The Fulfilment of Doom?
The Dialogic Interaction between the Book of Lamentations and the Pre-Exilic/Early Exilic Prophetic Literature.

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, 2003.
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

It has long been noted that the book of Lamentations shares, at least in part, a theological outlook with the prophetic literature that the destruction of Jerusalem was the result of Yahweh's decisive action against the sins of the nation. Too often, however, this relationship has simply been presupposed, or assumed to be a relationship of shared perspective. To date, there has been no systematic exploration of how it is that Lamentations accepts and/or modifies the theological outlook of the prophetic literature. In addition, when the theology of the prophets has been discussed in relation to Lamentations, there has been a tendency to group all the prophetic books together as if they existed as a homogeneous whole, and shared amongst themselves a singular outlook. This tendency to simplify the theological complexity of the prophetic literature coincides with a similar tendency to reduce the theology of Lamentations to simple, monolithic assertions. Drawing on the literary insights of Mikhail Bakhtin, this study aims to explore in detail the nature of the relationship between Lamentations and the pre-exilic/exilic prophetic literature. Drawing on the notions of dialogism, polyphony and double-voicing, the study argues that Lamentations enters into a dialogic relationship with the prophetic literature, a relationship which both affirms and subverts that literature. Central to the acknowledgment of the dialogic interaction between Lamentations and the prophetic literature is the recognition of Lamentations as a multivalent, polyphonic text in which unmerged viewpoints exist in a tension filled relationship.
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Acknowledgments

My deepest thanks go first and foremost to Dr. Sue Boorer; supervisor, mentor and friend. Thank you for your teaching, which introduced in me a love of the Hebrew bible, and taught me the importance of sound method and solid research. Thank you for your patient and astute guidance, for your meticulous feedback, and for always pushing me to go further. Most of all, thank you for your confidence in me and for helping me to believe that I would get there in the end.

Thanks also to Dr. Jim Trotter, who introduced me to the book of Lamentations, and was always ready for a caffeine fix.

There are many more people to thank, without whose support I would have given up long ago. To fellow post graduate students: to Gaye, with whom I have shared an office, friendship, endless cups of coffee, and just a few tears; to Yvonne, for more coffee, lunch breaks, laughs and tears; to Vicki, Kim and the politics people.

To my proof readers - Alison, Joy, Phil, Mum and Dad - thank you for your attention to detail and your patience, and for the many hours of work you did.

Special thanks must go to friends who have supported me in so many ways. To all who have listened to my complaints and encouraged me - thanks, and especially to Anne, Lisa, Carmel, Kerry, and the Monday night study group.

Last, but not at all least, enormous thanks go to my family. To my parents, Jim and Dorothy, who have always encouraged me, have looked after children during the many years I have been studying, and promised me a case of champagne when I finally finished. To my husband Phil, and my sons Aidan and Callum. What can I say? You have borne the brunt of my moods - the highs and the lows - always loving me and cheering me on. You have put up with my long hours, my absences, and my tears, and shared lots of joy and laughter. Thank you. Your love means everything.