Ideologiekritik* is a controversial issue, possibly due to its highly critical suspicious approach in texts participation. For *Ideologiekritik* to be

¹⁹ Schussler Fiorenza (1992:791) states: "Inspiration is a much broader concept than canonical authority insofar as it is not restricted to the canon but holds that throughout the centuries the whole Church has been inspired and empowered by the Spirit...Inspiration has not ceased with canonization but is still at work today in the critical discernment of the spirits." Schaeffer (1972:35-36, italics original) commenting on inspiration states: "A Christian holding the strongest possible view of inspiration still does not claim exhaustive knowledge at any point...What the Bible tells us is propositional, factual and true truth, but what is given is in relation to men. It *is* a scientific textbook in the sense that where it touches the cosmos it is true, propositionally true...The Bible is *not* a scientific textbook if by that one means that its purpose is to give us exhaustive truth or that scientific fact is its central theme and purpose."

²⁰ Carroll (1995:30) states: "Reading the Bible *as if* history did not matter and *as if* the Enlightenment had never happened can only produce the false consciousness of ideologically induced blindness...The untransformed reading of the Bible breeds only fundamentalism and sociopolitical disasters" (italics original). He places his statement in the context of the apartheid regime. One could just as easy place this within the context of the Civil Rights Movement in America. These two historical examples prove the dangers of not reading the biblical text with the eyes of *Ideologiekritik*. Carroll also views liberation theology as a 'fundamentalistic' reading of the Bible. Carroll (1995:36 italics MB) conjectures: "It (*liberation theology*) singles out certain texts, treats them literally and makes no allowance for radical changes throughout history decontextualizing any such use of the Bible...therefore the Bible has to be subjected to *Ideologiekritik* in order to arrive at a critically determined notion of liberation." For Carroll, fundamentalism and liberation theology are viewed in mutual respect due to their shared common attitudes about the Bible.

²¹ As Carroll defines 'ideolatry' as the worship of ideas, the researcher defines 'bibliolatry' as the worship of the Bible in place of the God of the Bible.

useful in biblical criticism, a hermeneutic of trust and the postmodern approach that suggests texts do not have ideologies simply cannot be employed (Carroll 1998:103). He (1998:104) comfortably treats the Bible “as a collection of ideological documents.” Carroll (1998:104 italics original) also has “a personal *preference* of reading the Bible *as if* it participated in the ideological operations of second temple²² power politics and read it accordingly.”

A discussion on *Ideologiekritik* would be incomplete without mention of the use of language as a device to convey ideology. As soon as a person begins to express himself or herself, rhetoric and representation enters and things begin to get complicated. Carroll (1994:2) continues: “It is not just that we are all situated in language or that language is highly metaphorical and ambiguous, but we are also situated in particular languages which precede us and leave their traces on everything we say.” The particular language we grew up under has preformed us as well as performed us. Carroll means by this that a person expresses themselves through idioms and other rhetorical devices handed down from one generation to another.

Carroll adheres to the belief that ideology is ‘woven’ into the very fabric of our being.²³ It is impossible to escape ‘ideology’ because it is to be found everywhere

²² Carroll (1994:9) states: “As ideological literature of the second temple period the Bible needs to be read critically and with an eye to *Ideologiekritik*. It may be the case that the people designated ‘Canaanite’ were an ideologically inscribed term used to create an artificial divide among the peasants of Palestine in order to discriminate between Israelites and Canaanites.” The modern application can be seen in the way derogatory terms are used today such as Kaffir or Amakwerekwere in South Africa and Nigger or ‘High Yellow’ in America.

²³ Carroll (1995:27) defines ‘ideology’ as “a system or network of ideas and to the values in such a system which generate praxis...To say something is ideological is just to say that it belongs to a larger point of view or worldview involving general beliefs, outlooks, values and social practice.” He sees ideology as being the ‘big picture’ of the shared beliefs by many people in a common culture.

and in everything. Carroll (1998:104) states: “It is the natural condition of our existence...We are all soaked in ideology. We cannot escape...[W]herever we go, there ideology is to be found.”

His use of *Ideologiekritik* in approaching the Bible is, for Carroll (1998:106), a “return to the older definitions of ideology which related the term to denoting codes, networks and systems of ideas.” He does not embrace the Marxist’s ideas that have shaped the use of ideology in the past decades. Carroll (1998:106) discerns the “Hebrew Bible as possessing elements of a system of thought-praxis or an ideology wherein the biblical writers constructed their view of the world and how to live in it.” *Ideologiekritik* is more concerned about the reader²⁴ response to the text as it stands than in the original production of the Bible.

Carroll (1995:28) emphasizes that a separation must exist between the text and the reader of that text: “One of the ways in which an *Ideologiekritik* perspective might be applied to the Bible would be to formulate and theorise the separation of text from the interpretative gaze which reads that text.” He promulgates the idea of ideological traces, which leads to a double scrutiny of the text and its reception. By ideological traces Carroll (1995:28) means, “the ideology of the writer of the text...inscribed in the text and then there is the ideology (or ideological traces) of the reader of that text.”²⁵ The text comes preformed with the writer’s ideology and

²⁴ Carroll (1995:38) states: “The least that an *Ideologiekritik* approach to the Bible can do is to ensure that readers read it with their eyes open, acutely aware of and reflecting on what they read...Selective readings of the Bible may enable the reader to avoid the obvious, but a proper *Ideologiekritik* reading of the book insists on the reader staring the obvious in the face. That is the great strength of such an approach.”

²⁵ It becomes the function “of *Ideologiekritik* as applied to the Bible is to scrutinize both sets of ideological traces and to analyze critically all the ideological factors at play in any and every reading of the Bible” (Carroll 1995:28). Carroll (1995:34) states later in this article: “Self-scrutiny and self-criticism are the only controls we have to protect ourselves from the lure of the ideological.” This is all an attempt to keep a safe critical distance from the ideologies of the text.

it becomes the function of *Ideologiekritik* to decipher what this might be. This owes its existence to the fact that texts' writers lived in a world constructed ideologically.

The list of ideological traces,²⁶ admits Carroll, is less full than he would have liked. This list is made and expounded upon by readers of the biblical text. The implementation of *Ideologiekritik* gives the reader a freedom to examine his or her past with the hope of a bright future of change and possibility. For Carroll (1995:41) *Ideologiekritik* "scrutinizes text, tradition and reading moment for concealed or assumed ideological factors and signals to the alert reader what has been detected." The success of this method is in the detection. This detection is viewed as a signal that something in the text or within the reader needs to be dealt with, as Carroll would say, with suspicion.

He introduces the idea of biblical idolatry.²⁷ Carroll's intent (1998:107) is to use idolatry as 'the worship of an idea' and, "It will function in this piece of reflective writing as shorthand for an ideology of YHWH(ism) in the Hebrew Bible or the worship of the idea of YHWH (as god)." Carroll uses this term to focus on one specific ideology of the Bible. His use of this term guides his explanation of 'ideological' as found within the text. 'Ideological' is for Carroll the equivalent of what most scholars identify as 'theological.'

Carroll sees the Bible as the 'works of human hands' and not 'divine words.' When these are confused he labels this confusion as 'idolatry.' His approach to

²⁶ Carroll (1994:3) concludes: "As a shaping force in the evolution and construction of Western European civilization (including its offspring the United States of America) the bible has already left many ideological traces on our culture by means of its reception-history."

²⁷ Carroll (1998:107) suggests: "The word is formed partly from the *idea* aspect of ideology and partly from the *latry* aspects of liturgy and worship."

the Bible and the utilization of ideology “is due to a desire to see the political” (Carroll 1998:107). This approach allows Carroll to flee the temptation of viewing the human words, which express ideas about ‘god,’ as being divine words outside the experience of humanity.

Due to the fact that there exists many images and descriptions of God in the biblical material, Carroll (1998:108) favors “treating all biblical statements about the divine as contestable and contested. None is to be absolutized.” Carroll defines a privileging process as when a reader²⁸ gives precedence to one writer’s version of ‘god’ and then places it in judgment above all other descriptives about ‘god.’ Carroll (1998:108) states: “I would want to maintain that such a privileging process is precisely of the essence of ideology when it is used by the conventional approaches of traditional theologians reading the Bible in harmony with their own theological (ideological) foundational holdings.”

Carroll (1998:112) agrees that reading the Hebrew Bible from an *Ideologiekritik* point of view “may be said to have a single fundamental ideology behind it, it would be the ideology of belief in YHWH as a single, solitary god.” He continues that this belief is a detrimental ideology due to the plurality of viewpoints in the biblical writings. Carroll (1998:113) explains, “Furthermore, the representation of YHWH as one, single, solitary god has proved to be a most destructive form of

²⁸ Carroll takes issue with the misjudgments made by biblical scholars about representation in the Bible. He means by representation that what is said and what that speech purports to represent are two opposing realities. The fact, plain and simple, is that biblical scholars were ‘conditioned’ to believe in a specific way prior to becoming academics. He (1994:11) concludes: “[T]hey have their own ideological commitments before they become scholars and they regularly use that acquired scholarship to underwrite their prior beliefs (about the Bible).”

ideology both in the pages of the Bible and in its subsequent receptions by religious communities.”

2.2.2 – Feminist theology

The attention of the research will now shift into the realm of the various branches of ideological criticism. The first branch that will be examined is feminist hermeneutics. Schussler Fiorenza is to be commended on her straightforward definition of feminist hermeneutics. She (1992:783) states: “Yet feminist inquiry is not more, but less ideological because it deliberately articulates its theoretical perspective without pretending to be value-free, positivistic, universal knowledge.” In her understanding, this hermeneutical approach is less ideological²⁹ than the other approaches to be mentioned. She states up front that it is not value-free but the agenda of feminism is its value and approach.

Schussler Fiorenza (1992:784) states that though there are many diverse ways of defining feminism it is generally agreed upon “their critique of masculine supremacy and hold that gender roles are socially constructed rather than innate.” The contrast between masculine supremacy³⁰ and feminine inferiority are legitimated by the binary oppositions or complementary poles in a binary gender system: subject/object, orthodoxy/heresy, and man/woman.

²⁹ Barr (2000:136) states: “I think it regrettable that, in the process in which women have become much more prominent in both religion and education, so many women scholars – certainly not all, but a substantial proportion – have so totally and consciously embraced ideology as their key instrument for the understanding of the world – an action which is likely to have negative effects upon the position of women in the long run.”

³⁰ Exum (1995:65, 67) states “feminist criticism seeks to expose the strategies by which men have justified their control over women...If the Bible presents us with men’s views of women – what men thought women were like, or what they wished them to be – the feminist critic must ask how, if at all, a woman’s perspective can be discovered in, or read into, this androcentric literature”

Feminist scholarship's agenda appears to be in the rooting out of the androcentric³¹ language of biblical interpretation. An issue has been raised among African-American feminists (womanists) concerning this. Even though womanist critics have become skilled at "detecting the androcentric language and patriarchal contextualizations of mainstream theory and biblical interpretation, it does not always pay attention to its own inoculation with gender stereotypes, white supremacy, class prejudice, and theological confessionality" (Schussler Fiorenza 1992:784). The idea of 'knowing oneself' and the prejudicial stances are all crucial information for any critic before embarking on the shores of interpretation.

Haney, commenting on women's experience as a source for feminist theology, includes women from many different strata of society. This location in society is characterized by how these women have been viewed by others (men) and treated by the same. This of course conditions the way in which they view and experience God. Haney (1998:40) compares how womanists and white feminists experience God:

My reading of womanists suggests that the experience of God is not of a God who imposes further limits or constraints, who is over against, but who is *with* them in the struggle. Much of life is a struggle for survival, but power for that struggle is deepened and sustained by God's presence. My reading of white feminists and my own experience point to a somewhat different experience of God. God is one in whom we delight, from whom we receive delight, with whom we are bound in mutual embrace. Our relationship with

³¹ Schussler Fiorenza (1992:785 italics original) emphasizes that androcentric texts and language do not describe and comprehend reality: "Rather they are ideological constructs that produce the invisibility and marginality of women. Therefore a critical feminist interpretation insists on a *hermeneutics of suspicion* that can unmask the ideological functions of androcentric text and commentary."

God is an experience of mutuality or friendship, and it is not accidental that friendship has been a theme in white feminist writing much more than in womanist writing.

Schussler Fiorenza's emphasis in her introduction in *Wisdom Ways* is to read a text in light of feminist theory of justice and a feminist movement of change. She (Schussler Fiorenza 2001:1, 2) states "feminist scholars and activists in religion have developed new ways of interpreting the bible in order to prevent biblical knowledge from being produced in the interest of domination and injustice." This interpretation is concerned with contextualizing women's issues, which are embedded in structures of dominance.

Exum (1995:69) offers some helpful questions to ask of a text. These questions asked of a text reflect the interpreter's interests, known or unknown, which lead to one's interpretation of a given text. The questions a feminist literary critic might ask are:

- 1 Is there a woman or a woman's point of view in this text?
- 2 How are women portrayed in this text? Do they speak? Are we given access to their point of view?
- 3 Who has the power in the text? How is power distributed? How do women get what they want? And what do women want?
- 4 How does the text represent uniquely female experiences, such as childbearing, or traditionally female experiences, such as child rearing?
- 5 How have women's lives and voices been suppressed by this text? Are women made to speak and act against their own interests?

6 What hidden gender assumptions lie behind this text?

Since some biblical texts are androcentric, women often act and speak contrary to their own interests. Because of this, Exum (1995:70) gives strategic questions that need to be asked of the text: “What androcentric agenda does this text promote? Does it, for example, function to keep women in their place, under the control of men? Does it show male control of women as something necessary for society to function smoothly, or as something women desire? What buried and encoded messages does this text give to women?”

Schussler Fiorenza’s thrust is to liberate a text from varying forms of dominance and injustice. Her model for this type of liberation is ‘rhetorical-emancipatory.’³² This model conditions an interpreter to recognize the rhetorical features (persuasive elements) within a text that perpetuate dominance and injustice issues. For Schussler Fiorenza (2001:3) it is a matter of “becoming conscious of structures of domination and for articulating visions of radical democracy that are inscribed in our own experience as well as in that of the text.” A feminist biblical scholar focuses on a critical investigation of the Bible³³ ever mindful of the ability to articulate feminist values and perspectives of the feminist movement.

Schussler Fiorenza seems to insist on a ‘non-violent’ struggle for emancipating biblical texts. This is a process of seeking deeper meaning and understanding not

³² Schussler Fiorenza (1992:785 italics original) states: “[F]rom the vantage point of an emancipatory standpoint makes it possible to ‘imagine’ a *different* interpretation and historical reconstruction.” Schussler Fiorenza declares for real change or liberation to take place all the values and vision of the ‘Western Man’ must be claimed by women and other nonpersons.

³³ Schussler Fiorenza (1992:785) states: “Not to defend biblical authority but to articulate the theological authority of women is the main task of a critical feminist hermeneutics.” The impetus behind the feminist critic is to reinterpret or transform biblical traditions and interpretation from the sociopolitical religious location.

just of the Bible by feminists, “but also into the self and the world in order to engage in struggles for survival and justice” (Schussler Fiorenza 2001:3). The consuming drive of the feminist Bible scholar is to interact with a text to free it from its ‘chauvinistic’ biases.

Her appeal is to begin to ‘undo’ or ‘unthink’ one’s ideas about the historical stance the Bible demonstrates toward women. The feminist biblical scholar is challenged “to give up long-held convictions, such as the views that the biblical text is an unclouded window to the historical reality of wo/men, that G*d has written it, that it is a historical source-text providing data and evidence which document wo/men’s reality, or that it contains biblical injunctions and prescriptions as timeless revelation and fixed norms given once and for all” (Schussler Fiorenza 2001:4). The ideology of this statement is that the feminist critic must abandon any preconceived ideas they may bring to a text. This is the hallmark idea of ideological critics. The reader must recognize and examine herself before embarking on a serious study of the text.

Schussler Fiorenza stresses the idea of a new emerging paradigm. This field, emancipatory biblical criticism, has been ‘initiated, shaped, and pioneered’ in the realm of feminist biblical studies. This paradigm must be recognized as engaging in ‘emancipatory rhetoric’ because “ideology criticism as well as postcolonial and cultural biblical criticism have for the most part not made *wo/men* subjects of interpretation, connected intellectuals, or historical agents central to their theoretical frameworks” (Schussler Fiorenza 2001:5 italics original). This stems from the fact that gender issues have not been factored into the equation for developing an eth-

ic of interpretation which would take into consideration women's experiences when analyzing 'social location and the operations of power in a discourse.'

For hermeneutics to become emancipatory biblical criticism, one must adopt new labels for the interpretive process. Instead of utilizing 'reading' for 'exegesis' the biblical scholar must use 'interpretation.' Schussler Fiorenza (2001:6) suggests that this "shift from reading to interpretation, from gender analysis to feminist analysis, initiates the shift from a text-centered to an emancipatory methodology of conscientization." This 'shift' enables the interpreter to begin to dismantle traditional biblical understanding for modern discourses that are interested in political analysis of biblical traditions as well as social critique. This all leads ultimately to the liberation of the texts from gender biased viewpoints.

A South African feminist voice, Claassens, states that feminist biblical interpretation has a twofold task. The first task confines itself to deconstructing³⁴ interpretations. The aim is to deconstruct interpretations that contribute to "hierarchies with regard to race, class, and gender are not only tolerated but also actively propagated" and a second task is "to reconstruct interpretations...that offer a vision of God's relationship to the world that is committed to end oppression and injustice in a deeply wounded society" (Claassens 2006:326).

Derrida before Schussler Fiorenza and Schussler Fiorenza before Claassens all utilized the masculine supremacy-feminine subordinate binary oppositions.

³⁴ Mohler (2005:61) states: "Deconstructionists subject the Bible to radical reinterpretation, often with little or no regard for the plain meaning of the text or the clear intention of the human author. Some texts are simply identified as texts of terror, worthy only to be deconstructed so that humanity might be liberated from their tyranny. Any text that is not pleasing to the postmodern mind is rejected as suppressive, patriarchal, heterosexist, homophobic, 'speciesist,' or similarly deformed by some other political or ideological bias. The authority of the text is denied and the most fanciful and even ridiculous interpretations are celebrated as affirming and therefore authentic."

Claassens sees Derrida's contribution as 'particularly relevant to feminist biblical interpretation.' She (2006:327) concludes "one member of each pair of binary oppositions is ordinarily regarded as positive or the norm, while the other is viewed in a negative fashion constituting the derivative. More often than not male, reason, spirit, mind and culture are viewed as essentially positive, whereas female, emotion, nature, body and matter are all seen as inherently negative concepts." She sees this regard of one binary opposition positive while the other is negative as a way of formulating hierarchical patterns of dominance.

These hierarchical patterns of dominance logically lead to the rationale that the 'other' will be viewed in a negative manner. The 'other' "who is different from the norm is viewed in a negative light and even demonized for being of a different race, gender, class or sexual orientation" (Claassens 2006:330). Because of this pattern, Claassens affirms deconstructive criticism's role in feminist biblical criticism's relationship to a text. Claassens (2006:330) continues: "Deconstructive criticism provides a helpful tool to deconstruct potentially harmful interpretations of the binary oppositions...by challenging the central/marginal dichotomy held up in the text and its interpretations."

2.2.3 – Brueggemann's Imaginative Hermeneutics

Brueggemann utilizes similar language as Schussler Fiorenza³⁵ when he speaks of an 'emancipated imagination which is obedience.' For Brueggemann (1985:27)

³⁵ Schussler Fiorenza states that androcentric texts must undergo historical reconstruction. She suggests that as feminist critics enter into the androcentric discourse of the marginalized and subjugated they must also participate in the democratic dialogue of freedom and justice. She states that this process must be 'imagined differently.' She (1992:788) continues: "Such 'imagination' is, however, not pure fantasy but historical im-

taking “the texts most seriously is to see that they are indeed acts of imagination.” These ‘acts of imagination’ are reminders of Yahweh’s sovereignty. For Brueggemann (1985:29), humanity, like God, “is a generator of *images* that lead to *alternative acts* and *social possibilities*” (italics original). This generation of new images/metaphors is the *modus operandi* that will “challenge, delegitimize, deconstruct old stable realities, and which anticipate and evoke the shape of new realities” (Brueggemann 1985:15).

Brueggemann states that the biblical writers were able to use their imaginations³⁶ to ‘foresee’ a different future than those people around them, a monarchy that would be different and a society that would be structured in such a way as to eliminate a class system. Did this occur? No, it did not. But this is not to say that the writers did not imagine a future ‘brighter and better’ than the past. Brueggemann views the book of Deuteronomy as a copy of the Torah. He (1985:22) states: “But it seems obviously the case that it is an inventive, imaginative act – a new statement ‘formed’ in the heart/mind of these teachers and preachers, a bold act which challenges old givens.” He also utilizes the potter image in Jeremiah 18 and 19. Brueggemann (1985: 17) continues: “But it is equally clear that there is a forming

agination because it refers to a reality that has been accomplished not only in discourse but also in the practices and struggles of ‘the subjugated others.’” Claassens utilizes phrases like ‘a playful outlook’ and ‘imaginative interpretation’ when dialoging with Rutledge in regards to rabbinic midrash in opening up new interpretations of the Hebrew Bible for a new generation. She (2006:331) states: “This mode of interpretation gives rise to imaginative interpretations that may help to deconstruct fixed schemes held up by the text” and continuing Claassens quotes Rutledge: “Feminist biblical interpretation requires a leap in exegetical imagination...conjuring meaning to rise out of the white spaces between the letters of the biblical text and be shaped according to the needs of the interpretative community.”

³⁶ Dever (2001:173) states: “Archaeology at its best provides a graphic illustration of the everyday masses, the vast majority of ordinary folk, their brief lives forgotten by the biblical writers in their obsession with eternity, their voices long muted until modern archaeology allows them to speak again to us. It was these anonymous folk – not just kings and priests and prophets whom we know by name – who made Israel what is was. Their world, their situations, are different from those who wrote the Bible, but no less important for that. Indeed, the *lack* of convergences here may be the most revealing of all the data that we have now for writing a realistic history of Israel – not the ‘ideal Israel’ of the imaginations of the biblical writers but an ‘Israel, warts and all.’”

that takes place prior to the work of hand with clay. That ‘forming’ may be said to take place in the ‘mind’ or ‘heart’...Thus the term ‘forming’ leads to ‘forming’ in the mind, hence imagination...The potter must also be able to envision, to plan ahead, foresee the shapes, to call into being in ‘mind’s eye’ what does not yet exist. That is, good potting requires *imagination* as well as *physical skills*” (italics original). He also references an event out of the researcher’s historical past. Brueggemann (1985:26) observes: “To be able to anticipate ‘there shall be no poor among you’ in either the ancient or the modern world is almost as though one were to say, ‘I have a dream’. Indeed, it would not take much to recast the entire piece into rhetoric like that of Martin Luther King, for it is all a dreaming vision of how social criticism can be made of a hierarchical community together with an alternative proposal.”

Utilizing an interpreter’s imagination to interpret a text must be carried out with caution. Utilizing imagination³⁷ needs to be grounded in what one knows of the character of God of the Bible. If not, one is liable to drift in a sea of creative fraudulence. One is likely to create a theological ‘Java man,’ who came to life as a ‘missing-link’ with only a skullcap, a femur and three teeth and a heaping dose of imagination. Brueggemann (1985:30) emphasizes: “Thus, the ultimate measure of every imaginative thought, imaginative text and imaginative social possibility is how it corresponds to the character of God.”

³⁷ Vanhoozer states that imagination has a place in theological service. Imagination has been given a ‘bad rap’ in evangelical scholarship. Vanhoozer (2005:121) defines imagination as “the power of synoptic vision – the ability to synthesize heterogeneous elements into a unity.” The imagination is the component for the reader to be able to see the unity of seemingly unrelated parts. Stories are the avenues by which the reader sees the imagination in action. Vanhoozer (2005:121, 122) continues: “Where reason analyzes, breaking things (and texts) up into their constituent parts, imagination synthesizes, making connections between things that appear unrelated...Scripture summons the intellect to accept its rendering of reality, but it also summons the imagination to see, feel, and taste the goodness of God.”

2.2.4 – Slaveology and Native American Liberation Theology

Having been ‘programmed’ to read and interpret a text from a southern American point of view, the researcher felt it only justifiable to dialogue with two specifically North American liberation theologians. The first theologian is Katie Cannon. She is a womanist (feminist of color) and her “particular concern as a liberation ethicist is to unmask the hermeneutical distortions of White Christians, North and South, who lived quite comfortable with the institution of chattel slavery for the better part of 150 years” (Cannon 2001:196).

Those who passively or actively accepted slave ideology did so because of the monetary benefits and power brokerage of the day. Cannon (2001:196) remarks: “If the powerbrokers of the antebellum society were to continue benefiting from the privileges and opportunities the political economy provided, then the slaveholding aristocrats must, as a basic precondition, maintain their domination over the ideological sectors of society: religion, culture, education, and media.” The landowners (occupants of the land) knew they would need a large pool of cheap labor to drive the industrial/agricultural machine. This sounds awfully familiar in regards to the immigration policies being enacted in America today.

Cannon embarks on the ideological myth that existed in Christian antebellum (The Olde South) society. This myth reasoned that the black race was in essence not members of the human race. To justify slavery, white Southerners had to appease their biblical consciousness of equality of all people in God’s sight. To do this “[t]he humanity of Black people had to be denied, or the evil of the slave system would

be evident” (Cannon 2001:197). The drive for cheap or free labor clouded the conscious of Christian slaveholders in such a way that the oppression and injustice of this system was easily overlooked.

The story of Ham in Genesis 9:25-27 has been used on more than one continent to justify the demoralization of the black race. White supremacist and proslavery proponents, in order to legitimize the enslavement of blacks, embraced this story for such a cause. Cannon (2001:198) states: “Central to the whole hermeneutical approach was a rationalized biblical doctrine positing the innate and permanent inferiority of Blacks in the metonymical curse of Ham.”

The segregation of the black and white races was based on the ‘separate but not equal’ policy adopted in the 1940’s. The adoption of the eighteenth century *partus sequitur ventrem* demonstrates all the more how macabre the issue of slavery had become. This eighteenth century state law stated that the children follow the plight of the mother, no matter the race of the father. Cannon (2001:198) continues: “Hence, the Black woman as the carrier of the hereditary legal status extended the status of slave to her children and her children’s children, supposedly to the end of time.” Basically, black women became ‘breeding stock’ for black men. They also became victims of rape by white men. A black woman’s life was estimated by the fact of her capacity to reproduce more of her kind. This was the cheaper option, since purchasing new slaves on the open market became harder and more expensive than producing your own.

The Church became the agent of evil in this whole process of slavery. They supported and endorsed laws and legislation to insure the position of the slaveholder was not jeopardized. The Olde South Church refused to see or simply turned a blind eye to the injustices and dehumanizing aspects of the slave trade. Cannon (2001:199) reiterates this as: “Ideas and practices that favored equal rights of all people were classified as invalid and sinful because they conflicted with the divinely ordained structure that posited inequality between Whites and Blacks.”

In light of the gross injustices meted out by Bible-believing fundamentalist Christians during this era, one is led to seriously contemplating anew the idea of infallibility of Scripture. Infallibility has the idea ‘of not being able to mislead.’ (This needs to be a driving force for any person desiring a modern day application of the Bible to conduct a demythologizing hermeneutic of the Bible so as to eliminate fictitious theories or beliefs surrounding a given text.) It was this very “doctrine of biblical infallibility (*that*) reinforced and was reinforced by the need for social legitimization of slavery” (Cannon 2001:199 italics MB). Due to the ideology of scriptural infallibility, Christians readily accepted that slavery was the logical fulfillment of the curse of Ham found in Genesis. Cannon (2001:199) states: “This had the effect of placing the truthfulness of God’s self-revelation on the same level as Black slavery and White supremacy.”

A second ideological process Cannon brings to the forefront is the mythologizing of enslavement. Christian slave owners bathed their religious consciousness in the idea that they were actually performing a godly act by releasing Africans from their superstitions and ignorance. Cannon (2001:199) reveals that proponents of

slavery were: “Using gross caricatures, slave apologists mounted an ideological offensive in justification of the ravishing of the entire continent of Africa.” These same Christians needed to believe that these poor savages would consider it a privilege to be a captive in a foreign land.

It is a truism that Christians in North America exposed Africans to Christianity. The demonic side to this was Christians believed that the conversion of Africans would make them better servants of God and better servants of men. Cannon (2001:200) states: “The prevailing sentiment of American Christians – Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Roman Catholics, Quakers, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, and Anglicans – was that African peoples deserved imperial domination and needed social control.” Cannon’s (2001:202) reflection on this heinous ideology leads her to conclude: “I believe that it is important for us to trace the origin and expansion of these myths because the same general schemes of oppression and patterns of enslavement remain prevalent today and because the biblical hermeneutics of oppressive praxis is far from being dead among contemporary exegetes.”

This one historical act alone should drive each serious biblical interpreter to exorcise any and every demon of oppression from the text, so that the biblical texts will be able to function as a liberating force in the generation we are living. If not, we are bound to repeat the past. As Cannon rightly points out, at least five generations of white Americans were convinced that slavery was a protected privilege and the constitution endorsed this widely held belief that ‘all men are not created equal.’ Kuykendall (2005:25) emphatically states that the institution of slavery in

America created an ethos for race relations: “Racism was established as an ideology to make this social inequality acceptable. Religion was used to support slavery and segregation; science has been used to justify a racial hierarchy; and meritocracy has been used as proof that African Americans lack intelligence, industriousness, motivation, and ambition to take advantage of opportunities.”

An equally heinous act was the treatment of Native Americans by the early European settlers. This treatment came as lust for land expansion loomed on the horizon. The only way these settlers could deal with the Native American problem was to round them up and put them in reservations. This was all well and good until gold was found on one of the reservations and this land was deemed immediately ‘white’ for the exploitation of the gold.

Warrior, an Osage Indian, ascribes to a Native American theology of liberation. He is also the progeny of a Native American and a white. Warrior (2001:189) admits: “The inclusion of Native Americans in Christian political praxis is difficult – even dangerous.” He has first-hand experience of the difficulties ‘marrying’ Native American and white causes for injustice and liberation. The difficulties lie in the way in which these two people groups reach decision, their views of relationship and leadership, as well as the relationship between religion and politics.

He says that the problem with applying a liberation theology hermeneutic to the Native American situation is the preoccupation these liberators have with the Exodus story. Warrior (2001:190) believes “that the Exodus story is an inappropriate way for Native Americans to think about liberation.” He continues his explanation by using the metaphor of God as conqueror.

Yahweh as conqueror or deliverer is for Warrior an incomplete assessment. Warrior (2001:190) continues: “A delivered people is not a free people, nor is it a nation.” A liberated people dreams or constructs a vision of a place free and far away from their oppressors as possible. This vision became for Israel the land flowing with ‘milk and honey’ - Canaan. Warrior echoes the words of Carroll when he stated that no sooner had Israel been granted their freedom they began to organize laws and legislation for the ownership and treatment of slaves. The Israelites began to use “the same power used against the enslaving Egyptians to defeat the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan” (Warrior 2001:190). This becomes the crux of the argument for Warrior. He sees the Native Americans in general and the Osage nation specifically, as being ‘the Canaanites’ in their own land – America.

The stark reality that jumps off the page is that many readers read the story of the Exodus as a tremendous victory for the oppressed and Yahweh is the mighty conqueror. It is through the eyes of Native American liberation theology that we see the indigenous people being ruthlessly oppressed and slaughtered. There are many scholarly explanations and theories as to how the land was settled. Warrior (2001: 191) recounts some of these:

The Canaanites were not systematically annihilated, nor were they completely driven from the land. In fact, they made up, to a large extent, the people of the new nation of Israel. Perhaps it was a process of gradual immigration of people from many places and religions who came together to form a new nation. Or maybe, as Norman Gottwald and others have argued, the peasants of Canaan revolted against their feudal masters, a re-

volt instigated and aided by a vanguard of escaped slaves from Egypt who believed in the liberating god, Yahweh.

Whatever the fate of the Canaanites might have been, they were, as scholars agree, intimately involved in this process.

It is through the eyes of the Canaanites that Warrior, a member of a tribal nation of indigenous people, reads the Exodus story. Parry (2005:315) states: “A Native American reader may find such texts oppressive and wish to subvert them, especially as such texts were used by European settlers to justify their taking of land.” The biblical critic needs to be cognizant of the fact that he or she needs to read the text from the point of view of the colonized and not the colonizer. Warrior puts this into perspective from his unique point of contact with the text.

Warrior directs us to ask the fatal question: Whose narrative? It is at this very juncture that the reader is reminded that Christian and Native American activism begins. The Exodus narratives demonstrate what happens when powerless people come to power. Warrior (2001:192) continues: “Historical scholarship may tell a different story; but even if the annihilation did not take place, the narratives tell what happened to those indigenous people who put their hope and faith in ideas and gods that were foreign to their culture.” This caused the Canaanites to lose their story of oppression and exploitation. Warrior (2001:192) drives the nail in the coffin when he states: “Whatever dangers we identify in the text, the god represented there will remain as long as the text remains.” What a somber reality

that some oppressed communities are unable to distinguish between the god of conquest and the liberating god.

Warrior offers two solutions to this problem. First he (2001:193) states, “the Canaanites should be at the center of Christian theological reflection and political action.” If this occurs, then it is possible that the reader will read the entire Bible and not just the parts that evoke inspiration. This will allow the reader to become involved in the human rights violations that occurred with the land grab of Canaan.

In second place Warrior (2001:194) admonishes the reader “to be more aware of the way ideas such as those in the Conquest narratives have made their way into Americans’ consciousness and ideology.” The Church again failed miserably in reaching out to Native Americans. These narratives were used to label Native Americans as people to be annihilated if they would not be converted. Warrior (2001:194) reminds us that, “Many Puritan preachers were fond of referring to Native Americans as Amelkites [*sic*] and Canaanites.”

Finally Warrior attests to the fact that the Canaanites put their trust in a foreign god and due to this their identity and their ancestry was absorbed into another people’s identity. He presses the issue of whether people of one nation (tribe) are willing to enter into the struggle of another people, allowing their story to remain at the forefront of the liberation. Warrior (2001:194) leaves one with a hollow echo:

But perhaps, if they are true to their struggle, people will be able to achieve what Yahweh’s chosen people in the past have not: a society of people delivered from oppression who are not so afraid of becoming victims again

that they become oppressors themselves, a society where the original inhabitants can become something other than subjects to be converted to a better way of life or adversaries who provide cannon fodder for a nation's militaristic pride.

2.2.5 – African Liberation Theologians

Since this research is occurring on (South) African soil, it is only just to 'hear' from African hermeneutical perspectives. Jonker (2005:637) states: "An African hermeneutic is therefore comparable to a feminist or liberationist hermeneutic." This being the case, it is appropriate to include this hermeneutical approach in this section of ideological criticism.

The first voice is that of African womanist Madipoane Masenya. She quotes a Northern Sotho proverb: *dinaka tsa go rweswa ga di gomarele hlogo*, which translates, as 'counterfeit horns cannot stick permanently on a different head.' Masenya's search is for an African hermeneutic within South Africa. Masenya (2005:742) declares: "I have argued that the theological curricula as well as those of Old Testament Studies in South Africa, still rely heavily, if not totally, on the West rather than on Africa itself."³⁸ Her pursuit of this 'contextualized' hermeneutic results from her experience with Old Testament graduates who remain irrelevant³⁹

³⁸ Masoga is critical of trained African scholars who imitate Western biblical hermeneutics. Masoga (2002:98, italics original) states: "Ostensibly so, Western scholarship draws much attention that the African life orientation occupies a peripheral position. The African trained scholar occupies the central position and continues to echo Western training scholarship and dominates the *space*."

³⁹ Masenya (2005:742) addresses the issue of what she refers to as 'insider-outsider' status: "One becomes an insider as one is being trained as a student, an insider to the theologies which are foreign to oneself, an insider as one trains African students in Western-oriented studies of the Bible...If the research conducted is not played according to the rules inside the game, it will not earn this 'insider/outside' accreditation to Western academic status quo, which itself remains basically an outsider to the African status quo." This 'in-

to the South African context. Masenya (2005:742) states this is “a situation which is alarmingly similar to what used to be the case in *apartheid* theology during *apartheid* South Africa.”

Masenya describes her hermeneutical approach to biblical studies as the *bosadi* (womanhood) concept. This approach is the process of removing the ‘artificial horns’ of women’s issues. This methodology “critiques both cultures and texts not only in terms of gender concerns. It also includes issues of class, ‘woman-as-strange’ and ‘Africans-as-strange’” (Masenya 2005:745). The *bosadi* approach does not accept the Bible uncritically as the word of God⁴⁰. This approach recognizes the exploitation imposed upon blacks during *apartheid* whose regime justified these actions by employing a theology of Israel’s election.

The *bosadi* method of Bible reading allows women to be affirmed in their reading of texts. Masenya declares that this methodology is an African woman’s liberation hermeneutic. Masenya (2005:747) states: “As in liberation theologies the experiences of the marginalized, in this case African-South African women, and not the contexts which produced the Bible, serve as the starting point of one’s encounter with the biblical text.”

sider-outsider’ status is seen as an ‘othering’ of Africa in South Africa. Her (2005:743) observation of how this ‘othering’ of Africa and African people by Africans should sound an alarm: “The negative appellation ‘*makwerekwere*’ to refer to fellow African persons from other parts of Africa has said it all. It denotes the hate and denigration of African-South African peoples for fellow African peoples. This is an unfortunate xenophobic situation indeed, particularly given the important role which some of them played for many African-South African exiles during the apartheid era.”

⁴⁰ Farisani (2003:48) commenting on the renewal and transformation project in Africa states: “First, it warns against any uncritical reading of the biblical text...By uncritical reading, we refer to any reading of the Bible which does not engage in an in-depth manner with the text. Any uncritical reading of the biblical text tends to further oppress and sideline the poor and marginalized by appropriating the ideologically undifferentiated biblical text as the ‘revealed word of God.’ Instead of empowering the poor and marginalized, an uncritical reading of the text disempowers and weakens them.”

If the texts are the starting points in Bible reading, one should understand the function the Bible serves within the confines of this approach. The Bible is acknowledged in a positive light in the lives of African-South African women believers. Though the Bible is emphasized as the word of God in a positive sense, the recognition of the oppressive way the Bible⁴¹ has been used is also admitted. Masenya (2005:748) continues: “However, given the harsh reality of the use of the Bible to endorse patriarchal domination in South Africa, the *bosadi* concept is somewhat cautious about the notion of the Bible as ‘Word of God.’”

In light of the cautious nature of the *bosadi* concept in viewing the Bible, it is seen as having the power to change the lives of women in a positive way. Masenya (2005:748) states “the Bible is approached with hope, with a view to transformation by its liberative power.” Having this view of the Bible will lead the scholar to engage the marginalized with openness to their viewpoints.

Mosala believes that an anti-populist reading of the Bible is necessary not only to liberate the Bible but also for the Bible⁴² to be a liberating force. During the 1980s in South Africa, Mosala came to understand that the Bible became void in the process of liberation. He states that the Bible became impotent not as a result of the inactivity or non-political involvement of the churches but it was a result of these activities “that accounted for this impoverishing of the Bible’s role in the

⁴¹ Dube (2002:54, 55) states: “I have repeatedly argued that current feminist biblical practice is working within a colonizing framework because of its lack of attention to religious diversity or acknowledgment of how the Bible has functioned as a tool of suppressing other cultures... The work of African women has been credited with sharpening the political edge of biblical and theological hermeneutics.”

⁴² West (2000:145) quotes Mofokeng as saying: “Young blacks in particular have categorically identified the Bible as an oppressive document by its very nature and to its very core [and the best option] is to disavow the Christian faith and consequently be rid of the obnoxious Bible.” This is this generation’s reaction to the oppressive use and subversive nature in which the Bible has been used and applied to the (South) African situation.

struggle for human liberation in South Africa” (Mosala 1991:267). He sets out in this article to enunciate the reasons for this impoverishment.

His primary concern as a black theologian is liberation efforts on behalf of the marginalized have occurred within the hermeneutical auspices of the ‘dominant bourgeois biblical scholarship.’ Mosala (1991:268) argues, “that this enslavement to dominant ideology does not make for liberation of the oppressed.” He (1991:268) also contends the tools being utilized for biblical studies are taken from the “oppressive culture and ideology themselves.”

Mosala (1991:270) stresses that discernment for what is recognized by biblical scholars, as the will of God, “must of necessity happen in the context of struggles between classes, between races, between genders, and between generations.” The way in which this statement of human emancipation is to be engaged is through “a critical and liberatory hermeneutics of the Bible” (Mosala 1991:270). This will be the only satisfactory way in which the un-liberating prejudices of the Bible can be exposed and overcome.

Mosala (1991:271) is adamant that “an anti-populist approach to the texts of the Bible is necessary if the potency of the Bible as a weapon of struggle for oppressed and exploited people⁴³ is to be restored.” He emphasizes the fact that post-exilic theology is simply another form of populist biblical interpretation. This

⁴³ West quotes a familiar anecdote, which is told with ‘particular hermeneutical force in South Africa’ – *When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we (Blacks) had the land. The white man said to us ‘let us pray.’ After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible* (italics MB). This statement shows “the central position which the Bible occupies in the ongoing process of colonization, national oppression and exploitation...[and] the incomprehensible paradox of being colonized by a Christian people and yet being converted to their religion and accepting the Bible, their ideological instrument of colonization, oppression and exploitation” (West 2000:144).

type of theology will not have a liberating effect on the black population of South Africa from white colonist oppressive control. This type of theology might usher in a black government to rule the people but liberation of the people will be another matter. Mosala (1991:274) continues: “In order to recover that God (*the God of whom Norman Gottwald wrote in The Tribes of Yahweh*), the Bible must be read differently, taking into account class, racial, gender, cultural, and political issues in our analysis of its texts” (italics MB).

Frick focuses on the work of Mosala because he is knowledgeable about the recent developments in Europe and North America in social critical biblical scholarship. It was Mosala who introduced Frick to apartheid in the black townships in Cape Town during a visit in 1988. Frick sees Mosala as one who has been able to flesh out a biblical hermeneutic in the South African context.

Frick (1991:232) begins by suggesting that Mosala criticizes “those hermeneutical schemes of black theologians in South Africa that give priority to the Bible as ‘The Word of God.’” Mosala continues (1991:232) by stating “any hermeneutics that begins with a belief in the Bible as the ‘Word of God’ is anti-black working class and anti-black women and merely ‘bourgeois exegesis applied to the working class situation.’” What Mosala is advocating is a new starting point for doing biblical exegesis.

Mosala expounds several reasons for developing a biblical hermeneutics of liberation. He (1989:32) states: “I will argue that this struggle⁴⁴ is a key category in developing a biblical hermeneutics of liberation.” Within this struggle exist tension between classes. This class struggle exists to “harmonize the contradictions inherent in the works and events or to highlight them with a view toward allowing social class choices in their appropriation” (Mosala 1989:32).

Another reason cited by Mosala in the development of a biblical hermeneutic of liberation is the uncritical approach of a cultural worker⁴⁵ to a given text or set of text. An uncritical approach to various themes such as the Exodus, the prophetic and the Jesus traditions is to “enlists the rhetorical structures that inhere in and circumscribe those themes – and which have an inbuilt proclivity to produce politically undesirable effects – on the side of the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed” (Mosala 1989:33). The uncritical approach blindly overlooks the colonized and colonizers and fails to detect the oppressors and oppression that might be lurking in the text.

Mosala also includes a historical-critical exegesis of the text in order to develop a sound biblical hermeneutic of struggle⁴⁶. The ongoing social struggle demands that this form of exegesis be the starting point in an approach to a text. This leads

⁴⁴ Mosala (1989:32) states: “My fundamental objection to the biblical hermeneutics of black theology is that not only does it suffer from an ‘unstructural understanding of the Bible,’ but – both as a consequence and as a reason – it also suffers from an unstructural understanding of the black experience and struggle.”

⁴⁵ Eagleton lists three tasks of a revolutionary cultural worker. These are: ‘1) participate in the production of works and events, thereby intending those effects commensurate with the victory of socialism; 2) function as a critic, exposing the rhetorical structures of works and combating whatever deceptions are intended through them; 3) interpret works and events ‘against the grain’” (Mosala 1989:32).

⁴⁶ West characterizes Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu as proponents of a hermeneutics of trust. West (2000:144) describes how the Bible is viewed in a hermeneutic of trust: “[T]he Bible is considered to be a primary source of Black Theology...[and] the Bible is perceived to be primarily on the side of the black struggle for liberation and life in South Africa.”

naturally to the formulation of questions of the text such as: “what are the social, cultural, class, gender, and racial issues at work in this text? what is the ideological-spiritual agenda of the text, that is, how does the text itself seek to be understood” (Mosala 1989:35)?⁴⁷ This indicates that the writer build in to the text various rhetorical features that must be investigated if the historical meaning for the recipients of the text is to be recognized. For a proper social application to be constructed, the investigation of these questions is imperative.

Mosala was writing during a tumultuous time in South Africa. Many changes had taken place and the blacks of South Africa were again being sidelined in their role in society and government. This intentional neglect led to an increase of violence and unrest within the country. These socio-political⁴⁸ factors led Mosala to utilize language of his day. Frick (1991:233) comments: “For Mosala, the key word in biblical hermeneutics is the word *struggle*.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Mosala (1991:233) asks a probing question in understanding the social struggle for biblical hermeneutics: “What is the ideological-spiritual agenda of the text, that is, how does the text itself seek to be understood?” This statement seems to suggest that the text has an inherent will of its own. It has a desire to be understood and applied in its own way. Where does this will/desire originate? The writer made a decision in writing in a particular way/style and the readers throughout generations have likewise taken sides on the meaning and application of texts.

⁴⁸ In July 1984 was the final sitting of an all white parliament in South Africa. The tricameral system of government was introduced. The objective of this system “was to ‘accommodate the coloured people and Indians without detracting from the self-determination of the whites’” (Oakes 1988:467). The majority African voice was not given a place in the new legislative construction. Oakes (1988:466) reiterates: “[T]he apartheid master plan had already decided that their political rights could be legally expressed only through the ‘homeland’ to which they could be ethnically linked.” The exclusion of Africans in the decision-making process erupted into an era of violence not seen since the days of June 1976. The violence escalated until a state of emergency was announce by P.W. Botha (Executive State President) in July 1985. Winnie Mandela announced, “the time for speeches and debate has come to an end” (Oakes 1988:480). She proclaimed that the year 1986 would be the “liberation of the oppressed masses of this country. We work in the white man’s kitchen. We bring up the white man’s children. We could have killed them at any time we wanted to. Together, hand-in-hand with our sticks and our matches, with our necklaces, we shall liberate this country” (Oakes 1988:480). It was out of this environment, the place of reading for Mosala, that the language of struggle can be understood in his biblical hermeneutics.

⁴⁹ Frick (1991:238 italics MB) concludes his article by quoting Mosala: “The Bible is the product, the record, the site, and the *weapon* of class, cultural, gender, and racial *struggles*...Once more, the simple truth rings out that the poor and exploited must liberate the Bible so that the Bible may liberate them.”

He continues by emphasizing the ‘decoding’ of the text and the ‘encoded’ struggles within groups and positions of these groups in society. This struggle is seen as the force behind the written text. After this ‘decoding-encoding’ process is reckoned with, “the biblical interpreter must take sides in the struggle” (Frick 1991:233). Mosala is advocating that the text reader must be aware of the decision that he or she is making as they interact with the text.

Dube addresses inculturation hermeneutics that was embraced by scholars in an attempt to hold in tension their Christianity and identity as Africans. She (2002:51) states: “Inculturation followed or even started during colonial times. It sought to resist the colonial reading/interpretations that began by dismissing all aspects of African Religions as pagan, exotic, savage, ungodly, childish and dangerous. The proponents of inculturation sought to resist this colonizing missionary⁵⁰ approach by adopting different strategies of reading towards the Bible and African Religions/cultures.” This hermeneutical method had as its focus decolonization and liberation. She also classifies this approach to inculturation as ‘inculturation from above.’

Dube continues by discussing a much older approach to inculturation, which began with the African Initiated Churches (AICs). Inculturation from below sought open rebellion against the government as well as refusal to continue with missio-

⁵⁰ Boone (2007:4) states: “The early missionaries understood conversion to Christianity among Africans in a very Western way. If an African came to church with Bible in hand, wearing Western clothes and participated in Christian worship practices they were assumed to be born again and baptized, becoming a member of that church. But in reality the majority of these people heard the missionary’s presentation of the gospel, but due to the language barrier, the message was often misunderstood.” Schwartz (1989:5) recounts an incident at the International Conference of Lausanne ’74: “Sir, what you have said about conversion deeply moves me, because I must confess, I have not been converted that way. My deeper African values have not been changed. I have merely become an imitation European on the outside. I have not learned to listen to the Holy Spirit, but I have been trained to listen very carefully to what the missionary wants.”

nary churches. Another characterization of inculturation from below was “an articulation of black theology that critiqued white images of Christ and held that Christ and his disciples were black” (Dube 2002:52). Inculturation from below lent itself to a syncretization⁵¹ of the gospel within the African liberation context. Dube (2002:53) states: “Inculturation from below adopted a radical and nonapologetic hybridity as a stance of resistance and continues to hold this stance.”

Dube places her hermeneutical approach to biblical interpretation in the inculturation from below category. She argues that colonialism, and imperialism, depend upon the suppression of canons of other traditions. For this reason alone biblical hermeneutics, by necessity of diversity, must become ‘multicultural.’ She (2002:54, 55) comments: “I have repeatedly argued that current feminist biblical practice is working within a colonizing framework because of its lack of attention to religious diversity or acknowledgment of how the Bible has functioned as a tool of suppressing other cultures.” The multicultural aspect, according to Dube, is for the oral and written canons of various cultures to be given a hearing. This will allow for diversity within biblical criticism and allow the Bible to function in the role of cultural liberation.

2.2.6 – North American Anti-populist

All of the aforementioned voices are in unison in regards to interpreting the biblical texts from a non-traditional hermeneutical perspective. At this juncture, a voice that contributes another anti-populist view on the matter of biblical interpretation

⁵¹ Syncretism, as defined by *Websters New World College Dictionary 4th ed page 1452*, is “a combination, reconciliation, or coalescence of varying, often mutually opposed beliefs, principles, or practices, esp. those of various religions into a new conglomerate whole typically marked by internal inconsistencies.”

will be injected into the conversation. This voice comes from R. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, USA.

Mohler suggests that, in regards to truth, people are expecting to be lied to. This ethos of dishonesty is a result of misleading advertisements from the media as well as cultural leaders. Mohler (2005:54) quotes Barnes, a Sociologist, “that people have grown so accustomed to untruth that many postmodernists now claim that lies are actually ‘meaningful data in their own right.’” It would appear that this ‘ideology’ of being intentionally lied to, has crept into the abovementioned writers’ ethos as applicable to biblical studies.

Mohler continues by tracing a brief history of how truth could be known by rationalists, empiricists and science. He (2005:55) states:

In the background to all this, of course, were those whom Paul Ricouer called the ‘high priests and prophets of the hermeneutics of suspicion.’ Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, and their heirs intentionally attacked the reigning truth claims of the day in an effort to subvert them, transform them, and ultimately replace them with a very different understanding of reality.

The phrase ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’⁵² has become the standardized approach with some biblical scholars when a reader engages the biblical text. Mohler admo-

⁵² Dever, (2001:x, 128) a self defined secular humanist who converted to Judaism during the mid 1970s, states: “How is it that the biblical texts are always approached with postmodernism’s typical ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’ but the nonbiblical texts are taken at face value? It seems to be that the Bible is automatically held guilty unless proven innocent.”

nishes the reader not to dismiss this idea but it should raise concern not only for the academic and elite guard but also the non-academic Bible reader as well.

The feminist's voice declared that the text must be deconstructed of oppressive meanings and then reconstructed with social and justice issues as the driving force behind biblical interpretation. Mohler states that the deconstruction of the truth is one of many challenges facing the church today. Truth, in the mind of postmodernism, is not objective and certainly not absolute. Mohler (2005:58) continues: "Instead, postmodernists argue that truth is socially constructed, plural, and inaccessible to universal reason, which itself does not exist anyway." Those who approach the Bible as deconstructionists understand the truth as social construct. Truth in actual fact comes via social groups with the intent of serving their own interests. For Mohler (2005:59) truth historically "understood and affirmed...argue these postmodernists, is really nothing more than a convenient structure of thought intended to oppress the powerless."

The aforementioned writers also suggested that one should not accept the Bible as the Word of God uncritically. This logically leads one to accept the notion that granting meaning and authorship to a text is fallacy. Mohler describes this worldview as *the demise of the text*. He states that in the eyes of those who view the text in this way reject the meta-narratives as dead and thus implies that the texts behind these meta-narratives are dead as well. Mohler (2005:60) continues: "According to their thought, it is the reader of a text who establishes meaning, and there are no controls to limit the interpretation a reader might give." The only limitation is one's imagination, that has been shaped by their experiences, and with-

out this being grounded in the character of God, theology is destined to become shipwrecked – devoid of a central truth and ethical grounding.

Mohler (2005:67) concludes: “We are faced today with two trajectories for the future of evangelical theology, two paradigms of truth and theology, two competing apologetics, two readings of evangelical history, two (or at least two) definitions of evangelical identity, and two models for engaging the culture.” The question the evangelical community must ask is what evangelical theology will be handed to the next generation? To engage the current culture suggests that the worldview of the age must be engaged. One way of engaging current culture is to understand the church as “the product of the divine revelation, and not the producer of the divine revelation” (Mohler 2005:70). This could lead to a renaissance in ecclesiology.

2.3 - Utilization of Ideological Criticism

The Masoretic text (Mt) of the Hebrew scriptures will be viewed synchronically. Synchronic is understood as the ‘final form’ of a text under review. Saussure, a Swiss linguist, analyzed language as a system in a synchronic way. Synchronic linguistics is the study of language at a given moment in history. This approach to language is in contrast to diachronic linguistics, which is the study of the changing state of a language over time.

Barr suggests that it is possible to view the Mt in a synchronic way. He (1995:4) states: “The Masoretic text does not give us direct and precise access to any one

synchronic state of ancient Hebrew. The materials lie in layers which represent differing states of analysis and registration over a long time.” In viewing the Mt as a ‘final form’ representation, it is imperative that the interpreter realize that this preserved form is a compilation over an extended period of time.

The goal of utilizing the Mt is for exegetical purposes. In so doing, Barr suggests two trains of thought in which the exegete may approach the Mt for these purposes. The interpreter can ignore the historical circumstances in which the text was composed and disregard the motivation of the writer or writers for creating the text in a given form. Barr (1995:9) emphasizes: “The text itself, and not the background or mode of its origin, should be central to exegesis.” Another approach to exegesis could be the realization that two or more sources were combined to produce the final format of the text. Barr (1995:9) continues: “In this case the idea of synchronic exegesis is that only the final text matters and that the existence of previous versions is irrelevant.”

The approach that will be adhered to in this research is the second approach to exegesis that Barr explains. The awareness of the historical situation in which the text was composed and addressed is of importance when attempting to understand the motive for writing a text and the utilization of specific words or phrases and the addressees. It is also of importance to focus on the final form in which a text has been handed down. To speculate on what source or sources a text could have been composed of could easily become an exercise in futility. Accepting a text in its final form can also have the effect of a text being the inspired form from which matters of faith and practice are to be extracted.

The text to be considered will not be viewed with 'suspicion' as understood from a hermeneutic of suspicion ideology. What will be considered will be the way in which texts have traditionally been interpreted. The hermeneutic of suspicion will be applied to the interpretation of texts and not the texts themselves. The Church on occasion has employed interpretations of texts in order to continue a system of oppression. A prime example used was the interpretation the colonial church in America applied to Genesis 9:25-27 to justify the enslavement of Africans. (This was also true within the South African context.) The idea of infallibility as interpreted by fundamentalists needs to be revisited. Since infallibility suggests not being able to mislead, then there exists interpretations of scripture that need to be re-interpreted or deconstructed in light of ideological criticism's watchful eye.

A strength of ideological criticism is its focus on the reader of a text. The reader or interpreter of a text must be aware of his or her biases and social conditioning before embarking upon textual criticism. This methodology directs a person to examine their past with a hope of engaging biased interpretation. One should also be aware that an unbiased approach to interpretation is impossible. The best an interpreter can accomplish is to have a self-awareness of the environmental and social factors in which he or she was formed. This will alleviate much animosity created by an individual who refuses to scrutinize their traditionally biased interpretations.

All of the ideological critics considered brought to light specific issues and injustices that adversely affect their particular area of emphasis. It would serve the evangelical church well to consider the issues being raised by these ideological critics.

Feminist critics, womanist critics, Slaveology critics, Native American critics, Black Theologians, Liberation Theologians, etc., are all attempting to shed light on issues the evangelical church has neglected or simply viewed as not the most pressing issue of concern. Evangelicals have taken the position of bringing a person to Christ and afterwards initiating change or anticipating change would occur when a person became a loyal follower of the teachings of Christ. Evidently, this has not been adequate for solving the greater problems of society.

Imagination⁵³ will be utilized to envision a world the writer might have had in mind when writing a text. In the words of Vanhoozer (2005:121), “Narratives do more than convey propositions; they configure the past in a certain way and say, ‘look at the world like this.’” When imagination is invoked, it will be understood that the author of a text is wanting the readers and audience to see the world in a certain way. Chapter six will allow for the imagination to project a particular view of the world. This chapter will configure a theology of transformation from a theological-ethical interpretation of Leviticus 19. Social transformation or development will not be the thrust of this chapter but imagining an alternative society taking root in the existing social structure. Vanhoozer (2005:122) states: “Scripture summons the intellect to accept its rendering of reality, but it also summons the imagination to see, feel, and taste the goodness of God.” The devising of a theology of transformation will focus the imagination to experience the goodness of God through the formation of an alternative society.

⁵³ Haney (1998:26) states: “Jesus envisioned a society in which the power hierarchies and social barriers of his day would be ended, a society in which the poor and marginalized and despised have food, power, and dignity and are no longer outcast. He envisioned a society of health, a society in which all of us love God from our hearts and love our neighbors as we love ourselves (and we are learning to love ourselves) and in which we live mercifully, gracefully, with one another.”

Haney, a feminist, adds an interesting insight on the use of imagination in understanding women of the early church. Haney (1998:51) states that “immersion within goddess-constructed reality can put us imaginatively in touch with the women of the early church, as well as with the people Israel conquered.” She suggests that this type of imaginative utilization can assist in recovering more of one’s past. Haney (1998:52) continues: “This kind of imaginative reconstruction of our past helps us to claim our whole past—its ambiguity and complexity—or at least more of it than we have been given by the fathers.”

What is to become of the interpretive community?⁵⁴ Will it have any input in the interpretive process? At the risk of being misunderstood, the interpretive community has a tremendous task in this process. The receptive community has the responsibility to implement the application of a text in its cultural setting. Vanhoozer (2005:122) clarifies this role: “The theological interpreter inhabits the world of the biblical text – not some cleverly devised modern or postmodern myths, but true myth, myth become redemptive history, myth become – dare I say it? – fact.” Viewing the text synchronically, allows the community to understand the text as true myth which will allow them to find 21st century application from the scripture.

2.3.1 – *Excursus* – Douglas’ Ring Composition as a function of socio-rhetorical interpretation

Ring composition will be applied to the text as an interpretive methodology in an attempt to disclose a possible ideology espoused by the writer of Leviticus 19. The

⁵⁴ Harrington (1996:229) states, “the way in which a worship community resolves the ambiguities of Scripture reveals its own identity. A community’s biases, culture and traditions often find expression between the lines of Scripture.”

argument will be put forth that the thrust of this chapter in Leviticus is not exclusively holiness, but loving one's neighbor or an emigrant/immigrant through deeds performed on his or her behalf – initiating one's journey towards holiness. It will be demonstrated that the writer could have possibly employed this ancient rhetorical device to place implicit emphasis (rhetorical clues that were evident to the recipients) on loving the 'other' while explicitly accentuating personal holiness – based on the example that YHWH is holy. This argument echoes the words of Robbins' (1996:1) discussion of socio-rhetorical criticism: "Rhetorical analysis and interpretation give special attention to the subjects and topics a text uses to present thought, speech, stories, and arguments." The application of ring composition will give modern readers an alternative implication for belief and practice as was possibly evident to the original audience. The use of ring composition will also create a new convention for the modern reader as the author could have been attempting to establish distinct traditions for the original recipients. The use of ring composition will allow the modern reader to have the opportunity to imagine a wealth of applications for this passage.

The function of ring composition will be to unravel multifaceted layers of textual criticism. This rhetorical device will guide the interpreter to see the societal structure as well as the ideas/beliefs of the writer. Robbins (1996) describes five textures in a text: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture. Ring composition as a rhetorical device acknowledges these textures in chapter 19 of Leviticus.

Robbins (1996:7) describes inner texture as “features in language of the text itself, like repetition of words and use of dialogue between two persons to communicate the information.” Ring composition accentuates this aspect by its use of parallelisms. This rhetorical device confines the multiple meanings of words and phrases (Douglas 2007:14). Douglas (2007:22, 92) states: “In ring composition repetitions are markers of structure. These repeated answers have made a parallelism...The repeated double emphasis...tells the reader to anticipate the...outcome...And remember that we are not interested in thematic correspondences unless verbal indicators support them in both of the paired sections, and remember that it is word clusters that count, not isolated words.” The purpose of inner texture according to Robbins (1996:7) “is to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context for meanings and meaning-effects.” For Douglas, this is what gives a well constructed ring composition its verification. She (2007:27) continues: “The elaboration is not just for fun; it is the way to say that something is important, something serious needs to be said, there is a message that must be heard.”

As the argument will proceed that loving the neighbor or emigrant/immigrant is an equal focus of Leviticus 19 as holiness; ring composition gives the reader a clue as to why this conjecture can be made. Douglas (2007:109) states: “The mid turn is the ‘central place’...All the meaning is to be found there.” It will be argued that chapter 19 is a double ‘micro-ring’ construction. Verses 17 and 34 comprise the mid turns of the two rings. Douglas suggests that the mid turn is where the meaning of the text is to be found. If this is the case, then the intended meaning of the

text in the mind or imagination of the writer was for the assembly of Israel to love the neighbor and the emigrant/immigrant as they love themselves.

Robbins acknowledges that inner texture needs to be ‘supplemented’ in order to ascertain the full meaning of a given text. Because of this he addresses other aspects of texture. Robbins (1996:3) states: “Intertexture concerns a text’s configuration of phenomena that lie outside the text.” This aspect of socio-rhetorical criticism is attentive to material that is found ‘outside’ of the text. Inner texture utilizes language that exists in another text and recontextualizes this material. Robbins (1996:48) declares “recontextualization presents wording from biblical texts without explicit statement or implication that the words ‘stand written’ anywhere else.” For instance, all of the 10 commandments are either quoted or alluded to indirectly. The author of Leviticus 19 utilizes these familiar statements to hone the audiences’ attention and sentiment toward the mid turn which culminate in deeds done as an expression of love for the ‘other.’ The motivational clause, that is repeated 16 times, ‘I am the Lord (your God),’ serves as the central tenant for the religious and ethical behavior of the congregation of Israel.

It is possible, if the reader or interpreter accepts a late (post-exilic) writing of the text, to grasp the rationale behind the writer employing an obsolete rhetorical style. By suggesting that YHWH spoke directly to Moses and by the employment of the phrase ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,’ or ‘for you were aliens in the land of Egypt,’ these serve as a reconfiguring or recontextualization of this body of material as originating from the time of Moses. These words and phrases would serve as an ‘echo’ which “evokes, or potentially

evokes, a concept from cultural tradition” (Robbins 1996:60). This would assist the writer to participate in what Robbins (1996:48) states as “attributed speech.” Ring composition would, as Robbins (1996:50) continues, reconfigure “a situation in a manner that makes the later event ‘new’ in relation to a previous event.” The use of the phrase ‘sons of Israel’ is only found in chapter 19 of the Holiness Code. The application of this phrase would signal for the Israelites the delivery of the commandments to the congregation by Moses at Mount Sinai. The utilization of this phrase would also serve to recreate a nostalgic setting for a covenant renewal ceremony.

Another textural layer that is contained within a text is the social and cultural texture. Robbins (1996:3) states: “Social and cultural texture...concerns the capacities of the text to support social reform, withdrawal, or opposition and to evoke cultural perceptions of dominance, subordination, difference, or exclusion.” The hallmark of ring composition is parallelism. This rhetorical device unravels several important components of the Israeli social and cultural practices. When the two ring format is presented, a number of ethical topics rise to the surface. Robbins (1996:71) affirms: “Specific topics in the text reveal the religious responses to the world in its discourse.” The implementation of ring composition with its unique accentuation within parallelism supports a variety of social reforms that entreat religious responses. For instance, the first ring (verses 2-25, 31) enunciates holiness, offerings and gleaning issues. The parallelism features holiness as a characteristic of both people and produce. The highlighting of offerings through parallelism, emphasizes the procedure by which the worshiper will be accepted and atonement procured through an offering guarantees a person’s acceptability be-

fore YHWH. The areas of reaping and sowing reveals that certain procedures must be carried out to ensure the holiness of God. The second ring (verses 26-30, 32-37) illustrates similar religious and social responses in the realm of keeping (Sabbaths and ordinances), and respect and dignity to be shown to a variety of relations in society (daughters, emigrant/immigrant, aged, old and business dealings).

A fourth texture to be acknowledged by ring composition is ideological texture. Robbins (1996:4) states that ideological texture “extends beyond social and cultural location into particular ways in which people advance their own interest and well-being through action, emotion, and thought.” The revelation that comes to the forefront through ring composition is the interrelatedness of holiness and love. For a person to be holy as YHWH is holy, specified deeds must be done. When a person performs these deeds for those around him or her, neighbor or emigrant/immigrant, this jumpstarts the individual down the road of holiness. Since the mid turn of the ring composition is where all the meaning is to be found, then the ideology of the writer is to be found in this location as well. This would indicate that love is the overarching ideology which the writer is attempting to convey to the recipients and the ancient text, through ring composition, is still endeavoring to communicate to the modern reader.

The final texture of a text described by Robbins is sacred texture. This is the search for the divine in any given text. Since the Bible is ascribed as being a book about the divine, seeking the divine in a text must be an objective in the interpreter’s mind as he or she approaches a text. Douglas (2007:36) declares the prolo-

gue “states the theme and introduces the main characters...It tells of a dilemma that has to be faced, a command to be obeyed, or a doubt to be allayed.” The writer of Leviticus pronounces in the beginning of the covenant renewal ceremony the aim of this renewal is to imitate God (*imitatio dei*). They are initially given a list of commands that will evidence this imitation of the divine. Robbins (1996:120) states: “Describing the nature of God can be a first step toward analyzing and interpreting the sacred texture of a text.” The writer of chapter 19 sets about emphasizing the essence or quality that belongs to God – holiness.

Robbins (1996:127) affirms another aspect of sacred texture through the “formation and nurturing of religious community. In other words, human commitment regularly is not simply an individual matter but a matter of participating with other people in activities that nurture and fulfill commitment to divine ways.” Ring composition accentuates this aspect of sacred texture through the use of parallelism that gives the writer “opportunities of taking the text to deeper levels of analogy” (Douglas 2007:36). This is demonstrated by the admonition for the assembly of Israel to *imitatio dei*, the praxis oriented ways that offerings are to be handled and by sowing and reaping one’s field in particular ways. This is also demonstrated through the interchanging use of the 2mp and 2ms. Some of the stipulations are directed to the entire assembly (2mp) while others are aimed at individuals (2ms) within the assembly. Robbins (1996:130) states: “As an interpreter works carefully with the nature of language itself in a text, with the relation of a text to other texts, and with the material, social, cultural and ideological nature of life, a thick description of the sacred texture of a text emerges.”

2.4 – Summary

America has been attempting social transformation and development since the end of the Civil War in 1865. Mindsets and attitudes are still rigidly set in pre-Civil Rights molds. Having been a part of a multi-racial Pastor's group in North Carolina, the researcher heard first-hand that these demons of supremacy and racism – dare to suggest, Xenophobia – are still alive and well. What is needed? Transformation of education, affirmative action, integration, government intervention, all have fallen short of their targeted goals. For true transformation to occur, there must be an ethos change. The fundamental characteristics and distinguishing attitudes, habits and beliefs of American society must change. This will include more than just social transformation and development. These two components will get society started down the road to transformation, but they, or at least thus far in American history, will not bring about the necessary desired social change. For instance, when a female Jamaican American, who has attained the academic credentials to gain admission to a prestigious American university, but is advised by an academic counselor to pursue a less 'taxing' degree. This advice was given due to the prevailing attitude that 'black' Americans are unable to cope with the demands of a particular professional degree program. This current attitude signals that social transformation has failed and calls for an ethos change within all aspects of society.

Ideological criticism will be the guide to extract a theology of transformation that will impact and challenge the prevailing societal ethos of a nation. The inclusion of a multicultural approach to biblical interpretation will help to transform the preva-

lent ethos. It has been suggested that the integration of primarily white theological training institutions would bring to the surface the predominate ethos of a particular region or province or nation. This approach would allow the Bible to have a role in liberating inhabitants of the land from an oppressive national ethos. It would also allow for dialogue and understanding between those who experience marginalization from a dominant culture. The inclusion of more women would also allow for conversation on the role of women in theology and society as a whole.

The research in this chapter began by examining two factors that have shaped the way the researcher views the world and the way in which he reads the Bible. His worldview has been shaped by the phrase 'separate but equal.' This phrase contains, for him, the ideology of superiority/inferiority among people groups. The ideology of segregation holds within its grasps the notion of supremacy and dominance. A self-awareness of the embedded worldview of segregation is of primary importance as he approaches a text with the idea of allowing the Bible to be a liberating force.

The SBC has been the primary religious force in determining how the researcher reads and interprets the Bible. It has had a history of endorsing slavery and white supremacy. Some of its leaders continue to use public rhetoric to express a doctrine of white supremacy in or at denominational gatherings. These sorts of ideologies contain the oppressive attitudes that have characterized America since its inception as a British colony and are long from being exorcised from the fabric of American society.

All this being said, it is imperative that the researcher has a continual awareness of the influences these two factors exert upon his worldview and ideology. It is of utmost importance to realize that these factors have predisposed him to think and respond/react in a certain way to specific individuals and under specific circumstances. As he begins to excavate the text, it will be necessary to recognize where his ideology begins and the ideology of the text starts. The desire is for the text to serve as a liberating force to those who cannot give a voice to their oppressive circumstances. The present day application needs to attend to the injustices and domination that have existed. The way in which countries, governments or religious institutions have utilized the Bible as a weapon of oppression needs to be the primary objective of the biblical interpreter for releasing the captives.

Looking at ideological criticism we heard from many different voices addressing this issue. The use of ideological criticism helps the critic determine factors that condition a reader to read a text the way he or she does. Ideological criticism is most concerned with the reader response to a text. For ethical applications of texts it is of the utmost importance for the reader to be aware of his or her predispositions as they approach a text. What is happening is two distinct ideologies are converging as a text is read. The ideology of the writer as expressed in the written text and the ideology the reader brings with him or her form a confluence of meaning. The function of ideological criticism is to decipher the writer's ideology and the reader must have an understanding of his or her own ideology simultaneously. In this process, detection is the key element in the pragmatic role of ideological criticism.

The primary concern of the feminist critic is the removal of the androcentric language of biblical interpretation. Masculine supremacy is viewed as socially constructed – instead of being innate. The feminist critic is concerned with contextualizing women's issues amid embedded structures of dominance. The critical investigation of the Bible has as its objective to articulate feminist's issues. This approach to biblical criticism is viewed as less ideological than other approaches because it states at the onset that it is not value free but has the feminist agenda as its value and approach.

The use of the imagination grounded in the character of God is appealing and refreshing in this sea of ideological criticism. Ideological critics place the crux of their discussion on the reader and the humanistic construction of the text. The use of the imagination is appealing in that it allows the reader to consider the writer's intent on envisioning a different world of reality. Instead of insisting on the idea that the writer of a text was imposing a particular ideology of power, it is possible to imagine a society based upon justice and equality. As it is possible to think that God utilized imagination in creating the world, it is also possible to think that writers of texts utilized their imagination in constructing a world much different than what was realized. This imaginative process of the writer can be viewed in their understanding of the character of God as they understood it.

The discussion then focused on two North American liberation theologians. Slave ideology was the first liberation hermeneutic that was viewed. This ideology is deep-seated in the psyches of white Southerners. This ideology permeated all aspects of American society, even the Christian sector. The Bible was used as a

weapon to demoralize the black race. This served as a 'dummy' (pacifier) to the Christian population in that they were able to view the black race as sub-human, even denying their humanity to justify the slave trade. In this regard, the Church became an accomplice of evil in the slavery issue. The disregard for and the perpetuation of human rights violations characterized the unwillingness of Christians to accept their responsibility in the oppression of blacks through the slave trade.

The Native American liberation theologian relates to the conquered indigenous people when reading a text. This being the case, utilizing the Exodus story as a means by which to think about liberation for the Native American is not the path to tread. This reality reiterates again that a reader must be cognizant of the view of the colonized people. If the critic is unaware of the point of view of the colonized, or indigenous people, the same oppressive ideologies will become a part of the psyche of the next generation. This view of the text gives a skewed view of God. If the oppressive and exploitative nature of the text remains, the god represented in the text remains also.

It is appropriate, since the researcher is writing this document on African (South African) soil, to 'hear' from African liberation theologians. A concern expressed by these African 'voices' is that biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) is not being contextualized by African students upon graduating from institutions of higher learning. This causes these theological graduates to be irrelevant to the African context in which they live. This is resultant from the fact that African students desiring degrees from Western-oriented institutions must play the academic 'game' in order to

receive recognition from these institutions. The trained African scholar, instead of contextualizing the biblical texts, simply resonates Western scholarship.

The Bible has been viewed in both a positive and negative light in regards to its liberative potential in the African context. The Bible is emphasized as the word of God in a positive understanding. The way the Bible has been used to oppress Africans is strongly affirmed as well. The Bible is also viewed as having the ability to transform and offers hope through its liberative power. The Bible is viewed negatively in that it proved impotent during the struggle for liberation in South Africa. This is due primarily to the fact that the churches were inactive or did not involve themselves politically during this struggle. Because of this inactivity the Bible lost its potential to be a liberating force.

It appears that what is being advocated by black theologians is a new hermeneutical approach to biblical interpretation. This is due to the fact that the current process is biased toward the colonizer in its application of the text. The blinders⁵⁵ will need to be removed in order for a broader understanding of how the 'language' of the text is 'heard' by those reading from a marginalized perspective. For this to be solidified in the thinking and application by un-marginalized Bible scholars, dialogue with the marginalized must take place. This dialogue will need to empower class, gender and others to be able to express how they are affected by the past and present application of the biblical texts. It has been a struggle for young seminary students from disadvantaged backgrounds to disclose how they 'hear' not only texts but also articles that have a 'colonized' slant. These students

⁵⁵ Blinders are defined as "two flaps on a bridle that keep the horse from seeing to the sides, esp. as worn by a racehorse that tends to shy" (Websters New World College Dictionary 4th ed., p. 155 under *blinker n. 2a*).

either are non-responsive or they overreact and thus lose credibility with their advantaged background peers. Is this an indication that disadvantaged background students have not been sufficiently empowered with the tools to vocalize their personal theological struggle, as well as being able with freedom to express these struggles in an academic setting among an ethnically diverse group?

The impression that stays with the researcher is that everyone is shaped and directed by their individual ideologies. These ideologies are also what define the world for all. When these are being threatened or in peril of being taken away we cling to them and defend them to the death. An awareness of these is of utmost importance. Also, an understanding of how oppressive societal or religious applications affect the marginalized is of great importance. We need to begin to hear how others are hearing and interpreting events in society. In some way we need to, especially the Church, give a voice to the marginalized in society.

A brief overview was presented of how ring composition acknowledges the five textures within socio-rhetorical interpretation. It will be argued that the implementation of ring composition by the author of Leviticus 19 was to emphasize loving one's neighbor and the emigrant/immigrant which sets an individual out upon the road of holiness. The use of parallelisms in ring composition accentuates the reality of the mid turn by confining the meaning of words and creates an atmosphere of anticipation of what ideological stance the writer was trying to design. The use of ring composition exhibits a praxis oriented ethical and religious focus of Leviticus 19. It outlines what is expected of a 'son' of Israel in his or her relationship to YHWH or neighbor or emigrant/immigrant.

The researcher is also struck by the fact of how male and white many of the social constructs of society are based. This gives rise not only to recognition of biases toward ethnic groups but also gender biases need to be examined. The empowering of ethnic and gender groups will be an added threat to the white male ego (ideology). What need we have of humbly admitting our supremacy attitudes and adopting a stance of giving opportunities to those groups that have been squashed by White Supremacy?

In chapter three attention will be given to the text of Leviticus 19 from the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible. A literal translation will be offered of the text and an explanation that falls within the segmented *inclusios*. The text will be viewed synchronically and a historical setting for the writing of Leviticus will be given as well.