"Perhaps there is Hope": Reading Lamentations as a Polyphony of Pain, Penitence, and Protest

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Abstract:
Lamentations consists of multiple speaking voices, expressing a variety of theological perspectives on the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, and interacting dialogically. In seeking to clarify "the" theology of Lamentations, however, interpreters summarise its multiple theological perspectives into a single monologic message. Lamentations is read as either primarily a theodicy, highlighting penitence, or an antitheodicy, highlighting protest.

This thesis reads Lamentations as a Bakhtinian polyphony, attending to individual speaking voices and examining their theological perspectives in turn, as well as the interaction between them. Alongside this dialogic reading, the thesis engages theodic and antitheodic interpretations of Lamentations. It reveals the strategies interpreters employ in support of their theodic or antitheodic readings, observing that Lamentations is ultimately read in keeping with the theological position of the interpreter. Interpreters find in Lamentations either an affirmation or an accusation of the God of the text, according to their ideological commitments. Reading for theodicy, God is just and the message of Lamentations is one of necessary penitence, in order to reverse the devastating punishment that has been inflicted on Jerusalem. Reading for antitheodicy, God is cruel, even abusive, and the message of Lamentations becomes a demonstration of protest against divine injustice.

But the burden of Lamentations is also to express immense pain. While there are elements of both penitence and protest within its pages, I argue that collapsing the "theological message" of Lamentations into one of either protest or penitence does a disservice to the text. Lamentations is better read as a polyphony of pain, penitence, and protest.

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'Perhaps There Is Hope': Reading Lamentations As a Polyphony of Pain, Penitence, and Protest. A Vatican investigation found Karadima guilty in 2011 and sentenced the now 84-year-old to a cloistered life of "penitence and prayer" (NCR, April 25-May 8, 2014). Catholics, priests reject bishop. Approximately 1,300 Catholic faithful, 51 of 120 national lawmakers and 30 priests have taken a stand against Barros' appointment, alleging that he concealed the abuse of former priest Fernando Karadima, who was sentenced by the Vatican in 2011 to a "life of prayer and penitence... These five peaceful protests and nonviolent movements led to meaningful systemic change. There are times when one person’s peaceful actions can bring about more change than anyone can imagine. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., is one such example. Her defiant act symbolized greater civil rights, spreading the message that all people deserve equal seats. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled a year later in 1956, segregation on public buses unconstitutional. "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of In your books of either home reading or individual reading find the above mentioned expressive means and stylistic devices and comment upon their structure and stylistic function. III. Do the following exercises 2. It was there again, more clearly than before: the terrible expression of pain in her eyes; unblinking, unaccepting, unbelieving pain. (D. U.) 3. We were sitting in the cheapest of all the cheap restaurants that cheapen that very cheap and noisy street, the Rue des Petits Champs in Paris.