The Semantics of Lexemes in the Hebrew Psalter

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The Semantics of יאו̓ד Lexemes in the Hebrew Psalter

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Aberdeen

Rev. Michael D. Rasmussen
2011
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Psalms containing lexemes derived from the Hebrew root \( צרר \) (to bind, be in distress) are studied in order to reveal a previously-unnoticed generic subgroup in the Psalter. Chapter 1 discusses methodology, particularly with respect to the structural and cognitive linguistic principles used throughout the study. Part of chapter 1 discusses the concept of “genre,” incorporating both Louis Hjelmslev’s mid-20th century discussion of genre as a multi-axis matrix, as well as drawing upon recent applications of prototype and fuzzy set theory to the definition of the term “genre.” Chapter 2 determines which psalms will be the subject of the study. Since the Hebrew Psalter contains both \( צרר \) lexemes as well as lexemes derived from the homonym \( צרר \) (to be hostile, be an enemy), chapter 2 investigates translational patterns in ancient versions as well as elements of Hebrew grammar and syntax in order to separate instances of these two roots. The core of the study (chapters 3 through 5) conducts a two-fold investigation of psalms that include \( צרר \) lexemes, with respect to these psalms’ uniqueness in the Psalter. First, the structural linguistic principles of paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis are applied to psalm texts as wholes, resulting in a set of syntagms that only appear in psalms that include \( צרר \) lexemes. Second, these syntagms are classified using principles from the field of cognitive semantics. The result is a set of three cognitive domains (given the domain names [POWERLESSNESS], [PALPABLE THREAT], and [ENTREATY]) which are relatively unique to psalms that include \( צרר \) lexemes, and which are part of the cognitive profile of distress in the Psalter. In this way, a given psalm can be understood as displaying more than one generic identity, so that psalms which are dissimilar vis-à-vis traditional form-critical classifications are seen to be nonetheless similar with respect to distress. Chapters 6 and 7 round out the cognitive profile of distress with an analysis of two more salient domains (given the domain names [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE], and [GUILTY?] which, although being necessary components of the profile, are not unique to distress psalms. Chapter 7 studies \( צרר \) lexemes with respect to the overall editing of the Hebrew Psalter, leading to a conclusion that after the Babylonian exile, distress was more strongly associated with divine discipline and displeasure; whereas before the exile it was more associated with declarations of innocence. Chapter 8 conducts an exegetical and cognitive semantic analysis of Psalm 107, which contains more \( צרר \) lexemes than any other psalm. This psalm is investigated as a test case and exemplar of the cognitive profile that has been uncovered in the prior chapters. The final chapter draws conclusions with respect to the generic identity of distress psalms.
Acknowledgements

It is entirely appropriate to begin these acknowledgements with a hearty thank you to Dr. Jamie Grant, my doctoral supervisor. Not only has Jamie ably fulfilled the role of supervisor, but he has also functioned as a pastor, with his constant display of care and concern. Thank you, Jamie, for being both academically excellent, and for shepherding me through this arduous process. I am also thankful to Peter MacKenzie, my roommate while I was living in Scotland during the early phase of this work. Peter helped to make this time of separation from my wife and family more bearable through his hilarious sense of humour and constant display of Christian love. I also wish to thank all of the staff and faculty at Highland Theological College. Highland is a warm and friendly Christian community, showing kindness to the sojourners in their midst. Thank you also to Prof. Joachim Schaper at the University of Aberdeen for reading this work and providing helpful feedback. I am also grateful to the staff at the Pitts Theological Library at Emory University for helping me to track down volumes in their cavernous facility. I am also thankful to the linguist, Leonard Talmy, for his helpful explanation of how language expresses ideas of force and motion, two concepts which are particularly important in chapters 3, 4, and 8 of this dissertation.

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Mike Rasmussen
Redeemer Theological Seminary, Dallas TX, March, 2011
## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ANE</td>
<td>ancient Near East</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Authorized (King James) Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>before the Common Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU</td>
<td>Die Bibel Einheitsübersetzung (German version of the Bible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELB</td>
<td>Revidierte Elberfelder (German version of the Bible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td>The Holy Bible, English Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Individual Lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Individual Thanksgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint (A. Rahlfs, ed.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>The New American Standard Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKJV</td>
<td>New King James Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>Revidierte Schlachter-Bibel (German version of the Bible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPCK</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge</td>
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Introduction

The Hebrew Psalter often uses words derived from the root צרר (to be cramped, restricted, hampered) to reference troubling situations and people’s worried reactions to such situations. This dissertation will study the environments in which these צרר lexemes occur in the Psalter, in pursuit of a twofold purpose: The first purpose is to gain an increased understanding of the Psalter’s צרר lexemes from a cognitive semantic point of view. The second purpose is to gain an increased understanding of psalm genres based on a collection of similarities among psalms that contain צרר lexemes. Psalm 31:10 provides a typical example of syntagms that include this type of language:

Ps 31:10 המהוה ילה נצר
Be gracious to me, Yahweh, for I am in distress.

From a diachronic perspective, such expressions of distress constitute a figurative usage of the צרר semantic range, similar to the English word “anxiety,” the German Angst, Greek ἀγχος and Latin angere. The etymologies of all of these words relate to spatial restriction, to feeling “hemmed in,” or being “in dire straits.” In his commentary on Psalm 4—the first צרר lexeme in the Psalter—Martin Luther combines scholarly acumen with pastoral sensitivity to unpack the meaning of this spatial confinement metaphor (Enge):

When the heart and all the senses are contracted when fleeing before something or when frightened by sorrowful events, the trouble closes in from all sides, drawing everything together, so that one feels constrained in all kinds of ways.

Luther’s explanation includes both the emotional and spatial aspects underlying the metaphor. The fact that spatial restriction is the underlying reference of the metaphor can be

---

1“The word ‘anxiety’ (Angst) and the related term ‘confinement’ (Enge) are etymologically derived from the Latin angere, meaning ‘to suffocate’ or ‘to strangle.’ Anxiety is the feeling of constriction, a constraint, the feeling of threatened suffocation that happens when one finds oneself in a situation of confinement. Suffocation is inseparably connected with the feeling of anxiety. The physical function of breathing finds its parallel in the psychological realm: Anxiety is the feeling of being cut off—or the threat that one might be cut off—from something which is absolutely essential to life.” At the death of his friend Jonathan, David lamented: יוהנן עליי צר (2 Sam 1:26) (I am in distress, anxiety and woe on account of you my brother Jonathan!), (O. Keel, Feinde und Gottesleugner: Studien zum Image der Widersacher in den Individualpsalmen [Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969] 62) (trans. mine), quoting G. Adler’s Zur Analytischen Psychologie (Zurich: Rascher Verlag, 1952) 118; C. T. Lewis, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 118; F. W. Danker, ed., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 3587–8.

illustrated by looking at how the Hebrew Bible sometimes employs צָרָה נַפְשֵׂים lexemes in non-
figurative settings to reference literal, physical occasions of spatial restriction. In these
settings, צָרָה נַפְשֵׂים lexemes carry the sense that there is not enough physical space for some desire
or goal to be achieved. For example, in Numbers 22:26, the Angel of the Lord encounters
Balaam “in a narrow place” (בֵּית לָוֵה צָרָה) where there is not enough physical space for Balaam
to manoeuvre his donkey. 2 Kings 1:6 provides another non-figurative example, where the
sons of the prophets explain that their lodging place is “too small for us” (ץָרָה מָטָן). Here,
the צָרָה lexeme expresses the notion that there is not enough physical space for all of them
to dwell in that particular building.

In situations denoting distress, the צָרָה lexemes may be diachronically understood either as
a metaphor of spatial restriction, or as a metonymic reference to an individual part of the
human body—the throat—as an avatar for a particular situation of dire straits. English
metonymic references to body parts, such as “pain in the neck” or “his hands are tied” fit
into a similar linguistic category, although not referring to anxiety. The speculative
question of whether ancient Hebrew speakers may have perceived such a metonym or
metaphor when using this figure of speech is not a matter that this study will try to resolve,
since the linguistic focus here will be strictly synchronic. In this regard, it is worthwhile to
note that the sense of the contemporary English word “anxiety” does not typically include
diachronic allusions to a constriction of the airway, even though the Latin etymology points
in this direction.

The following research consists of eight chapters, which are briefly summarised as follows:
Chapter 1 will address the method to be employed throughout the study, consisting of a
combination of structural and cognitive linguistics. Chapter 2 will deal with the issue of צָרָה
homonyms in the Psalter. The Psalter contains terms derived from both צָרָה (confinement,
distress) and צָרָה (enemy, hostility). Obviously, instances of word group two must be
excluded in order to conduct a study of word group one.

Following these preliminary steps, chapters three through seven will develop a cognitive
profile of distress in the Psalter. There are certain expressions which typically appear in
psalms containing צָרָה, and yet do not appear in psalms where צָרָה is absent. When these
collocated expressions are analysed from a cognitive semantic perspective, it becomes clear
that the members of the group possess common characteristics. These characteristics are

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5 The meaning of this term, “cognitive profile” will be outlined in chapter 1.
grouped into five salient domains. Chapters three through seven will outline the following salient domains, respectively: [POWERLESSNESS], [PALPABLE THREAT], [ENTREATY], [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE], and [GUILT?].

The question mark in the [GUILT?] domain suggests that when expert readers proceed through a distress psalm, they seek to answer a question: do the distressed individuals deserve their distress, or is the distress a case of undeserved suffering? Therefore, chapter seven explores the question: “What role does צער¹ play in our understanding of the macro-message of the Hebrew Psalter with respect to guilt and innocence?” In The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter (1985), Gerald Wilson drew attention to the location of royal psalms at the seams between Books 2—3 (Psalm 72) and Books 4—5 (Psalm 89) of the Psalter. In a conclusion which has gained wide acceptance within the scholarly community over the past twenty years, Wilson asserted that this placement of royal psalms at the seams is not accidental, but rather, “represents the end result of purposeful editorial organisation.”⁷ Through this strategic placement of royal psalms at the seams, the national calamity of the collapse of the monarchy, and the concomitant conquest and exile, is attributed to Yahweh’s judgment upon the sin of Israel and her leadership. Wilson’s work has set the tone for much subsequent research, as several scholars have sought to explore the macro message of the Psalter. For example, in Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, Jerome Creach sought to build upon the work of Wilson by conducting a macro-study of occurrences of the “Yahweh as refuge” motif throughout the Psalter, to determine if the frequency of this motif in any way coincides with the “major break” in the Psalter at the end of Book 3.⁸ As another example of such macro-analysis, Erich Zenger has explored the relationship between Book 5 and the rest of the Psalter:

Psalm 107 marks a new beginning and indicates the theme of the fifth book of the Psalms with its first sentence, 107.1: the praise of יהוה whose hesed reigns until the end of time (’וֹלָם). The fact that Ps. 107.1 is identical to 106.1 merely emphasizes that the fifth book is a commentary summarizing the preceding four books of psalms which are to be understood as a unit. The goodness of יהוה as set forth in Psalm 107 proves to be the saving power in the midst of all kinds of deadly threats (desert, imprisonment, disease, and different waters as images of death).⁹ Therefore, the point of departure for chapter 7 will be the simple fact that, throughout the Psalter, the individual psalm which contains the most occurrences of צער¹ is Psalm 107, a

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⁶ In keeping with the cognitive semantic literature, domain names are given in all capital letters, and enclosed in brackets, like [POWERLESSNESS].
“seam psalm” at the head of the Psalter’s fifth book. The chapter will investigate occurrences of צרר1 with respect to assertions of the guilt or innocence of the ones in distress. In the latter portions of the Psalter, particularly in Book 5, occurrences of צרר1 are more strongly correlated with sin and divine discipline, whereas, in the earlier portions of the Psalter, צרר1 more often coincides with expressions of undeserved suffering or claims of innocence. Chapter 7 will explore these issues in detail. Looking across the five books of the Psalter, there seems to be a macro-message with respect to distress, particularly in its correlation with sin and guilt or the lack thereof.

Chapter 8 will examine Psalm 107 as an exemplar of cognitive profile of distress developed in the prior chapters. Particular attention will be directed to the first four stanzas of the psalm, each of which ends with a refrain containing צרר1. Before studying the respective stanzas, it will be necessary to explore the generic uniqueness of Psalm 107. Compared with other distress psalms, Psalm 107 de-emphasises the enemy as a source of distress, while providing greater situational clarity and detail with respect to causes of distress.

The research in this dissertation is an attempt to follow a path similar to the one advocated by Patrick Miller, who calls for hermeneutical approaches which move forward rather than backward:

In many respects the effort to identify in some sharp and specific way who the individuals are who spoke or are spoken about in the psalm, whether they are the “I,” the “we,” the enemies, or whatever, is a move in precisely the opposite direction from those interpretive efforts that will make the psalms more responsive to contemporary appropriation. While the extensive work in this century on the cultic interpretation of the psalms has been an exciting enterprise that has often uncovered something of their original cultic context, that effort has been of very little use for the contemporary interpreter who asks the meaning of the psalms in the present community of faith. The open language of the psalms invites, allows, and calls for interpretation that looks and moves forward into the present and the future as well as for interpretation that looks backward.10

Miller suggests that the psalms are issuing an invitation to a forward-moving hermeneutic. It is hoped that the cognitive profile of distress and the explorations of this profile in Psalm 107 will be a helpful response to this invitation with regard to the psalms of distress.

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Chapter 1
Methodological Considerations

The central method to be employed in the following chapters is a combination of structural and cognitive linguistics. Structuralism asserts that the meaning of a word is a function of its paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Paradigmatic relations consist of the choice of a particular word or syntagm as against other possible words or syntagms that could function as a replacement for it. For example, in the clause, The man threw a rock, there are other nouns that could fill the same slot as “rock” (e.g. stone, brick). Such groups of paradigmatically-related words can be understood as forming semantic fields of similarity and opposition. However, when a particular word occupies a unique position within a body of literature, the heuristic potential of semantic field study is limited or nonexistent, because a semantic field with only one major member does not have very much clarifying value. (Chapter 5 of this study will explore the unique position of וּלְךָ.lexemes within the Psalter.)

In contrast to paradigmatic analysis, syntagmatic analysis explores the meaning of words with respect to their syntactic environments, thus studying a word’s collocation with other elements in a phrase, sentence or larger complex. The structuralist concepts of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations lead to the idea of co-occurrence restriction: the notion that certain linguistic forms (of varying length) can be restricted to only appear when other forms are present, and to not appear when such forms are absent (see the discussion of structuralist Louis Hjelmslev, below). Chapters 3 - 5 of this study consist of a co-occurrence analysis of forms in the Hebrew Psalter which only appear in psalms featuring וּלְךָ lexemes. Once these forms have been isolated using structuralist techniques, they will then be analysed from a cognitive semantic perspective. Cognitive semantics takes a view of meaning which is supplementary to structuralism. In cognitive semantics, the meaning of a linguistic form transcends its paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Cognitive semantics intentionally takes greater account of the human interlocutors who happen to be using a particular form in a given setting. This view is summarised by Ronald Langacker:

Semantic structure is conceptualization tailored to the specifications of linguistic convention. Semantic analysis therefore requires the explicit characterization of conceptual structure... I believe that mental experience is real, that it is susceptible to empirical investigation and principled description, and that it constitutes the natural subject matter of semantics.

For example, cognitive semantics pays greater attention to linguistic-conceptual phenomena such as fictive motion.\(^4\) The sentence, *The mountain range runs from Nevada to British Columbia* invites a reader who is somewhat familiar with North American geography to envision a map and to conduct a directional mental scan running from south to north. In this sample sentence, the motion evoked by the verb “runs” is fictive in nature, because there is nothing actually running, or moving at all. The following chapters will explore certain constructions, understood cognitive-linguistically as motion event frames (discussed below, along with related force dynamics), which are exceedingly important when studying items which uniquely co-occur with קָרָא\(^1\) lexemes. Therefore, since both structuralism and cognitive linguistics are central to the method employed in this study, a historical survey of these two related fields would be in order. This survey will seek to point out that the relationship between linguistic form and human thought or cognition has been a matter of debate for quite some time.

1. Historical Survey of Biblical Semantics from James Barr to the Present Day

It seems appropriate to begin with James Barr’s works, both because they are key examples of structuralism applied to biblical exegesis, and because Barr discusses the issue of the relationship between linguistic form and cognition, bringing the discipline of structuralism to bear within the field of biblical studies, during a day and age when its exegetical implications had not yet been fully recognised or applied.

1.1 James Barr

Barr applies structural linguistic principles to critique “unsystematic and haphazard” approaches to "the relation of language and thought.”\(^5\)

In certain currents of biblical theology according to my observation the way in which Hebrew linguistic phenomena are being correlated with the patterns of the Hebrew mind means in effect that linguistic structure reflects or corresponds to the thought structure. In this view, however, there are very great difficulties...\(^6\)

For example, Barr censures certain researchers who take the fact that Hebrew often uses verbs to describe states of being (i.e. the stative verb) as evidence that Hebrew thought is more dynamic than Greek thought.\(^7\) Barr is critical of the “belief that a language contains an implicit metaphysics...” and “that a vocabulary stock represents a way of organizing the


\(^{6}\) Barr, Semantics, 33.

\(^{7}\) Barr, Semantics, 50–8.
Ironically, both the view that Barr advocates, as well as the view he opposes, can trace their lineages back to Ferdinand de Saussure. Barr applies the Swiss linguist’s concept of the linguistic sign to critique certain theologians’ “blindness to any idea of the socially conditioned nature of language as an arbitrary system of semantic markers.” In application of Saussure’s principle of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations, Barr writes, “It is the sentence (and of course the still larger literary complex such as the complete speech or poem) which is the linguistic bearer of the usual theological statement, and not the word...” Barr's discussion of etymology echoes Saussure’s distinction between synchronic and diachronic linguistics.

The people whom Barr criticises, such as T. Boman, can also trace their linguistic heritage back to Saussure, in their attempt to draw a relation between theological thought and biblical language. This is because Saussure carried his concept of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign into his general concept of cognition. Thus, the arbitrariness of the relationship between phonic signals (signifier) and concepts (the thing signified) reflects a general arbitrariness inherent within human thought itself, were it not for the categorising function of language.

Psychologically our thought—apart from its expression in words—is only a shapeless and indistinct mass. Philosophers and linguists have always agreed in recognizing that without the help of signs we would be unable to make a clear cut, consistent distinction between two ideas. Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language... The linguistic fact can therefore be pictured in its totality—i.e. language—as a series of contiguous subdivisions marked off on both the indefinite plane of jumbled ideas and the equally vague plane of sounds... Thought, chaotic by nature, has to become ordered in the process of its decomposition... Language works out its units while taking shape between two shapeless masses...

After Saussure’s death, similar ideas on the relationship between language and thought were advocated in the 1930s by Benjamin Lee Whorf and his mentor Edward Sapir in the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (discussed below). Whorf is introduced at this point for two reasons. First, he receives frequent mention in Barr’s *Semantics*. Although Barr does not directly criticise Whorf, Barr does criticise those who, in his view, are undisciplined in applying ideas similar to those of Whorf. The second reason for including Whorf in this

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9 Barr, *Semantics*, 204.
10 *Semantics*, 263. Also, see Barr, “Semantics and Biblical Theology: A Contribution to the Discussion,” 15.
discussion is because George Lakoff mentions him as a forerunner of the cognitive linguistic movement, although Lakoff does not embrace Whorf’s ideas wholesale.14

1.2 Benjamin Lee Whorf
According to Whorf, there is an inextricable linkage between the grammar and vocabulary of a particular language, on the one hand, and the metaphysical and cultural presuppositions of that language's native speakers, on the other. Thus, “the real essence of thought” is essentially linguistic.

The nonmotor processes that are the essential thing are, of their nature, in a state of linkage according to the structure of a particular language, and activations of these processes and linkages in any way, with, without, or aside from laryngeal behavior, in the forefront of consciousness, or in what has been called “the deep well of unconscious cerebration,” are all linguistic patterning operations, and all entitled to be called thinking.15

For example, Whorf asserts that the metaphysics of the native American Hopi people are “properly describable only in the Hopi language...”16 Similar to Saussure’s “shapeless and indistinct mass,” Whorf believed that language is the medium through which a people’s “unformatted philosophy” becomes crystallized.

Every language contains terms that have come to attain cosmic scope of reference, that crystallize in themselves the basic postulates of an unformatted philosophy, in which is couched the thought of a people, a culture, a civilization, even of an era.17

It should be pointed out that, although Barr is cautious about Whorf’s ideas, he does not completely reject them. While Barr remains committed to structuralist principles, he leaves the door open to further developments in semantics along the lines of those initiated by Whorf, developments which are partially realised in the cognitive linguistics movement.

Even should there be some sense in which it is linguistically true that there is some kind of ‘metaphysics’ implicit in a language as the ‘Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis’ supposes... Even if it should come to be agreed that linguistic study has been weakened by formalism, or that the use of structural methods has been accompanied by a lack of attention to ‘meaning’, it must be remembered that in theological study the concept of structural linguistics and of language systems has hardly yet come to be known, and their values have hardly been recognized, much less exhausted...18

16Whorf, Language Thought and Reality, 58.
17Whorf, Language Thought and Reality, 61.
18Barr, Semantics, 295.
1.3 J. L. Austin and Speech Act Theory

Austin’s *How to Do Things with Words* was published posthumously in 1962, soon after Barr’s *Semantics*. Austin is included here because he was a significant participant in the discussion on the relationship between linguistic expression and cognition. Austin sought to move the semantic debate beyond its common focus on formalism and truth conditions. Formalism is the idea that the meaning of an expression is fully conveyed within its paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Formalism is the notion that any meaning beyond that which is expressed in the linguistic form itself belongs to the domain of pragmatics rather than to that of semantics. For example, formalist presuppositions are clearly set forth by Paul Ricoeur:

> The units of meaning elicited by structural analysis signify nothing; they are only combinatorial possibilities. They say nothing; they conjoin and disjoin... Is not philosophy's task then to ceaselessly reopen, toward the being which is expressed, this discourse which linguistics, due to its method, never ceases to confine within the closed universe of signs and within the purely internal play of their mutual relations?19

Closely accompanying formalism is the idea that the central goal of semantics is disambiguation between linguistic terms. In other words, the semantic essence of a word consists of the minimal packets of information necessary to remove ambiguity; i.e. to accurately single out the correct referent of an expression among a field of possible referents, by applying principles of Aristotelian categorisation and philosophical truth conditions. In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin sought to move the semantic debate beyond the boundaries of formalism and truth conditions.

> This topic is one development—there are many others—in the recent movement towards questioning an age-old assumption in philosophy—the assumption that to say something, at least in all cases worth considering, i.e. all cases considered, is always and simply to state something.20

Austin describes a speech act as consisting of three elements. The first element, the locutionary act, comprises the traditional semantic understanding of sense and reference.

> We first distinguished a group of things we do in saying something, which together we summed up by saying we perform a *locutionary act*, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to ‘meaning’ in the traditional sense. Second, we said that we also perform *illocutionary acts* such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, &c., i.e. utterances which have a certain (conventional) force. Thirdly, we may also

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perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading.\(^{21}\)

Austin stresses the idea that virtually all speech situations consist of more than mere locution, thus more than mere predication and accompanying truth conditions. “Whenever I say anything (except perhaps a mere exclamation like ‘damn’ or ‘ouch’) I shall be performing both locutionary and illocutionary acts...”\(^{22}\)

1.4 John Searle
A few years later, John Searle developed Austin’s theory and applied it to his debate with deconstructionists. While agreeing with Austin that, “The illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication,”\(^{23}\) Searle emphasises that, “To perform illocutionary acts is to engage in a rule-governed behavior.”\(^{24}\)

From a semantical point of view we can distinguish between the propositional indicator in the sentence and the indicator of illocutionary force. That is, for a large class of sentences used to perform illocutionary acts, we can say for the purpose of our analysis that the sentence has two (not necessarily separate) parts, the proposition-indicating element and the function-indicating device. The function-indicating device shows how the proposition is to be taken, or, to put it another way, what illocutionary force the utterance is to have, that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence.\(^{25}\)

Thus, Searle’s analysis of speech act theory focuses to a greater extent on linguistic forms; on lexical and syntactic indicators within utterances, than that of Austin’s, which places greater emphasis on the extra-linguistic settings in which utterances take place. Austin writes,

> Once we realize that what we have to study is not the sentence, but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation, there can hardly be any longer a possibility of not seeing that stating is performing an act.\(^{26}\)

1.5 Louis Hjelmslev: The Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Analysis of Texts as Wholes
The writing of Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev made its first appearance in the English-speaking world in the late 1960s. Hjelmslev is included at this point because the set of terms that he developed for conducting paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis will be used throughout the study to follow. According to Hjelmslev, the analysis of paradigmatic and

\(^{21}\) Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 109.
\(^{22}\) Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 133.
\(^{26}\) Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 139.
syntagmatic relations is “an accordion concept” where essentially the same methods which are applied to clauses or syntagms can also be applied to entire texts.\textsuperscript{27} Therefore the initial object of linguistic inquiry is not first and foremost the sentence or clause, but rather the text as a whole.\textsuperscript{28}

An explicit or implicit tradition has it that the work of the linguist begins with dividing sentences into clauses, while it is thought possible to refer the treatments of larger parts of the text, groups of sentences and the like, to other sciences—principally logic and psychology. According to this view the linguist or the grammarian should, when faced with an unanalyzed text... be able to plunge headlong down to a stage where it is resolved into clauses; theoretically he must supposedly premise that a logico-psychological analysis of the larger parts of the text has been undertaken, but it is nevertheless believed that in practice he does not have to worry about whether or not such an analysis actually has been undertaken, or whether it has been made in a way that may be called satisfactory from the linguist’s point of view. The question we are raising here is not a question of practical division of labor but of the placing of objects by their definitions. From this point of view the analysis of the text falls to the linguist as an inevitable duty, including the textual parts that have large extension. A partition of the text is attempted with selection and reciprocity as bases of division, and at each stage of the analysis those parts shall be sought that have the greatest extension. And it is easy to see that a linguistic text of very large or unrestricted extension offers the possibility of partition into parts or large extension defined by mutual selection, solidarity, or combination. The very first of these partitions is the partition into content line and expression line, which are solidary.\textsuperscript{29} When these are each further partitioned, it will be possible and necessary, \textit{inter alia}, to analyze the content line into literary genres... The systematics of the study of literature and of general sciences thus find their natural place within the framework of linguistic theory.\textsuperscript{30}

In this way, Hjelmslev includes genre studies within the scope of structural linguistics. The execution of paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis on a larger scale involves the analysis of textual characteristics such as style and tone. This structuralist view of genre studies brings Hjelmslev to the idea of a genre matrix where individual texts are actually genre hybrids, with respect to several relevant genre variables.

Any text that is not of so small extension that it fails to yield a sufficient basis for deducing a system generalizable to other texts usually contains derivates that rest on different systems. Various parts, or parts of parts, of a text can be composed in different stylistic forms (characterized by various restrictions: verse, prose, various blends of the two); in different styles...; in different tones (angry, joyful, etc.); in different idioms, under which must be distinguished different vernaculars (the

\textsuperscript{28}Hjelmslev, Prolegomena, 12, 28, 31, 39, 115.
\textsuperscript{29}Hjelmslev uses the term “solidary” to say that these two entities are utterly inseparable, describing how one and the same utterance can be viewed from two different perspectives simultaneously. The “content line” is the meaning of an utterance. The “expression line” is the phonetic form of an utterance. Thus, Hjelmslev’s expression line and content line are homologous to Saussure’s “signifier” and “signified.”
\textsuperscript{30}Prolegomena, 98. Also, see L. Hjelmslev, Language: An Introduction (F. J. Whitfield; Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970) 98.
Hjelmslev’s idea of generic hybrids will be developed further in section 2.3.2 of this chapter, while discussing the multidimensional aspect of genre categorisation. Hjelmslev also develops a nomenclature for analysing the results of paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis. Since much of the work in the following chapters consists of this type of structural analysis, several of Hjelmslev’s terms will be employed throughout the study whenever the co-occurrence of variables is being discussed.

**Determination:** A situation in which the presence of one textual unit (a constant) presupposes the presence of another such unit (a variable) but not vice versa. The constant, whose presence is a necessary condition for the presence of the variable, is said to be determined (or selected) by the variable. The variable, whose presence is not a necessary condition for the presence of the constant, is said to determine (or select) the constant. Units thus bound by this determination relation are said to **cohere** with one another, or to be cohesive.

**Constellation:** A situation in which two textual units are compatible but neither presupposes the other. “On this basis we can define...determination as a function between a constant and a variable, and constellation as a function between two variables.”

Thus employing Hjelmslev’s terminology, in the following chapters,.lexemes will be viewed as the constant, the presence of which is a necessary condition for the presence of certain variables. These variables often appear in constellation within individual psalms. Also, applying Hjelmslev’s constellation concept at a more general level of abstraction (that of the interrelation between multiple texts; i.e., genre), this dissertation shows that there is a generic constellation of psalms possessing particular attributes that are strongly related to the presence of lexemes. This issue will be discussed at the conclusion of chapter five.

1.6 The 1970s: Field Semantics and Lexical Decomposition
Although field semantics and lexical decomposition (i.e. componential analysis) did not originate in the 1970s, throughout this decade and into the early 1980s, several works

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focused on these two methods within biblical studies. Some of these works will now be briefly summarised because they are important in understanding the state of affairs in biblical semantics at that time, and because some of the authors express dissatisfaction with the general situation in biblical semantics, at a time when cognitive semantics was first beginning to emerge.

1.6.1 John F. A. Sawyer
Sawyer applies field semantic methods developed by Jost Trier along with the Aristotelian concept of semantic components in order to shed new light on Hebrew terms for salvation such as יְשׁוּע. Sawyer summarises his method of lexical field analysis as follows:

Instead of defining a word L in terms of another language, it can be defined as associated with A, B, C (in the same language), opposed to D, influenced semantically by G because of frequent collocation with it in idiom I, and so on. This is the most reliable method of describing meaning, and must precede translation, not follow it.\footnote{J. F. A. Sawyer, Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1972) 32.}

The meaning of a given linguistic unit is defined to be the set of (paradigmatic) relations that the unit contracts with other units of the language in the context or contexts in which it occurs.\footnote{Sawyer, Semantics in Biblical Research, 67.}

Sawyer contrasts Charles Bally’s concept of associative field or “halo” with Trier’s more restricted notion of lexical field.

An “associative field” would include all the words associated in any way with a particular term. It has been described as “a halo which surrounds the sign and whose outer fringes merge into their environment”, and must be distinguished from a “lexical field” or “group”, which can be precisely defined for any given corpus. While a word's associative field includes terms related to it at all levels (for instance synonyms, opposites, terms that rhyme with it or look like it), a lexical group consists only of words very closely related to one another... Trier's work was on the smaller groupings, which he and his followers claim correspond to conceptual spheres. In each lexical field, some sphere of reality or experience is organized in a unique way...\footnote{Semantics in Biblical Research, 30–1. For more on the relationship between linguistic forms and cognition in Bally's halo concept, see S. Ullmann, Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962) 240.}

Sawyer published Semantics in Biblical Research during the period of active debate over the role of semantics within transformational, generative grammar. In order to better understand the views of Sawyer, as well as Eugene Nida and Moisés Silva (discussed below) it is necessary to provide a brief description of transformational, generative grammar.

\footnote{Semantics in Biblical Research, 30–1. For more on the relationship between linguistic forms and cognition in Bally's halo concept, see S. Ullmann, Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962) 240.}
The leading proponent of generative grammar is Noam Chomsky. Chomsky builds upon the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who asserted that, beneath the infinite variety of possible utterances, there exists an underlying systematic structure consisting of a finite set of rules governing word formation, speech articulation, syntax, etc. Thus, similar to Saussure's concepts of langue and parole, Chomsky develops the idea that language consists of two structural levels: deep structure and surface structure. The deep structure consists of a fixed set of generative principles for transforming thoughts into surface-structure statements. For the present study, the relevant feature of Chomsky's earlier work was his belief that semantics is a deep-structure concept. The surface structure is chiefly the realm of phonetics:

A descriptive grammar is concerned with both sound and meaning; in our terminology, it assigns to each sentence an abstract deep structure determining its semantic content and a surface structure determining its phonetic form.

A sentence can be studied from the point of view of how it expresses a thought or from the point of view of its physical shape, that is, from the point of view of either semantic interpretation or phonetic interpretation. Using some recent terminology, we can distinguish the "deep structure" of a sentence from its "surface structure." The former is the underlying abstract structure that determines its semantic interpretation; the latter, the superficial organization of units which determines the phonetic interpretation and which relates to the physical form of the actual utterance, to its perceived or intended form.

In order to understand a sentence, it is necessary to know the kernel sentences from which it originates.

Since, for Chomsky, semantics was considered to be a deep-structure concept, therefore the realm of meaning was largely limited to issues of logic, regarding propositional assertions, affirmation versus denial, truth versus falsehood, and the like. Paul Ricoeur refers to such limiting presuppositions in the definition of semantics as the "subordination of inductive operations." In this regard, Chomsky and his adherents stand in contrast to the cognitive linguists, discussed below. At that time, several linguists sought to demonstrate that semantics cannot be limited to deep structure. In response to these demonstrations, in the

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38 Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*, 93.
early 1970s, Chomsky changed his position, acknowledging that, "There is no reason at all why surface structure should not play a role in determining semantic interpretation." Nevertheless, within the generative school of thought, the scope of semantics continued to be seen in truth-conditional terms. Although Sawyer side-steps this debate, while highlighting the value of lexical decomposition, he also implies that the method may be deficient.

Semantic components (or “markers”) enable us to make general statements about groups of words which obviously have something in common: e.g. ‘man’, ‘bull’, ‘stallion’, ‘cock’ have in common the semantic components (Male) and (Adult), as opposed to the group ‘woman’, ‘cow’, ‘mare’, ‘hen’ which have the components (Female) and (Adult) in common. Without entering into the debate as to whether these ‘semantic components’ are part of the cognitive structure of the human mind, or whether the meaning of more complex terms will ever be adequately defined in terms of the sum total of their semantic components, one would expect the notion to be a helpful one in the study of a group of related words like the present.

Thus, Sawyer’s statement here is similar to Barr, in that both of them seem to leave the door ajar, in expectation that further developments in semantics may arise.

1.6.2 Eugene Nida

Operating from a generative, transformational point of view, Nida was another proponent of lexical decomposition in the 1970s. Nida drew upon his extensive experience training Bible translators to describe a methodology for mapping semantic domains and analysing their relationships.

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Meaning consists of that particular structured bundle of cognitive features, associated with the lexical unit, which make possible the designation of all the denotata by the lexical unit in question. In other words, the meaning consists of that set of necessary and sufficient conceptual features which make it possible for the speaker to separate the referential potentiality of any one lexical unit from that of any other unit which might tend to occupy part of the same semantic domain.\(^{47}\)

Nida uses the term “diagnostic components” to denote the minimal listing of semantic data which would satisfy the necessary and sufficient conditions for separating the referential potential of one lexical unit from that of all other units in a language, a process known as disambiguation. This minimalist approach to semantics, which is primarily concerned with disambiguation, is known as the “dictionary view” of lexicography. In keeping with this view, and in agreement with the generative grammarians of his day, in Nida’s opinion, encyclopedic data or connotative features of a lexical unit are not considered to be semantic data.\(^{48}\)

Only what is marked by structural contrasts becomes part of the language structure; all the rest is part of the structure of the culture. It may be discussed by means of language, but it is not a part of the language system itself.\(^{49}\)

Although Nida is chiefly concerned with semantics at the level of analytical validity, and “necessary and sufficient conditions”,\(^{50}\) his final chapter includes a hint of dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in semantics; a sentiment similar to that of Sawyer, above. Nida acknowledges that referential meaning is only one aspect of semantics, and that there is much progress remaining to be made in this field.\(^{51}\)

1.6.3 Moisés Silva
Silva summarises and critiques the work of the two authors discussed immediately above, and similar researchers. Silva’s work is divided into two major sections. The first deals with diachronic semantics and semantic change. In the second section, semantics is

\(^{39}\)Nida, \textit{Componential Analysis of Meaning}, 34–5.
\(^{40}\)Nida, \textit{Componential Analysis of Meaning}, 36.
\(^{50}\)Nida, \textit{Componential Analysis of Meaning}, 21, 26, 32, 39, 44, 46, 65, 162.
\(^{51}\)\textit{Componential Analysis of Meaning}, 202, 205. For another presentation of a componential approach to biblical semantics, see J. Beekman and J. Callow, \textit{Translating the Word of God} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974). John Lyons is critical of this approach: “The recent literature of linguistic semantics is full of programmatic statements to the effect that the meaning of all lexemes in all languages can, and must, be accounted for in terms of the combination of allegedly more basic, and possibly universal, sense components. So far, however, the analyses that have been published are incomplete and, for the most part, unconvincing... It has yet to be demonstrated that sense components of the kind that linguists have tended to invoke in their analysis of the meaning of lexemes play any part whatsoever in the production and interpretation of language utterances; and if the allegedly more basic sense-components cannot be shown to have any psychological validity, much of the initial attraction of componential analysis disappears,” (\textit{Semantics}, 333).
approached from a synchronic perspective, using the Ogden-Richards triangle as a point of departure. Silva is less committed to a referential theory of meaning than Nida. Silva notes that a referential, denotative understanding of meaning is appropriate for technical terms in the Bible, such as νομος and ἁμαρτία, because,

These concepts are true referents... Insofar as a word can be brought into a one-to-one correspondence with an extralinguistic object or entity, to that extent the word may be subjected to the concordance-based, word-and-thing, historico-conceptual method typified by TDNT.

But, although a referential theory of meaning can be effective with respect to technical terms, in most cases a word's syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations are central for determining its meaning.

Lexical meaning—which cannot be reduced to the concept of denotation—consists largely in the sets of (structural) relations obtaining between the senses of different symbols... It should be noted that the syntagmatic relations play the determinative role in language. While the paradigmatic relations alert us to the potential for lexical expression in a particular language, this potential becomes “actualized” only when words are in fact combined with one another by a specific speaker or writer to form sentences.

While acknowledging that lexical decomposition can be of benefit for achieving disambiguation because it “formalizes the way we often distinguish terms from one another,” yet Silva is critical of Nida’s advocacy of this method, and doubts its ultimate value because it may not even be psychologically valid, and because it is dependent upon extralinguistic factors, and thereby implies an encyclopedic approach to lexicology, an approach which was viewed disapprovingly by generative grammarians, as discussed above. Curiously, Silva speaks approvingly of extralinguistic factors a few pages later in his discussion of context.

What exactly do we mean by context? This term must be interpreted in the broadest sense possible, from the smallest syntactical detail to the knowledge shared by speaker and hearer of all that has gone before.57

In another statement which seems to advocate a more encyclopedic, rather than dictionary approach to semantics, Silva approvingly quotes Bronisaw Malinowski, as follows:

The conception of context must be substantially widened, if it is to furnish us with its full utility. In fact it must burst the bonds of mere linguistics and be carried over into the analysis of the general conditions under which a language is spoken.58

Thus, Silva seems to disapprove of involving extralinguistic factors in the semantic analysis of individual words, while accepting the same in the semantic analysis of texts. At that time, several researchers—who were intent upon “burst[ing] the bonds of mere linguistics” in a certain way—began to comprise what would come to be called the cognitive linguistics movement. Cognitive linguistics provides potential methods for transcending field semantics and lexical decomposition in biblical studies. However, before discussing cognitive linguistics, this survey would be incomplete without including the works of Anthony Thiselton, another participant in the debate over the definition of semantics and its relationship to the cognitive activity of speakers and hearers.

1.7 Anthony Thiselton: Semantics vis-à-vis the Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Ludwig Wittgenstein

Thiselton notes that Wittgenstein originally held to a referential theory of meaning, a view which he would later come to reject. The referential theory of meaning is the idea “that the meaning of a word is the object to which the word refers; and second, that even within broader stretches of language the word itself still remains the basic unit of meaning.”59

Wittgenstein came to see, however, that the notion of “simple” elements of language that correspond to “simple” objects is a mere abstraction demanded by the mind of the logician.60

It is Thiselton’s view that both the Ogden-Richards triangle and generative linguistics are dependent upon a referential theory of meaning. The “semantic triangle” theory of meaning “suffers from all of the difficulties of the referential theory”, and “is little more than an attempt to add a mentalist dimension to a theory of reference... This theory can never

57 Silva, Biblical Words and Their Meaning, 140.
progress beyond the assumption that the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meaning of its components.”61 Although the referential theory of meaning can be helpful “as a way of answering certain specific questions about particular meanings... it cannot be accepted as an all-embracing theory of meaning.”62 Texts carry a “referential dimension of meaning”, although, “We cannot invoke a referential theory of meaning as a basis for hermeneutics.”63

Likewise, in an article written in 1977, Thiselton expresses caution over the usefulness of generative grammar in exegesis.

The translator must be on guard against thinking of semantic equivalence in cognitive terms. If “decease”, “departure from this life”, and so on, could all be transformed into the kernel sentence “he dies”, it would be easy to overlook the emotive, cultural, or religious overtones of meaning which may have been important in the original utterance... Theories about a “universal” grammar of objects, events, abstractions and relations are too reminiscent of the theory of language that Wittgenstein first propounded and then rejected. These criticisms do not invalidate this whole approach, but they perhaps call for caution over the ways in which it is used.64

With respect to the philosophy of Gadamer, it is Thiselton's view that semantics plays a restricted role in the overall hermeneutical picture. Within his general theme of the fusion of horizons, Thiselton notes that although, “Semantic inquiries perform a positive role in distancing the interpreter from the text,”65 nevertheless, “Semantic inquiries, by their very nature, can only assist with one half of the hermeneutical task, namely with elucidating the meaning of the text in terms of its horizons in the ancient world.”66 However, Thiselton does not completely close the door to the idea that semantics plays a role in the contemporary horizon, because the code system of the writer can activate the code system of the reader.

Eco’s understanding of semantic fields and of semiotic systems has a parallel with Wittgenstein’s perceptive observations: these are conditions of signification which are activated in what other writers might term hermeneutical life-worlds or speech-acts, in which interaction occurs between the code-system of the writer or sender and the code-system of the reader or receiver.67

63A. Thiselton, Two Horizons, 124.
65A. Thiselton, Two Horizons, 117.
66A. Thiselton, Two Horizons, 120.
In similar manner, Thiselton notes that there is a half truth within the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

The relation between hermeneutics and language introduces the questions about language and thought. Two sides have to be held together. On the one hand, accidents of surface grammar and vocabulary stock do not usually determine thought in a decisive way. In this respect the claims of Saussure and his linguistic successors are correct. Similarly Barr's attack on Boman, which is based on them, is also valid. But this is only half of the problem. On the other side, language uses, as language habits, can and do influence thought... There is a half truth in the Whorf hypothesis, which is significant for hermeneutics, especially for the problem of pre-understanding.  

At the time Thiselton wrote these words, the nascent cognitive linguistics movement was making new strides with respect to the relationship between language and cognition, as will be discussed below. In the exegesis of texts, cognitive linguistics provides a new set of tools for analysing the results garnered by structural linguistic analysis.

1.8 The 1980s to the Present: Cognitive Linguistics
As discussed above, throughout the mid-twentieth century, the influence of structuralism and transformational grammar had a confining effect upon the definition and scope of semantics. This confining effect can be understood as a barrier between semantics and the workings of the mind in general. This barrier was twofold. Not only did structuralism tend toward a formalistic emphasis upon texts at the expense of the human interlocutors who employ them, but also, generative grammarians viewed the innate human linguistic capacity as an autonomous entity within the mind, separate from other aspects of cognition, human embodiment, and corresponding knowledge of the world.  

Eco’s comment on the feasibility of artificial intelligence incorporates both of these presuppositions.

A theory of codes has nothing to do with what may happen in the addressee's mind... The study of the signs in a culture enables us to define the value of the interpretants by viewing them as a system of positions and oppositions... Following a method of this kind it could in theory be possible to construct a robot which possesses an

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68 A. Thiselton, *Two Horizons*, 440.
69 Paul Ricoeur describes this situation as “The closed state of the linguistic universe,” (“The Problem of Double Meaning as Hermeneutic Problem and as Semantic Problem,” 72, 78). Nida advocates similar views while discussing the lexical decomposition of terms for fatherhood: “Thus not all that is known about fathers can be regarded as supplementary components of meaning. Only what is marked by structural contrasts becomes part of the language structure; all the rest is part of the structure of the culture. It may be discussed by means of language, but it is not a part of the language system itself,” (Nida, *Componential Analysis of Meaning*, 36). According to Nida, encyclopedic data or connotative features of a lexical unit which exceed certain minimal products of lexical composition (products called “diagnostic components” are not considered to be semantic data (*Componential Analysis of Meaning*, 35).
assortment of semantic fields and the rules to link them to systems of signvehicles.\textsuperscript{70}

According to this view, because linguistic meaning is essentially restricted to that which is explicitly given within the code itself, therefore, semantics is little more than a decoding process. As Eco supposes, it therefore logically stands to reason that, because linguistics is all about the code and nothing but the code, therefore, a consummate decoding machine such as a computer or robot ought to be able to decode linguistic data quite effectively.\textsuperscript{71}

Views like this came under increasing attack throughout the 1970s, in part because of the implied reductionist conception of semantics. Howard Maclay’s comments are representative of many.

A consequence of restricting linguistics to purely formal matters was an extreme narrowness of focus on the utterances of a language independent of any properties of human language users. The external and internal stimuli acting on a speaker are placed outside of linguistics, and all other, perhaps more interesting, aspects of human speakers are excluded as well. Further, the results of a linguistic analysis are not taken to be relevant to an understanding of the capacities and fundamental characteristics of human beings. The independence and methodological priority of form over meaning is clearly affirmed. This assumption, that form is independent, may be regarded as one of the central conceptions of modern linguistic theory, and,

\textsuperscript{70}U. Eco, \textit{A Theory of Semiotics} (Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press, 1979) 80. In retrospect, the binary nature of computers is probably a detriment to this end. Lakoff cites artificial intelligence researcher Lotfi Zadeh’s concept of “fuzzy sets” as foundational in the development of cognitive linguistics. Zadeh writes: “It may well be the case that the conventional techniques of system analysis and computer simulation–based as they are on precise manipulation of numerical data–are intrinsically incapable of coming to grips with the great complexity of human thought processes and decision making. The acceptance of this premise suggests that, in order to be able to make significant assertions about the behaviour of humanistic systems, it may be necessary to abandon the high standards of rigor and precision that we have become conditioned to expect of our mathematical analyses of well-structured mechanistic systems, and become more tolerant of approaches which are approximate in nature,” (“The Concept of a Linguistic Variable and Its Application to Approximate Reasoning-1,” \textit{Fuzzy Sets and Applications: Selected Papers by L. A. Zadeh} [R. R. Yager; New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1987] 221). See also, Lakoff, \textit{Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things}, 22. The philosophy underlying potential methodologies which would enable computers to categorize sets in a manner similar to human beings led to Zadeh’s improved understanding of human categorisation \textit{per se}, and therefore, to a better understanding of human artifacts such as literature, which are a result of such categorisation operations. See D. de Geest and H. van Gorp, “Literary Genres from a Systemic-Functionalist Perspective,” \textit{European Journal of English Studies} 3/1 (1999) 40.

\textsuperscript{71}For another representative sample of this view, see Fodor and Katz, “The Structure of a Semantic Theory”. Their discussion of semantics is chiefly concerned with "correctness" and with "necessary and sufficient" conditions for removing ambiguity (498, 501). Katz and Fodor draw a strict dividing line between grammar and semantics: "Semantics takes over the explanation of the speaker's ability to produce and understand infinitely many new sentences at the point where grammar leaves off," (483). In their advocacy of a limited "dictionary" approach to lexical semantics (492, 496-497), they assert that a semantic metatheory must not blur the distinction between a speaker's knowledge of his language and his knowledge of the world (489, 491). A theory that requires or assumes knowledge of the world is "\textit{ipso facto} not a serious model for semantics," (489).
though it has come under increasingly severe attack in recent years, it continues to be vigorously defended by such scholars as Chomsky...\(^{72}\)

In lamenting this situation, Maclay mentions both sides of the problem, mentioned above. Maclay is concerned with both the formalistic restriction and the exclusion of human cognition from the prevailing notion of what constitutes semantics. At that time, linguistic analysis which went beyond the limited purview granted to semantics was generally considered to belong to the realm of pragmatics.\(^{73}\) The prevailing school of thought was that there was a clearly-definable boundary between semantics and pragmatics.\(^{74}\)

In the latter quarter of the twentieth century, the dissatisfaction with prevailing semantic theories which had been expressed by several linguists, and, at least, suggested by James Barr, began to be addressed by the movement known as cognitive linguistics. In contrast to the prevailing view, in which semantics was considered to be autonomous from the workings of the mind in general, Ronald Langacker writes that, in cognitive semantics,

Semantic structure is conceptualization tailored to the specifications of linguistic convention. Semantic analysis therefore requires the explicit characterization of conceptual structure... I believe that mental experience is real, that it is susceptible

\(^{72}\)“Overview,” *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology* (eds. D. D. Steinberg and L. A. Jakobovitz; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 163. Maclay’s criticism was part of a growing chorus at that time. For example, Lakoff conducted a logical analysis of anaphoric reference in order to demonstrate that grammaticality (a Chomskian term for the grammatical correctness of an expression) cannot be determined apart from situational context: “The consequences for linguistics are not too surprising either, namely, that grammaticality must be defined relative to assumptions about situational contexts and to thought processes... The general principles governing when certain sentences are grammatical relative to certain presuppositions can only be stated in terms of deductions from those presuppositions. An anaphoric expression may have as its antecedent an expression which is not in the sentence itself nor in the presuppositions of the sentence, but in some line of deduction based on those of presuppositions... The question as to whether an arbitrary sentence is well-formed relative to an arbitrary set of presuppositions seems to be in general undecidable,” (“The Role of Deduction in Grammar,” 69–70). Likewise, Weinreich laments contemporary efforts to integrate transformational grammar and semantics: “Thus the theory is too weak to account for figurative usage (except the most hackneyed figures) and for many jokes. Whether there is any point to semantic theories which are accountable only for special cases of speech–namely humorless, prosaic, banal prose–is highly doubtful,” (“Explorations in Semantic Theory,” 311). Lyons expresses similar sentiments: “British empiricism and Cartesian rationalism (in the form in which it has been taken over and reinterpreted by Chomsky) both share the intellectualist–and objectivist–prejudice that language is essentially an instrument for the expression of propositional thought. This prejudice is evident in a large number of influential works, which, though they might differ considerably on a wide variety of issues, are at one in giving no attention at all to the non-propositional component of language or in playing down its importance,” (*Linguistic Semantics: An Introduction*, 336).


to empirical investigation and principled description, and that it constitutes the natural subject matter of semantics.\textsuperscript{75}

Langacker’s assertion that mental experience is susceptible to empirical investigation was a relatively new idea within the field of linguistics. It was partly the result of cognitive linguists’ incorporation of research from other investigative fields, some of which will be summarised below. Likewise, William Croft and D. Alan Cruse contrast the foundational idea of cognitive semantics with the idea that language is an autonomous cognitive faculty.

The first hypothesis is that language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty. The basic corollaries of this hypothesis are that the representation of linguistic knowledge is essentially the same as the representation of other conceptual structures, and that the processes in which that knowledge is used are not fundamentally different from cognitive abilities that human beings use outside the domain of language. The first corollary is essentially that linguistic knowledge—knowledge of meaning and form—is basically conceptual structure... The second corollary is that cognitive processes that govern language use, in particular the construction and communication of meaning by language, are in principle the same as other cognitive abilities.\textsuperscript{76}

These statements by Croft and Cruse show that, at least within the adherents of this new linguistic movement, the twofold restriction (discussed above) on the linguistic community’s definition of semantics—a restriction which had been imposed by structuralism and generative grammar—was beginning to fade away. In like fashion, Gilles Fauconnier contrasts the presuppositions of structuralism with those of the emerging field of cognitive linguistics,

There is no hope of retrieving interesting principles of meaning organization from surface distributions alone... Language data suffers when it is restricted to language, for the simple reason that the interesting cognitive constructions underlying language use have to do with complete situations that include highly structured background knowledge, various kinds of reasoning, on-line construction, and negotiation of meaning.\textsuperscript{77}

The interest in cognitive linguistics resulted from both the dissatisfaction noted above, as well as from cognitive researchers’ increasing objective knowledge of how human beings

\textsuperscript{75}Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, Vol 1, 99. See also, Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 1–4, 21; Lakoff, Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things, 57–8. John R. Taylor echoes similar sentiments when he writes, “No distinction can, or needs to be drawn between linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge... [There is] an intimate, dialectic relationship between language on the one hand and more general cognitive faculties on the other, and which places language in the context of our interaction with our environment and with others of our species. On this view, a clean division between linguistic and non-linguistic faculties, between linguistic facts and non-linguistic facts, between a speaker’s linguistic knowledge proper and his non-linguistic knowledge, between competence and performance, may prove to be both unrealistic and misleading.” (Linguistic Categorization [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003] 16). Also, see D. Lee, Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 12.


perceive and categorise sets and objects. This increasing knowledge base has enabled semantic study to take the thought processes of language users into account to a greater degree than in the past, without engaging in what would previously have been derided as naïve mentalism. Regarding this increasing objective knowledge of cognition, one example among many has to do with the colour spectrum. Following Saussure’s notions of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign and the continuity of substance, structuralists had traditionally cited the variations in colour terms between languages as a prime example of arbitrariness. Hjelmslev provides an example of this view:

Behind the paradigms that are furnished in the various languages by the designations of color, we can, by subtracting the differences, disclose such an amorphous continuum, the color spectrum, on which each language arbitrarily sets its boundaries.

Hjelmslev displays the prevailing structuralist assumption that human beings perceive the colour spectrum as an undifferentiated, kaleidoscopic flux, onto which various language groups arbitrarily project differing transition points and taxonomy. But if this were the case, then ethnolinguistic research would have resulted in an utterly random set of data, with no individual colours evidencing prominence over others, among various linguistic groups. The conclusions of Berlin and Kay, after surveying colour terms in ninety-eight languages, demonstrated that this is not the case. Lyons summarises this research as follows:

All languages with only two basic colour terms have words whose focal point is in the area of black and white (rather than, say, in yellow and purple); all languages with only three basic colour terms have words for black, white and red; all languages with only four basic colour terms have words for black, white, red and either green or yellow...

Later cognitive researchers determined that this species-wide linguistic preference for the colour red has a physiological basis in perceptual capacities of the human eye and related neurological structures. Contrary to the structuralist presupposition, human perception and cognition determines—at least in part—the colour lexicon. This is just one example of

78 After espousing an understanding of context which embraces the entire cultural background against which a speech-event has to be set, Ullmann cautions, “This does not mean, however, that we should relapse into a naïve form of mentalism, set up spurious psychological entities, and operate with loose and nebulous concepts such as ‘ideas’ ‘mental images’ and the like.” Ullmann continues that linguists should “avoid any recourse to vague, intangible and subjective mental states or processes,” (Ullmann, *Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning*, 60). Also, see J. Fodor, *Semantics: Theories of Meaning in Generative Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980) 16–7.
79 *Prolegomena*, 52. Also, see Ullmann, *Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning*, 246.
the research underlying Leonard Talmy’s assertion that the cognitive linguistics movement is on a “trajectory toward unification with the psychological.”

2. Aspects of Cognitive Linguistics Which Will Be Employed in the Following Study

It is not the intention here to exhaustively explain or defend the field of cognitive linguistics, but rather to limit the discussion to a few aspects of this field which are directly relevant to the methods employed in the following chapters. Cognitive linguistics is not intended to replace other semantic approaches but rather to complement them. It is also important to keep in mind that cognitive linguistic concepts are considered to be overlapping in nature, so that more than one concept can be appropriately in view while analysing the same text or form. For example, the whole notion of profile and frame, discussed below, is a particular application of Figure-Ground segregation. In the poetic analysis to be carried out in the following chapters, Figure-Ground segregation is a useful starting place for explaining how cognitive semantics will be put to use in the remainder of this work.

2.1 Figure-Ground Segregation

Human beings have the ability to perceive the salience of an object within a given scene, and to conceptually foreground that object; that is, to single it out as the attentional focal point, while simultaneously perceiving the remainder of the scene as comprising the conceptual background. This perceptual ability, called Figure-Ground segregation, is regularly reflected in linguistic expression, as demonstrated in the following sentence:

There is a large palm tree in the hotel atrium.

In this sentence, among the many features of the hotel atrium, the palm tree has been construed as the salient object. In Gestalt psychological terms, the palm tree is the Figure, and the atrium—as a whole—serves as the Ground. This scenario is both cognitive and linguistic at the same time: It is a mental conception, which is also assembled as a sentence. Many readers can “see” a hotel atrium in their mind’s eye as they read this paragraph. For

83Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 3.
84Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 1. As another example, Aristotelian categorisation has been a recognised part of semantics for a very long time. While Lakoff discusses the cognitive semantic concept of prototype categorisation (discussed below), he points out that this more recent development in categorisation theory does not eliminate the usefulness of Aristotelian categorisation: “I should make it clear that I will not be claiming that classical categories are never relevant to cognition,” (Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things, 160).
86Ungerer and Schmid, An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics, 192.
anyone who has spent a significant amount of time at a hotel, the collocation “hotel atrium” evokes a broader cognitive scene with many components, some more salient or central than others, even though these components do not formally appear in the sentence. This scene idea will be discussed below. Leonard Talmy defines Figure-Ground alignment as,

The pervasive system by which language establishes one concept as reference point or anchor for another concept. It posits the existence in language of two fundamental cognitive functions, that of the Figure, performed by the concept that needs anchoring, and that of Ground, performed by the concept that does the anchoring.87

Likewise, Langacker refers to the Figure as the pivotal entity within a scene.

The figure within a scene is a substructure perceived as “standing out” from the remainder (the ground) and accorded special prominence as the pivotal entity around which the scene is organized and for which it provides a setting.88

Schmid notes the broad applicability of Figure-Ground segregation.

The Figure is regarded as the most salient entity in a given configuration, while the Ground has secondary prominence... Figure/Ground organization provides a cognitive basis for a range of linguistic structures, most notably among them relational predications expressed by prepositions and basic clause patterns consisting of subjects and complements. What all these structures share is the idea that language allows speakers to highlight certain aspects of conceptualized scenes while backgrounding others.89

The concept of Figure-Ground segregation is scalable in its application. Ellen van Wolde notes that, "The figure-ground distinction functions on every level of the language, be it word, clause, concept, category, grammar, or dictionary."90 With respect to this scalability, in the chapters which follow, the concept of Figure-Ground segregation will be applied in three general levels of scale: at the local level of clause or sentence in the analysis of force and motion event frames; at an intermediate level in the employment of frame semantics; and also on a larger scale for analysing highlighted versus backgrounded information within larger blocks of text. Due to its chief importance, I will deal with the middle level first.

87Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 311.
2.1.1 Figure-Ground Segregation at the Level of the Individual Word in Context: Frame Semantics

As mentioned in the discussion of Hjelmslev, above, some structuralists assert that syntagmatic analysis is a scalable concept, ranging all the way from a collocation (such as a noun with attributive adjective) to a sentence, chapter, or an entire work.\(^{91}\) But, aside from field semantics, structuralist methodology has generally been rather quiet regarding specifically how to analyse the results of syntagmatic analysis once a group of variables, which determine the presence of a constant, has been isolated. Specifically, once a pattern of co-occurrence restriction within a particular group of psalms has been demonstrated, how shall this pattern be analysed? How shall we obtain semantic information beyond merely stating the lexemes and syntagms of widely-varying size which are involved in the restriction pattern? This problem illustrates how structuralism and cognitive linguistics can complement one another in exegesis. After syntagmatic analysis has yielded a pattern of co-occurrence restriction, frame semantics can then provide the researcher with a method for inferring semantic conclusions from the results.

The concept of frame semantics was introduced by Charles Fillmore in 1977. He summarises his concept as follows: “A metaphor that fits the view of semantics I am proposing is that when you pick up a word, you drag along with it a whole scene.”\(^{92}\) Here, Fillmore encapsulates a central difference between structuralist semantics and frame semantics, because the scene, or frame, exists in the mind of the language user, and includes cognitive information not formally given in the utterance itself. Frame attributes and contents are triggered or activated by the utterance, whether in speech or text.

The slogan that goes with the approach to semantics that I am taking is this: Meanings are relativized to scenes. I am using the word *scene* in this discussion in a technical sense that includes its familiar visual meaning, but much more as well. I mean by it any coherent individuatuable perception, memory, experience, action, or object. Some scenes are made up out of other scenes. A word appearing in a text that is being interpreted by someone who understands the word can be thought of as activating a scene and pointing to a certain part of that scene.\(^{93}\)

\(^{91}\)“Even the strictly verbal context is no longer restricted to what immediately precedes and follows, but may cover the whole passage, and sometimes the whole book, in which the word occurs,” (Ullmann, *Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning*, 49).

\(^{92}\)“Topics in Lexical Semantics,” 114. Fillmore uses the word “frame” to describe his scene concept (p. 127). Interestingly, the researchers criticised by Barr were also practising a form of frame semantics, but were committing other linguistic errors in their conceptualisation of the frames, thereby rendering their frames incorrect. Barr writes, “While in the concept method a word is seen as a 'concept' and placed within a frame of related 'concepts', the patterns of the frame reflecting the realities of theological truth, translation takes an actual communication in one language and translates it into an actual communication in another. Etymological considerations, which have so often been employed in order to assign words to their proper place in the theological 'concept' framework (as with *dabar* above), may very commonly not have been a consideration in the actual communication at all, and in such a case the task of translation will help to keep etymological considerations within their proper bounds,” (*Semantics*, 118).

\(^{93}\)Fillmore, “Topics in Lexical Semantics,” 84.
Here, Fillmore advocates a notion of semantics which is broader than the prevailing structuralist view, because a scene is comprised of more than that which is literally stated within the text, and more than that which is provided merely by dictionary definitions of words. In similar fashion, Walter Kintsch writes that, “Word meanings are not something to be pulled from a mental lexicon but are ephemeral constructions that are generated during comprehension.”94 Thus, the meaning of a word includes the reader’s contextualised encyclopedic knowledge (i.e. “perception, memory, experience, action,” etc.) with respect to the scene evoked by the word in a given context.95 Fillmore expands this concept to encompass not only scenes but also schema, which are, “Frameworks that are linked together in the categorization of actions, institutions and objects.”96 An example of one such schema is [COMMERCIAL EVENT], which would then include elements such as buyer, seller, money changing hands, goods changing hands, and so forth.97 (Within the field of cognitive linguistics, cognitive domains—discussed below—are typically denoted by capital letters within brackets. Likewise, semantic elements such as AGENT or RESULT, as well as conceptual metaphors are typically denoted by capital letters without brackets. For example, the conceptual metaphor which correlates the passage of time in one’s life with the taking of a journey is referred to as LIFE IS A JOURNEY.)98 The entire scene may be cognitively evoked even though the text formally represents only portions of it. Next, we come to the concept of frame, as Fillmore writes, “We can use frame to refer to the specific lexico-grammatical provisions in a given language for naming and describing the categories and relations found in schemata.”99 Various researchers have built upon Fillmore’s ideas, each of whom tends to use their own individualised terminology, or to use the same terms in slightly different ways. In order to keep jargon to a minimum in the following chapters, the following three frame semantic terms will be used throughout:

95Cf. the discussion, above, of encyclopedic knowledge versus dictionary knowledge with respect to Silva, Nida, and others. In 1986, D.A. Cruse entered this debate with a position which he acknowledged some would find controversial: “Any attempt to draw a line between the meaning of a word and ‘encyclopaedic’ facts concerning the extralinguistic referents of the word would be quite arbitrary,” (*Lexical Semantics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986] 19). Later, Cruse adds that, “General knowledge concerning cars and operations carried out on them is, on the view of meaning adopted in this book, embedded in the meanings of car, wash, polish, etc,” (*Lexical Semantics*, 58). Likewise, Terrance Wardlaw writes, “A dictionary view of meaning seeks to isolate a restricted range of specifications which constitute the linguistic characterization of an entity... However, as linguists have demonstrated, the grounds for delimiting the scope of linguistic knowledge which is associated with a linguistic expression is misconceived. Instead, stores of knowledge help one to make sense of both semantic and grammatical structure,” (*Conceptualizing Words for God Within the Pentateuch: A Cognitive-Semantic Investigation in Literary Context* [New York: T & T Clark, 2008] 31). Wardlaw is careful to point out that this encyclopedic view does not imply that every occurrence of a term necessarily evokes an exhaustive fusillade of semantic data. It is contextualised encyclopedic knowledge.
96Fillmore, “Topics in Lexical Semantics,” 127.
97In Fillmore’s parlance, scene is a hyponym of schema, (“Topics in Lexical Semantics,” 103, 127).
98For an example of such usage, see Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1*, 474–5.
Domain
According to Ronald Langacker, a domain is, “A coherent area of conceptualization relative to which semantic units may be characterized.” Langacker writes that, “Most concepts presuppose other concepts and cannot be adequately defined except by reference to them, be it implicit or explicit.” He uses the example of the concept [KNUCKLE], which cannot be understood apart from the concept [FINGER]. So, an occurrence of the noun, “knuckle” generally presupposes an understanding of the [FINGER] domain; which, in turn, cannot be understood apart from knowledge of the configuration of a hand. Therefore, an occurrence of the noun “finger” would, in most cases, presuppose the conceptual domain [HAND]. In this way, as Langacker explains, “It is typical for one concept (or conceptual complex) to serve as domain for the characterization of another.”

This phenomenon explained in Langacker’s simple illustration from anatomy is also the case in more complex and abstract arenas. Langacker writes, “A concept or conceptual complex of any degree of complexity can function as an abstract domain (e.g. the human body, the rules of chess, a kinship network).” For the analysis of distress, it is important to see that psychological states are included among the cognitive schema that can comprise a domain.

Frame
The term, “frame” denotes “the knowledge network linking the multiple domains associated with a given linguistic form... Frames constitute global patterns of common sense knowledge about some central concept, such that the lexical item denoting the concept typically evokes the whole frame.” When a word is used, several domains can be evoked simultaneously. Therefore, a frame is the multi-domain matrix associated with a lexical item. For example, the following chapters will discuss the frame accompanying lexemes, a frame consisting of cognitive domains such as [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABILITY].

Profile
Langacker defines profile as “the entity designated by a semantic structure.” Different domains can be evoked simultaneously by the same cognitive unit, thereby forming a matrix. “This matrix of domains is the base (or ground) against which cognitive units are

104Taylor, Linguistic Categorization, 89.
105Taylor, Linguistic Categorization, 90.
Fillmore touches upon something similar to Hjelmslev’s concept of determination when he writes that, “Some words are limited to the kinds of schemata they activate and are constrained, therefore, to appear with the other words that belong to the frames matching such schemata.” This phenomenon of co-appearance (or co-occurrence) constraints is evident within many psalms containing ṣāḥăr̥1 lexemes. In this dissertation, using cognitive semantic terminology, ṣāḥăr̥ and ṣa are the words being profiled, and the following chapters attempt to describe the various domains which the Psalter associates with these two synonymous lexemes. Understood as a matrix, these various domains comprise the frame, with respect to which the ṣāḥăr̥1 lexemes are profiled. Technically, every single occurrence of a ṣāḥăr̥1 lexeme within the Psalter serves as a component within the profile. However, for the sake of clarity and economy of presentation, only the more prominent domains will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.1.2 Figure-Ground Segregation at the Clause or Sentence Level
At the clause and sentence level, Talmy has researched the role of Figure-Ground alignment with respect to two categories which are central to the study in chapters three and four: the semantic representation of force and motion. These representations of force and motion occur in what Talmy calls “event frames”. For example, in the event frame, The ball broke the window, the ball serves as the Figure, and the window is the Ground. With these types of event frames in view, Talmy defines the general conceptions of Figure and Ground in language as follows:

The Figure is a moving or conceptually movable entity whose site, path, or orientation is conceived as a variable the particular value of which is the relevant issue. The Ground is a reference entity, one that has a stationary setting relative to a reference frame, with respect to which the Figure's site, path, or orientation is characterized.

Thus, in the sample sentence, the ball is the reference object, and the window is the reference entity. Chapters 3 and 4 will explore how the distress psalms contain a unique concentration of particular types of event frames with respect to force and motion.

109 Fillmore, “Topics in Lexical Semantics,” 130.
110 Properly speaking, the two terms are not fully synonymous, because they are two different parts of speech and cannot serve as replacements for one another in identical syntactic environments. Other than this, there is no detectable difference in the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations and environments of these two lexemes in the contexts in which they occur. Regarding the parts of speech issue, see the discussion in chapter 2.
111 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 259.
112 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 184, 312.
Chapter 3 will investigate the distress psalms’ tendency to include certain force dynamic event frames which are relatively absent in other psalms. For instance, Ps 18 provides an example of force dynamics, where the supplicant has been tied down, or immobilised, by the ropes of Sheol. To illustrate Talmy’s principles, the following sample sentence describes the force-dynamic interaction between a golf ball and a tree:

The golf ball stopped rolling when it encountered the tree.

Here, the golf ball’s tendency to remain in motion has been blocked by the tree. In Talmy’s terminology, the golf ball is the (in this case, weaker) Agonist, the tree is the (in this case, stronger) Antagonist, and the fact that the golf ball is now stationary is called the resultant.

Underlying all more complex force-dynamic patterns is the steady-state opposition of two forces, and we now examine the factors that comprise it. The primary distinction that language marks here is a role difference between the two entities exerting the forces. One force-exerting entity is singled out for focal attention—the salient issue in the interaction is whether this entity is able to manifest its force tendency or, on the contrary, is overcome. The second force entity, correspondingly, is considered for the effect that it has on the first, effectively overcoming it or not. Borrowing the terms from physiology where they refer to the opposing members of certain muscle pairs, I call the focal force entity the Agonist and the force element that opposes it the Antagonist.”

The roles of Agonist and Antagonist are an example of Figure-Ground segregation. However, the Agonist is not always positioned as the Figure. Sometimes the situation is reversed. For example, in chapter 3, when Psalm 18:5a and 6a, are analysed as a motion event, the supplicant plays the semantic role of Ground, while the moving Figure of the rope has assaulted him. But with respect to the force dynamic in these two clauses, the supplicant plays the semantic role of Agonist, whose desire, or tendency, is mobility. The ropes, which have immobilized him, are the Antagonist. Thus, although it is most common for the Agonist to be the Figure, in this case, the situation is reversed. The Agonist is the Ground. Talmy describes dozens of variations on this basic force-dynamic idea, seven of which are relevant for this study of the distress psalms. In order to avoid having to repeatedly define force-dynamic terminology in the exegetical chapters 3 and 4, the details of these seven kinds of force-dynamic event frames are provided in an excursus at the end of this chapter. However, there are two more general force-dynamic concepts that need to be defined, due to their importance in the following chapters.

113 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 413.
114 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 468.
The first of these two, the concept of relative strength, as seen in the exchange between the golf ball and the tree, needs to be explained. According to Talmy,

A further concept in association with opposed forces is their relative strengths. As language treats this, the entity that is able to manifest its tendency at the expense of its opposer is the stronger. According to their relative strengths, the opposing force entities yield a resultant, an overt occurrence. As language schematizes it, this resultant is one either of action or of inaction, and it is assessed solely for the Agonist, the entity whose circumstance is at issue.\textsuperscript{115}

In the sample sentence, above, the resultant is one of inaction. But, in the following sample, the opposite is the case, and the resultant is one of action.

As she swung her three-wood, the golf ball sailed off the tee.

In this case, the same Agonist (yet, now with a tendency to remain at rest) has undergone impingement by a moving Antagonist (the golf club), with action as the resultant. This is an example of Onset Causation of Motion, as shown in the table, below, which summarises some of the more common force-dynamic patterns evident within distress psalms.

\textsuperscript{115}Talmy, \textit{Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1}, 414–5.
Common Force-Dynamic Patterns In Distress Psalms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force Dynamic Pattern</th>
<th>Agonist’s Tendency</th>
<th>Agonist’s Result</th>
<th>Agonist’s Force Relative to Antagonist’s</th>
<th>Status of Antagonist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onset Causation of Rest</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>rest</td>
<td>lesser</td>
<td>shifting: disengaged Antagonist moves to impingement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset Causation of Motion</td>
<td>rest</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>lesser</td>
<td>shifting: disengaged Antagonist moves to impingement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset Letting of Motion</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>lesser</td>
<td>shifting-blocking Antagonist disengages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Causation of Motion</td>
<td>rest</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>lesser</td>
<td>steady pursuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Causation of Rest with Expenditure of Effort</td>
<td>rest</td>
<td>rest</td>
<td>greater, due to exertion</td>
<td>steady impingement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Motion Despite Opposition</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>stronger</td>
<td>steady impingement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>rest</td>
<td>declining</td>
<td>steady impingement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, it is important to point out that the concept of force dynamics applies to situations other than those of mere physical force. According to Talmy,

> Overall, force dynamics thus emerges as a fundamental notional system that structures conceptual material pertaining to force interaction in a common way across a linguistic range: the physical, psychological, social, inferential, discourse, and mental-model domains of reference and conception.\(^\text{116}\)

Oftentimes, force dynamics do not deal with tangible objects, and they are often lexicalised and tacit, in contrast with the overt causation of the woman swinging her golf club. An example of a lexicalised force dynamic can be seen in the following four sentences from

\(^{116}\)Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1*, 410.
Talmy, which retain his numbering system, in order to relate them to the quote, immediately below:

d.i. She’s polite to him.
d.ii. She’s civil to him.
e.i. She’s got to go to the park.
e.ii. She gets to go to the park.

Talmy describes the sociological and lexical aspects of the force dynamics within these sentences as follows:

Example (d) exhibits the same type of force-dynamic contrast... but demonstrates that this can be lexicalized. While the polite of (di) is neutral, (dii)’s civil indicates that the subject’s basic tendency here is to be impolite but that she is successfully suppressing this tendency. Example (e) demonstrates that language extends force-dynamic concepts as well to interpsychological—that is, social—interactions. Here, both of the expressions exhibit force-dynamic patterns, but of different types, ones that yield the same overt resultant for different reasons. In (ei), the subject’s desire (= force tendency) is not to go to the playground, but this is opposed by an external authority who does want her to do so, and prevails. In (eii), the subject’s desire is to go to the playground, and stronger external circumstances that would be able to block her from doing so are reported as either disappearing or not materializing, thus permitting realization of the subject’s desire.
In these descriptions, a phenomenon known as attentional windowing also frequently occurs. For example, in the aforementioned Psalm 46:3, only the destination of the motion event (i.e. the sea) is explicitly given in the text. The rest of the motion path (i.e. the mountains’ point of origin and their course) is “gapped”, as described by Talmy.  

Terminologically, the cognitive process at work here is called the windowing of attention, the coherent referent situation with respect to which the windowing must take place is an event frame, the portions that are foregrounded by inclusion are windowed, and the portions that are backgrounded by exclusion are gapped... In this process, one or more portions of a referent scene—where each portion has internal continuity but is discontinuous from any other selected portion—will be placed in the foreground of attention while the remainder of the scene is backgrounded. The most fundamental formal linguistic device that mediates this cognitive process is the inclusion in a sentence of explicit material referring to the portion or portions of the total scene to be foregrounded, and the omission of material that would refer to the remainder of the scene for backgrounding.

Thus, the entire motion event frame (i.e. with no gapping) of the mountains slipping into the sea could be construed as follows:

The mountains became dislodged from their original location, slid down the foothills, across the valley, onto the beach, and into the sea.

Based on Talmy’s work, constructions like the incidence of “final windowing” in Ps 46:3 (i.e. gapping where only the final destination or result is formally provided) can be understood not only from a formal perspective as examples of poetic terseness, but also from a cognitive perspective as eliciting increased “alertness” with respect to “Those conceptual areas currently assessed as the most relevant and important relative to larger concerns and goals.”

2.1.3 Figure-Ground Segregation in the Real-Time Perception of Poetic Texts as Wholes

A third and final application of Figure-Ground relations to be put to use in the following chapters relates to the highlighting and backgrounding of information during the on-line processing involved in the reading of larger blocks of text. Several of the longest lament and thanksgiving psalms happen to be psalms of distress (Pss 9-10, 18, 22, 69, 107). Reuven Tsur notes that, while reading all but the most brief poems,
There is a rigid upper limit to the amount of information that an organism can process at any given time. When the information to be processed exceeds this limit, the organism may have recourse to a variety of cognitive strategies and devices... Such as abstracting some common quality from a series of items, and organizing them in some more or less clearly definable category. In other cases again, an altogether different mental strategy may be required in order to alleviate cognitive overload. One of the best known instances concerns perceptual overload, when excessive perceptual information is dumped onto an undifferentiated ground, sometimes serving as background to a well-differentiated figure.\footnote{R. Tsur, \textit{Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics} (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2008) 36–7.}

Thus, the structure and limitations of a reader's short-term memory influence the way the reader will cognitively receive a poem with respect to background and foreground. In view of the contributions of Gilles Fauconnier and Walter Kintsch (below), it is probably beneficial to modify Tsur's view, because the construction of macropropositions (i.e. Tsur’s “abstracting... organizing...categorizing] and the operation of Figure-Ground relations can actually work together, rather than as distinct and opposite strategies. The central issue here is that, "The distinction between Ground and Figure accentuates the difference between highlighted and backgrounded information."\footnote{A. Kamp, “World Building in Job 28: A Case of Conceptual Logic,” \textit{Job 28: Cognition in Context} (E. v. Wolde; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 318.}

Albert Kamp’s analysis of Job 28 is an example of how Figure-Ground segregation can function within a larger block of text. Kamp investigates this passage from the point of view of narrative-world construction.

In the communicative setting of a discourse world, the speaker and hearer, or the author and reader, jointly build up a text or narrative world. Within the evoked conceptual space, another layer of ‘worlds’ is possible. These mental realities, built up by the characters in the text are called sub-worlds. They represent any state of affairs that can be imagined or referred to by the participants of the text world...The linguistic presentation of the text also distinguishes between backgrounded and foregrounded information. In other words, the ground of each world establishes the context in which the figure highlights a specific topic or piece of information... Each sub-world contains backgrounded information, followed by a specific figure in which the main topic of wisdom and understanding is highlighted.\footnote{A. Kamp, “World Building in Job 28: A Case of Conceptual Logic,” \textit{Job 28: Cognition in Context} (E. v. Wolde; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 309–11.}

In Kamp’s analysis, Job 28 presents three successive sub-worlds to the reader, each featuring Figure-Ground segregation, as shown in the table, below. For example, the discussion of mining and metallurgy in verses 1-11 supplies the Ground for the Figure statement given in verse 12 (see table below). Likewise, verses 13-19 form the Ground for the Figure statement in verse 20, and verses 21-27 form the Ground for the Figure statement

\begin{table}[h]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Verse & Ground & Figure \\
\hline
1-11 & Mining and metallurgy & Statement about wisdom and understanding \\
13-19 & Verses 13-19 & Form the Ground for Verse 20 \\
21-27 & Verses 21-27 & Form the Ground for Verse 28 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
in verse 28. Kamp uses the metaphor of a graphical user interface to describe this highlighting effect with respect to the reader’s real-time processing of textual information, noting that, “As in a popped up window, the figurized contents... are highlighted at the foreground of the reader’s mental representation.”

Summary of Kamp’s Figure-Ground Analysis in Job 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-World</th>
<th>Ground</th>
<th>Figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vv 1-12</td>
<td>vv 1-11 Discourse on mining</td>
<td>v 12 “Where can wisdom be found...?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv 13-20</td>
<td>vv 13-19 Discourse: precious metals &amp; gems</td>
<td>v 20 “Where does wisdom come from...?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vv 21-28</td>
<td>vv 21-27 Discourse: Inaccessibility of wisdom</td>
<td>v 28 “The fear of Adonai—that is wisdom...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 5 will seek to demonstrate something similar to Kamp’s work with respect to the foregrounding of הַרְפָּא lexemes and the corresponding backgrounding of what will be termed “force-dynamic discourses.” This phenomenon is evident within these longer distress psalms mentioned above, although it can also be observed within several of the shorter ones as well.

In addition to this Figure-Ground approach, the cognitive research of Walter Kintsch and Gilles Fauconnier provides further help for understanding how the backgrounding and foregrounding of information occurs during the process of reading larger blocks of text. Kintsch writes that, although language has been studied and analyzed for centuries, “Most of this work has focused on analyzing language as an object, rather than on the process of language comprehension or production.” While literary analysts have studied the reading process for quite some time, relatively recent advances in cognitive science bring new information to this discussion, particularly with respect to the interaction between long and short term memory during the reading process. Basically, the reading process is not an at-

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126 Kintsch, Comprehension, 93.
127 For example, in Wolfgang Iser’s discussion of indeterminacy, he characterises the reading process as being an essentially creative, additive phenomenon, whereby the reader imaginatively fills-in gaps left by the text itself. As the following discussion demonstrates, it is quite interesting in this regard that cognitive linguistics views the reading process as both creative and subtractive, as readers generate macropropositions, essentially reducing the aggregate amount of processed information, in order to maintain a supply of unoccupied short-term memory capacity, so readers can incorporate new segments of text. Iser’s idea is essentially additive, while the cognitive linguistic viewpoint both combines and subtracts information. Both processes are creative and inferential, and they are not mutually exclusive. For Iser’s view, see The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) 279.

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large, unadorned assimilation of textual information into the memory, as if the readers’ short-term memory capacity was virtually unlimited and as if the reading process was a mere conduit into that enormous memory capacity. Rather, a form of compression takes place, involving the construction of macropropositions—sometimes called scripts—in readers’ minds as they proceed through a text.\textsuperscript{128} Sometimes, a key sentence or phrase within a text can trigger an entire set of cognitive domains (i.e., an entire frame).

In his discussion of “a script-based situation model,” Kintsch points out that, “Many texts contain linguistic markers that signal their macrostructure.”\textsuperscript{129} Chapter 5 will assert that most distress psalms include a stereotyped pattern of linguistic marking, signalling a distress-oriented macrostructure to the experienced reader. To bring this matter into focus, one must understand four of Kintsch’s technical terms: textbase, situation model, microstructure and macrostructure.

We distinguish on the one hand between the microstructure and the macrostructure of a text, and on the other between the textbase and the situation model. The textbase–situation model distinction refers to the origin of the propositions in the mental representation of the text. Those propositions that are directly derived from the text constitute the textbase. However, only in rare cases is the result of comprehension a pure textbase; usually in order to understand a text, comprehenders supplement the information provided by a text from their knowledge and experience (long term memory) to achieve a personal interpretation of the text that is related to other information held in long term memory. The complete structure that is composed of both text-derived propositions (the textbase) and propositions (this includes imagery and action, which we also represent as propositions) contributed from long term memory is called the situation model. The micro- and macrostructure distinction is orthogonal to the textbase–situation model distinction. The microstructure is the local structure of the text, the sentence-by-sentence information, as supplemented by and integrated with long-term memory information. The macrostructure is a hierarchically ordered set of propositions representing the global structure of the text that is derived from the microstructure. It is sometimes directly signalled in a text, but often it must be inferred by the comprehender.\textsuperscript{130}

As an example of how Kintsch’s terminology and method relate to the exegesis in the following chapters, chapter 3 will include a discussion of the structure of Psalm 22:12-22 with respect to the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS]. Concerning the microstructure of this passage, the textbase of Psalm 22 features a series of metaphorical descriptions of the enemy as a group of wild beasts. Each type of beast is repeated within the text (dogs—vv 17, 21; lions—vv 14, 22; bulls, wild oxen—vv 13, 22), resulting in a six-fold metaphorical description of the enemy as a surrounding group of beasts; which can also be understood as a six-fold force-dynamic event frame. This six-fold repetition would

\textsuperscript{128} See Kintsch’s explanation of his “construction–integration model” of reading comprehension in Kintsch, Comprehension, 93ff.
\textsuperscript{129} Kintsch, Comprehension, 111.
\textsuperscript{130} Kintsch, Comprehension, 49–50.
probably suggest a macrostructure to an experienced reader. To arrive at a situation model, experienced readers may access long term memory about themselves, or others, having been outnumbered or overpowered by opposition. In Psalm 22, this rather lengthy distress discourse is bordered by verse 12, which includes הָעִבָּדֵל in parallel with verbs entreating the divine presence, an extremely common parallel structure within the Psalter. Based on Kintsch’s concept of macrostructure, an experienced reader would then probably construct a macroproposition, viewing this six-fold repetition (among other textual features to be discussed in chapter 3) as a unit, with respect to the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

I wish to draw an analogy between Kamp’s Figure-Ground analysis of Job 28 and Kintsch’s discussion of how a text may signal its macrostructure to the reader by means of a key sentence. Kintsch calls this signalling effect a “script-based situation model,” and he uses a story about grocery shopping to illustrate the phenomenon.

Many texts contain linguistic markers of importance and structure that signal their macrostructure. The following example shows how a text that lacks such signals can nevertheless be assigned a macrostructure as part of the construction of a situation model if it fits a familiar schema... The text is as follows:

(S1) Jane went grocery shopping on Sunday afternoon. (S2) She had to park her car far away from the store because the parking lot was full. (S3) The aisles were as crowded as the parking lot. (S4) The lettuce was wilted and the fruit was picked over. (S5) She became upset. (S6) But she filled her cart with whatever she could find. (S7) The bill was larger than expected. (S8) She carried two heavy bags across the parking lot.

The first sentence (S1) retrieves the grocery-shopping script... This script provides a macrostructure for the text...131

According to Kintsch, the first sentence (S1) prompts the reader to retrieve a script which then guides the reader’s reception of the text as a whole. After pointing out the script-retrieval effect of the first sentence upon the reader’s real-time, dynamic construal of the text, Kintsch summarises this grocery-shopping script effect as follows:

The processing of this text resulted in the creation of two macropropositions, GROCERY-SHOPPING and ANNOYED, that serve to organize and interrelate the text. The first macroposition was generated by the fact that a script that was retrieved on the basis of the first sentence proved to provide an appropriate organizational structure for the remainder of the text. Each sentence of the text was recognized as a possible filler for the slots of the script that was available. This computation involves matching each (complex) text proposition with propositions associated with the slots of the scripts in long term memory.132

The key notion here from Kintsch is that a single sentence within a text can prompt the reader to “retrieve” a sociologically-conventionalised set of information from the long term...
memory. In Kintsch’s example, the script-retrieval sentence is unmarked. As a mere part of
the narrative, its surface form does not stand out; yet it still triggers the script. Chapter 5
will suggest a similar retrieval function, yet of a more marked variety, triggered by verses
containing the parallelism ofعبر יֵבֶר lexemes and terms of divine entreaty, mentioned above.
According to Kintsch, the reader’s experience of the remainder of the text is then
understood to be a process of filling-in mental slots, which have been generated through the
expectations implied by the script. Kintsch points out that, “A reader without knowledge
about shopping in a supermarket who has not experienced the annoyances of such places
could and would not create this kind of structure.”

Ginsberg fishing is a
conventionalised cultural activity, and familiarity with this convention is necessary for the
script to function.

Gilles Fauconnier’s concept of mental spaces sheds further light on the question of how
language expressions such as Jane went grocery shopping on Sunday afternoon can prompt
the reader to retrieve a script from long term memory. This script-retrieval function is
related to the fact that this sentence contains the components of what Fauconnier calls a
“mental space builder.” In Fauconnier’s terminology, an expression like the one about Jane
going grocery shopping, “Invites the reader to build a new mental space...” According to
Fauconnier, mental spaces are,

Domains that we set up as we talk or listen, and that we structure with elements,
roles, strategies and relations. These domains—or interconnected mental spaces, as
I shall call them—are not part of the language itself, or of its grammars; they are not
hidden levels of linguistic representation, but language does not come without them.

In a later work, Fauconnier defines mental spaces as, “The domains that discourse builds up
to provide a cognitive substrate for reasoning and for interfacing with the world.” It
should be clarified that, in this quotation, Fauconnier uses the word “domain” somewhat
differently from that of Langacker, et. al., as discussed above. This is because mental
spaces are generally more temporary cognitive constructs, whereas frame semantics
typically uses the term “domain” as referring to more long-term cognitive constructs.
Fauconnier writes, “Mental spaces are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and
talk, for purposes of local understanding and action.” In this regard, Fauconnier’s
concept of a mental space is somewhat analogous to Kintsch’s situation model concept.

133 Kintsch, Comprehension, 116.
134 G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden
135 G. Fauconnier, Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language (Cambridge, Mass:
136 Fauconnier, Mappings in Thought and Language, 34.
137 Emphasis added. The Way We Think, 102.
Fauconnier notes that various grammatical forms can serve as space builders, in order to introduce new mental spaces. However, his general definition of a mental space builder is an expression stating that a certain proposition is held to be in effect with respect to the entities occupying the space. To demonstrate this idea, in the following quote, Fauconnier’s and Turner’s mental space builders about mountain climbing are similar to Kintsch’s script-retrieval sample sentence about grocery shopping.

The mental space that includes you, Mount Rainier, the year 2001, and your climbing the mountain can be activated in many different ways and for many different purposes. “You climbed Mount Rainier in 2001” sets up the mental space in order to report a past event. “If you had climbed Mount Rainier in 2001” sets up the same mental space in order to examine a counterfactual situation and its consequences. “Max believes that you climbed Mount Rainier in 2001” sets it up again, but now for the purpose of stating what Max believes. “Here is a picture of you climbing Mount Rainier in 2001” evokes the same mental space in order to talk about the content of the picture.

In like fashion (as discussed in chapter 5), the mental space that includes the supplicant’s distress and a call for help can be activated by stereotyped expressions within the Psalter such as לי צֶר (I am in distress), accompanied by terms which request the divine presence. To further explain how these principles will be applied in the following chapters, one more similarity between Kintsch’s script retrieval function and Fauconnier’s mental space building function needs to be explored. Both concepts include the retrieval of culturally familiar cognitive domains from long term memory. While discussing the various sources of knowledge that are incorporated in the construction of situation models, Kintsch includes “knowledge about the world in general.”

The reader must add nodes and establish links between nodes from his or her own knowledge and experience to make the structure coherent, to complete it, to interpret it in terms of the reader’s prior knowledge, and last but not least to integrate it with prior knowledge. Various sources of knowledge must be used in the construction of situation models—knowledge about the language, about the world in general, and about the specific communicative situation.

We have already seen that Kintsch’s example of grocery shopping is based upon a conventionalized activity within Western speech communities. In like fashion, Fauconnier and Turner use the term “organizing frame” to describe certain kinds of expressions that employ culturally-familiar concepts to introduce new mental spaces.

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139 The general definition of space-builders, namely, ‘Prop holds in space M’,” (Mental Spaces, 87).
141 Kintsch, *Comprehension*, 103.
An organizing frame for a mental space is one that specifies the nature of the relevant activity, events and participants. An abstract frame like *competition* is not an organizing frame because it does not specify a cognitively representable type of activity and event structure. *Boxing* is an organizing frame that specifies an activity, its events and sequences, and its participants.\(^{142}\)

Thus, the [BOXING] domain can function as an organizing frame because it refers to a specific, culturally conventionalised activity, with participants, sequences, and the like. However, the more abstract [COMPETITION] domain is too general, and lacks the specific focus which would be necessary for it to function as an organizing frame. As a final example of the importance of cultural convention and long term memory, Fauconnier evokes Fillmore’s familiar [COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION] frame to discuss how a mental space can be framed with respect to culturally-ingrained phenomena.

When the elements and relations of a mental space are organized as a package we already know, we say that the mental space is *framed*, and we call that organization a *frame*. So, for example, a mental space in which Julie purchases coffee at Peet's coffee shop has individual elements that are framed by COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION, and also by the subframe—highly important for Julie—of BUYING COFFEE AT PEET’S. Spaces are built up from many sources. One of these is the set of conceptual domains we already know about...\(^{143}\)

In a similar way, chapter 5 will discuss how a reader who is familiar with the Psalter as a body of literature may very well recognise the frequent juxtaposition of קָרָא lexemes and verbs of invocation and entreaty as a “package” that the reader “already knows,” lending the effect of an organising frame to this frequent juxtaposition of terms. In this brief survey of the work of Fauconnier and Kintsch, we have seen that certain expressions which contain the right package of information can serve as a cognitive lens, through which the remainder of a text can be received by experienced readers. To illustrate the similarity between Kintsch’s script-retrieval concept and Fauconnier’s concept of mental space builder, Kintsch’s [GROCERY SHOPPING] frame can function as a direct replacement for the [MOUNTAIN CLIMBING] frame in Fauconnier’s discussion:

The mental space that includes Jane, grocery shopping, and Sunday can be activated in many different ways and for different purposes. The sentence, *Jane went grocery shopping on Sunday afternoon* sets up the mental space in order to report a past event.

Chapter 5 will discuss how a particular, frequently repeated type of expression in several distress psalms would probably have a similar script-retrieval, or mental space building function in the mind of, “an idealized ‘normal’ reader... who reads everything carefully and

\(^{142}\) Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 104.

constructs a proposition whenever the text invites one.”144 This is not to imply that every reader would activate this [DISTRESS] script in every reading situation. Different readers will react to a text in different ways, as Kintsch writes,

A situation model is, therefore, a construction that integrates the textbase and relevant aspects of the comprehender’s knowledge. No general rules may be stated, because knowledge elaborations may be of many different types, and the extent to which they occur may differ widely among readers and occasions. How much elaboration occurs depends on the text—whether it is self-sufficient or not—but also on the readers, their goals, motivation, and resources available.145

An expert reader might have a tendency to cognitively activate a script, whereas another reader might not do so. Kintsch writes that peak performance in literary interpretation is a field reserved for expert readers.

The comprehension of literary texts should be regarded in the same way as any other expert performance. Peak performance, accordingly, would probably require a decade of intensive study. Of course a literary text can be enjoyed at some level even without that expertise, but deep understanding is reserved for the expert.146

This section has attempted to show how, when viewed from both a Figure-Ground perspective as well as from a cognitive perspective, key clauses—functioning as script-retrievers—can have a formative effect on the overall construal of texts during the real-time processing involved in a reading experience. Chapter five will examine this issue with respect to the frame semantics of צרור lexemes.

Having concluded the discussion of how Figure-Ground segregation will be employed in the chapters to follow, there are three more important areas in which aspects of cognitive linguistics will be put to use. The first of these three has to do with Talmy’s concept of palpability.

2.2 Palpability and Related Parameters
Certain בָּהֵם-cohesive expressions display a common factor with respect to the way certain scenes are depicted. Some examples, which will be discussed later, include motion event frames like the pitching and yawing of the ship (and the corresponding irregular motion of the sailors) in the fourth stanza of Psalm 107, and the mountains sliding into the sea in Psalm 46. When trying to state what these expressions have in common, Talmy's parameter of palpability seems to be an effective taxonomic distinction. Talmy presents a set of palpability-related parameters, several of which have a bearing upon our understanding of

144 Kintsch, Comprehension, 105.
145 Kintsch, Comprehension, 107.
146 Kintsch, Comprehension, 213.
expressions like those listed above, where the psalmists describe their distress in concrete terms.

The parameter of **palpability** is a gradient at the high end of which an entity is experienced as being concrete, manifest, explicit, tangible, and palpable. At the low end, an entity is experienced as being abstract, unmanifest, implicit, intangible and impalpable...

The **ostension** of an entity is our term for the overt substantive attributes that the entity has relative to any particular sensory modality. In the visual modality, the ostension of an entity includes its "appearance" and motion—thus, more specifically, including its form, coloration, texturing, and pattern of movements...147

Based on Talmy's definitions and terms, this parameter of palpability is applicable both to force-dynamic, as well as to motion event frames. Chapter four will investigate certain motion event frames within distress psalms, which depict the trouble of individuals and groups in uniquely palpable ways which are generally not found in psalms lacking ל大學 lexemes.

There are two more important areas in which aspects of cognitive linguistics will be put to use in the remainder of this study. The first of these two regards the definition of the term "genre" and the ways in which genre analysis will be conducted in the exegetical work to follow.

### 2.3 Genre Categorisation via Prototypes and Fuzzy Sets

The research in the following chapters asserts that there is a generic constellation of distress psalms: a grouping of texts that, in most cases, do not give indication of having been copied from one another, but yet show resemblances with respect to “diverging patterns of selection and combination of language items.”148 Since genre studies have advanced and changed since the days of Gunkel, it is important to discuss how the concept of genre will be approached throughout this study. Also, cognitive linguistics has made significant contributions within the field of genre study, through the concepts of prototypes and fuzzy sets, as will be pointed out below.

#### 2.3.1 Basic Definition of “Genre”

As exemplified by Wolfgang Richter, the idea of repeated traits has been an integral component in the definition of the word “genre” set forth by many scholars over the years:

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147 Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 141–3.
When a structural form repeatedly occurs with strong resemblance, and if in fact the individual occurrences of the form are textually independent from each other, then this related group of forms falls under the designation of “genre”.

If related forms have come into existence independently from one another, one must deduce that a particular structural pattern has preceded the individual forms, a pattern which includes a certain number of structural criteria. The concept of “genre” thus denotes no more than an approximate value which is assigned to a recognised structural pattern in a group of forms...

In a similar way, Tzvetan Todorov’s definition of genre research includes the idea of an operative principle evident within a number of texts:

When we examine works of literature from the perspective of genre, we engage in a very particular enterprise: we discover a principle operative in a number of texts, rather than what is specific about each of them.

Thus, in its most basic sense, the term “genre” has to do with similarities between texts. However, within the field of literary analysis, the understanding of genre has shifted considerably since the early twentieth century.

2.3.2 Current Views of Genre Studies Contrasted with Those of Gunkel

Compared with the view advocated by Gunkel in the early twentieth century, the genre concept employed in this research will be limited both temporally and ontologically (i.e. regarding the logical status of genre categories).

Temporal (Synchronic) Limitation

The concept of genre employed in the following research is strictly synchronic, whereas the prevailing conceptions of an earlier age have been largely diachronic, as scholars sought to understand the sociological processes which gave rise to particular groups of...
Jean-Marie Schaeffer writes that diachronic conceptions of genre gained popularity during the 19th century, aided by Hegel’s philosophy of history, which provided the impetus for understanding genre as a genetic essence which could be transferred across time through various texts:

Hegel is unquestionably the most prestigious representative of this neo-Aristotelian epistemology; the texts, conceived according to their literary essence, realise the genres historically, and the evolution of literature is the organic development of its generic determinations. All of the historical or systematic generic theories, and God knows they are legion, can be reduced to this Hegelian archetype.\(^\text{155}\)

Thus, Hegelian idealism supported the notion of “transtextual teleology” in which genres were regarded as discrete entities in-and-of themselves; entities which—in a manner of speaking—could bequeath their DNA across time via the texts which they embodied. In this way, a given literary genre was understood to be an “autonomous historical organism.”\(^\text{156}\)

Gunkel’s concept of genre purity exemplifies this view. He understood the oldest genres to have been pure and simple, due to their close attachment with their original cultic Sitz im Leben.\(^\text{157}\) As the genres were transmitted through time, from text to text, they became impure. Thus, Gunkel asserted that investigating the oral prehistory of a psalm was a necessary precursor to understanding the psalm itself:

Therefore, if we want to understand the psalms we have to ask about the experiences of those groups of people who sang and composed them. We must subject these poems to scrutiny not as that which has been written, but rather as that which has been sung; not on paper, but rather in life. But on what public occasions might such poems have been sung?\(^\text{158}\)

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Gunkel’s method of genre classification was largely diachronic. In his *Introduction*, he wrote, “The genres of an ancient writing must be differentiated by the various events of life from which they developed.”

The psalm scholars who followed in Gunkel’s footsteps have carried out largely diachronic investigations of various psalms, in search of the kinds of life events which would offer clues to the prehistory and development of the various texts. For example, Klaus Seybold in his *Das Gebet des Kranken im Alten Testament*, outlines a concept of genre that is inherently diachronic, as he sets out to investigate “the cultic genre originating from a context of sickness.”

Contrary to this earlier trend, the approach to genre assumed in this study will be synchronic rather than diachronic. Hempfer cautions that literary-critical assertions based on the putative diachronic genre lineage of texts constitute nothing more than “pseudo-explanations based on historical-philosophical speculations.” Childs notes that attempts to peer back in time through diachronic analysis of the Psalter are analogous to the idea that “one could write the history of England on the basis of the Methodist hymn book!”

Similarly, Richter explains that just because some Old Testament texts may warrant diachronic interpretation by virtue of their historical setting within a particular narrative, this does not imply that the exegete then has free reign to import this methodology elsewhere, or to assume that similar diachronic conclusions can be drawn with respect to texts which lack such historical contextualisation. Along a slightly different line of reasoning, Hardmeier explains that, although the generic features present in a given text have been sociologically (i.e. diachronically) determined, this does not imply that such sociological processes can be investigated without potential uncertainty. In other words, to acknowledge the possible existence of diachronic realities present in a particular text is essentially different from

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159 Gunkel used three criteria in his genre assignations: *Sitz im Leben*, thoughts and moods, and “language related to the form” (*Formensprache*). The first of these three was where Gunkel’s diachronic interests came into particular focus, as he sought to determine “the specific occasion in the worship service” reflected in a given psalm (*An Introduction to the Psalms*, 16).


165 Richter, *Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft*, 129.


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engaging in diachronic research based on genre.\textsuperscript{167} Even Longman, who takes a decidedly synchronic approach to genre analysis, acknowledges that there are diachronic aspects to the way genre functions in the creation of texts:

Reading and writing take place in the context of literary conventions exploited by both authors and readers. Genre is such a convention. Writers may not always be conscious of the generic tradition that is driving their writing. For instance, a contemporary mystery writer may not be able to articulate well a definition of his or her genre, but previous reading has provided the background needed in order to write something that readers will recognize as a member of that genre. Indeed, readers would be lost if authors utilized a writing vehicle that was totally unique with no literary connections with what preceded it. It is hard to imagine what such a writing would look like. Authors thus naturally write within a generic tradition to give the reader some guidance as to ‘how to take’ the writing on the page. In a sentence, genre triggers reading strategy. Genre signals are embedded in the text to invoke in the reader the proper response.\textsuperscript{168}

In the chapters to follow, a particular constellation of stylistic elements\textsuperscript{169} present in psalms containing לְצָר lexemes will be investigated, without in-depth cultic or sociological conclusions being drawn. The study seeks to advance our present understanding of the psalms as we possess them in the MT. The research in the following chapters is based on the idea that, accompanying occurrences of לְצָר in the Psalter, there is a group of textual elements which evidences a “transindividual pattern”\textsuperscript{170} (i.e. a thematic field “of similar features in constellation between texts”\textsuperscript{171}). The objective will be to increase the awareness and understanding of this thematic field in order to improve the present understanding of the psalms themselves.

\textit{Ontological Limitation}

A second and related limitation respecting the approach to genre taken in this dissertation has to do with the logical status of genre categories. Tracing its roots back to Platonic idealism, traditional criticism understood genre categories to be “a precise classificatory

\textsuperscript{167} Therefore, although it is not the goal of this present work to conduct diachronic analysis, a strictly synchronic approach does not deny that it is possible for one work of literature to be somehow generically dependent upon a prior work, as A. Fowler notes: “In literature, the tape of change can often be partly rewound through genre study,” (“The Future of Genre Theory: Functions and Constructional Types,” \textit{The Future of Literary Theory} [ed. R. Cohen; New York: Routledge, 1989] 293).


\textsuperscript{169} Brown, “Genre Criticism and the Bible,” 119.


\textsuperscript{171} “Careful attention to similar features in constellation between texts may very well illuminate generic parameters that truly reflect ancient conventions and not simply the generic grid of the interpreter,” (Brown, “Genre Criticism and the Bible,” 129).
system, “in which genres were conceived of as realistic “essences,” or as “categories that are fixed in nature.” Schaeffer explains this “essentialist” viewpoint as follows:

The way in which literary studies have used the notion “literary genre” since the 19th century is closer to magic thought than to rational investigation. In magic thought the word creates the thing. That is exactly what has happened with the notion of “literary genre”; the very fact of using the term has led us to think we ought to find a corresponding entity which would be added to the texts, and would be the cause of their relationship. In other words, most 19th and 20th-century generic theories would have us believe that literary reality is bicephalous: on the one hand we would have the texts, on the other the genres. These two notions are accepted as autonomous literary entities that are then to be related, the genres serving to interpret the texts.

This traditional approach emphasised genre purity and clear boundaries between genres, as if genres were discrete objects or containers (watertight compartments) into which literary works could be placed with quantum precision. This approach also tended to view the concept of genre as prescriptive (i.e. genres as rules which authors must follow) rather than descriptive (i.e. genres as “the clarification of meaningful structures”). For example, Hans-Georg Gadamer understood genre to be a normative phenomenon, consisting of guidelines to which authors must adhere. Contrary to this understanding of genres as reified entities, it is more appropriate to view them as synthetic constructs located in-between senders and receivers of communication, as summarised by Hempfer:

Genres are synthetic constructs located in-between the traditional positions of nominalism and realism. When the big picture is understood in this way, conceptions of genre are neither dismissed as mere linguistic fictions, nor are they granted apriori existence alongside the actual texts (in a Platonic or Aristotelian sense). Rather, they are understood as constructs resulting from the interaction between reader and text.

Thus, while the notion of genre should not be dismissed as if it were nothing at all, neither should the notion of genre be objectified as if a genre were a discrete object at which one could point with their index finger (Zeigehandlung). This view is similar to

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172 Brown, “Genre Criticism and the Bible,” 115.
175 Literary Genres and Textual Genericity, 167–8. Similar to Schaeffer’s use of the term “bicephalous”, Hempfer employs the word “isomorph” to assert that generic structures do not possess a separate a priori ontological status alongside the linguistic principles which result in the construction of sentences and texts (Gattungstheorie, 222–3).
178 Gattungstheorie, 221 (trans. mine). Along a similar line of reasoning, note Todorov: “We have postulated that literary structures, hence genres themselves, be located on an abstract level, separate from that of concrete works. We would have to say that a given work manifests a certain genre, not that this genre exists in the work,” (The Fantastic, 21).
179 Hempfer, Gattungstheorie, 221.
Wittgenstein’s game analogy, wherein he asserts that, although everyone knows that games exist, and everyone can offer an example of a game, yet, nobody can offer a discrete summary of what constitutes “gameness”. Wittgenstein’s studied refusal to boil the concept down to specifics provides a helpful analogue to our understanding of the ontology of genre. Elsewhere, Hempfer adopts Wittgenstein’s terminology to describe genres as “rules of the game”:

Genres are generally understood to be communicative norms (in the sense of more or less internalised rules-of-the-game, not in the sense of prescriptive postulates).

Thus, as Schaeffer summarises, “Generic concepts are ‘soft’ concepts, not ‘hard’ ones; their limits are definitionally fuzzy...” Furthermore, in light of Lotfi Zadeh’s work (discussed below), not only are the definitional genre boundaries fuzzy, but a particular text’s degree of membership within a given genre category is fuzzy as well.

Therefore, based on these chronological and ontological limitations, it is not the purpose of this dissertation to hail the “discovery” of a “new genre” as one might point out a new species in the Amazon rain forest. Rather, the purpose is to point out a previously unnoticed constellation of similar features among a group of creatures (i.e. texts) that biblical scholars have seen running in the forest for a long time; a purpose summarised well by Brown:

In fact, it is possible that careful attention to similar features in constellation between texts may very well illuminate generic parameters that truly reflect ancient conventions and not simply the generic grid of the interpreter.

2.3.3 The Concept of Genre Understood as a Matrix: Three Criteria

The concept of genre to be employed in the following study can be understood as consisting of multiple axes, like a matrix. Understood in this way, a text can have more than one generic descriptor suitably associated with it. This understanding of genre as a matrix can be broken down into three attributes. The concept of genre is scalable, multidimensional, and non-discrete. The following discussion describes the genre research methodology to be used in this dissertation without implying criticism of those scholars who have employed other genre methodologies.

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181 *Gattungstheorie*, 223 (trans. mine).
183 Brown, “Genre Criticism and the Bible,” 129.
184 Many other scholars have focused their genre research at a more generally abstract level resulting in broader classes of texts, in greater emphasis on taxonomy (i.e. attaching proper nouns to groups of texts), and on the study of genres (plural) as historical phenomena. The fact that the abstraction level employed in this dissertation is more specific, resulting in a smaller grouping of texts, and in less emphasis on taxonomy, in no way implies that these other studies are not legitimate. R. A. Burridge’s work comparing the gospels with Graeco-Roman biography is an example: “When dealing with documents like the gospels which are not part...
Scalability

Genre research is like a set of lenses with variable focal length. The focus of intertextual commonality can be broadened or narrowed according to the needs of the research, as explained by Richter:

“Genre” is a concept, the limits of which cannot be clearly stated. One cannot clearly define what belongs to a particular category of forms and what does not belong. It depends upon the number of exemplars, but also upon the decision of the researcher. Thus, the concept of genre reflects that which is generally true of concepts themselves: namely, their lack of conceptual clarity. Furthermore, genre is a concept for an “ideal” or “typical” form which does not exist in reality. It is derived through the process of selection (abstraction) which considers some features of a form to be characteristic, while disregarding others. “Genre” is therefore a theoretical product of research. In the actual literature, only the forms exist. But it is not pure theory, because if related forms have come into existence independently from one another, one must deduce that a particular structural pattern has preceded the individual forms, a pattern which includes a certain number of structural criteria.185

As Richter continues to develop the idea that the abstraction level is, in part, dependent upon the decision of the researcher, he writes, “Therefore, ‘genres’ include various levels of selection (abstraction).”186 Richter explains that the selection criteria can be modified, resulting in larger or smaller collections of texts. On one end of this spectrum one would find a very widely-meshed structural pattern (sehr weitmaschigem Strukturmuster), resulting in very large, overarching genres, such as “prose” or “poetry”. On the other end of the spectrum one would find the meaningless situation where the unique content of each text is thought to comprise its own sub genre (Gattungsuntergruppe). Richter makes the important observation that selection criteria which result in smaller groupings of texts are of generally greater value than the opposite.187 Similar to Richter’s concept of variable abstraction, Longman assigns five generic descriptors to Psalm 98, each derived from a different level of abstraction:

Scholars in the past and the present have expended much effort to determine the correct abstraction level of “genre.” How many traits must be shared by texts in order to classify them as belonging to another type? Another way to state the...
problem is as follows: Are genres finite or are they infinite in number? The answer to this problem is that genre exists at all levels of generality and that the make-up and nature of a particular genre depends on the viewpoint which the researcher adopts. In other words, it is possible to speak of a broad genre of many texts which have few traits in common, or of a narrow genre of as few as two texts which are identical in many ways. It depends on the decision of the researcher, and his/her decision arises from his/her research needs. The fluidity of genre designations is best demonstrated with an example. Psalm 98 may be classified in a variety of different genres, depending on the level of abstraction from the text itself. It may be classified very broadly as a poem and share a few general similarities with other texts which we call poetry. On the other extreme, Psalm 98 may be classified narrowly as in a genre with only Psalm 96. Psalm 96 is virtually identical to Psalm 98 with the exception that the former includes a diatribe against idol worship. Between these two extremes are a variety of other potential classifications for Psalm 98. Moving from broad to narrow, Psalm 98 may be treated as a poem, a cultic hymn, a hymn concerning God’s kingship, a divine warrior victory psalm and finally as most closely related to Psalm 96.\(^{188}\)

Generic analysis is a scalable pursuit, as the researcher varies the selection criteria (and, thereby, the abstraction level) to gain various degrees of insight into a particular text or grouping of texts. Thus, Longman writes about the benefit of studying a psalm (singular) in the context of its genres (plural):

> More benefit may be gained studying a psalm in the context of its genres than by examining the immediately preceding and following psalms.\(^{189}\)

**Multidimensionality**

Similar to Hjelmslev’s concept of genre hybrids (see section 1.5, above), a text’s genericity can be suitably described in terms of more than one variable, rather than as belonging to a univalent classificatory system. Closely related to the criterion of scalability, the genericity of a text can be understood as a matrix in which, not just variable quantities of criteria come into view (levels of abstraction), but also various kinds of criteria, as Martin Buss explains:

OT form critics have often not seen, as others have, that genres are abstractions (“ideal forms”) and that virtually all human experiences involve a combination of categories applied simultaneously and that partly for this reason no more than statistical correlations between phenomena can be expected. The concept of a matrix, or field, involving several dimensions has proved fruitful in many areas recently, and can be applied meaningfully to the OT... A multidimensional and flexible approach permits a meaningful assessment of individuality. A very simple object which involves only a few dimensions is not likely to be distinct from many other instances of a similar combination of characteristics. A more complex entity which draws together many different features, however, can have a relatively unique status. (Gunkel saw the role of such a rich complexity in prophetic literature but assigned it too strongly to a secondary process associated largely with writing.) In


\(^{189}\)I emailed Dr. Longman to confirm that I was correctly understanding his use of the singular and plural in this sentence. He replied in the affirmative (“Israelite Genres in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context,” 65).
other words, individuality is not opposed to comparability. It may be noted that this observation applies also to the field of religion; the meaningful individuality of biblical faith is enhanced not denied, through a wide range of contacts. If forms are understood not as exclusive genres, but as potentially interacting structures, the study of forms becomes of increasing, rather than of decreasing, importance for highly important phenomena.¹⁹⁰

Thus, for example, if the generic identity of Psalm 18 is viewed as a combination of categories applied simultaneously, this helps to explain why some scholars have viewed this psalm as an individual thanksgiving, while others have viewed it as a royal psalm. Both conclusions are reasonable, but they have to do with different axes of a generic matrix. The following chapters will assert that it is also reasonable to regard this poem as a distress psalm, thus giving Psalm 18 a threefold generic identity. More recently, John Frow has said essentially the same thing, using the term “field” rather than “matrix.”

Texts—even the simplest and most formulaic—do not “belong” to genres but are, rather, uses of them; they refer not to “a” genre but to a field or economy of genres, and their complexity derives from the complexity of that relation.¹⁹¹

Similar to this field or matrix concept, the distress-related genre elements studied in this work are located in psalms which cut across traditional form-critical classifications. Although most frequently appearing in Individual Laments (e.g. Psalms 9/10; 22; 31; 54; 59; 69; 71; 77; 86; 102; 142; 143) and Individual Thanksgivings (e.g. Psalms 18/2 Sam 22; 116; 118; Jonah 2), these distress-related genre elements are also found in the Hymn of Zion category (Psalm 46), as well as that of Communal Lament (Psalm 106), Communal Thanksgiving (Psalm 107), Wisdom Psalm (Psalm 37), and Confidence Psalm (Psalm 4). Therefore, very similar distress-related genre elements are present across a spectrum of different traditionally recognised form critical categories, thus providing two different axes on a matrix. The distinction which Schaeffer draws between generic denomination and textual genericity is somewhat similar to Buss’ notion of genre as matrix:

No generic denomination can stand as being both the necessary and the sufficient condition to define a given text. To be more precise, generic names always select

¹⁹⁰“The Study of Forms,” 53–4. Schaeffer’s concept of overlapping networks is somewhat similar to Buss’ matrix idea: “The different texts that we integrate into a genre are often linked by simple “family resemblances” in Wittgenstein’s sense: they do not all necessarily share the same recurrent characteristic or characteristics, but a given text shares some characteristics with some of its “congeners,” some other characteristics with other “congeners.” Thus a text p shares a bundle of traits A with texts q and r; q in turn shares traits B (different from A) with s, which, furthermore, shares part of traits A with q and r; r in turn, in addition to the A traits that it shares with p, shares other traits C with it and with s, etc. In other words, a genre is far from forming a univocal class; it is formed of several networks of partial resemblances that, through a process of overlapping, form the literary genre in its historical variability. Therefore the intentional generic definition of retrospective classifications inevitably neutralizes this variability,” (“Literary Genres and Textual Genericity,” 175).

some generically pertinent textual traits... The traits selected by the name are not necessarily the only ones that are pertinent from the viewpoint of textual genericity, nor the most important...\(^{192}\)

Therefore, because generic conceptions are scalable and multidimensional, it is possible for an individual work of literature to have more than one generic identity.\(^{193}\)

**Non-Discrete: Fuzzy Boundaries and Non-Binary Set Membership Status**

Genre designations do not constitute sharply-separable classes. René Wellek quotes the 18th century critic, Lord Kames, as follows:

> Literary compositions run into each other, precisely like colours: in their strong tints they are easily distinguished; but are susceptible of so much variety, and so many different forms, that we never can say where one species ends and another begins.\(^{194}\)

Likewise, Schaeffer writes that, “Generic morphology, even in the most stable genres, such as the fable for example, is always open.”\(^{195}\) Elsewhere, he adds,

> The relation of text to genre is not strictly definitional but is on the order of the relationship of an exemplar to a purely extensional class; it does not presuppose strict definitional identity of all exemplars entering the class.\(^{196}\)

Schaeffer also notes that gaining a greater understanding of generic structures within a group of texts can be more profitable than the sometimes mechanistic exercise of attaching proper nouns to texts or groups of texts.

> The analysis of textual genericity—that is to say the study of generic mechanisms—may be more interesting from a structural viewpoint than the study of genres as classificatory sets.\(^{197}\)


\(^{193}\)Since genres are groupings of texts based on similarities, it is possible that a single text could be identified with more than one genre type, if it shares significant similarities with multiple categories,” (Brown, “Genre Criticism and the Bible,” 142); A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 20; H. Dubrow, *Genre* (London: Methuen, 1982) 31; Longman III, “Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical,” 65. “A work can, for example, manifest more than one category, more than one genre,” (Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 22).


\(^{197}\)“Literary Genres and Textual Genericity,” 178. Likewise, Todorov makes a similar comment while discussing the taxonomic orientation of N. Frye’s view of literary genre: “To say that the elements of a whole can be classified is to formulate the weakest possible hypothesis about these elements. Moreover, Frye’s *Anatomy* constantly suggests a catalogue in which countless literary images might be inventoried; but a catalogue is of course only one of the tools of knowledge, not knowledge itself. It might even be said that the man who merely classifies cannot do his job so well,” (Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 18–9).
Cognitive linguistics provides additional understanding of this non-binary aspect of genre category membership. This understanding of set membership can be explained by comparing it with the Aristotelian understanding of set theory. The theory underlying classical Aristotelian categorisation assumes that there are only two potential degrees of set membership: member or non-member.\(^{198}\) For example, with respect to the set consisting of bananas for sale in grocery stores, a given object either is a banana, or it is not a banana. In this case, set membership is a binary function. Contrary to this classical understanding of set membership, fuzzy set theory asserts that the categorisation of many human artefacts—literary or otherwise—with respect to set membership is not a binary function in which there are only two options: member or non-member. Lotfi Zadeh summarises this view as follows:

The kind of logic we need is not \textit{first-order logic}, but \textit{fuzzy logic}—that is, the logic that underlies inexact or approximate reasoning. I feel this way because most of human reasoning—almost all of human reasoning—is imprecise... I will explain the main differences between fuzzy logic and classical two-valued logic. In classical two-valued systems, all classes are assumed to have sharply defined boundaries. So either an object is a member of a class or it is not a member of a class. Now, this is okay if you are talking about something like mortal or not mortal, dead or alive, male or female, and so forth. These are examples of classes that have sharp boundaries. But most classes in the real world do not have sharp boundaries. For example, if you consider characteristics or properties like tall, intelligent, tired, sick, and so forth, all of these characteristics lack sharp boundaries. Classical two-valued logic is not designed to deal with properties that are a matter of degree... In classical logic, there are just two truth values: true/false (or one and zero). In multivalued logical systems there are more than two truth values... You would need a multivalued system to be able to say something “John is tall.” For tall is a property that requires an infinity of truth values to describe it. So something as simple as “John is tall” would require multivalued logic-unless you arbitrarily establish a threshold by saying “somebody over 6 feet tall is tall, and those who are less than 6 feet tall are not tall.” In other words, unless you artificially introduce some sort of a threshold like that, you will need multivalued logic. But even though these multivalued logical systems have been available for some time, they have not been used to any significant extent in linguistics, in psychology, and in other fields where human cognition plays an important role. Another key difference is that in fuzzy logic \textit{truth} itself is allowed to be fuzzy. So it is okay to say that something is “quite true.” You can say “it's more or less true.” You can also use fuzzy probability like “not very likely,” “almost impossible,” or “rarely.” In this way, fuzzy logic provides a system that is sufficiently flexible and expressive to serve as a natural framework for the semantics of natural languages... The crux of the problem, really, is the excessively wide gap between the precision of classical logic and the imprecision of the real world.\(^{199}\)

Using Zadeh’s illustration of physical stature, a hypothetical set comprised of “tall men” may—at its centre—contain a few prototypical members: extremely tall men, professional

\(^{198}\)Lakoff, \textit{Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things}, 5–6.


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basketball players with a height of 220 cm. Then, moving approximately halfway toward the set’s fuzzy boundary, one could find tall men, with heights in the range of 195 cm. Approaching the set’s fuzzy boundary region, one might find men who are somewhat tall, with heights of approximately 180 cm. Of course, all of these stated degrees of tallness assume certain pre-existing cognitive domains such as [TALLNESS], and [METRIC SYSTEM], resident within the long term memory of speakers and hearers. Also, the domain [TALLNESS] may be affected by one’s regional location, ethnic heritage, and personal opinion. Similar to the way that this illustration presents the fuzzy semantics of the word “tall,” this notion of graded centrality of set membership, with prototypes serving as exemplars, has been applied to genre studies.

A particular element (a singular text, in our reasoning) may therefore 'more inherently' and 'to a larger extent' belong to its category (a definite literary genre) than another element although in the final analysis both instances may (in other respects) be considered as equally valid instances of the same category. As a result, the dichotomous perspective on meaning has been replaced by a less reductionist theoretical model with a broader and more continuous spectrum of nuances and degrees which, instead of drawing on Aristotle, is mostly associated with Wittgenstein's notion of 'family resemblance' and Zadeh's mathematical topology of 'fuzzy sets'. No longer clear-cut and definitely fixed, the boundaries of a category are often fuzzy... Our remarks so far have, we trust, convincingly demonstrated the cognitive importance of prototypes—although a specification like ‘prototypical instances’ may be better suited to stressing the ideal, sometimes imaginary character of such constructions for the successful understanding of any category. Because of their representative character and their central position, prototypical instances are usually recognized, identified and judged more easily than non-prototypical cases. Accordingly, they serve as cognitive reference points for the classification of new, formerly unknown specimens as well as for the process of inference and for global characterisation of the entire category.200

Gerard Steen applies the concept of fuzzy sets to genre categorisation in a similar fashion.

Whether classes of discourse are regarded as natural or social kinds, they cannot be regarded as so-called definitional concepts, which permit description by means of necessary and sufficient conditions. Instead, it is plausible to assume that they are cognitively represented by means of prototypes. As is well known, a prototype is the most typical instance of a more encompassing and varied, fuzzy conceptual category.201

Longman’s assertion that genres are “fluid and overlapping” is somewhat similar to the ideas discussed above, that genres are scalable, multidimensional and non-quantised (with fuzzy boundaries). Commenting on the potential breadth of genre research, Longman notes,

What criteria do we use to place genres in their proper category? Stated quite simply, if we are going to conceive of genres as fluid and overlapping, any type of

similarity is appropriate. Gunkel restricted his criteria to three: content, mood and setting, but there is no reason why we cannot use many types of similarities.  

The following research will assert that there is a generic constellation of forms and features associated with יָרֵד liexemes; a constellation which cuts across traditional form-critical genre distinctions, thus forming one axis on a multi-variable generic matrix. Although, in the absence of native-speaking informants, an analysis of prototype effects must be approached with caution, this does not mean that such an exercise is impossible. At the conclusion of the study, it will be asserted that there is a smaller grouping of distress psalms which expert readers may perceive to be particularly representative—or prototypical—of this distress genre constellation. The hope is that increasing our awareness of these patterns will improve our understanding of the psalms themselves, and of the Psalter as a whole. Wittgenstein asserted that the way one views an object affects the way one will use it.  

The objective of the following study is to try to improve the view of a constellation of expressions which are clustered around יָרֵד ilexemes in the Psalter. 

The final way that cognitive linguistics plays a central role in the following study has to do with the importance of inference in semantic analysis and exegesis.

### 2.4 The Indispensability of Inference in Semantic Analysis

In the research to follow, semantic inferences are drawn from linguistic data presented in several psalms. Forms of widely-varying lengths and kinds, which (using Hjelmslev’s terminology) are cohesive with יָרֵד liexemes will be grouped together and analysed semantically. Central to this methodology is the notion that various forms and syntagms which are not manifestly similar when viewed as surface elements can be inferred to be similar when viewed as semantic elements, as described by Talmy:

> We assume that we can isolate elements separately within the domain of meaning and within the domain of surface expression... We examine which semantic elements are expressed by which surface elements. This relationship is largely not...

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202 Longman III, “Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical,” 58.

203 For examples of contemporary researchers applying prototype theory in Old Testament exegesis, see Wardlaw, Conceptualizing Words for God Within the Pentateuch, 98ff; van Wolde, “Wisdom, Who Can Find It?” 26–7.

204 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 74.

205 According to John Hayes, “elucidation” is a goal of genre research: “A subconscious structure is one of which a speaker or hearer is sufficiently aware to act appropriately in relation to it. Such action shows itself in correct usage (such as of words or syntax) or in an appropriate response (laughing at a joke, obeying a command, accepting an implicit offer of friendship). A special form of such minimal awareness is the process of meaningful classification... a large part of language study, as indeed of the humanities and social sciences, consists in the bringing into awareness considerations which are known subconsciously. Such a process may be called ‘elucidation.’ A major part of form criticism is then the elucidation of genres and thus the clarification of different aspects of human life. The primary aim of form criticism, as we shall see more fully below, is not to provide data external to oneself but rather to provide insight into human existence,” (“Preface,” Old Testament Form Criticism [ed. J. Hayes; San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1977] 3).
Thus, surface forms which are different from one another in kind (e.g. nouns vis-à-vis verbs) or in size (single forms vis-à-vis larger syntagms) can serve a similar semantic role, in spite of their surface differences, and inference is a necessary step in making these determinations.

Linguists from varying schools of thought have noticed that their craft is dependent upon inference of one kind or another. Generative grammarians, for example, “rely heavily on deduction and intuition”, as they employ the judgments of native speakers to determine the grammaticality of expressions. With the rise of cognitive linguistics in the 1980s, the deployment of inference in semantic analysis has become more deliberate and methodologically-informed. I use the word “inference” similar to the way that Talmy uses the term “introspection”, as follows:

Cognitive semantics centers its research on conceptual organization, hence, on content experienced in consciousness. That is, for cognitive semantics, the main object of study itself is qualitative mental phenomena as they exist in awareness. Cognitive semantics is thus a branch of phenomenology, specifically, the phenomenology of conceptual content and its structure in language. What methodology, then, can address such a research target? As matters stand, the only instrumentality that can access the phenomenological content and structure of consciousness is that of introspection.

While urging caution that introspection must be employed with linguistic rigour, Talmy observes that, in any science, researchers must go to where the data is located; geologists must examine rocks, and so forth.

In the same way, if one’s area of scientific study is linguistic meaning, one must go to where meaning is located. And meaning is located in conscious experience. In the case of such subjective data, “going” to their location consists of introspection.
Similar to Talmy’s discussion of introspection, inference plays a central role in Gilles Fauconnier’s concept of mental spaces and their role in discourse comprehension.\textsuperscript{210} Fauconnier likens participation in a discourse to negotiating a maze of mental spaces, in which linguistic data provides partitioning information “for drawing inferences properly.”\textsuperscript{211}

Inference also important in Walter Kintsch’s model of the cognitive processes through which readers comprehend texts. According to Kintsch, inference is integral to text comprehension both at an instantaneous or micro-level as well as at an overall gist-extraction or macro-level. At the micro, or local, level within a text, reading comprehension is a virtually instantaneous two-stage process, which Kintsch calls construction and integration. The initial part of this process takes place at a pre-conscious level, and is loosely structured:

Comprehension, in this view, may in fact be quite chaotic in its early stages. It becomes orderly and well-behaved only when it reaches consciousness. Such a process can be modeled by a construction process that is only weakly controlled and proceeds largely in an associative, bottom-up manner that is followed by a constraint satisfaction process in the form of a spreading activation mechanism that yields the coherence and order that we experience. I have called this model the construction-integration (CI) model. In this model, mental representations are formed by weak production rules that yield disorderly, redundant, and even contradictory output. However, this output undergoes a process of integration, which results in a well-structured mental representation... The production rules in the CI model are weak and dumb and do not discriminate what is contextually appropriate from what is not; they are just as likely to instantiate the wrong as the right meaning of a word, or to form an irrelevant as relevant inference. The construction of the “correct,” contextually appropriate meaning results from the integration process that quickly deactivates contextually inappropriate constructions.\textsuperscript{212}

In the initial phase of reading comprehension at the micro-level, the construction process yields a disorderly network of propositions in the reader’s pre-conscious mind. In the integration phase which immediately follows, inference plays an indispensable role in the reader’s emerging comprehension of the text.

Once these propositions have been linked into a network...a spreading activation process is used to stabilize the network. Activation is spread around the network until it stabilizes in a way that takes account of the pattern of mutual constraints that exists among the nodes of the network (the propositions of a text together with the inferences and knowledge elaborations a reader has produced). The final activation values of the nodes thus come to reflect the constraining properties of the network as a whole... Nodes that are positively connected to many other nodes in the net will be strengthened. Nodes that have few connections or are negatively connected will wither away or become suppressed. This is a process of constraint satisfaction.\textsuperscript{213}

\textsuperscript{210}Fauconnier, \textit{Mental Spaces}, 1, 16.
\textsuperscript{211}Mappings in Thought and Language, 49 For more of Fauconnier’s understanding of discourse as a process of inference-production, see also pages 5, 7, 12, 28, 30, 31, 69, 70, and 155.
\textsuperscript{212}Kintsch, \textit{Comprehension}, 94–5.
\textsuperscript{213}Kintsch, \textit{Comprehension}, 98–9.
This construction-integration process takes place both instantaneously and continuously throughout a text reading event. "The construction of word meaning in a discourse context takes approximately 350 ms." For our purposes here, the central idea is that inference plays an integral role as the understanding of small bits of text emerges in the reader’s consciousness. On a macro level, according to Kintsch, inference also plays a central role in a reader’s sequentially emerging mental representation of a text as a whole, which he calls “episodic text memory”. To summarise this concept, three terms need to be briefly defined: textbase, situation model, and macroproposition.

The comprehension process yields as its end product a mental representation of a text, the episodic text memory... This episodic text memory is a unitary structure, but for analytic purposes it is useful to distinguish two components—the textbase and the situation model. The textbase consists of those elements and relations that are directly derived from the text itself. It is what would be obtained if a patient linguist or psychologist were to translate the text into a propositional network... without adding anything that is not explicitly specified in the text. In general, this procedure yields an impoverished and even incoherent network. The reader must add nodes and establish links between nodes from his or her own knowledge and experience to make the structure coherent, to complete it, to interpret it in terms of the reader’s prior knowledge, and last but not least to integrate it with prior knowledge... The mental text representation is a mixture of text-derived and knowledge-derived information.

According to Kintsch, "Inferences... are involved in both the formation of the textbase and the construction of the situation model." A reader’s global understanding of a text involves a reductionary process resulting in the production of macropropositions. Later on, Kintsch summarises the generation of macroproposition is as essentially an inferential exercise.

The generation of macropropositions can be considered as some kind of inference—an inference that does not add information to the text but that reduces information. In selecting a macroproposition, micropropositions are deleted, and in forming a generalization or construction, several micropropositions are replaced by an appropriate macroproposition. Information is reduced in all these cases, as a summary replaces lower level detail.

In a similar manner, Lakoff points out the role that inference plays in the cognitive processing of prototypes. "Prototypes act as cognitive reference points of various sorts and

214Kintsch, Comprehension, 101, 124.
215Kintsch, Comprehension, 103.
216Kintsch, Comprehension, 103–4.
217Kintsch, Comprehension, 167.
218Kintsch, Comprehension, 111–6.
219Kintsch, Comprehension, 177.
form the basis for inferences.” Lakoff emphasises the pervasiveness of inference in human beings’ knowledge and categorization, both linguistic and otherwise.

An enormous amount of our knowledge about categories of things is characterized in terms of typical cases. We constantly draw inferences on the basis of that kind of knowledge. And we do it so regularly and automatically that we are rarely aware that we are doing it.

The cognitive researchers cited above highlight the important idea that, although inference may be involved in any type of semantic analysis (even in a strictly structuralist approach), in cognitive semantics, the role of inference is more deliberate, and perhaps more self-aware than in other approaches. This is because, “In cognitive semantics, meaning is identified as conceptualization associated with linguistic expressions.” As Talmy points out, these surface expressions do not come complete with semantic name tags attached. There is no self-evident formal correspondence between linguistic form and semantic expression, and I will suggest that this phenomenon is particularly prominent in the assignation of domain names in the poetic criticism carried out in the following study. However, by applying cognitive linguistic criteria such as scripts, force dynamics, and motion event frames, the semantic inferences can be correlated to identifiable linguistic forms in many cases. In the chapters to follow, the terms เธ่ and เธ่ will serve as the profile, and the discussion attempts to describe the contextualised encyclopedic knowledge (consisting of domains or propositions) which the Psalter associates with these two terms. These domains thereby comprise the “distress frame”, i.e. the frame against which เธ่ lexemes are profiled in the Psalter. The role of inference is strategic throughout the study, because, for example, the linguistic forms comprising the domain [POWERLESSNESS] are not overtly labelled as such. Nevertheless, careful cognitive semantic analysis leads to a plausible conclusion that an experienced reader would conceptualize the domain [POWERLESSNESS] (or some similar domain name: [WEAKNESS], etc.) when reading a distress psalm.

Having discussed matters of the method to be employed in this study, in chapter 2 we will turn to the homonym issue, in order to exclude occurrences of เธ่ from our study of distress in the Psalter. But first, a brief excursus.

3. Excursus: Talmy’s Force-Dynamic Taxonomy
Chapters three and four of this study will employ Talmy’s terminology to examine the force-dynamic patterns evident within distress psalms. In order to avoid the repetitious

221Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 86.
explanation of terms in these two chapters, the following excursus is provided as a reference, summarising a portion of Talmy’s force-dynamic taxonomy.

3.1 Onset Causation of Rest
Talmy describes the Onset Causation of Rest as the pattern in which, “The stronger Antagonist comes into impingement against an Agonist that tends toward motion and has been moving, and thus stops it.”223 The following sample sentence with the golf ball demonstrates this pattern:

The golf ball stopped rolling when it encountered the tree.

3.2 Onset Causation of Motion
The Onset Causation of Motion is similar. Talmy describes it as the pattern in which, “A stronger Antagonist comes into position against an Agonist with an intrinsic tendency toward rest, and thus causes it to change from a state of rest to one of action.”224 The following sample sentence with the golf ball demonstrates this pattern:

As she swung her three-wood, the golf ball sailed off the tee.

3.3 Onset Letting of Motion
Next, Talmy describes the Onset Letting of Motion as the pattern in which, “A stronger Antagonist that has been blocking an Agonist with a tendency toward motion now disengages and releases the Agonist to manifest its tendency.”225 In the following sample sentence, the weaker junior varsity wrestler is finally allowed to go free:

When the practice round ended, the varsity wrestler released the junior varsity wrestler from the series of holds that he had inflicted upon him.

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223Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 418.
224Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 418.
225Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 419.
3.4 Onset Letting of Rest
In this force-dynamic category, “An Antagonist that has forcibly kept in motion an Agonist tending toward rest now ceases impinging on this Agonist and allows it to come to rest.”

In the following sample sentence, the town tends toward rest, and has been kept from it by an earthquake:

The town rested quietly after the earthquake came to an end.

3.5 Extended Causation of Motion
The Extended Causation of Motion, “Involves an Agonist with an intrinsic tendency towards rest that is being opposed from outside by a stronger Antagonist, which thus overcomes its resistance and forces it to move.”

The following sample sentence presents a situation of pursuit:

The suspect kept on running, while the police officer chased him down the street.

3.6 Extended Causation of Rest with Expenditure of Effort
To illustrate the Extended Causation of Rest with Expenditure of Effort, Talmy offers the following sample sentence:

The man resisted the pressure of the crowd against him.

In this situation, the man would typically be swept along by the crowd—he would be force-dynamically weaker than the antagonist—were it not for the “psychological component.”

The psychological component is normally included and understood as the factor that renders the man a stronger Agonist able to withstand the crowd. It accomplishes this by maintaining the expenditure of effort, that is, by a continuously renewed exertion...

3.7 Extended Motion Despite Opposition
In Extended Motion Despite Opposition, “The Agonist’s intrinsic tendency is now toward motion, and although there is an external force opposing it, the Agonist is stronger, so that its tendency becomes realized in resultant motion.” The following sample sentence envisions an individual eluding others’ attempts to confine him:

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226 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 419.
227 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 415.
228 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 433.
229 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 433.
230 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 415.
The king remained free despite the rebels’ attempts to capture him.

3.8 Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist
The seventh and final force-dynamic pattern evident in the distress psalms is that of Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist. This is among a group that Talmy refers to as balance-shift patterns.\textsuperscript{231} This is a situation where, “The Antagonist and Agonist can continue in mutual impingement, but the balance of forces can shift through the weakening or strengthening of one of the entities.”\textsuperscript{232} The following sample sentence presents a man’s strength as Agonist, and a chronic disease as Antagonist:

Due to the chronic disease, the man’s strength gradually faded away.

\textsuperscript{231}\textsuperscript{Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 419–20.}
\textsuperscript{232}\textsuperscript{Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 419.}
Chapter 2
Translating צַרְרָם Homonyms in the MT Psalter

An analysis of the root צַרְרָם (word group one) means “to wrap, be cramped, to have problems,” while צַרְרָם (word group two) denotes “treat with hostility, attack.” Obviously, if one wants to study צַרְרָם, then instances of צַרְרָם must be excluded from the analysis. This chapter attempts to briefly clarify any potential homonym ambiguity, so that questionable occurrences can be excluded from the analysis conducted in the following chapters. The phrase מִידֵּצֶר in Psalm 107:2 serves as an example of the ambiguity caused by this homonym pair. Although the lexica, along with the LXX, Syriac, Targum and Vulgate, translate this as an instance of word group two (“from the hand/power of the enemy/oppressor”), Gunkel disagrees, due to the three occurrences of צַרְרָם later in the psalm: “In this case, צַר does not indicate “enemy”, but rather “distress”, as will emerge from what follows.” Others share Gunkel’s opinion. So we will seek to explain how syntax and morphology can be combined with general context to reduce ambiguity over the translation of these homonyms. This chapter includes a table of all the forms in the Psalter which are derived either from צַרְרָם or צַרְרָם. The table also gives the forms with which the ancient versions (LXX, Peshitta, Targum and Latin) have rendered each corresponding Hebrew form. A summary of lexical data about each form is also included in the table.

This chapter gives a threefold analysis of this homonym issue. First, we will consider the question of etymology. Is the semantic distinction between צַרְרָם and צַרְרָם based upon two Semitic roots with one indicating "enemy/hostility" and the other indicating "narrowness/distress", or do words formed from the consonants צַרְרָם emerge from a single Semitic root which finds application in more than one semantic field? Second, the translation history of this homonym pair in the Psalter will be investigated in a selection of ancient versions (LXX, Syriac, Targum, Vulgate) and in modern lexica. Third, based on cases where all of the above witnesses are in agreement, three simple patterns will be pointed out—linguistic indicators which aid in the decision of whether a given instance comes from root one or root two.

1 Richardson, HALOT, 8205.
2 Richardson, HALOT, 8206.
1. Etymology

Is the semantic distinction between גזר and גזר a case of homonymy, in which there are two separate Hebrew roots with identical consonants, one indicating "enemy/hostility" and the other indicating "narrowness/distress"; or is this distinction between גזר and גזר a case of polysemy, where a single Hebrew root finds application in two different semantic fields? In short, the answer is that from a diachronic perspective they are a pair of homonyms: two separate Semitic roots, each beginning with a different Proto-Semitic first radical, although appearing identical in biblical Hebrew due to the history behind the consonant ג. The Hebrew consonantal symbol ג is probably the product of an evolutionary conflation of three Proto-Semitic emphatic consonants: the affricate ג, the interdental fricative ג, and the lateral ג.5 In the Hebrew language of the mid-second millennium BCE, the latter two of these consonants (ג and ג) gradually lost their phonemic status and merged into the phoneme ג.6 Although similar conflations occur elsewhere in other Semitic languages, the orthographic schemes of Aramaic and Arabic have kept these three phonemes distinct. Therefore, the two roots which are homonymous in Hebrew are not homonymous in these cognate languages. As Stephen Ullmann writes, “Phonetic convergence is the commonest cause of homonymy.”7

Aramaic generally represents Proto-Semitic ג as ג, ג as ג and (by a “remarkable phonetic odyssey”) ג as ג.8 Therefore, in biblical Aramaic, forms from word group two are not homonymous with forms from word group one.10 Similarly, the Arabic cognate to ג is ג (to bind11), while the cognate to ג is ג (to harm, to do violence).12 Additionally, although the evidence is scant, Ethiopic and Old South Arabic also preserve the consonantal distinction between these two roots in certain word forms.13

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6 Z. S. Harris, Development of the Canaanite Dialects, 35, 40.
8 Bergsträsser, Introduction to the Semitic Languages, 78.
9 “Proto-Semitic ג undergoes a peculiar development in Aramaic: the most ancient inscriptions employ the symbol ג, while later ג takes its place (e.g. רג ‘earth’, later גר cf. Ar. ‘ard)... The phonetic process reflected in these changes is far from being clear,” (S. Moscati, ed., An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964] 30; Bergsträsser, Introduction to the Semitic Languages, 3).
10 For example, the Aramaic version of the Hebrew word ג (enemy) is ג (Dan 4:16), a distinction which is also apparent when the Hebrew and Aramaic words for “earth” are compared. (Heb. ארץ Aramaic ארע).
12 Cowan, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, 537.
2. Ancient Versions

Several ancient versions provide insight into the translation history of terms derived from these two Hebrew roots.

2.1 Septuagint

The LXX Psalter translates צרר with the nouns θλιψις (trouble), άναγκη (distress), and κινδυνος (danger), and with the verb θλιβω (to cause something to be constricted or narrow). The LXX Psalter translates צרר with the verb πολεμεω (to be in opposition to, be hostile), as well as with active participles of μισεω (to hate), θλιβω (to cause to be troubled, oppress, afflict), and its roughly synonymous compound derivative εκθλιβω.

The LXX Psalter also frequently translates צרר with the noun εκπρος (enemy), and in one isolated instance, errantly with the noun ικετης (suppliant).

2.2 Syriac

The Syriac Psalter translates צרר with the substantives 'wls (constraint) and †q (distress), while translating צרר with either ‡lws (oppressor), b ldbb' (enemy, adversary) or snyn (enemy).

2.3 Targum

The Targum translates צרר exclusively with עקה (trouble) while translating צרר with מיעך (oppressor) and דבב (enemy). The MT of Psalm 129:1-2 contains the Psalter’s only

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14 A. Rahlfis, Psalmi Cum Odis (Septuaginta: Societatis Scientiarum Gottengensis; Göttingen: Vandenhoec & Ruprecht, 1931).
15 Danker, ed., BDAG, 3588.
16 Danker, ed., BDAG, 456.
17 Danker, ed., BDAG, 4243.
18 Danker, ed., BDAG, 3587.
19 Danker, ed., BDAG, 6027.
20 Danker, ed., BDAG, 4933.
21 Danker, ed., BDAG, 3587.
22 Danker, ed., BDAG, 2317, 3d.
23 Danker, ed., BDAG, 3351.
24 Danker, ed., BDAG, 3697.
two occurrences of an affixed finite verbal form from either הֶצֶר or הֶצֶר. The Targum translation of these two verbs is an 'aphel 3mp perfect from the verb 'ךְשֵׁר (to trouble). Although this Aramaic translation is ambiguous with respect to root, the fact that it is 3ms and in the active 'aphel stem rather than the passive/reflexive ipe'el indicates that the translator perceived the psalmist to be discussing his enemies. Both LXX and the Syriac translate these occurrences unambiguously as instances of הֶצֶר. The LXX translates with a 3mp finite verb, while the Syriac translates with the typical substantive (in the singular). Psalm 6:8 presents another interesting situation in the Targum, where the MT’s qal active participle from הֶצֶר has been rendered into two Aramaic words: first מַעְיָק (oppressor) and then עַקְיָתִי (my distress). Here the Targum seems to have “split the difference” between the concepts of distress and hostility.

2.4 Latin
The Latin Psalter frequently translates word group one with the noun tribulatio (distress) and passive forms of the related verb tribulo (to press), as well as with the noun angustia (straitness, distress). There is also one occurrence of the noun munitio (fortification—Ps 116:3). This translation suggests that Jerome read this form as מֹצֵדי, an emendation proposed by HALOT. By comparison, Jerome used a wider variety of words in translating word group two.

Having looked at the various terms used in the ancient versions, we now turn to a comparative analysis of the versions themselves, to determine where they agree or disagree with one another.

3. Cases of Etymological Uncertainty in the Psalter
Out of the 80 overall occurrences of הֶצֶר forms in the Psalter, there are twelve instances where the ancient witnesses and modern lexica are not unanimous, as shown in the table below. None of these twelve uncertain cases will be relied upon decisively in the remainder

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33 Occurrences of the affixed, bilateral הֶצֶר can be viewed as impersonal constructions in which הֶצֶר is read as a 3ms finite verbal form or verbal adjective. See P. Jouon, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (Vol. 1; trans. T. Muraoka; Rome: Editrice Pontifico Instituto Biblico, 1991) v 1, 225–7; W. Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910) 176, 459.
34 Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period, 400.
36 Lewis, A Latin Dictionary, 119.
37 Lewis, A Latin Dictionary, 1177.
39 The Latin translates word group 2, with forms of hostilis (of, or belonging to an enemy, hostile), adversarius (antagonist), inimicus (unfriendly, hostile), affligo/adfligo (to overthrow, throw down), expugno (to conquer, subdue), and with active participles from ligo (to tie, bind) and tribulo (to oppress). See Lewis, A Latin Dictionary, ad. loc.
of this dissertation. We will briefly discuss these twelve exceptions after pointing out three simple patterns which emerge when the 68 unanimous cases are viewed as a group.

### Translational Disagreement Regarding מְצוֹר in the Psalter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Translated as מְצוֹר¹</th>
<th>Translated as מְצוֹר²</th>
<th>Hebrew form &amp; Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ps 25:22</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin, BDB, HALOT, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>Syriac</td>
<td>מְצוֹר תָּחוֹת</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ps 32:7</td>
<td>LXX, BDB, HALOT</td>
<td>Syriac, Targum, Latin, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>מְצוֹר הָנָּר</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ps 34:18</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin, BDB, HALOT, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin HALOT, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>מְצוֹרֵי צָרְרוֹתָם Syriac contains no form corresponding to a מְצוֹר occurrence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 44:11</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin HALOT, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin HALOT, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>מְצוֹרֵי Syriac contains no form corresponding to a מְצוֹר occurrence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 54:9</td>
<td>LXX, BDB, Syriac, Latin Targum, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>Syriac, Targum, Latin Targum, Eben Shoshan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ps 60:13</td>
<td>Latin, LXX, BDB</td>
<td>Syriac, Targum, Eben Shoshan, HALOT</td>
<td>מְצוֹר</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ps 60:14</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin, Eben Shoshan, HALOT</td>
<td>Syriac, Targum, Latin, Eben Shoshan, HALOT</td>
<td>מְצוֹרין Syriac contains no form corresponding to a מְצוֹר occurrence.</td>
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<td>Ps 74:23</td>
<td>Syriac, Targum, Latin, BDB, HALOT</td>
<td>LXX, Targum, Latin, BDB, HALOT</td>
<td>מְצוֹרִים LXX inexplicably translates as ικετῶν.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Targum</td>
<td>LXX, Syriac, Latin, Eben Shoshan, HALOT</td>
<td>בָּצִּוְרִים</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ps 143:11</td>
<td>LXX, Syriac, Targum, Latin, Eben Shoshan</td>
<td>Syriac, Targum, Latin, Eben Shoshan, HALOT</td>
<td>מְצוֹרַה HALOT uncertain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Translation Patterns Noticed in the Ancient Versions

After subtracting the twelve disputed instances from the Psalter’s 80 occurrences of צֶר forms, we are left with 68 occurrences where the ancient versions and modern lexica are in complete agreement. There are three simple patterns evident in these 68 cases of unanimous consent.

4.1 Lamed Preposition Indicating Experiencer of Distress

The Psalter includes several variations of the familiar clause לי צֶר (“I am in distress”), which employ the *lamed* preposition to indicate the party experiencing distress. Whether these clauses are understood as verbal or nominal, this *lamed* preposition was a certain indicator of word group one for Jerome as well as for the translators of the LXX, Targum and Peshitta. The LXX generally regards occurrences of בָּצֶר with *lamed* as verbal, translating them as infinitives (e.g. Ps 107:6, 13, 19, 28). In each of the twelve uncertain cases in the above table, there is no *lamed* to aid the translator. Grammarians sometimes refer to this type of case relation as "experiencer", a nomenclature suggested by Charles Fillmore in 1971 and which is closely related to the traditional “dative” case.⁴⁰ Cook relates that,

Experiencer is the case required by an experiential verb. Experiencer is the person experiencing sensation, emotion, or cognition... Experience deals only with the inner life of man, not with experience in its more general sense.⁴¹

4.2 Biliteral צֶר as Standard Nominal Expression of Word Group Two

When a clause has no *lamed* preposition, and when the syntax unambiguously treats biconsonantal צֶר as a noun (e.g. with pronominal suffix or in a construct chain), this is (with one exception: Ps 119:143) an indicator of word group two. Since Psalm 107 will be the subject of special attention in chapter 8, it is important to briefly analyse the Psalter’s two occurrences of יד (hand, power) constructed upon biconsonantal צֶר.⁴²

| Ps 78:61 | He delivered his strength into captivity, his glory into the hand of the enemy. |
| Ps 107:2 | Let the Lord’s redeemed say it, whom he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. |

⁴² There are seven additional occurrences of this construct arrangement elsewhere in the MT: 2 Sam 24:13; Neh 9:27 (twice); Job 6:23; Lam 1:5,7; Eze 39:23.
As mentioned above, Gunkel, and a few others, have asserted that Psalm 107:2 is an instance of word group one. On the other hand, Beyerlin comments that when כַּר is placed in construct with יָד it is a certain indicator that כַּרָ is in view:

> Whenever כַּר occurs in construct with יָד, it is certainly an instance of כַּר II. The use of terms such as “hand,” “fist” or “power” is most consistent with the conclusion that a personal entity (an enemy or oppressor) is in view.43

Three additional factors can be brought in support of Beyerlin’s assertion that the use of “hand” indicates that a personal entity is in view. First, even when we disregard what specific noun may be in construct with כַּר, the very fact that biliteral כַּר is syntactically located as a noun indicates that this is probably an occurrence of word group two. Second, historically speaking, all four of the ancient versions are in agreement with Beyerlin. Third, references to the enemy near the conclusion of the prior Psalm 106 lend support to the idea that the enemy is also in view at the beginning of Psalm 107. In Psalm 106:41, the use of יָד in a construct chain referring to the enemy (בַּיָד גוֹיִם) lends support to the view that the similar construct chain כיִֵֽד כַּר in Psalm 107:2 also refers to the enemy.

4.3 Feminine Substantive כַּרָה as Standard Nominal Expression of Word Group One

The ancient versions of the Psalter understood the feminine substantive to be an indisputable indicator of word group one. Unlike the biliteral form כַּר 1, the feminine substantive appears in the following situations typical of nouns: It occurs in either the singular (Pss 20:2; 22:12) or plural (Pss 25:17, 22; 46:2). It is modified by attributive adjectives (Ps 71:20). It appears in bound forms of both the construct (Ps 25:17) and absolute (Pss 20:2; 25:22; 37:39; 50:15; 77:3; 86:7) states. It appears in nominal clauses (Ps 22:12) as well as in various case relations to finite verbs (Pss 25:17; 22; 31:8; 78:49; 116:3). It is coordinated with other nouns in chiasm, parallelism, and in noun groups separated by י (Pss 25:17; 31:8; 78:49; 116:3; 142:3). Also, unlike the biliteral form of word group one, the psalmists show no reticence to attaching pronominal suffixes directly to the feminine substantive (Pss 25:22; 34:7, 18; 77:3; 86:7; 142:3). Throughout the MT, כַּר 2 is such a strong indicator of word group one that at the one point where it most probably indicates word group two (1 Sam 1:6), the LXX translator apparently did not notice, and translated כַּרָה with τὴν θλιψίν αὐτῆς.

Thus, although biliteral כַּר 1 and biliteral כַּר 2 appear identical when viewed in isolation, when they are understood as two different parts of speech, much of the ambiguity disappears. Ullmann comments on this linguistic situation as follows: "Many homonyms exist only in

theory; in practice there is no risk of any confusion since they belong to different word-classes.νν44

5. Analysis of Twelve Instances of Disagreement in Ancient Versions
The three patterns discussed above can shed light on some of the cases where the ancient versions disagree with one another. We will begin with the six cases where only one ancient version departs from the group.

5.1 Passages with a High Degree of Certainty
In the six instances where only one ancient version stands in the way of translational unanimity, the three patterns pointed out in section 4 might have led to an unambiguous solution. The ancient translators apparently missed the mark, whether for Vorlage-related or other reasons. In three out of these six instances, the Syriac lacks a word corresponding to an occurrence of הָרֵץ (Pss. 34:18; 44:11; 60:14). In one instance, the LXX apparently mistranslates the text (Ps 74:23). This leaves two instances where the translators simply made the wrong binary choice. In Psalm 25:22, the Syriac mistranslates the feminine substantive צְרָתָיו (his distresses) as לֹא צְרָתָיו (his oppressors). The translator may have been confused by the particle מִן, which refers to enemies more commonly than it does to distress, when employed with verbs denoting the redemptive activity of God.45 In Psalm 112:8, the pronominal suffix on biliteral בְּצוֹר (בְּצוֹרֵי) marks it clearly as a noun and therefore probably as an instance of word group two. The Targum translator may have been thrown off the trail by the ב prefix on this hapax form, since this prefix often appears with word group one in the Psalter.

5.2 Passages with Less Certainty
The six remaining disputed instances all involve a relative absence of the three patterns discussed in section 4. This absence of cues, combined with the conceptual overlap between the ideas of “distress” and “enemy”, has resulted in uncertainty over these six instances, three of which involve biliteral צְרָת (Pss 32:7; 60:13; 108:13), and three the feminine substantive צְרָת (Pss 54:9; 138:7; 143:11). In summary, after examination of the contexts in which these six occurrences are located, the suggested solution is to simply follow the cues discussed above. The three biliteral forms should be translated as word group two, because they are syntactically regarded as nouns. The three feminine substantives should be translated, in keeping with BDB and the ancient versions, as instances of word group one. Due to the uncertainty in these six instances, in arriving at a decision, context will be considered in addition to the three patterns.

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45 C. Barth, Die Erretung vom Tode (Basel: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947) 143.
Psalm 108:7-14 is virtually identical to Psalm 60:7-14. The issues involved with Psalms 60:13 and 108:13 are quite similar to those found in Psalm 32:7. Both contain the form מַּצר (or pausal מָצר) in association with terms denoting divine protection or victory:

Ps 32:7  אתּה סִּתְרִי לְפֶלֶס וּלְפָּלְאִיתֵי יִתֶּה יִתֶּה וּלְפָּלְאִיתֵי יִתֶּה You are my hiding place; you protect me from (distress/the enemy?); you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Pss 60:13/108:13  המֶרֶץ עָזָרִיתִי וְשָׁמָיָה וּלְיִתֶּהוּ אֱלֹהִים Give us help from/against (distress/the enemy?); the salvation of man is worthless.

The lexica, ancient versions and modern commentaries show no apparent pattern in their varying decisions over the translation of מַּצר in these three verses. The English versions show a propensity to translate מַּצר as word group one in Psalm 32, but as word group two in Psalms 60:13 and 108:13, possibly due to the obvious conflict theme in Psalms 60 and 108, and the lack of the same in Psalm 32. NIDOTTE assumes that the parallel occurrences in Psalms 60 and 108 are from word group one, although no justification (or even an acknowledgement of the uncertainty) is offered for this decision. Because biliteral מְצָר is syntactically located as a noun in these three cases, the trend seen thus far inclines one to assign these occurrences of מַּצר to word group two. There are two further reasons for arriving at this same conclusion. First, in Die Erretung vom Tode, Barth studies the particle מְצָר as it occurs with terms for salvation or deliverance. When the Psalms describe Yahweh delivering someone from something, the majority of occurrences refer to enemies (Feinde) rather than to other distresses (Bedrangnis, Wasser, etc.). Second, a contextual study of other terms in these two passages suggests that word group two is the correct choice. The verb נָצַר occurs with מְצָר four other times in the Psalter (Pss 12:8; 64:2; 140:2, 5). In one hundred percent of these instances the object of the preposition מְצָר is the enemy or a synonym thereof. Two other terms in Ps. 32:7 (פלט and סִּתְרִי) are associated with enemies far more frequently than they are with distress. The root סֵתֵר (to escape, deliver) occurs eighteen times elsewhere in the Psalter. Eight of these occurrences lack specific information regarding the object from which one escapes (Pss 18:3; 22:5, 9; 31:2; 40:18; 56:8; 70:6; 144:2). Nine of the remaining ten instances describe deliverance from enemies, the wicked, etc. (Pss 17:13; 18:44, 49; 37:40a, 40b; 43:1; 71:2, 4; 82:4), while only one of these remaining nine denotes deliverance from distress (Ps. 91:14). Analysing the Psalter’s

46 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 51–100, 94.
48 C. Barth, Die Erretung vom Tode, 143.
use of the root הָנָךְ (hide) yields similar results. Although the majority of the Psalter’s use of this root has to do with the deus absconditus theme,\textsuperscript{49} in passages denoting the object from which the psalmist hides, one hundred percent of the occurrences are found in the enemy context rather than the distress context (Pss 17:8; 27:5 [2x]; 31:21 [2x]; 55:13; 61:5; 64:3). The situation is similar in Pss 60:13/108:13. The term עזר (help) only occurs once referring to distress (Ps 46:2); while it refers to enemies ten times (Pss 22:20; 27:9; 35:2; 38:23; 40:14, 18; 44:27; 70:2; 71:12; 94:17). Tate suggests that the repetition ofalez in Psalm 60:13-14 could be a play on words between word groups one and two.\textsuperscript{50} But it could just as easily be a poetic repetition of word group two, in the same way that Psalm 116:3 contains two occurrences of word group one in rapid succession. To summarise, these three occurrences of מצר offer no compelling reason to vary from the three translational cues, discussed above in section 4. Although one cannot be certain, they are probably instances of word group two.\textsuperscript{51}

\textit{HALOT’s Uncertainty over Three Occurrences of the Feminine Substantive}

In Psalms 54:9, 138:7 and 143:11, \textit{HALOT} offers the “very uncertain”\textsuperscript{52} suggestion that three occurrences of the feminine substantive נרצ may represent word group two. Among all of the major commentaries and lexica, \textit{HALOT} stands alone in offering this suggestion. The \textit{BDB} article on נרצ\textsuperscript{2} begins with the dagger (†), and lists only one occurrence of נרצ in the entire MT, denoting Hannah’s rival in 1 Sam. 1:6. With two of these three questionable instances (Pss 54:9; 138:7), the uncertainty may be partially due to the fact that the feminine substantive is located in parallel with איב. But איב appears in many poetic passages without a synonym in the parallel colon (Pss 13:3; 18:4; 25:2; 27:6; 30:2; 31:9; 41:3, 6, 12; 56:10; 61:4; 66:3; 69:19; 78:53; 132:18.). Although it cannot be stated with absolute certainty, it is reasonable to follow the decision of every major commentary, lexicon (other than \textit{HALOT}), ancient version, and modern English translation in seeing these three instances as representing word group one.

6. Conclusion

In addition to the general context which inclined the ancient translators to render an occurrence as either word group one or two, the three morphological and syntactic patterns described above seem to contribute some of the rationale underlying the unanimous agreement in the ancient versions. Since it is the purpose of this dissertation to study word


\textsuperscript{50} M. Tate, \textit{Psalms 51–100} (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1990) 103.


\textsuperscript{52} Richardson, \textit{HALOT}, 8176.
group one, none of the conclusions reached in the following chapters will be decisively based on the six uncertain occurrences discussed above in section 5.2. Although the three occurrences of the feminine substantive questioned by HALOT will be included as instances of רָצִּר¹, no conclusions will be based on these psalms standing alone. The homonym study in this chapter has yielded a collection of 31 psalms containing רָצִּר¹ which will comprise the group of texts to be studied in the following chapters.⁵³

Now that instances with questionable etymology have been excluded, we begin our analysis of terms and expressions which are collocated with רָצִּר¹ in the Psalter. As discussed in chapter one, “Careful attention to similar features in constellation between texts may very well illuminate generic parameters that truly reflect ancient conventions and not simply the generic grid of the interpreter.”⁵⁴ The following three chapters (3, 4 and 5) will examine three sets of “similar features in constellation” with occurrences of רָצִּר¹. In pursuit of simplicity and clarity, these three sets have been given the names: powerlessness, salience, and entreaty. The first group to be studied will be terms that express a notion of powerlessness of those who are suffering distress.

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⁵⁴ Brown, “Genre Criticism and the Bible,” 129.
### 7. Table of יִרְךּ and זַרְעָה Lexemes in the Psalter

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Form</th>
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<th>Targum</th>
<th>Vulgate</th>
<th>Analysis (cf. key below)</th>
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<td>עֵרִי</td>
<td>ὑσυ</td>
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**Analysis (table column 7) Key:**

**Lower Case Letter** (a or b):
Eben-Shoshan’s categorisation
a=צר\(^1\) (restriction/distress)
b=צר\(^2\) (hostility/enemy)

**Numeral** (1 or 3):
*BDB* categorisation
1=צר\(^1,2\) (restriction/distress)
3=צר\(^3\) (hostility/enemy)

**Lower Case Letter** (x or y):
*HALOT* categorisation
x=ցר\(^1\) (restriction/distress)
y=ցר\(^2\) (hostility/enemy)
(xy)=HALOT uncertain

**Capital T:**
Denotes a relatively unambiguous verbal context indicating Ցר as *enemy*

**Other**
$ Ancient versions are in agreement
¢(GS) Greek and Syriac are in agreement, but not Targum
! No disagreement in modern lexica (including Eben Shoshan)
Chapter 3
Cognitive Profile of Distress: [POWERLESSNESS]

1. Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to investigate a certain type of language expressing force and motion that is collocated with צער lexemes in the Psalter. As discussed in chapter 1, Talmy refers to these expressions as force-dynamic event frames. These event frames depict hostile forces impinging upon the freedom and vitality of the sufferers in various ways, and will be investigated with respect to the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS]. The research in this chapter is the first step in assembling the set of salient domains that constitute the cognitive-semantic frame associated with צער lexemes in the Psalter.

As discussed in chapter 1, the method to be used in this chapter—as well as in chapters 4 and 5—employs a blend of approaches from two linguistic fields: structuralism and cognitive semantics. From the structuralist field, we will utilise the concept of co-occurrence restriction, assembling a collection of syntagms which only appear in psalms containing צער lexemes. From the field of cognitive semantics, these צער-cohesive syntagms will be investigated as examples of what Talmy calls force-dynamic event frames. The common denominator among these event frames is the presentation of unwanted, hostile forces impinging upon the freedom and vitality of the sufferers in a great variety of ways. Sometimes the sufferer is forced to move when he would rather remain still (as in being washed away by a flash flood). Sometimes the opposite is the case, where the sufferer's mobility is restricted, as by a confining rope or an encircling pack of wild animals. The sufferers in these psalms appear to be particularly overwhelmed, or rendered weak in comparison with the forces that have brought about their distress. Although the reading and life experience of each individual is different, this analysis of צער-cohesive syntagms leads to a reasonable inference that expert and experienced readers would activate a cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] (or some approximate synonym) as one of the more salient domains within the distress frame. Using the nomenclature developed by Talmy, the following analysis will examine these force-dynamic event frames both from a grammatical perspective (with respect to the cognitive experiences evoked by clause structure and poetics) and from a lexical perspective (with respect to the cognitive experiences evoked by individual lexemes vis-à-vis the [POWERLESSNESS] domain).

Since the objective is to analyse the cognitive profile of צער based on the literary contexts in which it occurs in the Psalter, therefore an additional brief step will be necessary after

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1 When a semantic issue under discussion relates to an individual lexeme rather than to a clause or larger structure, the term “lexicalised” will be used.
examining each collection of force-dynamic event frames. It will be important to analyse
briefly the structure of each psalm where these textual features appear, in order to determine
the conceptual proximity of the expression to the occurrence of כַּרְר in the psalm. This is
quite simple in many cases, because several of the psalms under discussion display a
thematic unity, and include the כַּרְר lexeme in the invocation, conclusion, or at some other
key transition point in the psalm. In this regard, a general working assumption will be that
most psalms—in their entirety—are rightly understood as being complete utterances. Zellig
Harris defines an utterance as “any stretch of talk by one person, after which there is silence
on the part of that person.” I would include any potential antiphonal cultic usage of a
psalm under Harris’ rubric of a “stretch of talk by one person.” Lyons notes that an
utterance “may be of any length”, including sequences of sentences. Therefore, in most
cases, viewing individual psalms as self-contained utterances, we will assume that the
expert reader perceives the beginning of a psalm to be conceptually related to its end and
middle, and vice-versa. On the other side of the coin, when כַּרְר appears in psalms where
distress is not an aspect of the poem’s central theme (e.g. Ps 119:143) it would not be
legitimate to point out a textual feature elsewhere in the psalm—from a location that is far-
removed from the כַּרְר lexeme—as if it contributed to the cognitive profile. So it will be
necessary to briefly examine the structure of the psalms cited in the following study.

To investigate this collocation of כַּרְר lexemes and force-dynamic event frames, we will
now proceed to analyse a group of distress psalms one-by-one. These event frames come in
a wide variety of sizes. Some are rather brief, comprising a single clause or so (e.g. Pss 37,
54, 86, 116 and 142), while others are quite long, and will be called “force-dynamic
discourses” (e.g. Pss 9/10, 22). This chapter seeks to present a variety of samples
throughout the size range. In order to begin with a clear and simple example of how כַּרְר—
cohesive force-dynamic event frames might induce expert readers to activate the cognitive
domain [POWERLESSNESS], we will start out with a medium-sized sample from Psalm
18 (and some related texts) where the supplicant recounts how the subterranean realm of the
death opened before him, and tried to snatch him downward with ropes.

2. Onset Causation of Rest/Motion in Ps 18 and Similar Clauses in Pss 116 and 142
In Talmy’s taxonomy, linguistic expressions of stopped motion, confinement, or
restriction—in which an individual or object used to move about freely, but now no longer
can—are classified as Onset Causation of Rest. In the literary scenarios of the distress
psalms, such rest is not a desirable experience (like resting on a hammock); rather it is an
undesirable experience (like being placed “at rest” in a prison cell).

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2.1 Confinement with Ropes: Pss 18:5-6 and 116:3

Our first example of the Onset Causation of Rest is found in the psalmist’s expression of being tied down by ropes which have emerged from the realm of the dead. There are two psalms (Pss 18, 116) in which words denoting death or the grave (שאול/מות) occur in the Hebrew construct state along with חבל (rope, cord), or מוקש (snare), another confinement device. This type of imagery only occurs in the immediate vicinity of צער lexemes. In Psalm 18, three successive expressions of the Onset Causation of Rest are accompanied by a single expression of the Onset Causation of Motion in verse 18:5b. A similar text from Psalm 116 is also shown.

Ps 18:5a אופפוני חבלו מות The cords of death encompassed me.
Ps 18:5b בליעל נחלו יפה The torrents of wickedness terrified me.
Ps 18:6a שבלי שואל חבלו The cords of Sheol surrounded me.
Ps 18:6b קדומי מוקש מות The snares of death confronted me
Ps 116:3 אופפוני חבלו The cords of death encompassed me

In each of the five clauses shown above, the Agonist psalmist serves as Ground and the Antagonist moving objects serve as Figure. Regarding the cords and snares, these Figure objects have a confining, halting function upon the Ground object. The opposite is the case with respect to the torrents in Psalm 18:5b, where the Figure object threatens to set the Ground object into motion, similar to the way that a flash flood in a Palestinian wadi might sweep its victim off his feet. ⁴ Each of these event frames presents the psalmist as overwhelmed by a force greater than himself, which may prompt careful readers to access the domain [POWERLESSNESS]. ⁵ This effect is intensified in Psalm 18, by the compact, four-fold repetition. From a lexical perspective, the poet’s choice of individual words also contributes to this image of helpless entrapment. Although there is etymological uncertainty regarding whether the מוקש is a fowler’s net or a wooden trap of some sort, ⁶ both the מוקש and the חבל are more powerful than their quarry’s ability to struggle free. The fact that each

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⁵ “Faced with constant mortal danger, it was as though death and the underworld had already bound him and were drawing him inexorably toward demise,” (P. C. Craigie, WBC: Psalms 1–50 [Waco: Word, 1983] 174).
of these figures is in construct with death-related terms intensifies this picture by prompting the reader to access horrific images from long term memory. In *Die Erretung vom Tode*, Christoph Barth uses a power paradigm to describe the Old Testament conception of life and death. He describes human life as a form of power. A person’s life is a limited kind of power—limited, that is, by the factor of time. Then, Barth describes death as a superior power. Death is a force which is greater than all the power a human being can muster, because, when death arrives, one’s time has elapsed. In a similar fashion, the ancient conception of *שאול* was more than a mere location or destination of the dead; it was also conceived of as a malevolent force, as Umberto Cassuto describes it, “Sheol, the subterranean abode of the shades of the departed, the netherworld that ever seeks to swallow up more of the living without ever knowing satiety.” Likewise, Erich Zenger comments on the lexicalised power dynamics implied in OT death-related terminology:

Death and the realm of the dead are thought of as a personal power attempting to expand its field of dominance and desiring, like a monster to devour the living... This condition of being helplessly handed over to death is expressed in the Psalms in powerfully experiential metaphors when the realm of the dead (Sheol) is described as grave, hole, sea, or desert, imagined as “deep beneath the earth” or “at the limits of the earth” (not localizable topographical designations, but mythical places that “appear” in the midst of concrete daily life, or into which one may suddenly tumble). Anyone who is in the field of force belonging to this death is no longer in the force field of life and can only win back to it if someone retrieves him and puts him back there, that is, “saves him from death.”

These thoughts from Barth, Cassuto and Zenger underscore the idea that these death-related bound forms in Psalm 18 represent lexicalised force dynamics located within grammatical force-dynamic event frames, informing the expert reader of the power dynamic that the poets were attempting to evoke.

Also from a lexical perspective, the verbs in Psalm 18:6, are agentive, expressing intentionality, even though the ropes and snares are inanimate objects, and therefore unable to exert intentionality under normal circumstances. The agentive nature of the verbs סבב (to surround) and קדים (to meet, confront) can be seen both through their contexts elsewhere in the MT, as well as through semantic analysis of the sense of the verbs themselves. Contextually, קדים typically includes or implies an agent who has brought about the meeting (e.g. Pss 18:19; 59:11; 79:8; 88:14; Neh 13:2; 2 Kgs 19:32). Likewise, many of the contexts

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7 *Die Erretung vom Tode*, 22 (trans. mine).
in which סבב is found typically imply some sort of deliberate plan.\textsuperscript{11} In addition to these contextual factors, the semantics of the verbs themselves also demonstrate that they are agentive. Working from a language-universal perspective, Talmy subdivides individual verbs such as “surround” into sets of semantic morphemes, a phenomenon which Talmy calls conflation, in which individual verbs are understood to contain more than one semantic component.\textsuperscript{12} Using Talmy’s nomenclature, verbs such as “confront” and “surround” include three semantic components; namely, “an Agent’s intended and executed simplex action plus his intention that this action lead to a certain desired result... [plus] the actual fulfilment of that intention.”\textsuperscript{13} Talmy calls verbs such as these “attained-fulfilment verbs”.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, verse 6 is somewhat similar to modern horror films, where inanimate objects like ropes—which normally do not move on their own or evidence intentionality—are nonetheless intentionally moving, providing a compact presentation of sheer terror. The combined poetic effect of the agentive verbs, the implements of confinement, the death imagery, as well as the grammatical structure itself conveys the palpable experience of one whose personal resources and abilities were entirely inadequate to extricate himself from this dilemma, thus inclining the expert reader to activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS].\textsuperscript{15} As Nicholas Tromp explains, “The psalmist feels drawn into Sheol...”\textsuperscript{16} This type of force-dynamic imagery, as seen in Psalms 18 and 116, invariably determines צצר lexemes in the Hebrew Bible. Before moving on to an analysis of the force dynamics in Psalm 22, there is one more feature within Psalm 18 (and similar language in Psalm 142) that should be pointed out.

### 2.2 Overmatched by the Enemy—& Comparative: Pss 18:18 and 142:7

While Psalm 18 contains several force dynamic event frames recounting the interaction between Yahweh as Antagonist and the created realm or the enemy as Agonist (vv 7b-16), verse 18 provides an additional force-dynamic that relates directly to the supplicant’s experience of rescue. It is noteworthy that a similar expression also occurs in another distress psalm (Ps 142:7) and that this expression occurs nowhere else.

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\textsuperscript{11} L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, \textit{HALOT}, 739.

\textsuperscript{12} Talmy, \textit{Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 2}, 25.

\textsuperscript{13} Talmy, \textit{Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 2}, 267.

\textsuperscript{14} Talmy, \textit{Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 2}, 263, 267.


\textsuperscript{16} “In Akkadian literature every god is said to have his net to drag his enemies into the nether world; Widengren affirms that in Sumerian texts also gods know the use of nets and snares and the same is ascertained by Kristensen for Egyptian texts,” (\textit{Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament} [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969] 172–3).
Ps 18:18 He delivered me from my strong enemy; from my foes, for they were too strong for me.

Ps 142:7 Rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.

These two verses have much in common. They both begin with a hiph‘il form of the verb נצל (to pull out, snatch, deliver). They both feature the same כי clause employing the verb אמר (to be strong) with the preposition מון (from) used comparatively to express an inequality of power. However, although these two verses are quite similar, when context is considered, the force dynamics which may be perceived by an expert reader are probably dissimilar. One is a case of rest, while the other is a case of motion. In Psalm 142, the supplicant requests deliverance from pursuers, and is therefore presently fleeing—either metaphorically or physically—and is thus in a state of motion. In Talmy’s terminology, the supplicant is the Agonist, whose preference would be to remain at rest. However, the Agonist is undergoing continuous impingement by the pursuing Antagonist, who has set the Agonist to flight. The force dynamic here is Extended Causation of Motion. Deliverance from this situation will result in Onset Letting of Rest. In Psalm 18, however, the supplicant’s distress is not construed as being in flight, but rather as having his freedom of motion restricted. In verse 20a, the psalmist describes his present state of affairs—after being rescued—as freedom of motion, since he has been “brought out to the broad place” (לمطارף וויאיצעו). While discussing Psalm 18 as an example, Sawyer points out that forms derived from the roots צזרר and רחב (to be broad, wide) sometimes serve as conceptual opposites, evoking the notions of spatial restriction and corresponding Lebensraum.

There are a number of passages in which hirhjb, merhab and rewah are applied to escape from some kind of restricting, claustrophobic experience... Victory is escape “into a broad place”.

Therefore, expert and experienced readers would probably construe Psalm 18:18 as expressing the Onset Letting of Motion. Motion is understood in this case as the liberty to move about freely. The previously-cornered supplicant has been set free. Thus, both the

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17 “This supplication arises from the terror of helplessness in the face of ferocious enemies,” (Terrien, The Psalms, 889); “Er kann sich nicht mehr selber helfen. Die Verfolger sind zu stark,” (K. Seybold, Die Psalmen [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996] 225); “Es war eine Rettung aus der Hand übermächtiger Feinde,” (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 64).

grammatical presentation of the verb אָמַצ with the מָן comparative, and the contextualised force dynamics make it likely that expert readers would activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] while reading these distress psalms.

Using Psalm 18 as our point of departure, we have examined a set of similar force-dynamic event frames in three distress psalms. Before proceeding to our next grouping of texts, we will pause briefly to analyse collocation of the event frames with the corresponding צרר lexeme in each poem.

2.3 Psalms 18, 116 and 142: Analysis of Collocation
In Psalm 116:3 the rope imagery is located in the very same verse which contains two עֶרֶץ lexemes (ֶרֶץ and מֶרֶץ), thus providing a close association for the reader. The case is similar in Psalm 18, where the phrase בָּצַר לי (when I was in distress) is located in the verse immediately following the rope imagery. Regarding the features in the latter portions of Psalm 18, I believe that this psalm should be read as a singular utterance. Psalm 18 is a thematically-unitary IT, in which the deliverance celebrated with the מָן comparative in verse 18 correlates to the distress expressed earlier in the poem. Clearly, the singular enemy (ַיִּבְי) from whom the supplicant is delivered in verse 18 is a representative of the same general group of enemies which the invocation introduces in the plural number (ַיְבֵי [v 4]). The situation is similar in Ps 142, which is a brief IL with a unified theme. Theצרר lexeme is located in the psalm’s invocation (צרתי [v3]), where the supplicant states his intentions to give a report (אֶדֶד) of his distress. The כי clause discussed above is simply one component within the ensuing report.

As pointed-out in this chapter’s introduction, one of the purposes is to display the size-variation of these force-dynamic collections. We began with a medium-length series of צרר – cohesive force dynamic event frames in Psalm 18. We will investigate some larger force-dynamic series with respect to the [POWERLESSNESS] domain below. But for the moment, to demonstrate the smaller side of the spectrum, we will change our focus, to look at three relatively brief syntagms that cohere with צרר lexemes within the Psalter.

3. Force-Dynamic Event Frames Featuring the Adjective עָרָץ (Tyrant)
For our first example a brief syntagm cohesive with עָרָץ lexemes, we will focus on the adjective עָרָץ (tyrant). All three occurrences in the Psalter determine עָרָץ lexemes.20

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19 Sections 6 and 8 will examine force-dynamic discourses in Pss 22 and 9/10, respectively.
20 Space limitations prevent extended discussion of the text-critical issues involved in Ps 37:35. If the original text read עריץ, then this verse is a simile comparing the עריץ רׁשע to a thriving tree, although the LXX rendering of this simile may indicate a Vorlage that differed from the MT.
As we contemplate the experience of the expert reader in these three texts, the force dynamics—and corresponding evocation of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain—can be understood from both a lexical point of view, as well as with respect to the three event frames in which this adjective appears. B. Kedar-Kopfstein comments on the lexical force dynamics of כארץ (עריץ) from both a subjective and an objective point of view. Objectively, the term “means primarily someone terrifying, hence powerful and intimidating, a tyrant...” Subjectively, from the perspective of an individual on the receiving end of such mistreatment, Kedar-Kopfstein writes, “Someone who feels threatened within his own community calls his powerful persecutors ‘אראים...” For attributive occurrences of this adjective, HALOT offers the definitions, “violent, powerful” or, when substantivised, “potentate, tyrant”; and BDB suggests a “formidable adversary”.

In addition to these lexical force-dynamic factors, the grammatical structure and context of these three verses present two basic categories of force-dynamic event frames. The event frame evoked by the simile in Psalm 37:35 is probably Extended Causation of Motion, because the well-being of the wicked is compared to the extended stability and growth of a thriving tree. Any Antagonist forces that might hinder this thriving are gapped from the scene. This expansive growth of the wicked again prompts expert readers to access the [POWERLESSNESS] domain. On the other hand, the specific category of force dynamic evoked by the verb בקוש (to seek) in Psalms 54:5 and 86:14 is less clear. It includes the idea of Extended Impingement by an Antagonist, because this agentive verb indicates that those who seek the supplicant’s life strive to establish contact with him. If the reader uses his

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21 Reading בקוש (insolent ones) rather than בזרום (foreigners), according to the BHS textual apparatus, ad. loc.
24 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 884.
long term memory to recall passages where this verb occurs in situations of flight (e.g. Ex 2:15; 4:19; 1 Sam 19:10), the reader may envision the supplicant as running for his life. If this is the case, then מָעַץ serves as a component in the force dynamic event frame Onset Causation of Motion. The reading tradition set forth in the superscription of Psalm 54 is one of flight: the young king David is running from Saul. Thus, from both a lexical and a clausal perspective, these occurrences of מָעַץ— which exclusively cohere with צרה lexemes— may also prompt readers to access the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS].

Analysis of Collocation

As with the above study of Psalm 18, we will briefly evaluate the specific collocations of מָעַץ along with the corresponding צרה lexemes in Psalms 37, 54 and 86. Psalm 54 is a brief and thematically-unitary IL which has the supplicant’s troubles as the central focus. צרה serves a summative function in the psalm’s conclusion (in v 9a). Regarding Psalm 86, Tate points out a chiastic structure in which v 14 (the location of מָעַץ) echoes v 7 (the location of צרה):

A 1-4 (עבדך, “your servant,” in 2 and 4)
B 5-6 (רֶבְעַדְסָה) (“abounding loyal-love”)
C 7 (רֶבֶּם, “in the day of my distress”)
D 8-10 (יְבִיאוּ לְשׁפָּם) (“they will glorify your name”)
E 11 (שָׁמָּה, “your name”)
D’ 12-13 (אָסָכְבָּה לְשָׁמָּה) (“I will glorify your name”)
C’ 14 (גדֶתָה רֶעָצִים בָּקֶשׁ נְפָשִׁי) (“a group of tyrants seeks my life”)
B’ 15 (רֶבְעַדְסָה) (“abounding loyal-love”)
A’ 16-17 (עבדך, “your servant”)

In this chiastic structure, צרה is located in C and מָעַץ is located in the corresponding C’. Readers who perceive this chiasm would reinforce the association between צרה lexemes and the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS]. Since Psalm 37 is an acrostic, one could initially suspect that the collocation of מָעַץ (v 35) and צרה (v 39) is merely coincidental with the thematic diversity of some acrostic psalms. However, several of the repeated words and themes within Psalm 37 provide evidence for its thematic unity. Some of these repeated items include the concept of inheriting the earth

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27 For other collocations of מָעַץ and צרה outwith the Psalter, see Isa 25:3-5 and Job 15:20-24.
28 Seybold, Die Psalmen, 219; Terrien, The Psalms, 419.
29 Tate, Psalms 51-100, 378.
or possessing the land (vv 9, 18, 22, 29, 34), and the fact that this psalm contains more references to the wicked (רָשָׁע) than any other psalm. In Psalm 37, the machinations of the wicked are the chief source of trouble for the godly. The הֶרְשָׁע lexeme occurs in a summative location at the conclusion of the psalm, prompting the expert reader to associate the troubles described throughout the psalm with the הֶרְשָׁע lexeme at the psalm’s end.

Our second example of a brief הֶרְשָׁע– cohesive syntagm is the hitpa‘el stem of the verb עשׁק (to feel weak, faint away) used to express the idea of the exhausted spirit or soul.

4. The Exhausted Spirit/Soul

Occurring four times in the Psalter, the hitpa‘el stem of the verb עשׁק exclusively determines הֶרְשָׁע lexemes. This cohesion contributes to the likelihood that expert readers may activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] while reading these distress psalms.

Knowledgeable readers may perceive the force dynamics of these four clauses as examples of Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist. In this event frame category, the subjects’ distressful circumstances serve as the Antagonist; circumstances which are in continuous impingement upon the subjects. The subjects’ personal vitality, or psyche plays the role of Agonist. Due to this continuous impingement, the subjects’ personal vitality has gone through a process of degradation. Artur Weiser refers to this situation “dwindling energy”, while Gunkel comments that the supplicant clings to God “mit seiner letzten Kraft.” The hitpa‘el of עשׁק provides one more piece of evidence that expert readers may draw an association between distress psalms and the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS].

Analysis of Collocation

The structure of these psalms indicates a close association between the hitpa‘el of עשׁק and the הֶרְשָׁע lexeme. Three out of the four above citations are directly adjacent to verses containing the הֶרְשָׁע lexeme (Pss 77:4; 107:5; 142:4). The remaining Psalm 143 is a brief

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31 14 occurrences: vv 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 40. See further discussion of רָשָׁע in the section on Psalm 9/10, below.
33 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 815; Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 742.
and thematically unified IL, dealing with the petitioner’s conflict with his enemies.\textsuperscript{35} The \(ץrar\) lexeme is located at the conclusion, serving a summative function, similar to Psalms 54 and 37, which have been discussed above.

5. \textit{Hurled (שָׁלֶךָ)} by Yahweh

The third brief \(ץrar\)-cohesive syntagm that we will investigate is one in which Yahweh himself is the superior force who has picked up the psalmist and hurled him. Although the verb \(שָׁלֶךָ\) (to throw) occurs in several different semantic fields within the Psalter, Psalm 102:11 is the only place where Yahweh is the one who has thrown the supplicant.

Ps 102:11

For you have picked me up and thrown me.

Although the psalmists twice ask the Lord \textit{not} to throw them (Pss 51:13; 71:9), Psalm 102:11 is the only case where the supplicant actually claims to have been thrown by him. Outwith the Psalter, Jonah makes a similar claim in a \(ץrar\)-cohesive setting (מָצָּלָה וּשָׁלָךְ, you have thrown me into the deep [Jon 2:4]). In both of these cases, the Agonist supplicant has been picked up and thrown by the Antagonist, who is Yahweh himself, an example of the Onset Causation of Motion. In both psalms, the evocation of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain is quite clear—the petitioners have been acted upon by the ultimate external superior force, Yahweh himself. Kraus comments, “As if lifted up by a mighty storm, he has been dashed down to earth. And yet the petitioner knows that Yahweh has smashed him to pieces and struck him in wrath.”\textsuperscript{36}

\textit{Analysis of Collocation}

Similar to several of the cases discussed above, Psalm 102 and Jonah’s IL place the \(ץrar\) lexeme at the beginning of the poem. The \textit{throwing} syntagms under discussion occur in the bodies of these poems, where further details of the distress are set forth. Similar occurrences of \(שָׁלֶךָ\) collocated with \(ץrar\) can be found in Lamentations 1:20–2:1; Job 27:9-11; and Deuteronomy 29:27–31:17.

In the Psalter, the constellation of force-related language that coheres with \(ץrar\) lexemes covers a broad range of syntagm sizes, from very small to quite large. We have just looked at three small syntagms. We now turn to examine some of the larger ones in the Psalter. Several of the Psalter’s longest lament and thanksgiving psalms contain \(ץrar\) lexemes.


Many of these psalms include blocks of text—force-dynamic discourses—which are characterised by repeated depictions of power inequality between distressed subjects and the agents that are causing the distress. In Psalms lacking מֶרֶד lexemes, these sizable collections of force dynamics are generally absent. The force dynamics included in these blocks of text are both grammatical and lexical in nature, and may prompt expert readers to activate the domain [POWERLESSNESS].

6. Force Dynamics and Motion Event Frames in Psalm 22
Psalms 22:13-22 contains a collection of force and motion event frames which coheres with מֶרֶד lexemes. This coherence takes place on two levels. First, regarding the collection as a whole, distress psalms often contain relatively large groupings of force and motion event frames, the likes of which do not appear in other psalms. Second, several individual forms within this collection also determine the presence of מֶרֶד lexemes. For example, the description of the enemy as a pack of dogs only occurs within distress psalms. The imagery within this rather lengthy force-dynamic discourse repeatedly describes the supplicant’s experience of encirclement, exhaustion, and immobilisation—expressions which may prompt careful readers to access the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS]. The force-dynamic discourse (vv 13-22) begins immediately following the מֶרֶד lexeme in verse 12. We will see a similar structure in Psalm 9/10, below, where the force-dynamic discourse also follows immediately after the מֶרֶד lexeme.

Psalm 22:12-17, 21-22

v 12 Do not be far from me, for distress is near; for there is no helper.

v 13 Many bulls surround me; strong [bulls] of Bashan encircle me.

v 14 They open wide their mouths at me, as a tearing, roaring lion.

v 15 I am poured out like water; and all my bones are dislocated. My heart is like wax; it is melted within me.

v 16 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue sticks to my palate; you lay me in the dust of death.

v 17 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.
Deliver my life from the sword, my only life from the power of the dogs.

Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

This passage presents a collection of both lexical and grammatical force and motion event frames which relate to the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

6.1 Verses 13 & 17: The Onset Causation of Rest Expressed through Encirclement and Incapacitation

From a grammatical point of view, the four-fold repetition of the concept of encirclement or entrapment in vv 13 and 17a-b, including the four-fold identical Figure-Ground segregation and case relations, exposes the reader to four iterations of essentially the same force-dynamic event frame—Onset Causation of Rest—within a relatively small block of text. This is similar to the repetition discussed above in the study of Psalm 18. Also, if the reader perceives verse 17c as an expression of incapacitation, then these two verses contain a compact, five-fold repetition of the Onset Causation of Rest.

In the Psalter, the verb סבב (to move in a circle, surround) often occurs in event frames which do not imply hostile intent (e.g. Pss 7:8; 26:6; 32:7, 10; 114:3, 5). Such occurrences of סבב relate to various semantic fields such as that of worship (i.e. Yahweh being surrounded by worshippers or the worshipper going around the altar) or that of protection (i.e. someone being surrounded by Yahweh’s protective care). However, if the analysis of סבב is restricted to occurrences in semantic fields related to hostility, then every poetic repetition of this verb (or a synonym) is located in a distress psalm. For example, in Psalm 22:13, 17, the two occurrences of סבב, each accompanied by a synonym (כתר and נקף), gives a compact, four-fold repetition of the concept of being surrounded, and determines הצרה lexemes in the Psalter. The Figure-Ground and case relations within these frames are identical to those discussed above in Pss 18 and 116: The supplicant is the Ground, and the threatening objects in motion constitute the Figure.

Regarding verse 17c, although there is uncertainty over the correct reading of כארי (like a lion[?]), the fact that the clause ends in Orgel (my hands and my feet) suggests that it is not out of the question to read this phrase as an additional expression of powerlessness. Hartmut Gese suggests etymology from the Aramaic root כרי (to shorten). He translates this clause as, “Sie schneiden ab meine Hände und Füße...”37 Gese notes that the severing of

37 “Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament: Der älteste Bericht vom Tode Jesu und die Entstehung des Herrenmahles,” Vom Sinai zum Zion: Altestamentliche Beiträge zur biblischen Theologie (author H. Gese;
hands and feet was a known means of execution in the ancient Near East, thus fitting well with the allusions to execution in verse 19. He concludes that verse 17b “drastically presents the powerlessness (Ohnmacht) of the supplicant, having been deprived of the use of his hands for self defence or of his feet to run away.”

Dörte Bester reaches similar conclusions, although she does not emend the MT. Translating the clause as “Like the lion - my hands and feet” (wie der Lowe - meine Hände und Füße), she notes that “Through the encirclement of the enemies, all possibilities of flight and action have been taken away from the supplicant.”

Bester summarises by saying, “Die Situation ist ausweglos.” Both Gese’s and Bester’s assessment suggest a high probability that, in this context, expert readers would experience this clause as yet another expression of the Onset Causation of Rest.

From a lexical point of view, the constellation of terms exclusively cohering with נזר lexemes is quite prominent in this portion of Psalm 22. The designation of the enemy as a bull (פר—only here in Ps 22), a “strong one” (אביר—only here in Ps 22), a pack of dogs (Pss 22, 59), a gang (עדה—Pss 22, 86), or a “wild ox” (ראם—Ps 22:22) exclusively determines נזר lexemes in the Psalter. In contexts outside of distress psalms, these terms sometimes appear in other semantic fields, and may prompt a reader to access other cognitive domains, which are not related to distress. For example, פר may prompt the [SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM] domain (Pss 50:9; 51:21; 69:32), and אביר appears as a divine epithet (Ps 132:2, 5). But within this context, the reader would perceive these terms as lexicalised expressions of power.

Also, the fact that they are clustered together within one rather lengthy force-dynamic discourse (vv 13-22) would serve to intensify this effect, possibly prompting an ideal reader to construct a macroproposition (i.e. cognitively coalescing the entire discourse into a central idea) related to [POWERLESSNESS]. Before moving on, it should be pointed out that Berndt Janowski interprets the plural designation of the enemy not as an expression of a particular personality, but rather as denoting a hostile power (Feindmacht).

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40 Körperbilder in den Psalmen, 227 (trans. mine).

41 Körperbilder in den Psalmen, 234.


43 Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 108.
If Janowski’s assessment describes the actual experience of an ancient reader, then these plural expressions could serve to intensify the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

6.2 Verse 14: Roaring Lions

Although the Psalter often metaphorically represents the enemy as a wild beast, Psalm 22 contains by far the largest collection of such imagery within an individual poem. Also, although the enemy is often described as a lion (e.g. Pss 7:2; 17:12), nowhere else do we find the lions’ mouths formally represented in the text, as we do here in verses 14 and 22. The mouth is the “business end” of the lion; and nowhere else do we find the lions’ mouths featured in an event frame in which the mouth is in motion. The Figure-Ground relations in verse 14 are identical to those of the preceding verse, thus building upon the concept of encirclement that has already been established. The pride of lions is the Figure, and the supplicant is the Ground, as he is positioned face-to-face before these overpowering creatures. The clause structure accentuates the motion of the lions’ mouths before the onlooking supplicant. The finite verb indicating the opening of the mouth (פצה), along with the pair of complementary participles (טרף—tearing; שוג—roaring), present the motion of the lions in a palpable way, contributing to the force of the discourse as a whole. With expert readers, this verse may also have the cognitive effect of a lexicalised force dynamic, given that the lion is “a picture of pride, strength and rapacity.” As Cottrill suggests, “The ultimate strength of the lion effectively and necessarily implies the ultimate powerlessness of the psalmist.” Expert readers may perceive this verse as an expression of threatened Onset Causation of Rest, because once the supplicant has become a prey item, he will no longer be able to move. Thus the event frames describing encirclement by lions and the incapacitation of the hands and feet (below) probably elicit a similar cognitive effect in the expert reader’s experience.

6.3 Verse 15: Similes Expressing Exhaustion

Verse 15 presents two similar force-dynamic event frames involving liquids—water and wax—that are being poured out. First of all, water is set in downward motion when poured from a container. The verb שפך “denotes the vigorous movement of a solid or liquid.” Although the verb is sometimes used metaphorically to express concepts like the pouring out of the heart (e.g. Lam 2:19); within this simile in Psalm 22, the verb’s concrete meaning

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Commentators often note that these metaphorical images of being poured out like water or melting like wax are expressions of weakness, describing a reduction in the supplicant’s vitality or capability to function, which supports the likelihood that [POWERLESSNESS] is one of the more salient domains with respect to distress in Psalm 22. A cognitive linguistic approach provides additional support to assertions like these, because, if a reader stops to consider these two motion event frames, he may experience them as instances of an underlying conceptual metaphor which correlates powerlessness with downward movement or location, known in some cognitive semantic literature as POWERLESSNESS IS DOWN. As shown in their downward motion, both the wax and the water have “surrendered” to the superior force of gravity, a concept which reappears in the following verse where the psalmist complains that he has been laid in the dust.

Before moving on to the next verse, some readers may perceive an additional force-dynamic event frame in verse 15, in the statement about dislocated bones. Several commentators have interpreted this clause as an expression of powerlessness. Since the articulation of bones is necessary for mobility, their dislocation could be read as another instance of the force-dynamic event frame Onset Causation of Rest (i.e. the inability to flee), thus contributing to the reader’s perception of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

6.4 Verse 16: Declining Motion as Weakening
In contrast to the Onset Causation of Motion which predominates in verse 15, verse 16 may evoke the same cognitive domain of [POWERLESSNESS] by using event frames that show declining motion or a lack of motion. Verse 16a uses a metaphor of dryness to describe the supplicant’s reduced strength. The stative verb יבש (to be or become dry) describes either the process or the result of the process of desiccation. Therefore the temporal aspect of this verb is different from the preceding verbs in the passage. Water is poured out quickly; wax melts relatively quickly before a flame; but desiccation happens over time, a type of lexical aspect which the reader can perceive either as “gradient” (also called “inchoative” as in The riverbed gradually dried up; cf. Gen 8:7) or as “steady-state” (as in The desert is dry; cf. Ezek 37:11). However, should the reader perceive this clause as a steady-state assessment of the supplicant’s strength, this is probably a case of “final windowing” (cf.

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47 Concepts such as the pouring out of the heart are probably based on an underlying conceptual metaphor: THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS (Ungerer and Schmid, An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics, 135).
48 Bester, Körperbilder in den Psalmen, 166, 200; Wilson, Psalms Volume 1, 417.
50 Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 92; Cottrill, Language, Power and Identity, 36-7; Craigie, WBC: Psalms 1–50, 200.
51 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 384.
52 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 2, 68, 78.
Chp 1, section 2.1.2), in which the supplicant’s present state of weakness has been foregrounded by inclusion in the text, while his prior state of normal or full strength has been backgrounded by exclusion from the text (also referred to as “gapping”).53 The supplicant’s strength was once at a normal level, but it has now withered away to a level of abject weakness. Therefore, this expression of declining strength (i.e. weakening Agonist) would probably evoke the [POWERLESSNESS] domain in the cognitive experience of an expert reader.

Also from a lexical point of view, the form כחי (my strength) contributes to the reader’s awareness that the [POWERLESSNESS] domain is a component of the distress frame. This form occurs five times in the Psalter (Pss 22:16; 31:11; 38:11; 71:9; 102:24), and Psalm 38 is the only one of these five which is not a distress psalm, indicating a fairly high degree of cohesion between כחי and תצר lexemes.54

Along with several of the features from this portion of Psalm 22 that have been discussed above, verse 16c is understood by many researchers to be an example of death imagery.55 The supplicant is as good as dead. For all practical purposes, he has already been laid in the tomb. As discussed above, since death is partly understood through a paradigm of power in the OT, the death imagery—in and of itself—may contribute to an experienced reader’s perception of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain. However, in addition to the death imagery, the force dynamics of verse 16c may also evoke the domain [POWERLESSNESS] in the cognitive experience of the reader. The event frame in verse 16c describes motion that is oriented in the same direction—downward—as that of the poured-out water and melted wax in verse 15. All three of these event frames depict situations involving the downward force of gravity. However, unlike the Onset Causation of Motion in verse 15, the event frame here in verse 16c expresses a cessation of motion. The verb שפת (to set, lay down56) occurs only four times in the MT (Is 26:12; 2 Kgs 4:38; Ezek 24:3), so any semantic conclusions drawn from this limited data set are tentative. The semantics of the occurrence in Isaiah are uncertain and disputed, and will therefore be left out of this brief analysis. The occurrences in 2 Kings and Ezekiel denote the setting of a cooking pot onto a fire or hearth. This usage concurs with a relatively high volume of cognate usage in Middle Hebrew, as well as in the Aramaic of the Targums.57 The occurrence of this verb in Psalm 22 may represent a semantic extension—or meaning chain—based upon this culinary

53 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 268.
54 For instances of the same cohesion elsewhere in the MT, see Isa 49:11-20 and Lam 1:14-20.
56 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1637.
57 Jastrow, Dictionary, 1620; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1637.
For understanding the force and motion dynamics of verse 16c, it is important to note that the base of a typical iron age cooking apparatus was located at floor level or below, and that such equipment was typically accompanied by a considerable amount of ashes. Thus this verb may have evoked the notion of ashes or dust in an ancient reader’s cognitive experience; a notion which was then reinforced by the inclusion of the term עפר (dust) in the clause of the psalm. Considering the two respective scenes (placing a pot on a fire, laying a body in the dust) a tentative conclusion can be reached regarding the similarities in motion and force-dynamics within these three occurrences in Psalm 22, 2 Kings, and Ezekiel. Therefore, expert readers may perceive this clause as an instance of Onset Causation of Rest in which the earlier phases in the chain of action are relatively gapped from the scene, and the focus is on the supplicant’s resulting location. Careful readers may perceive this clause as another instance of the language-universal, conceptual metaphor POWERLESSNESS IS DOWN.

6.5 Verses 21-22: Wild Beast Imagery
The force-dynamic discourse of Psalm 22 concludes in verses 21-22, where each of the previously established wild beast images is repeated and intensified by being placed in construct with terms emphasising the power of each respective creature. Here at the conclusion of this psalm’s distress discourse, the beasts’ order of appearance is the opposite of their initial appearance earlier in the psalm. They first appear in the order of bulls (v 13), then lions (v. 14), and then dogs (v. 17a), while here at the conclusion the order is reversed: dogs, then lions, then bulls (represented by רמים—wild oxen). In verse 21b, the syntagm “power of the dog” (יד כלב) employs the Hebrew word “hand” as a metaphor for power. Likewise in verse 22a, the second bound form, אריה פי (mouth of the lion) draws the reader’s attention to the part of the lion which has the ability to devour the supplicant. In similar fashion, the syntagm קרני רמים (horns of the wild oxen) highlights the power of this beast. Thus, the distress discourse draws to a close with a three-fold poetic repetition of the power motif, providing further input for the reader to activate the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

62 The horn is “a symbol of strength and power, “ (L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1145).
6.6 Psalm 22: Analysis of Collocation

The complaint component of Psalm 22 consists of two sections with somewhat differing emphases. In the initial section, the supplicant laments the silence and absence of God (vv 3-12), while in the latter section, the topic shifts to the vicious attack by the psalmist’s enemies (vv 13-22). The features of Psalm 22 that have been discussed above are all located in this latter section of the psalm’s complaint component. The יְרָר lexeme is located at the transition point between these two sections (v 12). Bester notes that verse 12 serves “a dual function, as conclusion of the one, and introduction of the other section.” She also notes that the psalmist’s proximal distress (דֶּשֶּׁתְּךָ בָּבֹל) correlates to imagery of the proximal enemy, introduced in the following verse. Given this structure, as the expert reader proceeds through the psalm, the powerlessness imagery follows immediately after the יְרָר lexeme, making it likely that the reader would activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] in association with distress.

Psalm 22 contains one of the longer force-dynamic discourses in the Psalter. In section 8 of this chapter (below), we will examine another discourse of similar length, in our study of Psalm 9/10. But first, in an effort to display the various sizes of force-dynamic event frame groupings we will look at the medium-sized collection in Psalm 118. The four-fold repetition of force-dynamics in this psalm resembles the four-fold repetition in Psalm 18, which we investigated at the beginning of the chapter.

7. Onset Causation of Rest through the Four-fold Repetition of סֶבֶב (to Surround) in Psalm 118

In Psalm 118 we find a four-fold repetition of the verb סֶבֶב, repeating the notion of Onset Causation of Rest in compact, wave-like succession.

Psalm 118:10-12

v 10 וכל גוים סביבوني במשפט יהוה כי אמילם All the nations surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I cut them off.

v 11 סבבוני הבך וסבבוני במשפט יהוה כי אמילם They surrounded me; indeed, they surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I cut them off.

v 12 סבבוני הבך וסבבוני במשפט יהוה כי אמילם They surrounded me like bees, but they were extinguished like burning thorns; in the name of Yahweh I cut them off.

63 Wilson, Psalms Volume 1, 414–7.
65 Bester, Körperbilder in den Psalmen, 79.
From a grammatical point of view, in this psalm, we see Figure-Ground segregation, case relations, and poetic repetition which are similar to the examples shown above in Pss 18 and 22, and which express the force dynamic of the Onset Causation of Rest, as the speaker recounts a military episode of entrapment or encirclement. Interestingly, the celebration of victory in verse 12b is also an expression of the Onset Causation of Rest. Although verse 12b is grammatically different when viewed from a surface element perspective, when this clause is viewed from a cognitive semantic perspective, the rapid reduction of a raging thornbush fire, as the fuel is quickly consumed, expresses the same class of force dynamic as the experience of being surrounded. In the case of an extinguished fire, the rest is a desirable outcome, whereas in the confinement of being surrounded, the rest is an unwanted situation.

From a lexical point of view, the word דבורה (bee) occurs only four times in the MT (Deut 1:44; Ju 14:8; Isa 7:18; Ps 118:12). Other than its use in Samson’s riddle (Judges 14:8) the term always refers to the numerical superiority of an aggressive enemy. Therefore, both the grammar and lexicography of this passage lead to the inference that an experienced reader would access the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS].

Analysis of Collocation
Psalm 118 is a thematically-unitary IT, with a collocation similar to several of the examples that have already been analysed, above. The צarcer lexeme is located in the psalm’s introductory portion (v 5), while the force-dynamic event frames occur later on, as the poet unfolds the details of the distress from which he has been delivered.66

We will now proceed to a study of the force dynamics in Psalm 9/10, which contains a lengthy force-dynamic discourse similar to that of Psalm 22, which has been discussed above.

8. Lengthy Force-Dynamic Discourse in Psalm 9/10
Psalm 9/10 provides our next example of a force-dynamic discourse. The description of the wicked and their victims in this psalm features several expressions of a power inequality between these two parties. Although questions remain about the psalm’s original construction, Psalms 9 and 10 probably constitute a broken acrostic, and were originally a

single unit, as reflected in the LXX. The portion now known as Psalm 10 contains a lengthy description of the wicked (רָשֵׁע) in their interaction with the poor or oppressed (עני).

Psalm 10

1. Why, O Yahweh, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of distress?

2. In arrogance the wicked hunts down the weak. They are caught in the evil plans which they have devised.

3. For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces Yahweh.

4. In the pride of his countenance the wicked does not seek [him]; all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

5. His enterprises endure on all occasions; your judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all of his enemies, he snorts at them!

6. He says to himself, “I shall not be shaken; from generation to generation, I shall not meet adversity.”

7. His mouth is full of curses and lies and oppression; under his tongue are trouble and iniquity.

8. He lies in wait in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes spy upon the helpless;

9. He lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.

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10 הדרה נאם נשפך אל התים אל פיק צדקה The helpless are crushed, bent over, and they collapse under his strength.

11 אמרו בלשון שמה אל התים אל פיק צדקה He says in his heart, “God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it.”

12 קשייה והולא נשכח מיך אafür על עיניים Arise, O Yahweh; O God, lift up your hand; do not forget the afflicted.

13 עלמה נאם רם אתלם אというもの לא חזר Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”? 

14a ראה אתה עמל ל/of עתי What does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”? 

14b/U אלך יושם אל את יהוה To you the helpless entrusts himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless.

15 שבר את הרע רעש גור תודרש רעש Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer; call his wickedness to account till you find none.

16 יהוה מלך עלם ועד אביו גוזד נקודת Yahweh is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land.

17 O大佬, אתון שמעת יהוה תפך לך קשלום To vindicate the fatherless and the oppressed, That man who is of the earth may cause terror no more.

18 שמש יהוה רד ברליזיסע טור להר To vindicate the fatherless and the oppressed, That man who is of the earth may cause terror no more.

8.1 Accumulation of רוע and עט Terminology
Psalm 9/10 contains more occurrences of the noun רוע (wicked; 9:6, 17, 18; 10:2, 3, 4, 13, 15a, 15b) than any other psalm except for Psalm 37, which is also a distress psalm. Psalm 9/10 also contains more occurrences of the two etymologically-related adjectives שן and עט (humble, oppressed, poor; 9:13, 14, 19; 10:2, 9c, 9d, 12, 17) than any other psalm.69 Thus, this psalm features a unique twofold accumulation of terms. The way these two terms are

68 The first form in this line is read as an imperfect, following the Qere.
used within this psalm itself (discussed below), as well as elsewhere in the Old Testament, make it likely that experienced and expert readers may perceive a lexicalised force dynamic with respect to the concentration of these terms, prompting them to access the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] while reading this distress psalm.

Othmar Keel surveys occurrences of רַשִּׁع throughout the Old Testament and concludes that the wicked are very rich and powerful individuals, primarily as a result of their unscrupulous actions in taking advantage of others. Likewise, Kraus points out that the sense of the term רַשִּׁע includes sociological overtones with respect to power:

> We should not think that the רַשִּׁעים ("wicked") are isolated evil and criminal elements in Israel. They were “respectable”, influential, and, above all, strong, those who oppressed the weak.71

Thus, when the wicked are in view, part of the behaviour that sets them apart as wicked is the abuse of power. This idea will be developed further in the following analysis of Psalm 9/10. On the other hand, the power-related aspect of the terms עֶניים/עֶנֶּנַי suggest that, in settings like Psalm 9/10, these terms may serve as a functional antonym of רַשִּׁע, as far as power is concerned. Commenting on the power aspects of עֶנֶנַי/עֶנֶּנַי in Psalm 9/10, Gerstenberger writes, “Those who used this psalm obviously thought of themselves as poor wretches, marginalised by the power elite, impoverished and déclassé—cf. the image of the lion (v 10:8) and the description of the blasphemous brutality of those in power (v 10:3ff.).” In most cases the terms עֶנֶנַי/עֶנֶּנַי describe a condition beyond mere economic deprivation, and have considerable spiritual and sociological ramifications. Mays describes the “poor” as people who “disavow all self-sufficiency and claim the right to help that belongs to the helpless.”73 Psalm 9/10 also contains the Psalter’s first occurrence of a similar term, אביון (poor, needy [Ps 9:19]). According to Kraus, these terms do not merely denote one’s income level or net worth, they imply a situation of helplessness:

> In the Psalms the “poor” are the victims of their “enemies.” The essential feature of this situation of “poverty” is the attack by hostile forces and the resulting state of helplessness and need. It can be shown that the “poor” are above all those who are persecuted, slandered, and falsely accused, who are not able to defend themselves against the superior power of their foes.74

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72 E. Gerstenberger, "עֶנֶני," 247.
74 Theology, 151.
Goldingay has chosen the provocative phrase “How to Pray against the Powerful” as the title for his commentary on Psalm 9/10. He translates the terms עני והר as “weak”, thereby emphasising the power equation present in this psalm. The wicked (רָשִׁע) and the poor (עני) are two theme words (Leitworter) of Psalm 9/10, describing a situation where well-connected powerful people take advantage of others who lack the individual means and/or sociological support structure to defend themselves. In addition to this psalm’s unique accumulation of the common terms רָשִׁע and עני, it also contains multiple occurrences of two relatively rare synonyms for the poor and helpless. The words חלך/חלכה (hapless, weak [10:8, 10, 14]), and דך (oppressed, miserable [9:10; 10:18]) contribute to the motif of power inequality throughout the psalm. With this accumulation of terminology, the wicked and the weak are continually juxtaposed, presenting a lexicalised force dynamic to careful readers, prompting them to activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS]. The force-dynamic discourse in Psalm 10 is located in similar fashion to the one in Psalm 22, discussed above. The discourse (Ps 10:2ff) begins immediately following theخر lexeme in verse 1. The force-dynamic discourse opens in verse 2 by describing the interaction between the רָשִׁע and the עני.

8.2 Pursuit and Capture in Psalm 10:2
Psalm 10:2 presents a temporal succession of two force-dynamic event frames. The first one features the verb דולק (to set on fire, burn, hotly pursue). The Agonist עני has been put to flight by the hot pursuit of the Antagonist רָשִׁע, an instance of the force dynamic, Onset Causation of Motion. The verb דולק can denote many different kinds of figurative burning, including revenge (Obd 18), intoxication (Isa 5:11), and lips “burning” with deceptive speech (Prov 26:23). It can also mean to “burn-after” (i.e. pursue) someone. In 1 Sam 17:53, it denotes literal pursuit, as when the Israelite military pursued the Philistines after David’s victory over Goliath. Here in Psalm 10, the verb denotes a metaphorical pursuit: the aggressive and hostile measures taken by the Antagonist רָשִׁע to plunder the Agonist עני; as the NIDOTTE article points out, “Here, the vb. is used figuratively of harassment and persecution.”79 This example of metaphorical pursuit illustrates the concept that force dynamics do not have to involve literal motion or physical force.80 The additional term in this clause (גאה; pride, arrogance) may also intensify the reader’s reception of this force dynamic, since the term often occurs in contexts related to the abuse of power.81

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75 Psalms: Volume 1, 162.
76 Gesenius, Grammar, 269; Kraus, Theology, 150.
77 Hossfeld and Zenger, Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1–50, 81.
78 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 221.
80 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 410.
The accompanying event frame in verse 2b expresses the result—and the force-dynamic opposite—of the one expressed in the first semicolon. The Antagonist has now captured the formerly-fleeing Agonist, which represents Onset Causation of Rest. The terminology relating to evil plans (מזמות) and thoughts (חׁשב) reminds the reader that this is a case of metaphorical pursuit and capture, not a literal one.

Moving on to verses 5-6, in the next set of force dynamics, the wicked have shifted from the position of Antagonist to that of Agonist, as the psalmist presents the indomitable wicked as able to withstand whatever opposition may come their way.

8.3 Verses 5-6: Stability of the Wicked
In the force-dynamic category called Extended Motion Despite Opposition, a stronger Agonist maintains its motion or activity despite continuous impingement by an Antagonist. In similar fashion, the force-dynamic category, Extended Rest Despite Opposition involves a resting Agonist which remains at rest in spite of continuous impingement by a weaker Antagonist. Verses 5-6 present four successive examples of these event frames, each of which depicts the wicked as an unstoppable force. In the first example, verse 5a applies the basic conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A JOURNEY. It focuses on the journey (דרך; enterprise, situation82) of the wicked as an entity that endures, in spite of whatever time may bring (בכל־עת). Next, the psalmist makes three observations of the wicked’s behaviour and words, which represent force dynamics taking place on a sociological and psychological level. In verse 5c, the wicked’s snorting (יפיח) at his enemies displays contempt against anyone who would oppose or try to stop him.83 This is a lexicalised force dynamic, telling the reader that the wicked views himself as unstoppable. In the third force-dynamic within this section, verse 6a presents the wicked surveying his future and imagining himself immovable, through his asseveration that he will not be made to totter (אמוט). Baumann’s TDOT article on this verbal root places it under a general rubric of “stability”, although the article does not detail the force and motion dynamics underlying this verb’s conceptual schema.84 The basic idea in view with the verb מוט is that of an upright or otherwise stable object (e.g. a standing person or statue) succumbing to an opposing force, such as the force of chaos (Ps 46:3), the force of gravity (Isa 40:20; 41:7), or the force applied by an enemy (Ps 13:5). This verb’s sociological applications are a metaphorical extension of its basic sense, which relates to solid objects.85 In the setting of Psalm 10:6, this statement by the

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82 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 232.
83 Gunkel interprets this term as, “verächtlich anblasen oder zornig anhauchen,” (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 38).
wicked represents another lexicalised force dynamic describing Extended Rest Despite Opposition. In the wicked’s self-concept, no one has the power to apply a shocking force that can topple him from his dominant position. Verse 6b brings the fourth force dynamic expression within this brief section of scripture. Although space limitations prevent extended discussion of the textual and stichometric difficulties with the syntagm לא־ברע אׁשֶר (I shall not meet adversity[?]), the fact that the immediately preceding words are לְרָד וּרְד (from generation to generation) indicates that this clause appears to be yet another assertion of the wicked’s belief that he is unstoppable and will endure across time. Therefore, experienced readers of the MT may perceive this clause as another instance of the event frame, Extended Motion Despite Opposition.

The next feature to be explored in this psalm comes in verses 8-10, where we see another case of the repetition of force dynamics that is common in distress psalms. Although poetry is repetitive by definition, this wave-like, iterative reference to the causes of distress—particularly involving force dynamics—is characteristic of psalms that include זרעים lexemes.

### 8.4 Verses 8-10: Repetition of Ambush Imagery

Verses 8-9 present a six-fold repetition of the force-dynamic event frame Onset Causation of Rest, employing the cognitive schema of a predator or hunter lying in wait to ambush his prey. While this type of imagery is not unique to distress psalms (e.g. Pss 17:12; 64:5), the compact and multiple repetition of such imagery is a phenomenon that coheres with זרעים lexemes.

The event frame represented in verses 8-9 consists of two basic steps or phases. In the first phase, impingement between the Agonist and the Antagonist has not yet occurred. The predator lies concealed and motionless while he observes his quarry, awaiting the right moment to pounce. This initial stillness of the predator—and absence of impingement—is expressed through the verbs יִשָּׁב (to sit [v 8a]), צִפָּה (to spy, reconnoitre86 [v 8c]) and אָרָב (to lie in wait [9a, b]); as well as through the nouns מָסָר (hiding place [vv 8b, 9a]), מַאֲרָב (ambush [v 8a]), and סָכה (thicket [v 9a]). The second phase, describing the subsequent attack and immobilisation of the עַעֲנֵי is expressed through the finite verbs הָרָג (to kill [v 8b]) and חֲטָף (to seize [v 9b, c]); as well as through the infinitive form of the verb מָשָׁך in the syntagm ברָשתוֹ בְּמַשְׁךְ (when he draws him into his net [v 9c]). As a result, the psalm presents six successive instances of the Onset Causation of Rest, reinforcing the notion of [POWERLESSNESS] to the reader.

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86 Following LXX here, reading צִפָּה rather than צָפַן. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1044.
8.5 Verse 10: Imagery of Collapse Under a Load

Next, in the following verse, this psalm complements the preceding six-fold presentation of the Onset Causation of Rest, with a similar force-dynamic, called a Balance-Shift pattern. Instead of the hunting concept, verse 10 refers to a downward motion path, like one collapsing under a load of oppression. Before analysing the force dynamics in this verse, there are some textual and grammatical ambiguities that must be discussed. The decision that is made affects the way the force dynamics will be perceived. Textually, we will follow the Qere, which presents the first verb in this line as an imperfect, yielding a syntagm that begins with two imperfect verbs, followed by a perfect with vav consecutive, the only such form in the poem. Grammatically, there is uncertainty over which of these verbs have the wicked as subject, and which ones have the hapless (חלכאים) as subject. These basic options can be quickly seen by comparing the AV with the NIV.

AV
He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

NIV
His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength.

In comparing these two translation options, although a reader of the Hebrew text may experience ambiguity at this point, it is more probable to assume that many readers will see the helpless as the subject of all three verbs, for two reasons. First, the root דכה, as well as the other etymologically-related roots (דכה, דכא, דכה), typically appear in contexts of crushing or personal injury, and never in contexts denoting an animal or hunter lying in wait. Second, the fact that this psalm twice employs the noun from the same root (דך, oppressed [9:10; 10:18]) lends weight to the idea that the first verb in verse 10 denotes oppression rather than a strategy of concealment.

Turning to the force dynamics in this verse, it is noteworthy that all three verbal roots can refer to downward motion. In fact, readers may perceive these three verbs as a succession of increasing downward motion or orientation. The first verbal root (דהה, to crush) occasionally appears in contexts specifying downward motion or force (e.g. Ps 143:3; Isa 57:15; Lam 3:34); yet, often this downward orientation is not formally present in clauses where this verb occurs (e.g. Ps 44:20). By contrast, the notion of downrightness or lowliness is more overtly lexicalised in the second verb. The basic sense of the second


verbal root (שחח) in this context has to do with being bowed down or bent over. Next, following these two imperfect verbal forms, the reader encounters the verb נפל in the perfect conjugation with vav—indicating consecution or result—yielding a picture of the hapless ones collapsing to the ground. Expert readers may perceive this verse, with its series of three verbs, as a force dynamic called “balance-shift”. In this type of event frame, the Antagonist and Agonist continue in mutual impingement over a period of time, but the balance of forces shifts through the weakening or strengthening of one of the two entities. The event frame begins with the חלאים (weak ones) in the role of Agonist, standing upright, while a heavy load of oppression—the Antagonist—is metaphorically applied upon them, exerting a downward force. Soon, the חליאות begin to falter under this load. This is the balance shift, occasioned by the weakening Agonist. As the shift takes place, the חלאים are soon unable to remain standing, and thus collapse to the ground. If the verse is perceived in this way—which seems probable—it contributes to the reader’s experience of the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] in the psalm.

As this psalm draws to an end, the [POWERLESSNESS] domain is evoked in a different way than before, as Yahweh’s superior power is brought to bear against the wicked.

8.6 Verse 15: Imagery of the Broken Arm

In the Psalter, the collocation of the lexemes שבר (to break, smash) and זרוע (arm, power, force) only occurs in the two distress psalms, Psalms 37 (v 17) and 9/10, both of which focus on the interaction between the רושי and the עני. The force dynamic on display here comes in the form of a request that God put an end to the powerful activity of the wicked by metaphorically breaking their arm. The arm would then be rendered immobile, an instance of the Onset Causation of Rest. The occasion of a broken arm does not usually result from the gradual application of a force over time, but rather through an instantaneous event, such as a fall, or, in this case, a sudden encounter between the רושי and the protector of the עני, Yahweh himself.

The final clause that we will analyse from a force-dynamic perspective is the concluding verse, where we encounter more terminology—the root זרז in the semantic field of terror and oppression—that exclusively coheres with זרז lexemes.

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89 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1458.
90 Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 419.
91 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 280.
8.7 Verse 18: Onset Letting of Rest via Imagery of an End to Terror
The root הערץ (to terrify, to exercise force) occurs five times in the Psalter (Pss 10:18; 37:35; 54:5; 86:14; 89:8). In four of these occurrences—all found in distress psalms—forms from the root הערץ are attributed to human beings, with the meaning, “ruthless; causing terror”.92 Here in Psalm 10:18, an infinitive form of הערץ occurs in this psalm’s final expression of confidence that God will put an end to the oppressive terror of the wicked. Readers may perceive this infinitive at the end of the psalm as lexicalised force dynamic, similar to the adjective עֵרֵץ (ערץ) that has been discussed above in section 3.

8.8 Summary of Force-Dynamic Discourse in Psalm 9/10
We have surveyed a collection of 15 force-dynamic features, all of which are located in Psalm 10. As the reader experiences the repetition and rapid succession of these event frames, this contributes to the psalm’s presentation of a power-inequality between the two central parties: the רְשֻׁעִים and the עְנֵי. As in Psalm 22, the reader of Psalm 10 may construct a macroproposition with respect to the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.93

8.9 Psalm 9/10: Analysis of Collocation
Psalm 9/10 contains two הערץ lexemes, in the unique construction לֹא־עָרַץ בְצָרָה (“in times of distress” [9:10; 10:1]). Because of this psalm’s acrostic format, and because it possesses characteristics of both thanksgiving and lament,94 Psalm 9/10 is not easy to classify from a form-critical perspective. Nevertheless, this psalm shows a considerable degree of thematic unity around the concepts of assailants and their victims.95 The first occurrence of לֹא־עָרַץ בְצָרָה is located in parallel with דֹּחָר (“oppressed one”), a term which reappears later in the psalm. The second occurrence of לֹא־עָרַץ בְצָרָה is analogous to several examples discussed earlier in this chapter: It is located immediately adjacent to the force-dynamic discourse which begins in the following verse. This location is quite similar to Psalm 22, where the force-dynamic discourse begins immediately following the הערץ lexeme. This dual occurrence of הערץ in Psalm 9/10, as well as the conspicuous location with respect to the force dynamics, helps to build the case that expert and repeated readers of the Psalter would associate the [POWERLESSNESS] domain with the הערץ lexemes.

92 The occurrence in Psalm 89:8 represents a different semantic field from the other four. In Psalm 89, הערץ occurs in parallel with יָרָא, referring to reverence for Yahweh.
93 As discussed in chapter 1, the construction of a macroproposition is a process of cognitive summarising, where the reader coalesces textual details around a central idea. See Kintsch, *Comprehension*, 218.
94 Seybold, *Die Psalmen*, 55.
95 Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 1*, 168–9. See Goldingay’s listing of terms contained in Ps 9 which are repeated in Ps 10.
This chapter highlights some of the clearer examples of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain cohering with [צרר1] lexemes in the Psalter. Moving toward the conclusion, only two candidates remain: Psalms 31 and 69.

9. Four-fold Occurrence of יד as a Metaphor for “Power” in Psalm 31

Although the Hebrew word יד (hand) appears in several different semantic fields, Psalm 31 contains an interesting four-fold repetition of this term in a semantic field relating to power. TDOT notes that, “The use of יָד in the sense of “power” or “control” covers a wide range.” This Hebrew usage of the singular noun יד to express power or authority is semantically similar to the idiomatic usage of the plural noun in the English sentence, *We’ll commit this matter into your hands.* This is why the English plural is used to translate the Hebrew singular in verses 6 and 16, below. The supplicant in Psalm 31 uses יד four times to describe his interaction with the power of his enemies vis-à-vis the power of Yahweh. This four-fold repetition of יד, coupled with this psalm’s two [צרר1] lexemes may incline readers to activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS] as an aspect of the distress frame.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>בְּדֵרָךְ אָפְּקֵד רְוֹת פְּדוֹתָה אָאוּר יְהוָה</td>
<td>I commit my spirit into your hands; redeem me, Yahweh, God of truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>נַעֲשָׂה תַּפְּרָם הָבַלֵּי שָׁוָה וּאְנָגָלָה</td>
<td>I despise the worshippers of worthless idols; I trust in Yahweh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>אֲנַשֶּׁהָתָם הַבּוֹסֵדּוֹ חַסְרָרָן אָשֶׁר רָאוּ</td>
<td>I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you have seen my affliction and you know the distress of my soul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>לִולֵא מֶגֶרְגֵרִי בּוֹרְדִיאָוָי הָעַסְמֵדָה</td>
<td>You have not handed me over to the power of the enemy, but have set my feet in a spacious place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>שָׁנָא קוֹדֵר כְּרָלַיָּאָו הָעַסְמֵדָה</td>
<td>Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>בְּדֵרָךְ עַתָּיָא הָעַסְמֵדָה מִידָאָרָוָי</td>
<td>My fate is in your hands; deliver me from the power of my enemies and my pursuers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To spell out the force dynamics which expert readers may perceive in this psalm, four grammatical particulars should be kept in mind. First, each occurrence of יד is in the construct state, and includes a proclitic preposition. With respect to the construct relations, two of the absolute nouns denote the supplicant’s enemies ([structor, [vv 9, 16]), while the other two denote Yahweh, expressed through the 2ms pronominal suffix (vv 6, 16). The

powerless supplicant is positioned between these two superior power sources. Second, in this context, the four prepositions designate proximity or motion with respect to these two opposing power sources: Yahweh and the enemy. Three of the occurrences have the ב (in, into [vv 6, 9, 16a]) prefix. In a comment that has force-dynamic implications, BDB notes that the ב preposition sometimes occurs “with verbs of motion, when the movement to a place results in rest in it.”97 In this context, the ב preposition serves in a similar way, yet as a conceptual opposite of the ב preposition, expressing “separation or removal from a person or place.”98 Third, one of the occurrences of יד is in a nominal clause (v 16a), while in the remaining three the predicator is a finite verb. Before suggesting specific force-dynamic categories, it is important to point out that expert readers may very well perceive this psalm’s first two occurrences of יד (vv 6, 9) as a pair, as pointed out by Goldingay.

The weakness has made it hard to overcome enemies, but Yhwh has preserved the supplicant from ending up in their power. Not being delivered into the hand of the enemy also pairs with entrusting the spirit to the hand of Yhwh.99

This pair of power metaphors featuring יד is nestled amidst the psalm’s pair of ר nowraped 1 lexemes in verses 8 and 10, thereby associating these two concepts in the expert reader’s cognition. Although determining the specific force-dynamic categories at work in Psalm 31 is difficult when compared with some of the more obvious imagery that has been discussed above in other psalms, the following is a suggested delineation of what expert readers may experience. Verse 6a is an example of Onset Letting of Rest, as the supplicant entrusts himself to God’s protective hand, thereby seeking to shield himself from the impingement of his pursuers. Moving to the other half of this pair of power metaphors (v. 9a), there is a significant degree of synonymity between the two verbs in verses 6a and 9a. The hiph‘il stems of פקד and סגר both include the sense of “handing over” an object to the authority or control of another.100 Therefore, the expert reader would probably perceive the force dynamics in verse 9a as a request for Yahweh to prevent an unwanted occasion of Onset Causation of Rest in the clutches of the supplicant’s enemies. Thus, both of the first two יד metaphors revolve around the idea of rest. The supplicant wishes to rest in Yahweh’s hand rather than “resting” in the hand of the enemy. Regarding the dual occurrence of יד in verse 16, expert readers may perceive this as a single event frame, given the fact that verse 16a is a nominal clause. This nominal clause can be read as simply a statement of confidence in Yahweh, rather than as an event frame. Thus reading verse 16 as a single event frame, the concept of pursuit in the second bicolon informs the reader that the supplicant is again

97 Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 88.
98 Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 577.
100 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 743, 957.
requesting the Onset Letting of Rest. Yahweh’s deliverance from his powerful pursuers will let the supplicant rest.

**Analysis of Collocation**

As discussed above, this psalm’s two צְרָרֵי lexemes (vv 8, 10) are interwoven with the first two metaphorical expressions featuring יד (vv 6, 9), a literary presentation that may incline expert readers to associate the domain [POWERLESSNESS] with the distress lexemes. (A similar structure can be noted in Psalm 106:41-44, where two references to the יד of the enemy are found immediately before a צְרָרֵי lexeme.) Regarding the third and fourth occurrences of the יד metaphor in verse 16, the situation is similar to several of the psalms studied earlier in this chapter. Psalm 31 is a thematically unitary IL, in which the supplicant’s conflict with his enemies permeates throughout.

In our attempt to highlight some of the clearer examples of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain in the psalms of distress, only one poem remains to be studied: Psalm 69. We now turn to an analysis of Psalm 69, which is one of the stronger examples of water-related threat imagery in the Psalter. This imagery shares some vocabulary with the Song of Moses, terms which fall into the category commonly referred to as chaos imagery. Chaos-water terminology often appears in event frames which evoke a sense of terror in the reader. Patrick Miller writes that the waters of chaos “always evoke danger and elicit fear.”

This is true for the majority of occurrences, but not for all of them. Psalms 42 and 88 contain terms from the semantic range of chaos waters (e.g. תָּהוֹם, the deep; מֵצָאָל, the deep) occurring in contexts where the central focus revolves more around despair or discouragement rather than fear. In Psalm 42, for example there are no explicitly fear-related verbs or images. Rather, we encounter terms like דָּמַע (tears) and קָדֵר (mourning), which paint a picture of one who is overwhelmed by discouragement rather than fear. However, when chaos water images are used to express fear, this motif of water-related threat shows quite a strong correlation with occurrences of צְרָרֵי.

### 10. Water Motifs and Distress in Psalm 69

Psalm 69 presents the tour-de-force of the water-related threat motif in the Psalter. This psalm conveys its water imagery, as it were, in two separate waves (vv 2-3 and 15-16).  

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101 Miller, *Interpreting*, 70.
102 Ps 88:7 contains an occurrence of תָּהוֹם, but the LXX has translated this as σκια θανατου, indicating that the Vorlage may have read צָלָמָה (shadow of death).
First, at the psalm’s outset in verses 2-3, the poet omits the summons which is so common in the Individual Laments. Through this omission, the psalm evokes a feeling of urgency, as if there is no time to waste with formalities. The second wave of water-threat imagery occurs in verses 15-16, where this motif is recapitulated and expanded.

Psalm 69:2-3, 14-18

v 2 Save me, O God! For the waters have risen up to my neck.

v 3a I am sinking in deep mire, where there is no foothold;

v 3b I have entered the watery depths, and the flood washes me away.

v 14a But I pray to you, O Yahweh, in the time of your favour;

v 14b In your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.

v 15 Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.

v 16a May the flood not inundate me! May the deep not swallow me!

v 16b May the pit not close its mouth over me!

v 17 Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

v 18 Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in distress.

The first two verses of Psalm 69 present a rapid succession of water-related force-dynamic event frames, calling upon the reader’s long term memory in various ways. From a cognitive semantic perspective, the reader’s understanding of cultural phenomena like the waters of chaos is dependent—by definition—upon his long term memory. This is the case whether the reader has experienced such phenomena personally, or has merely heard about it from others. In either case, the reader does not approach the text with his mind as a \textit{tabula rasa}. The reader’s cultural awareness of chaos necessarily implies the use of his long term memory. But, perhaps the reader has heard the roar of a cistern as it rapidly fills during a cloudburst. Perhaps he has carefully leaned over to peer inside the cistern at such a moment, observing the watery maelstrom. Perhaps he has seen a \textit{wadi} during a flash flood,
and has watched partially-submerged objects being rapidly carried away. Perhaps he has heard others tell stories of such events. The text calls upon such cultural phenomena. Throughout verses 2-3, both the force dynamics and the figure-ground relations constantly shift, presenting imagery that quickly flashes from scene to scene. If the reader slows down to observe each specific scene, his cognitive experience may include factors explained in the following force-dynamic analysis.

10.1 Verse 2: The Threat of Rising Waters

In verse 2, the terrified psalmist faces the immediate prospect that his airway will be cut off. The rising waters—the Antagonist—are in the nominative, and are presented as being in motion, thus serving as Figure, while the supplicant’s neck or throat (נפׁש) is represented as a fixed location—the Ground—with respect to which the waters rise. The neck is an effective metonym for the psalmist’s entire body—the Agonist in this force dynamic—as well as for his life itself, because, “The concrete primary meaning of nepēš is usually assumed to be ‘maw, throat, gullet,’ as the organ used for eating and breathing.” Thus, if the rising waters cut off his airway, the continual repetitive motions involved in daily living (e.g. breathing, eating, speaking) will come to a sudden stop. The text thereby summons the reader’s long term memory with respect to human anatomy: the distance between the neck and the nose. This sudden stop of life’s activities is just a few centimetres away—an example of threatened Onset Causation of Rest. The implication is that the supplicant is powerless to stop the situation, inclining the expert reader to activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS].

10.2 Verse 3a: Imagery of Sinking

In verse 3a, the Figure-Ground segregation is the inverse of that which immediately precedes it. The supplicant’s sinking body is the nominative, and is in motion, thus serving as Figure, while the miry depths are presented as a fixed entity, and thus the Ground. Although it is not textually represented, the downward force of gravity plays a dynamic role in this event frame, similar to several of the examples discussed above that involve descent, toppling, etc. The added factor that there is no foothold informs the expert reader once again that the supplicant is powerless to stop this extended motion, as “the floods are continually dragging the petitioner down.” This is an instance of the force-dynamic event frame, Extended Causation of Motion.

106 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 51–100, 177.
10.3 Verse 3b: Further Flood Imagery

There is some question as to whether an experienced reader would perceive the two clauses in verse 3b as separate motion events, or as a single event. But, if the reader assumes that the vav beginning the second colon of verse 3b (שבלת, and a torrent) functions like the vav in the preceding verse 3a, then the reader would probably receive this text as one—rather than two—motion events. The following analysis assumes that this is the case. The axis of motion in this event frame has shifted from the previous, vertical idea of sinking to one of horizontal motion: being inundated by a raging river or flood. The two bicola of verse 3b present this motion event from two different Figure-Ground perspectives. The first bicolon (v 3bα) presents the supplicant as Figure and the watery depths as the Ground, thus establishing the subject’s spatial disposition. Readers may envision a scenario where only the subject’s head is visible above the water’s surface. The second bicolon (v 3bβ) reverses the Figure-Ground segregation and sets the prior image in motion. The שבלת (flowing stream, torrent) is now the Figure, while the supplicant serves as Ground. Transitive occurrences of the motion verb שטף (to flood over) often refer to the forcible removal of objects from their prior fixed or visible position. This removal can be accomplished through erosion (Job 14:19; Sol 8:7; cf. the substantive שטף in Job 38:5); through washing (1 Kgs 22:38); or as in a flood when the dry land is obscured from view and virtually all of the previously visible objects upon the land are carried away (Jer 47:2), never to be seen again. Thus, transitive occurrences of this verb often assume a fixed scene or substrate, from which a smaller object has been washed away by water in motion, like blood from a chariot, sand from a wadi, or livestock from a farm. In the event frame given in verse 3b, the moving waters are the Antagonist, and the conceptually stationary supplicant is the Agonist. This study of the verb שטף indicates that the “mind’s eye” of the expert reader probably would not follow the supplicant as he is swept downstream. Rather, the reader’s attention would remain fixed on the supplicant’s former location, from which he is threatened to be washed away, never to be seen again. Therefore, this event frame is another expression of imminent death, similar to the threat that the psalmist’s airway will soon be cut-off. Expert readers would probably receive this event frame as threatened Onset Causation of Motion, or as a Balance-Shift pattern, where the psalmist’s present ability to resist the onslaught will soon come to an end.

10.4 Verses 15-16a: Plea to be “Snatched-Out” of the Waters

Verses 15-16a repeat several terms that draw the reader’s attention back to the predicament described in this psalm’s introduction. The four volitive forms in this portion provide the

107 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1475.
new factor in this repetition of chaos-water imagery, as the supplicant requests divine intervention from the watery chaos that engulfs him. The reader encounters two verbs that he has already seen earlier in verse 3 (תָּבַע, to sink; שָׁנַף, to be washed away), the difference being that here they are negated volitive forms, as the supplicant calls upon Yahweh to counteract the forces that currently prevail against him. These two volitives are supplemented by two volitive occurrences of the verb נָלָץ (to snatch away, deliver). This is the Psalter’s only dual occurrence of נָלָץ in the same verse. This grammar informs the reader that the Agonist supplicant wants his impingement with the Antagonist chaos-waters to come to a sudden end. The expert reader would probably perceive this language as a request for divine reversal of the force dynamics set out in the introduction. Since most of the event frames at the introduction have to do with motion rather than stasis, expert readers may perceive verses 15-16a as a dual request for Onset Letting of Rest. The supplicant asks Yahweh to accomplish something that he cannot accomplish for himself, again suggesting the domain [POWERLESSNESS] to the reader.

10.5 Verse 16: Imagery of Swallowing
This psalm’s water-threat imagery concludes in verse 16b-c, where the watery depths are ready to swallow the supplicant alive. This swallowing imagery is introduced in verse 16b (בלע elabor to swallow), and is then repeated in verse 16c with parallel terms that provide the reader with further detail. The words בָּעֵר and פֶּה (its mouth) along with the hapax legomenon אַטֶּר (to close) may prompt expert readers to personify the chaos waters and envision the supplicant as trapped inside the mouth of a giant beast. If this is the reader’s cognitive experience, then the supplicant’s entire body fits inside the monster’s mouth. This monster is truly huge, providing further substantiation to the reader’s experience of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain. Additionally, the closing mouth would probably be understood as another instance of the force-dynamic Onset Causation of Rest. If the mouth were to close, the supplicant would immediately die, and all bodily motion and supplication would end. If the reader perceives it this way, then this final water-related event frame matches the force-dynamic category with which the psalm began, where the waters threaten to shut off the supplicant’s airway.

10.6 Psalm 69: Conclusion of Force-Dynamic Discussion
Several of the examples discussed in this chapter have pointed out how distress psalms use the literary device of repetition to suggest the [POWERLESSNESS] domain to the reader. To review, Psalm 22 introduces its wild beast imagery in verses 13-17, and then reprises it in verses 21-22. Psalm 9/10 provides a lengthy narrative, laden with force dynamics. Psalm

108 “God is the power that counters chaos,” [Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 51–100, 180].
109 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 51–100, 181.
31 introduces its power-related imagery featuring יְדֵי in verses 6-9, and then returns to this imagery with the twofold occurrence in verse 16. Psalm 69 is very similar in this regard, with its dual presentation of water-related force dynamics. Although other psalms lacking יְרָעֵם lexemes sometimes include similar elements in relative isolation (e.g. Ps 124:4-5), the repeated and lengthy assemblies of these force dynamics—expressing unwanted forces impinging upon distressed people—are, by and large, associated with the distress psalms alone.

10.7 Analysis of Collocation
Psalm 69 is a thematically unitary IL, primarily addressing the supplicant’s trouble with his enemies. Unlike many IL psalms (e.g. Ps 4:2; 86:1; 143:1), the beginning of Psalm 69 lacks a summons or invocation section. However, in verses 14, 17 and 18, the psalm includes the kind of petitionary language that is often found in the summons of other IL psalms. The structure of Psalm 69 closely associates the water-threat motif with the יְרָעֵם lexeme (v 18) by packaging the second wave of its water-related threat imagery (vv 15-16) within the petitionary language of verses 14, 17 and 18.

11. Summary and Conclusion
This chapter has examined a constellation of various-sized syntagms which are expressions of force impinging upon the sufferers, and which determine יְרָעֵם lexemes. This study has been conducted for a twofold purpose. The first purpose is to demonstrate that the [POWERLESSNESS] domain is a salient component of the cognitive-semantic frame associated with יְרָעֵם lexemes in the Psalter. The second purpose is to begin building the case that there is a generic element in the Psalter associated with these lexemes. As discussed in chapter one, I am following Longman, Buss, and others, by assuming that an individual psalm can carry more than one generic descriptor. For example, Psalm 18 can be understood to carry three generic names: It is an IT; it is a Royal Psalm; and it carries certain attributes that allow it also to be called a distress psalm. In this way, psalm genres comprise a matrix, in which a given poem can simultaneously carry multiple generic descriptors. One axis of this matrix could be called “the distress (יְרָעֵם) axis,” and one of the indicators of this axis is the [POWERLESSNESS] domain that is often evoked through various kinds of force dynamics. Therefore, psalms that are dissimilar with respect to traditional, form-critical categories can be understood as similar vis-à-vis the distress axis. In keeping with the fuzzy set theory discussed in chapter one, some distress psalms are stronger prototypes of this distress axis than others. In other words, using Hjelmslev’s terminology, not all יְרָעֵם lexemes determine force dynamic discourses, but virtually all force-dynamic discourses

110 Wilson, Psalms Volume 1, 951.
determine lexemes. Set membership with respect to these two variables is not binary, but rather is better understood as a fuzzy boundary. The following chapter will examine a similar constellation of cohesive force-dynamic event frames. In these texts, similar motion and force is depicted, however the force does not impinge directly upon the supplicant. Rather, the supplicant observes it at a temporal or spatial distance. This domain is perhaps best described by the name [PALPABLE THREAT].
Chapter 4
Cognitive Profile of Distress: [PALPABLE THREAT]

1. Introduction
This chapter will investigate another significant domain—to be called [PALPABLE THREAT]—that is part of the semantic frame associated with פלאזך.lexemes in the Psalter. We will examine some פלאזך–collocated motion and force-dynamic event frames that display two key differences from the ones studied in chapter three. The first difference relates to the identity of the Agonist, while the second difference deals with the kind of motion which the events describe.

First, regarding the identity of the Agonist, the psalms studied in the prior chapter describe forces impinging upon the subjects of the suffering themselves rather than upon some other object. The texts studied in chapter three depicted distressed human beings in the role of Agonist: as surrounded by wild beasts, persecuted by tyrants, captured in traps, etc. Most of these events that were discussed under the heading of [POWERLESSNESS] are expressed in the first person, drawing the reader’s attention to the Agonist’s physical body or psychological situation (e.g. Pss 18, 22, 31, 69). Although some of the examples from chapter three are expressed in the third person (e.g. Ps 9/10), these event frames are similar to the first person cases because the Agonists are the sufferers themselves, rather than some other entity. However, unlike the texts studied in chapter three, the texts that will be investigated in this chapter feature an Agonist other than the sufferer. The motion and force dynamics that we will investigate here do not impinge directly upon the human subjects, but rather upon something else. The two clearest examples of this situation are found in Psalms 46 and 77 (studied below), which depict the violent motion of the chaos sea in a פלאזך setting.

Second, regarding the kind of motion, the event frames examined in the prior chapter generally feature translational motion—where a Figure object moves from one point to another with respect to a Ground object—rather than cyclical or iterative motion. Examples of translational motion from chapter three include water rising up to the neck (Ps 69:2), an individual laid in the dust (Ps 22:16), or an army conducting an encirclement manoeuvre (Ps 118:10-12). By contrast, the texts that will be investigated in this chapter feature verbs expressing repeated or cyclical action, such as רעש (to shake, quake). Talmy describes this type of action as “self-contained motion,” while contrasting it with translational motion.

In translational motion, an object’s basic location shifts from one point to another in space. In self-contained motion, an object keeps its same basic, or “average,”
location. Self-contained motion generally consists of oscillation, rotation, dilation (expansion or contraction), wiggle, local wander, or rest.¹

As with the issue of the Agonist’s identity, two clear examples of texts featuring self-contained motion are Psalms 46 and 77, which cast the power of Yahweh versus that of the turbulent sea. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine these two poems, along with some similar language in other distress psalms. Building upon Talmy’s parameter of “palpability,” the cognitive domain elicited by these syntagms will be given the name [PALPABLE THREAT].²

It is important to point out that there is overlap between the two cognitive domains [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT]. For example, although the event of being surrounded by wild beasts has been discussed under the heading of [POWERLESSNESS], it would be reasonable to also view such imagery as conveying [PALPABLE THREAT], because the motion of roaring lions (Ps 22:14) could be construed as iterative. However, in order to avoid covering the same ground twice, in each case the deciding factors will be the identity of the Agonist and/or the inclusion of verbs which clearly describe the idea of self-contained motion. Therefore, language that activates the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain will be defined as that which depicts trouble or conflict using the poetic repetition of self-contained motion and related force dynamics, and in which the respective motion or force does not impinge directly upon a suffering subject or speaker, but rather demands their focused attention, and that of the reader.

Our first example of the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain is Psalm 46, which includes repeated force and motion event frames, yet without depicting entrapped, fleeing, or exhausted individuals. Similar to Psalm 77 (below) the text of Psalm 46 presents the threatening waters of chaos from a distal perspective rather than the proximal perspective of Psalm 69 (studied in chapter 3), where the supplicant is personally engulfed by the waters.³

2. Self-Contained Motion and Related Force Dynamics in Psalm 46
The scale of the force-dynamic event frames in Psalm 46 is larger than most of those examined in chapter three. Here, the forces at work involve the entire cosmic realm, depictions of battle scenes and the toppling of governments.

¹ Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 2, 35–6.
² Palpability is discussed in chapter 1, section 2.2.
³ For a discussion of perspectival distance, see Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 69–70.
Psalm 46

v 2 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

v 3 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be altered\(^4\) and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

v 4 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah

v 5 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

v 6 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

v 7 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

v 8 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

v 9 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

v 10a נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
Making battles cease to the ends of the earth;

v 10b נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.

v 11 נמצא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

v 12 נמצוא בצרות עזרה וŮצז מחסה לנו אלהים
The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

2.1 Verses 3-4: A Change in the Cosmic Balance of Power

Conducting a cognitive-semantic analysis of Psalm 46:3-4 presents a new challenge to the interpreter, when compared to most of the work done in chapter three. This is because many of the event frames examined in the prior chapter are more readily understandable to modern readers. For example, an individual surrounded by lions (Ps 22:14) in the twenty-first century is in more-or-less the same predicament as someone so surrounded during the Iron Age. Likewise, the Onset Causation of Rest that happens when someone is caught in a

\(^4\)Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 495.
net (Ps 10:9) probably has not changed all that greatly over the millennia. The situation in Psalm 46 is different. Psalm 46:3-4 presents a force-dynamic event frame to the ancient reader, which modern readers may not fully understand, because they believe that the earth is a relatively-solid sphere. This is because the cosmological presuppositions of the ancient reader were different from moderns regarding the structure of the habitable earth with respect to the sea. These presuppositions would lead the ancient reader to perceive the event described in the text quite differently from the way that moderns do. For ancient Near Eastern readers, the force dynamic event frame conveyed in Psalm 46:3-4 assumes prior knowledge that the inhabited earth is a solid disc resting atop the chaos sea. Othmar Keel summarises this scenario as follows:

Even less clear to the ancient Near East than the relation between Tehom (primeval ocean) and Sheol (realm of the dead) was the problem of how the inhabited earth is kept from sinking into the Chaos-waters... The OT postulates pillars (Ps 75:3; I Sam 2:8; Job 9:6), foundations (Pss 18:7; 82:5), or supports (Ps 104:5) on which the earth disc rests... These conceptions may have an experiential basis in the mighty rock walls, articulated like pillars, of the deep-cut wadis; but no man knows where they themselves rest (Job 38:6). The crucial factor is that Yahweh, a personal power, keeps the earth out of the Chaos-waters (Pss 24:1-2; 93:1; 96:10; 136:6). The technical means by which that is accomplished remain unclear.\(^5\)

If we assume that the long-term memory of an ancient, expert reader includes some of the biblical texts or cultural information referenced by Keel, then as he approaches the text of Psalm 46, the reader presupposes that the earth’s present situation is, actually, a kind of force dynamic stasis, in-and-of-itself, as the earth disc rests upon its supports, atop the chaos sea. Stasis is the beginning-point for all force-dynamic analysis. According to Talmy, “Underlying all more complex force-dynamic patterns is the steady-state opposition of two forces...”\(^6\) We will assume that the ancient reader understood the earth to be resting—in continuous impingement and steady-state opposition—upon the pillars or foundations which prevented it from sinking or toppling back into the waters of chaos from whence it came. Thus, although the specific referent events in verses 2-3 may be an earthquake or landslide,\(^7\) the ancient reader would probably perceive these motion event frames as being caused by a subterranean Balance Shift of some kind; in which all or part of the earth disc’s vertical support system somehow lost its structural integrity, resulting in a considerable chunk of that disc becoming dislodged and toppling back in to the chaos sea, which continuously impinged upon the earth disc from below. Thus, the relationship between institutionalised

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\(^6\) Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1*, 413.

cultural knowledge and a specific linguistic form manifests itself in a particularly interesting way here in Psalm 46.8 The force-dynamic event frame in Psalm 46:3-4 presupposes a static balance of power in the cosmos, followed by a sudden, perilous shift in that balance, on a vast scale. Yet the force depicted in this event frame—threatening as it is—does not impinge directly upon anybody. Compared with the waters rising to the supplicant’s neck in Psalm 69, the reader observes this cosmic disaster in Psalm 46 from a greater distance, triggering the cognitive domain which we are calling [PALPABLE THREAT]. The three successive imperfect verbs in verse 4 present a poetic repetition of violent, self-contained motion (המה, to roar, be turbulent, tumultuous; חמר, to boil, foam up; רעש, to quake).

Throughout verses 3 and 4, the threatening object is the sea, and not the dry land. The antecedent of the two 3ms suffixes in verse 4 reminds the reader that it is ים (the sea; v 3b)—and not the mountains—that is the real threat as the two collide together in this presentation of force and motion. It is also important to note that, as we will see in the study of Psalm 77 below, Psalm 46:4b ascribes a personal attribute (arrogance, גאוה—with its overtones of aggression—to the otherwise impersonal sea.12 The dry land—represented by the ostensibly powerful mountains—is placed in the role of Agonist and hapless victim to the Antagonist forces of chaos. In the Psalter, lengthy depictions of the waters of chaos in violent motion cohere with חזר lexemes (Pss 46:3-4; 69:2-3, 15-16; 77:17-20; 107:23-27. Cf. also Ps 18:8-17; Hab 3:1-16; Job 16:22-25; Jon 2:3-6.).13

2.2 Verses 4-5: Onset Letting of Rest Accomplished through a Change of Setting

In verse 5, similar to an effect that is often accomplished through movie editing, Psalm 46 alleviates the tension evoked at its introduction by suddenly transporting the reader to a different setting. The overpowering waters of chaos in verses 3-4 are immediately juxtaposed with the beneficial effects of the water that flows from the dwelling place of the

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8 As a former resident of southern California, I can testify to a similar phenomenon with respect to the relationship between linguistics and naive cosmology that occurred there in the early 1970s. Beginning in the 1960s, through the influence of television, the emerging science of plate tectonics became general knowledge for the very first time. Soon, millions of naive geologists (I was one of them!) residing between San Jose and the Rio Grande, became acutely aware of the San Andreas fault; and very soon, the syntagm, What if California falls into the ocean? had become idiomatic. The point is, that were it not for the pre-existing, institutionalised, cultural knowledge in southern California at that time, the linguistic form What if California falls into the ocean? and its accompanying image schema would have been virtually unintelligible, and may never have occurred at all.

9 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 250.
10 Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 330.
11 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1271.
12 Kraus, Psalms 1–59: A Commentary, 461.
13 Psalm 69 was studied in chapter 3. We will examine Psalm 77 in this chapter, section 3, below. Psalm 107 will be studied in chapter 8.
Most High.\textsuperscript{14} The impingement represented by the violent waters is removed—at a literary level—as the reader’s attention is directed from the crashing waves to a bubbling brook, which may be perceived as an instance of the Onset Letting of Rest.\textsuperscript{15} The [PALPABLE THREAT] of chaos is alleviated, as represented by the gentle waters.

2.3 Verse 6: Extended Rest for the City of God Despite Opposition
Verse 6 presents a force-dynamic event frame dealing with the [PALPABLE THREAT] of war against the City of God. The reader’s confidence that the city of God will not topple is based on an assurance that God is present there, and will help the city. This event frame includes an important case of conceptual windowing and gapping. The stability of the city is given explicit representation in the text. The threatened assault upon the city—that which would cause it to topple—is gapped, or in other words, left unstated. The people in the city are placed in a position of relative irrelevance with respect to the force-dynamic, because the countering force that will withstand the opposition is God himself, and not the city’s human residents. For this reason, the event frame presented in verse 6 may also contribute to an experienced reader’s perception of the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS], which would accompany the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain which has been elicited earlier in the poem.

2.4 Verses 7-10: Six-Fold Repetition of Onset Causation of Rest through Imagery of an End to Warfare
As Psalm 46 draws to a close, readers are prompted to link some of the terms in verse 7 with similar terms occurring earlier in the psalm. Verse 7a repeats two of the verbs (ָּֽהָמָה and מְמוּט) which were introduced in verses 3b and 4a, in order to advance the idea that the turbulent waters of chaos depicted at the beginning of this psalm are actually a metaphor for the violent instability and [PALPABLE THREAT] of the nations.\textsuperscript{16} Then, after these terms have been reintroduced in verse 7a, God raises his voice amidst the din in verse 7b, and “the very earth, which is the setting for the power of human states, ‘melts’ beneath them.”\textsuperscript{17} In other words, the field of battle has been rendered unusable by divine fiat. If the chaos sea has the power to place the dry land at risk—as at the psalm’s beginning—then the almighty Creator certainly has the power to accomplish the same with the dry land as well, resulting in a cessation of human combat and removal of the [PALPABLE THREAT]. Thus, it is probable that an expert reader would perceive the melting earth in verse 7b as an instance of

\textsuperscript{14} For a discussion of the double meaning (Zweiseitigkeit) of water as both a destructive and beneficial entity, see, C. Barth, Die Erretung vom Tode, 35–6.
\textsuperscript{15} Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 1, 419.
\textsuperscript{16} Mays, Psalms, 183.
\textsuperscript{17} Craigie, WBC: Psalms 1–50, 345.
the Onset Causation of Rest, with respect to the activity of warfare. Next, a similar force dynamic is presented in verse 9, but one that employs a variation on the current image schema: the quiet aftermath of battles, sieges, or similar disasters (שמות, desolations), whereby territories have become “devoid of inhabitants.” I. Meyer writes that “Regions that become šammâ are no longer fit for habitation for human beings and domestic animals...” In the present context, these desolations wrought by Yahweh himself evoke a picture of inactivity which stands in contrast to the self-contained motion of the turbulent waters and raging nations earlier in the psalm. This is another instance of the Onset Causation of Rest. The potential that expert readers would perceive INACTIVITY to be a semantic component of the noun שמות in this context seems reasonable in view of the clearly-lexicalised cessation of warfare in the following verse. Here in verse 10, the hiph’il participle מָשַׁבְיָה (to make something stop, bring to a conclusion) denotes an end to the clamour of the nations, and the geopolitical threat to the city of God. Whether this participle is read as an anarthrous substantive or as a predicate, the result is approximately the same, as the human inhabitants of God’s city are mere passive beneficiaries of Yahweh’s worldwide termination of warfare, thus putting an end to the [PALPABLE THREAT]. This hiph’il participle is the third in a rapid succession of concepts presenting the reader with the Onset Causation of Rest. This picture of cessation is then completed in verse 10b where the reader encounters three successive verbal clauses referencing Yahweh’s destruction of the implements of war. These three clauses provide more instances of the force-dynamic, Onset Causation of Rest (bringing the total to six), as the attacking armies are brought to a stop by Yahweh himself.

2.5 Psalm 46: Conclusion

A cognitive semantic analysis of Psalm 46 sheds new light on our understanding of how ancient readers may have perceived the psalm. Cognitive semantics helps us to understand the essential semantic unity of verses 5-10; a unity revolving around the basic force-dynamic concept of rest, which is presented from various angles. This is because, beginning at verse 5, the psalm presents a series of eight force dynamic event frames depicting rest of various kinds. Beginning with Onset Letting of Rest resulting from the change of scenery in verses 4-5, the reader then encounters Extended Rest despite Opposition (v 6), followed by six iterations of Onset Causation of Rest. The psalm then concludes in a fitting manner by requesting a response of rest (הרפו) from the reader.

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2.6 Analysis of Collocation
Psalm 46 is a thematically unitary Hymn of Zion, and is similar to many others in that the lexeme is located in its introduction (v 2). The word “therefore” (עלכן) in verse 3a links the psalm’s opening line with the remainder of the poem where the imagery of self-contained motion and related force-dynamic event frames are located.

We now turn to a study of Psalm 77. Similar to Psalm 46, this distress psalm depicts the waters of chaos in violent motion, yet the motion does not impinge upon the speaker or any particular individual.

3. Self-Contained Motion and Related Force Dynamics in Psalm 77
Psalm 77:17-20 recounts a forceful interaction between Yahweh and the waters of chaos. We will begin our investigation of this passage by noticing the series of five verbs expressing self-contained motion: חיל (to writhe [v 17]); רגע (to quake [vv 17, 19]); הולך (hitpa‘el to flash hither and thither21 [v 18]); רעש (to quake [v 19]).

Psalm 77:17-20

17 ירגזו אַף יחילו מים אלהים מים BALLות The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed.

18 אַף־חצציך שחקים נתנו קול עבות מים זרמו יתהלכו The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth.

19 קול רעך גנבו אורות ברקים מלא הרוה The earth trembled and quaked.

19 בערשי האור Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked.

20 יי מים דרך השביקה גojis רביםعراقיך לא נדע Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.

21 אתה נצאר עמך ידдержива אהר You led your people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron

21 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 248.
In addition to the lexicalised self-contained motion given in the five verbs (mentioned above), several of the clauses themselves—and the events depicted by them—paint a picture of violent, iterative motion and sound, yet this action does not impinge directly upon a human subject. The details of the thunderstorm in verses 18-19 prompt the reader to access long term memory regarding the repeated pounding and flashing of thunder and lightning. The word גלגל (wheel) in verse 19 evokes imagery of a whirlwind or of Yahweh’s chariot wheel, either of which exemplifies self-contained motion. The text’s personification of the churning sea (i.e. seeing Yahweh, and reacting to his presence) is more detailed than the personification noted above in Psalm 46:4.

The reader’s perception of the force dynamics in this passage is partially dependent upon which historical event—or events—the reader perceives the text to be referencing. The imagery in this passage is similar to the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15), in that terminology recalling Yahweh’s dominance over the waters in primeval times is used to describe Yahweh’s parting of the sea during the Exodus.

The following force-dynamic analysis assumes that the reader accesses long-term memory in this regard. Several versions appear to have made such an exegetical decision, demonstrated by having translated the two proclitic ב prepositions in verse 20 as “through” rather than with the more prototypical “in” or “within,” thereby helping modern readers to recall the time when Yahweh cut a path...
“through” the violent waters.\textsuperscript{25} The clauses and order of presentation in verses 17-20 present a juxtaposition between (on the one hand) the violent, self-contained motion of the sea and (on the other) Yahweh’s path through this tumultuous zone, which rendered it passable for his people. Therefore, although the reading experience of each individual is different, this analysis leads to a reasonable inference that expert and experienced readers would perceive verses 17-20 as an instance of the Onset Causation of Rest. Yahweh’s path erected a boundary which the violent self-contained motion of the waters could not cross. Yahweh forced the raging waters to “rest”. If the reader ponders further, he may also perceive this event frame as Onset Letting of Motion, because Yahweh’s entrapped people were given a passable route through the impassable sea. Therefore, this text may activate not only the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain, but also, possibly the [POWERLESSNESS] domain as well.

\textit{Analysis of Collocation}

Psalm 77 is a thematically unitary lament, which displays both community and individual aspects.\textsuperscript{26} James McCann notes that the thematic unity of this psalm is demonstrated through the similar terms which are carried throughout, such as meditation (\textit{ׂשיח}, vv 4, 7, 13) and remembering (\textit{זאמר}, vv 7, 12).\textsuperscript{27} The \textit{צרר} lexeme is found in a typical location, in the Psalm’s introduction (v 3). After the introduction, the psalmist gives details of what has caused his distress, namely, the downtrodden condition of the psalmist’s community, or the nation of Israel as a whole.\textsuperscript{28} The answer to the petitioner’s distress is provided in verses 12ff, where he recounts what God has done in the past in order to give him strength in the present, as summarised by J. Kselman:

By calling to mind the paradigmatic act of wonder and power from Israel’s past, Yahweh’s victory over Egypt and his mastery over the sea, the psalmist answers the questions of Psalm 77 by asserting that God’s mighty power to save is still active. The God who delivered Israel from Egypt can deliver the psalmist from the present distress as well.\textsuperscript{29}

Beat Weber makes a similar comment regarding the relationship between the beginning and end of Psalm 77:

In the poetic structure, the theophany in the thunderstorm (vv. 18-19) thus echoes the call of distress in the opening lament (v. 2). In the theophany of

\textsuperscript{25} E.g. RSV, NIV, TNK, ESV, EIN, ELB, SCL, ad. loc.
\textsuperscript{26} P. S. Johnston and D. G. Firth, eds., \textit{Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches} (Leicester: Apollos, 2005) 298.
\textsuperscript{27} J. C. McCann, \textit{The Book of Psalms} (The New Interpreter’s Bible; Abingdon, 1996) 983.
\textsuperscript{28} Tate, \textit{Psalms 51–100}, 274–5.
\textsuperscript{29} Kselman, “Psalm 77 and the Book of Exodus,” 53.
Thus, readers of Psalms 77 and 46 encounter blocks of text conveying repeated imagery of self-contained motion and related force dynamics in a צָרֵר–related setting. These force dynamics do not impinge directly upon individuals, but rather, are observed from a more distal perspective. These factors may promote the reader’s understanding that the cognitive domain [PALPABLE THREAT] is part of the distress frame. Before wrapping up the study of this domain, Psalm 59 provides one more noteworthy example.

4. Self-Contained Motion in Psalm 59
Psalm 59 received brief mention in chapter three (section 6.1), as one of only two psalms which depict the enemy as a pack of dogs (along with Ps 22). Part of the refrain in Psalm 59 also deserves brief attention because the self-contained motion expressed in these verses may evoke the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain. Psalm 59 has two separate pairs of verses which function as refrains: a refrain characterising the enemy as a pack of dogs (vv 7, 15), and a refrain expressing confidence in God (vv 10, 18). We will focus our attention on the pair of verses which reference the enemy.

Psalm 59:7-8a, 15-17

v 7 יְשַׁוָּהוּ לְעֵרָּבָּה הַמַּמְלָכִים רְסַמְמָּבָּה עֲרֵר They return each evening, barking like dogs, and prowl about the city.

v 8a וּבְפִיוֹנָם בִּיאֲשַׁמָּה Behold, they pour forth with their mouths...

v 15 יְשַׁוָּהוּ לְעֵרָּבָּה הַמַּמְלָכִים רְסַמְמָּבָּה עֲרֵר They return each evening, barking like dogs, and prowl about the city.

v 16 וּלִיְנָהוּ עִמְּסַמְמָּה אָסְרַאֲלָה יְשַׁבְּרוּ וְלִיְנָה They wander about for food; if they are not satisfied, they spend the night.

31 Tate, Psalms 51–100, 96.
32 Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 105.
But as for me, I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love;

For you are my high place, my refuge in the day of my distress.

The self-contained motion expressed in these verses is thematically different from the examples discussed above in Psalms 46 and 77. Unlike these other two psalms, there are no allusions to the forces of chaos, yet we see a similar poetic repetition of words and events depicting self-contained motion, in a distress psalm. There are seven factors to be considered with respect to self-contained, iterative motion in this passage. The first factor is the mere fact that the phrase is repeated in the psalm (vv 7, 15), which is a form of iterative expression. Regarding this repetition, one might notice anecdotally that verses 7 and 15 do not stand out as containing the kinds of ideas that would typically be chosen for a refrain. There may be something going on here from a genre-perspective, where the psalmist chose these verses in order to fulfill a specific generic purpose with respect to motion event frames in this particular distress psalm. Secondly, the imperfect verb יׁשובו (vv 7 and 15) makes the most sense in this context if it is read as an iterative. These enemies keep reappearing in the evenings: a repeated process that weighs heavily on the supplicant’s mind as a [PALPABLE THREAT]. Third, HALOT glosses the verb המה in this context as “to bark”, a behaviour which readers may perceive as iterative, in view of the succession of three imperfect verbs in verses 7 and 15. The enemies’ mouths emit a continual, repetitious din. Fourth, the po’el stem of the verb סבב in this context indicates that the enemies “go about” or “prowl around” the city. As discussed above, Talmy provides the example of “local wander” in his definition of self-contained motion. These enemies, who return each evening barking like dogs, are in continual motion around a locality: the city in which the poet resides. The fifth factor relating to self-contained motion comes in verse 8a, where the hiph’il stem of the verb נבע refers to the stream of words that these opponents emit from their mouths. Following after the simile comparing the enemy to barking dogs, this language contributes to the picture of incessant activity. Sixth, in verse 16, the verb נתש (to shake, sway, move to and fro) is a clear lexicalisation of self-contained motion. Elsewhere in the MT, the general sense of this verb relates to various kinds of self-contained, repeated motion, including quivering lips (1 Sam 1:13), swaying trees (Jdg 9:9-13), shaking heads (Ps 22:8) and the trembling threshold of the temple (Isa 6:4). In this context, its meaning is similar to the po’el of סבב, which precedes it. HALOT glosses it as “to roam around.”

33 Joüon, Grammar, 366. Cf. also TNK and ESV, ad. loc., which translate as “each evening”.
34 Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 686.
35 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 740.
36 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 681.
This is another example of Talmy’s concept of local wander. Even though this motion does not impinge directly upon the supplicant, the locally mobile enemy is continually on the supplicant’s “radar screen,” posing a [PALPABLE THREAT].

The seventh and final factor to point out in Psalm 59 is that the enemy remains present all night long. The final word in verse 16 (וּלְכוֹ) is ambiguous. It can be taken as coming from the root קָלָה (to grumble), or from the root קָלָה (to spend the night). There are two factors suggesting that the latter option may be preferred. First, the Syriac and Targum have translated this verb with the root быt (to spend the night). Second, the reference to the morning in the following line provides a fitting contrast. Berndt Janowski takes this view, noting that the enemies’ nocturnal presence contributes to the picture of their insatiability (Unersättlichkeit) and continual voraciousness (permanent Gefräßigkeit): “Who are these enemies, who plague the petitioner night after night like prowling wild dogs...?”

According to Janowski, this expresses the unrelenting (unstillbaren) aspect of the petitioner’s distress in Psalm 59. As in Janowski’s analysis, the nocturnal presence of the enemy contributes to the reader’s perception of the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain as a component of the distress frame.

Analysis of Collocation
Psalm 59 is a thematically unitary IL, focused around the petitioner’s struggle with his enemies. It is one of four distress psalms with צַרְרָה lexemes located at the conclusion (Pss 54, 59, 138, 143) rather than in the more frequent location near the beginning. But in being located at the conclusion, the distress lexeme plays a similar role retrospectively as it often does in the introduction to many other psalms. It looks back over the psalm in a summative fashion rather than looking forward into the psalm in a preliminary fashion.

5. Conclusion
In each of the three psalms studied in this chapter, it is not the presence of any one individual factor, but rather the accumulation of items within each psalm that is decisive for understanding both the semantic frame associated with צַרְרָה lexemes, and related genre issues. All three psalms display something similar to the psalms examined in the prior chapter: namely, blocks of text that provide repeated emphasis on force and motion to a degree that is not present in psalms lacking צַרְרָה lexemes.

37 Konfliktgespräche, 105 (trans. mine).
38 Konfliktgespräche, 105.
39 For further examples of distress psalms featuring nocturnal trouble, see Pss 77:5 and 102:8.
40 Wilson, Psalms Volume 1, 848.
Regarding the בֵּיהַ semantic frame, the unique contribution of the present chapter has been the focus on self-contained motion and on force dynamics that do not impinge directly upon individuals. Both the turbulent sea in Psalms 46 and 77, and the peripatetic enemies in Psalm 59, with their continual motion and sound, provide signals to the expert reader that the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain is part of the semantic frame associated with בֵּיהַ lexemes in the Psalter.

Understanding the concept of genre to be like a matrix which consists of multiple axes, then it is possible for an individual psalm to simultaneously carry more than one generic descriptor. This chapter has demonstrated this principle, because psalms belonging to differing traditional form-critical categories are seen to possess generic similarities with respect to the בֵּיהַ semantic frame. Psalm 46 is traditionally regarded as a Hymn of Zion, while Psalm 59 is an IL, and 77 has been classified by some scholars as a CL. In this way, three psalms that are dissimilar with respect to traditional genre categories are shown to be similar with respect to the genre axis that relates to distress.

Chapters 3 and 4 have applied the work of Leonard Talmy to the exegesis of distress psalms, because Talmy has led the way in the study of force and motion in cognitive semantics. The next chapter will apply the research of Gilles Fauconnier and Walter Kintsch with respect to the possible function of distress lexemes as a script-triggering mechanism.41 We will investigate how the frequent collocation of distress lexemes at the beginning of certain psalms, or immediately prior to force-dynamic discourses in other psalms, provides a signal to readers, channelling their reading expectations.

41 The work of Fauconnier and Kintsch is summarised in chapter 1, section 2.1.3.
Chapter 5
Cognitive Profile of Distress: [ENTREATY]

1. Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to investigate a third salient domain comprising the cognitive-semantic frame of צֶרֶךְ lexemes in the Psalter. We will investigate the fact that distress lexemes are typically located within petition clusters, expressing the supplicant’s call upon God, and God’s hearing of that call. Therefore, this domain will be given the name [ENTREATY]. The first petition cluster in the Psalter (Ps 4:2) provides a clear example of this situation:

Ps 4:2

Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. In distress make a broad space for me; be merciful to me and hear my prayer.

Here in Psalm 4:2, we find both the Psalter’s first petition cluster, and the Psalter’s first צֶרֶךְ lexeme. This collocation of a distress lexeme and petitionary language represents the majority of צֶרֶךְ lexeme occurrences in the Psalter and several occurrences elsewhere in the MT. In these 18 psalms, צֶרֶךְ lexemes are collocated with terms denoting the supplicant’s call upon God, and/or God’s respective hearing of that call. Several researchers have pointed out that petition clusters such as these are quite common in the prayers of many ancient Near Eastern people groups. The investigation in this chapter will be carried out in three phases. The first phase will be a paradigmatic analysis of petition clusters in the Psalter. Among the various terms serving as general descriptions for trouble within petition clusters, צֶרֶךְ lexemes play a central role. Second, the various forms in which this צֶרֶךְ–related petitionary language occurs will be briefly investigated. Thirdly, from a cognitive-semantic perspective, we will explore how expert readers may perceive such petitionary language as a script-triggering mechanism, directing the reading process with respect to the


2 23 out of the Psalter’s 38 צֶרֶךְ lexemes are located within petition clusters (Pss 4:2; 18:7; 20:2; 31:10; 34:7,18; 50:15; 69:17-18; 77:2-3; 81:8; 86:6-7; 91:15; 102:2-3; 106:44; 107:6, 13, 19, 29; 116:2-4; 118:5; 120:1; 142:2-3. Cf. Gen 35:3; 1S 28:15; 2S 22:7; 2 K 19:3-4; 2 Ch 15:4; 20:9; Neh 9:27; Job 7:11; 27:9; Isa 37:3-4; 46:7; Jon 2:3).

other domains within the distress frame. We will now turn to the first phase of this study: a paradigmatic analysis of petition clusters in the Psalter.

2. Paradigmatic Analysis of Syntagms Referring to Trouble within Petition Clusters

Precisely what type of language qualifies as a petition cluster? Placing specific boundaries around this concept is a difficult exercise. Nevertheless, whether the petition cluster concept is construed in a broad or a narrow sense, it becomes clear that יזרא lexemes occupy a prominent position within this kind of language. The following table cites every case in the Psalter where stereotypical terms for entreaty (e.g. חנני, be gracious to me; הוזינה, listen; ענני, answer me; תפלי, my prayer) are situated in parallel cola (or sometimes within the same colon; e.g. Pss 69:18b; 86:7a) along with various syntagms that denote trouble. In other words, this table attempts to list every petition cluster where a reference to the trouble itself is part of the cluster. It is important to point out that petition clusters often occur without including a reference to the trouble within the cluster itself. The arrows [→] in the left-hand column indicate that the citation comes from a psalm containing one or more יזרא lexeme(s). The X-mark [×] in the left-hand column indicates that this psalm has been discussed in chapters three or four, as exemplary of the domains [POWERLESSNESS] and/or [PALPABLE THREAT].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Syntagm Referring to Trouble (Hebrew)</th>
<th>Syntagm Referring to Trouble (Translation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:2b</td>
<td>בצרה... ли</td>
<td>when I am in distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:3</td>
<td>צרה, אנני</td>
<td>I am frail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:14a</td>
<td>עניי... השעון פנוי</td>
<td>my affliction... the gates of death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:4</td>
<td>פארת,... השעון המות</td>
<td>lest I sleep the [sleep of] death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:4-7</td>
<td>ובצרא... et. al.</td>
<td>when I am in distress; et. al.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:2</td>
<td>בבית רחם</td>
<td>in the day of distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:25</td>
<td>עונת עני</td>
<td>the affliction of the afflicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:16</td>
<td>עוד וינני אוני</td>
<td>I am lonely and afflicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28:1</td>
<td>לע... אנטש,... ימי,... בר</td>
<td>lest... I become like those who go down to the pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31:10</td>
<td>יצריל</td>
<td>I am in distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34:5</td>
<td>כלמרימה</td>
<td>all my terrors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34:7</td>
<td>כלמרימים</td>
<td>all his distresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34:18</td>
<td>כלמרימות</td>
<td>all their distresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:5</td>
<td>המעשים,...</td>
<td>I have sinned against you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50:15</td>
<td>מבית רחם</td>
<td>in the day of distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51:3</td>
<td>מפשיעי</td>
<td>my transgressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55:3</td>
<td>עניד,... על,... ימי,... ב</td>
<td>I am restless in my complaint, and am distraught</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table demonstrates that צר(ו) lexemes occupy a prominent position within petition clusters. Five observations can be drawn from the data in the table. First, although many petition clusters do not include descriptors of the suppliants’ trouble itself, when such descriptors are included, צר(ו) lexemes comprise all or part of the descriptor most of the time. 22 of the above citations include צר(ו) lexemes. Among the 17 petition clusters that include a trouble descriptor other than a צר(ו) lexeme, seven come from psalms which also include a צר(ו) lexeme elsewhere in the poem. The second observation is that the verbal adjective (צר) and the feminine substantive (צרה) appear to be used synonymously within these petition clusters. Aside from the syntactic variation due to the fact that they are different parts of speech, there is no observable semantic difference. Third, the examples from Psalm 107 demonstrate the key role of צר(ו) lexemes through their syntagmatic relations with synonyms derived from the root צוק (narrowness, distress⁵), both here in Ps 107, and throughout the Psalter. Although, as the table shows, צר(ו) lexemes often appear without צוק lexemes, the opposite is never the case. In the Psalter, a צוק lexeme never appears without being accompanied and preceded by a צר(ו) lexeme.⁶

⁶ In addition to the four cases in Ps 107, see Pss 25:17 and 119:143. Cf. also Job 15:4; 36:16; Zep 1:15; Ps 1:27; Isa 8:22-23; 30:6.
appear alone, and they never appear first. צור lexemes play a decidedly minor role, compared with their צור synonyms. The fourth observation from the table is that, aside from צור lexemes, there are only two trouble descriptors that occur more than once within petition clusters, and these two descriptors are very infrequent when compared to צור lexemes. Terms derived from the root נז (to be afflicted) occur four times (Pss 9:14; 22:25; 86:1; 88:10); and the word כל (concern, complaint) occurs three times (Pss 55:3; 64:2 142:3). Thus, when the poets seek to abbreviate their expression of trouble within a petition cluster, their clear favourite paradigmatic choice is a צור lexeme. From a paradigmatic perspective, other lexemes rarely occupy similar positions within the Psalter. A fifth observation from the table is that, although some psalms include petition clusters near their conclusions (e.g. Pss 39:13; 66:19-20; 86:16) the four distress psalms which locate their צור lexeme at the end of the poem (Pss 54, 59, 138, 143) do not have these distress lexemes nested amidst entreaty-related terms. The importance of this matter will be discussed below in section three of this chapter.

3. Examples of the Psalter’s Petition Clusters: Similarity and Variety

Within the petition clusters of the Psalter, we find the frequent juxtaposition of two factors: צור lexemes as the standard idiomatic abbreviation for severe life difficulty, alongside expressions denoting the human cry to God and his attentive response. As an emblem of his presence, the personal name of Israel’s God is often included in these phrases; usually Yahweh and/or the term שם (name [Pss 20:2; 91:14-15; 116:3-4]). As would be expected, in the Elohist Psalter (Pss 42-83), the term Elohim is substituted for Yahweh. Throughout the Psalter, these common ingredients are presented with considerable variety. There are five basic types, which we will examine in order of declining frequency. The most common type for the petition cluster (Type 1) involves the psalmist (1st person) speaking about Yahweh in the third person:

Ps 18:7 הביאתי א fick אתון אל אלהים אקרא
When I was in distress, I called upon Yahweh, and to my God I cried.

Ps 77:2-3a קולו אל אלהים ואציעק קולו
With my voice to God I cried, with my voice to God, and he heard me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord.

The second most common type (Type 2) involves the supplicant (1st person) addressing God directly (2nd person):

Kraus, Theology, 21.
Kraus, Theology, 22–3.
For more examples of this format, see Pss 34:7; 116:2-4; 118:5; 142:2-3.
For more examples of this format, see Pss 4:2-3; 31:10; 69:17-18; 86:6-7; 102:2-3.

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Ps 69:17-18

Hear my prayer, Yahweh. May my cry come before you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Incline your ear to me. Answer me quickly when I call.

The third most frequent arrangement for the petition cluster (Type 3) involves third person reports of people calling upon Yahweh when in distress. This occurs in the four-fold refrain of Psalm 107, and one additional time in the preceding Psalm 106:

Ps 106:44

He saw when they were in distress; when he heard their cry.

The variety and frequency of the entreaty language described above indicates the extent to which this collocation of calling/hearing terminology and קָרָאת lexemes was a familiar concept to the people who created this literature. The next most frequent arrangement of the petition cluster (Type 4) involves God addressing his people in various ways:

Ps 50:15

Call upon me in the day of distress. I will deliver you and you will honour me.

Ps 81:8

In distress you called and I delivered you. I answered you from a hidden thundercloud.

Ps 91:15

He will call upon me and I will answer him. I will be with him in distress. I will deliver him and I will honour him.

These three passages use similar language to the other examples, although God is the speaker, either recounting his activity as hearer of prayer (Ps 81:8) or promising to hear the future requests (Pss 50:15; 91:15) of his people. The final, and solitary example of a קָרָאת lexeme occurring within a petition cluster comes in Psalm 20, offering a benedictory blessing for the king (Type 5):

Ps 20:2

May Yahweh answer you in the day of distress. May the name of the God of Jacob make you inaccessible.

Although the reading and life experience of each individual is different, the observations from the above table, as well as the prominence of this type of language as evidenced by the five types, lead to a reasonable inference that experienced readers would recognise the
cognitive domain [ENTREATY] as one of the more prominent domains within the distress frame.

4. Implications for the \( צָרָה \) Genre Subgroup

We will now build upon this raw data, along with the results from chapters three and four, to draw two further conclusions vis-à-vis the semantic frame associated with \( צָרָה \) lexemes and related genre issues.

4.1 The \( צָרָה \) Generic Subgroup

The first conclusion has to do with the \( צָרָה \) generic axis in the Psalter. When the above data from this chapter are considered along with the findings of chapters three and four, the conclusion begins to emerge that there is a prototype category of psalm, characterised by the occurrence of a \( צָרָה \) lexeme situated in parallel cola with entreaty-related terms, either in the invocation of the psalm or at a key transition point within the body of the psalm, but typically not at the end of the psalm. These \( צָרָה \) lexemes play a key role within these psalms, because they serve as a general designation for trouble, which is then spelled out in greater or lesser detail elsewhere in the psalm. There is no other word or word group that plays a similar role. For psalms that are so marked by a \( צָרָה \) lexeme, the way the distress is detailed elsewhere in these psalms evidences a co-occurrence restriction pattern—vis-à-vis the [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT] domains—which sets these psalms apart as a generic subgroup within the Psalter. This subgroup is best understood as a separate generic axis that operates independently from the axes characterised by traditional form-critical nomenclature. Thus, psalms bearing dissimilar traditional names (e.g. IL, IT, CL, CT, Royal, Wisdom, Hymn of Zion) are seen to be similar with respect to the \( צָרָה \) generic axis.

The category boundaries for this type of psalm are not rigid. It is not the case that each distress psalm possesses each of the above attributes in mechanistic fashion. However, Zadeh’s fuzzy-set theory, discussed in chapter one, indicates that we would not expect the category boundaries to be rigid, as if they were water-tight compartments. Cognitive research regarding the way human beings categorise sets of objects and information indicates that fuzzy boundaries are to be expected. Based on the way the three domains [ENTREATY], [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT] are represented in the psalm texts themselves, prototype theory can be employed to break down this generic axis into four prototype categories. Psalms which include both a \( צָרָה \)– related petition cluster

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11 See the discussion of co-occurrence in chapter 1, section 1.5.
12 For a discussion of Zadeh’s work and related prototype theory, see chapter 1, section 2.3.
13 I do not claim that ancient readers actually recognised these four categories. These categories are simply a heuristic grid to help demonstrate the reality that some distress psalms are stronger representatives of this
and a sizable block of text giving strong evidence of the [POWERLESSNESS] and/or [PALPABLE THREAT] domain will be classified as prototype category A.\textsuperscript{14} Category B will consist of psalms which include a similar, sizable block of motion and force-dynamic text. However with these psalms, the \( צבאי \) lexeme is located in a clause which, although similar to a petition cluster, does not technically qualify as such.\textsuperscript{15} Prototype category C will consist of psalms which include a similar, sizable block of motion and force-dynamic text, but which include a \( צבאי \) lexeme that is definitely not located within a petition cluster.\textsuperscript{16} Prototype category D consists of distress psalms which include relatively smaller amounts of motion and force-dynamic language.\textsuperscript{17}

As stated in the introduction, one purpose of this dissertation is to gain an increased understanding of psalm genres based on a collection of similarities among psalms that contain \( צבאי \) lexemes. The analysis of psalm genres has been a productive area of research since the days of Gunkel, almost one hundred years ago. Genre studies have improved the understanding and application of the great variety of poems contained within the Psalter. Having established that there is a distress-related generic axis within the Psalter, these poems can be put to more specific use within communities of faith, because pastors, rabbis and teachers can gain an increased understanding that these psalms can be particularly helpful among worried people who feel overpowered by palpable trouble in their lives. Although two more cognitive domains are yet to be explored, in chapters 6 and 7, this dissertation has demonstrated that such a \( צבאי \) generic axis does, in fact, exist; and that the topic of genre analysis has not yet been exhausted within the field of Psalms scholarship.

The second conclusion relates to a phenomenon discussed in chapter one, by which a key sentence or phrase within a text can trigger an entire set of cognitive domains (i.e., an entire frame).

4.2 The Potential Function of Petition Clusters as a Script-Triggering Device
Chapter one outlined Gilles Fauconnier’s concept of “mental space-builders,” and Walter, Kintsch’s similar concept, called a “script-based situation model.”\textsuperscript{18} Both of these concepts deal with the signalling function of certain brief phrases within larger blocks of text. These key sentences or phrases can trigger an entire set of cognitive domains (i.e., an entire frame) in the reader’s expectations. The resulting reading process can be likened to filling-in slots

\textsuperscript{14} Prototype category A consists of seven psalms: 18, 31, 69, 77, 107, 116 and 118. Psalm 107 will be the exclusive focus of chapter 8, since this psalm includes more distress lexemes than any other.

\textsuperscript{15} Prototype category B consists of two Psalms: 9/10 and 22.

\textsuperscript{16} Prototype category C includes Psalms 46 and 59.

\textsuperscript{17} E.g. Pss 37, 54, 102, 143.

\textsuperscript{18} Chapter 1, section 2.1.3.
in the pre-existing script which has been evoked by the triggering phrase. Again, we must keep in mind that each reader’s life background and reading experience will be different. But, the convergence of these three sets of data, which we have discussed under the domain names [ENTREATY], [POWERLESSNESS], and [PALPABLE THREAT], leads to the reasonable inference that the frequent and stereotypical collocation of צור_lexemes and entreaty-related terminology can function as a script-triggering device. Hence, it is interesting to note that the four psalms which locate their צור_lexeme near the conclusion do not include this stereotypical language, even though some psalms occasionally place entreaty language at their conclusions. However, it is also axiomatic within cognitive linguistics that, if a particular domain is a salient member of a lexeme’s semantic frame, then the mere occurrence of the lexeme can legitimately be expected to evoke the entire frame in many cases. Based on the dominant position of these lexemes within the petition clusters, the [ENTREATY] domain—and the ensuing script—may be activated even when a particular צור_lexeme is not located within a petition cluster, because the occurrence of the lexeme itself can activate the entire frame in the reader’s cognitive experience. Thus, when experienced readers encounter a צור_lexeme, it may prompt their attention, and place them “on the lookout” for accompanying force-dynamic and motion event frames. In this way, the activation of the [ENTREATY] domain may promote the activation of the [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT] domains.

As discussed in chapter one, the data-collection methodology used in chapters three, four and five has been drawn from structural linguistic terminology developed by Louis Hjelmslev, specifically regarding the concepts of determination and cohesion. With these two related terms, the presence of one syntagm is said to determine the presence of another, and they are said to cohere. For example, syntagms referencing the ropes of Sheol determine צור_lexemes. Chapters six and seven will employ another of Hjelmslev’s analytic categories, that of constellation. Hjelmslev defines constellations as “the freer dependences, in which two terms are compatible but neither presupposes the other...”

In other words, there are three more domains which are a salient part of the distress frame, but these domains are not exclusively associated with צור_lexemes. These domains are also evident in many other psalms which do not contain צור_lexemes. These three important aspects of the cognitive profile of distress will be given the names [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE], [SOVEREIGNTY] and [GUILT?].

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20 The rationale for including the question mark in the [GUILT?] domain name will be explained in chapter 7.
Chapter 6
Cognitive Profile of Distress: [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE]

1. Introduction
Thus far we have investigated three salient domains—[POWERLESSNESS], [PALPABLE THREAT] and [ENTREATY]—contributing to the cognitive profile associated with זַרְע חִים lexemes in the Psalter. The language that evokes these domains is generally unique to distress psalms. But an analysis of the זַרְע חִים cognitive profile would not be complete without investigating two more salient domains which contribute to the profile, but which are not unique to distress psalms. In other words, this chapter will not include an investigation of co-occurrence restriction. Nevertheless, a study of the cognitive profile of זַרְע חִים would not be complete without investigating the two domains to be discussed in this chapter and the following one. This chapter will investigate the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain. Chapter seven will investigate the [GUILT?] domain.

As with many psalms that do not contain זַרְע חִים lexemes, distress psalms typically refer to extra-linguistic situations that have brought about the subjects’ distress. In the past, many form-critical scholars have made it their task to single-out the precise extra-linguistic causes which lie behind individual psalm texts. Although this will not be the objective here, the fact remains that when a reader encounters a זַרְע חִים lexeme, it is almost always collocated with references, elsewhere in the psalm, to some sort of trouble occurring in the supplicant’s life or community. This collocation is so frequent and regular that it is reasonable to assume that [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] is a salient domain in the cognitive profile of distress. Using Hjelmslev’s terms, these references to extra-linguistic causes of distress are found in constellation with זַרְע חִים lexemes, although they are not limited to a relationship of cohesion with these lexemes. In other words, although they are an essential aspect of distress psalms, they are not a unique feature of them. These references to extra-linguistic dilemmas or trouble are a feature that distress psalms have in common with many other psalms which, although dealing with personal or communal experiences of trouble, do not use זַרְע חִים to articulate this trouble.

2. Indeterminacy and the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] Domain
Students of the Psalter have long noticed that details of the psalmists’ troubles are often left unspecified. This lack of specificity is probably an intentional aspect of many psalms’ design, in order to facilitate their use in various situations. One term to describe this

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1 Mays, Psalms, 431; Allen, WBC: Psalms 101–150, 114.
phenomenon is “indeterminacy.” The word “indeterminacy” (*Unbestimmtheit*) was introduced to literary criticism in 1931 by the Polish philosopher, Roman Ingarden in his book, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (The Literary Work of Art). Ingarden used the term *Unbestimmtheitstellen* (points of indeterminacy) to describe the informational gaps which necessarily exist in any literary portrayal of reality:

Theoretically, these points of indeterminacy cannot be completely removed through the finite enlargement of content—the number of words. If we say, “an old experienced man,” instead of merely saying, “a man,” then some points of indeterminacy have been removed through the addition of descriptive words. But infinitely many still remain to be removed, the initial disappearance in an endless series of classifications. For example, if one began a story with the sentence, “At a table, sat an old man,” etc., thus this represented “table” is indeed a “table” and not, for example, an “armchair.” But whether this table is, for instance, made of wood or of iron, or whether it has four legs or three legs has not been said at all, and therefore (in a pure creation of the mind) has not been determined. Although the table must consist of something, the material from which it has been manufactured is left generally unqualified. Consequently, a further refining of the attributes in question is simply not available. A “void”, a “point of indeterminacy” is there.\(^2\)

The fact that the reader often cannot determine what specific kinds of trouble plagued the psalmists is an example of this indeterminacy concept. According to Ingarden, even if an author wishes to reduce indeterminacy in a text, he can never completely eliminate it. But, in the Psalter we probably have a situation where indeterminacy is a deliberate part of the broad genre of poetry in many cases. Even pre-critical scholars have noticed that many psalms appear to have been designed for broad applicability. For example, John Calvin took note of it in his Psalms commentary:

> The disputes of interpreters as to what victory David here celebrates, in my judgment, are unnecessary, and serve no good purpose... It is therefore a mistake to limit to one victory this thanksgiving, in which he intended to comprehend many deliverances.\(^3\)

Most distress psalms present a generalised depiction of a dilemma or perhaps a constellation of dilemmas, which have brought about the psalmists’ troubled state of mind. Sigmund Mowinckel suggested that there are two essential tools for determining what this dilemma was: the text, and the interpreter’s imagination:

> The interpreter has to use both the descriptions of such cultic processions and the allusions to them in other Old Testament texts, and his own imagination, to recall a picture of the definite situation from which such a psalm cannot be separated.\(^4\)


Without denying the layer of subjectivity inherent in any hermeneutical activity, the following analysis of causes of attempts to keep the use of the interpreter’s imagination within reasonable bounds. Mays comments on the difficulty of determining the specific form of trouble being discussed in any particular psalm:

Because the vocabulary employed to describe the experience of trouble is conventional and formulaic, it is difficult to determine just what trouble occasions a particular prayer. The language can imply illness or alienation from the community through false accusation or the threatening hostility of others or personal failure and guilty conscience or combinations of such troubles.

Most of the psalms containing occurrences of ‘צרר’ also contain expressions reflecting causes of distress which can be grouped into eight broad categories (below). Admittedly, restricting this analysis to expressions contained within the texts themselves does not eliminate all forms of subjectivity. For example, there are widely varying opinions regarding the cause of the psalmist’s irritation in Psalm 4. These varying interpretations arrive at mutually exclusive answers to the question of whose glory is at stake in verse 3. According to some interpreters, the psalmist’s distress has been caused by people turning to idolatry in a situation of drought. Thus, the psalmist’s “glory” refers to Yahweh himself, and not to the psalmist’s reputation. With this reading, the psalmist is not relating an experience of personal shame or accusation when he says the following:

Ps 4:3  סונים בני אדם, המי אני את כבודי למלאת התחום?

On the other hand, Gunkel and Seybold are representative of several interpreters who classify this psalm as a prayer of the accused, in which case the psalmist’s “glory” denotes his own personal reputation. In the case of Psalm 4, the former explanation seems to yield a more plausible reading of all the elements in the psalm, and is less dependent upon predetermined genre assumptions. Therefore in the classifications below, the cause of the psalmist’s distress in Psalm 4 has been categorised as “apostasy;” i.e., the apostasy of influential people in the community.

The issue of whether or not certain expressions are instances of metaphor also has a bearing on the process of determining what may be the cause of the psalmists’ distress. For

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7 Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, 154; Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 1*, 120.
example, Psalm 142:8 can be interpreted either as a metaphorical expression of social antagonism, or as an expression denoting physical incarceration:

Ps 142:8 אַתּ-שֶׁם לַהֲדוֹעֵת נָפֹּּשִׁי מָמָּגֹר הָוצֵיאָה Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise your name.

Although it is uncertain whether the psalmist’s reference to prison denotes metaphorical or literal confinement, the relevant point is that this psalm’s reference to an extra-linguistic situation represents the norm in distress psalms. A few distress psalms do not conform to this pattern (e.g. Psalms 34, 50, 66). Psalm 66 is noteworthy in this regard, since it is an Individual Thanksgiving which goes to considerable length to celebrate deliverance from distress, yet offers no clues to the cause of that distress. Although Kraus suggests that v 17 (“If I had regarded iniquity in my heart”) relates to a slanderous accusation, Anderson is probably correct in asserting that Psalm 66 “does not give a definite account of the misfortunes...” Although some psalms, like Psalm 66, offer virtually no clue regarding the extra-linguistic cause of distress, most distress psalms do provide some information of this kind.

3. Eight Categories of [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE]
Eight distress-causing issues are listed below, in declining order of frequency. The general category of social antagonism is the most frequent by far. To help clarify this category, it will be divided into four groups of expressions, and a prominent example will be quoted in each category.

3.1 First Person Representations of Social Antagonism
Some psalms refer to social antagonism as causing distress in the lives of people other than the speaker (e.g. Psalm 9/10, discussed in section 3.2, below). These psalms generally represent distress in the third person. On the other hand, in the majority of cases, petitioners describe distress in their own lives, using first person language. These first-person expressions of social antagonism have been broken down into four sub-categories.

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3.1.1 Aggression and Hostile Intent

The psalmists often describe experiences of being hounded by enemies. One way that this perception is expressed is through terms of aggression and hostile intent used to denote these malevolent people or forces. Keel notes that “Encirclement, attack and persecution are concepts which express the unappeasable relentlessness and closeness of hostility.” Various terms denoting enemies frequently appear: (e.g. איב, enemy [Pss 25:2; 31:9; 59:2; 102:9; 138:7]; מְשָא, haters [Ps 9:14]; עִרְיצִים, tyrants [Pss 54:5; 86:14]; שורר, enemy [Ps 54:7]). Psalm 59 contains nine different terms describing the enemy, eight plural, and one singular. Thus, although the enemy of the individual is not exclusive to psalms of distress, some of the more prominent examples are collocated with:"}

Psalm 59:2-4

v 2 Communicate with my enemies, O God; protect me from those who rise up against me.

v 3 Communicate with the evildoer and save me from bloodthirsty men.

v 4 See how they lie in wait for me! Fierce men conspire against me for no offence or sin of mine, O Yahweh.

Over the years, interpreters have offered widely varying suggestions as to the identity of these enemies. Augustine often referred to the Devil as the enemy in the Psalter. Luther frequently identified them as Jews, due in part to his Christological reading of the Psalter through the lens of the Gospels. Calvin paid a great deal of attention to the superscriptions and assumed a largely Davidic Psalter. Thus, Calvin is a sort of forerunner for many who have identified the enemy as opponents of the king. Mowinckel asserted that the enemies were those who practised magic with the spoken word, rendering curses upon the enemy.

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13 Cottrill, Language, Power and Identity, 60.
15 Feinde und Gottesleugner, 194 (trans. mine).
18 Luther, Psalmen, 232.
19 Calvin, Joshua, Psalms 1–35, 266.
psalmists. Schmidt read many psalms from a juristic frame of reference and asserted that the enemies were the psalmist’s wicked opponents in a cultic courtroom. On the other hand, Miller suggests that an attempt to discretely identify the enemy may be to ask the wrong hermeneutical question:

In many respects the effort to identify in some sharp and specific way who the individuals are who spoke or are spoken about in the psalm, whether they are the “I,” the “we,” the enemies, or whatever, is a move in precisely the opposite direction from those interpretive efforts that will make the psalms more responsive to contemporary appropriation.

Janowski advances the contemporary appropriation of the enemy theme in the Psalter by citing Barth’s Der Römerbrief, and suggesting that the enemy is any individual who incites a powerful desire in the offended party to play the role of God by taking one’s own revenge—to “settle the score” (die Versuchung, mir selbst Recht zu verschaffen).

3.1.2 Isolation

Keel notes that for an ancient Near Eastern individual to became separated from one’s tribal connections brought uncertainty into every aspect of life. The Old Testament entertains no Romantic notions of loneliness, but rather presents it as the most serious kind of crisis. Psalms 31 and 102 provide examples of this motif in the distress psalms:

**Psalm 31:12-13**

v 12 בפחד מהדים ולשכני חרהפ מבל ממכים רבים אד ואמד ממעון
Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours; I am a dread to my friends—those who see me on the street flee from me.

v 13 נUSART מלח רבים ממעון י YYSTACK נועה
I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.

**Psalm 102:7-8**

v 7 יירא לי מכל רבים ממעון ד.restore HashSet יירא לי מכל רבים
I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins.

v 8 ירא לי מכל רבים יירא לי מכל רבים יירא לי מכל רבים
I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof.

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21 Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel’s Worship, 199.
23 Miller, Interpreting, 51.
24 Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 132.
25 Relevant texts include Psalms 22:12; 25:16; 31:12-13; 69:9, 21; 102:7-8; and 142:5.
26 Keel, Feinde und Gottesleugner, 39.
In the ancient Near East, the concept of life was based on a principle of social connectivity, and the corresponding concept of death was often depicted through images of social isolation. Loneliness is a “driving force... more terrible than anxiety.” Distressed psalmists often represent themselves “as removed from the company and protection of any supportive community through spatial distance.” They often complain that they have no means of support other than Yahweh himself. Compared to the expressions regarding the enemy, above, which fall into fairly consistent linguistic patterns, the expressions denoting loneliness show quite a bit of linguistic variety. The only repeated term in the references cited above is the predicator of nonexistence (there is no, [Pss 22:12; 142:5]) used in similar expressions where the psalmist says that there is no one to take care of him. These expressions of isolation prompt the reader to correlate the situations depicted in the psalm with similar phenomena in the real world, thus triggering the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain.

3.1.3 Representations of Social Rejection/Shame/Scorn/Humiliation

Keel writes that “The humiliation of the supplicant is characteristic of the enemy.”

We see several examples of such humiliation in Psalm 69.

Psalm 69:7-13, 20-21

v 7 May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me, O Lord, Yahweh Almighty; may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel.

v 8 For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face.

v 9 I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons;

v 10 For zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

v 11 When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn;

v 12 When I put on sackcloth, people make sport of me.

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27 Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 188.
29 Cottrill, Language, Power and Identity, 75.
30 Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 120.
31 Relevant texts include Psalms 22:7-9, 18; 31:19; and 69:7-13, 20-21.
32 Feinde und Gottesleugner, 169 (trans. mine).
Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards.

You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed; all my enemies are before you.

Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none.

The petitioners often represent themselves as the objects of social disdain, who must endure derisory gestures and mocking words, either thrown in their face directly, or spoken about them behind their backs. This maltreatment contributes to the diminishing of the psalmists’ standing in the community as well as having a deleterious effect on their emotional life, as evidenced, for example, by the broken heart (לבי שברה) in Psalm 69:21. The psalms often use physiological imagery to express emotional realities:

For example, when bodily organs like the heart or kidneys are connected with cognitive processes like joy or jubilation, or conversely, when the same body parts are effected detrimentally through social or psychological conflict like animosity or bitterness, in these cases, mankind as a whole (i.e. with respect to his somatic and psychological/cognitive aspects and functions) is in view.  

Cottrill offers penetrating analysis of the psalmist’s self-designation as a worm (תולעת - Ps 22:7) as reflective of his emotional state due to rejection by the community:

The connection between social and personal shame is evident in Ps 22:7, in which public disdain translates into a feeling of overwhelming unworthiness. The psalmist describes himself as a “worm (תולעת), less than human, scorned (חרף) by men, despised (בזה) by people” (Ps 22:7). Here, the psalmist represents himself as socially and personally diminished, implying an overall sense of wrongness in his existence. The feeling of internalised shame, feeling like a worm, is immediately connected to a public experience of rejection, implying both a public and a private sense of shame.

Cottrill’s analysis of this worm imagery sheds light on the power of metaphor to depict situations like public experiences of rejection and the accompanying feelings of isolation.

3.1.4 Collusion Against the Psalmist

The petitioners’ representations of their distress often include the notion of people conspiring together with an evil, deceptive intent.

*Psalm 31:5, 14, 19, 21*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v 5</td>
<td>מעוזי כי אתה לי טמנו זו מרׁשת תוציאني</td>
<td>Bring me out of the net which they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 14</td>
<td>בהוסדם מסביב מגור רבים דבת שמעתי כי זממו נפׁשי לקחת עלייחד</td>
<td>For I hear the whispering of many—terror on every side—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 19</td>
<td>האלמנת שפָּה שקר הזרחה על־ציוןית תחק</td>
<td>Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 21</td>
<td>הסתרם שער מרכי ארש תכפם במכסה מרכי לשת</td>
<td>In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities of the unnamed opponents include slander and accusation. Recurring textual features include the root בזם (to plan, to plan evil [Pss 31:14; 37:7, 12]) and variations of the root יחד (together [Pss 31:14; 71:10]) employed as an adverbial accusative. Metonymic reference to the lips (שפת, [Pss 31:19; 59:8,13; 120:2]) and the tongue (לָשׁון, [Pss 31:20; 120:2-3]) as organs of speech is also common. In psalms containing לָשׁון יְדוּר lexemes, social antagonism in its various forms is the most frequent cause of the psalmists’ distress.

3.2 The Wicked (רְשֵׁע): Third Person Representations of Persecution and/or Oppression

In the fourteen psalms mentioned above under the category, “First Person Representations of Social Antagonism,” the term רְשֵׁע is virtually absent, only occurring in Psalms 71:4 and 31:18. However, Psalms 9/10 and 37 are quite different in this regard, featuring the term 22 times. The following two texts serve as examples:

*Psalms 10:9; 37:14*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ps 10:9</td>
<td>אֵרֶב בְּמַשָּׁרָה מַשָּׁר אֵרֶב לַהֲמוֹן</td>
<td>He lies in wait like a lion in his thicket; he lies in wait to seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 37:14</td>
<td>הַרְבָּה חֲזָקָה וַדְּרוֹר כַּשֵּׁם הוֹפֵל</td>
<td>The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose way is upright.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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36 Relevant texts include Psalms 31:5, 14, 19, 21; 37:7,12; 59:7-8, 13-16; 69:5; 71:10-11, 13; 102:2; 116:11; 120:2-3; and 142:4. For a helpful discussion of this aspect of distress, see Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 99.

37 The two most prominent texts in this category are Psalms 9/10 and 37.
The similarities shared by Psalms 9/10 and 37 have already been detailed in the chapter 3. Briefly, these two psalms contain considerably more occurrences of the substantivised adjective רׁשע (wicked) than any other psalm. Both psalms are acrostic, and both deal with issues of theodicy. 38 These two psalms are different from the psalms previously cited in this chapter, in that they relate dynamics of social hostility in the third person rather than in the first person. The rhetorical “I” is not the one under assault. Rather, it is a rhetorical “they” who are under assault. These people are the downtroddenעני (poor). 39 So these two psalms are quite similar in their third person representations of the oppression carried out by the wicked. Othmar Keel noticed that, among all of the terms which the Psalter employs to describe the enemy, רׁשע is less frequently used in portrayals of individual conflict. Keel draws upon Jeremiah’s use of the term to note that רׁשע appears more often in descriptions of injustice:

This leads to a transformation of the personal conflict into a discussion which concerns the community as a whole. Because where the power of the wicked threatens, then it becomes a matter of the existence of the community and no longer only that of an individual. Yahweh condemns this one or that one, not simply because he is an enemy of the supplicant, but rather Yahweh only hates that which the supplicant is reflecting upon here: the injustice... The issue at stake in Psalm 10 is not that of a physical crisis. This crisis in Psalms 10, 12, 14, 94, etc., is no longer expressed first of all as a personal crisis of the supplicant, like in Psalms 7 and 55. Rather, from the outset, these psalms are concerned with people whose rights Yahweh claims to protect in a special way, namely the oppressed (עני: Pss 10:2, 9, 12; 12:6; 14:6), the orphans (יתום: Pss 10:14, 18; 94:6), the innocent (נקי: Pss 10:8; 94:21)... 40

In distress psalms like 9/10 and 37, these references to the poor and the weak who are under oppression prompt the reader to correlate the situations depicted in the psalm with similar phenomena in the real world, thus triggering the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain.

3.3 Divine Hiddenness or Displeasure 41

The cause of the psalmist’s distress is often attributed directly to Yahweh himself, as in Psalm 77:

Psalm 77:8-10

v 8 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וִיהֵם אֹדֶם וָאֲלָמָה לַרְצָחָה וְעָזָה הָלֻּשָּׁלְמִים יְהוָה אָבָן וְלָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִшָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָם אֶפְקָּר וְאֵין לָא־יִשָּׁפֵ אָדָמ

Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favourable?

38 Crenshaw, Old Testament Wisdom, 171; Seybold, Die Psalmen, 58.
39 See the discussion in chapter 3, section 8.
40 Feinde und Gottesleugner, 123–6 (trans. mine).
41 Relevant texts include Psalms 10:1; 22:2; 77:8-10: 78:49; 102:11; 106:35-43; and 107:11, 17.
Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time?

Has God forgotten to be gracious? Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah.

When the psalmists attribute their distress to Yahweh himself, this typically occurs in one of two ways. Sometimes it is expressed interrogatively either with הלך (why [Pss 10:1; 22:2]) or with the interrogative ה (Ps 77:8-10). At other times, the cause of pain is indicatively attributed to Yahweh, whether it be his wrath against the Egyptians in the form of plagues (Ps 78:49), his anger against the psalmist (Ps 102:11), his anger with his apostate people (Ps 106:40), or his disciplinary action against rebellious individuals (Ps 107:11, 17). Similar to the other extra-linguistic references discussed above, these expressions of divine displeasure prompt the reader to access long-term memory for examples in the real world, thus triggering the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain.

3.4 National Distress: Military Threat/Battle; Slavery in Egypt

Four of the Psalter’s distress psalms include explicit references to warfare. Psalm 20 serves as an example of these warfare references:

_Psalm 20:7-10_

v 7 Now I know that Yahweh saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand.

v 8 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

v 9 They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

v 10 O Yahweh, save the king! Answer us when we call!

These references include either implements of war (i.e. chariots [Ps 20:8]; war wagons [Ps 46:10]) or accounts of conflagration (Pss 18:15-19; 118:10-13). Since distress is such a common theme in the Psalter, it is interesting that צמר is only used once to denote Israel’s suffering under the yoke of the Egyptian bondage prior to the Exodus (Ps 81:6-7).

42 Relevant texts include Psalms 18:15-19; 20:7-9; 46:7-11; 81:6-7; and 118:10-13.
3.5 Sickness/Physiological Manifestations

Sometimes the psalmists describe situations of bodily pain or discomfort, as in Psalm 102:

Psalm 102:4-6

v 4 For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.

v 5 My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food.

v 6 Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh.

Although in the past many scholars were quite certain that language like that of Psalm 102 denotes physical illness, more recent research suggests that such terms are best understood metaphorically, although exceptions to this trend can be found. Seybold drew a helpful distinction between psalms which (after their composition) could have been prayed by a sick person, and psalms of which the Sitz im Leben can be unambiguously traced to sickness. When analysing poetic expressions of damage to body parts (such as the burning of bones) in the Psalter, the presuppositions of the interpreter seem to be the determining factor in the exegetical decision. If we refer to the occurrence of such terms outside of the Psalter, this will often protect us from the rush to judge these terms as unambiguously denoting physical sickness. Goldingay’s commentary on Psalm 102 gives a helpful example of this type of reference outside of the Psalter:

Talk of one’s bones burning is doubly figurative. Having a fever means the body is consumed as by fire, but Job, too (for instance), speaks in these terms (Job 30:30) and need not imply a fever but rather that he is consumed by afflictions and pains. Even more sinister is the talk of bones burning in Ezek 24:10. In light of vv 12-22, that passage is the more significant. Jerusalem became the fireplace in which the Judeans’ bones were burned up.

Gunkel, however, operating with different presuppositions, makes similar comparisons to texts outside of the Psalter, yet arrives at the opposite conclusion with reference to the burning bones, namely, that “a very severe fever is meant.” Physiological expressions like those in Psalm 102 can serve to direct the reader’s attention to extra-linguistic causes of distress, whether readers perceive them as metaphorical or as denoting physical pain. Thus,

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43 Relevant texts include Psalms 22:15-16; 31:10-11; 71:9, 18; 91:3, 6; 102:4-6, 24-25; and 107:18.
44 Kraus, Psalms 60–150, 284; Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 437.
46 Terrien, The Psalms, 697.
47 Seybold, Das Gebet des Kranken, 168.
48 Goldingay, Psalms: Volume 3, 151.
49 Die Psalmen, 438 (trans. mine).
this kind of language plays a similar role to the other examples cited above, prompting the reader to access the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain.

3.6 Imprisonment (Metaphorical or Literal)\(^{50}\)

There are two distress psalms which indicate a situation of confinement, including Psalm 142:

Ps 142:8

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

The interpretive decision in 142:8 is similar to that of the physiological manifestations discussed immediately above: Should this reference to imprisonment be understood as literal or metaphorical?\(^{51}\) As with the issue of physical sickness, early twentieth century scholars, operating with cult-functional presuppositions, tended to view the imprisonment as literal, such as Gunkel\(^{52}\) and Schmidt.\(^{53}\) However, these terms are probably best understood metaphorically, with possible allusions to the Babylonian exile.\(^{54}\) Statements like this one in Psalm 142 serve to direct the reader’s attention to real world situations where they felt imprisoned or entrapped, thus triggering the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain.

3.7 Dangers While Travelling\(^{55}\)

Psalm 107 is the only psalm in the Psalter which unambiguously denotes dangers while travelling as the context for distress. Jonah’s thanksgiving psalm could also possibly be included in this category, as he fled by sea from Yahweh’s call and was then afforded further opportunity to “travel” in the belly of the fish. The fourth stanza of Psalm 107 serves as an example of distress resulting from an encounter with danger while on a sailing ship:

Psalm 107:23-27

Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters.

They saw the deeds of Yahweh, his wondrous works in the deep.

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\(^{50}\) Psalms 107:10-12; 142:8


\(^{52}\) Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms*, 471, 600.


\(^{55}\) Psalm 107:4-5, 23-27
For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea.

They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their soul melted away in misery.

They reeled and staggered like drunken men and all their wisdom was confounded.

The four pericopes of Psalm 107 present the specifics of distressful situations with greater clarity than many of the Individual Laments and Thanksgivings, in which “The reader is not informed as to the details of the situation and a gap is left open to be filled by imagination.” However, in this text from Psalm 107, there is simply no question that the distress is an example of “dangers while travelling.” The only question is whether the interpreter should take the story a step further and interpret it as a metaphor. Almost everyone has experienced the inherent, potential dangers of being away from home on a journey. Thus, this language serves a similar function as the other examples cited in this chapter, directing the reader’s attention to the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain.

### 3.8 Apostasy of Prominent Citizens

In Psalm 4, the cause of the petitioner’s distress is probably a situation where influential people within the community have turned away from following Yahweh.

**Psalm 4:3**

O sons of men, how long will my honour become a reproach? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah.

The interpretive challenges of Psalm 4 have been discussed above. Briefly, the term “sons of man (אֱשֶׂר בְּנֵי)" probably refers to prominent citizens, and the agricultural references later in the psalm may allude to crop failure, as Oesterley summarises:

Owing to the failure of the harvest, the people, or a large section of them, are disheartened and discontented; they not only blame Yahweh for this, but even turn, in consequence, to the worship of another god. The psalmist, firm in his trust in God, in spite of all, is mocked for his belief and faithfulness.

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56 Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 196.
57 Psalm 4:3
Although the extra-linguistic cause of the petitioner’s distress is quite obscure in Psalm 4, readers who perceive this psalm in the way that Oesterley describes may have their attention directed to extra-linguistic situations in their own societies; situations where influential groups of people are not trusting in Yahweh’s provision.

4. Summary and Conclusion

צרר.lexemes almost invariably appear alongside descriptions of trouble or historical references to trouble that are detailed elsewhere in the OT. For example, Psalm 78:49 prompts the reader’s long-term memory with respect to events recorded in the book of Exodus. The eight categories of extra-linguistic causes of distress that have been presented above have been listed in order of declining frequency. The largest category by a wide margin has to do with the enemy of the individual. The machinations of the enemy are by far and away the most frequent cause of the psalmists’ distress.

With respect to the cognitive profile of distress, the collocation of extra-linguistic causes withצרר.lexemes is so regular and predictable that it leads to a reasonable inference that [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] is an important domain within the cognitive profile of distress. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, although these extra-linguistic causes of distress are not exclusive to distress psalms, a study of the cognitive profile of distress would not be complete without including this domain.

Regarding theצרר.generic subgroup, the references to extra-linguistic causes, discussed above, represent a component that distress psalms hold in common with many others. Therefore, viewing textual genericity as a matrix, the expressions that have been studied in this chapter do not represent a uniquely distinctive component of the generic axis related to distress psalms. In other words, unlike the items studied in chapters three through five, these references to extra-linguistic causes are not something that make distress psalms stand out from the others. However, this is an almost universally occurring phenomenon within the distress psalm subgenre.

The final salient domain that we will analyse will be given the name [GUILT?]. This domain is similar to the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain, due to the fact that the association withצרר.lexemes is one of constellation rather than cohesion.
Chapter 7
Cognitive Profile of Distress: [GUILT?] 

1. Introduction
This chapter will investigate an additional domain comprising the cognitive profile of distress. The question mark in the domain name [GUILT?] suggests the probability that, while an expert reader proceeds through a distress psalm, it is likely that he will ask the following question: “Does the distressed party deserve the distress, or do they not? Does this particular psalm assert guilt or innocence?” As in chapter six, this discussion will be based on Hjelmslev’s concept of constellation rather than cohesion. The factors discussed in this chapter are not unique to distress psalms, but a study of the cognitive profile of distress would not be complete without them.

The past century has seen a great deal of scholarly discussion over the relationship between lament and assertions of innocence in the Psalter. This chapter discusses occurrences of צָרַע as they relate to claims of innocence or, conversely, to portrayals of guilt of those in distress. Can distress be a form of divine judgment or discipline in the Psalter? When someone experiences distress, does this mean that God is angry or displeased with them? Does the Psalter present any consistent association between the Hebrew root צָרַע and sin or guilt? Or on the other hand, is there any consistent association between צָרַע lexemes and claims of innocence on the part of the psalmists?

2. Historical Survey
There are no simple answers to these questions, but a brief historical overview of the issue will provide important background for the study to follow.

2.1 Hermann Gunkel
Gunkel divided the genre of Individual Lament into several subcategories, two of which are relevant to the issue of the relationship between distress and sin in the Psalter. Under the title Songs of Innocence, Gunkel categorised several psalms in which the petitioner requests deliverance from trouble based on his upright conduct.1 Gunkel noted that these innocence psalms, which stress the upright behaviour of the psalmists, are often thematically centred upon deliverance from external distress. Conversely, in another subcategory, the Songs of Confession, where the characteristic element is “the painful awareness of having sinned against YHWH and deserving the punishment”,2 Gunkel noted an absence of external distress:

1 Gunkel, An Introduction to the Psalms, 176.
2 Gunkel, An Introduction to the Psalms, 187.
It is understandable that complaints about external distress and indeed complaints in general are generally lacking in these psalms.\(^3\)

Thus, Gunkel’s two subcategories, the Songs of Innocence and the Songs of Confession, emphasise the Psalter’s general tendency not to express a causal connection between external distress and an awareness of sin.

### 2.2 Geerhardus Vos

In *Biblical Theology* (1948), Geerhardus Vos acknowledged that the claims to righteousness in the Psalter have, “Caused difficulty with interpreters on account of its seeming to run athwart of the principle of unmeritoriousness in God’s dealing with his people.”\(^4\) As a solution, Vos asserts that, “It is not over against God in the abstract, that the pleaders claim to be righteous, but over against their adversaries.”\(^5\) This solution seems to be an oversimplification, since not all of the individual claims to righteous status are expressed in comparison with the enemy.

### 2.3 Claus Westermann

In *Praise and Lament* (1965), Westermann summarised this general lack of causal association between guilt and distress as follows: “The confession of guilt can be a constituent part of the lament psalms, whether in the lament of the nation or of the individual, but that is not generally the case.”\(^6\)

### 2.4 Klaus Koch

In *Gibt es ein Vergeltungsdogma im Alten Testament* (1972), Klaus Koch investigated selected psalms as part of his examination of an OT doctrine of retribution. He concluded that the Psalter, along with the entire OT, draws a distinction between a so-called doctrine of retribution and the belief that Yahweh merely sets in motion a state of affairs in which either good or evil actions produce results in and of themselves.\(^7\) His selective approach omits evidence which does not support his thesis. For example, he cites Psalm 109:18-19 while omitting the following verse.\(^8\)

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\(^3\) Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms*, 187.


\(^8\) Koch, “Vergeltungsdogma,” 152.
2.5 G. Ogden

In Joel 4 and the Prophetic Response to National Laments (1983), G. Ogden noted the same general absence of connection between suffering and sin in the Psalms of Lament:

In national and individual laments it is frequently to be noted that there is a protestation of innocence on the part of the sufferer (e.g. Ps 59:3-4). It is the fact that the suffering is undeserved which makes the anguish so poignant.\(^9\)

2.6 Samuel Balentine

In The Hidden God (1983), Samuel Balentine studied the expression פנים + סתר (to hide the face) throughout the MT, including the nine occurrences in the Psalter (Pss 10:11; 13:2; 22:25; 27:9; 51:11; 69:18; 88:15; 102:3; 143:7).\(^10\) Balentine concludes that, “In the Psalms, God’s hiding is a subject for lament and protest as innocent suppliants charge that they have done nothing to warrant divine abandonment.”\(^11\) His comments on Psalms 51 and 69 are relevant to the subsequent discussion:

In the psalms under discussion there are only two occasions in which the psalmist makes explicit reference to sin, either by way of acknowledgement or confession, and in neither instance is there a direct statement that God has hidden his face because of the suppliant’s sin. In Ps 51:11, the statement is actually a petition to God that he would hide his face from the suppliant’s sin, i.e. that God forgive him. In Ps 69 the suppliant acknowledges two instances (vv 6, 29) that he has been foolish and that both his actions and the consequences which have followed them are known to God. But he also protests that his situation has come about, at least in part, as a result of his work on God’s behalf (vv 8, 10). Thus if it is to be assumed that here sin is the cause of God’s hiding, it must also be allowed that from the suppliant’s perspective at least, there seems to be an implicit protest that the sin does not merit the punishment.\(^12\)

For the study to follow, it is noteworthy that Balentine pays very little attention to Psalm 143, even though it contains an expression of the hidden face of God:

Ps 143:7 אַלּ הֶמְשֶׁר פָּנְיָךְ מִפִּי Do not hide your face from me.

For reasons which he does not state, Balentine does not consider the petitioner’s disavowal of personal righteousness in Psalm 143:2 to fall into the same category as Psalms 51 and 69. While he comments at length on the underlying “sense of protest” or “implicit protest”\(^13\) in

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\(^12\) Balentine, The Hidden God, 51.

many of the nine psalms under consideration, Psalm 143 is conspicuously absent from this discussion, apparently because it contains none of the textual cues which he highlights as indicators of protest. For the discussion to follow, it is important to note that, Psalm 143 excepted, all of the featured psalms in Balentine’s study are located in the first four books of the Psalter. Balentine’s omission of Psalm 143 is interesting, because Ps 143:2 can be understood as the functional opposite of protest, as will be discussed below.

2.7 James Crenshaw
In *Theodicy in the Old Testament* (1983), Crenshaw writes that when Israel is compared with neighbouring polytheistic groups, her monotheism heightened her theological concern over undeserved suffering. With a polytheistic world view, “certain deities are responsible for life’s disturbing aspects, while others share no responsibility for these vexing phenomena.”14 But with monotheistic Israel, on the other hand:

The consequence of emphasis upon God’s incomparability, nay sole existence, was intensified distress about undeserved suffering. Famine, pestilence, and earthquake struck human society without discriminating between the innocent and the guilty.15

Crenshaw contends that this tension resulted in a shift in emphasis from theodicy to anthropodicy:

Who would contend that all instances of suffering were occasioned by the victim’s wickedness? The resulting tension between divine and human culpability was nearly always eased by stressing the latter’s sinfulness. In short, defence of God occurred at human expense. As a consequence, theodicy was given up, and anthropodicy became the fundamental problem claiming the attention of religious thinkers.16

The chapter on Wisdom Psalms in Crenshaw’s later work, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (1998), focuses on four psalms (Psalms 37; 39; 49; 73) which “ask the perennial question about divine justice in face of apparent prosperity among the wicked.”17 For our purposes here it should be noted that the question of undeserved prosperity is closely related to the question of undeserved distress, as will be discussed below.

16 Crenshaw, “Introduction: The Shift from Theodicy to Anthropodicy,” 5.
2.8 Gerald Wilson
In The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter (1985), Wilson drew attention to the seam between Books 3 and 4 of the Psalter, where the national calamity of the conquest and exile is attributed to Yahweh’s judgment upon the sin of Israel. Wilson offers five brief summary statements about Psalm 90, the first psalm in Book 4. Wilson’s third and fifth summary statements are relevant to this discussion:

3. The iniquity of man is the cause for the outpouring of God’s wrath (90:7-8).
5. How long? (90:13ff) This picks up the question in 89:46ff, which now stands in the new context of Israel’s sin rather than YHWH’s refusal to honour the Davidic Covenant... YHWH is not at fault for Israel’s state, he is still her “rock” and refuge (92:15).  

Even though Wilson does not focus on any specific Hebrew terms (e.g. צָרָר) denoting distress or trouble, his statement about a causal connection between distress and divine judgment upon sin in the Psalter is quite relevant to this discussion of the ethical contexts in which צָרָר may occur. It is relevant for two reasons. First, the correlation noted by Wilson relates to instances of corporate distress and judgment, and not to cases from individual laments or thanksgivings. Psalm 90 is a Lament of the Community and Wilson’s argument takes place on a congregational or national plane. This congregational connection between calamity on the one hand and sin and judgment on the other is in keeping with the analysis of צָרָר, shown below. Where the Psalter employs צָרָר in the third person plural, reflecting community concerns, the correlation between distress and guilt is far stronger than where צָרָר is contained in first person statements of lament or thanksgiving. The second reason Wilson’s comments are important to this discussion is because his work focused on the seams between the books of the Psalter, and it will be shown below that the location where the Psalter most forcefully presents distress as a deserved response from Yahweh is also found at a seam—in this instance the seam between Books 4 and 5.

2.9 Patrick Miller
In Interpreting the Psalms (1986), Miller underscores the general consensus that expressions of lament in the Psalter are not strongly identified with the sin of the one(s) lamenting:

Most of the psalms either do not identify the plight of the lamenter with sin or at least are ambiguous on that score... More recently Samuel Balentine has demonstrated that while the motif of the hiding of the face of God, and related themes, such as God’s rejecting, forgetting, being silent, and the like, are frequently

understood as manifestations of divine judgment for sin when appearing in prophetic texts; that is not the case in the psalms.19

2.10 Craig Broyles

In *The Conflict of Faith and Experience* (1989), Broyles builds upon the work of Westermann, with the grammatical observation that the Psalter expresses lament in the first, second and third persons. “There is the ‘I/We-lament’, the ‘Thou(God)-lament’ and the “They(foe)-lament.””20 Some psalms contain all three types of lament, while others may contain just one or two. Broyles focuses attention on the second God Lament category, which relates “the psalmist’s perception of God’s role in the distress.”21 Two important characteristics of God-laments are the presence of the rhetorical question, “Why...?” or “How long...?” and the fact that these types of expressions, implying a form of divine accusation, are “often juxtaposed with expressions that recount the past praise of God.”22 Broyles analyses twenty psalms which he characterises as God-laments (Psalms 6, 9-10, 13, 22, 35, 39, 42-43, 44, 60, 74, 77, 79, 80, 85, 88, 89, 90, 102). His study emphasises a general lack of correlation between distress and disobedience in the God-lament psalms: “The distresses cannot be considered just judgments commensurate with their transgressions.”23

2.11 Fredrik Lindström

Motivated by his experience in training priests to care for people suffering from Aids, Lindström’s *Suffering and Sin: Interpretation of Illness in the Individual Complaint* (1994) employs form and redaction criticism in order to virtually deny any association between guilt and sin in the individual laments. With his redaction-critical presuppositions, it seems that Lindström has constructed a thesis which is impenetrable to the force of any biblical evidence of which he does not approve in advance. For example, Lindström asserts that Psalm 143:2 was not a part of the original poem, and therefore can be excluded when drawing exegetical conclusions: “The form-critically strange elements in Ps 143, i.e., vv 2, 5, 8cd, 10, most likely originate from a thorough literary reworking of this poem.”24 Lindström conducts this form and redaction analysis in order to cleanse the individual laments of later Deuteronomic25 interpolations and thereby arrive at the original “Temple Theology” expressed within the individual laments; a theology in which, “Man’s

relationship with God is not constituted of his sin or innocence.”26 Therefore, early in the book, Lundström anticipates his conclusion as follows:

The psalms which contain the motif of human guilt and divine wrath are the exceptions to a clear and dominant tendency, namely, that affliction is not connected to YHWH in the individual complaint psalms. Rather, God is experienced as being on the side of the petitioner against the evil which has come to him from some other direction.27

And in his final chapter, Lundström summarises:

According to this understanding of life, the normal, “positive” relationship with God is expressed in human “life” in a wider sense, such as health and well-being. This relationship with God is not established because of the individual’s “merit,” e.g., lack of sin. The “negative” relationship with God in the psalms, YHWH’s passivity, wrath, etc., which leads to the loss of the freely (without merit) received “life,” does not depend on the guilt of the individual.28

2.12 Monica Melanchthon
In Rejection by God (2001), Melanchthon notes that the rejection motif in the individual and corporate laments contains, “an element of protest in the lamenter’s questioning of God.”29 While conducting a general survey of the motif of divine rejection, she comments on two psalms. Regarding Psalm 22, she writes, “The psalmist is therefore to all appearances innocent of any sin or guilt.”30 She also comments at length regarding the protestation of innocence in Psalm 44.31

2.13 G. Kwakkel
In According to My Righteousness: Upright Behaviour as Grounds for Deliverance in Psalms 7, 17, 18, 26, and 44 (2002), G. Kwakkel describes these five psalms as “Psalms in which God’s attention is drawn to the upright behaviour of the psalmist or the people of Israel are related to various situations.”32 Along with Gunkel, he notes that psalms which emphasise the psalmist’s upright behaviour typically also emphasise deliverance from distress: “What they have in common is that they all refer to situations in which the lives of the people are under threat at the present moment or have been threatened in the recent

26 Lindström, Suffering and Sin, 435.
27 Lindström, Suffering and Sin, 10.
28 Lindström, Suffering and Sin, 430–1.
30 Melanchthon, Rejection by God, 115.
31 Melanchthon, Rejection by God, 123–6.
past.” Kwakkel says that the psalmists’ claims of upright behaviour are not assertions of sinless perfection, but rather claims of general covenant loyalty to Yahweh, in keeping with the Psalter’s general contrast between the righteous and the wicked:

All of the psalms analysed in this study provide evidence to support the idea that there are only two ways of life: a way of life that is characterised by loyalty to YHWH versus an attitude and behaviour in which Israel’s God and his will are ignored.

2.14 Samuel Terrien
In his interpretation of Psalm 77, Terrien attributes the psalmist’s lack of correlation between distress and sin to his misunderstanding of OT covenant theology:

Unlike the great prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries, the psalmist omitted to mention the corruption of Israel and the violation of the Sinai Covenant—a conditional contract that was annulled. A sacred singer of the Zion temple, as a royal functionary, like many other psalmists, believed in the unconditional character of the Davidic covenant...

2.15 Philip Johnston
In *The Psalms and Distress* (2005), Johnston summarises the relation between distress and sin or guilt in the Psalter as follows:

Though both are represented, protest of innocence features more in the Psalter than acceptance of guilt. It is generally the poor and needy who cry to Yahweh for deliverance from distress which is not of their own making.

In *Interpreting the Psalms*, Miller agrees with this view:

Most of the psalms either do not identify the plight of the lamenter with sin or at least are ambiguous on that score... While the motif of the hiding of the face of God, and related themes, such as God’s rejecting, forgetting, being silent, and the like, are frequently understood as manifestations of divine judgment for sin when appearing in prophetic texts, that is not the case in the psalms.

2.16 Bernd Janowski

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is the vindication of the righteous (Die Rechtfertigung des Gerechten). Janowski draws upon Psalm 7 as his central example and notes that this psalm includes a purity oath (Reinigungseide) as a key component in the psalm’s protestation of innocence (Unschuldbeteuerung).\footnote{Janowski, \textit{Konfliktgespräche}, 143–5.} In this chapter on persecution, Janowski also draws upon Psalms 9/10, 11, 17, 44, 57, and 82.

3. Grammatical Analysis
The studies summarised above are not lexically driven (Balentine excepted), which is to say that they are not focused around any particular set of terms in the Psalter. The following analysis is different, in that it is lexically driven. We seek to determine any correlation or lack thereof between occurrences of the Hebrew root \( צֶרֶר \) and sin/guilt/judgment in the Psalter.

3.1 \( צֶרֶר \) Lexeme Occurrences Categorised According to Person
The data can be most clearly displayed by categorising the occurrences of \( צֶרֶר \) according to grammatical person, because it is in the third person occurrences that the correlation between distress and sin is the strongest.

1st Person Occurrences of \( צֶרֶר \):

Pss 4:2; 10:1; 18:7; 22:12; 25:17; 31:8; 10; 32:7; 34:7; 46:2; 54:9; 59:17; 66:14; 69:18; 77:3; 86:7; 102:3; 116:3b, 3c; 118:5; 119:143; 120:1; 138:7; 142:3; 143:11.

2nd Person Occurrences of \( צֶרֶר \):


3rd Person Occurrences of \( צֶרֶר \):


It is interesting to note that, in the listing of psalms where \( צֶרֶר \) occurs in the first person, we find one of Kwakkel’s psalms asserting upright behaviour as grounds for deliverance (Psalm 18), four of Broyles’ God-lament psalms (Psalms 9/10; 22; 77; 102) and four of Gunkel’s
Songs of Innocence (Psalms 59; 69; 86; 119). This presents a total of nine psalms containing occurrences of צרה¹ which have been highlighted by scholars specifically for their lack of connection between distress and guilt. None of the psalms in the second person listing fall into any of these three categories. Notably, the second person occurrence in Psalm 81:8 is the only place in the MT where צרה¹ denotes the struggles of Israel in Egypt prior to the Exodus. Our analysis of the third person occurrences, below, leads one to suspect that there is a reason why the MT generally avoids employing צרה¹ when referring to the innocent suffering of Israel in Egypt. There is only one point of overlap between the psalms in the third person listing and the three psalm categories studied by Kwakkel, Broyles and Gunkel: namely, Broyles includes Psalm 9/10 among the God-laments.

3.2 צרה¹ in the Third Person and the Question of ‘Innocence’
Before attempting to draw conclusions from the above categorisation, the listing of third person occurrences requires further scrutiny. Four of these psalms do not contain any occurrences of the preterite with וו-consecutive (Psalms 9; 34; 37; 91). These four psalms employ צרה¹ in divine appellatives or otherwise general descriptions of Yahweh as one who delivers people from distress. In most of these cases, the beneficiaries of Yahweh’s deliverance are the righteous or the oppressed poor. Technically, the occurrence of צרה¹ in Psalm 9:10 is part of a divine appellative, and is not a third-person expression. It has been included among the third person listing because the context of Psalm 9/10 informs the reader that it is the suffering of the oppressed poor which is in view when Psalm 9:10 describes Yahweh as an elevated refuge/fortification in times of distress (בצרה לעתות מׂשבג). Both of the occurrences of צרה in Psalm 9/10 could be assigned to either the first person or the third person listing, because the psalmist himself is distressed about the distress of others. Most scholars have assigned Psalm 9/10 to an individual rather than community genre category.⁴⁰ As the third person grouping is examined further, it emerges that, unlike these four psalms which never use the preterite with וו-consecutive, the three remaining psalms containing third-person occurrences of צרה¹ (Psalms 78; 106; 107) each contain multiple occurrences of the וו-consecutive. These psalms are, to a large degree, historical narrations of Yahweh’s actions with groups of people in the past. These are the only three psalms in the Psalter where third person instances of צרה¹ coincide with employment of the וו-consecutive, and these three texts are quite telling in this study of possible correlation between distress and sin.

4. Correlation between Distress and Divine Wrath in Psalm 78
In Psalm 78:49, the Egyptians are the group which experienced distress. This psalm employs the preterite with וו-consecutive 58 times as it narrates certain aspects of the

⁴⁰ Johnston and Firth, eds., Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches, 296.
history of Israel. For example, situated near verse 49, the \( \text{vav} \)-consecutive occurs in verses 41, 44, 46, 48, 51, 52, and 53. As a part of this historical recollection of the plagues upon Egypt, \( \text{צרה} \) occurs alongside several Hebrew terms denoting the wrath of Yahweh:

Ps 78:49

He sent against them his hot anger, wrath, indignation and distress, a band of destroying angels.

Here we have an example of a group of people experiencing \( \text{צרה} \) as a direct result of divine displeasure, as Yahweh poured out plague after plague upon hard-hearted Pharaoh and his nation. In passing, it should be noted that although the people of Yahweh are not the recipients of the distress described in verse 49, yet the sin and unbelief of Yahweh’s people is a major theme of this psalm. Throughout the psalm, however, Yahweh inflicts similar treatment upon his own hard-hearted people as he has upon the hard-hearted Egyptians. Verse 47 uses the verb \( \text{הרג} \) (to kill) recalling how Yahweh damaged the Egyptian wine industry with a hail storm. Verses 31 and 34 employ the same verb to denote how Yahweh killed members of the Israelite community as discipline for their sin. By the time the reader arrives at verse 47, she has already encountered it twice. And which is more severe, the killing of vines, or the killing of citizens? Verse 44 uses the verb \( \text{הפך} \) (to turn, overthrow) recalling how Yahweh turned the Nile river into blood. In verse 9, the reader has already encountered the same verb denoting an Ephriamite military defeat, the cause of which is covenant disloyalty. Verse 45 uses the \text{hiph'\text{il}} form of verb \( \text{שחת} \) (to destroy) recalling the plague of frogs which Yahweh inflicted upon Egypt. Yet just seven verses prior, this \text{hiph'\text{il}} verb also occurs, informing the reader that the mercy of Yahweh is the only reason that the covenant community has not received the same treatment. Similar correlations between Yahweh’s treatment of the Egyptians and that of the Israelites can be seen in this psalm’s use of \( \text{נתן} \) (to give) in verses 46 and 61, as well as the verb \( \text{סגר} \) (to hand over, deliver) in verses 48, 50 and 62. Here in this narrative type of psalm, containing an instance of \( \text{צרה} \) with a third person antecedent, we see a strong correlation between distress and divine displeasure. This occurs most directly with reference to the Egyptians in verse 49, but also, by implication, the hard-hearted people of God are drawn into the equation as well. As we examine the next instance where \( \text{צרה} \) is employed in third person plural, historical recollection, we begin to see a pattern emerging. And this time, the covenant people are not drawn in by implication, but rather they are the direct recipients of distress as an expression of divine displeasure.
5. Correlation between Distress and Disobedience in Psalm 106

As with Psalm 78, Psalm 106 frequently employs the vav-consecutive as a device for presenting historical narrative through the medium of poetry. It occurs eight times in the citation below, including verse 44, where יהוה לבר is the direct object of ירא.

\[Psalm 106:40-44\]

v 40 יתרא יהוה בצרו ויתעב אחרוניה יהוה was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance.

v 41 וה ninguר ומשלו ביד גויים יתנם He gave them over to the power of the nations; their foes ruled over them.

v 42 יחלטו וירושו חנה תחת וייכנו Their enemies oppressed them; they were subdued under their power.

v 43 פעם רב ירצה והמה ימרבעה ימע Many times he delivered them; but they were bent on rebellion and they sank down in their sin.

v 44 ירא ברו לבר לעמע אתתרות But he saw their distress when he heard their cry.

Here in Psalm 106, we see two important things about distress and its relation to divine displeasure. First, in verses 40-42, we see that the distress of Yahweh’s people resulted from his anger, and his giving them over to oppression. This direct association between distress and guilt is quite dissimilar to the manifold claims of innocence observed in the first person occurrences, where the psalmists often assert that their distress is not a result of personal disobedience to Yahweh. Second, in verse 44, we see that Yahweh is the gracious deliverer from distress, even when the people being delivered are culpable, a theme which is similar to that of Psalm 78 (vv 38-39, 65ff.). So, in his displeasure, Yahweh delivers his disobedient people into distress, but then, when they call upon him, Yahweh mercifully delivers people from the very same distress. Thus, this corporate occurrence of ברר illustrates a causal connection between distress and sin in Psalm 106.

6. Correlation between Distress and Disobedience in Psalm 107

In the chapters up to this point we have withheld detailed analysis of Psalm 107 in our discussion of the facets of distress because it will be the subject of its own chapter to follow. However, as we now focus on correlation between distress and disobedience, a careful look at Psalm 107 is in order, because it plays an important role in this discussion. Therefore, as regards this one subject area we will carefully examine Psalm 107 in this present chapter and, correspondingly, in chapter 8, there will be no need to repeat what is covered here.

\[\text{Chapter 8 focuses on an analysis of distress in Psalm 107.}\]
In its four-fold refrain, Psalm 107 contains more occurrences of צער than any other psalm. In *Werden und Wesen des 107 Psalms*, Beyerlin repeatedly draws attention to the connection between guilt and distress in Psalm 107.\textsuperscript{42} Given that Psalm 107 often quotes or alludes to portions of Isaiah and Job, Beyerlin emphasises that this connection between sin and distress is actually intensified when one examines the contexts of these passages in Isaiah and Job from which Psalm 107 draws. The intertextuality of the psalm intensifies its correlation of distress and sin. Beyerlin notes that most of the material that Psalm 107 shares with the book of Job comes from its Elihu section. One characteristic of the Elihu material is that it stresses the educational value of distress.\textsuperscript{43} Thus it is probably not coincidental that the writers of Psalm 107 chose to quote from Elihu. Although much has been surmised regarding the redactional development of Psalm 107, we choose to focus our attention on the canonical text contained in the MT. This psalm contains 24 occurrences of the נ Unsure consecutive, including the four-fold refrain where צער appears:

Ps 107:6a, 13a, 19a, 28a

They cried out to Yahweh in their distress.

Some of this psalm’s correlations between distress and sin are nuanced and complex, while others are quite obvious and simple. The canonical text of this psalm breaks down into five stanzas, and can be outlined as follows:

<table>
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<th>Introduction</th>
<th>vv 1-3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lost in the Wilderness</td>
<td>vv 4-9</td>
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<td>2. Prisoners In the Dark Dungeon</td>
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<td>3. Rebellious Fools</td>
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<td>vv 33-43</td>
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Stanzas 2, 3, and 4 each contain overt correlations between distress and disobedience, which we will consider now, before examining the more tacit correlations between distress and disobedience in Stanza 1.

\textsuperscript{42} Beyerlin, *Werden und Wesen*, 11, 40–5, 51, 64, 65, 110.

6.1 Correlation between Distress and Disobedience in Psalm 107, Stanza 2

The second stanza of Psalm 107 begins in verse 10 by depicting prisoners suffering in irons. The following verse 11 begins with an explanatory כי (for, because), providing the reason why the prisoners are held captive:

Ps 107:11 כידוהםו אפוריהלא עשתו עלין נאתי For they rebelled against the word of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.

Immediately after the declaration of the sufferers’ guilt in verse 11, verse 12 informs the reader that Yahweh has brought about this situation of suffering. The distress of the prisoners is the direct result of Yahweh’s response to their rebellion against him. Regarding this second stanza, Beyerlin comments on its strong wisdom overtones and draws comparisons with Job chapter 36:

In essence, Psalm 107 speaks in the same way as the wisdom poet of Job 36:8, 13 regarding prisoners who are lying in irons and suffering in confinement. By using the explanatory כי particle, verse 11 is similar to Job 36:8-9 in that it attributes the cause of such imprisonment and confinement in irons to the rebellion and arrogance of the people concerned. Psalm 107:11-13 is analogous to Job 36:9, 10, 13 because it testifies to educational and corrective measures which God carries out. When compared with one another, both of these passages leave the strong impression that they are closely related from a redaction-historical point of view.

Beyerlin also notes points of similarity between the second stanza of Psalm 107 and Job chapter 38. Both the Psalm and Job correlate distress with divine displeasure:

This conclusion can be further substantiated by the same kind of similarities between Psalm 107:10-11 and Job 38:2. In both passages, when the “counsel” of God is darkened through human opposition and rebelliousness, then God’s plan operates in darkness. Psalm 107:10-11 has this detail in common with Job 38:2: the one who despises the “counsel” of the Most High must sit in darkness as a result.

Thus, the second stanza of Psalm 107 presents an obvious causal connection between distress and sin. Next, we will see that the same is the case with the third stanza.

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44 “Es ist Jahwe, nicht etwa ein menschlicher Kerkermeister, der die Betroffenen »fesselt«,” (Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 41).
45 Werden und Wesen, 40 (trans. mine).
46 Werden und Wesen, 40 (trans. mine).
6.2 Correlation between Distress and Disobedience in Psalm 107, Stanza 3

The third stanza presents a connection between distress and sin, beginning with its first word: אולים (fools):

Ps 107:17 אולים מדרך פשעם ומעותיהם תעננ Fools suffered affliction, due to their rebellious and sinful ways.

The term “fool” (אויל) comes from an Old Testament wisdom milieu, denoting “moral deficiency”, and is not chiefly a commentary on one’s intelligence. It refers to someone who disregards the teachings of Yahweh. Verse 18 informs us that the situation of suffering endured by these fools is probably some form of illness. Terrien suspects mental illness or anorexia nervosa. As Beyerlin writes, “The state of suffering, the severe sickness is brought about through the way of rebellion against God.” In this stanza, the order of events is fascinating, because the psalm informs the reader that the suffering is deserved (v 17) before providing any description of what the suffering may have been (v 18). The concept that the suffering is attributed to the wayward lives of the sufferers is emphasised by the order of presentation, which is opposite to what is found in the second stanza where the suffering is described first (v 10), and then the reason is given (v 11). While verse 18 leaves the details of the affliction in the background, verse 17 emphasises the guilt of the sufferers in a twofold way: first, by calling them fools (אויל), second, through the dual employment of the preposition מ, in this case indicating “the cause or means of a situation” (מדרכ פשעם, “because of their rebellious way” and ומעותיהם, “and because of their iniquities”).

Many scholars have noted that the second and third stanzas of Psalm 107 present a causal connection between distress and sin. J. Mejia mentions an instance of chiasm in his comment on the first four stanzas of this psalm:

We can even point out that the chiastic structure indicated acquires a special sense when it is seen in the light of the preceding: two acts of salvation from sin are framed by two acts of salvation from chaos.

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48 Allen, WBC: Psalms 101–150, 64; Seybold, Das Gebet des Kranken, 31, 36.
49 Terrien, The Psalms, 739.
50 Werden und Wesen, 51 (trans. mine).
However, given that the canonical form of the psalm is comprised of five stanzas, not four, there are further connections between distress and guilt to be investigated. The historical tendency to view Psalm 107 as being originally comprised of three or four stanzas has contributed to a lack of holistic analysis and a corresponding failure to fully document the correlation between distress and sin which permeates the psalm.

6.3 Correlation between Distress and Disobedience in Psalm 107, Stanza 5

There is a conceptual difference between the fifth stanza and the first four. In stanzas 1-4, the redemptive action of Yahweh is in response to the cry of distressed people, whereas, in stanza 5, the focus is on Yahweh’s control of events without any reference to the prayers of people in need. Although we will demonstrate that the motif in question (distress as a result of sin) is consistent throughout the psalm, the point of view is slightly more anthropocentric in the first four stanzas, and slightly more theocentric in the fifth. This difference in point of view is evidenced both in the lack of refrain in stanza 5 and in the structure of the first phrase in each of the five stanzas. In the first phrase of stanzas 1-4, human beings are the subjects of the verbs, whereas in the first phrase of stanza 5, Yahweh is the subject of the verb. Stanza 5 begins with a general statement to the effect that Yahweh brings about negative circumstances for those who displease him:

v 33
לצמאון
מים
ומצאי
למדהבר
נהרות
יׂשם
He turns rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground,

v 34
בה
יׁשבי
מרעת
למלחה
פרי
ארץ
and fruitful land into a salt waste because of the wickedness of those who live there.

Here we see the third instance where this psalm employs the preposition ש in order to inform the reader of the cause, or the reason why something has happened. The reason why the agricultural environment withers is due to the wickedness of the inhabitants. Beyerlin comments that this aspect of stanza 5 (der Psalmschluß) is simply carrying on the same motif already present in stanzas 2 and 3. He then directs his attention to verse 39 where the people of Yahweh themselves (das Jahwevolk selber) are the recipients of disastrous circumstances:

Ps 107:39
ויגון
רעה
מעצר
ויׁשحو
וימעטו
Then their numbers decreased and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow.

\[53\] “Unheil und Bosheit eine innere Beziehung haben,” (Seybold, Die Psalmen, 430)

\[54\] Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 64.
After noting the ambiguity in the term רעה (wickedness, calamity), which occurs in verse 34 denoting wicked behaviour (Bosheit), and then occurs soon thereafter in verse 39, except this time denoting calamity (Unheil), Beyerlin wonders if, in verse 39, the guilt of the sufferers should be tacitly presupposed (Daß eigenes Verschulden als prima causa stillschweigend vorausgesetzt wird?). Beyerlin answers in the affirmative (Eigentlich muß es so sein.), particularly with reference to verse 42 where the opposite is the case, as the godly are blessed with positive circumstances:

Otherwise, how could the poet say in the very next breath that the righteous would rejoice when they see these positive and negative circumstances? Such rejoicing conclusively presupposes that unprovoked disaster and grief do not befall the fully innocent righteous.

6.4 Correlation between Distress and Disobedience in Psalm 107, Stanza 1

While stanzas 2, 3, and 5 make overt connections between distress and disobedience, the allusions to this connection in the first stanza are a little less obvious, but present nevertheless. A good starting point is to note that stanza 1 contains several points of similarity with the other four stanzas. Beyerlin notes that stanza 1 is similar to stanzas 2 and 3 in that the crises are self-caused (Die notvolle Krisen erleiden, diese auch selber verursacht...), and also in that all three feature Old Testament images representing death:

What was said about Strophe I regarding the desert and about Strophe II with reference to darkness and pitch-black is also valid for the grave, featured in Strophe III. In all three Strophes surveyed thus far, the power and influence of the realm of death play a role.

6.4.1 The Way

The potential correlation between distress and sin in stanza 1 can be brought into sharper focus in four ways. The first relates to this Psalm’s fivefold use of the Hebrew root דרך (way, path). This root appears in nominal form four times, in stanzas 1 (vv 4, 7), 3 (v 17) and 5 (v 40) and in verbal form in verse 7. Beyerlin notes that this metaphor of the way is influential in both stanzas 1 and 3:

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Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 65.
56 Werden und Wesen, 65 (trans. mine).
57 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 57.
58 Werden und Wesen, 48 (trans. mine).
Incidentally, it is the very same metaphor which already occupies a key position in Strophe I. Since there it is the way that has been lost and (by the grace of God) found again, so also here, in verse 17, it is the misguided way which ends in suffering.59

But, not only do stanzas 1 and 3 share this motif of losing one’s way, the psalm makes further use of this metaphor of the way in stanza 5. In the fifth stanza, verse 40 picks up on two linguistic cues (תעה, to wander lost; דרך, way, path) from the first stanza and informs the reader that wandering lost in barren terrain is a manifestation of divine displeasure:

Ps 107:40

He pours contempt upon nobles and makes them wander in a trackless wasteland.

The indeterminacy of the psalm leaves the identity of these nobles rather obscure, but it could be that the nobles who are the recipients of divine contempt here in verse 40 also happen to be the ones who abused their power to carry out the oppression in the immediately preceding verse 39. Although we cannot be sure of this, it would be in keeping with the overall message of stanza 5,60 providing a reason why Yahweh holds them in contempt. At any rate, the fifth stanza presents this image of the way in a manner which suggests moral or ethical implications: It is those with whom Yahweh is displeased who are sentenced to wander lost in a trackless waste. Keeping in mind that verses 33-34 have already provided an overt correlation between distress and sin, therefore two of this psalm’s stanzas (3 and 5) expressly associate the motif of the way with sinful behaviour or divine displeasure, which could lead one to assume that a similar association may be read into stanza 1.61

6.4.2 Lostness

In addition to the image of the way, there is a second feature that stanzas 1 and 5 have in common which sheds further light on the potential correlation between distress and sin in stanza 1. The verb תעה (to wander lost) occurs in both stanza 1 (v 4) and stanza 5 (v 40). The semantics of this verb can be simply understood as dividing into two basic areas: that of literal wandering and of figurative, metaphorical wandering. When literal wandering is in view, such as this verb’s four occurrences in the Pentateuch (Gen 20:13; 21:14; 37:15; Ex

59 Werden und Wesen, 47 (trans. mine).
60 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 65, 79.
61 “Noch wichtiger und triftiger ist, daß Gottes Handeln verschieden dargestellt wird: Im Psalmschluß - ähnlich wie in den ersten drei Strophen — so, daß Jahwe mit einleuchtender inner notwendigkeit handelt (Unheil ist göttliche Strafe, Strafe für die Bosheit der Menschen),” (Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 79).
23:4), there are typically no ethical connotations implied. However, the metaphorical use of this term frequently carries ethical implications:

Language about loss of physical orientation or erroneous orientation was useful for talking about ways of living, especially living apart from God. The moral and religious dimensions are prominent in תעה.

Of the 44 instances of תעה in the MT, 35 denote such metaphorical wandering away from Yahweh, his blessings or his way of life. Beyerlin notes similarities between Psalm 107’s use of תעה and ethical occurrences of this term in Isaiah 53:6; Proverbs 7:25; 21:16 and Psalm 119:176, although he does not mention the ethical overtones of תעה in his discussion of the first stanza of Psalm 107.

The use of תעה in verse 40 of stanza 5 indicates that wandering lost can be a form of divine judgment. Since it is specifically those who are recipients of Yahweh’s contempt who are condemned to wander lost, therefore the verse correlates the circumstance of wandering lost with some sort of a breach in the wanderers’ relationship with Yahweh. Since the pronouncement of divine contempt implies some degree of ethical connotation regarding the occurrence of תעה at verse 40, perhaps a similar connotation should be assumed with reference to this verb’s occurrence as the first word in stanza 1 (תעה). Since it is the metaphorical occurrences of this verb which carry the ethical connotations, this leads to the question: is it appropriate to consider the occurrence of תעה in stanza 1 of Psalm 107 to be an instance of metaphor? Beyerlin considers the concept of wandering from the way in this stanza to be metaphorical, and even parabolic. A considerable number of scholars assume that stanza 1 (as well as the other four stanzas) is intended to be understood metaphorically. Therefore, in addition to the image of the way (דרך), this stanza’s employment of תעה provides a second reason to suspect that stanza 1 states tacitly that which stanzas 2, 3, and 5 state expressly: namely, that there is a causal connection between distress and disobedience or divine displeasure. The twofold occurrence of the verb תעה in

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65 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 37.
Psalm 107 may also provide a conceptual link with the final verse of Psalm 119, which Martin Leuenberger characterises as the “monumental monolith”\(^{67}\) of Book 5.

The third means of correlation between distress and sin in stanza 1 can be most effectively presented after some initial conclusions have been summarised. Having grouped all of the occurrences of צָרָר\(^1\) in the Psalter according to grammatical person, and having analysed these three groupings, we have seen that the first person expressions of distress generally do not correlate distress with sin. In fact, these first person occurrences are precisely where we see several of the poets assert their innocence. But, on the other hand, it is the third person expressions which indicate a connection between distress and sin. We have observed this connection where the Egyptians are concerned in Psalm 78. And, in Psalms 106 and 107, we have observed an explicit connection between distress and sin with regard to the people of Yahweh. It is quite fascinating that this grouping of צָרָר\(^1\) by grammatical person draws the reader’s attention to the seam between Books 4 and 5. In the Psalter, it is specifically Psalms 106 and 107 where the distress of the people of Yahweh is expressed in the third person while being associated with the sin of the people of Yahweh. The fact that Psalms 106 and 107 are located at this seam provides one more angle for exploring potential connection between distress and divine discipline in the first stanza of Psalm 107. This is the connection that we will now explore.

6.4.3 Distress and the Seam of Books 4 and 5

In The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Zenger discusses the closing doxologies of Books 1-4 and writes, “The view, which K. Koch also supports, seems likely that these four books already existed as a complete compositional entity before the fifth book was added.”\(^{68}\) If it is the case that Book 5 was added at some point after Book 4, then the fact that Psalms 106 and 107 are the only places in the Psalter where the distress of the people of Yahweh is discussed in the third person plural seems to be more than mere coincidence. It hints at editorial intention. The location of ‘יַעֲלֵה’ in Psalm 106, near the end of the psalm (v 44) leaves the concept of distress fresh in the reader’s mind as she proceeds from Psalm 106 to Psalm 107. It carries the concept of Yahweh’s redemption from deserved distress from one psalm into the other, and from Book 4 into Book 5.

Several interpreters have taken notice of words and concepts contained in Psalm 106 which are repeated in Psalm 107. Zenger notes that the introductory verses of these two psalms

\(^{67}\) Leuenberger, Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter, 268.
\(^{68}\) Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of the Psalms, Psalms 107–145,” 81.
are identical. Lohfink comments that Psalms 105 and 106 are twin psalms (Zwillingspsalmen), both of which refer to the exile. Zenger also remarks that the theme of Yahweh’s gathering (קבץ, Pss 106:47; 107:3) of his people from exile is contained in both Psalms 106 and 107. M. Goulder notices that Yahweh’s scattering his people “throughout the lands” (בארצות) in Psalm 106:27 corresponds to his gathering of his people “from the lands” (מארדס) in Psalm 107:3. Goulder also notes the occurrence of the expression “in a wasteland” (byterim) in both Psalms (Pss 106:14; 107:4). Leuenberger also notes that both psalms include the wonderful deeds (נפלאות) of Yahweh (Pss 106: 7, 22; 107:8, 15, 21, 31); disregarding the counsel (עצה) of Yahweh (106:17; 107:11), and the concept of crying out to Yahweh in distress (Pss 106:44; 107:6, 13, 19, 28). Other items which these two psalms have in common include the metaphor of the “hand (יד) of the enemy” signifying the power of the enemy (Pss 106: 10a, 10b, 41, 42; 107:2), and explanatory כי (because) clauses containing the verb מָרָא (to rebel) in the hiph‘il stem (Pss 106:33; 107:11). Not only do both psalms begin with the concept of the חסד (faithful love) of Yahweh, both psalms make frequent reference to this important term (Pss 106:1, 7, 45; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43). Mays notes that Psalms 105 and 106 contain thematic links with Psalm 119, including the occurrence of דבר (word) as a synonym for Torah. Psalm 107 contains a similar occurrence of דבר (v 20), providing not only a further link with Psalm 106, but also another conceptual link between Psalm 107 and Psalm 119, which is the theological centre of Book 5. Wilson summarises the association between Psalms 106 and 107 as follows:

Even if this is an old “pilgrim” ps (as others suggest), it becomes in this connection a description of the ingathering of the exiles from the diaspora. The viewpoint of Ps 107 is essentially different from that expressed in 106 where the psalmist still looks forward in expectation of YHWH’s deliverance. The perils here described are the “troubles” of the redeemed (107:2); the distress of the exiles (106) has been overcome. Close correspondence between the concluding summary in Ps 106:40-46 and the concluding refrain of 107:6-8, 13-15, 19-21, 28-31 leaves little doubt of the purposeful juxtaposition of these two pss.

The many links between Psalms 106 and 107 lead to the third area of exploration for possible correlation between distress and guilt in Stanza I of Psalm 107. Namely, if the

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73 Goulder, Psalms of the Return, 120.
74 Leuenberger, Konzeptionen des Königstums Gottes im Psalter, 201–2.
77 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 220.
wanderers in the wilderness are returning from the exile, then the very fact that they are in
the wilderness to begin with is a direct result of the exile. Since the exile was a form of
divine judgment, therefore any distress suffered as a result of the return is, at least indirectly,
a result of sin. Beyerlin adopts a minority position by asserting that stanza 1 does not have
the exilic returnees in view. \(^78\) However, most commentaries on the psalms that adopt a
canonical approach pay considerable attention to the links between Psalms 106 and 107 and
therefore assume that the subjects of Stanza 1 are the exilic returnees. Kraus is typical of
this view:

In view of the adoption of the psalm in the circle of the postexilic community, it is
easy to see that the desert trek in vv 4ff. could be transferred to the journey of
travelers who were homeward bound from Mesopotamia, especially since in the
prophetic vision the “second exodus,” the journey through the Syrian Arabic desert,
played an important role: Isa 42:10ff.; 49:10ff.; 51:9ff. \(^79\)

Therefore, the view that the wanderers who are lost in the wilderness in stanza 1 happen to
be exilic returnees provides another tacit linkage between distress and divine displeasure in
this stanza, because the very fact that they are on their journey is a direct result of Yahweh
having scattered (Ps 106:27b) his people.

6.4.4 Wilderness

The fourth potential correlation between distress and sin in stanza I can be derived from a
closer inspection of the context in which the psalm uses the term יִשָּׁמְעָה (desert, wilderness) in verse 4:

Ps 107:4a יִשָּׁמְעָה They wandered in a desert wilderness...

יִשָּׁמְעָה occurs four times in the Psalter (Pss 68:8; 78:40; 106:14; 107:4), each time with the
prefixed preposition ב (in, with). However, three of these four occurrences (Psalms 78; 106;
107) are situated in close company with בֵּית מֶדֶר (in the desert). It is striking that these are
precisely the psalms which have been discussed above, displaying a strong correlation
between distress and divine displeasure. Psalms 78 and 106 each employ the two terms
יִשָּׁמְעָה and בֵּית מֶדֶר in expressions describing the sin of Yahweh’s people:

\(^78\) Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 35.
\(^79\) Kraus, Psalms 60–150, 328.
Ps 78:40  וַיִּשָּׁמְרוּ  יִשְׂרָאֵל  בְּמִדְבַּר  וַיִּהְמְרוּ  בַּכְלָלָתָּם
How often they rebelled against him in the desert and grieved him in the wilderness!

Ps 106:14  וַיַּחֲמֹם  יְהוָה  בְּמִדְבַּר  וַיִּנְסֶמוּ-אָל  לֹא  יְהוָה
They craved intensely in the desert and put God to the test in the wilderness.

Given the similarities already noted between Psalms 78, 106 and 107, it seems reasonable to infer that when the terms בְּמִדְבַּר and בְּיָשָׁמְרוּ occur in close conjunction in similar psalms, they probably have a similar meaning, connoting the association between wilderness and rebellion, as is so often the case in the Hebrew Bible.

Goulder summarises the general concept of distress in Psalm 107:

It (Ps 107) sets out four images, all of them drawn from Second Isaiah — wandering in the desert, imprisonment, sickness and storm at sea — which represent the just punishment for Israel’s sins. 80

7. Summary of Findings

We have seen thus far that when distress is presented in the Psalter as a corporate occurrence, particularly in psalms which adopt a historical narrative style employing the preterite with vav-consecutive, there is a correlation between distress and sin/guilt/divine displeasure. We have also noted that, aside from the mention of Yahweh’s wrath upon Egypt in Psalm 78, these third person corporate occurrences are located at the seam of Books 4 and 5. We have also observed that these occurrences in Psalms 106 and 107 are slightly different from the occurrence in Psalm 78 because צָרַר is not coupled with a third person pronoun where Egypt is concerned in Psalm 78, while it is invariably coupled with the third person plural pronoun in Psalms 106 and 107, which exclusively employ the unique expression בַּכָּלָם בַּכְלָלָתָם.

This correlation in the Psalter between צָרַר and divine displeasure can also be examined from a synchronic form-critical perspective. The key genre distinction here is that of community psalms versus individual psalms. A clear majority of the Psalter’s expressions using the root צָרַר occur in psalms of the individual, appearing in either individual laments (e.g. Psalms 22; 25; 31; 54; 59; 69; 71; 86; 102; 120; 142; 143), or in individual thanksgiving or confidence psalms (e.g. Psalms 4; 9/10; 18; 32; 34; 91; 116; 118; 138). It is noteworthy that there are only four distress psalms which many scholars have traditionally

80 Goulder, Psalms of the Return, 117.
understood to be psalms of the community (Psalms 66; 77; 106; 107). Appearing in this brief list of four, we see the same two key psalms (Psalms 106; 107) analysed in our grammatical study, above. Thus, an unbiased sorting of psalms based on genre leads in a direction similar to the grammatical study—namely, to the seam between Books 4 and 5. We find the correlation between distress and divine displeasure where expressions from the root נטר 1 occur in a community genre, whether they may be community laments or community thanksgivings.

These conclusions lead us to three further questions that need to be explored briefly. First, is there a similar correlation between distress and divine displeasure elsewhere in the MT? Second, does this correlation lead to any new conclusions regarding the canonical role of Book 5? And third, what light is shed upon the exegesis of Psalm 107 by this correlation?

### 8. Similar Correlation Elsewhere in the MT

When the MT is scanned for instances of נטר 1 expressed in the third person plural occurring in narrative sequences where the preterite with נון-consecutive is employed, the first instance of such a structure in the Hebrew Scriptures is found in Deuteronomy. Prior to Deuteronomy every instance of the root נטר 1 either refers to individuals speaking of their own personal distress (e.g. Gen. 35:3) or to cases of literal rather than figurative restriction, such as the case where Balaam’s donkey had no room to turn around (Num 22:26). Following the format of an ancient suzerainty treaty, 81 the book of Deuteronomy concludes with covenant sanctions, describing life in very simple terms: if Israel follows Yahweh, she will be tangibly blessed, and if she does not, she will be tangibly cursed (Deut 27-28). Deuteronomy chapter 31 summarises the potential fate of apostate Israel as follows:

Deut 31:17

והתא אפי בכרותיה וגוויית תחתיה
ונמֵת יהוה לאֽלָּל תֶּצִּאתהוּ רֵעֵיה
נֵטרֵיהוּ אָמוּר בְּוַיָּוֵה הָֽאָּלָה עִלְּעָל׃

On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and distresses will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, 'Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?'

This is the very first occurrence of נטר 1 in a third person, narrative setting in the MT, and the correlation between distress and sin in this case is self-evident. In verse 21 of the same chapter, there is a very similar, third person, singular occurrence, which is a collective

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reference to Israel, thus functionally equivalent to a third person plural. The next third person narrative instance is in Judges 2:15, where:"\[\text{בצל כלאר היה עדים הוהי לאריה}
\text{אשר היה טוב את כל ארץ יהוה}
\text{והיה ליהוה אחיה}
\] Wherever they went, the hand of Yahweh was against them, bringing disaster, as Yahweh had spoken and as Yahweh had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

Just like the first two occurrences in Deuteronomy 31, here in Judges, the correlation between distress and divine displeasure is self-evident. The book of Judges contains an additional verbal occurrence of צצר (Jdg 10:9), also in the third person, in which the same correlation is equally apparent. In Judges chapter 10, this verb is singular, but the subject is also Israel—a collective again—and, effectively, a plural occurrence. In 2 Chronicles 15, the prophet Azariah announces an oracle to king Asa, which sparks Asa’s reform of the southern kingdom. In verse 3, Azariah summarises Israel’s history of idolatry:

\[\text{אמלא הוא לאריה לאלהי אלוהים}
\text{וללא מורה לכהן ולאל אלוהים}
\] For many days, Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach, and without the law.

In the following verse, we find a construction quite similar to the familiar בהם בצל phrase of Psalms 106 and 107, except for the fact that צצר is coupled with a singular rather than a plural pronoun. However, in this setting, the Chronicler employs the singular as a collective for the people of Israel, rendering it functionally equivalent to בהם בצל:

\[\text{והש בצל לאריה אלוהים}
\text{לאריה אלוהים}
\] In their distress they turned to Yahweh, the God of Israel...

Again in this case, the obvious correlation between corporate distress and corporate idolatry requires no elaboration. The only other occurrence of the construction בהם בצל (or בהם בצל intended collectively) in the MT is in Hosea 5:15, a chapter which also makes frequent use of the vav-consecutive. Once again, the strong correlation between distress and sin is contained within the brief passage itself:

\[\text{אליה יראל אריאל אשרב אליא ונאריה}
\text{קבוש ישבר להם ישראלי}
\] Then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their distress they will earnestly seek me.
If we coin the term *historical-corporate* to describe instances where the root **צרר** \(^1\) is employed using the third person (or singular collective) in a narrative setting (employing the preterite with *vav*-consecutive), the above examples show that where these two criteria are present, distress is *always* correlated with the sin of, or divine displeasure toward, the ones in distress. These historical-corporate occurrences of distress are decidedly different from the general trend of the first person occurrences which often either claim innocence or carry no moral overtones. In this respect, King David’s (the chief canonical representative of the Psalter) first person claims in the Former Prophets (e.g. 1 Sam 26:24), that Yahweh “delivers him from distress” are similar to many of the first person claims in the Psalter, because such statements from David contain no ethical overtones (cf. Jacob’s similar statement in Gen 35:3). It is possible that this historical-corporate correlation of **צרר** \(^1\) with sin is a reason why this Hebrew root is not used in the book of Exodus. Neither the concluding chapters of Genesis, nor the book of Exodus itself, presents the plight of Israel in Egypt as being a result of their sin, therefore it would be expected that Exodus would not employ the root **צרר** \(^1\) to refer to corporate Israel’s innocent suffering at the hands of the Egyptians.

Before moving on to discuss the canonical role of Book 5, it is also important to notice the same kind of ethical implications in some occurrences of **צרר** \(^1\) where one of these two criteria are lacking. For example, Deuteronomy 4:30 contains a second (rather than third) person singular occurrence, which is, again, a collective reference to Israel in a narrative setting:

Deut 4:30  
בצר לך ומצאו כל יהוה אלהיך בɫך  
הימים שבעת עד יוהו אלהיך שמעת בך  
When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him.

Again in this case, the connection between distress and divine displeasure is obvious. Weinfeld denotes Deuteronomy 4:30 as prototypical Deuteronomic language reflected in Hosea 5:15ff. and Proverbs 1:27-8,\(^82\) two texts where a similar connection between distress and sin is apparent. Isaiah 26:16 contains a third person corporate occurrence of **צרר** \(^1\) where the *vav*-consecutive is lacking, even though the context is an historical recollection with narrative attributes:

\(^{82}\) Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 364.
Yahweh, they came to you in distress; They could only whisper a prayer, your chastening was upon them.

Here in Isaiah 26, the correlation between distress and divine displeasure is made explicit through the association of בצר with מוסר (discipline, chastening). So it seems that the conclusion which has been drawn with regard to the Psalter also generally holds for the rest of the Hebrew scriptures: Historical-corporate occurrences of צרר generally express distress which is a result of displeasing Yahweh.

9. Canonical Considerations

Does this correlation between distress and sin lead to any new conclusions regarding the canonical role of Book 5? When the psalm subgroupings mentioned in this chapter’s historical overview are analysed according to the book of the Psalter in which they are located, the results are startling. All of the featured psalms in Kwakkel’s work, *According to My Righteousness* are located in Books 1 and 2. All of the God-Lament psalms featured by Broyles are located in Books 1 to 4. All of Crenshaw’s theodicy psalms are located in the first two books. Likewise, all of Gunkel’s Songs of Innocence are located in Books 1 to 4, apart from his reference to four verses in Psalm 119. Similarly, all of the psalms highlighted by Janowski in his chapter on the persecuted individual are located in the first three books of the Psalter. This data hints at three apparent trends when the Psalter is viewed as a whole. First, the work by Gunkel, Janowski and Kwakkel hints at an apparent trend, whereby the stronger innocence claims grouped in the earlier portions of the Psalter and with relatively muted innocence claims toward the end of the Psalter. Second, the work of Broyles points to an apparently corresponding trend in which the tenor of lament is relatively muted in Book 5 of the Psalter when compared with the other four books. Third, Crenshaw’s work indicates a possibility that issues of theodicy are of declining importance in the latter books of the Psalter. These three trends will now be briefly examined.

9.1 Declining Claims of Innocence

Although none of the works cited in our historical survey have focused on Psalm 66, perhaps because it is not a lament, yet it contains a claim to righteousness which is quite similar to the psalms analysed by Kwakkel, et. al. In Psalm 66:18-19, the fact that Yahweh has heard the suppliant’s prayer has something to do with the purity of his thought-life:

Ps 66:18-19

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.

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This thanksgiving psalm presents a correlation between the experience of deliverance and the upright behaviour of the psalmist. For our purposes, it is important to note that this righteousness claim is located relatively early in the Psalter in Book 2. In *According to My Righteousness*, Kwakkel surveyed the entire Psalter to select psalms which contain the strongest innocence claims. All of Kwakkel’s selected psalms are in Books 1 and 2 (Psalms 7; 17; 18; 26; 44). Even though Kwakkel’s selection criteria did not include discussion of the psalms’ location within the Psalter yet the strongest claims of upright behaviour as grounds for deliverance from distress are located in Book 1 and the beginning of Book 2. Books 4 and 5 are not completely devoid of such claims, but they are quite muted when compared with the strong examples cited by Kwakkel. A brief comparison of some of the innocence claims from the earlier portions of the Psalter with those of the latter portions will help to make their considerable difference apparent. In Psalms 7 and 18, the psalmists assert their familiar and forceful claims of innocence from which Kwakkel has derived the title for his book: “*According to My Righteousness.*”

Ps 7:9b

شعبתי יהוהزادני ותחמם על

Vindicate me, O Yahweh; according to my righteousness, according to my integrity!

Ps 18:21

⊞יɾו יהוהצדני זבר די ישיב לי

The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.

Ps 18:25

壽כיוה יהוהצדני זבר די לנגה עניי

The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

In Psalm 18:22-24, the psalmist makes six consecutive parallel claims to righteousness, situated directly between the two identical assertions כזרי צדני זבר די ישיב (“according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands”) cited above. Also, although Kwakkel does not focus on Psalm 4, Gunkel views the term צדני (my righteousness) in Psalm 4:2 as parallel to Psalm 18:21. He translates צדני as the psalmist’s assertion of his righteous status: “God, who rewards me according to my righteousness” (*Gott der mir nach meiner Gerechtigkeit vergilt*). Obviously, Psalm 4 is located in Book 1 of the Psalter. In fact, the term צדני only occurs in Book 1 (Pss 4:2; 35:27). Among the psalms studied by Kwakkel, similar strong and repeated assertions of innocence are found in Psalms 17:3-5; 26:1-6, 11; and 44:18-22. In Books 3-5 of the Psalter, there is nothing approaching the

84 Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 16.
strong innocence claims contained in the first two books. In Books 3-5, there is no כ “according to” prefix attached to any adjective or noun describing personal upright behaviour. The closest grammatical similarity is one instance of the כי particle in Psalm 86:2:

Ps 86:2 שמריNEL נפשי כי־חסיד אני Watch over my life, because I am a covenant-keeper.

Other than this lone occurrence in Book 3, there are no innocence claims in the remainder of the Psalter that employ any kind of a comparative, causal or assertative Hebrew particle. Book 4 has two instances which could be said to fall into the category of a claim of righteous status. The first instance in Book 4 is Psalm 97:10. It is similar to Psalm 86:2, cited above, except that it is stated creedally in the third person, rather than as a vocative address or personal claim made to Yahweh:

Ps 97:10 שמר אלfellת הסדרים מי דעת תמים He watches over the lives of his covenant-keepers and delivers them from the power of the wicked.

Psalm 101 is the only other text in Book 4 which could be said to constitute a claim to righteousness. But this psalm is a pledge to live righteously henceforth, and makes no correlation with or request for deliverance of any kind based on past righteousness. The muted innocence claims in Book 5 include Psalms 109:1; 119:2, 22; 120:7, 85 125:4; 138:6; 140:13; 142:7; 86 and 145:18-20. The righteousness claims in Psalm 119, to which Gunkel refers, should be read in light of the complex nature of this lengthy psalm, because Psalm 119 concludes with a tacit confession of sin (v 176) and also contains occasional associations between sin and personal suffering (vv 67, 71, 75). Psalm 120:6-7 is representative of these muted righteousness claims present in Book 5:

Psalm 120:6-7

v 6 רבת שמענוהל מפשי טמר שמחות I’ve lived for too long with those who hate peace.

v 7 קויטשלו ופ אפרים המה למלות I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.

Here in Psalm 120, the assertion of personal righteousness consists of nothing more than a two-word assertion that the psalmist is in favour of peace rather than conflict. When this

86 Kraus, Psalms 60–150, 533.
muted claim is compared with the examples that Kwakkel has selected, above, it is reasonable to conclude that when the five books of the Psalter are viewed sequentially, there is a declining emphasis in claims of innocence in the face of distress. When this declining emphasis is viewed in the light of the strong correlation between distress and sin at the seam between Books 4 and 5 (Psalms 106-107), the canonical message of this seam comes into sharper focus. Incidentally, the only psalm which contains both ברזר and the root מיסר (to discipline, chastise) is located in Book 5:

Ps 118:5a מִכְשָׁר מִן־הָמָּצְרָה יָבֹא In distress I called upon Yah.
Ps 118:18 יָשָׁר יְשֵׁרֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל יָבֹא יָשָׁר יִשְׁרָאֵל יָבֹא יָשָׁר יָשָׁר יָבֹא יָשָׁר יָבֹא יָשָׁר יָבֹא יָשָׁר יָבֹא יָשָׁר Yeh has severely chastised me, but he did not deliver me over to death.

9.2 Declining Occurrence of Divine Accusation

Before attempting to summarise this canonical message, we should observe that, not only is there a declining emphasis in personal assertions of righteousness, there is also a declining level of divine accusation in the latter portions of the Psalter. The tenor of lament is relatively muted in the latter portions of the Psalter, when compared with the earlier portions. Lament is more strident earlier in the Psalter. While discussing the work of Broyles, above, we noted a chief characteristic of the God-lament. In a God-lament, the psalmist addresses God with the question, “Why...?” or “How long...?” Scanning Broyles’ list of the twenty God-laments in the Psalter (Psalms 6; 9-10; 13; 22; 35; 39; 42-43; 44; 60; 74; 77; 79; 80; 85; 88; 89; 90; 102 [communal psalms italicised]), one notices their conspicuous absence in Book 5. The key observation here is that the accusatory questions, “Why?” and “How long?” are not asked in Book 5, which leads to the question, “Why this silence?” Claus Westermann provided the answer for us in 1954: “In der Spätzeit kommt die Anklage Gottes fast or ganz zum Schweigen.” From a form-critical perspective, Westermann assigns the two questions, “Why?” and “How long?” to “the early stage” (der frühen Zeit) of Israel’s literary development. Although Westermann does not specifically point out the absence of these two questions in the fifth book of the Psalter, the reason he provides for this general post-exilic decline in divine-accusation (Anklage Gottes) is indicative of Israel’s post-exilic historical self-knowledge, namely that there is very little legitimate space for a nation with a history of apostasy to accuse God in their canonical literature.

9.3 Declining Concern with Theodicy

Similarly, it is probably also significant that the psalms highlighted by Crenshaw as chiefly concerned with the perplexing question of the prosperity of the wicked (Psalms 37; 39; 49; 73) are all located in the first three books of the Psalter. There are no major theodicy psalms toward the end of the Psalter. I suggest that these psalms would be out of place in Book 5, due to the very public acceptance of communal wickedness in the history of the covenant community itself. The people of God in the exilic and postexilic period no longer see how they can number themselves among the innocent who suffer unjustly.

9.4 Summary of Canonical Considerations

Viewed as a whole, the Psalter displays a declining emphasis on two themes which have attracted the attention of Psalms scholars for decades: namely the theme of divine accusation and the theme of claiming innocence or personal righteousness. Incidentally, the three psalms which the evangelists employ as literary background for the crucifixion of Jesus (Psalms 22, 31, 69) all contain occurrences of צאַר, as well as all being located in the Psalter’s first two books where the emphasis on divine accusation and undeserved suffering are the strongest. Thus, the Psalter’s testimony to the suffering of the righteous One has been drawn from the portions of the Psalter where we would expect to find it.

These declining emphases provide a framework for understanding the editorial intention behind the historical-corporate occurrences of צאַר at the seam of Books 4 and 5. While the seam between Books 1 and 2 is perhaps eclipsed by the postscript of Psalm 72, which may have the effect of gluing Books 1 and 2 together to be approached as one unit, each of the other three couplings or seams has an apparent message to share. According to Brueggemann, the coupling between Books 2 and 3 speaks of “the disruption of faith after the failure of Solomon.” According to Wilson, the coupling between Books 3 and 4 marks “the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant.” According to Leuenberger, discerning the Psalter’s message as it transitions to Book 5 (die Aufbauprobleme von Buch V) is one of the more difficult challenges in contemporary psalm studies. Leuenberger provides an excellent summary of the scholarly state of affairs and asserts that the overall canonical

90 Gunkel notes that there is no confession of sin in all of Psalm 31, and that on this basis v. 11 should be emended to “my affliction” from “my iniquity”, following the LXX and Syriac (Die Psalmen, 133).
92 Wilson, The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter, 208.
95 Leuenberger, Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter, 267.
message of Book 5 has to do with the present realisation (der Gegenwartsbezug)\textsuperscript{96} of the Kingdom of Yahweh. According to Leuenberger, the basis for much of the structural modelling (die Gliederungsmodelle) of Book 5 is grounded in the linking of key words (Stichwortvernetzungen), particularly the repeated theme of praise and thanksgiving (das הלל/הללויה System).\textsuperscript{97} The analysis of historical-corporate occurrences of distress sheds additional light on the redactional intention behind Book 5 and its seam with Book 4. Assuming, for the sake of discussion, that the present realisation of the Kingdom of Yahweh is the overarching concept of Book 5, then the additional feature provided by this study can be stated as follows: The citizens of Yahweh’s kingdom do not deserve their citizenship status. Not only is the תְּהִדָּה זֶבַח a major theme of the psalm group 103-107) an unconditional love, it is a contra-conditional love. It is a love bestowed upon rebels (כִּי־הַמְּרֹר, Pss 106:33; 107:11). I suggest that Psalm 143 provides a final echo to the theme of deserved distress which has been introduced at the seam between Books 4 and 5. It is striking that this final occurrence of צרר in the Psalter (Ps 143:11) is found in a penitential psalm which refers to righteousness in a way which is effectively the utter and logical opposite of the assertions of personal righteousness highlighted by Kwakkel. Here at the opposite end of the Psalter, far removed from the psalmists who exclaim, according to my righteousness, we read the contrite expression:

Ps 143:2  לא־תבוא כל־חי לפניך לא־יצדק Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

Even though the psalmist is embroiled in the same types of conflict and torment typical of Individual Laments, here in the Psalter’s final Individual Lament (and final occurrence of צרר), we find a very different tone from the requests for deserved vindication which are so much more common in Books 1 and 2. In this way, even though there is no explicit correlation between distress and sin in Psalm 143, the general tenor of the psalm acknowledges the link between distress and sin which has been so forcefully presented at the beginning of Book 5.

\textsuperscript{96} Leuenberger, Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter, 269.
\textsuperscript{97} Leuenberger, Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter, 276.
10. Interpretive Guidelines for Psalm 107

Finally, what effect should the Historical-corporate connection between distress and sin have upon our interpretation of Psalm 107? In particular, our attention is drawn to the חסד of Yahweh (vv 1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43). In the psalm’s concluding verse, people who aspire to wisdom are encouraged to contemplate the lovingkindnesses (plural construct) of Yahweh. These lovingkindnesses are Yahweh’s startling and powerful deliverances of people in crisis. Other than the sailors in stanza 4, these crises from which Yahweh delivers have been caused by sin and by Yahweh’s response to sin. In view of the canonical big picture, these lovingkindnesses of Yahweh amount to deliverances of people who simply do not deserve to be delivered.

11. Conclusion

This chapter began by explaining the reason for the question mark in the domain name [GUILT?]. By exploring the variable relationship between distress, guilt, and innocence, this chapter has demonstrated how expert readers of a given distress psalm will probably ask themselves the question: “Do these particular sufferers deserve their suffering, or do they not?” The issue of guilt versus innocence is prominent enough in distress psalms to be considered a salient component of the semantic frame associated with צור ל ו lexemes in the Psalter.

We will now turn to Psalm 107 as a paradigmatic example of distress in the Psalter. This psalm contains more occurrences of צור ל ו than any other and provides a good test case with which to observe and evaluate the cognitive profile of distress that has been developed thus far.
Chapter 8
Distress in Psalm 107

With its fourfold refrain, “Then they cried out to Yahweh in their distress,” Psalm 107 contains more lexemes than any other psalm, and is therefore an appropriate testing ground for the cognitive profile of distress that has been developed in the prior chapters. Does this psalm give evidence of the [POWERLESSNESS], [PALPABLE THREAT], [ENTREATY], [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE], and [GUILT?] domains that have been detailed in the previous chapters, and if so, in what ways? This chapter follows a four-stage plan: First, the text and a translation of Psalm 107 will be given. Second, a few relevant text-critical and linguistic issues will be examined. Third, we will see a brief overview of the history of exegesis and research of Psalm 107. Then, the fourth section will explore how the previously-established cognitive profile of distress is reflected in the text of this psalm.

1. Psalm 107 Text and Translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Verse</th>
<th>Parallel English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v 1 השיה להזה פְּרָתֵה בַּעֲלֵה הָסָּה</td>
<td>Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 2 יַאֲמַר מִשְׁרֵי יְהוָה אָשֶּׁר אָסְרָם מְדִיצָר</td>
<td>Let those redeemed by Yahweh say this; those whom he redeemed from the power of the enemy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 3 וַעַרְצוּת בָּבָל מֵמֶרֶךְ מֶמַּעַרְמָךְ מֶמַּעַרְמָך</td>
<td>And those whom he gathered from the lands; from east and from west, from the north and from the sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 4 נֹסְרִים בְּיֵשְׁמָנִים דִּיפְרִים פִּיר מִשְׁמָנִים</td>
<td>They wandered in the desert wasteland; they could not find a way to an inhabited city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 5 רֵעָבִים מִתְפְּרֵצִים נִפְרָסִים בַּחוֹדְתָּם</td>
<td>Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted away within them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 6 יָצְקָא אֲלִישָּׁה בֶּן לָהֶם מִפְּדוּתָם</td>
<td>Then they cried out to Yahweh when they were in distress; he delivered them from their straits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 7 יָשָׁר לְלָכָה אֲלִישָּׁה מִשְׁבָּבֵרִים בַּדַּרְךָ</td>
<td>And he led them by a straight road to travel to an inhabited city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 8 יִזְרְקוּ להזָה חָסְדָיו מִפְּלוֹאָהָיו לָבִי אֲדֻסֶּם</td>
<td>Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his acts of steadfast love, and his wonderful deeds for the sons of men.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For he satisfies the thirsty soul, and fills the hungry soul with good things.

Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons,

Because they had rebelled against the words of God, And spurned the counsel of the Most High.

So he humbled their hearts with trouble; they stumbled and there was no one to help.

Then they cried out to Yahweh when they were in distress; he saved them from their straits.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and tore their bonds apart.

Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his acts of steadfast love, and his wonderful deeds for the sons of men.

For he shatters doors of bronze andcleaves iron bars.

Fools – due to their rebellious way, and their iniquities – brought affliction upon themselves.

They loathed all kinds of food; and their souls arrived at the gates of death.

Then they cried out to Yahweh when they were in distress; he saved them from their straits.

He sent his word and healed them, he delivered them from their pits.

Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his acts of steadfast love, and his wonderful deeds for the sons of men.

Let them sacrifice thank offerings, and recount his deeds with shouting.

Some who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on mighty waters,

They saw the works of Yahweh, and his wonders in the deep.
For he spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; their soul melted away with trouble.

They reeled and staggered like drunken men; all of their skill was swallowed-up.

Then they cried out to Yahweh when they were in distress; he saved them from their straits.

He reduced the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.

They rejoiced because it grew calm; and he led them to their desired harbour.

Let them give thanks to Yahweh for his acts of steadfast love, and his wonderful deeds for the sons of men.

Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground,

A fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who live there.

He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water.

He lets the hungry live there; and they establish an inhabited city.

And sow fields, and plant vineyards that yield a fruitful harvest.

He blesses them and they multiply greatly; and he does not let their herds diminish.

When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow,

He pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes;

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But he lifts the poor out of affliction and makes their families like flocks.

The upright see it and rejoice, and all injustice shuts its mouth.

Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider Yahweh’s acts of steadfast love.

2. Text-Critical and Grammatical Issues

After the introduction (vv 1-3), Psalm 107 consists of five stanzas. The reader is almost immediately confronted with the following question: With which verb tense(s) should these five stanzas be translated? Specifically, should we draw a distinction between the tense of stanzas 1-4 and that of stanza 5?

A survey of versions yields the following summary: The AV alternates between past and present with no apparent pattern. The LXX relies chiefly upon aorist tense throughout (in the same way that the Syriac relies mainly on the perfect), thus treating stanza 5 no differently than the first four. Likewise, the NIV translates the whole psalm as past tense, along with the 1545 Lutherbibel and most other German versions (e.g. EIU, SCH). Goldingay also translates all five stanzas as past tense, yet with frequent use of the subjunctive modal verb “would,” which occurs 13 times throughout his translation. Gunkel translated stanzas 1-4 in the past tense, and stanza 5 in the present tense, as does the ESV, the RSV, and the NAS. Although one should not be dogmatic on this issue, in the translation in section one, above, the first four stanzas are rendered in the past tense, while the fifth stanza is rendered in the present tense, for the following reason: The first four pericopes share something in common with the psalm’s introduction (vv 1-3), namely, the

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2 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 337.
4 F. E. Schlachter, Revidierte Schlachter-Bibel (Geneva, 1951).
prevalence of the Hebrew perfect tense. The first 32 verses of the psalm contain 13 occurrences of the perfect, while the psalm’s conclusion (vv 33-43) contains only one occurrence at the very end of the psalm (v 42b). This unexpected move from the perfect to the imperfect likely implies that a change of tense is in mind, although it is impossible to make such statements definitively because of the vagaries of Hebrew poetry.

Verse 1
The LXX incorrectly assumes that the concluding doxology of the fourth book of the Psalter (הללו יה - praise Yahweh) is the first clause in Psalm 107.

Verse 2
As will be discussed below in the “History of Exegesis” section, Gunkel’s cult-functional presuppositions led him to mistranslate this occurrence of הָרָעָן 2 (Bedränger - distressor/oppressor) as הָרָע 1 (Bedrängnis - distress). 9 The MT has seven cases where הָרָע occurs as nomen rectum, governed by יד (hand/power [Neh 9:27a, 27b; Job 6:23; Pss 78:61; 107:2; Lam 1:7; Ezek 39:23]). In spite of some assertions to the contrary, 10 this construction is an unambiguous indicator of הָרָע 2 (enemy). 11 This conclusion is supported by two lines of evidence: contextual and grammatical. With respect to context, toward the end of the preceding Psalm 106, there are multiple references to the Israelites’ suffering under the oppressive power of their enemies (vv 41, 42, 46) including an instance of יד employed as nomen regens in verse 41a:

Ps 106:41a יִתְנָה בְּדֶרֶךְ הָעָないです He gave them over to the power of the nations.

Thus, both the end of Psalm 106 and the beginning of Psalm 107 contain similar phrasing. Israel suffered under the “hand of the nations” in Psalm 106, and was redeemed from the “hand of the enemy” in Psalm 107. The second line of evidence leading to a translation of הָרָע as “enemy” in verse 2 comes from the grammatical discussion in chapter two of this dissertation. When biliteral הָרָע is syntactically located as a noun (as in the construct chain in question here), this is virtually always an indication of word group two (enemy). If it is assumed that instances of biliteral הָרָע in frequently occurring phrases like הָרָע־לִי (I am in distress) are “impersonal constructions” 12 (i.e. that these are syntactically regarded as verbal occurrences of הָרָע), then the resulting conclusion is that virtually whenever הָרָע 1 is expressed as a noun, the feminine substantive (נְכָר) is employed. Therefore both the context

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9 “‘ר hier, wie aus dem Folgenden hervorgeht nicht „Bedränger“, sondern „Bedrängnis“,” (Die Psalmen, 471).
11 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 69.
12 Waltke and O’Connor, Syntax, 376–7.
and the syntax contribute to the conclusion that מִדְרָ֣צָר in Psalm 107:2 is an instance of מְרַדְּרָ֣צָר (enemy, hostile one).

**Verses 6, 13, 19, 28**

I have read לֵהָם בָּצֵר as an infinitive construct temporal clause, with the LXX (ἐν τῷ θλίβεσθαι).

**Verses 8, 15, 21, 31**

There are two important textual issues in the refrain, both having to do with חָסְדּוּ (his steadfast love). First, due to the semantic range of יִדָּה (to praise, thank, confess), there is ambiguity regarding what type of accusative role is played by חָסְדּוּ. Is it a direct object or is it an adverbial accusative? Most modern versions (and Targum) treat it as an adverbial accusative, thus rendering the jussive שֵּׁהָדָה as “let them praise/give thanks” while translating the adverbial accusative with a prepositional phrase such as “for his steadfast love”. On the other hand, Goldingay treats חָסְדּוּ as a direct object, and selects the more transitive option for יִדָּה (confess), thus rendering the clause, “They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment.” However, the former seems the more likely translation option.

The second question over חָסְדּוּ is whether it should be read as singular or plural. The Targum renders it in the singular. On the other hand, the LXX, Syriac and Jerome translate it as plural. The Qere of Psalm 106:45 emends חָסְדּוּ to חָסְדוֹ. Reading the refrain of Psalm 107 as חָסְדוֹ, not only has textual support, but it also brings the two cola of the parallelism into numerical agreement (his acts of steadfast love – his wonderful deeds), and also agrees with the plural חָסְדֵי יְהוָה (v 43 – Yahweh’s acts of steadfast love) at the conclusion of the psalm.

**Verse 27**

The occurrence of חכָמָה (wisdom, skill) in this context (כולל חכָמָה - translated above as “all of their nautical skill”) is probably not intended sapientially, but rather as addressing the realm of technical skill. The root חכָמָה sometimes denotes “expertise in navigation and shipbuilding”. “In the perfect storm, all the skill of sailors dissolves along with the collapse of their morale.”

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14 Goldingay, Psalms: Volume 3, 255.
Verse 29
Following the Syriac, which reads *gllwhy dym*’ (the waves of the sea), I read הים (the waves of the sea) rather than גליהם (their waves).

3. History of Exegesis
Before proceeding to our analysis of the cognitive profile of distress as reflected in Psalm 107, it would be appropriate to briefly summarise the history of exegesis of this important psalm.

3.1 Augustine
Through his generous employment of typology and allegory, Augustine’s homily on Psalm 107 is typical of patristic exegesis of the Psalter. His typological interpretation of the psalm’s introduction (vv 1-3) curiously fails to notice any reference to the return from exile, while instead focusing on the Exodus event:

> Let them speak, those who have been redeemed by the Lord. It may look as though the redeemed people referred to are the people of Israel redeemed from the land of Egypt, from their servile condition, from their sterile labor, and from their drudgery with bricks. However, let us investigate whether it really is the people freed from Egypt by the Lord who speak here. In fact it is not. Who are they, then? Those whom he redeemed from the hands of their enemies. It is still possible for someone to argue that it does mean the Israelites redeemed from the hands of their Egyptian foes. But now let them be unmistakably identified, the people on whose account the psalm wishes the following verses to be sung. From different regions he gathered them into a single flock. Well, I suppose this could just mean different regions in Egypt, for even in a single province there can be many regions. Let the psalm make its point plainly, then: from east and west, from the north and from the sea. This makes it clear to us that the redeemed people are to be found all over the world. The people of God have been freed from a vast, widespread Egypt. They are led through a kind of Red Sea for the destruction of their enemies, for in the sacrament symbolised by the Red Sea - in Baptism, consecrated by the blood of Christ... It is the baptised who are invited by the psalm to speak.\(^{15}\)

After informing his listeners that the redemptive event mentioned in the psalm’s introduction is, in fact, the Exodus, which typologically denotes conversion to Christianity, Augustine proceeds to draw out the allegorical meaning concealed within the psalm’s first four pericopes:

> The first temptation is error and starvation of the word; the second is the difficulty of conquering one’s lusts; the third is boredom and distaste; the fourth is the danger of storms in the government of churches.\(^{16}\)


Augustine also expressed an allegorical understanding of the fourth pericope within an eschatological frame of reference:

The fourth one is still to come, the trial that puts us all in jeopardy, for we are all aboard the ship. Some are crew, others are passengers, but all are in peril from a storm, and all alike are safe when she reaches harbour. After all the earlier vicissitudes comes this one: Those who go down to the sea in ships, pursuing their business in vast waters, that is, among many peoples. The Revelation of John proves to us that “waters” often stand for “peoples” in scripture...  

3.2 Gregory of Nyssa
Gregory’s comment in Against Eunomius indicates that he considered Psalm 107 to be prophetic literature. He interpreted the first stanza, about those who wander lost and are returned to the right path, to be a metaphor for the divine work of conversion:

Prophetic language affirms that the conversion of those in error is the work of God. For “they went astray in the wilderness in a thirsty land,” the psalmist says, and then he adds, “So he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to the city where they dwelled...”

3.3 Theodoret
As with Gregory of Nyssa, Theodoret interpreted Psalm 107 in a prophetic manner:

Let the word weakness teach us that Jesus was not nailed to the tree as the Almighty, the uncircumscribed, the immutable and invariable, but that the nature enlivened by the power of God, according to the apostle’s teaching, died and was buried - both death and burial being proper to the nature of a servant. “He broke the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder” and destroyed the power of death and in three days raised his own temple.

3.4 Rashi
Rashi translated the phrase מיד־צר (“from the hand/power of the enemy”) as an instance of תאר (“from adversity). He also translated the first word of verse 27 as if it were derived from the root חגא (to suffer shame, confusion) rather than the root חגג (to celebrate a festival). In his brief commentary on the psalm, he notes in the second stanza that, “a person experiences suffering only as a consequence of one’s sin.”

17 Augustine, Works of Saint Augustine, 232.
20 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 2657.
3.5 Martin Luther

Luther references the work of Augustine and proceeds to work out Augustine’s allegorical approach in such detail that he (mirroring Augustine) pays virtually no attention to the historical-grammatical exegesis of the psalm. For example, according to Luther’s interpretation, the foe (v 2) is the Devil; the gathered peoples (v 3) are the Church; and the lost travellers (vv 4-9) are those who have chosen an earthly city rather than an eternal one. The fact that the text does not mention an alternate city is no deterrent. Luther notes that, “Although their bodies put on weight and their flesh was not the least bit exhausted,” (Wiewohl ihr Leib zunahm und ihr Fleisch gar nicht erschöpf war) yet their souls were exhausted because “they were hungry without God’s word and thirsty without spiritual water” (Sie waren darum ohne Gottes Wort hungrig und ohne das geistliche Wasser durstig). It is interesting to note that, even with Luther’s allegorical approach, he arrived at two often overlooked theological conclusions which are quite similar to those of Walter Beyerlin, a scholar who has applied an historical-grammatical methodology to the exegesis of Psalm 107 more rigorously than any other. In his concluding summary, Beyerlin notes two overarching themes in the psalm’s depiction of people in crisis. First, the crises are “self-caused” (selber verschuldet). Second, they are expressions of mankind’s essential inability to extricate himself from life’s most serious forms of trouble (Nicht aus eigenem Vermögen, vielmehr allein durch den angerufenen Gott zu bewältigen sind.). With his allegorical and law/gospel methodology to analyse Psalm 107, Luther refers six times to the inability of the sinful flesh to fulfil the Law of God, which corresponds to his generalisation regarding verse 1:

“Praise the Lord!” This has been interpreted in the same way as the preceding psalm, “because he is gracious,” and does good to us wicked ones.

Likewise, Luther’s theological presuppositions are apparent in his frequent mention of the ineffectiveness of “merit” (Verdienst). For example, commenting on the psalm’s refrain (vv 8, 15, 21), Luther writes:

“Praise the Lord for his mercy.” It is a wonderful verse, and full of the very best instruction, first because God’s favours are not the result of our merit, but rather his

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23 Likewise, the sown fields and planted vineyards (v. 37) represent worldwide evangelism (unterweisen allerlei Völker im Evangelium) and church-planting (Kirchen mit Glauben und Hoffnung in aller Welt), (Luther, Psalmen-Auslegung 3, 168, trans. mine).
24 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 110.
25 Luther, Psalmen-Auslegung 3, 164 (trans. mine).
pure mercy... “And his miracles to the sons of men...” Because God’s favours come, as far as they refer to him, from pure mercy; because he gives them to us without our merit.\textsuperscript{26}

3.6 John Calvin
Calvin’s analysis of Psalm 107 is noteworthy on three accounts. First, in spite of his oft-voiced respect for Augustine, Calvin departs from the bishop’s allegorical interpretation of the Psalms and, instead, employs a grammatical-historical approach. Second, as with Luther, Calvin observes that the psalm expresses a causal relation between sin and distress, a theme which has often received scant attention in the more contemporary secondary literature:

Consequently, adversity and all the ills which mankind endure, as shipwrecks, famines, banishments, diseases, and disasters in war, are to be regarded as so many tokens of God’s displeasure, by which he summons them, on account of their sins, before his judicial throne.\textsuperscript{27}

Thirdly, as one might expect, Calvin notes the psalm’s frequent depictions of the sovereignty of Yahweh over all human affairs. In his commentary on Psalm 107, Calvin uses the word “providence” 14 times and uses the contrasting terms “chance” or “fortune” ten times.

3.7 Robert Lowth
Psalm 107 was one of Bishop Lowth’s favourites:

The hundred-and-seventh Psalm may undoubtedly be enumerated among the most elegant monuments of antiquity; and it is chiefly indebted for its elegance to the general plan and conduct of the poem. It celebrates the goodness and mercy of God towards mankind, as demonstrated in the immediate assistance and comfort which he affords, in the greatest calamities, to those who devoutly emplore his aid: - in the first place, to those who wander in the desert, and who encounter the horrors of famine; next, to those who are in bondage, to those who are afflicted with disease; and, finally, to those who are tossed about upon the ocean. The prolixity of the argument is occasionally relieved by narration; and examples are superadded of the divine severity in punishing the wicked, as well of his benignity to the devout and virtuous; and both the narrative and preceptive parts are recommended to the earnest contemplation of considerate minds. Thus the whole poem actually divides into five parts nearly equal; the four first of which conclude with an intercalary verse, expressive of the subject or design of the hymn: - ...In all these passages, the transition from the contemplation of their calamities to that of their deliverance, which is made by perpetual repetition of the same distich, is truly elegant...\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Luther, \textit{Psalmen-Auslegung} 3, 167 (trans. mine).
3.8 Hermann Gunkel
With his cult-functional approach, Gunkel concluded that verses 1-22 were originally a mass-thanksgiving liturgy, similar to the mass baptisms and marriages which were common in Germany during his lifetime.29 According to this view, during major festivals of the diaspora period,30 time and space would not permit each worshipper to offer his individual todah, so the priests sang this song as the representatives of the large group. Gunkel’s cult-functional approach led him to interpret verses 1-3 as a description of people travelling to a Jerusalem festival during the diaspora, rather than as a return from exile. In this view, “the redeemed of Yahweh” (יהוה גאולי [v 2]) refers to those who are redeemed from the four distressful situations to follow in the psalm, rather than referring to those redeemed from Exile. He specifically asserts that the psalm should not be interpreted in its relation to Psalm 106. In verse 2, this cult-functional reading led Gunkel to a misinterpretation of צֵר (enemy) as צֵר (distress), for the same reason that influenced his interpretation of verse 3.

In Isaiah 62:12, the term צֵר refers to deliverance from the Babylonian exile, but here it refers to other kinds of trouble described in the remainder of the psalm. It is also clear from the remainder of the psalm that this occurrence of צֵר should be translated as “distress” rather than as “enemy.” Verse 3 does not refer to what the expression could mean in view of Psalm 106:47. It refers neither to the eschatological regathering of those who have been scattered, nor to those led forth from exile. Rather, it refers to people from diverse regions, whom Yahweh has gathered together for the plenary thankoffering.31

Gunkel’s cult-functional hermeneutic led to a tendency to view each psalm as an entity unto itself rather than as part of a collection. In his comment on verse 11, Gunkel downplays the connection between sin and suffering.

It seemed natural to the Jews that whoever encountered the severe misery of incarceration must have committed a sin against God (Job 36:8ff). If he had actually committed the sin of which he was accused is another question.32

3.9 Walter Beyerlin
Beyerlin describes Psalm 107 as a song of thanksgiving which has been transformed into a didactic wisdom psalm.33 The salvation pericopes are not directed exclusively at praise, but have a didactic purpose.34 The psalm (especially stanza 5) is typical of wisdom literature in

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29 Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 470.
30 Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 471.
31 Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 471 (trans. mine).
32 Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 471 (trans. mine).
33 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 96.
34 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 32.
that it employs the indicative mood rather than the imperative to accomplish its paranetic-
didactic purpose.\textsuperscript{35} The present psalm text is the result of a three-phase literary process.\textsuperscript{36} The first stage consists of stanzas 1-3 along with verse 1. The absence of ו from verse 22, when compared to verses 9 and 16, indicates that verse 22 was the original ending.\textsuperscript{37} The writer of stanzas 1-3 lived in a wisdom milieu and naturally drew from this stock.\textsuperscript{38} The second phase of development was the addition of stanza 4. Stanza 4 is less dependent upon prophetic literature and more upon wisdom than the first three stanzas.\textsuperscript{39} In the third and final stage, stanza 5 was added along with verses 2-3. Beyerlin assumes that verses 2-3 were added during the psalm’s final redaction because these introductory verses presuppose the ocean which is mentioned in stanza 4.\textsuperscript{40} The earlier form of the psalm was already considered to be holy scripture by the writer of stanza 5.\textsuperscript{41} Stanza 5 develops the thought of stanza 4, in that Yahweh’s power is not limited to any particular sector of creation, such as ocean or desert.\textsuperscript{42} Beyerlin categorises the first four stanzas as hymnic.\textsuperscript{43} Strophe 5 contains hymnic elements, but is more characterised by wisdom than the first four stanzas.\textsuperscript{44} It is also different from the first four in the precision of its OT quotations, rather than allusions which characterise the first four stanzas.\textsuperscript{45} The first portions of the psalm were probably composed by a postexilic levitical singer under the influence of wisdom.\textsuperscript{46} The final stanza was written by a wise man, not a singer,\textsuperscript{47} because the conclusion does not seem designed for liturgical use.\textsuperscript{48} Beyerlin catalogues the psalm’s extensive quotations and allusions to other OT literature, particularly Isaiah and the Elihu speech in Job.\textsuperscript{49} The “gathering of the elders” at the conclusion of stanza 4 is a quote from Sirach 6:32ff., which provides a further link to the wisdom tradition.\textsuperscript{50} Beyerlin attempts to determine which

\textsuperscript{35} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 66–7.
\textsuperscript{36} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 97–9, 108.
\textsuperscript{37} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 80.
\textsuperscript{38} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 29.
\textsuperscript{39} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 20–1.
\textsuperscript{40} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 101.
\textsuperscript{41} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 108.
\textsuperscript{42} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 60.
\textsuperscript{43} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 9.
\textsuperscript{44} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 11.
\textsuperscript{45} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 107–8.
\textsuperscript{46} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 104–5.
\textsuperscript{47} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 107.
\textsuperscript{48} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 99.
\textsuperscript{49} The numbers in parentheses are Werden und Wesen page numbers: v 33 to Isa 42:15; 44:27; 50:2 (14); v 35 to Isa 41:18 (14); v 43 to Hos 14:10 (16); v 16 to Isa 45:2 (16); vv 10-14 to Isa 49:9 (17); v 10-11 to Job 36:8; 38:2 (18); v 17 to Isa 53:4-7 (18); v 20 to Isa 55:11 (18); v 18 to Job 33:20; 38:17 (18-19); v 20 to Job 33:22, 24 (49); v 17 to Pz 5:21-23; Job 5:2-3 (19); v 7 to Isa 48:17; 42:16; Pz 2:13, 4:11, 12:15; 14:12, 16:25, (19); v 4 to Isa 53:6; Pz 7:25; 21:16; Ps 119:176 (20); vv 4-9 to Isa 43:19; 48:21; Job 6:18 (20); v 9 to Isa 29:8; 58:11; Jer 31:25; Pz 27:7; Job 22:18 (20); vv 2-3 to Isa 43:1-7; 49:12; 62:12 (22-24); v 1 to I Chr 16:34 (24) (Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 18–24).
\textsuperscript{50} Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 91–3.
portions of the psalm are intended to be taken metaphorically. Stanza 1 contains the metaphor of “the way,” and is intended to be understood parabolically, as is stanza 2. Stanza 3 is similar to stanza 1 in that it contains the metaphor of “the way,” but is not intended to be taken metaphorically. Rather, it refers to literal sickness. Beyerlin also concludes that stanzas 1-3 are not intended to be understood communally, but rather as dealing with the fate of individuals. The stanzas are generally applicable, not limited to specific historical situations, and they have much more in common than the mere fact that they conclude with a refrain. Regarding stanza 4, Beyerlin disagrees with interpreters who have attempted to see a metaphor for the exile in the situation of the sailors in the storm. Rather, noting that the sea was especially eerie and unfamiliar to the non-seafaring Israelites, Beyerlin views stanza 4 as a paradigm for the most deadly crisis imaginable, and as an example of Yahweh’s uncontested power over the most unruly aspects of creation. Beyerlin cites death imagery as a common theme in stanzas 1-4. Stanza 5 tacitly presupposes the guilt of those who experience the negative aspects of divine providence. Stanza 4 is the only one of the five which does not correlate disaster with disobedience.

Regarding dating, Beyerlin sees the various portions of the psalm as spanning a wide range of OT history. The הָדוּ (praise) imperative in verse 1 is of preexilic origin. The final redactor worked after the book of Job had received its Elihu expansion in approximately the 3rd century BCE. The “tritoIsaianic” references in verses 2-3 prove that this portion of the psalm dates from a time when the book of Isaiah was at or near the completion of its literary development. The final redaction of Psalm 107 is one of the latest pieces of the OT canon. The psalm has a double Sitz im Leben which reflects both centralisation and decentralisation: the postexilic worshipping community (centralisation), and the decentralised groups of elders which formed in the vicinity of the temple. The mention of offerings and public worship indicate that Psalm 107 was developed in the vicinity of

51 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 1.
52 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 37–8.
53 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 43.
54 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 37–8.
55 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 49–50.
56 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 34, 35, 40, 47.
57 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 51.
58 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 53.
59 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 56.
60 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 48.
61 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 64–5.
62 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 79.
63 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 26, 83.
64 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 15, 84.
65 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 85.
66 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 85.
67 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 97.
Jerusalem.\(^{68}\) One of the motivations for writing Psalm 107 was the effort to reinstate public worship during the period of the return from exile,\(^{69}\) and the psalm was probably used in worship during the Second Temple period.\(^{70}\) The Thanksgiving Offerings at that time were spiritualised (Entdinglichung).\(^{71}\) With the repeated emphasis of inhabited city (עיר מושב [vv 4, 36]), stanza 5 suggests a Mosaic reinterpretation of stanza 1, because stanza 5 describes the construction of the city rather than the “finding” of the city in stanza 1.\(^{72}\) The psalm does not depict the return from exile as a completed matter, but rather as an ongoing process which will find greater fulfilment in the future, and therefore the psalm has an eschatological motif.\(^{73}\)

Over the centuries, interpreters of Psalm 107 have arrived at quite a variety of conclusions, particularly over the question of whether the psalm’s pericopes should be understood literally, parabolically or allegorically. The issue of the guilt of the distressed parties has also been a frequent matter of discussion. However, recent developments in cognitive linguistics provide further opportunities to increase our understanding of this beloved psalm, as will be outlined below.

4. The Uniqueness of the Portrayal of Distress in Psalm 107

As discussed in chapter 6, taken as a group, psalms which contain צרר\(^1\) lexemes attribute the cause of the distress to various kinds of stimuli. These psalms impress certain situations of dilemma or trouble upon the reader, thus triggering the domain [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE]. This study began under the assumption that the occurrences of צרר\(^1\) in Psalm 107 were situated in contexts which were typical and representative of the way distress is depicted elsewhere in the Psalter. However, further research shows that this is only partially true. Comparing Psalm 107 with other distress psalms, although there are strong similarities which we shall discuss presently, three differences emerge with respect to the portrayal of the situations or stimuli that have caused the distress.

The first difference between Psalm 107 and other distress psalms has to do with the fact that in other psalms containing צרר\(^1\), social antagonism is by far and away the most frequently referenced cause of distress. The enemy and his machinations appear at every turn. But in Psalm 107, the enemy is virtually absent. The enemy is mentioned in verse 2, and

\(^{68}\) Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 86–7.
\(^{69}\) Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 27.
\(^{70}\) Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 99.
\(^{71}\) Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 90, 98, 111.
\(^{72}\) Beyerlin compares the finding of a city in strophe 1 to the building of a city in strophe 5 and concludes that this reference to the construction of buildings refers to the conquest period (Werden und Wesen, 61, 107).
\(^{73}\) Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 101.
oppression is briefly noted in verse 39, but other than that, the psalm depicts neither corporate nor individual conflict. Chapter 7 provides a potential reason why the enemy is absent in this post-exilic psalm, positioned as it is at the head of the Psalter’s fifth book: In view of the divine discipline of the exile, reference to an external enemy is out of place and unnecessary, since the community has become convinced that they themselves have been their own worst enemy. This may be the reason why the enemy is downplayed in Psalm 107. The frequent theme of the enemy in other distress psalms has been replaced in Psalm 107 by occasional reference to one’s own sin (in the context of divine sovereignty) as the initiator of distress.

The second difference between the depiction of distress stimuli in Psalm 107 and that of other psalms is the explicit reference to travel as a factor that induces distress. In the first four stanzas of the psalm, although each of the four situations is different, stanzas 1 and 4 share travel as a common theme: the groups of sailors and wanderers are both on a journey. Other than Jonah 2 (which also contains an occurrence of יָרָום), there are no other distress psalms which single out travel as a cause of distress. While potential allusions to sickness or imprisonment are rather common in other distress psalms, these two unambiguous references to travel are unique to Psalm 107.

The third (and most important for our purposes) difference between Psalm 107 and most other distress psalms has to do with genre. Although the genre embodied in Psalm 107 shares features in common with other distress psalms, such as the juxtaposition of יָרָום lexemes with expressions of “calling upon Yahweh”, there is a reduced level of situational indeterminacy when compared with other distress psalms. Psalm 107 paints a much clearer picture of specific distressful situations than most other distress psalms, thereby providing a more specific form of prompting for readers to activate the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain. The genre of the first four stanzas of Psalm 107 can be broadly understood as parabolic. Parables, by nature, tend to provide more situational details when compared with the situational uncertainty of the individual lament and thanksgiving psalms. With distress psalms other than Psalm 107, the secondary literature regularly notes how the texts do not provide enough information to determine the specific situation which has caused the distress. For the sake of brevity, we will compare Psalm 107 with Psalm 86, although many other examples could be cited. Regarding the specific cause of distress in Psalm 86, a host of commentators have said that we really do not have the faintest clue:

Neither the inscription nor the contents of this psalm enable us to conclude with certainty what dangers David here complains of...

74 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 38, 43.
The adoption of various older psalm statements makes access to a determination of the actual situation of the petitioner impossible.\textsuperscript{76}

As in most laments, it is difficult to establish the exact nature of the misfortune which had befallen the writer. The traditional thought forms and liturgical expressions obliterate the specific details of the particular troubles.\textsuperscript{77}

The crisis situation itself is not closely defined...\textsuperscript{78}

No description offers circumstantial information on the cause of the psalmist’s terror.\textsuperscript{79}

As usual, the precise nature of the trouble is unclear, except to say that the psalmist is opposed by people who are also opponents of God.\textsuperscript{80}

In Psalm 86, as in most distress psalms, a high degree of situational indeterminacy typifies the genre through which distress is depicted. In contrast to this, however, the secondary literature on Psalm 107 shows quite a lot of agreement regarding the specific nature of the distress in the first four stanzas of the poem. Quite unlike Psalm 86, the situational details of these four stanzas serve to “identify each of the four groups of the redeemed”,\textsuperscript{81} by describing “a particular crisis”,\textsuperscript{82} thus “specifying four groups”.\textsuperscript{83} For most other distress psalms, such terms as “identify”, “particular” and “specify” are not used in this way in current secondary literature. Compared to compositions such as Psalms 22, 31, 69, 86 and 102, the first four stanzas of Psalm 107 provide far greater clarity as regards the basic distressful situations which are in view. While the question remains regarding whether these relatively clear situations may be interpreted as allegories of the exile, or as “open paradigms of deliverance”,\textsuperscript{84} the general category of trouble is relatively distinct and understandable.

The first stanza deals with the perils of lost travellers suffering from thirst and hunger. Verses 4, 5 and 7 present four successive verbal clauses telling a tale of a group lost in the wilderness. Scholars disagree over the extent to which this stanza refers to the return from

\textsuperscript{76} Kraus, \textit{Psalms 60–150}, 181.
\textsuperscript{78} Hossfeld and Zenger, \textit{Psalms 51–100}, 370.
\textsuperscript{79} Terrien, \textit{The Psalms}, 614.
\textsuperscript{80} McCann, \textit{Psalms}, 1021.
\textsuperscript{81} Mays, \textit{Psalms}, 345.
\textsuperscript{82} Allen, \textit{WBC: Psalms 101–150}, 87.
\textsuperscript{83} Allen, \textit{WBC: Psalms 101–150}, 87.
\textsuperscript{84} McCann, \textit{Psalms}, 346.
exile,\textsuperscript{85} but the basic notion of lost travellers remains intact throughout the secondary
literature.

The second stanza describes some kind of imprisonment. As in the first stanza, the text
provides a relatively clear description of literal imprisonment when compared with other
psalms which may possibly have a Sitz im Leben related to imprisonment. For example,
earlier form critics classified Psalm 142 as a Prisoner’s Song (\emph{das Lied eines Gefangenen})\textsuperscript{86}
based essentially on a single piece of data, the term \כפירה (prison) in verse 8. This psalm’s
other typical components of the individual lament genre (e.g. isolation, persecution) have
been read through the interpretive lens of imprisonment, thus using a single term in verse 8
as the exegetical standpoint for reading the psalm. The situation in the second stanza of
Psalm 107 is quite different. Metal implements of confinement are mentioned four times
(vv 10a, 14b, 16a, b). The darkness of the dungeon is described twice (vv 10a, 14a). Thus
Psalms 107 and 142 present two different interpretive questions: With Psalm 142, the
question is: “Should the occurrence of a single term for prison (v 8) be employed as a
fulcrum, inclining the interpreter to read the whole psalm as an account of imprisonment?”
With Psalm 107, on the other hand, the interpretive question is: “Should a relatively
complex and unambiguous depiction of a literal prison be interpreted as a metaphor?” The
second stanza is a parable of incarceration.

Although the third stanza of Psalm 107 probably describes people “who had recovered from
serious sickness”,\textsuperscript{87} this stanza provides fewer unambiguous references to the specific cause
of distress when compared with stanzas 1, 2, and 4. For example, the introductory lines of
stanzas 1, 2 and 4 inform the reader of the specific distressful situation: Here, we are
obviously reading about lost travellers, prisoners and sailors. However, the first line of the
third stanza provides no specific information. The LXX and Syriac differ from the MT at
verse 17a, indicating either that this colon of the MT is corrupt, or that the translators have
attempted improvements upon the Hebrew text. Although suggested emendations (אָמַלְלָים, frail ones; חולים, sick ones) would remedy the situation, in the MT as it stands, the reader is
not informed of the nature of the problem until verse 18. The abhorrence of food in verse
18a indicates some sort of malady which has deleterious effect upon the body. The text
does not specify whether this malady is some sort of physical disease, or, as Terrien
suspects, a serious psychological condition.\textsuperscript{88} Furthermore in verse 18b, the expression

\textsuperscript{85}Goldingay, Terrien and Weiser make no specific reference to the return from exile (see Goldingay, \textit{Psalms: Volume 3}, 250–1; Terrien, \textit{The Psalms}, 738; Weiser, \textit{Psalms}, 686, respectively), while many other
commentators do make such a reference (see, for example, Kraus, \textit{Psalms 60–150}, 328).
\textsuperscript{86}Gunkel, \textit{Die Psalmen}, 600; Kraus, \textit{Psalms 60–150}, 531–2; Schmidt, “Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten
Testament,” 162.
\textsuperscript{87}Allen, \textit{WBC: Psalms 101–150}, 90.
\textsuperscript{88}Terrien, \textit{The Psalms}, 739.
“gates of death” (v 18b) is, in and of itself, only of marginal help in specifying the nature of the distress. Hezekiah’s thanksgiving psalm includes the noun phrase שערי שאול (gates of Sheol [Isa 38:10]) in a context in which Hezekiah recovered from serious illness. But the term שערי מות (gates of death) appears elsewhere in the MT in contexts which apparently have nothing to do with sickness (Ps 9:14; Job 38:17). But, given that Hezekiah’s statement was made in the context of sickness, it is reasonable to assume that both bicola of Psalm 107:18 inform the reader that sickness is in view. As with the other stanzas, the central interpretive question regards whether this relatively clear depiction of illness should be carried a step further and read as a metaphor for exile, a question which is based more on the reader’s presuppositions than on the features of the text itself. Therefore, the secondary literature shows very little agreement over this question. Beyerlin, for example, insists that it is not appropriate to read this stanza as a metaphorical depiction of exile and restoration,89 while Allen asserts the opposite: “Exile had been a sickbed to which their own moral perversity had driven them.”90 Stanza 3 seems to be a parable of severe illness and recovery.

Looking at the first four stanzas of Psalm 107, the fourth stanza gives the strongest example of the general assertion that the parabolic nature of this poem depicts distress-causing situations with greater specificity than other distress psalms. The host of nautical and oceanographic textual features in this fourth stanza leaves little doubt that we are reading about a group of sailors caught in a storm at sea. As with the first three stanzas, the interpretive question relates to the degree to which this maritime disaster should be received as a metaphor. The fourth stanza is a parable of seafarers’ encounter with their imminent death on the raging ocean. The four-fold parabolic presentation of distress in Psalm 107 provides far more situational detail than other distress psalms. It is part of the nature of a parable to provide clever details which intensify the presentation of the story it tells.

This genre difference leads to a slight shift in methodology for analysing distress in Psalm 107. In the prior chapters, we have looked at phrases, lexemes and motifs that tend to cluster around מוחר. Psalm 107 shares a few of these in common with other distress psalms, and we will analyse them but, unlike other distress psalms, the clarity of the parables in Psalm 107 contributes to this psalm’s presentation of distress. The situations in which these sufferers found themselves play an essential role in understanding the cognitive domains that may be activated by readers of this psalm. Therefore, we will take these situations into account in the analysis to follow; something which we were unable to do with the other psalms, due to their indeterminacy.

89 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 46.
90 Allen, WBC: Psalms 101–150, 90.
5. Exegetical and Cognitive-Semantic Analysis of Distress in Psalm 107

Finally, we will now proceed to look at the presentation of distress in each of the first four stanzas of the psalm.

5.1 The Place of the Dead

In The Forbidden Zone, Michael Lesy’s essay on the subject of death in American culture, this modern author has chosen to metaphorically denote death as a location, not merely as an event:

There is a forbidden zone marked out on the map of twentieth century American culture, a place every citizen knows but fears to enter. It is a place whose borders are open but never willingly trespassed, a place guarded by dread but surrounded by fascination. It is the zone of death, the modern American Hades.91

Bernd Janowski makes some very similar comments on the concept of death in ancient Israel. He contrasts the Egyptian belief in the dead regaining certain positive aspects of earthly life with the Hebrew belief in rescue from death (Erretung vom Tode). Janowski says that the first four stanzas of Psalm 107 are all deliverances from the realm of death:

Here as well [i.e. in IL and IT psalms], obviously, the realm of the hereafter was projected into this life in a virtually spatial manner, recast as a realm of death, as an otherworldly realm in this present world. The distinguishing characteristic between Hebrew and Egyptian belief consists in the fact that, in Israel, it is not the dead (and then the transfigured spirit of the dead) who return to this life, but rather, it is the supplicant who is rescued from death by Yahweh. The supplicant experiences in his earthly life – and definitely not after having died – that which Christoph Barth has described with the phrase, “deliverance from death.” In this context, the realms which assume these otherworldly functions are: the grave, the dust, imprisonment, the cistern, the pitfall, flooding waters, the ocean, the desert, the steppe, the mountaintop, and – as a time-related realm – the dark night. They form the thin and dangerous boundary between life and death, upon which the distressed supplicant is situated: [Janowski inserts a diagram here] For example: in the thanksgiving Ps 107, four groups of those who have been delivered are summoned to proclaim the praise of Yahweh in the temple. The four realms from which they cried to God in their need and were delivered are the desert (vv 4-9), the dungeon (vv 10-16), sickness (vv 17-22) and the ocean (v 23-32). Scorched, impassable deserts, churning oceans and locked dungeons are realms which can similarly depict and visualise human misery. The same is true with sickness, which leads the supplicant right up to the “gates of death” (v 18) or down to the “pit,” from which Yahweh is able to rescue him through his word.92

92 Konfliktgespräche, 261–2 (trans. mine).
Likewise, in *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, Othmar Keel traces thematic similarities in death imagery between ANE iconography and the Psalter. Keel mentions Psalm 107 as he notes that these similarities present death not merely as an event, but as a realm or location:

The realm of the dead is present in darkness and in the depths of the grave (cf. Ps 88:4, 6, 11); in the bottomless, dark waters which surround the earth and flow underneath the earth disc (cf. Pss 18:4-5, 69:2, 15; 107:23-28); and in the outer perimeters of the inhabited earth, the desert (Pss 61:2; 107:4-7).93

The cognitive profile distress presented in the preceding chapters has been carried out in an environment of indeterminacy, where the literary genre never intended to paint a picture of a specific kind of trouble. Thus, in the distress psalms other than Psalm 107, studying this cognitive profile is usually not dependent on figuring out a specific distress stimulus. Things are quite different in Psalm 107, where distress is presented mainly through the painting of four very specific pictures of distress. Thus, in order to discover how Psalm 107 aligns with our previously-established cognitive profile of distress—particularly with respect to force dynamics—the specific settings of the four stanzas provide a key piece of the puzzle. The places (in and of themselves) from which Yahweh rescues distressed supplicants, together with the specific kinds of freedom that the rescued supplicants enjoy, helps to corroborate the cognitive profile of distress which has been garnered from elsewhere in the Psalter. Like settings in a play, the four locations themselves (desert, prison, gates of death, the stormy sea) depict specific distress stimuli with real clarity, situations which align quite well with the literary features studied elsewhere in the Psalter. When the benefits of having been rescued are held in contrast with the supplicants’ four prior predicaments, this contrast can be helpfully understood through the cognitive-semantic lens of motion and force dynamics. Studying distress as presented in Psalm 107 centres on studying this psalm’s uniqueness. With this in view, we will now examine the settings of this psalm’s first four stanzas, comparing these settings with the description of deliverance in each case.

5.2 Stanza 1: Onset Letting of Rest through Rescue from Wandering in the Desert

The first stanza of Psalm 107 presents a familiar tale of travellers lost in a desert. We see force dynamics that are similar to those expressed in many other distress psalms, although here they are expressed through the parabolic story telling. From a force-dynamic perspective, the stanza begins with a situation of Extended Causation of Motion presented by the verb הנה (to wander). The lost individuals are the Agonist, and the circumstance of

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lostness in the desert is the Antagonist. Then the stanza transitions to Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist, including the same Hebrew terminology that was discussed in chapter 4, (section 4) involving the hitpa‘el stem of the verb עָטָף (to faint, feel weak). The stanza concludes with Onset Letting of Rest: Yahweh’s deliverance has removed the Agonist, allowing the wanderers to cease their wandering. Thus, the pericope includes force dynamics which may prompt readers to activate the [POWERLESSNESS] domain. We will now examine further details in this stanza, with respect to the previously-established cognitive profile of distress.

Modern readers can easily miss the intensity of distress depicted here. This is because most of Western mankind simply do not fear the desert, because of our lack of contact with it. Therefore it is difficult for us to empathise with the people described in this stanza: hapless wanderers lost in a trackless, howling waste. However, to the people of the ancient Near East, the desert was a frightening place, as described by S. Talmon in TDOT,

Terminological accumulations show that the biblical authors wanted to depict for the reader as vividly as possibly the connotation of midbār as an awe-inspiring, howling wilderness: ‘eres midbār – tōhū – yʾšîmôn (Deut 32:10)... and especially Ps 107:33 ff.94

Talmon’s later comment about the weakening of people lost in the desert has force-dynamic implications:

Biblical human beings accustomed to village and town life, view the wilderness as a gaping void. No civilised person dwells in it, nor even passes through it. The “great and terrible wilderness” inspires revulsion and debilitating fear. Hunger and thirst weaken the person who is cast into the wasteland. There he searches aimlessly for water, suffering from heat and thirst, and finally expiring. Only divine intervention offers deliverance from death.95

Thus, stanza 1 prompts readers to activate the [PALPABLE THREAT] and [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domains by accessing their shared cultural understanding of the desert. Given this notion of the desert as a terrifying and deadly place, it is important to examine the unique role which stanza 1 plays in the Psalter’s discussion of the desert. The term מדבר (desert) occurs 19 times in the Psalter, including once in the superscription of Psalm 63. These occurrences fall into six basic categories:

1. Historical reference to Israel’s desert wanderings after the Exodus: Pss 78:15, 19, 40, 52; 95:8; 106:9, 14, 26; 136:16
2. Yahweh’s power over the desert: Pss 29:8a, 8b; 65:13; 107:33, 35

3. Desert used as a hideout: Pss 55:8; 63:1 (superscription)
4. Exaltation will not come from a distant place, like the desert: Ps 75:7
5. Metaphorical self-designation “like a desert owl”: Ps 102:7
6. Parable of Individuals lost in the desert: Ps 107:4

It is interesting that out of all these appearances of such a common Hebrew word (מדבר), a word with such frightening connotations, the Psalter contains only one occurrence in which people are actually lost in the desert, namely here in the first stanza of Psalm 107. This is an example of how the most frequent distress stimulus elsewhere in the Psalter (the enemy) has been replaced with different, yet equally distressing stimuli here in Psalm 107. In the light of the ancient Near Eastern fear of the desert, this singular use of מדבר as a distress stimulus aligns well with our previously determined cognitive profile of distress, which includes the [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT] domains. Three additional features in the first stanza reinforce the palpable and overpowering nature of this desert distress: (1) isolation, (2) thirst and (3) this stanza’s threefold use of the anthropological term נפש (life, soul), including its use as the subject of the verb עטף (to be exhausted), which correlates strongly with occurrences of צרר lexemes elsewhere in the Psalter.

5.2.1 Isolation
The distressed people in this stanza were isolated from society. They could not find their way to an inhabited city (מוּשֶׁב עיר). Although this stanza shares this feature in common with many other distress psalms, the isolation here in Psalm 107 is different from isolation described elsewhere. Chapter six, (discussing the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain) notes that in the ancient Near East, the concept of life was based on a principle of social connectivity, and the corresponding concept of death was often depicted through images of social isolation.⁹⁶ Distressed psalmists often represent themselves “as removed from the company and protection of any supportive community through spatial distance.”⁹⁷ They often complain that they have no means of support other than Yahweh himself.⁹⁸ However, elsewhere in the Psalter, isolation is virtually always related to conflict. Here in the first stanza of Psalm 107, although the subjects had no means of support other than Yahweh, and although spatial distance had removed them from the company and protection of any supportive community, the precipitating cause is not social antagonism, but rather, the fact that they are simply lost. Although the isolation in this stanza is different from isolation presented elsewhere in the Psalter, the fact remains that the repeated use of the term מִן מֶלֶשׁ (vv 4, 7) underscores the fact that these people were isolated from human

⁹⁶ Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 188.
⁹⁷ Cottrill, Language, Power and Identity, 75.
⁹⁸ Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 120.
assistance and that they were in constant motion, having found no inhabited place to cease from their wandering and restore their bodily strength.

5.2.2 Water

Psalm 107 employs two most basic Old Testament images in order to denote distress as a close brush with death: namely, water and light. Although stanza 1 only mentions one half of this pair (water, and not light/darkness) it is helpful to briefly think of them as a pair. The Bible introduces the motifs of water and light in the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2. C. Barth details the role that these two creation symbols play in the corresponding themes of life and death in the Psalter. He notes that, although light and water are symbolically similar, they are not identical:

Finally, the two most important symbols of life which are suitable to denote the essence of life are light and water. In this capacity, these two terms have been widespread and popular in the ancient Near East since very long ago. Although the significance of the two terms are closely related, they are not identical. 99

Barth notices an essential difference between these two images as they are first set forth in the book of Genesis: Whereas water can be either a good thing or a bad thing, Genesis chapter one represents light as unambiguously beneficial:

As is generally recognised, the “priestly” creation account asserts that there can be no life without light, that God brought light into existence before all other things... Under its influence, life abounds, darkness disappears... 100

Although light is something unequivocally good, water, on the other hand, can go either way. In and of itself, water can either be a good thing or a bad thing:

The second biblical creation report presents the beneficial effect of water as the necessary precursor for all created life. Strangely enough, water is the same element which represents the powers of chaos in the “priestly” report... 101

Barth continues by noting water’s dual function in nature:

The double meaning of this symbol (as frequently seen in the Old Testament and throughout the literature of the ancient Near East) can be explained even more clearly by observing water’s dual function in nature. Besides its ability to flood and

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100 *Die Erretung vom Tode*, 34 (trans. mine).
to destroy, water has the power to quicken and to support life, and is therefore used as a symbol for life.  

Applying Barth’s observations to Psalm 107, interestingly, it is possible to have two utterly different kinds of water-related distress, one kind resulting from a lack of water (stanzas 1 & 5), and another caused by the opposite condition: far too much water (stanza 4). Thus, in stanza 1, the depiction of the travellers’ flagging vitality due to thirst (and hunger) employs this creation image of water to convey the notion of a close brush with death. On the other hand, the fourth stanza tells a tale of panicked individuals whose predicament is simply an overabundance of the same element: mighty waters (רבים מים [v 23]) raging out of control. Psalm 107 shares this motif of “too much water” with several other distress psalms, including Psalms 18, 46, 69 and 77. The notion of “not enough water,” which has been introduced in the first stanza continues into the fifth stanza, which repeatedly alternates between wet places and dry places (vv 33-35, 40). The fifth stanza presents situations where there is plenty of water, contrasted with situations where there is not enough water. Not only does Psalm 107 give a “double-edged” presentation of water vis-a-vis distress, we find a somewhat similar bilateral presentation of food. In the first stanza, the distress consists of a lack of food, while in the third stanza, the distress consists of a lack of appetite for the food which is ostensibly available. In summary, the gnawing thirst of these travellers in the first stanza employs the creation motif of water to paint a picture of life-threatening trouble. Ringgren notes that the symbolic connection between water and life can be traced back to early Mesopotamian cosmogony: “There is obviously a mental association connecting water, apsû, river, incantation, and life.” In the same way that this psalm’s use of מים is unique in the Psalter, the notion of dying of thirst is also unique. The water motif of the first stanza provides a distinctive contribution to the concept of distress as palpable, overpowering trouble. The existential experience of extreme thirst is recapitulated in this stanza’s final verse. Goldingay translates נפש שקקה as “scurrying person” from שקק¹, whereas it is probably better to translate as from שקק², thus “pulsating throat”, denoting a person with an extremely dry, uncomfortable throat. This is, therefore, an image of extreme thirst, rather than one of “people having to bustle about trying to find water.” Gunkel translated the phrase as “panting throat” (lechzende Kehle). This notion of thirst

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102 Die Erretung vom Tode, 36 (trans. mine).
103 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 36.
105 Goldingay, Psalms: Volume 3, 244.
106 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 1647.
107 Goldingay, Psalms: Volume 3, 251.
108 Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 468.
contributes to this stanza’s force-dynamic imagery of Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist, thus prompting readers to trigger the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

5.2.3 

Psalm 107 employs two common anthropological nouns: הנפש (throat, life, breath) and הלב (heart, love, breath) (vv 5, 9a, 9b, 18, 26). Although הנפש and הלב are common in the Psalter, they are not equally common with respect to distress. הנפש is found far more often in proximity to צרות lexemes (Pss 31:8, 10; 69:18; 77:3; 78:49-50; 107:5, 9a, 9b, 18, 26; 116:3-4; 120:1-2; 143:11). צרות lexemes occur in close proximity to other anthropological terms relatively rarely. רוח (spirit) occurs in close proximity to צרות only once (Ps 142:2-3), as does the noun בטן (belly, womb, inner parts; Ps 31:10). הלב is found alongside צרות only twice (Pss 25:17; 107:12).

נפש is the most common anthropological term in Psalm 107, occurring five times. Three of these five occurrences of הנפש are in the first stanza, which aligns well with this situation of people dying of thirst and starvation. “The concrete primary meaning of nepes is usually assumed to be “maw, throat, gullet,” as the organ used for eating and breathing.”

H. W. Wolff’s overarching concept for the term הנפש is “needy man” (der bedürftige Mensch). Wolff’s designation also fits quite well with the way הנפש is used in this parable of travellers lost in the desert. Wolff cites these three occurrences in the first stanza of Psalm 107 as examples where the term הנפש, should be translated anatomically as “throat”:

The context of הנפש mentions its hunger and thirst, its fainting and its being satisfied, its dryness and its being filled, thus showing unequivocally that what is being talked about is not the ‘soul’ but the ‘throat’.

Wolff’s assertion seems true of the two occurrences in verse 9 (where הנפש is in the accusative), but the occurrence in verse 5 (with הנפש in the nominative) should not be understood as semantically identical with these other two, for the following reasons:

Chapter 3 (section 4) noted that the hitpa‘el stem of the verb ישן (which only occurs with צרות as subject of the verb) determines צרות lexemes (Pss 77:4; 107:5; 142:4; 143:4; Jon 2:8; cf. also Ps 102:1 in the qal). As discussed in chapter 4, this construction is an

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109 Interestingly, both of these psalms contain wisdom-related material.
110 Seebass, “נפש,” 504.
112 Anthropology of the Old Testament, 11; K. Barth, Church Dogmatics III.2 (G. W. Bromiley; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960) 379.
113 HALOT, BDB and TDOT each discuss the occurrences in v 9, but make no reference to the occurrence in v 5. NIDOTTE incorrectly classifies the occurrence in v 5 as “the literal breath” of an individual. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 712–3; Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 659–61; Seebass, “נפש,” 505; D. C. Fredericks, “נפש,” New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (ed. W. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996) 3:133.
existent expression denoting abject exhaustion, of having arrived at the end of one’s internal resources for coping with a situation. The phrase נפשם ובם הנפש expresses the idea that, due to these sojourners’ unremitting, indelible distress, their life energy—their vigour as inhabitants in the land of the living—was dwindling away to nothing because they were under assault by the death-dealing forces of chaos, represented by the desert. In other words, this is an expression of Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist, as discussed in chapter three. Thus, even though Psalm 107’s parabolic depiction of distress is unique in the Psalter, there are, nevertheless, some rather striking linguistic correlations with the way distress is presented elsewhere. This evidence suggests that, in using the hitpa’el of נפש with נפש, Psalm 107 is borrowing a genre element from the individual laments and thanksgivings where this phrase is found. Thus, for form critical reasons, it appears that the occurrence of נפש in verse 5 touches upon a different aspect of the semantic range of נפש than the two occurrences in verse 9. Using Seebass’ terminology in TDOT, it should probably fall under his category, “Vital Self, Reflexive Pronoun”:

Many texts suggest that humans have a relationship with themselves as individuals; this is unmistakably the case when נפש denotes the vital self.  

Nepeš presupposes and expresses the characteristically human distance that human beings can observe in relationship to themselves.

Compared with verse 5, the two occurrences of נפש in verse 9 represent a different shade from this term’s semantic range. This is because, unlike verse 5, נפש as used in verse 9 is not part of a borrowed genre element. Here, the concrete, primary meaning “throat” steps to the fore, understood as the bodily organ which receives food and drink, evoking the notion of “a perpetually needy organ which cannot be satisfied by human effort”. Wolff notes that this use of נפש relates to yearning for food:

When, therefore, the throat or neck are mentioned, there is frequently an echo of the view of man as needy and in danger, and therefore yearns with his nepeš for food and the preservation of his life; and this vital longing, desiring, striving or yearning can, even when the nepeš is mentioned, dominate the concept by itself.

Likewise, Seebass correlates this use of the Hebrew term for “throat” with the notion of “craving”:

That various categories of the use of *nepes* still evidence the effects of both functions of the throat, swallowing and breathing, confirms this relationship. One function echoes in the meaning “desire, wish, craving”... and in a series of expressions associated with *nepes* that presume the original meaning “throat, jaws, gullet” (e.g. *šb* ‘hi. “to sate,” Isa 58:11; *ml*’ pi. “to fill,” Prov 6:30; *rēq* “empty,” Isa 29:8; *šōqēq* “thirsty” Isa 29:8; Psa 107:9...).

To summarise, the first stanza of Psalm 107 offers a unique presentation of distress (the explicit threat of death in the desert), while at the same time including common motifs from other distress psalms (i.e. isolation, water and the “exhausted soul”). Regarding the [GUILT?] domain, this stanza occupies middle ground between the obvious guilt of the sufferers in stanzas 2 and 3, and the lack of the same in stanza 4. If readers perceive the lost wanderers to be exilic returnees, then they will experience an affirmative response to the question implied by the [GUILT?] domain. If readers do not make such an association between the wandering and the exile, then they may provide a negative reply to the same question.

5.3 Stanza 2: Onset Letting of Motion through Rescue from a Dungeon

Although the idea of confinement is suggested elsewhere in the Psalter, the situation in the second stanza of Psalm 107 is unique. In a similar manner to the first stanza’s unique reference to the desert as a distress stimulus, the second stanza is the only place in the Psalter where the imprisonment of individuals is unambiguously presented as the situation that has brought about the petitioners’ distress. Although this stanza may be read as a metaphor for the exile or for the various kinds of distress that individuals may bring upon themselves through disobedience to Yahweh, the fact remains that the text itself quite clearly describes a situation where individuals have been imprisoned, thus prompting readers to activate the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain. From a force-dynamic perspective, the initial picture of the supplicants is that of Extended Causation of Rest. The prisoners are the Agonist, and the prison, with its shackles, is the Antagonist. The text repeats the notion of confinement in several ways, which will be discussed below. By contrast, Yahweh’s act of deliverance removes the Agonist, allowing the Onset Letting of Motion, as the former captives have had their restraining bonds broken.

Before form-critical and cult-functional presuppositions began to fall out of favour in the late-20th century, many scholars assumed that the *Sitz im Leben* of more than a few psalms could be traced back to experiences of imprisonment. Hans Schmidt led the way in this effort with his work, *Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten Testament* (The Prayer of the

\[118\] Seebass, “כבד,” 505.
Accused in the OT), in which he scrutinised terms and phrases that could possibly be interpreted as resulting from experiences of incarceration or legal trouble. For example, he took note of several psalms in which the supplicants cry out to Yahweh for vindication (e.g. Pss 26:1; 54:1). Schmidt theorised that such requests for vindication imply a *Sitz im Leben* of legal trouble, and thus, possible imprisonment.119 From the perspective of 21st century psalm studies, it is argued that textual features such as requests for vindication do not logically necessitate a situation of formal legal proceedings or literal confinement. For example, Schmidt was certain that Psalm 7 is a “Prayer of the Accused”,120 while Goldingay says, “The fact that battle and trial can each be used as an image for the other means that we may not be able to determine which is the literal reality.”121 Compared with the views of the early-mid 20th century, present day scholarship holds that unambiguous instances of literal imprisonment referenced in the Psalter are relatively few. Although there are some passing references to confinement (e.g. Pss 88:9; 142:8) in the Psalter, usually we cannot be sure if they should be taken literally or metaphorically. The Psalter makes several references to the collective confinement of the exile, most often using root לֵשׁ (to take captive [e.g. Ps 106:46]). Yahweh is sometimes described as one who releases prisoners (Pss 66:11ff; 68:7; 146:7), and has regard for their plight (Pss 69:34; 79:11; 102:21; 116:16), but only here in Psalm 107 do we find an actual deliverance from prison. In view of our previously-determined cognitive profile of distress, what conclusions can be drawn from this depiction of incarceration as a distress stimulus here in the second stanza of Psalm 107?

This stanza’s description of imprisonment offers five details which help to build the picture of distress: darkness, shackles, forced labour, isolation, and this psalm’s only use of the anthropological term לֶב (heart, mind).

5.3.1 Darkness
The concepts of darkness and the underworld are frequently associated, as are the concepts of prison and the underworld.122 This stanza makes a four-fold reference to darkness by repeating the noun pair חָשׁך חָשׁך (darkness and the shadow of death, vv 10, 14). Ringgren writes that “Any theological discussion of the concept of darkness must begin with Genesis 1...”123 As discussed above in the analysis of stanza 1, the Genesis creation reports present water as something which can be either a good thing or a bad thing. Predicated on human

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experience, water represents the forces of chaos, yet it is also necessary for life. Light, on the other hand, is something unequivocally good from a creation point of view. Throughout the Bible, when predicated of human experience, darkness is virtually always bad. Ringgren points out several isolated instances where darkness is expressed as beneficial. For example, in Gen 15:12, darkness is part of Abram’s experience as he receives God’s covenant promise. Keel makes frequent reference to darkness while presenting Psalm 107 as his keynote text in his discussion of “Spheres of Death.” He presents the four locations of Psalm 107’s first four stanzas as emblematic of four aspects of the power and realm of death. He also explains how three concepts (the grave/Sheol, prison, and pit/cistern) frequently overlap in the Psalter as well as in poetic texts elsewhere. These concepts are often presented side-by-side in parallelism. Darkness is an attribute that these three concepts hold in common. The darkness denoted in the second stanza has two connotations. First, this dark prison represents “the land of no return, the realm of the dead” (das Land ohne Wiederkehr, die Welt der Toten). Second, it relates to the guilt of the prisoners. Darkness connotes not only death, but also evil behaviour or ignorance. Interestingly, the two stanzas which clearly assert the guilt of the distressed parties (stanzas 2 and 3) contain this psalm’s only references to darkness or dark places. Being consigned to darkness is part of Yahweh’s reaction to human rebellion. This darkness, combined with other clear indications of the prisoners’ guilt, contributes to the reader’s positive answer to the question posed by the [GUILT?] domain. The terms (darkness) and (shadow of death) also carry emotional connotations as “a metaphor for conditions of life in which all joys are taken away and life itself is very hard or almost impossible.” Although the threat in this stanza implies a different form of palpability than the examples of self-contained motion studied in chapter four, the jail with its darkness and metal restraints represents a palpable threat to the prisoners’ happiness, and may prompt readers to activate a similar cognitive domain.

125 Keel, Symbolism of the Biblical World, 62–78.  
126 Tromp similarly correlates the concepts of desert, prison, illness, and ocean as representative of the chaos realm (Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death, 133).  
127 Thus, Stanza III (discussed below) also references this theme in vv 18 (“gates of death”) and 20 (the pit).  
128 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 45; Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death, 155.  
130 Regarding guilt, Schmidt’s tendency to look beyond the text in search of predetermined Sitze actually led him to deny the clear statement of the text in Ps 107:11. This verse clearly says that these prisoners were guilty. Yet Schmidt asserted that a verdict had not yet been rendered, and that the prisoners discussed in this stanza had only been accused (Beschuldigte, not sentenced (Verurteilte) (“Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten Testament,” 160).  
131 Beyerlin, Werden und Wesen, 40.  
5.3.2 Metal Restraints

In keeping with the parabolic nature of this stanza, the text provides details which fill-in the story line of the parable. Therefore it is not surprising that in this description of inescapable confinement, this stanza contains references to implements made of metal. First in verse 10, iron (ברזל) is mentioned in the syndetic pair בœurלון ענין (misery and iron). Here, ברזל either denotes chains or (in hendiadys with “misery”) serves as a poetic metonym for the general situation of confinement. Second, verse 14 contains the term “fetters” (מוסרות), depicting a situation where one’s feet and/or arms had been in shackles until Yahweh tore them off (פִּי’ל נתק). Thus, in the poetic vocabulary of the MT, Yahweh alleviates the spatial restriction of distress by tearing shackles apart – setting hands and feet free to move: an example of Onset Letting of Motion. The third and fourth references to metal are in verse 16, where bronze doors (נחׁשת) and iron bars (ברזל בריחי) underscore the inescapability of the situation from which Yahweh rescued the supplicants. Keel summarises the combined effect of darkness and metal restraint as inescapable misery, which corresponds to our understanding of Extended Causation of Rest, in prior discussions of the [POWERLESSNESS] domain:

The actual prisons where captives were left to rot (cf. Gen 41:14), were holes as dark as cisterns (cf. Ps 107:10, 16). In addition, prisoners were often bound by iron fetters on the hands, neck, or feet (Pss 105:18; 107:10). Under such conditions, escape from misery was inconceivable.

5.3.3 Forced Labour

The semantic range of the noun عمل (v 12) extends in two basic directions, depending on context. On the one hand, it can denote “trouble” often with ethical implications such as “mischief, evil” (e.g. Pss 7:15, 17; 10:7, 14; Hab 1:13). On the other hand, it can denote “labor, toil” (e.g. Ps 105:44). Strangely, the HALOT listing for the noun عمل mistranslates the German from the KB lexicon, thereby omitting the option of “labor” for this noun. In the German (KB), the third translation option for عمل is “Bemühung, Sich-mühren” which are correctly rendered into English respectively, as “effort, endeavour”, and “to strive”. HALOT has mistranslated these German words as “care, anxiety”,

133 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, HALOT, 155.
134 This description of divine deliverance using the verb נתק with מוסרות in the accusative occurs three times elsewhere in the MT (Jer 2:20, 30:8; Nah 1:13). Two of these three are in the presence of צרור, including a dual occurrence of צרור in the Nahum passage (Nah 1:7, 9; Jer 30:7).
135 Keel, Symbolism of the Biblical World, 69.
136 Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 765.
139 Terrell, The Collins German Dictionary, 569.
thereby overlooking the option of “hard labor” for this common Hebrew noun. Likewise, the *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* edition of *KB* contains a translation error. Here, the third translation option for the noun עמל is the German Mühe. But, although the English semantic range for this German noun includes both “trouble” and “effort”, the only English offered in *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* is “trouble”, thus obscuring the other half of the English semantic range of עמל. So, we are left with the question: should this clause here in Psalm 107 be translated “He humbled their hearts with trouble”, or should it be rendered, “He humbled their hearts with toil”? The situation of confinement strongly suggests the latter option, as reflected in the English versions. In the ancient Near East, “When a convict was sentenced to prison, he was to make good his offence by carrying out dull and heavy labour.” This imagery of forced labour provides an additional force-dynamic component involving Extended Causation of Motion, contained within the general depiction of the prisoners’ enforced rest; possibly providing further opportunity for readers to activate the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

5.3.4 Isolation
In verse 12b, the text states that there was no one to help (עזר אין). This sub-theme of isolation appears in stanzas 1, 2, and 4. In stanza 1, the isolated desert wanderers eventually found an inhabited city. In stanza 2, the isolated prisoners were eventually set free. And in stanza 4 the isolated sailors eventually found a harbour town (v 30).

5.3.5 The Humbled Heart
In verse 12, we find another phrase unique in the Psalter, where the verb כנע (to humble) occurs in the same clause with לב (heart). Although there is textual uncertainty regarding whether לב stands in the nominative or accusative (and, correspondingly, whether the verb is niph'al or hiph'il), we will read the MT as it stands, and thus assume that לבם is in the accusative and that the verb (コンテンツ) is in the hiph'il stem. Two factors emerge from this clause, which contribute to our understanding of the mental processes of the sufferers with respect to the palpability of their distressful situation. First, regarding the verb כנע, *NIDOTTE* says, “Usually inner psychological processes are referred to in connection with

141 Terrell, *The Collins German Dictionary*, 569.
143 L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 568.
144 The LXX has translated לֹא (in the nominative case, having apparently read כנעランス as a niph'al (“Their heart was humbled”) [ευαγγελοθ - aorist passive] with labour). Thus, the LXX has read this clause as grammatically similar to vv 5b, 18a, and 26b, where לָא stands in the nominative. The argument of the above paragraph stands whether this verb is read as a hiph’il (per MT) or niph'al (per LXX), since both stems occur in a context of divine discipline. Most English versions translate לֹא in the accusative and find the nominative in the 3ms verbal form (“He humbled their hearts...”).
outside material circumstances.” Likewise, *TDOT* reports that the verb ḥannah “Refer(s) not only to outward, concrete events but also to inward experiences rooted in the mind, spirit, and emotions. Often both aspects are interwoven. The verb does not denote a punctiliar action but a process or its result.” This verb often occurs in contexts which imply repentance in response to negative circumstances which have been sent by Yahweh in response to human obduracy (Lev 26:41; 2 Chr 7:14; 12:6-12; 32:26; 33:12, 19; 34:27; 1 K 21:29; 2 K 22:19). Second, alongside the verb, it is important to notice that, although the noun ḥannah is the most common anthropological term in Psalm 107, at the one point where this psalm most clearly implies the teaching function of distress (v 12), it switches to ḥor (heart), the only occurrence of this term in the psalm. The choice of this term at this point in the text is not merely incidental or stylistic. Wolff’s general heading for his chapter on ḥor is the “reasonable” man. Whenever the root ḥannah (to rebel, [v 11]) occurs with an anthropological noun, the noun of choice is always ḥor (Pss 78:8; 107:11-12; Jer 5:23) and never ḥannah, because, “The lēb is seen as the seat of all human vices...” and “human obduracy (‘hardness of heart’) is particularly associated with the lēb.” The noun ḥor emphasises the “Noetic Center” of the human being, and is “the locus of God’s influence.” Thus, the lexical choices reflected in verse 12a tell a tale of a thought process, prompted by palpably miserable circumstances; a process which resulted in these rebels coming to terms with their own culpability and repentantly calling out to Yahweh for deliverance. Accordingly, this stanza prompts expert readers to supply an affirmative answer to the [GUILT?] domain. This intellectual terminology also contributes to the picture of distress as palpable trouble; an arresting awareness of their dire straits along with their own culpability, which may prompt readers to activate a domain similar to the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain discussed in chapter four.

To summarise our study of the second stanza, five textual features contribute to our understanding of distress as palpable trouble and an experience of powerlessness. The images of darkness, shackles, forced labour, isolation, and the humbled heart all have a role to play in this parabolic depiction of distress, and may prompt readers to access the cognitive domains [PALPABLE THREAT] and [POWERLESSNESS], as well as, obviously, the domain of [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE].

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149 H. Fabry, “Ḥor,” 419.
150 H. Fabry, “Ḥor,” 425.
5.4 Stanza 3: Onset Letting of Motion through Healing

The distressed individuals in this stanza are suffering from serious illness. As with the previous stanza, the text informs the reader that these people deserve their suffering, thus supplying an affirmative answer to the question posed by the [GUILT?] domain (v 17). With respect to the other cognitive domains in the distress profile, two textual features contribute to the picture: loathing of nourishment (v 18a), and the location from which Yahweh delivered these people (the gates of death [v 18b]; the pit [v 20b]).

5.4.1 Loathing of Nourishment

The people described in this stanza are not just slightly ill, they are sick enough for their nepēš (נפׁשם) to regard all nourishment (כל־אכל) with loathing (תתעב). The root תָּעַב (to abhor) is typically employed in cultic situations, describing that which is reprehensible to Yahweh. This is the only place in the MT where the verb תָּעַב occurs with reference to the appetite for food. Also, it is important to notice that, aside from the second stanza which employs לבם (their heart) in an ethical setting of divine discipline and repentance, each stanza in this psalm uses the term nepēš (vv 5, 18, 26) to detail the distress of the people concerned. These three phrases employing nepēš are very similar to one another, each depicting a waning life force: an exhausted nepēš (v 5b), a melting nepēš (v 26b) and, here in the second stanza, a nepēš which holds all nourishment in contempt. Of course, the semantic range of nepēš is rather broad, extending, for example, from the meaning, “throat” (Ps 69:2) to the meaning “individual, person” (Ex 1:5). These three identical constructions in Psalm 107 are probably using nepēš in a similar fashion. TDOT summarises as follows:

The wealth of textual evidence demonstrates rather that the meaning of nepēš inherently suggests a defiant affirmation of life. Johnson is correct in pointing to vitality as the defining characteristic of nepēš – impassioned, abounding vital energy.

This understanding of nepēš as “vitality” helps us to see that Psalm 107:18 is making a rather strong expression of contempt for nourishment:

Awareness that nepēš means the vital self makes expressions denoting repulsion appear even more vivid: sn’, “hate” (Prov. 29:24); g’il, “abhor” (Lev. 26:11, 15, 30, 43; = “loathe,” Jer. 14:19); qûs, “detest” (Num 21:5; Ps. 106:15 conj.?); t’b, “abhor” (Ps. 107:18; Prov 6:16)....

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153 Seebass, “נפׁש”, 511.
To put it simply, it appears that these individuals were extremely sick. Taking the rest of the stanza into account, these people were as good as dead. The situation was not that “People who give up eating because of sickness or injuries will find themselves at the gates of death...” Rather, their disregard for food indicated that they had arrived at death’s door. From a force-dynamic perspective, this is another example of Declining Motion with Weakening Agonist, prompting expert readers to activate the [POWERLESSNESS] domain.

5.4.2 The Setting of Divine Deliverance

Each of the four stanzas describes distress as occurring in a specific place: a designated setting where people are inescapably constrained. The locations of stanzas 1, 2, and 4 are simple for modern readers to grasp: a desert, a prison cell, and a ship at sea. The scene for the third stanza is perhaps less obvious, but no less specific. Although presented with poetic nuance, the scene which emerges takes place in a tomb. The distressed ones were so sick that only a gossamer veil separated them from the finality of death. The setting is marked out by two expressions denoting the grave: the terms שערי מות (gates of death, [v 18]) and שתחית (pit, [v 20]). The evocative power of these two nouns (denoting location) is focused by couching them among three verbs of motion which also express Yahweh’s healing as a spatial deliverance from a location. We will examine these terms in the order in which they occur in the stanza.

First, in verse 18b, we read of an arrival at the gates of death. Whenever the plural construct form “gates of” (שערי) governs the nouns שאול (Sheol, realm of the dead), מות (death), or צלימות (shadow of death, deep darkness), it occurs (with one exception: Isa 38:10) in the vicinity of a וצרך lexeme (Job 38:17a, 17b, Pss 9:14; 107:18). In Psalm 9:14, the suppliant uses a spatial metaphor as he requests to be lifted from the gates of death (מרממי מׁשערי מות). Four verses before (v 10) he also uses a spatial metaphor to assert (twice) that Yahweh is a high place in times of distress (בצרה לעתות מׂשגב). In Job 38, Yahweh reprimands Job with a series of questions which includes the bound form “gates of” twice in verse 17. וצרך also occurs in this context (v 23), in the same series of questions. So we find a fairly strong cohesion between the gates of death and distress, which brings us to this occurrence here in Psalm 107:18. What ideas are poetically conveyed by this nomen regens “gates of...”? The gate implies proximity—or sheer closeness—to death, because a gate is a portal. In The Symbolism of the Biblical World, Keel presents several ancient Near Eastern illustrations,
both Mesopotamian and Egyptian, which depict the necropolis, or city of the dead,\textsuperscript{156} including gates as points of entry. Allen summarises this concept as follows: “In v 18b Sheol is portrayed as a city.”\textsuperscript{157} This clause develops the notion of spatial deliverance from the tomb location by using the transportation-related hiph’il stem of the verb יָגַע (they arrived at the gates of death). Similar verbs of motion pass relatively unnoticed in the prior stanzas, the locations of which seem more apparent or “real.” It makes perfect sense to be brought out (hiph’il of进出, [v 14a]) of a prison cell, but verbs of motion in the third stanza underscore the reality that these sick people, although probably at home lying on their beds, actually “had one foot in the grave,” as the English idiom would have it.

The second verb of motion underscores the isolation of the tomb by asserting that Yahweh sent (言い, [v 20]) his word to this remote location to accomplish healing. The third verb of motion is the pi’el of מביא (He delivered [them] from their pits, [v 20b]). \textit{BDB} states that the basic meaning of the root מביא is to “slip away,”\textsuperscript{159} while also noting that this verb frequently occurs in parallel with other verbs of motion and that the preposition מ denotes the location out of which one is rescued. Here, the term שחית is “an expression for the grave and underworld.”\textsuperscript{160} Yahweh’s healing of these sick individuals was nothing less than a deliverance from the tomb. Additionally, we have an allusion to the concept of darkness here in this stanza. Darkness was a defining aspect of ancient Near Eastern tombs.\textsuperscript{161} The darkness which is mentioned explicitly in the second stanza is echoed implicitly in the third stanza; and these are the two stanzas where the text tells us that the distressed ones are guilty. Darkness and guilt are associated in this psalm, while the two stanzas (I and IV) which make no explicit reference to guilt likewise make no reference to darkness. In conclusion, the third stanza paints a picture of sick people staring death in the face, which substantiates our prior semantic profile of distress as including the domains [POWERLESSNESS], [SALIENT THREAT], and [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE]. Although the text has gapped any details of the supplicant’s experience subsequent to healing, the force dynamic that expert readers may perceive here is probably Onset Letting of Motion. The verbs of motion depict Yahweh as the one who has reached out and snatched these people from the confinement of the tomb to resume the normal activities (i.e. motion) of life.

\textsuperscript{157}Allen, WBC: Psalms 101–150, 90.
\textsuperscript{158}Cf. the 4th hiph’il definition (HALOT, 669).
\textsuperscript{159}Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 572.
\textsuperscript{161}Keel, Symbolism of the Biblical World, 65–9; M. Ringgren, “שער,” 255.
5.5 Stanza 4: Onset Letting of Rest by Calming the Storm

Like the first three stanzas, the severity of these sailors’ distress is primarily articulated through the clarity of the situation described, although there are also lexical similarities with other distress psalms. This parable of men trapped on a ship in stormy seas presents a unique picture of distress in the Psalter. It is the only such situation in the Psalms, although it shares a few features in common with the first two chapters of Jonah, another cohesive text. This fourth stanza contains four features which artfully emphasise the overpowering and palpable terror of this situation: (1) verbs of vertical motion (2) nouns denoting the waters of chaos, (3) two existential expressions [vv 26b, 27b], and (4) a description the human body overpowered by the motion of the ship [v 27a].

5.5.1 Verbs of Vertical Motion

This stanza contains a series of five verbs denoting motion in an up-and-down direction. This series of verbs is somewhat similar to the self-contained motion event frames studied throughout chapter 4. We will examine these five verbs in order of appearance. First, in verse 23 we see the first of two occurrences of the verb ירד (to go down [vv 23a, 26a]). This first occurrence of the verb is an idiomatic expression for going down to the seacoast (cf. Jon 1:3; Isa 42:10), and does not directly express the terrifying, self-contained motion that we see later in the stanza, but when read in light of the second occurrence in verse 26, this verb in verse 23 may be a hint of the distress to come. The second occurrence of ירד echoes the first, because those who descended to the seacoast did not expect to descend all the way to its chaotic depths, as verse 26 narrates. Next, in verse 25, we find two verbs which communicate the notion of ascent. The hiph’l of עמד and the polel of רום, both meaning “to raise,” stand in synonymous parallelism, giving vertical expression to the storm which Yahweh creates. The final two verbs of motion, each modified by an adverbial accusative, form a pair of opposites in verse 26a. The verb עלה (to ascend), with its accusative שמים (to the heavens/sky), followed by the second occurrence of the verb ירד (to descend), with its accusative תהומות (to the depths), portray the violent pitching of the ship with exquisite hyperbole. The grammatical development between verses 25 and 26 is quite effective. The verbs of motion in verse 25 are joined to direct accusatives, which set the stage for the intensification expressed through adverbial accusatives—modifying similar verbs of motion—in verse 26. The shift from singular to plural verbs has a similar effect upon the reader. The singular verbs of motion in verse 25 denote Yahweh’s action, leading the reader to the plural verbs of motion in verse 26, where the ship-bound individuals have been swept up in Yahweh’s vertical action. This nightmare of up-and-down motion corresponds well with Talmy’s definition of self-contained motion, discussed at the introduction of chapter four, where the domain of [PALPABLE THREAT] was introduced.
5.5.2 Terms Denoting the Waters of Chaos

This stanza contains a cluster of three terms with cosmological overtones, denoting the primordial ocean (vv 23b, 24b, 26a). If only one of these three were found here by itself, it could lead one to wonder if there are cosmological overtones, or if it is simply talking about the ocean. However the cluster of three, and the frequent reference to the imagery of death in the prior stanzas, leads to the conclusion that the chaos realm is in view. These three terms show significant correlation with רביב lexemes elsewhere in the Psalter, and may prompt readers to activate the cognitive domain [POWERLESSNESS]. In order of appearance, we begin with רבים (mighty waters [v 23b]). The רבים are “regarded as the threatening power of chaos, which could bring death.” This term is “a polemical allusion to the ANE perception of the sea as an unruly force”.

The concept of the primeval ocean in the guise of “mighty waters” (mayim rabbim) is widely attested in the OT. At several points it retains marked overtones of its significance as a destructive cosmic power.

There are seven occurrences of the phrase “mighty waters” (mayim rabbim) in the Psalter. In two of these passages, the context does not directly relate to calamity or trouble (Pss 29:3; 93:4), but rather expresses the power of Yahweh. A majority of the remaining occurrences of this phrase are in רביב– cohesive settings (Pss 18:17; 32:6; 77:20; 107:23). The second term is מצולה (the deep), which refers to the cosmological forces of chaos, and “connote(s) the extremity of someone’s experience of affliction.” This term is also collocated with רביב in Psalm 69 (vv 3, 16) and Jonah 2:4. The third expression of primordial chaos is תהומות (the depths [v 26]). Similar to מצולה, this term is frequently an expression of the murky depths of the underworld, whether it occurs as singular or plural. The term contains allusions to ancient Near Eastern mythology and is used to emphasise the extent of a person’s adversity or heightened trauma.

Hebrew t'hôm is a vigorous and often grim word, which never entirely renounced its mythical past. A primordial strength pervades t'hôm throughout. It stands for: a) the primeval ocean; b) the waters around the earth after creation, which continually threaten the cosmos.

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169 Primitive Conceptions of Death, 59; contra Johnston, Shades of Sheol, 120–1.
These three chaos-related terms for water underscore the text’s assertion that these sailors were not merely struggling with bad weather, but with the forces of chaos threatening their very lives. Death itself had appeared on the scene to claim a few victims. Also, the artistic placement of these three terms throughout the stanza is intriguing. Two of the three underworld water terms are given before the sailor’s problem shows itself. Like the calmness of the initial stage of a roller coaster ride, the placement of these terms serves to heighten the tension for familiar readers and hearers.

5.5.3 Existential Expressions
Verses 26b and 27b are parallel expressions describing the cognitive situation of these sufferers. Verse 26b comments on “their vitality” (נפשם), while v 27b comments on “their skill” (חכמתם) as sailors; i.e. their expertise as men of the sea. Each of the four stanzas makes a grammatically similar assessment of the sufferers involved (vv 5, 12, 18). This emphasis is expanded in the fourth stanza because there are two such statements. The pair of verbs in verses 26b and 27b, each from a hit-prefixed reflexive binyan, present a dual allusion to the liquid, or fluid aspect of these men’s trouble. The root מג means “to melt,” dissolve.” This little Hebrew phrase has obvious psychological overtones. Being tossed up and down by the fluid sea, their vital essence—their life force—was no longer firm, but became fluid itself. The expert men who perform feats on the mighty waters (v 23b) had been reduced to an affective puddle by those same waters. In a similar way, the fluid nature of the raging sea introduced the stark probability that the ship might sink, which is to say, that it would be swallowed by the raging fluid. Thus, verse 27b presents another brilliant creative fusion of the physical predicament and the cognitive processes of these hapless men by presenting the reflexive binyan of the verb “to swallow” (התבלע). This serves to intensify the parabolic presentation of distress as palpable and overpowering trouble, prompting readers to access these domains. When one pictures these sailors soaked to the bone with saltwater constantly lashed by the gale, the reflexive hitpolel of מג (dissolve,

170 “So Death does not merely await his guests, he enters the Cosmos to fetch them,” (Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death, 103).
171 Brown, Driver and Briggs, BDB, 556.
173 “The etymology of the root בלח has not been explained satisfactorily because scholars have been unable to agree as to whether the examples of בלח in the OT must be traced back to and understood in relationship to one, two, or even three roots. In most cases it is clear that the word under consideration comes from the root בלח meaning “to swallow,” which occurs in postbiblical Hebrew and in Aramaic, and has analogies in the other Semitic languages. Therefore, it is etymologically certain that the original meaning of בלח was “to gulp down” or “to swallow,” lit. “to snatch with the mouth and to gulp down through the esophagus,” which is obviously synonymous with ‘ק, “to eat.”... Thus, the suggestions that there are two or three roots בלח must be rejected,” (J. Schüpphaus, “בלח,” Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol II [ed. J. G. Botterweck; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 136–7).
melt) evokes a powerful and pitiful image of water as it were melting away the last fragments of confidence of tiny men and evoking a powerless certainty of impending doom, in the same way that Jesus’ disciples said to him during the storm on the Lake of Galilee, “Do you not care that we are going to drown?” (Mk 4:38). Instead of the everyday event of comfortably swallowing a cup of water, the water itself is juxtaposed and it swallows these seasoned men who supposedly knew what they were doing on the ocean. It is hard to imagine a more compelling word picture of a human response to a distressing situation. Although the literary technique is somewhat different from other distress psalms, the reader is similarly drawn into an experience of the [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT] domains, as well as the [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] domain. The text has nothing to say about any sin committed by the sailors, thus prompting expert readers to supply a negative answer to the question posed by the [GUILT?] domain.

5.5.4 Human Bodies Overpowered by the Motion of the Ship
Verse 27a employs the root חגג (to celebrate a festival) in a way which is unique in the MT: “They kept festival and swayed like the drunk” (יחוגו וינועו כׁשכור). It is possible for the celebrants at a festival to have too much to drink, and therefore to lose their sense of balance and have trouble walking straight. In this case it was the wildly pitching deck of the ship which had utterly overwhelmed their sense of balance. There is no evidence of this type of idiomatic, metaphorical usage of the root חגג anywhere else in the MT. Upon encountering this verb, the reader would initially think of a festival and its accompanying revelry, which leads to the understanding of the phrase as gallows humour, following Gunkel when he wrote, “Sie tanzen” (they dance).174 Thus, as with the first three stanzas, several features in this fourth stanza skillfully describe the palpable terror of this predicament, from which the men were powerless to extricate themselves.

To summarise the results so far, although there are some genre-related differences, the predicaments and deliverances that are described in the four stanzas of Psalm 107 corroborate the cognitive profile of distress that has been outlined in chapters three to seven. The final portion of our analysis of this psalm as a distress exemplar has to do with the four-fold refrain.

5.6 Distress Collocated with Entreaty in the Refrain (vv 6, 13, 19, 28)
Based on the data from chapter 5, we see that the four-fold refrain of Psalm 107 follows each distress story with highly stereotyped language collocating יזביר lexemes with

174 Drunks compensate for their lack of balance with erratic changes in speed and direction, which is similar to the speed and directional changes performed by anyone who has tried to stay upright on a boat deck in violent seas (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 472).
petitionary expressions of the prayerful call upon God and his attentive response. A couple of other examples from Psalm 34 are included below for comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ps 107:6</td>
<td>יזקך אליהם בהר להם והسمعו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 107:13, 19</td>
<td>יזקך אליהם בהר להם והسمعו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 107:28</td>
<td>יזקך אליהם בהר להם והשמיע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 34:7</td>
<td>והזקק אליהם בהר להם והسمعו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 34:18</td>
<td>והזקק אליהם בהר להם והשמיע</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Psalm 107, the final verbs in the four refrains form a chiasm, apparently for no more than stylistic reasons. The two refrains in the centre, following stanzas 2 and 3, conclude with the hiph’l of ישע (to save). The outer refrains, following stanzas 1 and 4, conclude with similar-sounding hiph’l forms of יצא andنزل, respectively. It is intriguing that even with the genre differences and uniqueness on display in Psalm 107, the poem still employsיוֹצָר לגות מֵאֲשֻׂרֵיהֶם lexemes within the same calling-hearing motif that is seen elsewhere in the Psalter. Thus in its use ofיוֹצָר לגות מֵאֲשֻׂרֵיהֶם lexemes, this psalm is a blend of the old (the calling-hearing correlation) and the new (parabolic stories of distress that trigger similar cognitive domains). This four-fold repetition of theיוֹצָר לגות מֵאֲשֻׂרֵיהֶם—cohesive “petition cluster” prompts expert readers to activate the[ENTREATY] domain as well as also possibly prompting them to activate a script with respect to the remainder of the distress frame. As discussed in chapter five, this triggering effect prompts readers to expect information in the text which will correspond to the other domains in the cognitive profile of distress, creating “slots” which the reader seeks to fill. The above study has shown that the psalm provides plenty of information with which readers can fill the available slots in the distress script.

6. Analysis of Ps 107: Conclusions

The central conclusion of this analysis of Psalm 107 is that the generic uniqueness of Psalm 107—with its parabolic presentation and absence of the enemy—exemplifies the cognitive...

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175 This script concept is discussed in chapter 5, section 4.2.
profile of distress in a way that is unique to this poem, yet is in keeping with the attributes of that profile that have been determined in the prior chapters. The force dynamics at work in this psalm are similar to the dynamics discussed in chapters three and four, although they are presented through the lens of parabolic story-telling. The four-fold refrain provides readers with a strong association between the four נקוד lexemes and the parables themselves. The only task that remains at this point is to provide a final summary of all that has been uncovered in this analysis of distress in the Psalter.
The introduction to this dissertation offered a two-fold objective. The first objective was to gain an increased understanding of the meaning of the Psalter’s lexemes by employing a combination of structural and cognitive linguistics. The second objective was to use the information garnered from this linguistic analysis to gain an increased understanding of psalm genres based on the package of similarities among psalms that contain lexemes.

With respect to the first objective, Hjelmslev’s structuralist concept of cohesion was helpful in yielding a set of linguistic data that is collocated with distress lexemes, but largely absent from psalms which lack distress lexemes. The resulting cognitive semantic profile of distress yielded a final tally of five prominent domains associated with lexemes. Chapter 3 pointed out how the distress psalms’ frequency of force-dynamic event frames shows that [POWERLESSNESS] is an important cognitive domain associated with lexemes. Chapter 4 focused on the presentation of self-contained motion in several distress psalms. Both the turbulent sea in Psalms 46 and 77, and the peripatetic, nocturnal enemies in Psalm 59, with their continual motion and sound, provide signals to the expert reader that the [PALPABLE THREAT] domain is part of the semantic frame associated with lexemes in the Psalter. Chapter 5 pointed out the unique role that lexemes play in the Psalter’s expressions of calling upon Yahweh and his attentive response. Amidst this entreaty language, lexemes are the most frequently-occurring shorthand term denoting trouble, thus indicating an association between these lexemes and the [ENTREATY] cognitive domain. Chapter 5 also pointed out how expert readers may experience a script-triggering effect through this entreaty language, prompting them to look for other aspects of the cognitive profile within a given psalm. In this regard, it is interesting that some of the Psalter’s more lengthy force-dynamic discourses are located immediately following statements of entreaty. For instance, in Psalm 10:1, the supplicant’s request for God to be near, and to not hide himself, is immediately followed by a lengthy force-dynamic discourse in verses 2-18. Likewise in Psalm 22:12, the supplicant’s request for God to draw near immediately precedes the lengthy force-dynamic discourse of verses 13-22. Briefer examples of the [POWERLESSNESS] and [ENTREATY] domains in close proximity can be found in Pss 18:5-7, 69:15-18, and 116:1-4, as well as in the first four stanzas of Psalm 107, each ending with an entreaty refrain. This close association between the [ENTREATY] domain and the [POWERLESSNESS] domain serves as an example of the script-triggering potential of such entreaty language.

Chapters 6 and 7 completed the cognitive profile of distress by investigating two further domains that distress psalms have in common with other psalms. The domains [GUILT?] and [EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CAUSE] form an essential aspect of the cognitive profile of
distress—the profile would not be complete without them—although psalms that do not include distress lexemes may also evoke these two domains. Chapter 6 began with the idea that when an expert reader proceeds through any of the Psalter’s many poems that describe people who are enduring various kinds of trouble, the reader brings a question into the reading experience; namely: “Does the party who is in trouble deserve their trouble, or do they not?” This question is common to the reading experience of distress psalms, as well as to many other laments and thanksgivings, etc. Chapter 6 demonstrated that in the earlier portions of the Psalter—particularly the first two books—the probability is high that the reader will arrive at a negative answer to the question posed by the [GUILT?] domain. In the latter portions of the Psalter—particularly in the fifth book—the opposite is the case. Thus, chapter 6 has advanced our understanding of the editorial intent behind the final canonical structure of the Psalter. This chapter demonstrated how historical-corporate occurrences of צרָה lexemes, situated in narrative recollections of distress that feature the Hebrew preterite with vav-consecutive, show a higher probability of eliciting a positive answer to the question posed by the [GUILT?] domain. The Psalter presents a concentration of these historical-corporate occurrences at the seam between the fourth and fifth books. This study sheds further light on our understanding of the ethical, behavioural factors (i.e. the emphasis on deserved distress and on guilty people experiencing distress as discipline from a sovereign God) that underlie the editorial intention that produced the placement of Psalms 106 and 107 at this seam.

Regarding the second overall objective (investigating what can be learned about psalm genres from a study of distress psalms) an important conclusion of this study is that there is a previously-unnoticed generic category in the Psalter associated with distress lexemes. If the generic identity of a text is understood to be polyvalent, where an individual psalm can be rightly assigned more than one generic descriptor, then the commonalities of distress psalms can be brought to the fore without calling prior form-critical studies into serious question. For example, Psalms 18, 22, 46 and 107 can be viewed as very similar poems with respect to the cognitive profile of distress, even though they have traditionally been assigned to four different form-critical categories (respectively: Royal/IT; IL, Hymn of Zion and Community Thanksgiving). In other words, if a psalm’s generic identity can be understood as a multi-axis matrix, then one of the axes on this matrix is that of the צרָה cognitive profile. This leads to the question: Is this multi-axis approach to genre a game that has no end? Can we throw a dart at a list of Hebrew words taped to the wall, and then generate a similar axis for virtually any word in the Psalter? I would suggest not, because of the unique role that צרָה lexemes play in the Psalter’s entreaty language, as discussed in chapter 5. While there may be some additional generic axes in the Psalter that are yet to be discovered—in a manner similar to the present discussion of the distress axis—this is not an exercise that can be carried on infinitely to the level of the absurd. It is a finite endeavour,
simply because of the unique role played by the distress lexemes themselves. Other potential generic axes would have to display a similarly significant role within the Psalter and the same strong degree of cohesion in terms of generic collocations.

Finally, the role of prototype theory is crucial for an accurate understanding of the כ_processesヴィーグ generic axis, because not all distress psalms display the generic characteristics to an equal extent. Prototype theory suggests that this asymmetry is what should be expected, because of the way human beings categorise information and create artifacts, literary or otherwise. Based on the way the three domains [ENTREATY], [POWERLESSNESS] and [PALPABLE THREAT] are represented in the psalm texts themselves, prototype theory can be employed to informally subdivide the כ_processesヴィーグ generic axis into four prototype categories. Psalms which include both a כ_processesヴィーグ–related petition cluster and a sizable block of text giving strong evidence of the [POWERLESSNESS] and/or [PALPABLE THREAT] domain will be classified as prototype category A. Prototype category A includes seven psalms that give particularly strong evidence of distress-related traits (Pss 18, 31, 69, 77, 107, 116 and 118). Category B includes psalms which feature similar, sizable blocks of motion and force-dynamic text. However with these psalms, the כ_processesヴィーグ lexeme is located in a clause which, although similar to a petition cluster, does not technically qualify as such. Prototype category C includes psalms which contain similar, sizable blocks of motion and force-dynamic text, but which include a כ_processesヴィーグ lexeme that is definitely not located within a petition cluster. Prototype category D consists of distress psalms which include, relatively speaking, smaller amounts of motion and force-dynamic language.

As a final application, I just want to note anecdotally that the three primary psalms used by the Evangelists to provide Old Testament contact-points for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Pss 22, 31, and 69) happen to be members of distress prototype categories A and B. I believe that this is an example of the distress sub-genre being intuitively applied by early Christian interpreters of the Psalter. Therefore, the final conclusion of this research is that there are specific, tangible reasons why readers may experience distress psalms as being similar, even though these psalms may be generically dissimilar in other regards. This similarity has been demonstrated to be centred around the cognitive profile of כ_processesヴィーグ lexemes in the Psalter.

1 Prototype theory and related matters have been discussed chapter 1, section 2.3, and chapter 5, section 4.1.
2 As mentioned in chapter 5, I do not claim that ancient readers actually recognised these four categories. These categories are simply a heuristic grid to help demonstrate the reality that some distress psalms are stronger representatives of this generic axis than others.
3 Prototype category B includes Psalms: 9/10 and 22. Scholarly opinion varies regarding precisely what kind of language qualifies as a petition cluster. Bernd Janowski includes statements like Pss 10:1 and 22:12 in his discussion of petition clusters, which suggests that these two psalms may be considered as members of category A. See Janowski, Konfliktgespräche, 53–5.
Prototype category C includes Psalms 46 and 59.

E.g. Pss 37, 54, 102, 143.
Notes


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