The Psalter is a considerably more emotionally salient biblical book than any other part of the Scripture. Examining the emotional states of the Psalmist, his personal religious experience, and the way it is expressed in psalmodic literature is the objective of this paper.

**PARRHESIA OF THE PSALMS**

_Parrhesia._ The Psalmist speaks openly of his: _displeasure_ (fear, resentment, anger), or _pleasure_ (joy, hope, gratification). His reactions and fears of mortal dangers is particularly fascinating. In such situations the way he speaks of his personal and religious experience is unhindered and direct. The _parrhesia_, refers to an open, sincere an unhindered direct speech, _oratio libera_ (lit. ‘free speech’).¹ _Parrhesia_ is also a very personal mode of speech. Its hallmark is a speech which is valiantly different from the surrounding majority and potentially a risk making endeavour. It is also characteristic of that it touches directly and openly to subjects which are generally either unpleasant (_death_) or unconventional (_such

¹ The term _parrhesia_ as a mode of speech, is a collocation of: _pan_ (=all) and _rhēsis_ (= speech/speak). The term as it appears firstly we find in the hellenistic literature of 5 cent. BC.

In the NT, we have it in Mk 8:32, on the occasion where Jesus begun to announce his forthcoming death: “He spoke this openly (καὶ παρρησίᾳ τὸν λόγον ἐλάλησεν). Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him”. The term then appears in the gospel of John (Joh 7:4,13,26; 10:24; 11:14,54; 16:25,29; 18:20).

In John 7:13 in reference to Jesus’ person and his deeds, the texts says that “no one spoke openly about him” (οὐδὲς μίαν παρρησίαν ἐλάλησεν πρὸς αὐτόν). In the same chapter it has been remarked that Jesus taught “openly (ἐδει παρρησίαν λαλῆσαι) and they say nothing to him” (Joh 7:26).

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as the existentialist and nihilistic speeches of Ecclesiastes). It should not be confused with other speech modes. Like euphemisms or other language conventions.

It is characteristic of poetic sections and biblical Wisdom in OT literature (Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes). Leupold will say for the Ecclesiastes’ speech to be “extravagant” (Leupold, 1952:28).² Michel Foucault describes parrhesia as that speech which was:

not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity.³

This is particularly true of Job and the finest examples of parrhetic speech we find in the book of Job. As in the final pronouncement on Job in Job 42:7: “you have not spoken rightly concerning me, as has my servant Job”. Also, condemned by his pious friends Job spoke sincerely and openly of his condition in the way he feels about YHWH.⁴ He pleaded with his friends:

Be silent, let me alone! that I may speak and give vent to my feelings” (Jb 13:13).⁵

In the words of Thomas Merton, parrhesia is: “Our destiny (is) to live out what we think”.⁶ Following Foucault and Merton, it is apt to note that biblical Job and the Psalmist were indeed the biblical parrhetic characters. The psalmist may only seem to be more timid in his parrhetic speech than Job.

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² Leupold rightly notes that Ecclesiastes’ (parrhetic) language is borne and upheld by his phrase “under the sun” (cf.Leupold:28).
³ In “Discourse and Truth: the problematization of parrhesia”.
⁴ The concluding remarks of the book presents God speaking to Eliphaz one of Job’s friends and counselors. The Almighty pronounces the following verdict on Elipahz and his friends: “I am angry with you and with your two friends; for you have not spoken rightly concerning me, as has my servant Job” (Jb 42:7), i.e. “rightly” or “sincerely”. Textually, the intensity of the situation is accentuated by niphal ptcp of (כָלְעָן) כָּלִעֲן. For the same niphal ptcp of the verb כָּלְעָן (= establish, be certain, truthful), see Ps 5:10: „for there is no sincerity in their mouths“.
⁵ The grammar of BH in such parrhetic speech is indicative, since in the majority of cases we find the intensive piel or cohortative forms.
⁶ in the more colloquial slanguage this can be translated as: ‘shut up and listen to me’.

⁷ the life and work of Thomas Merton may be easily described as parrhetic. In his Thoughts in solitude, Merton expresses his parrhetic attitudes in the following words: “Our destiny is to live out what we think”. The works and legacy of Thomas Merton today has become a life’s calling of Jonathan Montaldo.

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However, in his \textit{thanatophobic experiences} he displays even more direct and unhindered speech, not withholding or in any ways keeping in hiding the way he feels about his condition or God’s treatment of him. The \textit{imprecatory} (and self-imprecatory) psalms are the most powerful parrhetic speech in the Psalter. There in the fear for his life the psalmist speaks unusually openly about his fate and the fate of his (or YHWH’s) enemies.

\begin{quote}
if there is wrong in my hands, \\
if I have requited my friend with evil \\
or plundered my enemy without cause, \\
let the enemy pursue me and overtake me, \\
and let him trample my life to the ground, \\
and lay my soul in the dust (Ps 7:4f)
\end{quote}

The whole sentiment here is highly emotionally charged The following lines abound in motion and emotion vocabulary. The motion may yet be fictive and potentialy only in future terms. The short passage acumulates verbs which we categorize as verbs of \textit{surrounding} and \textit{following} (לָשֵׁב) or \textit{throwing} and \textit{falling} (רָמֶשׁ).

\textbf{THANATOPHOBIA}

The core of the Psalmist's emotional state is apprehension and unease in relation to his destiny. Existentialist anguish can be found in a number of Psalms, and not only within the \textit{lament group} (cf.Pss 13; 22; etc.). His unease can be easily traced even in Psalms of \textit{confidence} (cf.Pss 11; 16; etc.).\footnote{Westermann considers lament as the 'basic form of psalmic expression' (in Brueggemann, The Message of..,p.18)}

There are several factors form the pretext to thanatophobic overtones.
One is the threat from his pursuers and enemies, whoever they may be (cf. Pss 13; 18). Another is the Psalmist's mortal fear of being abandoned by God. This he regards as a death sentence. The Psalmist's anguish becomes an important leitmotif.
ORIENTATIONAL METAPHORS

Spatial orientation is not only physical, it is cognitive and mental in fictivity of motion. George Lakoff in his now already famed *Metaphors we live by*, shows that metaphors are not a matter of extraordinary, but indeed ordinary language. He portrays a number of conceptual systems we talk and by our speech live by. He calls them *orientational metaphors*. The spatial orientation is due to the facts that we have bodies which function and move within the three-dimensional space. Fundamentally bound by horizontal and vertical orientation. The postures of our bodies or our movements are bound by physical space, but we are also governed by orientational metaphors.

Orientational metaphors is a concept of spatial orientation in our mental spaces. Mental spaces being our “mental constructs in which alternative representations of states of affairs are held” (cf. Cruse, 2004:331). Spatial language and its conceptualizations, has a special place in our mental spaces. It comes from some physical facts as well as cultural or religious experiences. This conceptual make-ups in orientational metaphors seem to be universal and cross-cultural.

*Metaphors of space*

In the spatial orientation, at least that of the metaphoric kind, the vertical dimension is so much present that we might reckon it predominant. In the spatial conceptual realm, without too much difficulty we can easily note how many ‘ups’ and ‘downs’, the ‘ascendings’ and the ‘descendings’, the ‘hights’ and ‘depths’ we have.

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8 the notion of ‘mental space’ has been introduced by Gilles Fauconnier in 1985: *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language* (MIT Press) (1994, 2nd ed.). Cf.

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Besides all this, how this vertical spatial category frequently touches the emotional and the religious grounds of our experience.

Time, space, emotion

Any motion, even if maintained only as fictive, has strongly spatial-orientational references. In this three dimensional spatial terms, there is the motional-spatial framework. This seems to be so far a simple physical fact.⁹

The temporal axis and dimension is closely linked to the motion-space dimension. Our spatial orientation and understanding of time are inseparable. So we observe that in most cultures (and languages), moving forward in temporal terms designates the future. Thus the future is in front, still coming (before us); while the past is behind us; and moves or passes away (from us). Then looking back is a reminiscence of the past.¹⁰ That is why it also makes: “good biological sense that time should be understood in terms of things and motion” (cf. Radden, 2004).

Coincidentally, our general awareness of spatio-temporal dimension (time and space), in this motional and spatial terms, we also display, and at times quite strongly, how we feel about all these spatio-temporal realities.Spatial and temporal axis is paralleled with motional-emotional axis. How do the lines of the spatial-temporal and the

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⁹ in the Cartesian geometry every point is being described in terms of three coordinates. The three dimensions being the horizontal: length and width; and the vertical dimension: the depth (i.e. up and down). This is also known as the Euclidean space; as opposed to the curved space of the non-Euclidean geometry; i.e. the Einstein’s theory of relativity where in addition to the spatial coordinates there is the time as another temporal, forth coordinate.

¹⁰ „we talk about time using a spatial vocabulary. Individuals and other objects ‘move’ on a time axis from ‘time point’ to ‘time point’. So we find ourselves close to Christmas, we reach the end of the week, we go past the deadline, we do something on Tuesday, or at three o’clock” (Fauconnier, 1997:26). On the subject matter Lakoff here also asserts that: „in some cultures the future is in front of us, whereas in others it is in back” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003:14). It would be beneficial if Lakoff provided an example of a culture where the future lies behind and not in front (!?).

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motional-emotional axis cross and relate in the emotionally salient world of the psalter is a major part of this work.

For example, it is true to say that:

da given duration of time is experienced as lasting longer or shorter depending on our state of awareness and the amount of information registered. For example, duration of time in situations of heightened awareness and high information processing as in suffering or danger is experienced as passing more slowly, while the duration of time in situations of low information processing as in routine activities appears to be passing more quickly” (Radden, 2004).

Yet, it seems that even in the relatively routine situation and awareness of the life’s transience, when there may not be an imminent face of danger, duration of time seem to be passing more quickly. The psalmist’s musing over time duration and life’s years for which he says:

The years of our life are threescore and ten.,
yet their span is but toil (עמל) and trouble ( الجهاد);
they are soon gone, they are soon gone ( העון),
and we fly away ( מעון) (Ps 90:10)

In the suffering conditions, the psalmist asks, How long, O Lord?” ( צד אנה) (Ps 13) or

My soul also is sorely troubled.
But thou, O LORD -- how long?” ( צד מתן) (Ps 6:3).11

It has been proved again and again, and for quite a while, the emotional aspects were treated as of a lesser value and cognitively irrelevant. Even in terms of spatial metaphors the reason has been placed ‘up’, while the emotions are being put ‘down’.12

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11 For him these are the “times of trouble” ( פס 9:10). Cf. כה (= time).
12 For this Lakoff give a short and a concise explanation: „In our culture people view themselves as being in control over animals, plants, and their physical environment, and it is their unique ability to reason that palces human beings above other animals and gives them this control. Control is up thus provides a basis for man is up and therefore rational is up” (Lakoff,2003:17).
Past and passed away

Typically for the grammar of death, it is cynically threatening state of affair. When the time and space motions are emotionally so salient that the thanatophobic streak vein comes so assertive.

It is the past that is, the passed life, the hopelessnes and the despair in face of the fact that: “my days are passed away (ימי עברו)” (Jb 17:11). In the view of this one can even find certain emotional aggressiveness:

But as for you all,
do ye return, and come now;and I shall not find a wise man among you (Jb 17:10).

The psalmist (cf. Ps 103:16) is also well aware that the motion through space and time is the life’s transience and is like if the wind “passes over him” (כי רוח עברה וו). This passing away, the past, and the spatio-temporal moving away from (life), can be so disturbing for the biblical author and its happening being so fast that even “his home” does not remember him anymore (cannot recognise him).13

13 Dahood rightly notes that המִסְיָבִים (lit.) “his place” clearly bears nuance of his own home and one’s abode. So in Job 7: “He shall not again return to his house; his place shall know him no more” (7:10) (cf.Dahood,PSS III:29)

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MOTIONAL PATTERN

Motion is an event but it is also a concept which permeate our mental and cognitive experience, reflected in our language expressions. Directionality (vertical-horizontal) and manner (of motion) has particular place in the nature of the experience of the psalmist. For example, in the manner of motion, the psalmsit while in troublesome situations and mortal dangers urges God to “haste” (בהל) (Ps 104:29) or “hurry” ($$$) (Ps 38:23, 22:20). In his distress he is restless:

I am overcome by my trouble.
I am restless (Ps 55:2)

VERTICALITY

Up is good-down is bad. In the polar opposites and the spatial category of verticality and vertical dimension. In fictive motional pattern we often hear, as a familiar spatial deictic expressions: up there or down here. Even when it is not really in terms of higher or lower grounds - up and down.14

Why is up better than down? This is due to two particular factors.

One is the (physical) fact that the canonical orientation of human beings is upright. Followed by reasoning (conceptual) that the ‘upright’ and the ‘up’ is better than that what is ‘down’.15 In short, life is ‘up’ and death is ‘down’. Biblical Lazarus, just like Jesus, “rose from the dead”. This of course, conceptually seems quite natural, one does not descend

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14 For example the Hebrew verb תָּלָה (= going up, ascend), like in many (other) language uses may not necessarily refer to the higher ground of being elevated up. Egs. Jos 7:4; Jdg 6:35; 2Sam 2:2, etc.

15 There is a number of examples for the conceptual orientational metaphors. Chiefly in relation to vertically vectorialized experience. Feeling happy and healthy is ‘up’, while being sad or sick is being ‘low’ and ‘down’. One ‘wakes up’ or ‘gets up’ (conscious); and it is going down while ‘falling asleep’ or ‘dying down’ when diminishing in intensity or liveliness, like ‘falling ill’ or ‘going down with flue’ (uncoscious). For the convenience sake Lakoff groups them in the following clusters: * happy is up; sad is down / * having control is up; being subject is down / * more is up; less is down / * good is up; bad is down / * high status is up; low status is down / * foreseeable future events are up and ahead / * rational is up; emotional is down (Lakoff,2003:15-24).

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from the dead. In terms of spatial metaphors one cannot get lower than that. Death is as
down as one can get; and if there is a sudden death occuring then we say “drop dead”.

Pulled down
.

Raised up
.

From the brink of Sheol I call;
my heart grows faint.
Raise me up (מלך),
set me on a rock (Ps 61:3) (NAB)

One can ‘stand up’, yet it is a mere breath that will be dispersed as vapour..

thou hast made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing in thy sight.
Surely every man stands (כף) as a mere breath! (Ps 39:6)
HORIZONTAL

The horizontal metaphorical spatial orientation, movements and divisions are also very much at hand. In modern political discourse we have the political ‘right’ and ‘left’. In the temporal motion conception of space orientation we may look ‘forward’ to seeing you’, or just ‘look back to good old days’.

Left and right

When Abram said to his cousin Lot: “If you prefer the left, I will go to the right” (Gen 13:9), he did not refer to his or Lot’s political orientation. It signified their separation of going different ways.

As for the vigour and power on the right or left hand-side; the history of religion explicates this in the androgynous terms and nature of human beings. That is what also biblical texts witness that the right side, placement or right hand, has the more privileged role, power and vigour and with more immediate authority (cf. Mat 22:44). It is also the place of shelter and protection. The psalmist repeatedly invoked the protection of the right hand of Yahweh (Pss 16:8; 17:17). He is secured there and will not be moved. Yahweh’s right hand gives the psalmist his support (18:35) and is always victorious (20:7; 110:5; 118:15). The psalmist is safe and secured that “your right hand will find out those who hate you” (Ps 21:9). In fact the psalmist always tilts his eyes to the right to see if there

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16 some rabinic, and not only rabinic, but in the history of religions, on the horizontal dividing line, left-right, was the interpretation of the androgynous nature of the human being, i.e. referring to human sexuality and the coexistential aspects and duality of both the feminine and the masculine elements in the human being. According to some religious interpretations, the primeval man contained both genders in the same being. The traditional horizontal left-right gender division would give the right to the masculine element, and the left to the feminine. In the helladic mythology there were popular anasyromenous representations, sometimes of divinities with female heads and the exposed male (phallic) genitals.

17 “with the Lord at my right hand (דִּבַּר בְּפִי יְהוָה), I shall never be shaken (לָא יֹסֵף)” (Ps 16:8)

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is anyone to safeguard him: “I look to my right hand, but no friend is there. There is no escape for me; no one cares for me” (Ps 142:5). The horizontal motion in the psalmist’s emotional makeup has also a special place. Majority of hebrew verbs of the manner of motion are on the horizontal motional plane. In the psalmist’s case also considerably adding to the emotional salience.

**MANNER**

In times of need and mortal fear the psalmist urges haste for help, he would if he can fly away (Ps 139:9). He wanders restlessly (רַנד) while waiting for God's intervention and reply.

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18 the right and the right hand is always represented as stronger, more responsible and accountable. The evangelist Matthew warns that your left hand does not need to know what your right hand does (Mat 6:3). Sitting or sleeping at one's right (hand) side is a sign of given authority or special protection (Mat 22:44; 25:33-34). That is why at the great judgment day, the sheep will be placed „at his right hand“ and the goats „at the left“ (Mat 25:33).

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SUMMARY:

The Psalmodic language of death carries a specific linguistic representation whereas the dynamics of the verbs of motion have a particular place and role, more specifically in the emotional experience of the psalmist.

While death is the ultimate cessation of motion, the dynamics of the linguistic representation of the Psalmist’s thanatophobia is anything but static. It is comprehensively conveyed by motional grammar and verbs of motion. Death is presented as departure; in directional terms it is downward movement (either to dust or to the Pit). In emotional terms it is physical and mental (psychomotor) agitation.

Finally, the Psalmist's experience is inherent to his piety, that surpasses merely a 'cultic mode of speech' as some will have it.