The Curse of Ham: An Africentric-Postcolonial reading of Genesis 9:18-27 in the context of the Coloured People of the Cape, South Africa

by

André Christian Allies

Thesis presented for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department for the Study of Religions

(Faculty of Humanities)

University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Prof. Asonzeh Ukah

22 May 2024

Declaration

I hereby declare that:

The Curse of Ham: An Africentric-Postcolonial reading of Genesis 9:18-27 in the context of the Coloured People of the Cape, South Africa

is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or assessment in any other university, and that all the sources I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature: ..... Signed by candidate **Date: .....**

André Christian Allies

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the history of the interpretation of Genesis 9:18-27, erroneously referred to as 'the curse of Ham' and its application in the social-cultural history of the coloured people of the Cape in South Africa. The term *Gam* (which is the Afrikaans word for 'Ham') is embraced and accepted by many coloured people on the Cape Flats as a descriptor of their ethnic and cultural identity. Yet also, many other coloured people reject this concept of *Gam* given the connotations of slavery and servitude that are connected to it. This dissertation unpacks the notion of *Gam*, and the ethnic and racial classification 'coloured', and seeks to trace the origins of these terminologies and concepts dating back to the colonial period, and how they came to be linked to the biblical 'Ham'. This dissertation interrogates the extent to which rhetoric was used for the promotion of the curse of Ham (for example, *Separatism* and *Chosen people*), to justify the enslavement of Black people, for slavery was considered a godly imperative to be used by the colonisers and slavedrivers to cure the degradation of the African slave. In unpacking the biblical text, an Africentric – postcolonial interpretation is used as a tool to analyse, reread, and reconstruct the text. This dissertation determines how this text has been used ideologically to justify oppression and marginalization of dark-skinned people. This dissertation concludes with demythologising the terms *Gam* and 'coloured', starting with the biblical text and the colonial narratives that supported oppressive and exploitative interpretations, and a consideration of these terms to be used as catalysts for inclusivity and nation-building. It ends by highlighting the unique contribution that coloured people can bring about when they embrace their African-ness, knowing that every other person in South Africa, irrespective of ethnicity or race, has a connection with the coloured people of the Cape because of the heterogeneity of the coloured people.

Abbreviations

ABI	African Biblical Interpretation
ANC	African National Congress
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BEC	Basic Ecclesial Communities
CMA	Cape Mixed Ancestry
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
GAA	Group Areas Act
IAA	Immorality Amendment Act
LMS	London Missionary Society
MMA	Mixed Marriages Act
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NP	National Party
PRA	Population Registration Act
RSV	Revised Standard Version of the Bible
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCT	University oof Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
VOC	*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (Dutch East India Company)

Acknowledgments

‘Great and wonderful are thy deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are thy ways,
O King of the ages!
Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, O Lord?
For thou alone art holy.
All nations shall come and worship thee,
for thy judgments have been revealed.’
(Revelation 15: 3-4, Revised Standard Version)

To God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,
be praise and honour, from all peoples, all creatures, from eternity to eternity.
Amen.

I want to acknowledge and thank the two parishes during this time of research, the Parishes of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kensington, and the Church of All Saints, Durbanville. Much appreciation for your patience and encouragement of your parish priest during this time of my research. A vote of thanks to the leadership of the parish of All Saints for allowing me an extended period of sabbatical time to complete this study. Much appreciated.

A vote of thanks to Freda Valentine for sourcing and supplying me with books, documents, and other resources needed for this research. A vote of thanks to Dorothea Hendricks for her guidance on the technicalities and the mechanics of doing research. And a vote of thanks to Jacinth Dolby for your excellent editing skills. Thank you so very much indeed.

To my supervisor, mentor, and advisor, Prof Asonzeh Ukah, my heartfelt appreciation for the encouragement, patience, inspiration, and support given me during this time. I appreciate your availability, whether in person or otherwise, and your kind, welcoming spirit, and wisdom.

Finally, a special word of thanks to my wife and family, who often had to put up with my absence during important family gatherings due to my engagement with this project. Thank you, Elizabeth, Carmen and Karabo, Warren and Alethea, and my grandchildren Eli, Lereko and Sophia!

For my two grandsons,

Eli Itumeleng Dithloiso

and

Lereko Dré Dithloiso

And my granddaughter

Sophia Allies

Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Locating myself

I was born and bred on the sandy Cape Flats[1] of Cape Town; an area designated for the coloured population group to accommodate the forced removals of Black people in terms of the Group Areas Act of 1950. From a young age I was exposed to the brutality of the *apartheid* ideology[2], as I witnessed the segregation of white and non-white people on public transport systems, a commodity that we as a family was very much dependent upon. The brutality is not so much based on the segregation of white and non-white (even though this is also problematic), but rather the fact that a maximum number of seats in public transport were reserved for a minority of people, while the majority of the Black masses were forced onto a minimum number of seats. Non-white people were forced to sit upstairs in public buses, while the bottom seats were reserved for whites! On a public train, with eight carriages, the very last two were for non-white people (known as third class seating), two more carriages for first class seating for non-whites, and the remaining four carriages for white people only, who formed a minority by far. The General Post Office had two entrances: one for whites only, and another for non-white people. Given the population demographics of Cape Town, the non-white queue would inevitably have been much longer than the white queue, and the person attending to the services

[1] Black and coloured townships south-east of the central business district of Cape Town are normally referred to as the Cape Flats. They have also been described as 'apartheid's dumping ground'. People classified as 'non-White' were forcibly removed from more central urban areas designated for white people under the Group Areas Act.

[2] There is a plurality of meanings associated with the word 'ideology'. Honderich (1995: 392) defines it as 'a set of beliefs or philosophies attributed to a person or group of persons, especially those held for reasons that are not purely epistemic'. The use of the word in this thesis is based on a set of beliefs, political, social and religious, on which people or countries base their actions.

to be delivered will only serve the people in the non-white queue once there was no-one in the white queue. During my final year in high school (1979), my classmates and I decided to spend our end of year farewell function at Clovelly Beach. Hardly had we arrived there, when a police officer came to inform us that the residents in the surrounding area (white people) had lodged a complaint about our presence on the beach, and we were required to leave immediately, or run the risk of being arrested and charged for trespassing on a whites-only beach. Also, during my final year at high school, as people of colour, we could not make application to a university like the University of Cape Town (UCT) for our tertiary education, unless the course that we wanted to register for was not offered at the three designated universities for Black people[3] in South Africa, and one's application had been approved by permission of the national Minister of Education. My awareness of the injustices inflicted on Black people started in my primary school education, as our educators conscientized us about the struggle for justice for all. During the Soweto uprisings in 1976, my second year in high school, we decided to join in on the protest actions in solidarity with our fellow comrades in Johannesburg. Fifteen-year-old Christopher Truter, my contemporary, was the first student in Cape Town to be killed by the security police, on 25 August 1976 (TRC, 1996: 854). Many others were to follow, and many were detained without trial, but that did not deter us from getting involved in the protest actions for justice for all. Our involvement with protest actions would provide us opportunities to learn how to organise among the student body, how to forge connections with like-minded groups

[3] The University of the Western Cape (in Bellville) was established in 1959 by the South African government for coloured people only; the University of Fort Hare (in Alice in the Eastern Cape) was established in 1916 for Black African people only; and the University of Durban-Westville was established in the 1960's as the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay. All other universities in the country (Stellenbosch, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Orange Free State, Rhodes University, Witwatersrand, Natal, and Cape Town) were reserved for white people only, as promulgated by The Universities Amendment Act of 1959. In the early 1950's the South African government established the University College of the North at Turfloop for the Bapedi, Basotho, and Batswana African ethnic groups; the University College of Zululand at Ngoya for the Zulus; the University College of the Western Cape in Bellville for coloureds; and the University College of Durban-Westville for Indians / Asians. These new institutions were affiliated with the correspondence-based University of South Africa, which governed their curricula and academic matters, to ensure that academic standards were maintained. They did not achieve full university status until 1969 (see Mabokela, 1997: 423-424).

of people throughout the country and beyond, how to arrange and mobilise mass demonstrations without using any technology that might be tapped into by the security police, and yet get our message across to the majority of students, and how to empower each other in workshops and other youth gatherings. Our political awareness was also informed by our faith understanding for justice and peace. I was born into and raised in the Christian tradition of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (nowadays known as the Anglican Church of Southern Africa), where we were constantly reminded to pray for our struggle heroes, those banned, those in prison, and those in exile. By the late 1970's I was actively involved in the youth structures of the church, and in the early eighties I took up the leadership of the youth group at our local church. Instead of calling ourselves a Youth Club (as had been the case with the youth groups before us), we decided to call ourselves a Youth Movement (to align ourselves with the Mass Democratic Movement at the time in our country). By the time of the launch of the United Democratic Front (20 August 1983), most of the local church youth groups had organised themselves into an Inter-Church Youth Movement (ICY), who in turn was a constituent member of the United Democratic Front. My faith understanding was shaped and moulded to take into consideration the current political scenario, and not to isolate our faith from the social reality around us. On the day when Nelson Mandela was set free from prison by the apartheid government, we were there at the Parade in Cape Town to listen to his first public speech since his incarceration. We celebrated with every arrival of our political heroes who returned home after decades of being exiled. And we mourned, and we were angry, when our beloved Chris Hani was assassinated because he was considered a threat to white people's power and control. We celebrated with great joy the inauguration of the first democratically elected government in South African history. What an absolute privilege to have been part of this momentous history making within the small corner that I found myself.

In this dissertation my work is primarily focused on the coloured people of the Cape. Within the social and racial stratification of both apartheid South Africa and the new South African dispensation, I would be classified as 'coloured'. I do consider myself, however, as a Black person, for my theological and political consciousness have been moulded and shaped by the Black Consciousness Movement. I agree with Tinyiko Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar (2002: 5-6) when they argue, 'In terms of this understanding, "blackness (or African-ness for that matter), is a condition - a material, spiritual and cultural condition", that encompasses an approach to and attitude of life in South Africa as an existential condition brought about by historical marginalization and victimization of the majority by White supremacy … Our own biographies have been scarred by the effects of Apartheid White supremacist practices'. I want to echo the words of Maluleke and Nadar about the ruthless oppression and suppression inflicted upon the majority Black populace, even though some (like the South African Indian population, and the coloured population) have been more privileged in comparison to the Africans under apartheid. Unlike the majority black population in the rest of the country, coloured people shared the colonial space of the Cape with the colonialists for centuries (Erasmus, 2001: 21), where racial segregation was initiated and practiced long before the formal enactment of apartheid in 1948. By the second half of the eighteenth century most of the Khoikhoi[4] living under colonial rule were in the position of servants (Marais, 1957: 11-12). Many of the slaves were imported to the Cape from Maritime Southeast Asia by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Cape Town, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was a racially and culturally diverse community, with a mix of Khoisan[5], slaves from different continents,

[4] The Khoikhoi are known generally as the 'First Nation' or 'the First People' who owned and occupied the land where what is now Cape Town. They were the first native people to encounter the Dutch settlers in the mid-seventeenth century.

[5] 'Khoisan' is a collective term that refers to two distinctive groups of people, the Khoikhoi (pastoralists) and the San (hunter-gatherers)

and Europeans (Hendricks, 2001:36). Cape Town became the ‘cradle of racial discrimination’ in South Africa (Ahluwalia & Zageye, 2003:260).

In this dissertation, the use of the word ‘coloured’ will be rendered without the inverted commas, nor the prefix ‘so-called’. Many groups of people referred to as coloured, point blankly reject this label, and argues for a broader black South African identity, while many others proudly embrace the term as an authentic ethnic identity. In this dissertation I will recognise the various expressions with regards the term ‘coloured’ but wish not to render the description as either ‘so-called’ nor render it in inverted commas. In addition to this, I will also not capitalize the first letter of the term, unless, of course, the word appears at the beginning of a sentence. This is in keeping with the many scholars during the apartheid period who refused to capitalize the first letter of the term in opposition to the enforced classification of the South African population in racial and ethnic categories. A further justification is that the term ‘coloured’ was not derived from a proper noun, hence there is no need to capitalize it (see Adhikari, 2005: xv).

1.2 Statement of the problem

This thesis is a study of the history of interpretation of Genesis 9:18-27, erroneously referred to as ‘the curse of Ham’ and its application in the social-cultural history of the coloured people of the Cape in South Africa. The history of interpretation of this text indicates, according to some scholars, that interpreters have often sought to ‘justify their particular history, culture, and race by developing self-serving theological constructs’ (Felder 1991: 132). This study will investigate the history of interpretation of the biblical text of Genesis 9, and its application with reference to the coloured people of the Cape.

This study begins with a discussion of the identity-formation of the coloured people of the Cape from the colonial period to the post-apartheid South Africa. It explores the connection of the slave history and its legacy to the coloured people of the Cape. The so-called 'curse of Ham' derives its legitimacy from interpretative lenses on Genesis 9:18-27. Using an Africentric[6] – Postcolonial biblical interpretation, this research intends to analyse Genesis 9:18-27, with the hope of reconstructing the reading of the curse narrative, offering a different interpretation of the text within the context of the coloured community of the Cape.

Coloured people of South Africa have always been regarded as being of 'mixed race'. The South African racial hierarchy regard them as the 'in-between' racial group, distinct from the 'historically dominant white minority and the numerically preponderant African population' (Adhikari, 2006a: 468). The label *coloured* was not used until 1834. From this date forward it was used to describe both the Khoikhoi (who were placed on an equal legal and political footing by Ordinance 50 of 1828), and the slave communities emancipated in 1834 (du Pré, 1994: 9). Mohamed Adhikari (1992: 97) suggests three ways in which coloured identity was influenced and formed by slavery: (i) slavery assisted in creating an embryonic sense of community to the many culturally diverse people that were brought to the Cape as slaves. Such people were subjected to a common mingling experience which laid the foundation for a future coloured identity. (ii) slavery created a social environment in which other black labouring poor could find solidarity and identification; and (iii) the legacy of slavery continued into the late nineteenth century and contributed to the negative stereotyping of coloured people by the colonists. Despite the fact that non-whites at the Cape were given legal and political franchise (1828, 1854, 1872) under British colonial rule, their '"Hottentot" laws damaged the position

[6] Africentric is preferred because the name of the continent is Afri-ca and not Afro-ca (Adama, 2020: 3). Afrocentric sounds as if we are copying the term 'Eurocentric'.

and status of coloured people for all time because they conferred upon people of colour the status and stigma of inferiority' (du Pré, 1994:14). Coloured people will be ever dependent upon their white masters for a livelihood. As du Pré points out: 'the Afrikaner enslaved the coloured labourer, stripped him of dignity, consigned him to a life of humiliation and ensured that he would always remain passive, harmless and subservient – a virtual political and psychological automation' (du Pré, 1994: 110). The power dynamics of the master-servant relationship and black and white social interaction were shaped and formed under the influence of slavery in the southwestern part of the Cape (Adhikari, 1992: 98).

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was the first colonial power to govern the Cape Colony. The Dutch Reformed Church was considered the preferred public church in the Netherlands. Reformed Christianity, civic responsibility and Republic freedom were important tenets for the VOC, hence the need for ordained ministers and lay-readers in the colonies to serve the religious needs of the political leadership of its empire (Groenewald 2010: 27–28). Adhikari asserts that the Hamitic myth 'has been part of South African racial discourse since the days of the Dutch colonial rule and, as the contemporary use of the word *Gam*[7] indicates, at a popular level the supposed racial attributes of coloured people are still partly ascribed to their servile past' (Adhikari, 1992: 95–96; emphasis added). During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the slaves formed the largest group of people in the Cape. This number may have dwindled somewhat to about a third of the Cape's population by 1830 (after the emancipation of slaves), yet the slaves, through assimilation with other immigrants and the indigenous Khoisan, are considered the 'cradle of coloured group consciousness' (Adhikari, 1992: 98).

[7]*Gam* is the Afrikaans translation of the biblical name *Ham,* as given in the Afrikaans Bible.

Jacob Meiring (2016: 234) asserts that the ideology of the curse of Ham was shaped from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century to the point that the 'sons of Ham' were condemned to be slaves forever. 'The ideology of Ham was employed as a justification for slavery and was more generally focused on Africa. Europe had the right to subdue the sons of Ham' (Meiring 2016: 234). The notion of the 'curse of Ham', with the theological support of the Reformed Churches, strongly influenced the ideology of apartheid (Meiring 2016: 235). The Afrikaners invoked the curse of Ham to justify their dominance over the Khoisan (Yamauchi 2004: 10). This myth gained considerable popularity in the late nineteenth century in South Africa (Yamauchi 2004: 31).

Adhikari identifies four elements of coloured identity which have persisted for almost two centuries. These elements are (i) assimilationist, (ii) intermediate, (iii) negative associations and (iv) marginality (Adhikari, 2005: 7-19). The ***assimilationist*** group identity was evident among the upper-class coloureds hoping to share in the benefits of white culture and citizenship. This tendency to identify with whiteness inevitably led to a distancing from the black majority, with no promise of white ***assimilation***, which resulted in the next element of identification as ***intermediate***, not white enough to be white, and not wanting to be black. The negative associations have categorised coloureds in terms of what they are not. They are neither black nor white, and by virtue of what they are not, they are given (or accepting) a group identity. Lastly, ***marginality*** is an attribute that results from a group of people that is relatively small in population, with no economic and/or political clout. Marginality has led to many other pejorative labels, one such being *Gam*, which carries a stigma of being 'low class', illegitimate and impure (Adhikari, 2005: 15-16). This fourth element of identification 'dominated the day-to-day conditions' (Adhikari, 2005: 17) under which coloured identity operates. Adhikari notes, as part of a history research project, a university student was asked

to do a word-association exercise in which people were asked to respond spontaneously and instantly to an utterance of the word *coloured*. Virtually all the responses were negative, and an overwhelming majority responded with the word 'Gam' (Adhikari, 2006a: 482). *Gam* designates a self-stereotyping among lower class coloured people. South African missionaries justified the enslavement of blacks by preaching the curse of Ham right up to the twentieth century. Lower class coloured people, many of whom may not be familiar with the biblical account of the curse of Ham, would frequently apply the term to themselves (Stone, 1872: 33).

Post-apartheid race relationships among non-white South Africans show an attitude of resentment towards each other. A general lack of trust among the non-white groups (Burns, 2006: 810) and negative racial stereotyping (Stevens, 1998: 204) fuel such attitudes of resentment. This may particularly be true of coloured people, who, as a community, perceive themselves as being marginalized from the new South Africa (Stevens, 1998: 204). The 2022 mid-year estimates for South Africa by population groups indicate that coloured people constitute 8.8 percent of the total population (Statistics South Africa, 2022: viii). Coloured people have no significant political or economic power (Adhikari, 2006b: 144), which adds to their marginalisation. Common coloured adages, such as 'not white enough' (Adhikari, 2005) and 'we are the jam' (Adhikari, 2006a: 484) reinforce such marginalisation. Coloured people say that during the apartheid regime, they were not white enough to benefit from the apartheid policies as the white people did. In the new South Africa, they are not black enough to be considered a previously disadvantaged group (Ahluwalia & Zegeye, 2003: 272). Coloured feelings of being marginalised are further exacerbated by the fact that many former coloured supporters of the ant-apartheid movement have become disillusioned with the new South Africa. They feel betrayed by the African National Congress-led government whom it perceives to advance its own racial constituency. White people, who still dominate the

economy, are seen to ‘ingratiate themselves with the political elite’ (Adhikari, 2004: 173) while coloureds are regarded as the ‘lowest in the pecking order of the new South Africa’ (Adhikari, 2004:173).

This research will address the following:

(i) it will determine how the text of Genesis 9:18-27 came to be tagged ‘the curse of Ham’ and the implications of such nomenclature. This study will investigate the history of interpretation of this text to determine the powers and dominant interests behind such interpretations and how those interpretations came to oppress the non-biblical and non-European peoples of the world. It will determine how this text has been used ideologically to justify oppression and marginalization of dark-skinned people; and

(ii) it will consider what an alternative interpretation of the text might offer to the coloured people of the Cape.

The first point above relates to the history of the text, with a special focus on South Africa during the period of colonization, up to the period of the first democratic elections in the country. This thesis will investigate how this obscure text was used for a religious justification and legitimation for colonial practices. This study will consider whether there is any resonance between the way the primary text had been interpreted through the ages and the perception that coloured people are accursed, and that such a curse is by divine order. The second point above relates to an exploration of the undermining of the racist use of the text by an alternative interpretation. A re-reading of the text, using the tools of an Africentric–postcolonial biblical interpretation, will be proposed as a challenge to the construction of interpretations that led to the oppressive understanding inflicted upon the coloured people.

1.3 Literature review

Stephen Haynes' *Noah's Curse* (2002), and David Goldenberg's *The Curse of Ham* (2003) explore the exegetical and social history of the Hamitic myth. Goldenberg gives an in-depth discussion of the ancient near eastern and classical interpretations of the text, and Haynes describes a history of the interpretation of the curse in the context of the American South. David Whitford's *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era* (2009) aims to fill the gap between Goldenberg's *The Curse of Ham* and Haynes' *Noah's Curse*, from a Reformation point of view. Whitford's book gives an understanding of how people in the late medieval and early modern period understood and explained the curse of Ham.

Goldenberg seeks to answer how and when the Genesis story became a 'curse of Ham' condemning black Africans to slavery. The biblical text connects no colour to the curse. Goldenberg suggests that consideration must be given to the etymology of the word 'Ham', which is mistakenly connected to blackness. 'Those who assumed that the Curse condemns black Africans to eternal slavery based their understanding on the supposed meaning of Ham as "dark, black" or "hot"' (Goldenberg 2003, 145). Goldenberg (1997, 21-51) shows that the curse of Ham is not a theory of Jewish rabbinic thinking, but rather a misinterpretation of rabbinic literature in translation. 'But just as there is no Curse of Ham in biblical literature, so too there is no Curse of Ham in the rabbinic texts. The biblical story is an etiology accounting for Canaanite slavery. The rabbinic stories, on the other hand, speak of blackness, not slavery' (Goldenberg, 1997: 32). Goldenberg goes on to say that, just as there is no rabbinic literature that connects blackness to slavery, so too there is no history of institutionalized black slavery, but the connections do appear amongst Islamic writers 'who tightly linked blackness and slavery' in the seventh century (Goldenberg 1997: 34-35).

Haynes, in his book, *Noah's Curse* (2002) gives a brief history of the interpretation of the curse from early Judaism and Christianity up to the twentieth century. Haynes gives a detailed analysis as to how such interpretations influenced Christianity in the American South. Within the closing chapters, Haynes puts forward challenges to the curse, and explores what he calls 'counterreadings' of the Genesis 9 text. He suggests that challenges to the curse have come from various sectors in society, including abolitionists, African Americans, authors of fiction and poetry, and of course church people, who seek to find creative re-readings of the curse (Haynes: 2002, 177). Haynes suggests that, in a counterreading of the text, a redeeming of the curse is possible. He asserts that the 'oppressive potential' of the text can be nullified when we re-visit and reimagine the story and undermine the 'textual dynamics of the blame'. And secondly, Haynes suggests that this counterreading of the text be read within the context of the biblical canon, which is primarily about redeeming (Haynes: 2002, 203). In the closing chapters of his book, Haynes (2002: 417) suggests that the story of Noah and his sons may be regarded as an 'adumbration of the willing victimhood of God's Christ'. Instead of Noah representing the suffering Christ, as the church fathers taught, the true prefiguring of Christ's suffering could be seen in the innocent victim Ham, who 'put an end to scapegoating by refusing to retaliate' (Haynes, 2002: 217).

David Whitford's book *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era* (2009) reveals how the curse of Ham became the basis for Christian justification of slavery and slave trade in the early modern period. There are two claims that were perpetuated by modern scholarship. One is that 'there is a tradition of associating the slave Ham with Africans', and the second, that the 'blame for this association can be placed at the foot of Jewish exegesis' (Whitford 2009:19). The greatest unasked question of the 'exegetical history' of the Genesis 9 text up to the early modern period was whether or not the curse on Canaan was just. The history of interpretations focused

on why the curse fell on Canaan, and not so much on the justice aspect of Canaan being cursed (Whitford, 2009: 78). Whitford explains how early modern exegetes (such as Annius of Viterbo and George Best) popularised the legend of Ham and firmly established a connection between Ham, Africa, slavery, and race (Whitford, 2009: 115-119).

In summary, Goldenberg asserts that there is no justification for anti-black or racist sentiments in biblical or post-biblical Judaism. He contends that the curse of Ham and its connection with Africa and slavery is a later development as blacks were enslaved across cultures. For Haynes, the story of the curse of Ham appealed to slave-owners, and they could therefore categorise slaves to be like Ham, who acted dishonourably, and was therefore cursed to a life of dishonour. Whitford contends that the slave trade had the support of biblical interpretations of the curse of Ham, and as such perpetuated the myth of the curse of Ham.

1.4 Outline of the investigation

Chapter one: Introduction. This chapter primarily sketches the statement of the problem to be investigated in this thesis. It also locates the theological and political consciousness of the researcher and concludes with a brief literature review for this study, and an outline of the investigation.

Chapter two: The coloured people of the Cape. This chapter traces the shaping and formation of the coloured identity since its emergence during the colonial time at the Cape, to the present. It focuses on the identity crisis among coloured people, and the 'self-understanding' of coloured identity among smaller groupings of coloured people. The contemporary reality of coloured identity is discussed, particularly as a 'minority in the

middle', and the relationality with the dominant Black majority and the economically powerful white population.

Chapter three: **'Gam': Sense and Nonsense of a Concept.** This chapter explores three points: it investigates how the Gam-ideology was received and interpreted in the Cape Colony during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries; how this ideology was self-appropriated for the creation of a narrative that celebrates coloured people as Gam; and lastly, how this term was legitimised in Christian terms or by Christian people. It considers the narrative of the early European settlers and Christian missionaries, the position of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, the notion of 'Gam' as it appears in literature and poetry, and finally how the term 'Gam' can potentially be stripped of its negative connotations and challenged to take on a new meaning.

Chapter four: **The rhetoric of the 'curse of Ham': from the biblical narrative to Afrikaner Calvinism**. Rhetoric is one way to popularise a myth, and in this chapter, I evaluate the extent to which rhetoric was used for the promotion of the curse of Ham. This chapter begins with a brief explanation of the term 'rhetoric', followed by the biblical rhetoric of separatism, the rhetorical use of phrases and expressions in the biblical text of Noah's curse, the Hamitic rhetoric, the rhetoric of a Chosen people as promoted by Afrikaner Calvinism, and the Afrikaner Separatist rhetoric. This chapter further investigates the justification that black skin and hypersexuality are signs of the curse of Ham, and that slavery is a godly imperative to be used by the colonisers and slavedrivers to cure the degradation of the African slave.

Chapter five: **Genesis 9:18-27: a historical perspective on race and slavery**. This chapter gives a history of interpretation of the text of Noah's curse pronouncement from the early

rabbinic period to the modern period, and traces the development of race and slavery, and its association with Ham. This chapter investigates the hypotheses of paternal and maternal incest, an indirect curse on Ham through his son Canaan, a potential curse on the geographical territory and agricultural activities of the Canaanites, and the potential mythological function of this text. This chapter also investigates skin pigmentation and black slavery associated with the curse of Ham.

Chapter six: An Africentric – postcolonial biblical interpretation: tools for conceptualising and analysing. This chapter first unpacks African Biblical Interpretation (**ABI**), tracing it back to the 1930's and tracing its growth and development to the current era. It also points out any critiques levelled at **ABI**, and what needs to be done for any lack in its hermeneutics. Secondly, this chapter explores the appropriateness of **ABI** as an interpretive tool for this project and argues for the additional postcolonial tools that will make for an Africentric – postcolonial Biblical Interpretation.

Chapter seven: A rereading of Genesis 9:18-27 in the context of the coloured people of the Cape. This chapter does a rereading of the Genesis text with particular focus on the potential presence of colonial manifestations, and themes connected to colonialism such as land, covenant, and curse. It includes a psychological reading and a reading for international solidarity. The work of the redactor and the utterances of the narrator in support of a particular outcome of Israelite land invasion and domination is also investigated, concluding with a reconstructive reading of the text. This chapter employs some of the tools for an Africentric – postcolonial Biblical Interpretation as espoused in the previous chapter.

Chapter eight: Conclusion: 'Gam'- From pejorative to ameliorative. This is the concluding chapter. This chapter proposes alternative methods of reading the Bible to that of Afrikaner Calvinism, demythologising the curse of Ham as propounded by erroneous interpretations of the text, the conquest myth, and using poetry as a tool for demythologising. It considers the unique contribution that coloured people can bring about when they embrace their African-ness, knowing that every other person in South Africa, irrespective of ethnicity or race, has a connection with the coloured people of the Cape because of the heterogeneity of the coloured people.

Chapter 2

The coloured people of the Cape

2.1 Introduction

Coloured identity first emerged during the Cape colonial period and has been shaped and consolidated by those who have identified as coloured people through their lived experiences and also by the political and economic landscape dating back to the slave period (Hendricks, 2004, 114). The coloured population group descends largely from Cape slaves, the indigenous Khoi and San, and other people of African and Asian origin who had been assimilated into the Cape colonial society and partly from European settlers. Most coloured people are of the working class, and most are concentrated in, but not restricted to, the Western Cape. According to Census 2011, coloured people comprise 54% of the population of the Western Cape (Statistic South Africa, Census 2011, 56−59). This chapter traces the history of coloured identity formation from the period of slavery to the post-apartheid era, the identity crisis of coloured people, their self-understanding, and contemporary issues of coloured understanding.

Figure 1: The Cape Flats.

Source: http://capeflats.org.za/modules/home/overview.php

Figure 2: The Cape Flats in relation to the Western Cape.

Source: https://www.sa-venues.com/maps/westerncape/physical.php

2.2 History of the coloured people

L. Bloom (1967: 140) traces the origin of the coloured people of the Cape to the seventeenth century, when the first Europeans arrived on the Cape shores, although the term 'coloured' was not yet used as a descriptor. Mixed-raced people were born of 'non-marital liaisons' between 'Dutchmen and Hottentot women' (Bloom, 1967: 140), and by the 1670s about three-quarters of the children of slave women had white fathers (MacCrone, 1937: 68). The decades following the emancipation of the Khoisan (1828) and the slaves (1834) saw the rapid integration of several diverse black groups, which gave rise to an emerging identity based on a common socio-economic and shared culture and on their common position in the lower ranks of Cape colonial society. In the early nineteenth century, free blacks, Afrikaners and the descendants of the Khoisan sought to free themselves from the constraints of the Cape Colony government. They formed a mixed group, established themselves on the northern frontier (Lewis, 1987: 9) and identified themselves as Griqua, taking on an old Khoisan clan name. The Cape Muslims mobilised themselves around a set of religious, educational and social institutions in the early

1820s and referred to themselves as Cape Malay (Brickford-Smith, 1994: 299). These emerging groups of downtrodden labouring people were variously referred to as 'half-castes, bastards, Cape Boys, off-whites or coloureds', of which the last mentioned became standard from the second half of the 1880s (Adhikari, 2013: xi). Coloured identity emerged among members of the freed slaves as well as among 'members of the skilled and educated class', who, towards the end of the nineteenth century, began to validate the term 'coloured', and use it as a platform for political action (Scully, 1995: 340). The formation of a coloured identity was a 'survival mechanism for the subaltern peoples' (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999: 182). Colonialism brought about the dislocation and cultural dispossession of slave communities, who, through their mobilisation, sought to creolise the Dutch language as one way of manifesting a coloured identity and to facilitate dialogue between the 'subaltern and dominant forms in the colonial context' (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999: 182).

Coloured identity came into being partly because of 'ethnic mobilisation' in order to maintain or improve relative social positions (Goldin, 2014: 157). The term 'ethnic mobilisation' might be problematic in the case of the coloured people, given that, at their formation, they were not a homogeneous group of people, but rather a variety of different groups from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Peter Vermeesch (2011: 1) defines ethnic mobilisation as a process of organising over a longer period of history, 'making the abstract idea of ethnic belonging a somewhat more tangible reality, and [engaging] the members of this group into political action'. Such mobilisation is based on a common solidarity among members of the group(s) and on common life experiences inflicted by the powers that be (political authorities and/or slave masters), even though the group members may share commonality of ethnicity. Vermeesch (2011: 4) points out that, in broad literature of political scientists, four different perspectives of ethnic mobilisation can be identified. These are (i) the culturalist perspective,

(ii) the reactive ethnicity perspective, (iii) the competition perspective and (iv) the political process perspective. Given the description of each of these, the formation of a coloured identity fits into the reactive ethnicity perspective category. The reactive ethnicity perspective is prompted by an unequal division of resources along ethnic lines. Hechter (1975) asserts that ethnoregional loyalties may be strengthened because of economic inequalities between the core and the ethnically distinct peripheries, and Bonacich (1972), contends that ethnic antagonism is generated by the competition arising from a differential price of labour for the same occupation. This conceptualisation of ethnic mobilisation may aptly describe the scenario at the time of the slaves at the Cape being freed, and the competition for economic advantage they may have encountered coming from other free burghers.

By the turn of the century (the 1900s) the designation, 'coloured', was firmly entrenched, so much so that the 1904 census in the Cape referred to three distinct racial categories: 'white', 'bantu' and 'coloured' (Cape of Good Hope, 1904: para 102). This designation was further entrenched by both sporting and other social bodies (Bickford-Smith, 1994: 308). The African Political Organization (APO), despite its name, was formed specifically to promote and defend coloured people's social, political, and civil rights (Bickford-Smith, 1994: 309). The British parliament, in 1909, gave approval for the Cape Colony, the Colony of Natal and the two former Afrikaner republics to form the Union of South Africa, in which the only coloured people who had the right to vote were those living in the Cape and Natal (Lewis, 1987: 29). The term *coloured* became a preferential option to the state as opposed to the majority 'black natives', when, in the 1924 general elections, coloured voters were promised a 'new deal' by J.B.M. Hertzog in exchange for their vote− that they would share in the privileges legislated for white workers and would be exempted from the restrictions applied to 'natives' (Lewis, 1987: 119). Hertzog introduced the Coloured Persons' Rights (CPR) Bill in June 1926, which

in its first section, repealed the Cape's non-racial franchise. This would remove black Africans in the Cape from the voters' roll and would make coloured people complicit in their disenfranchisement (Lewis, 1987:137-138).

In 1937, the South African government launched its first commission of enquiry relating to the coloured people. The Wilcocks commission described the 'typical coloured' as a 'person living in the Union of South Africa, who does not belong to one of its aboriginal races, but in whom the presence of Coloured blood (especially due to descent from non-Europeans brought to the Cape in the 17th and 18th centuries or from aboriginal Hottentot stock, and with or without an admixture of white or Bantu blood) can be established with at least reasonable certainty, (a) from a knowledge of the genealogy of the person during the last three or four generations; or/and (b) ordinary direct recognition of characteristic physical features (such as colour of skin, nature of hair, and facial or bodily form), by an observer familiar with these characteristics' (Union of South Africa, 1937:10). Miscegenation was a major issue for the apartheid government, and any trace of non-white blood was regarded as a threat to the survival of the white race. Coloured people were singled out for particular attention (Goldin, 2014: 170). The state's obsession with the 'coloured question' had much to do with the conception that coloured people are because of 'miscegenation' (Giliomee, 2012: 134), and by the 1950s, the newly established apartheid regime had passed legislation aimed at barring interracial physical and social contact. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (MMA) No 55 of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act (IAA) No 21 of 1949 were passed. Sex and marriage between 'Europeans' and 'non-Europeans' became illegal. Coloured people's racial classification was firmly entrenched with the promulgation of the Population Registration Act (PRA) No 30 of 1950. The PRA defines 'coloured' as 'a person who is not a white person or a native. A native means a person who in fact is, or is generally accepted, as a member of any aboriginal race or

tribe in Africa. And a white person means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person' (Statutes, 277). The final nail in the coffin was the Group Areas Act (GAA) of 1950, which provided for the segregation of residential communities based on race. These four pieces of legislation were the state's attempt at resolving the coloured question. In 1956, coloured people were removed from the common voters' role and placed on a separate voters' roll through which they would elect three white members to represent their political interests in parliament (Lewis, 1987: 245). In addition, coloured people were promised jobs and business development opportunities in predominantly coloured areas, the creation of coloured political institutions (Hendricks, 2004: 117) and that the Western Cape would be protected from 'unfair competition' from black Africans (Lewis, 1987:246). Coloured people were not compelled to carry passes and were not subject to influx control legislation, as their black African counterparts were (Goldin, 2014: 171).

Henry Trotter speaks of the trauma and impact that both the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act had on coloured solidarity among the coloured people, and on further formation and consolidation of coloured identity. The PRA grouped those classified as coloured into a 'legally binding racial category that severely restricted their social and sexual interactions, political and communicative opportunities, and professional and material aspirations' (Trotter, 2013: 70−71). Both the PRA and the GAA have shaped the coloured people's experience of being coloured, giving them a self-perception of who they are and shaping the perception of other racial groups of who they are. The GAA, with its restricted residential areas, allowed for intra-group interactions among coloured people. The coloured people developed a community narrative of solidarity and a communal memory that reminded

them of where they had come from before the forced removals and from where they had been uprooted. Publicly and institutionally, coloured identity may have been well established before the GAA, even though the boundaries were rather fluid and malleable. The implementation of the MMA, IAA, PRA and the GAA, together with the Coloured Labour Preference Area Policy, firmly entrenched the coloured identity as never before. Coloured identity was firmly consolidated by both racial and other legislation as well as 'the connectivity that was achieved through sharing stories in the wake of mass social trauma, and the reinforcement of a sense of groupness through positive narrative circulation' by coloured people themselves (Trotter, 2013: 72). Social engineering did more than just grouping people together based on race; it also united people in proximity in their common trauma and reconfigured their social identities (Trotter, 2013: 73). Coloured identity was firmly consolidated both by the state and by those so identified. Both the state and the coloured people gained an interest in their differentiation (Hendricks, 2004: 117).

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of the 1970s brought about a reframing of coloured identity. The BCM's vision of blackness resonated with many coloured intellectuals. Those who embraced the BCM's vision could escape from both the marginality that coloured identity conferred (i.e., being situated in the gap between the majority African and dominant white identities and placed on the edges of a struggle between black and white), and the perceived psychological empowerment. Most of the coloured people, however, did not embrace the vision of the BCM. Coloured identity would ensure access to unskilled or semi-skilled labour and moderately better residential areas (Hendricks, 2004: 118). The political discourse of the 1980s was dominated by the United Democratic Front's (UDF) vision of non-racialism, which gained widespread support among coloured people. Non-racialism would provide for 'citizenship, legal rights, economic entitlement and life chances' without any 'racial

ascriptions' (Marks, 1994:2), which was appealing to coloured people. The discourse of non-racialism would deny the existence of a coloured identity, yet also employ coloured activists to attract coloured support. Hendricks (2004: 119) regards this as 'simultaneous cognizance and rejection' of the coloured identity. The United Democratic Front (UDF), launched in 1983, in the coloured township of Mitchells Plain in the Western Cape, had a strong coloured following, and gave the impression that coloured people (as a group) transcended their ethnic/racial identity (Hendricks, 2004: 119). Support for the UDF was assumed to be support for the African National Congress (ANC), but this dream was short-lived when the National Party (NP) transformed itself from an exclusively white organisation to a multi-racial one, enticing the votes of coloured and Indian people. The NP sought to emphasise kinship between the Afrikaner and the coloured people and at the same time warned about the *swart gevaar* (black peril) by emphasising the differences between coloured people and Africans, with the result that the NP gained almost 60 percent of the coloured vote in the first democratic elections held in 1994 (Hendricks, 2004: 119).

2.3 Identity crisis of the coloured people

Following the first democratic elections of 1994, coloured people were confronted with a new consciousness that sought to re-classify mixed-race people as 'Black African'. Prior to 1994, intragroup tensions among coloured people could be characterised as being between those who sought mobilisation on an ethnic/racial basis, and those who sought broader political alliances with other organisations. From the 1970s the tensions were between those who sought to hold on to the designator 'coloured' and those who sought to cast it off (Hendricks, 2004: 114). Coloured people had been excluded from being black by the white minority government and by their own agency for centuries before, although some identified with being black, especially the educated and politicised coloured people. For many others, who preferred the label

coloured, embracing their 'blackness' was rather confusing and traumatising. Hendricks (2004: 114) argues that there was an expectation that coloured identity be re-interpreted and reconstituted within the context of the liberation movement, this while other groups remained stable. The idea was to build non-racialism in a 'profoundly racially and ethnically constructed society' (Hendricks, 2004: 114), which, to some extent, negated the role of coloured people in identity formation. For many coloured people, the re-classification from 'coloured' to 'black' was one that was only theoretical, and not really authentic. This, Holtzman (2018: 529) says, is particularly true when one considers the phrases 'blacks in general', in which coloured people are included, and 'Africans in particular', which denotes the exclusion of coloured people. Most black Africans 'do not regard coloured South Africans as culturally black, and position coloureds on the outside of their social codes of engagement' (Holtzman, 2018: 529). Coloured people are thus 'odd' or 'other' in that they are not understood by the other racial groups, and only they can understand themselves. The converse of this is the notion that 'coloureds misunderstand themselves as not being black Africans', which Holtzman describes as a 'conundrum of collective classification that circles between denying one's blackness, having blackness imposed upon oneself, and being excluded from "belonging to blackness" and the benefits of blackness'.

Holtzman reports that the academic and social discourse around coloured identity is chiefly concerned about a collective 'other', or a 'third race' category of racialised citizenship. Coloured people are people with multiple identities and ethnicities, who fall outside the 'black−white racialised binary'. The opposing view, Holtzman (2018: 527) says, is that Coloured identity is a fallacy and does not exist as an authentic construct and therefore cannot be used as a defining term because of its 'derogatory and defamatory colonial and apartheid connotations'. Among the coloured population, there are those who authenticate and celebrate

their ‘coloured-ness’ by embracing the term ‘coloured’, and there are those who outright discard and delegitimise the term ‘coloured’ as oppressive and a racist construct that has no meaning. Richard van der Ross (2015) points out that the notion of coloured group thinking must be understood and approached from a position that there is no such thing as ‘coloured’. Yet, because it was created as a fabrication that was to take on meaning by referring to a group, it does exist, and it does have meaning, particularly for those inside the group. T. Reddy (2001: 65) asserts that collective identities are part of the discourses of classification, where each category has its meaning in relation to other categories, and the system makes it possible to see categories from a non-essentialist perspective. Fundamentally, all identity is relational− that is, you are only something because you are not something else. It is in this context that the category ‘coloured’ operates to hold the whole system of classification together in South Africa.

2.4 The ‘self-understanding’ of the coloured people

Conceptualisations of ‘the self-understanding’ of coloured identity among coloured people are varied. A wide range of voices are speaking against one another to justify a narrative concerning what validates or negates coloured identity. The following extract gives an idea of the wide-ranging conceptions of coloured identity:

> I am “proudly coloured”, I am “black, formerly classified as coloured”, “I am native black African”, “I am Khoi”, “I am Griqua”, “I am Nama”, “I am Korana”, “I am Damara”, “I am San”, “I am Camissa”, “I am an Asian-African”, “I am European-African”, “I am slave descendant”, “I am aboriginal”, “I am cosmopolitan”, “I am Muslim”, “I am Christian”, “I am Cape Flats”, “I am Eldo’s”, “I am Eersterust”, “I am Northern Areas”, “I am platteland”, “I am English”, “I am Afrikaans”, “I am Afrikaaps”, “I am Sabela”, “I am respectable”, “I am gangster”, “I am mixed race”, “I am South African”, “I am African”, “I am a global citizen” (Holtzman, 2018: 535).

Reframing coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa came through the lenses of several political and cultural movements, some of which sought to find a place in the new South

African nation, and others which sought to justify and authenticate their 'separateness' from the black-white binary. Patric Tariq Mellet, a former liberation movement cadre, calls for a rejection of the 'coloured identity' and self identifies as 'Camissa African' 'The word "Camissa" comes from the Kora (Cape Khoe) llkhamis sa, meaning "sweet water for us all". It refers to the river that flows from Table Mountain down to the sea, a freshwater system with over 40 tributaries and springs that today runs beneath the city of Cape Town' (Mellet, 2022: 179). Mellet further explains: 'The Camissa Museum concept is rooted in a tool known as the "seven tributaries matrix" that I developed to explain the roots of people classified as "Coloured". In this, we're in rejection of the term "Coloured" and refer rather to "Camissa Africans", which is a non-colourist, non-racist and non-tribalist term. Within these seven identified tributaries we unpack the more than 195 streams of origin of Camissa Africans, and the ties that bind us to our fellow diverse African communities' (Mellet, 2022: 243). Mellet wants 'Camissa' to be a proud descriptor for the coloured people, rejecting the label of 'coloured', which he says holds coloured people back from determinations of the self as positively African. Coloured rejectionism, even though it only had an impact on a small minority of coloured people, can be traced back to the late 1930s, with the emergence of radical, but small, coloured political formations (Adhikari, 2006a: 473), and, then again, during the early 1960s, to the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) (Adhikari, 2006a: 474), established in 1943 (Adhikari, 2006a: 471); but it was during the late 1970s, with the advent of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), that coloured rejectionism found wider support among the coloured community. Such rejectionism was primarily an act of political defiance to the apartheid imposed racial divisions, to banish racist thinking and foster unity against apartheid divisions (Adhikari, 2006a: 474).

Coloured rejectionism, however, became less prominent from the 1990s onward, when a resurgence of coloured assertiveness began to emerge. Invoking social memory would give rise to the *Kleurling Weerstand Beweging* (KWB) (Coloured resistance movement) and the December 1st Movement (Hendricks, 2004: 122). The reclaiming of lost history gave rise to 'linkages to slavery and a Khoisan heritage' to re-define coloured identity, which, according to Hendricks (2004: 122), intensified the divisions among coloured people. The KWB considered themselves as an ethnic group, that sought not to be governed by white people (who had been doing so for 300 years and had made a mess of it, according to the KWB), nor by black people (Caliguire, 1996:10). Seeking self-determination based on race, gained them much 'coloured' sympathy; however, the idea of their own 'Colouredstan' did not stand them in good stead with most coloured people who rejected this idea (Hendricks, 2004: 123). More organisations such as the Cultural Heritage Development Council, the Brown Movement and the Griqua National Conference of South Africa, soon emerged to reclaim their cultural pasts or rights based on the past (Hendricks, 2004: 124). A Cape Town−based coloured community movement called 'Gatvol Capetonian' supports the notion of coloured 'nationalism', seeking self-determination, claiming that they are 'indigenous, not black migrants, proudly coloured' (Holtzman, 2018: 534). This is a display of ethnonationalist mentality (Jacobs and Levenson, 2018), which is likened to the famously termed 'reactionary nationalism' as purported by the Black Panthers' Huey P Newton in an American context (Foner, 1995: 50). Newton contrasts reactionary nationalism to 'revolutionary nationalism', the latter of which is a 'people's revolution' for 'people's power'. In contrast, reactionary nationalism has an end goal of an imagined national identity at the expense of others (Jacobs and Levenson, 2018).

2.5 The contemporary reality

Coloured people occupy a political and economic ‘status gap’, stuck in the middle between a populous black majority and an economically powerful white minority. Coloured people fit the description of a ‘minority in the middle’, as described by the ‘middleman minority theory’ postulated by Becker (1940: 17). This term was initially coined to demystify the intermediary economic status that the Jews occupied in medieval Europe and was later systematically applied to minorities in colonial societies (Blaylock, 1967). Further development of this term has given rise to a ‘serial middleman minority’ phenomenon, a term coined by Pyong Gap Min (2008), which explains the importance of filling a ‘status gap’, so that the economic and political power group does not serve the marginalised group directly and so maintain the structural inequality between them. This group in the middle will enjoy advantages conferred by the dominant group and will defend such advantages against any hostile neighbouring communities.

Within the province of the Western Cape, recent events have highlighted growing tensions between the coloured community and neighbouring African communities. Such tensions had as a result a notion of ‘us’ against ‘them’, whereby racialised language was used to reinforce coloured identity, and by extension, claim certain entitlements and privileges. Two events that happened recently, are cases in point, the one being the events that unfolded at Siqalo in Mitchells Plain, and the other, the debate that surrounded the renaming of Cape Town International Airport. Siqalo is an informal settlement of black people on the outskirts of Mitchells Plain, the largest coloured township in Cape Town. Protest actions about poor service delivery led to violent clashes between the two communities (Holtzman, 2018: 534). Coloured people say that they are being ignored by the ANC government, that their lives do not matter much and that white and black economic advancement and social mobility matter more than

coloured survival (Holtzman, 2018: 533). In Siqalo, coloured people were calling on the local government to remove the squatters; yet, in other areas such as Vrygrond and Parkwood in the southern part of Cape Town to Philippi and Woodlands (Mitchells Plain) on the Flats, where coloured people occupied land illegally, residents resisted the removal of these people (Jacobs and Levenson, 2018). The organisation Gatvol Capetonian alleges that the post-apartheid government is racist, as black empowerment programmes exclude minorities and housing and service delivery are engineered to their disadvantage (Jacobs and Levenson, 2018). The debates surrounding the renaming of Cape Town International Airport also gave rise to racial slurs. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) rallied support around the renaming of the airport after struggle-stalwart Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Faizel Adams, the leader of Gatvol Capetonians countered this suggestion by saying that Madikizela-Mandela was never part of the province of the Western Cape and claimed that the 'first aboriginal nation' has been around for '30,000 years' and that the first Xhosa person had only set foot in the Cape in the 1900s (Jacobs and Levenson, 2018). The formation of the Cape Party and, subsequently the formation an organisation called First People First are attempts to garner support for a white/coloured solidarity group that would invoke the status of coloured people as 'indigenous to the Cape' and consider the black African as 'a migrant' from another province in South Africa (Jacobs and Levenson, 2018). These political formations may not have received wide-spread support among the majority of coloured people but have certainly planted a seed of difference, racial intolerance and coloured ethnonationalism. An emphasis on 'coloured identity', as well as attempts to claim the 'first−nation' status of the Khoisan, at best, conceals racism towards blacks; at worst, such 'renewed identity constructions' have sought to mobilise and popularise a view that the coloured populations are being marginalised in post-apartheid South Africa. Coloured identity was never an ethnic identity but was rather one that was based on race. This racial identity was an identity of privilege for coloured people during the era of apartheid,

compared with the black majority. The ethnic identities of the black majority condemned them to marginalisation. In post-apartheid South Africa, which has a focus on redistributive justice, ethnic subjects are those most eligible for redress, while racial subjects would be last in line. This is reason enough for coloured people to invoke the ethnic identity of being Khoisan instead of that of being coloured, in order to put themselves in a different category of eligibility.

Whereas the post-apartheid government was set on nation−building and the terms of 'full blackness' and 'Africanness' have translated into full citizenship of and belonging to the state (Farred, 2001: 182), coloured people argue that they were neither white enough in the apartheid era to enjoy the benefits of full citizenship, nor are they black enough in post-apartheid South Africa to qualify for the reparation and compensation of the previously disadvantaged communities (Ruiters, 2013: 105). The coloured vote, initially for the New National Party (NNP) after apartheid rule, and lately for the Democratic Alliance (DA), both of which are white minority political parties, demonstrates an 'unarticulable apprehension about black majority rule for certain sectors of the coloured community' (Farred, 2001: 183, 184). The coloured working-class townships of the Cape Flats are most responsible for voting the white minority party into power (Farred, 2001: 180) in the Western Cape.

2.6 Conclusion

The term 'coloured' refers to a group of people who, rightly or wrongly, were lumped together in the past and therefore share a common history. This history has not been an easy one, for it carries with it a lamentation of 'not good enough' since the time of the emancipation of the slaves at the Cape. Theirs is a history of slavery, rape and perceived miscegenation, immersed in their own struggles against economic and political oppression. Coloured people are of mixed descent and find themselves as an 'in-between' race, whom neither the white nor black people

seem to embrace. The white minority apartheid government defined the coloured people by negatives, giving them a more privileged status than blacks, yet less privileged than whites. In democratic South Africa, coloured people fear that they will lose their position of relative privilege, a painful legacy of apartheid, which is cause for ongoing mistrust and enmity between coloured and Black people.

The designator 'coloured' remains one that is inherently based on race, which continues to galvanise or polarise public opinion about coloured people. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) stipulates non-racialism as a founding value of the sovereign state (Chapter 1, Subsection 1(b)), and states that all citizens are 'equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship', and 'all are equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship' (Chapter 2, Subsection 3 (2)). Coloured people need to find their own brand of Africanism that will make for an inclusive and a unified people in the larger South African identity formation. This does not mean a dismissal of coloured identity in the hope that it will fade into oblivion, but rather an affirmation of the identity of a people who can contribute to nation building in South Africa. The process of coloured identity formation should perhaps shift in emphasis from that of difference from the black−white binary (i.e., coloured people are coloured because they are neither black nor white), to an emphasis of identity formation that can become the catalyst for an inclusive South African people.

Chapter 3

‘Gam’: Sense and Nonsense of a Concept

3.1 Introduction

‘Ham’ is both a transcultural and transhistorical term. In South Africa, the term is presented as *Gam*[8] and used as an identity politik by many coloured people, particularly those located on the Cape Flats. This chapter will explore three points. First, how Gam-ideology – the colonial and racist idea that coloured people are morally inferior beings – was received and interpreted in the Cape Colony during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Second, how this ideology was later appropriated for the construction of a narrative that celebrates coloured people as Gam. Finally, this chapter will examine how the term was legitimized in Christian terms or by Christian people, whether for good or for ill.

3.2 The narrative of the early European settlers and Christian missionaries

The European colonisation of Africa coincided with the age of classification, an age that succeeded the era of Renaissance thought, and an age in which physical characteristics replaced imaginary ones (Meiring, 2016: 227). For the European settlers, the African body was nothing more than a collection of ‘perceivable external organs’, an external surface without any ‘internal organs and systems’ (Meiring, 2016: 228). The detailed description of the Khoisan whom the European settlers encountered at the Cape was all about the external features: the forehead, eyes, nose, lips, mouth, neck, belly, and buttocks (Butchart, 1998: 55-56). Eighteenth

[8] *Gam* is the Afrikaans word for ‘Ham’.

and nineteenth centuries Western science and medicine have constructed and presented black male bodies as 'endowed with inordinately huge penises and an insatiable sexual appetite' (Ouzgane, 2002: 244), this being very much representative of the physicality of the biblical story of the curse on Canaan. Moreover, this pathologizing of black bodies was a process of othering to elevate the European settlers as superior and different (Ouzgane, 2002: 244). The notion of civilising the 'barbarian and savage natives of the "dark continent"' served as a justification of 'colonial enterprise objectives' (Tamale, 2011: 14).

European visitors and settlers to the Cape used their understanding of religion as a yardstick to relegate the indigenous people as 'other'. In his travel accounts when passing the Cape of Good Hope, Thomas Herbert (1677: 19) described the Indigenous people he encountered as irreligious and with no concept of a god or even a devil, no shame, and no rituals for births and deaths. Herbert denied the existence of any form of religion among the indigenous people of the Cape. This denial was more an absence of Christian doctrine and practices, as observed by Chidester (1996: 37), and led to a construction of a certain kind of Christian religion against the backdrop of this so-called no-religion. For Herbert, the indigenous people of the Cape had to be categorised within *this understanding* of the Christian religion and was genealogically linked to be a cursed offspring of Ham. Thus, Herbert (1634: 14) insisted that "The Natives being propagated from Cham [a variant spelling of Ham], both in their Visages and Natures seem to inherit his malediction."

The ideology of the curse of Ham gained momentum when European explorers expanded the trade route along the west coast of Africa during the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (Van der Linde, 1993: 77). The narrative of the European settlers at the Cape was firmly rooted in the notion that Shem, Ham and Japheth were the ancestors of Asia, Africa, and Europe

respectively (Stoop, 1984: 10). The Dutch Calvinists considered themselves the 'Israelites of Africa' in battle with dark-skinned 'Canaanites', with a divinely foretold victory (Latrobe, 1818: 295). The belief that Africans were descendants of Ham, condemned by a god to eternal enslavement, as propagated by the seventeenth century Lutheran theologian Jean Louis Hanneman, was well received by the Dutch settlers in South Africa in 1677 (Niederberger, 1959: 72).

By 1703, the notion of Ham in the South African context was used as a descriptor of people of colour in the petition sent by the Church Council of Drakenstein, and addressed to the Convocation of Amsterdam, asking permission to convert the Khoi, so that 'the children of Ham would no longer be servants of bondsmen' (Spoelstra, 1906: 34). In reply, permission was granted, with a rider that 'one day God would lift the curse from the generation of Ham' (Spoelstra, 1907: 15).

Another example dates to the time when Willem Adriaan van der Stel was the governor of the Cape Colony. Adam Tas and Henning Hüsing, on the one hand, and van der Stel on the other, were in conflict with each other. Tas and Hüsing advocated for the removal of van der Stel from his position as governor. A petition for his removal was signed by 63 people, which was countered by 240 other people who campaigned against his removal. In support of their argument, Tas and Hüsing petitioned The Dutch East India Company (*Dutch: Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie,* the VOC) to ignore the 240 counter-petitions, since these mainly came from people of colour (Mellet, 2020: 278). In their petition to the VOC, they note that not much could be expected from the slaves and 'the Kaffirs, Mulattos, Mestiços, and all the black brood living among us, who have been bred from marriages and other forms of mingling with European and African Christians' (Koloniaal Archief 4035, n.d.: 1035). Van der Stel's

paternal grandmother, Monica Da Costa, who in today's language would have been considered a coloured woman, was born in Mauritius, of mixed European and Asian ancestry (Tas, 1705-1706: xxiii). Not only was she of mixed race; she was also the daughter of an Asian enslaved woman (Mellet, 2020: 278). The protestors who petitioned against Tas were of black and slave descent, and so too van der Stel's paternal grandmother, which makes Tas and his companions to put on record that the 'blood of Ham is not to be trusted' (Koloniaal Archief 4035, n.d.: 1035).

Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of The Netherlands (1901-1905), and theologian and modern Calvinist (Joustra, 2018: 146), contributed to the South African Ham-narrative with his statement that the descendants of Shem and Japheth are responsible for the Asian and European civilisations, and the descendants of Ham had no higher purpose in life. In the *Plancius Speech*, he addressed the Dutch immigrants to South Africa for the role they played in their new-found homeland. Kuyper regarded black South Africans as the descendants of Ham, who are to be submissive to the descendants of Shem and Japheth. Within the South African context, the Dutch immigrants are to bring light to the African people who were denigrated to the lowest level of human development (Kuyper, 1884, 22).

The early Afrikaners held on to some aspects of Dutch Calvinism, notably 'the doctrine of predestination and its emphasis on the "community of the elect"' (Tiryakian, 1957: 391), based on their own interpretation thereof, and made applicable to the situation they found themselves in. The Afrikaners regarded themselves as the elect of God, like the Israelites, and the Khoisan whom they had come in contact with at the Cape, as the Canaanites. Dutch Calvinism at the Cape used the Old Testament as a moral base to justify their understanding that the Blacks are 'the sons of Ham who carried the curse of Cain on their heads', and 'that they had been doomed

by the wrathful God to perpetual bondage to any people who would put them in servitude' (Tiryakian, 1957: 392). The frontier farmers referred to the Khoisan as 'sons of Ham' who were 'destined to be hewers of wood and drawers of water', and to be kept in 'perpetual subjugation, serving their white masters' (Moodie, 1975:29). The *Statenbijbel* [State Bible] was the first translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages into Dutch, ordered by the Synod of Dordrecht 1618 and financed by government of the Protestant Dutch Republic and first published in 1637. It remained authoritative in Protestant churches well into the 20th century. This translation of the State Bible was exported to the Cape Colony and served as the official Bible during the time up to 1933. Apart from the spiritual and religious meanings it carried, this Bible also influenced other language usage and assisted in language development, terms, phrases, and idioms. In the passages about Ham and Canaan, some words were changed to give justification to slavery and the racial order at the Cape, for example, where the word "Pharaoh" occurred the word "Britain" was inserted, and "the Voortrekkers" replaced the word "Israel", and "blacks" instead of "Canaanites" (Loubser, 1987: x-xi).

Jan Stoop (1984: 153) tells of what he terms a comical story of Noah's curse, with the title *Gammie in die ark*. The story ends with the words: "*Gammie, my seun, in die ark was jy 'n jintelman, maar nou is jy 'n kaffer*" (my italics) [Hammie, my son, you were a gentleman in the ark, but now you are a kaffir] (my translation). Such are not just found in story books, but these are also realities that live on in our nation, which Stoop says, he as a child, had heard in many conversations and often encountered in congregational work in many belief systems: the blacks are no human, but cursed descendants from Ham, and are therefore different to the white Afrikaner. Thus, the 'ancient curse on the son of Ham was firmly inscribed on the bodies of black Africans' (Meiring, 2016:236). Of late this term is being used as a 'pejorative' descriptor

of the poor labouring coloured people because of their slave heritage (Adhikari, 1992: 95), rather than the Black Africans.

3.3 The curse of Ham and the position of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa

Theological powerhouses in the Netherlands were located at two universities: Utrecht and Leiden. Utrecht was the centre of orthodox theology, the home of the Voetians (followers of Giisbertius Voetius), which promoted the notion of *De Nadere Reformatie* (the further reformation). They believed that Dutch Calvinists should not submit to a secular authority, and with regards to slavery, considered all humanity to be equal and thus did not support any *ownership* of humans as slaves. 'To them the individual conscience was of greater importance than the power of the secular authorities and they expected their members to follow their conscience rather than what the state expects them to do' (Groenewald 2010, 28). Leiden, on the other hand, was the centre of the Cocceians (followers of Johannes Cocceius) and would more easily submit to the secular authority. The Cocceians argued that the colonial empire presented an opportunity to expand the kingdom of God and insisted that in many cases enslavement was a life-saving act of Christian charity and compassion. This argument, and the biblical justification of the curse of Ham, had for a long time been used to appease the conscience of whoever asked questions about the morality of Christians enslaving people (Groenewald, 2010: 28). Utrecht and the Voetians were by far in the minority compared to Leiden and the Cocceians, thus the Dutch East India Company would ship a lot more Cocceians to the rest of their empire, and so too a theology that would support slavery based on an interpretation of the curse of Ham. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) accepted the Cocceian argument that 'it was acceptable for Christians to own and even be involved in the

slave trade' (Groenewald 2010, 29). No doubt the Cape Colony would have received her fair share of such propagators.

The Dutch Reformed Church during the time of the Dutch occupation of the Cape (1652 – 1795) was in service of the colonial powers, to whom they also reported and were accountable to. The ministers of religion were employed by the VOC who controlled the half-way station at the Cape, and also the church (Loubser, 1987: 4). This relationship between church, state and society was captured and structured in *corpus christianum* which was maintained during this time of colonial rule. *Corpus christianum* was the term used to describe 'a unified Christian community of naturally overlapping religious, social and political corporations' (Janssens, 2014: 17). A key feature of the teaching flowing from *corpus christianum* was the fact that Europeans were regarded as carriers of the Christian civilisation to the non-European heathen[9] people. This thought was particularly applied to the Khoikhoi people of the Cape, who were regarded as a symbol of heathenism, and the object of the mission of the Europeans. The theology of the Reformed Church in The Netherlands determined the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape. Ministers at the Cape were accountable to the Reformed Church in Netherlands up to 1795. The settlement at the Cape had to abide by the *corpus christianum*, which was subjected to the second charter of the *Staten General* of the Netherlands government of 1622, which held itself responsible to 'further and protect the "public religion"' (Loubser, 1987: 4). This then suggests that the brand of theology promoted by the local church had indeed been sanctified and approved by the political powers of the day. It is noted that missionaries from other church denominations and those with a 'deviant ideology' were not allowed at the Cape, examples of which were the Moravian missionary Georg Schmidt (banned from the

[9] The term *heathen* was used by the colonists as a descriptor of Black people, including many Black people who were baptised and became full members of the church, yet still referred to as heathen, to differentiate between the European settlers and the indigenous people. There is a classic African text that discusses this problem of terminology. See E. Bolaji Idowu (1973: 119-120).

country in 1742), H.H. van den Heever (1750), and teacher N. de Beer (1769), none of them having committed any transgression of civil law (Hanekom, 1953: 98-100).

Initially the newly converted heathen people were taken up into the church, but not for long, after which a segregated assembly was advocated for, based on the grounds of race. In 1847 the precedent of *herstichten* (which means rebuild, and in this case the building of separate chapels for the white people and those referred to as heathen) was adopted and advocated for in Calvinia (Giliomee, 2003: 125). Nicolaas Hofmeyer was an outstanding young minister in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) who had studied theology at Utrecht. He returned to the Cape in 1850, and was appointed minister of Calvinia in 1851, where, for the first time he heard that the biblical story of the curse of Ham was used to justify the exclusion of non-whites from church services (Giliomee, 2003: 123).

In 1855, at the Stockenström congregation of the DRC, white parishioners refused to share in the Holy Communion with coloured worshippers. Segregation at the communion was allowed to accommodate the 'prejudices and weaknesses' of some white parishioners. In 1857, the Presbytery of Albany, of which the Stockenström congregation was a member, adopted a resolution that communion should be served to the white members by their own deacons and with their own chalices. Although this practice was already firmly established, it was, however, the first time that such a practice was sanctioned by church authorities (Loubser, 1987: 12). In 1857, when the DRC met for the ninth meeting of their General Synod, a compromise was made in what is considered a watershed moment of decision-making. The following resolution captures this compromise:

> De Synode beschouwt het wenschlijk en schrifmatig, dat onze ledematen uit de Heidenen, in onze bestaande gemeenten opgenomen en ingelijfd worden, overall waar sulks gescheiden kan; maar waar deze maatregel, ten gevolge van de

> zwakheid van zommigen, de bevordering van deze zaak van Christus onder de Heidenen, in de weg zoude staan, de gemeente uit de Heidenen opgerigt, of nog op te rigten, hare Christelijke voorregten in een afzonderlijke gebouw of gesticht genieten zal" (Acta Synodi 1857, 168). (This synod views it as preferable and scriptural that our heathen members are taken up and incorporated into our existing congregations, wherever it can be implemented; but where this measure, as a result of the weakness of some, obstructs the promotion of the Christian cause amongst the heathen, the congregation established or to be established from the heathen should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separated building or institution).

Loubser (1987: 13) argues that the synod had no scriptural principles in support of this motion, but admittedly acceded to what was referred to as a practical argument: the weakness of some white people. This compromised resolution was later to be condemned by Dr Robertson of Swellendam, fearing that a virtue would be made out of a concession. This was indeed what happened in the next century, as it provided a justification for segregation.

The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church held in October 1974 resolved that there was no scriptural basis for 'relating the subordinate position of some present-day peoples to the curse of Canaan' (1974: 19). The Synod concluded that Western thinking considered Noah's three sons as the 'progenitors of the three main races: White, Black and Yellow', and thus the temptation to relate the status and fate of the various races to the several pronouncements of Noah, including that Black people were doomed to eternal servitude. The Synod refuted that Ham and all Black people were perpetually cursed. The curse in the first place was directed at Canaan, and therefore does not apply to the other sons of Ham. The Synod resolved that there is no scriptural foundation on which Black people, including the Black people of South Africa, and the sub-ordinate position that they have in society, could be ever connected to the conception that they are the supposed children of Ham. The subordinate position of present-day peoples could be ascribed to many historical and cultural factors

(General Synod, 1974: 19-20). Nevertheless, the notion of the curse of Ham was deeply rooted in the consciousness of the people (Loubser, 1987: 7).

With no biblical justification, and no church sanction, the Afrikaner practiced a *home-made* theology that would undergird their interaction with people of colour. This theology would have been out of sync with the mainline church theology and church interpretation of texts. The frontier Afrikaner developed their own understanding and beliefs about the role God had prescribed for themselves and the non-whites. Their interpretation of especially the Old Testament was paramount in the constitution of their group identity. With a lack of theological sophistication, and with many of them having trekked inland and out of reach of established congregations, much of their worshipping happened within the patriarchal family. The Bible was their only guide which was readily interpreted in the light of their own experiences as a pastoral and nomadic people among the Black people. Invariably many of them would invoke the curse of Ham to justify their dominance over the Khoikhoi (Fredrickson, 1981: 170).

Many individual households were not only geographically distanced from the local church but were also distanced from their nearest neighbour. Such geographic remoteness drove a typically independent mindset with an increasingly 'autodidactic relationship' with the Bible and home management of slaves and servants. The following extract comes from the diary of Willem B. E. Paravicini di Capelli, the aide-de-camp of the revolutionary minded General Janssens, who toured the country in the early 1800's and visited one such distant farm:

> Before leaving Ferreira, I should like to refer to this man more closely. Filled with pride at the degree of perfection he believes he has attained, he makes use in conversation of set phrases and Biblical quotations. Whenever his interests demand it, he quotes Bible texts sanctimoniously. Of this he gave a proof when the Governor asked his opinion of treating Hottentots and slaves inhumanly. Our hypocrite, who clearly felt that this question was aimed at him personally, tried to prove that the Hottentots were the race

> of Ham, accursed of God and doomed to slavery, and that it was the duty of a Christian to obey the word of God. However neat this subterfuge, he noticed that this application was not well received by the Governor. He blushed, slammed shut the Bible, laid it in its accustomed place on the mantle plank of the chimney and gave a new turn to his scriptural knowledge (Shell, 1992: 47-48).

This myth gained considerable popularity in the late nineteenth century in South Africa (Yamauchi 2004, 31). Du Toit (1983: 929) notes that the claim made by Stephanus Ferreira did not just appear in the journal of Governor Janssens, but in fact was recorded in many other manuscripts as well. Scholtz (1958: 147) records that a vast majority of early Afrikaners until the latter half of the nineteenth century must have shared this view. With the emancipation of slaves in 1834, and the subsequent equalization of coloured people and white people, many white farmers embarked on the Great Trek to escape the Cape Colony laws that allowed for freedom of slaves. It was believed by many Voortrekkers that the 'equality of coloureds with whites was contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of descent and faith' (Esterhuyse, 1979: 34).

Whereas there is no conclusive evidence that the Dutch Reformed Church sanctioned a justification of the 'curse of Ham' to be applied to the indigenous people, yet it legitimised racial conquest and slavery. The Dutch Reformed Church, David Livingstone wrote, was the ideological source of persistent injustice to blacks. The church, he says, has been the 'great bulwark of slavery, cattle-lifting, and Caffre-marauding' (Blaikie, 2019: 166).

3.4 Gam in literature and poetry

Theology was annexed as part of a formidable explanation that makes for Afrikaner empowerment (Diala, 2000: 80). André P Brink, South African novelist, frequently depicts, in

his writings, the characteristic Afrikaner distortion of the Bible to a white mythology that supports and justifies a racist ideology. Brink writes in his novel entitled *Looking on Darkness* about a coloured actor, Joseph Malan, who recalls his master's young daughter reading 'with great conviction, the story of Noah and his sons'. Then she shuts the Bible, and exclaimed: 'You see, that is where it comes from. We whites, the children of Shem and Japheth and you are the children of Ham and his son Canaan. That's why it is like that' (Brink, 1974: 77). The citation of the biblical verse accounts for political motivations for the privileged position of the dominant group. This citation is also an example of a colonial myth that has become a metaphysical fact of which the origin has gradually been obliterated in the coloniser's consciousness (Diala, 2000: 82).

Well-known South African poet and writer, Adam Small (1961), alludes to the notion of *Gam* in the following poem:

DIE HERE HET GASKOMMEL	THE LORD HAS ROLLED THE BONES[10]
Lat die wêreld ma' praat pêllie los en vas	Let the worl' talk pallie if it wants to fast an' loose
'n sigaretjie en 'n kannetjie Oem Tas	a cigarette, a can Oom Tas
en dis allright pêllie dis allright	an s'alright buddy s'alright
ons kannie worry nie	we don' give a damn
'n sigaretjie en 'n kannetjie Oem Tas	a cigarette, a can Oom Tas
en 'n lekker meid en lekker anner dinge	pretty chick, pretty other stuff too
oe!	oh ja!
lat die wêreld ma' praat pêllie los en vas	let the world talk frien' if it wants to fast an' loose

[10] © Translation: 1997, Mike Dickman

wat daarvan	so what
wat daarvan	so what
wat maak dit saak	what diff'rence does it make
soes die Engelsman sê it cuts no ice	like th' English oke says cuts no ice
die Here het gaskommel	the Lord has rolled
en die dice het verkeerd geval vi' ons	an' the bones jus don' have our number
daai's maar al	is all
so lat hulle ma' sê skollie pêllie	so let them say skollie pallie
nevermind	ferget it, never mind,
daar's mos kinners van Gam en daar's kinners van Kain	it's jus' there's children a Ham an children a Cain
so dis dis allright pêllie dis allright	s'okay my frien', s'alright
ons moenie worry nie	let's jus' don' worry

Small, through his poetry, became the voice of the voiceless, the downtrodden, the poverty stricken and the disposed Cape Flats township coloureds. This poem does not demonstrate a purity of language. It switches from non-standard Afrikaans to English, uses phonetic spelling, and 'mimics and undermines apartheid logic' (Devarenne, 2010: 399). His use of language here could very well be a metaphor for the position in which coloured people find themselves in; the language depicts the mixed-race notion of those so described as *Gam.* Small gets into the psyche of those he features in his poems. He speaks the language of the poor, he shows full empathy, and understands their shattered dreams. Small's Afrikaans is particularly different to

the Afrikaans of white supremacy: for Small a 'non-standard language' could serve as 'resistance to cultural imperialism and nationalism' (Devarenne, 2010: 389).

Another poet of colour, S.V. Petersen, refers to dark skin as God's decision, and the result of the curse (of Ham). In the poem, *Bede* (Prayers)[11], if God decided that being black is a curse and because thereof blacks are meant to suffer, then the speaker sarcastically pleads with God that he be taught so and to accept the punishment (van der Linde, 1993: 122). This is a revolt against the accursed penalty of dark skin.

Laat dit dan wees, o Heer, dat ek	Let it be, O Lord, that I
in duisend jaar geleen teen God	in a thousand years borrowed
en mens gesondig het …	have sinned against God and man…
Dat weet ek nou, op U bevel	I know that now, at Your command
is hier die skurfte blootgestel.	the scab is exposed here.
Leer my dan maar soos Lasarus	Teach me, thus, just like Lazarus
tevrede wees, met streling van	to be satisfied, with fondness of
elk honger honed-tong,	every hungry dog-tongue,
dan weet ek tog dis U besluit,	yet I know it's your decision,
die Vloekstraf van 'n donker huid.	the curse of a dark skin.
As dit U straf is, dat ek so	If this is your punishment, that I must suffer,
moet ly, dan wil ek swyg, o Heer,	then I will keep silent, O Lord,
leer my berusting dan:	teach me acceptance, then:
laat my dan maar my Kruisweg gaan,	and let me go, on the way to my cross,
tot waar ek voor die donker staan …	to where I stand in the dark ...

[11] The poem *Bede* (Prayers) is included in Petersen's anthology entitled *Die Enkeling* (The Individual) published in 1944 (English translation: van der Linde, 1993: 123)

The poem is addressed not so much to God, but to those who confess God and yet are responsible for the rotten and infected position of people with dark skin. It is ironic that there is a call to accept and to make your peace.

The poet P.J. Philander and artist A.A. Langdown published a collection of poems in 1965, *Die Bruinkokon* (The Brown Cocoon). The preachers point out that people with the same skin colour of Ham and his offspring found themselves in a strange place in heaven. However long the separation in *apartheid* existed, access to heaven means that 'you and I' will also be white there! (van der Linde, 1993: 123).

Jy en ik	You and me
is op enkel reis	is on a single trip
na 'n vreemde plek	to a strange place
waarheen die predikantjies wys.	where the preachers show.
Wag hoe lank nog hier geskei	Wait for how long, here to divide
bij die ingang deur die uitgangbord	at the entrance through the exit board
tot ek en jy	until you and me
ook daar wit word.	also there become white.

These poets are not necessarily theologians, yet they borrow phrases and expressions that speak of the pervasiveness of the notion of *Gam* as it connects with the ideology promoted and deeply engrained in the psyche of the people.

3.5 Conclusion

The history of the notion of *Gam* is deeply rooted in the colonial period of conquering and enslaving Black people (those brought in from elsewhere, and the indigenous people of the Cape), which finds expression even in post-apartheid South Africa. I have shown that no church

synod or doctrine supported this notion of the curse of Ham, yet the notion of *Gam* is generally accepted as a given and a norm, and in many circles even a godly inspired injunction. This is evidenced in the politics, poetry, personal and private engagements in many households and on many farms, or popular jokes among either coloured people or those who are not coloured, or the self-taught religious interpretation among the colonialists. Such an acceptance has been embraced by both those who benefitted by a biased interpretation and exegesis of the Genesis text, as well as many of those to whom this was applied to. In history, the name of Ham as the evil one can still be found here and there [and everywhere] in South Africa (van der Linde, 1993: 7).

Chapter 4

The rhetoric of the 'curse of Ham': from the biblical narrative to Afrikaner Calvinism

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the rhetoric that would popularise the myth of the curse of Ham, starting with the rhetoric employed in the Hebrew Bible, and then in particular the function of the rhetoric used in the biblical narrative of Noah's curse, followed by a justification that black skin and hypersexuality are signs of the curse of Ham, and that slavery is a godly imperative to be used by the colonisers and slave-drivers to cure the degradation of the African slave. This would be the rhetoric driven by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the time that the Dutch, French, English, and other Europeans would settle at the Cape Colony. It is with this worldview that the Afrikaner population came to the Cape to enlighten and civilize the indigenous Africans. Finally, this chapter examines the rhetoric of Afrikaner Calvinism as a chosen and a separatist people which would give them the justification needed to brand the people of the Cape as descendants of Ham. But first, a brief introduction to what the term rhetoric means.

4.2 A brief explanation of rhetoric

Rhetoric may be described in broad terms as the 'use of words to persuade someone of something' (Corbett, 1965: 5). The someone is the target audience, who is the recipient of the writer's or speaker's techniques to inform, persuade or motivate them. Corbett (1965: 6) argues that one way of persuading others is to appeal to their reason. The speaker or writer may present

a series of facts or statements and draw from these generalizations or inferences. The effectiveness will largely depend on the truth of what is presented and the validity of the reasoning. Indisputable facts can convince an audience, and arguments based on probability can only induce belief. Corbet (1965: 7) asserts that 'universal truth has been the province of logic', and 'probabilities [have] been the province of rhetoric'. Rhetoric is about persuasion.

Aristotle (2007: 1356a) wrote:

> Let rhetoric be an ability, in each case, to see the available means of persuasion. This is the function of no other art; for each of the others is instructive and persuasive about its own subject; for example, medicine about health and disease and geometry about the properties of magnitude and arithmetic about numbers and similarly in the case of the other arts and sciences. But rhetoric seems to be able to observe the persuasive about "the given", so to speak. That, too, is why we say it does include technical knowledge of any particular, defined genus.

For Aristotle, the general aim of the oratory is to persuade. All the elements needed for persuasion is inclusive in the speaker's efforts to influence the audience (Rowell, 1932: 226). Aristotle (2007: 1356a) identified three artistic modes of persuasion in every speech: Ethos, Logos, and Pathos. Ethos is derived from the way rhetoricians present themselves. The character produces the proof as to whether the speaker is worthy of belief and honesty. The speaker's reasonable image contributes to the persuasiveness of the argument. Logos involves the use of logic. This is the reasoning in what is being spoken or written and appeals to the mind of the audience. Information shared is regarded as credible and true. Pathos appeals to the emotion. Aristotle recognises that logic alone does not move people to action. The audience must also feel an idea to be moved by it. This is particularly important in cases where there is a lack of proof, or where two different views can logically be maintained. Aristotle (2007: 1355a, 1355b) recognises that rhetoric is a 'faculty' that stands neutral and can be used for both good or evil, for the greatest blessing or the utmost harm. The rhetorician, therefore, can deliver

a good presentation, yet without moral compass. Aristotle admonishes that rhetoric is a useful art and should be rightly and honestly practiced; it could be used as an instrument of persuasion, but also used against the abuse of an exploiter, and to prevent fraud and injustice. Rhetoric is a power of persuasion, but also a power with notions of ethics.

Rhetoric seems to resurge especially in times of social violent upheaval, or when the 'old order' is being replaced by the new. Historical events, such as the Renaissance in Italy, the Reformation in England, and the American Revolution lent itself to rhetorical activity (Corbet, 1965: 22). The Dutch and other European settlers at the Cape may have experienced a similar kind of rhetorical activity for their own self-assurance, identity formation, and establishment.

4.3 A biblical separatist rhetoric

The Hebrew Bible, and particularly the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) abounds with literature that encourages separatism for the Jewish people. These stories are about distinguishing themselves from the other nations who were often referred to as impure and worshipping other gods. Judah's priestly class would use the notion of particularism (or separatism, as Israel was called upon to separate them from other nations) to weld together an ethnic identity and national aspirations for the Jews (Watt, 2020: 2). Jacob Wright claims that the Hebrew Bible is 'the first attempt in world history to construct what we may properly call a "national identity."' (2023: 12). The vision of the 'biblical project' was to affirm the 'political unity' of a people as a nation, one that transcends generations over time and ages, and the geographical definitions of a state (Wright, 2023: 466), with 'a robust and persistent engagement around issues of belonging' (Wright, 2023: 470). The story of a separate nation finds its roots in the covenant that Yahweh made with the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. They were to behave in a certain distinctive way to mark their identity as Israelites, to maintain their

purity and to distinguish themselves from other nations, as commanded in their book of laws (the Torah). Jacob Neusner (1973:15-20) describes a system of impurity through the various strands of the Hebrew Bible. In his view the language of purity and impurity is shown to be mainly present in the priestly texts and matters of the temple. Literature from the Second Temple relates purity and impurity to idolatry, which he considers a form of moral defilement and sexual misconduct.

The timing of the revelation of the laws at Mount Sinai happens between the exodus from Egypt and the settling in the land of Canaan. The laws required them to maintain their distinction from both Egypt and Canaan lest they become polluted as these nations were. This very notion of being polluted gave justification to the Israelites to displace the Canaanites from their land, and to take possession thereof for they (the Canaanites) have polluted it by behaving in ways contrary to the laws of Yahweh. Leviticus 18:3–4 (Revised Standard Version, hereafter RSV) stipulates:

> You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. You shall do my ordinances and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the Lord your God.

Hyam Maccoby (1999: 205) argues that the ritual impurity regulations in Leviticus 11-17 point towards Israel being a holy nation, morally pure, and marked to be a chosen people of God. The defilement of the land in Leviticus is only in connection with moral sins (not ceremonial), and in this case specifically sexual. 'Only in Lev. 18 and 20 (both concerned with sexual offences) do we find mention of defilement of the Land combined with the threat of expulsion' (Maccoby, 1999: 202).

The rhetoric of separation is not just applied to Israel as a people distinct from other peoples. It also draws a distinction between pure meat and that which is polluted. Leviticus 20: 24-26 (RSV) stipulates:

> But I have said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God; I have separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; you shall not bring abomination on yourselves by animal or by bird or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine.

The repetition of this rhetoric, albeit now applied to the pure and impure animals, does two things. It first connects this whole notion of separateness to the creation story of Yahweh, and thereby giving it more credibility, and secondly, it reinforces communal identity by drawing explicit contrasts with other groups (Olyan, 2000: 63–102). Egypt and Canaan, Israel's historical enemies, are mentioned as a catalyst for all other peoples in all places and all times. Dispossession of land appears as early as the promises given to the Jewish ancestors in Genesis 15: 18-21, and 17:8, and motivates the exodus story. It gives divine approval for the execution of captives during these wars (Numbers 31:14–18; 33:55; Deuteronomy 7:16; 20:12–13, 16–18; 25:17–19; Joshua 6:17–21; 8:18–29; 10:22–12:24; 1 Samuel 15) or their reduction to forced labour (Deuteronomy 20:10–11; Joshua 9:26–27).

4.4 The rhetoric of the biblical narrative of Noah's curse

The two rhetorical functions to be discussed under this heading shall be that of slavery and the appropriation of land. Slavery seems to be the more obvious one, for Noah's curse was one that caused Canaan to be the 'lowest of slaves' to his brothers (Genesis 9:25). The appropriation of Canaanite land by the Israelites is not so obvious, yet the repetitive nature of a phrase in the text may infer and lead us to the notion of a chosen people, and coupled with that, land for a chosen people, as espoused by M. Shahid Mathee (2016: 726-747).

Slavery is a theme that gets thrown around when the writer or the speaker needs to conceptualize notions of sin and salvation, as Paul so frequently does in his epistles[12]. In terms of biblical understanding, sin may lead to slavery, but rarely no consideration is given that slavery is sin, per se (De Wet, 2018: 104). Preaching slavery is preaching bondage. Noah's curse was that of slavery. Wittenberg (1991: 48) argues that the narrative of the curse of Ham is a quest for Canaanite servitude. The narrative has an etiological function and wants to explain why Canaan should serve Shem. The curse pronounced on Canaan is coupled with a blessing pronounced on Shem. Since the characters in this narrative are symbols for systems and/or nations, the blessing and the curse are reflective of the deep-seated animosity between 'Israel as the descendants of Shem and the Canaanites' (Wittenberg, 1991: 48). Animosity between the two groups stems from their expression of religion: the Israelites worshipped Yahweh and the Canaanites worshipped other gods, chief among them was Baal, the god of rain and fertility (Wittenberg, 1991: 49). Yahweh rescued the Israelites from the yoke of slavery in Egypt, and Canaan was a province of Egypt. The conflict between these two nations goes deeper than their religious differences; it also reflects socio-political differences. In the Table of Nations, the

[12] See, for example, Ephesians 6:5-8 and 1 Corinthians 7:21-24

names listed under Ham as descendants also represented, at one time or another, prominent and celebrated cities, such as Nineveh, Calah, Ashur, Accad and Uruk. These were well organised state-societies as opposed to the list mentioned under Shem (Obed, 1986: 27). This arrangement of names under the Table of Nations explains how Canaan, being the son of Ham, also represents the 'exploitative socio-political system of city-states' (Wittenberg 1991: 53). The curse on Canaan, and by extension on the descendants of Ham, and on Ham himself, is a curse on the symbols represented by these names. The narrative becomes a reinforcement of the preaching of slavery, this such that the previous exploiters, those who are descendants of Ham, can now be exploited by the descendants of Shem.

M. Shahid Mathee (2016: 727) considers the narrative of the Curse of Canaan as a motive for land. The covenant between Yahweh and the Jewish people marks them as a chosen people, and the notion of *chosen people* and *land* go together. According to Mathee (2016: 731), the phrase 'Ham was the father of Canaan', Genesis 9:18 and 9:22, serves a rhetorical function to single out Canaan. The rhetorical function is primarily to link Ham with Canaan. This rhetorical function is further pronounced when one considers that (i) there was no reason whatsoever to link Ham and Canaan (the redactor could just as well have said: the sons of Noah that went forth from the ark were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth); (ii) that none of the children of Shem and Japheth were mentioned; and (iii) why, out of all Ham's children was Canaan singled out? It was sufficient that Ham be introduced merely as Ham and not as the father of Canaan, just as Shem and Japheth are not introduced as fathers of their sons. Canaan was mentioned even before Ham did the wrong to Noah. The connection between Ham and Canaan is affirmed in Genesis 9:25, when Noah pronounces the curse. In Genesis 9:25 the phrase 'Ham the father of Canaan' is omitted. The redactor needs no longer to remind the reader of the relationship between Ham and Canaan, for in this verse Ham's deed had already been done. 'Canaan's

connection to Ham as his father is severed, a connection so emphatically stated and maintained prior to and at the time of Ham's "deed". In fact, Ham is completely dispensed with while Shem and Japheth feature, being blessed by Noah' (Mathee, 2016: 731). The phrase 'Ham the father of Canaan' helps to connect two completely independent traditions: the narrative of the curse of Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27), and the genealogy of Noah (Genesis 9:18-19). The narrative of the curse of Canaan does not fit this arrangement. It belongs to stories of crime and punishment and not genealogy (Wittenberg, 1991: 48). Genesis 9:18-19 closes off the flood narrative and introduces the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Wittenberg, 1991: 50). Noah's curse (Genesis 9:25-27) becomes the outcome of a rather noticeable introduction in Genesis 9:18, repeated in Genesis 9:22. The inserted phrase 'Ham the father of Canaan' has served its rhetorical function. Ham had already done his wrong against Noah which enabled him (Noah) to curse Canaan. This curse will enable Yahweh's chosen people to gain the land of the Canaanites (Mathee, 2016: 734).

Mathee associates the curse narrative with Israel's quest for land, unlike Wittenberg who links the narrative to slavery. Land becomes central in the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites, of which they become the chosen people of Yahweh. Ham, the father of Egypt, is set up to do the wrong against Noah. The exodus from Egypt saw them wandering in the wilderness, and Canaan was the only land to be conquered and became the receiver of Noah's curse (Mathee, 2016: 735). Occupying the land of another nation does not start with conquering them. For Israel it is a moral and religious justification. Any immoral sexual conduct on Canaan's side is reason enough for Israel, Yahweh's chosen and pure people, to occupy the land of Canaan. The author of the curse of Canaan did in fact intend Ham's act as a sexual deviant one, thereby the justification of the curse (Mathee, 2016: 737). Sexual abomination as a rhetorical function, although not as explicit in this narrative, gives

justification for 'casting out of land for one people and granting of it to another' (Mathee, 2016: 740). This prophecy has not yet found fulfilment in the pen of the redactor of the narrative of the curse of Canaan, for it will once again pop up in the religiosity and theology of the Afrikaners at the Cape.

4.5 The Hamitic rhetoric: black skin, hyper-sexualised and pagan slave

The popularising of the curse of Ham can be dated to the sixteenth century, during the reign of Elizabeth I as monarch of England and Ireland, and George Best, a sea captain, serving on her Privy Council. Best (1578: 31-32) gives a brief description of Noah and his three sons, whom he describes as being white, including their wives, and thus their children also ought to have been white. According to Best, God commanded continence and abstinence from 'carnall copulation', which Noah's wicked son, Ham, disobeyed, and as a result thereof, his first child born after the flood, Cush, and all his posterity after him, were punished with black skin as a 'spectacle of disobedience to all the World'. Thus, according to Best (1578: 32), all 'blacke Moores which are in Africa' are the descendants of Cush, and Africa was called 'Chamesis, after y^{e} father's name, being perhaps a cursed, dry, sandy, and unfruitful ground, for such a generation to inhabit in'. Best is noted as the most quoted source and best-known for his contribution on the curse of Ham hypothesis in the sixteenth century (see, for example, Habekost, 1993: 169; Fryer, 1984: 142-143). David Whitford[13] (2009: 106) asserts that Best was well cited whenever the Transatlantic Slave Trade was discussed. He also questions the accuracy (if compared to the biblical text) of the Noahic text given by Best, for example, (i) why is the curse placed on Cush instead of Canaan, (ii) what was his source that informed him

[13] Whitford (2009: 105) notes that Best was also a source to the writings of William Shakespeare with reference to *Othello*. Best also appears in introductions to *The Merchant of Venice: Texts and Contexts*, ed. M. Lindsay Kaplan (2002:176).

about forbidden sex on the ark, and (iii) why mention Africa in a book about the Northwest passage? Whitford (2009: 106) argues that the answers to all these are to be found in the Elizabethan era to support the 'exploration and exploitation and George Best was ideally suited to help in that endeavour'. That Best could connect Africa to blackness, as well as connect the sons of Noah and their wives to whiteness, was neither found nor supported by the biblical text. Also, that black could be connected to the proximity of the sun was also refuted. On the latter, Best would explain that those at the southern tip of Africa are just as far away from the equator as the English in the Northern hemisphere, so that, if blackness was connected to the proximity of the sun, then surely Africans at the southern tip ought to be as white as the English. Given this explanation, there must have been another reason for Africans to be black, and Best found his answer in the curse. 'Thus you see, that the cause of the Ethiopians blacknesse, is the curse and infection of bloud" (Best, 1578: 32). This very thought, that blackness is not because of the proximity to the sun, for which there was proof in skin colour between those in the southern hemisphere and those in the northern, must have made it easier to believe and give legitimacy to the notion that black people had been cursed and it shows in the colour of their skin. Also, by his proving that the proximity to the sun does not cause blackness, Best could reassure the English travellers and other explorers that they would not risk losing their whiteness in their quest to conquer the unknown world. Best must have been familiar with the sixteenth century writing of Guillaume Postel, *Cosmographica.* This document provides comprehensive accounts and narratives of the most interesting and mysterious places in the world. Postel (1636: 52-53) writes the following about Ethiopia, Cush, and Ham:

> … quæ cum Æthiopiæ voce per Gręcam furtivamque etymologiam Chussi, id eft nigri, filii primogeniti Chamesis significarionem servant. … Chus nigro colore ex albis, ut jam dixi, parentibus, summo certéaliqua Divinæ vindictæ signo sic ob parentis scelus tinctus

> [English translation: The name Ethiopia, which means black, comes from the Greek and is a hidden etymology for Cush the first son of Chamesis (Cham) and it signifies servant. … Cush, the first son (of Cham), was black coloured but came from white parents, this wicked tinge most certainly signifies a divine punishment against his parent.]

Postel derived the association between blackness and Africa from Greek Ethiopia, which meant 'burnt' or 'darkened' and was translated in Hebrew as Chus or Cush. The name *Chamesis* comes from Annius of Viterbo (fifteenth century Italian monk), repeated, edited, and translated by Postel (Whitford, 2009: 119-120). Best borrowed these from Postel, which explains the curse on Cush (instead of Canaan), and the link of Africa with blackness. Best's treatise (1578), *A True Discourse of the Late Voyages of Discoverie for the Finding of a Passage to Cathaya,* became a major publishing wonder of the seventeenth century, as a stand-alone publication, but also as it was included in Richard Hakluyt's *Principle Navigations*, which gave it a much wider readership. Translations of the travel and exploration narratives of Best became more readily available throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even as far as Virginia in 1608 (Mancall, 2007: 245).

The curse of Ham was not just associated with blackness. A second attribution to the curse of Ham is the hypersexualised African. Annius of Vertibo, in his exegesis of Berosus Book III, connected the macrophallic Africans to the curse. According to Annius, Ham introduced sexual immorality to the human condition after the flood, and in Ham, this sexual deviance found a new home in Africa. The popularity of Annius and his writing popularised the connection between the curse of Ham and African hypersexuality (Whitford, 2009: 124). Andrew Willet (1608: 90) included the list of sexual sins attached to Ham in his *Hexapla*:

> *Berosus* writeth of Cham, that he was after this given over to all lewdnesse, corrupting mankinde with his evill manners: and taught them, by his owne example, approving the same, that it was lawfull, as the wicked use was before the floud, to lye with their mothers, sisters, daughters, with the male, and bruit beasts, and therefore was cast out from his father, and dwelt in Egypt.

In the next two centuries to follow (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), images of racial categorisation and sexuality became increasingly discussed and presented in writing and art. One such example is an image of an African male, repeatedly printed throughout the eighteenth century, that demonstrated the potency of a hyper-sexed man, that even 'the mere sight of the picture or thought of a black man during coition might bring forth a black child' (Whitford, 2009: 131). Subjecting the hypersexualised African to slavery was seen as 'a necessary means for controlling, improving and elevating the inferior and degraded man' (Stringfellow, 1861: 35). A public display of black sexuality was allowed for the construction of the other, gazed at as a 'freak of nature or as exotic specimen' (Johnson, 2004: 97). Sarah Baartman, a South African Khoi woman (1788-1816) became a symbol of racial-sexual exploitation both in her life and in her death. Baartman was enslaved and taken to Europe, where she was put on display for public view. African people, and in particular African women, were regarded as inferior and were used as objects for white curiosity at freak shows. Baartman was put on public show, first in London and later in Paris. She was flaunted as the *Hottentot Venus*. She was regularly placed on display with no clothing so that spectators, at a fee of three francs, could look upon her unusually large buttocks. She died evidently of alcohol poisoning and smallpox in January 1816 (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999: 18-19, 27). Following her death, a certain George Cuvier, a medical scholar, was intrigued by the anatomy of Baartman's body, with particular interest in her genitalia. He referred to her overgrown labia as a *Hottentot apron* and compared her vagina and pelvic area to that of monkeys. For as late as the turn of the twentieth century, Baartman's genital remains were kept on display at the Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man) in Paris

(Sharpley-Whiting, 1999: 28-31). In a detailed chapter on the life of Baartman, Heather Radke (2022: 57) wrote that Sarah Baartman's 'days were long and likely lonely. It was imperative to the success of the show that Baartman be understood as a specimen rather than a person, so her social life was severely limited'. Baartman has been displayed as an object in the same way that plants and animals are displayed for public view, this show being part of a larger colonial project in which her captors sought justification for the colonisation of South Africa. This is an extreme case of racial violence, dehumanising both the individual and an entire race, under the guise of 'perceived radical difference of black men and women', and encoding them as 'wanton, dangerous, and evil' (Johnson, 2004: 99).

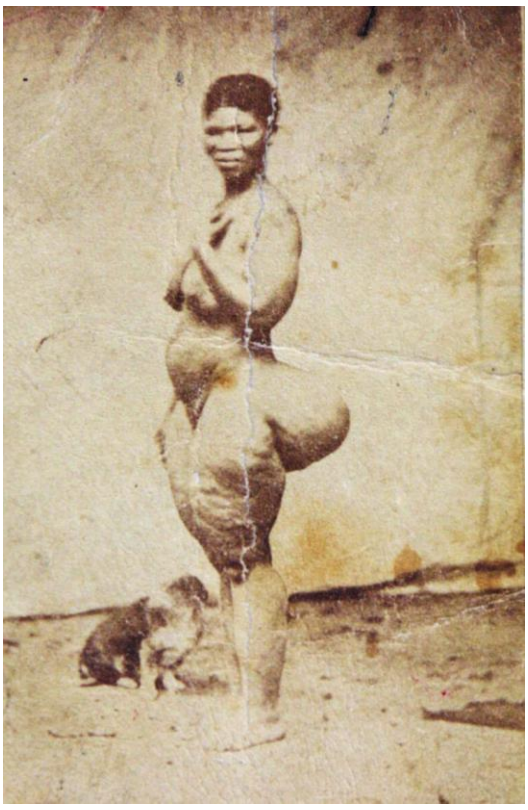

Figure 3: Photograph of Sarah Baartman from the 1800's.

Source: https://www.theafricaiknow.org/articles/Tragedy-of-Sarah-Saartjie-Baartman

Slavery provided an opportunity to tame the hypersexual African and to help with their lack of civilisation. 'Ham was enslaved of God to Shem and Japheth. The propriety of this was first

seen in the abuse Ham's descendants made of freedom while they enjoyed it in the land of Canaan. From that day until this, their history proves that freedom to them is a curse, and not a blessing, and that Ham's character is a true type of the character of his descendants" (Stringfellow, 1861: 35). Slavery, according to Stringfellow (1861: 35), was 'decreed of God for the correction of sin and the good of the world'.

The contradiction of Christianity is that it was an accomplice to slavery and provided justification for it. Paul in his letter to Philemon did not condemn slavery, but rather encouraged it (Philemon 12-16). Paul does not address slavery as a social reformer, but as one who advises believers how to deal with their realities for the transformation of the individual believer. Paul's vision was not for slaves to be set free in the Roman Empire, but rather, his vision was for a creation of a new sibling-based fellowship (McKnight, 2017: 10-11). The gospels show no evidence that Jesus condemned slavery. Religious orders and organisations such as the Anglican Church all held slaves and made millions from the sale of Africans (Walvin, 2008: 189-190). The Catholic Church would denounce slavery as inherently wrong only as late as 1965. John F. Maxwell (1975: 13) asserts that 'Popes, Bishops, canonists and moralists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could not easily accept that a moral doctrine which had been commonly taught for over 1,400 years could possibly be mistaken'. Pius Onyemechi Adiele (2017: 421) lists the following examples of direct intervention or by proxy of popes in buying and selling of slaves:

> Urban VIII, who wrote the Bull "Commissum nobis" of 1639 which condemned the enslavement of Indians gave permission for the purchase of 40 Turkish slaves for the papal Naval Fleets in 1629. His fellow pope Innocent X (*1574, pontificate 1644-1655) permitted the purchase of 100 Turkish slaves in 1645. Pope Alexander VII (*1599, pontificate 1655-1667) who succeeded him, went into the annals of history as the pope that bought the greatest number of slaves for the papal Naval Fleets. In 1661, he gave approval for the purchase of 600 slaves for the papal Galleys. In the same token, pope

> Innocent XI (*1611, pontificate 1676-1689) purchased slaves used as Galley slaves in the Papal States during his papacy. Pope Benedict XIV (*1675, pontificate 1740-1758), who authored the Bull "Immensa Pastorum" of 1741 that condemned Spanish enslavement of the Indians also enmeshed himself in the evil of the buying and selling of fellow human beings. He went into the sand of history as a pope who sold out 165 Turkish slaves to the Malteser Order at the huge price of 6,230 Italian scudi in 1758.

Whereas Pope Leo, in his letter published in *Catholicae ecclesia* (1890: 112) defended the popes in office before him from the charge of being pro-slavery, Maxwell (1975: 117) argues that they were given special commendation not so much for speaking out against slavery as per the impression given by Pope Leo, but rather that they condemned the unjust methods of slavery and the unjust titles of slave ownership, as was upheld by their contemporary and moral theology. The Second Vatican Council, 1965, corrected the Catholic teaching concerning slavery. No attempts were made to draw any distinction concerning the titles of slave ownership, nor that slavery be considered as a penalty for crime, for that would be morally unlawful and inhumane and degrading (Maxwell, 1975: 125).

The Protestant Reformation did not do any better. Martin Luther endorsed slavery in the sense that persons can be the property of other people. John Calvin agreed with the New Testament text that slaves should obey their masters, and that manumission is entirely up to their masters. The protestant Reformers did not give much consideration or saw anything wrong with slavery as being incompatible with the teaching of Christianity (Avalos, 220-225). Eighteenth century evangelist John Wesley, after an encounter with John Newton, the former slaver turned abolitionist, wrote a short treatise against slavery in 1774. Despite his stance against slavery, he still considered that slavery had offered an immense benefit to the African. Since the Transatlantic Slave Trade and evangelism went hand in hand, Wesley considered this to be an

opportunity for the slaves to be redeemed, this based on his understanding that Ham needed salvation. Wesley (1774: 57) concludes his brief treatise with a poem:

> The servile progeny of *Ham*
> Seize as the purchase of thy blood!
> Let all the heathen know thy name:
> From idols to the living GOD
> The dark *Americans* convert,
> And shine in every pagan heart!

Charles II, seventeenth century King of England, established, in 1660, a special commission to oversee the affairs of the foreign plantations. Among the responsibilities was highlighted a special concern for the souls of the colonists and the enslaved:

> You are most especially to take an effectuall care of the propogacon of the Gospell in the severall Forraine Plantacons, by providing that there be good encouragement settled for the invitacon and maintenance of lerned and orthodox ministers, and by sending strict orders and injunccons for the regulating and reforming the debaucheries of planters and servants, whose ill example doth bring scandall upon Christianitie, and deterr such as yet are not admitted thereunto, from affecting or esteeming it. And you are to consider how such of the Natives or such as are purchased by you from other parts to be servants or slaves may be best invited to the Christian Faith, and be made capable of being baptized thereunto ; it being to the honor of our Crowne and of the Protestant Religion that all persons in any of our Dominions should be taught the knowledge of God, and be made acquainted with the misteries of Salvation (Charles II, 1660, 36).

Both Charles II, and his successor, his younger brother James II, showed much consideration for the salvation of the slaves, and their conversion to the Christian religion. One such priest who answered the call to do mission work in foreign countries, was Morgan Godwyn. He was never an opponent of slavery itself but was very critical of the treatment of African slaves in

English domains. Slaves may have been baptised but was not allowed to sit in church with the English settlers, ship crews, and merchants. Baptism for slaves were frowned upon by the slave masters. Attending church services would rob them of their working hours. Godwyn (1680: 111) relates the following story:

> His Crime being neither more nor less, than receiving Baptism upon a Sunday-Morning at his Parish-Church, from the Hands of the Minister thereof; Who was said afterwards to excuse himself thus, That he could not deny it, being demanded of him. But the Negro at his return, did not escape so easily: The brutish Overseer instantly taking him to task, and giving him to understand, that that was no Sunday-work for those of his Complexion; that he had other business for him, the neglect whereof should cost him an Afternoons baptism in Blood (those I heard were his very words) as in the Morning he had received a baptism with Water.

Godwyn's advocacy helped with the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG)[14] in Foreign parts to oversee the catechesis and conversion of all colonial people, especially slaves. The stigma of the curse of Ham remained, though, for the evangelisation of the slaves was merely a cover for the economic exploitation of the black African people. Evangelisation to Africans was used as a front to enslave them.

David Goldenberg (1997: 34-35) claims that, within Islamic history and practice, the curse-of-Ham narrative was crucial for the enslavement of Black Africa (rather than Canaan) based on the interpretation that 'Black became slave'. Similarly, James Sweet (1997: 149) argues that the enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans by Muslims was justified by the Hamitic curse. It was not a given, however, that Blackness was linked to slavery, and neither that the biblical

[14] The SPG was quite involved in the missionary work of the Church of England in the Cape Colony, under the leadership of the first Anglican Bishop of Cape Town. The SPG supported the work for the bishop in planting churches, schools, and training clergy for the missionary work. The activities of the SPG falls beyond the scope of this thesis. More information about the work of the SPG in Cape Town and the greater Cape Colony can be found in *Classified Digest of the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1892*, on pages 286 – 297.

narrative was evoked by Islamic scholars for justification of Blacks to slavery. Ahmad Baba, born into an Islamic scholarly family (in 1556) in Timbuktu (Cleaveland, 2015: 45), rejected a racialised curse of Ham and black inferiority (Cleaveland, 2015: 51). Baba rejected the association of race with slavery and advocated that a *Sudani*[15] Muslim who was illegally enslaved by another Muslim, could sue the slaver for his or her liberation. Islamic law would also give relative protection to other believers who were not Muslim (for example Jews and Christians), for special safeguards against enslavement. Baba, however, did not give much advocacy for believers outside the Muslim tradition (Cleaveland, 2015: 52). The Trans-Saharan slave trade was well established across North Africa well before the spread of Islam in the seventh century. By the seventeenth century, Muslim scholars (for example Baba) attempted to change the behaviour of North Africans who enslaved West Africans on the basis of race rather than the dictates of Islamic law (Cleaveland, 2015: 49). A Black Muslim could not be enslaved by Islamic law (Bashir, 2019: 96). Slavery, Haroon Bashir argues, was justified by Islamic doctrine for the non-believer rather than 'Black Africa'. Bashir further argues that statements that suggest that Black Africa was enslaved as a result of the curse of Ham are a projection of Eurocentric interpretation onto Islamic history (more on the curse of Ham narrative in Islamic history will be discussed in 5.5.4 on page 101 below). During the period of the Transatlantic Slave Trade the curse-of-Ham narrative was used to justify anti-black racism, whereas within the Islamic scholarship the curse to slavery was due to disbelief (Bashir, 2019: 96). The rhetoric of the Khoi and San being a people of no faith, as spread by the European settlers, and the Islamic scholarly rhetoric giving justification for the enslavement of non-believers, put together, would become a powerful weapon for advocacy to classify people

[15] Muslim geographers, by the ninth century, regularly described sub-Saharan Africans as 'Black' (*Sudan*) as opposed to 'White' (*Bidan*) North African and Mediterranean peoples (Cleaveland, 2015: 50).

of no faith and slaves within the curse-of-Ham narrative. The coloured people of the Cape are the descendants of the Khoi, the San, and the slaves brought to the Cape.

4.6 The rhetoric of Afrikaner Calvinism: a chosen people

Calvinism was brought to the Cape by the earliest European settlers in the mid-seventeenth century (Stokes,1975: 62). The central features of Calvinism were the 'doctrine of predestination, the "calling", and unmediated relationship of man and God' (Stokes, 1975: 64). Adherents of Calvinism were to believe that they are among the Elect, and that clues of election were to be found in their level of economic success. As God's chosen ones, they were to prosper both in this life and in the life to come. It was of paramount importance that the Calvinists applied their 'spiritual devotion' to their 'secular affairs, and this in turn will help them to cope with issues of 'doubt and fatalism' (Stokes, 1975:64). The formative period for a distinctive Afrikaner society was from approximately 1690 to 1835. Their lifestyle and economic activity were primarily that of subsistence pastoral activity: seminomadic, scattered, patriarchal households, which included their non-white servants and slaves. The Afrikaners held on to the Calvinist tradition of Christianity, although they were distant from the organised church. Family services were held daily, led by the father of the family, and, when possible, a trip to the nearest church would be arranged several times a year for the family to partake of the *nagmaal* (communion). With limited access to formal schools and churches, *huisgodsdiens* (home church), with particular focus on the Bible and especially the Old Testament, compensated for the lack of learning and development (van Jaarsveld, 1976: 50). The family was the primary socialising institution, and the father, being patriarch and preacher, was the main dispenser of the commands of God, internalised by the members of the family (Loubser, 1968:373). The primacy of the Bible is confirmed by Loubser (1987: 371):

> There was no educational system beyond the most rudimentary beginnings, with almost no differentiations in the cultural content. As a result, the Afrikaners' definition of their situation, their conceptions of themselves, of others, and of the world, were derived from symbolism and mythology of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. The meaning of their being in the new land found expression in the symbolism of the Chosen People, the Promised Land, the Children of Ham, and the Philistines. They were called and led by Jehovah, their King, Ruler, and Judge, to glorify him by establishing his kingdom on the dark continent among the heathen. The Calvinist doctrines of predestination and election provided justification of their position as defined by these constitutive symbols.

The two unifying factors that kept the Afrikaners together, were war (against the non-white nations that they have encountered), and their religion (Walker, 1934:53). Afrikaans, as an emerging language during this time, became a third unifying factor for the Afrikaners. Having established themselves as an independent and separate community, they held on to those essential elements that would maintain their identity: 'the Afrikaans language, the Calvinist faith, racial purity and white dominance, a minimum of formal authority, a pastoral livelihood, and a reliance on precedent in all things' (Stokes, 1975: 68).

European Calvinism and Afrikaner Calvinism did not differ theologically. Both held on to the central doctrines of Calvinism: predestination, the calling as a primary duty, the unmediated relationship of humanity to God, all of which were affirmed by the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape. However, a distinct Afrikaner Calvinism emerged as they strictly adhered to the original Calvinist traditions, being immune to the winds of change that swept over European Calvinism. Stokes (1975: 72) argues that Afrikaner Calvinism, being imbedded in a 'radical divergent historical and social context', tended to promote 'conservatism, conformity and external social constraints.' The Afrikaners saw themselves, collectively, as God's elect, set apart from all others. God had a direct hand in shaping and sanctifying them. They were secured

in the salvific plan of God, and knew the will of God for their situation, which the European Calvinism was denied. The Afrikaners directly identified themselves with the Old Testament Israelites. Their destiny was a divine one, in the same way as Israel ventured into the land of Canaan in their exodus from Egypt. They were wanderers in a hostile environment, and, because they could identify with so many of the Old Testament Israelites, the Old Testament became a virtual manual for them to live by. In the process they increasingly moved away from the 'theological guidance of an organised church' (Stokes, 1975: 73). John M'Carter (1869: 143), a Dutch Reformed Church Minister, wrote about how central the Israelite-story and the Old Testament had been to the Afrikaners: 'The Word of God in the Old Testament has been to them not only a means of Grace, but in a sense what it was to the Israelites of Old, the means, in times of social dilapidation of preserving and keeping them alive as a people. It has been their bond of union, their code of manners, their motive to educate their children when none other exist'. This belief that they were like the Israelites, was further reinforced by the fact that the Afrikaner had to contend with a great number of heathen Africans. The *Nylstroom* (Nile river), a small river in the then Transvaal, was thought to be the Nile river through which ancient Israel was wondering, and they (the Afrikaners) were now tracing the very steps of ancient Israel. Such would give confirmation to their collective ascendancy and spiritual and cultural superiority above the apparent inferiority of the native Africans (Tiryakian, 1957: 390). As Fredrickson (1981: 173) remarked: 'Their mission was not so much to spread Christianity among the heathens as to preserve themselves as a Christian community amid a horde of savages who needed to be ruled firmly in the name of order and civilisation but were unlikely candidates for conversion'.

The one feature of Afrikaner belief that was well entrenched in their religious and family life, and of which signs were very evident in their political and societal spheres, was the fact that

they were God's chosen people (Stokes, 1975: 73). The theme of being a chosen people functioned to give legitimacy to 'racial inequality and oppression'. The 'rejection of any form of *gelijkstelling'* (an equalisation in status between black and white) was to be understood in the context of the Calvinist dichotomy between the chosen and the damned (Du Toit, 1983: 927). The early Afrikaners subscribed and maintained the notion that they were, like Israel, 'a chosen people' with an 'exclusive relationship with God' and a 'mandate to smite the heathen' (Fredrickson, 1981: 171). This claim stood central in Afrikaner belief system, which, in turn, engrained and reinforced the popular belief among Afrikaners that the indigenous people are the children of Ham, and hence are destined to be 'perpetual hewers of wood and drawers of water' (Du Toit, 1983: 927). 'It was as a chosen race that the Israelites had received a divine injunction not to intermarry with the Canaanites. The non-whites of South Africa were identified therefore not only with the children of Ham but also with the Canaanites of the Promised Land' (Van Jaarsveld, 1964: 7).

The theme of being a chosen people was popularised and promoted not just by their own agency as Afrikaner Calvinists, but also by travelling missionaries and other European visitors. Reverend James Mackinnon (1887: 177) recounts a story told to him by a lay leader of the *Dopper*[16] faction of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is about the chosen ones and the damned. If only some people are saved, Afrikaners reasoned, it must be the white Christians and not the pagan blacks. Mackinnon perceived this to be a widespread belief among especially the rural Afrikaners. Of particular concern was the fact that this notion of chosen people often time spilled over to human rights abuses in the name of a superiority race who had a lust for unlimited power over the indigenous people, as the following extract from Commissary J. A.

[16] There are three factions of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa: the Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk, the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk, and the Gereformeerde Kerk. The Gereformeerde Kerk is known as the Dopper faction.

De Mist (1920: 256-257) shows, who complied travel notes and official documents, and here he quotes the parting words of Commissioner Sluysken in 1793:

> What individual, unless he has lost all feelings of humanity, would not, with us, be deeply moved were he to realise that men could be found so debased and inhuman as to abuse the very rights and privileges with which the Creator has peculiarly favoured them above all their fellow-creatures, by employing their talents in effecting the undoing of these wretched mortals? Who would not shudder with horror were he to pause for a moment and glance at the pitiful picture of innocent people mercilessly despoiled of their corn and cattle, nay, more, of their wives and children, torn from them by powerful and rapacious neighbours? … Some, in spite of their consciences, actually dare to express a doubt as to whether it would be a crime to murder a Kaffir or a Hottentot. At most, they regard it as a matter of very small moment.

A petition was drawn up by the inhabitants of the Cape and addressed to the Governor and the Political Council of the Cape in 1784, expressing concern about the 'unlimited lust for power', far removed from the 'watchful eye of church and state' (Beyers, 1967). A similar concern was expressed by the nineteenth century traveller John Barrow (1801: 136-137), who blamed the Afrikaners for the plight of the Khoi people. The colonists, he says, had been removed too far away from the authority of their former government, and have committed the most barbarous acts against 'these poor wretches', and have made them to be totally dependent upon them for even a morsel of bread. John Philip, a missionary, and humanitarian, put together whatever historical evidence he could muster against the colonists for the way they oppressed and exterminated the slaves and Khoi people. He also blamed the weakness of the government that empowered the colonists to tyrannise at will (Philip, 1828: II, 33 and I, 86, 383).

David Livingstone found justification and legitimation for the colonists to settle in the land of the indigenous people. Invoking the 'Divine Charter' in Genesis 1: 28, he advocated that those who could toil the soil and invest their labour upon it, have more right to the land than those

who lived a nomadic life. Yet he also blamed the Afrikaners as nothing better than the indigenous people, for they were also cattle farmers who led a nomadic life. Afrikaner colonization, Livingstone said, lack the divine legitimation as they do less of the cultivation as the indigenous people do, whom they want to appropriate the land from (Livingstone, 1974: 76-77). Despite disqualifying the Afrikaners, that did not necessarily equate the Afrikaners to the same level as the indigenous people of the land, whom Livingstone referred to as the 'children of Ham'. He regarded it his mission to change their savage behaviour and to uplift them from the sunken position they have fallen into (Livingstone, 1960: 16). Livingstone was extremely critical of the Afrikaner behaviour towards the indigenous people and laid the blame at the Dutch Reformed Church whom he saw as the catalyst for their 'broad historical perspective of a peculiar, particular religious tradition' (Du Toit, 1983: 945), even though the frontier Afrikaners were already estranged from the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape. With regards their peculiar Calvinist tradition, Livingstone (1974: 72) comments as follows:

> Having done and suffered much for their religion, they naturally felt that in comparison with the Hottentots, who knew little of the Great Spirit, they were the peculiar favourites of Heaven. Some appropriated to themselves in a temporal sense Divine promises only meant to be fulfilled to the Church or its Head in a spiritual sense. They concluded, for instance, that the heathen were given *to them* for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for possession[17].

Commenting on Van Riebeeck's journal, Livingstone connects this Calvinist tradition to what he calls the *Van Riebeeck principle*, which is a legitimation of the theft of the indigenous people's property whenever practicable. This has been at the heart of Afrikaner thinking for two hundred years, Livingstone says, and it had been subtly condoned by the Dutch Reformed Church who have not uttered a single word against it for centuries (Livingstone, 1974: 73-74).

[17] 'Ask of me, and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession' (Psalm 2:8).

For Livingstone, the Afrikaners claim for themselves the title of *Christians* since they are the descendants of the French Huguenots and Dutch, two groups of people who presented themselves as very pious. People of colour would be regarded as black property or creatures. 'They being the *chosen people* of God, the *heathen* are given to them for an inheritance, and they are the rod of divine vengeance on the *heathen*, as were the Jews of old' (Livingstone, 1858: 37). Livingstone's writing, and his extensive exploration of southern Africa, make him one of the most influential sources of Afrikaner religious thinking and rhetoric. He is much quoted in secondary literature during the latter part of the nineteenth century, which lends credibility to his writing, and makes him an authoritative figure with regards the Afrikaner notion of them being a chosen people (Du Toit, 1983: 947).

4.7 Afrikaner separatist rhetoric

Under this heading of a separatist rhetoric, I wish to first and foremost focus on the role of the Voortrekkers[18] who left the confines of the Cape Colony to seek greener pasture to the north of the Cape. It may be argued that since their destiny was beyond the borders of the Cape Colony, their influence may not have had a bearing on the evolvement of a separatist notion at the Cape Colony, with the alienation, particularly, of the coloured people of the Cape. My counterargument contends that their departure from the Cape, and the evolvement of their idea of separatism, influenced both church and state law in their quest of uniting the Afrikaners, and by extension the white population, into a Union of South Africa, and how that separatist ideology also influenced the Cape Afrikaners to practice social distancing from the non-white peoples.

[18] The Afrikaans word, *Voortrekkers* (English: Pioneers), was used to describe the Afrikaners who left the British Cape Colony in Southern Africa after 1834 and migrated into the interior Highveld north of the Orange River.

The theme of a chosen people gave rise to and became the bedrock on which the Afrikaners built their ideology of separatism. The Great Trek[19] provided for them an exodus from the British rule at the Cape, whom they detested, and the governance of the Cape Dutch Reformed Church, whom they blamed as having danced to the tunes of the British government. Voortrekker leaders, such as Piet Retief, Andries Pretorius, Gerrit Maritz, Louis Trichardt, Andries Potgieter and Sarel Cilliers, were venerated not just as political leaders, but also as religious leaders who filled the void left by the absence of church ministers. Their new adopted roles had an impact on the Afrikaner version of Calvinism, with a specific outcome for their own religious sectarianism, as the following quotation from Barbara and Grey Villet (1982: 89) illustrates:

> Persuaded that God himself had guided them through their years of travail before, during, and after the Great Trek, many came to regard their own history with reverence once reserved for Scripture, to canonize their martyrs as saints, assign a prophetic role to their national leaders and, in this country, to elevate their own political causes to the level of a cultist religion that they would pursue with daemonic zeal.

Having made their peace with their religious and political alienation from the Cape, the Voortrekkers established new religious mythologies that would spill into and shape their own political realm. New factions of Calvinism became institutionalised in the formations of the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk* in 1853, and the *Gereformeerde Kerk* in 1859 (Du Toit, 1984: 617). The formations needed to be independent with no connection to the DRC at the Cape for fear that it would lay them open to be controlled by the British governor. The first minister in the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk* was Dirk van der Hoff, a Leiden-trained minister, who had no desire to fall under the control of the orthodox Cape synod of the DRC. The *Gereformeerde Kerk* is a break-away from the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk* under the leadership of Dirk

[19] This is the term used to describe the migration of the Afrikaners when they left the Cape Colony after 1834.

Postma, who emphasised the preservation of their conservatist thinking among the frontier farmers (Moodie, 1975: 59-60). The newly formed Reformed churches would play a major role in conscientizing their people into a unified Christian Afrikaner Nationalism. Their pulpits would be used to keep alive in their minds and hearts the events of the Great Trek and the South African War, the sacralising of their victories over the black nations, such as the Battle of the Blood River, in which the Voortrekkers conquered the Zulus in the Zulu Kingdom (Loubser, 1987:21). The observance of the *Day of the Vow* was both for the celebration of the historic events as well as reinforcing the religio-political reinterpretations. Their socio-political situation would be interpreted in the light of their historical experiences, and the fear of Black domination would be invoked to describe the predicament of the Afrikaners (Moodie, 1975: 247). Blacks were not welcomed to share in any of the services of the reformed churches in the north, unlike what was happening at the DRC at the Cape, where indeed Black people could attend.

In the run-up to the Union of South Africa, an attempt was made at unifying the three Reformed Churches in South Africa, but to no avail (De Gruchy, 2005: 94). Instead, the best that they could do was to form *De Raad der Kerken* (Federal Council) to facilitate and improve communication among the three churches. Central to such discussions was the divergent policies on black membership. The two churches outside the Cape Colony had strict segregation policies. Since it was essential that a consensual agreement was reached on this topic, a *unified* position on segregation in all Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa was adopted by the three Reformed Churches. This was later entrenched in the Dutch Reformed Church Act of 1911. Clause X stipulates (Dutch Reformed Churches Union, Act No 23: 1911):

> No coloured person, being a member of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Colony or Province of the Cape of Good Hope, shall be entitled, by reason of such membership or of the passing of this Act or the union brought about thereby, to

> claim membership of the united church [the three Reformed Churches] in the event of his finding himself, or of his being or becoming resident, in any of the adjacent Provinces and so long as he shall remain without the boundaries of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope; but this status as regards such membership in the adjacent Provinces shall be the same as, and be regulated and determined by, the status of coloured persons as regards such membership in such of the other Provinces within the Union as he shall find himself or be or become resident in.

That there was a close link between Afrikaner Nationalist Politics and the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa was evident, in that, following the promulgation of the clause above in the Acts of the Church, further discussions followed on the prohibition of mixed marriages which, by 1917, became the policy of the National Party who was then the official opposition in parliament. The influence of the DRC had become entrenched in the shaping of the racist political policies of the country (Loubser, 1987: 23).

4.8 Conclusion

Both in the context of the people at the Cape, and the African slaves throughout the world, especially those caught up in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, that their conversion to the Christian faith did not eliminate the painful marks of the illegitimacy of the Hamitic curse. Conversion did not change their lot in any way, even though evangelism among the so-called heathen was high up on the agenda of the colonisers and slave drivers. On the contrary, the mark of black skin was held up as a sign of punishment from God, and thereby a justification of the exploitation and subjectivity to slavery to correct and atone for being a descendant of Ham. From the biblical Israel nation to the European explorers and slave traders, and indeed the Afrikaner people in South Africa, a certain Christian rhetoric was used to justify the 'seizure of land, genocide, and the dissolution of the human rights' (Johnson, 2004: 130). Almost all

coloured people on the Cape Flats are either Christian or Muslim. They share in the heritage of what the Khoi and the San, and the slaves brought to the Cape, had to endure. The curse-of-Ham narrative is found in both the Christian and Muslim religious traditions, a point that gives the rhetoric of ‘Gam’ the much-needed traction and force of influence and acceptance, to the extent that many coloured people self-identify as ‘Gam’.

Chapter 5

Genesis 9:18-27: a historical perspective on race and slavery

5.1 Introduction

The biblical narrative of Noah's curse does not associate any race to the annunciation of the curse. Noah's drunkenness and nakedness, based on Genesis 9:18-27, and his sons' reactions, and the subsequent parental curse has been open to many criticisms as both the text on which it is based and the variety of interpretations thereof are endlessly confusing. Ham is not equated to blackness or slavery, whether 'linguistically or exegetically' (Avalos, 2013:70). This chapter will trace the development of race and slavery, and its association with Ham (and Noah's curse), starting with an analysis of text, and a history of interpretation of the text from the early rabbinic period to the early modern period. This chapter seeks to understand the traditional interpretation of the text as espoused by the early rabbinic interpreters, and the subsequent Christian and Islamic interpretations, and how such interpretations would reinforce Black slavery (or not), and whether there is any association of skin pigmentation with either blessings or curses.

5.2 The text of Genesis 9:18-27

The primary text for consideration in this research reads as follows:

> **9** [18]The Sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. [19]These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled. [20]Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. [21]He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and he lay

uncovered in his tent. [22]And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. [23]Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. [24]When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, [25]he said,

"Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers"

[26]He also said,

"Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem;
and let Canaan be his slave.

[27]May God make space for Japheth, and let him live in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." (Genesis 9:18-27, RSV).

Taking the text at a face value, the following observations are made:

1. It was not Ham that was cursed, but Canaan.
2. It was Ham who saw the nakedness of Noah, not Canaan. The text seems to suggest that Canaan is being punished for the sin of Ham.
3. The act of wrongdoing is not mentioned in verse 24, nor is the youngest son mentioned by name. The reader is led to believe, however, that the act of wrongdoing could be the fact that Noah's son, Ham saw the nakedness, laughed, and did nothing useful but went to tell his other brothers rather than take action himself. So, it is not just the act or deed of seeing his father's nakedness, but he was irresponsible for not covering that which was disordered. The order of the names of the sons of Noah, however, suggests

that Ham was not the youngest son, but the second son (verse 18, see also Genesis 6:10, 7:13, 10:1 and 1 Chronicles 1:4).

4. There seems to be a 'higher order' and a 'lower order' of blessings bestowed upon Shem and Japheth respectively. The blessing bestowed upon Shem comes from God directly, whereas the one given to Japheth is as a result of the blessing on Shem.
5. No blessing or curse is given to Ham. Given the point made at 4 above, we see here that Shem receives the real blessing, Japheth receives a blessing through Shem, and Ham receives no blessing at all.

Given a literal reading of the text, one could argue that there is no Hamitic curse. The curse, clearly, is on Canaan. However, the text is open to various interpretations, for it contains a number of unclear and/ or unresolved points. In what follows I will focus on the following hypotheses: i] Paternal incest, and a challenge to patriarchal authority; ii] Maternal incest leading to an actual curse of Canaan; iii] An indirect curse of Ham through his son Canaan; iv] A curse of the territory and agriculture of the Canaanites, and not so much the person Canaan.

5.2.1 Paternal incest, and a challenge to patriarchal authority

Regina M. Schwartz (1997: 107-110) argues that the text of the curse of Canaan demonstrates two powerful themes consistent with Israelite values, values that differentiate them from other nations and peoples. These are incest and the authority and/or power of the patriarch. Schwartz (1997: 107) asserts that seeing the nakedness (as in the case of Ham seeing the nakedness of Noah) vaguely suggests a sexual act, and in this case, a potential of homosexual, father-son incest. Homosexuality and incest are abhorred in the strongest terms in Hebrew culture, thus

the very strong legislation[20] against it. And the fact that Noah pronounces such a heavy curse underscores the seriousness of Ham's crime. The curse is not pronounced against the perpetrator, nor does the pronounced curse seek to avenge the scorned dignity of the father. Instead, the curse is pronounced in such a way that it causes enmity between the brothers. Schwartz argues that this is to protect the authority and power of the father. With Ham looking at the nakedness of Noah, there comes with this looking the potential of displacing the patriarch, and indeed of becoming the patriarch. '[S]ex with the father impinges his authority' (Schwartz, 1997: 108). A curse that causes animosity among the brothers will be a means of protecting the patriarch from a potential collaboration of brothers wanting to displace him. Sibling rivalry will guarantee patriarchal authority. Noah is set to be the father of the nations, for through him and his three sons all the world will be populated[21]. Sibling rivalry also means rivalry among the nations. The perceived threat to authority is countered with 'division, dissension, disparity, and domination' (Schwartz, 1997: 109). These themes, Schwartz argues, repeat themselves in the so-called primeval narratives of the Hebrew Bible. The story of Babel (Genesis 11) has all the elements of division, dissention, disparity and domination, and the aspiration to 'imitate God', in the same way as Ham tried to imitate Noah, and Noah, in response, causing dissension and animosity. So too the Almighty God introduces a punishment to those wanting to imitate the godhead, this punishment resulting in the creation of an Other, which will 'paralyze any imitation with its threats of displacement and desire' (Schwartz, 1997: 109). The God of Israel was also considered to be a jealous God who tolerates no rivals. Causing sibling rivalry, and by extension, causing rivalry among nations, seem to be a common way of dealing with any potential challenge to the patriarchal authority. Cain and Abel fight each other instead of their father; Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his

[20] See, for example, Leviticus 18: 7 "you must not uncover the nakedness of your father or mother", and Leviticus 18: 22 "you must not lie with a man as with a woman. This is a hateful thing".
[21] See Genesis 10 (The table of the nations).

brothers are all following this same pattern of rivalry among themselves. Schwartz (1997: 110) argues that such rivalry is biblically sanctioned, for it will ensure no homosexuality, which is strongly prohibited. Any potential love among men will be a threat to the father.

5.2.2 Maternal incest leading to an actual curse of Canaan

The text describes Noah as "realising what his youngest son had done" (verse 24), which suggests something more than just simply seeing Noah's nakedness. Old Testament phrases such as 'seeing someone's nakedness' and 'uncovering someone's nakedness' (see, for example, Leviticus 20:17; Ezekiel 16:36-37, 22:10, 23:10, 18, 29) often imply more than literal seeing, and are used as an idiom for sexual intercourse, sexual promiscuity, or sexual violation (Steinmetz, 1994: 199). Also, in both biblical[22] and ancient Near Eastern literature[23], wine is intimately connected to sexual transgressions. The text of Genesis 9:18-27 lends itself to be interpreted as an account of sexual promiscuity, given these thematic links and intertextual perspectives. If so, what would be the sexual transgression? We have already discussed the possibility of paternal incest above. Paternal incest (assuming that Ham sexually violated Noah), however, does beg the question: why was Canaan cursed, and not Ham? John Bergsma and Scott Hahn (2005: 33) contend that, even though the idiomatic meaning of the phrase, 'seeing the nakedness of the father' and the "erotic undertones of the text" may imply an interpretation of paternal incest, this, however, does not address the rationale for the cursing of Canaan. Instead, Bergsma and Hahn (2005: 34) suggest the maternal-incest view, given that a woman's nakedness is described by the nakedness of her husband (as described in Leviticus

[22] See, for example, Genesis 19:30-38 (the account of Lot's intercourse with his daughters); Song of Songs 8:2 (the drinking of wine functions as a prelude to sexual intercourse); 2 Samuel 11 (David manipulating the situation to get Uriah intoxicated so he can 'go lie with his wife').

[23] See Cohen (1974:3-6) for more detail on the association of wine and sexuality in ancient Greek, Egyptian, and Hebrew literature.

18:14, 16; 20:11, 30, 21, and Deuteronomy 23:1, 27), may account for the cursing of Canaan. Considering the nuances of the biblical idiom, 'to see that nakedness of your father', and the imagery of the vineyard and wine (which is associated only with heterosexual intercourse), one can infer that Ham presumably had sexual relations with Noah's wife (Ham's mother). 'Noah drank and disrobed in an effort to procreate; Ham intervened and succeeded' (Bergsma and Hahn, 2005: 35). The maternal-incest view gives insight to two unanswered aspects: why Canaan was cursed, and why Ham is repeatedly identified as 'the father of Canaan'. While the order, Shem, Ham and Japheth, comes from a 'genealogical tradition appearing in several passages', the inclusion of Canaan seems to break into this genealogical tradition (Westermann, 1987: 68). Canaan's name appears five times in this narrative. This inclusion means that the name is 'integral to the tradition and therefore certainly belonged to the original form of verse 25, where it is a single name and part of the narrative' (Westermann, 1987: 68). The genealogical tradition of Shem, Ham and Japheth and the insertion of Canaan's name were 'harmonized by the addition of "Ham it was who was the father of Canaan"' (Westermann, 1987: 68). Given the maternal-incest view, Ham has not only sexually violated his father's wife; he has also usurped his father's authority and circumvented the rights of his older brothers, whom he immediately informed of what he had done (verse 23). 'In the aftermath of the event, Noah curses the product of Ham's illicit union, namely, Canaan, and blesses Shem and Japheth for their piety' (Bergsma and Hahn, 2005: 39).

The text (verse 24) refers to the youngest son of Noah. Canaan, indeed, was the youngest son, not of Noah, though, but of Ham. The literal translation of the phrase 'his younger son' (*benô haqqãtãn*) could be rendered 'his son', 'his grandson' or 'the little one'. The last two translations are certainly in keeping with verses 18 and 22 that state that Ham was the father of Canaan (Douglas et al, 1982: 450). Another likely explanation could be that Canaan did in fact

commit a wrong against Noah, one that was not recorded, yet worthy of being cursed (Douglas et al, 1982: 450). Scholars suggest that in an earlier version of the story, Canaan could very well have been the youngest son of Noah, and that a redaction supplement may have contributed to a reconstruction of verse 22 (Frankel, 2017). Omitting the redaction supplement, 'Ham, the father of', would have given us an original of '[Ham, the father of] Canaan saw his father's nakedness'. This reconstruction gives credibility to the fact that Noah did in fact curse Canaan (as per the rest of the text), and that Canaan could have been the youngest son and the culprit in the original story (Frankel, 2017).

5.2.3 An indirect curse on Ham through his son Canaan

If Ham sinned, Ham should be punished. This logic seems to be lacking in the text. This lack of logic was cause for an 'altered reading', to replace 'Canaan' with 'Ham' (Goldenberg, 2003:157). According to Goldenberg (2003), Philo of Alexandria, the first century Jewish philosopher, seems to be the earliest source for many of the church fathers. Philo interpreted biblical names allegorically. Thus, for Philo, Ham represented quiescent, passive vice, and Canaan represented vice in the active state. Legislation cannot fix a penalty against the unjust in the quiescent state, but it certainly can when it moves to an action state when an unjust deed is committed. This, according to Philo, is cause for Noah to lay the curse on Canaan. Virtually, Noah does curse his son Ham in cursing Canaan. Since Ham has been moved to sin, he himself becomes Canaan, for it is a single subject, evil, which is presented in two different aspects, rest and motion (Philo, 1929–53: 44). Philo's allegorical interpretation allows for punishment against the action rather than the thought. Canaan means 'tossing', which is an embodiment of the action, and Ham means 'heat', which is an embodiment of the thought. Ham and Canaan thus represent the 'relationship between thought and action' (Goldenberg, 2003: 151).

According to T. Jones (n.d. 40), in Hebrew culture, to curse one's son is to curse oneself. Noah could not pronounce a curse on Ham, for that would mean that he is in fact cursing himself. Following this line of argument means that, a curse pronounced on Canaan is an indirect curse on Ham. In so doing Noah is not affected, and the wrongdoer who misbehaved is being punished, albeit indirectly. The church father, Justin Martyr (d. ca. 165) claimed that, in Hebrew culture, no pronouncement can be made of both a blessing and a curse on the same person. And since Ham had already been blessed by God (Genesis 9:1), the curse was therefore transmitted to his descendants, instead. Canaan is the only descendant being named in the curse, thus becoming a representative of Ham's descendants (Justin Martyr: *Dialogue with Trypho 139.1*, 309). This sentiment is shared by many other scholars, appearing as early in the Qumran (Martìnex and Tigchelaar, 1997:502-3).

Cain Felder (1991: 131) suggests that the 'original version of Gen 9: 18-27 referred only to Ham and his error and that a later version of the story, motivated by political developments in ancient Palestine, attempted to justify the subjugation of Canaanites by Shem's descendants (Israel) and those of Japheth (Philistines)'. This means that the portion of scripture that speaks about blessings and curses could have been an afterthought of the redactor who would have placed these words in the mouth of Noah. This would give justification to both the punishment of Ham's wrongdoing as well as the subjugation of the people of Canaan from the redactor's point of view.

5.2.4 A curse on the territory and agriculture of the Canaanites, and not so much the person Canaan

The territory of Canaan was located between the areas of the Philistine-Phoenician coastline, with the Western Sea (The Great Sea) on the west, extending inland to the east, possibly as far

as the valleys and the planes of the Jordan Valley (Douglas, et al., 1982: 164). This was rich and fertile land; a land 'flowing with milk and honey' (Exodus 3:8). It was this land that produced the harvest of vine, leading to the fermenting of wine for consumption.

Canaanite cultural and religious beliefs and expressions were very closely connected to the soil. The Canaanite people had a special relationship with the soil. Canaanite religion involved the worship of the Baals and Astartes (Judges 2:13, 10:6; 1 Sam 7:4, 12:10). The title 'Baal' means 'lord' or 'owner', a name that referred to the male god who owned and controlled the land and its fertility (Anderson, 1988:185). Canaanite religion carried with it a load of sexual overtones. Sex was elevated to the level of the divine. Baal and Astartes were sexual divine beings that represented the cycle of fertility (Anderson, 1988: 191). The Canaanites had an erotic relationship with the soil.

Noah was a man of the soil (Genesis 9:20). He was skilled in the art of agriculture, and the first to plant a vineyard (Genesis 9:20, Westermann, 1987:69). Having exercised his skill at viticulture, Noah produced a potent festal drink of which he partook, leaving him drunk and lying in his tent uncovered. Noah, by having tasted the fruit of the soil, and exposing himself scandalously, was simply exhibiting a typical religious characteristic trait of the Canaanites. Such expressions were abhorred by Israelite belief and Israelite custom. It had to be cursed. And the curse had to be pronounced on those (the Canaanites) who promoted such deviant behaviour, as detested by Israel. After all, Noah was regarded as a righteous man, the one who 'walked with God' (Genesis 6:9), and the one through whom God saved the created order and all humanity, and through whom God once again populated the earth (Genesis 9:1). Noah had no foreknowledge of the effect of wine since he was the first to plant and make the brew and tasted. Only after that did he know that it could intoxicate. This is good enough reason to curse

Canaan, the territory in which the vine grew. Anderson suggests that Noah's curse is a pointed attack on agricultural Canaan (represented as a person). The curse on the ground was removed (see Genesis 5:29; also 3:17-19) and Noah himself was successful as a wine farmer. But Noah was unprepared for this potent taste of Canaanite agriculture. 'When he saw he was overcome by the new powers of culture available to him, he pronounced a terrible curse on Canaan' (Anderson, 1988: 165). The Canaanite agriculture tradition, the customs, and the way of life, including the land on which this culture was practiced, was cursed. This could have been personified in the person of Canaan, who became the icon of this agricultural life, and after whom this land was eventually named. In the text, every time Ham is mentioned, it is done so in relation to his son Canaan (see verses 18 & 22). This creates an impression that Canaan was the more important of the two or was better known.

5.3 Slavery and the mythological inference of difference

The Exodus story tells us that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. If this could be traced back to the sons of Noah, it could mean that, in fact, Shem (the father of Israel) became the slave of his brother Ham (the father of Canaan and his descendants). The phrase 'house of slavery', or literally 'a house of slaves' ought to be read as a 'subjective genitive' rather than an 'objective genitive' (Goldenberg, 2003: 160). According to this teaching, all Egypt were to be considered as slaves. Egyptians were slaves. This means that slaves (i.e Egypt) enslaved the Israelites, in other words, Israel literally became the slaves of slaves. This was the curse pronounced on Canaan, to become a slave of slaves! Once again, if Israel were the slaves of slaves, and if we were to trace this back to the time of Noah, surely it would have meant that the curse fell on Shem! Israel being the slaves of the slaves (Egypt) meant that Shem had to be the slave of his brother Ham (father of Canaan – who in turn was the father of Egypt).

The uncertainty as to the relation of Canaan to Shem and Ham begs another question: what is the mythological function of this portion of this narrative? What is the point it is trying to make and what does it want us to believe? To shed some light, Niditch (1985: 53) proposes a comparison with a variant text. Similar themes seem to appear in Genesis 19:30-38, the story of Lot and his daughters. The following are noteworthy:

i. The narrative of Lot and his daughters follows on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (compared to that of Noah and his sons which follows the story of the flood);
ii. The repopulation of the earth was an important issue to the daughters of Lot (compared to the fact that the sons of Noah were very instrumental in the repopulation of the earth);
iii. Lot was intoxicated with wine (compared to Noah having drunk himself to a stupor); and
iv. The daughters of Lot had an incestuous relationship with their father (compared to Ham having dishonoured Noah by seeing his nakedness).

Lot's daughters conceived incestuously, and their offspring became the progenitors of the Moabites and the Ammonites. This theme of incest, as Niditch suggests, could be a means of insulting the political enemies of Israel (Moabites and Ammonites). Despite the fact that the history in the text locates itself after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that the whole world has not been destroyed, the daughters of Lot could very well 'have taken husbands from amongst Abraham's children'. The significance of this text, the underlying mythological implication, is the 'ordering of the families of men: Moabites and Ammonites engendered and distinguished from Israelites' (Niditch, 1985:54). By comparison and contrast, the same underlying and mythological implication could be constructed for the narrative of Noah and his sons. The Canaanites had to be distinguished from the other descendants of Noah. The descendants of Lot through his daughters were incestuously conceived; the descendants of

Canaan (and by implication through Noah's son Ham) had to be cursed. Culturally and religiously, these groups of peoples had to be different from Israel. And reasons had to be found to justify their difference!

5.4 Skin pigmentation: curse or blessing?

The story of Noah and his sons (Genesis 9:18-27) presents us with a curse being pronounced. As a result of the curse, were Ham and Canaan 'marked' in the pigmentation of their skin (i.e. they were made black), thereby becoming the fathers of the black race? Is dark skin pigmentation a sign of being cursed? Rabbinic teachings, as expressed in the *Babylonian Talmud*, *Tanhuma Noah*, and the *Midrash Rabbah*, present the curse on Canaan (Ham) as being smitten in the skin (Copher, 1991: 147-148). Cain (Genesis 4:1-16), who was also considered to be black by Europeans (from as early as the twelfth century onwards), attained his blackness as a result of being 'marked' and cursed by God (Copher, 1991: 149). Goldenberg (2003: 149), however, makes it quite clear that the name Ham is not in any way related or connected to any word meaning 'dark', 'black' or 'heat' in both the Hebraic and Semitic languages, nor is there any connection to the word meaning Egypt. 'To the early Hebrews, then, Ham did not represent the father of hot, black Africa and there is no indication from the biblical story that God intended to condemn black-skinned people to eternal slavery' (Goldenberg, 2003: 149).

There is ample evidence of texts in the Old Testament that speak of Black as promise, as wealthy, as prestige and indeed as a blessing and being blessed by God. The story of Abraham, Sarah, and their Egyptian servant Hagar is one such story. Abraham and Sarah are of Semitic descent. Hagar is of Hamitic descent. Yahweh's promise to Abraham is that he would be blessed with many descendants. Sarah, being barren, offers Hagar her servant to Abraham to fulfil Yahweh's promise. According to Randall C. Bailey (1991: 178-179), two interpretations

motivate the offer of Hagar to Abraham. One is that Hagar was the very best person Sarah could find to fulfil Yahweh's promise, and the other is, given the history of the text, and the history in the text (i.e. the time when it was written and the time that is being described in it, respectively), it was uncommon for an Israelite family to have an Egyptian slave, for it was too expensive to afford one. However, having an Egyptian slave could also mean that Abraham and Sarah were in fact wealthy enough to be able to afford one. Ownership of an Egyptian slave, and in this case the mention of Hagar, was a 'mechanism to raise the esteem' of Abraham and Sarah.

Another example is the marriage of Moses to a Cushite woman (Numbers 12: 1-10). The text seems to suggest that there was a dispute coming from Miriam and Aaron concerning Moses' authority. Miriam questions the 'higher status' of Moses. As far as she was concerned, all three of them (Moses, Aaron, and Miriam) were of equal status before God. By implication, this means that Moses indeed considered himself of a higher status. Bailey (1991: 179) argues that the reference to the Cushite woman in the first verse of this text is offered as the 'first piece of evidence' by Miriam in her accusation that 'Moses has an inflated position'. The magnificence, power, and position of the black Cushite woman (who happened to be the reason for Moses' inflated position) is further reinforced by the punishment meted out to Miriam. She became 'leprous, white as snow'[24] (verse 10). Bailey (1991:180) asserts: 'the punishment for complaining about Cushites as a means of status makes [Miriam] the exact opposite of the Cushite, white as snow. This ironic twist could not be accomplished unless verse 1 was part of the unit'.

[24] Strangely, Black people do not regard or generate a rhetoric that considers 'white as leprous' according to this verse of scripture to counter the Hamitic curse hypothesis. For some people, being white is good and not leprous. White in their minds would equate to socioeconomic and political power, what many now regard as 'white privilege'.

Quite a number of Old Testament texts expound the idea that the esteem of the Israelites was raised considerably by association with the Africans, which I will not attempt to spell out in detail here. Whether empowering themselves through negotiations with the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10), or consolidation of political power through marriages, the Israelites knew whom to form alliances with, and the value of such alliances. Ancient Israel placed a high value on African wisdom, African wealth, and African ability. Africa symbolized 'military might, political stability, and wealth' (Bailey, 1991: 183). These examples show that to be black, or to be African, was indeed no curse whatsoever. These were examples of blessings and divine presence.

5.5 The curse of Ham and black slavery

5.5.1 Early Rabbinic interpretations

The early Jewish interpretations of the said text, and how such interpretations may have influenced later Christian and Western ideologies that have given 'divine approval' to slavery of black people, is cause for much debate. Of course, the question of colour is not to be found in the primary text at all. Noah pronounced a curse on Canaan. The text does not state or even allude to the fact that the skin pigmentation of Ham and/or Canaan changed because of this pronouncement. The text connects the curse only to slavery (Genesis 9:25, 27). Whether or not the initial rabbinic interpretations read any skin pigmentation in the text, is debatable. The following controversial image for Ham is an extract from *Midrash Tanhuma* (Townsend, 1989:50):

> [A]s for Ham, because he saw with his eyes the nakedness of his father, his *eyes* became red: and because he spoke with his mouth, his lips became crooked and because he turned his face the hair of his head and his beard became singed and because he did not

> cover his [father's] nakedness, he went naked and his prepuce became stretched, [all this] because all of God's retributions are commensurate to a transgression. Even though this was the case, the Holy One Blessed be He, returned and had mercy on him, for his mercy extends to all his creation.

Red eyes, crooked lips, singed hair, enlarged genitals and going naked are physiological characteristics that, for some, are associated with 'blackness'. Graves and Patai (1964: 121) concludes, after studying a selection of rabbinic expositions, that the cursed Canaan had a black skin. In fact, the extract from *Midrash Tanhuma* is rendered somewhat differently:

> Because you twisted your head around to see my nakedness, your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted into kinks, and their eyes red; again, because your lips jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated. Men of this race are called Negroes (Graves and Patai, 1964:121).

Robert Graves and Raphael Patai's rendition is considered distorted by David Goldenberg. Their treatment of the rabbinic material connects 'blackness' to the curse and regards Canaan's descendants as both black and enslaved (Goldenberg, 1997:46). The extract from *Midrash Tanhuma* makes no mention of blackness; therefore, by comparison, Graves and Patai's rendition is stereotyping black people to fit the description given in the original extract. Moreover, Goldenberg considers their publication as appealing to the 'popular audience'. Graves and Patai's rendition became a source for the populist mindset that wrongfully connected the rabbinic exegeses to 'blackness' after Noah pronounced a curse.

David Aaron (1995, 737) applies a classical concept known as measure-for-measure to elucidate the meaning of the image given for Ham in the *Midrash Tanhuma*. This was a common literary tool in rabbinic exegesis, allowing the interpreter to create images that give expression to what is being conveyed, rather than creating a physiological sketch of the characters. An application of this concept of measure-for-measure reveals the following:

1. red eyes may be a reference to the character of Ham rather than a physical appearance, and it is a connection to his sin which involved 'glancing at his father';
2. deformed lips may be a reference to Ham speaking to his brothers of what he saw;
3. Ham twisted (or turned his face) to see his father's nakedness, yet his brothers approached their sleeping father to cover him without turning around. Ham twisted, hence the deformity in the twistedness of his hair and beard. Rabbinic commentators could have used the term "kinky hair" if reference to black hair texture was implied;
4. finally, stretched genitals may be directly connected to the sin of having seen his father's nakedness (Aaron 1995:737–738).

Aaron maintains that consideration should be given to the last line of this rabbinic commentary, 'Even though this was the case, the Holy One Blessed be He, returned and had mercy on him, for his mercy extends to all his creations'. This sentence, Aaron argues, softens the impact of the entire debacle, and is the one that is least quoted 'of those who ascribe to the Talmud the moral pretext for African slavery' (Aaron, 1995: 739). This text closes this Midrash with a mitigating comment. Despite the sin committed by Ham, still God will be merciful to him.

Reference is made in the *Jerusalem Talmud* that Ham exited the ark 'charcoal colored'. *Genesis Rabbah* (36.7) gives another variation, referring to Ham's descendants as 'ugly and dark' (Theodor and Albeck, 1965: 341). Aaron notes that these references are not necessarily racial

connotations, but rather another use of the classical rhetoric of measure-for-measure. Aaron (1995, 745) explains:

> [W]e can appreciate that the term used for Ham's darkness, *mfuhâm* is parallel to *'felâh* - the term used to describe the absence of light when the sin occurs. But why this particular word- *mfuhâm* -for "black", a most unusual term. Essential to this word choice is the paranomasia that can only be appreciated in the Hebrew. It would have been quite easy to call the darkened Ham *sâhôr*, the colloquial word for "black", as the shepherd girl of Song of Songs is identified, "I am black, but beautiful". However, the alliteration of the final syllable of *mfuhâm* with the very name of the disgraced and punished Ham (i.e., *hâm*) is what draws exegetes to employ this verbal form to indicate "color". The root itself is related to the noun connoting charcoal. Because Ham's sin took place in the dark, he became dark (measure-for-measure).

Consideration must be given to the etymology of the word 'Ham', which is mistakenly connected to blackness. 'Those who assumed that the Curse condemns black Africans to eternal slavery based their understanding on the supposed meaning of Ham as "dark, black" or "hot"' (Goldenberg, 2003: 141). Several theories relate the name 'Ham' to different etymologies. One such theory connects the name to *Hammu*, 'the name of the West Semitic sun god'; another connects it to c*amm* which, in Hebrew, Aramaic and Ugaritic mean 'kinsman', and in Arabic and Old South Arabian 'paternal uncle'. Another interpretation is from the Semitic word *ḥam* which means 'father-in-law'; and yet another is a derivation from the Arabic *ḥmy* which means 'to protect'. More possibilities include *ḥwm (ḥûm),* Hebrew for 'black, dark'; or *ḥmm*, 'to be hot', *ḥom* 'heat' and *ḥam* meaning 'hot' (Goldenberg, 2003: 145). The Egyptian name for 'Egypt' is rendered *kmt*, is also used to get to an etymological understanding of 'Ham' (Goldenberg, 2003: 145).

Goldenberg (2003: 145) suggests that these theories were 'attractive' not just for their 'phonetic reasons', but also for their 'biblical genealogy' of Ham's descendants. Except for Canaan, Ham's descendants lived in the 'southern, hot regions of the world, parts of Africa and Arabia'. The choice of connecting *ḥmm*, ('to be hot') to the meaning for 'Ham' seemed to be a natural choice, and thus becomes the traditional interpretation of the name for both Jews and early Christians. The root *ḥmm*, ('to be hot') is found in the Semitic languages to mean 'blackness, soot, charcoal'. Despite these attractive theories, not one seems to be an acceptable explanation for 'blackness' (Goldenberg, 2003: 146). The name 'Ham' starts with *ḫ* which gives it a velar speech sound instead of the *ḥ* that gives it a more palatal sound. The interpretations given above are mostly of the *ḥ* speech sound. This graphic distinction between *ḫ* and *ḥ* merged round about the second century B.C.E., making it difficult to differentiate between the two phonologies (Rendsburg, 1997: 73–74).

Edith Sanders (1969, 521-532) claimed that racist ideologies about the African continent can be traced back to Jewish exegesis. Both Goldenberg and Aaron, however, make it quite clear that the rabbinic interpretations are devoid of racism, and that the origin of racist association of black skin and God's curse is not to be found in rabbinic literature. Aaron (1995: 721-759) and Goldenberg (1997, 21-51) show in their respective articles that the curse of Ham is not a theory of Jewish rabbinic thinking, but rather a misinterpretation of rabbinic literature in translation. 'But just as there is no Curse of Ham in biblical literature, so too there is no Curse of Ham in the rabbinic texts. The biblical story is an etiology accounting for Canaanite slavery. The rabbinic stories, on the other hand, speak of blackness, not slavery' (Goldenberg, 1997: 45). Goldenberg goes on to say that, just as there is no rabbinic literature that connects blackness to slavery, so too there is no history of institutionalized black slavery, but the

connections do appear amongst Islamic writers 'who tightly linked blackness and slavery' in the seventh century (Goldenberg 1997, 47–48). Rabbinic literature has two traditions: dark skin passed onto Ham; and slavery on a non-Black Canaan as a result of Noah's curse. These two traditions are never joined in rabbinic literature (Goldenberg 1997, 46). This then becomes the bone of contention. McKenzie (1993, 268) states: '[T]he "curse of Ham" has been interpreted as black (Negroid) skin color and features in order to legitimate slavery and oppression of people of African origin. This interpretation occurs first in the Talmud and has persisted in certain circles'. Such misreadings of the rabbinic texts become entrenched in later Christian and Islamic literature. Under the next few sub-headings, I shall examine the connection of Ham and black slavery in Christian and Islamic literature.

5.5.2 Christian literature: from the early church to the medieval period

The earliest Christian Interpretation of Genesis 9 is that of the Church Fathers, who depicted Noah as a forerunner of Christ. Justin Martyr wrote that, like Christ, Noah started a new race 'through water, and faith, and wood' (*Dialogue with Trypho, CXXXVIII*). The figure eight was also very significant to Justin. Noah's family, who was saved, numbered eight in total. This prefigured the resurrection of Christ, which would happen on the eighth day[25] (*Dialogue with Trypho,* CXXXVIII). Noah's nakedness is considered a forerunner to Christ's passion. Ham's disrespect towards Noah prefigures the irreverence of Jews towards Christ's body, and the attitude of the other sons of Noah prefigures the reverence of those who worshipped and revered the crucified Christ. The seepage of 'blackness' into the story of the curse gained

[25]The usual reference to the resurrection of Christ is the third day. The reference to the eighth day is based on the understanding that Sundays are the first day of the week, and a count of eight will bring you to the following Sunday. The day of resurrection is considered to be on a Sunday.

currency in the third and fourth century with the work of the Syrian Christians entitled *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, as the following extract shows:

> And Canaan was cursed because he had dared to do this, and his seed became a servant of servants, that is to say, to the Egyptians, and the Cushites, and the Mûsâyê (Mysians), [and the Indians, and all the Ethiopians, whose skins are black]. And because Ham had dared to make a mock of his father he was called "vile" (or "lascivious") all the days of his life (*The Book of the Cave of Treasures - The Third Thousand years, Fol. 19b, col. 1)*.

The various revised editions of *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* throughout the centuries provided more justification for black slavery. This work explains that Canaan invented musical instruments, by means of which sin had multiplied in the world. 'For by means of singing, and lewd play, and the mad lasciviousness of the children of Cain, Satan had cast down the mighty men, the "sons of God", into fornication' (*The Book of the Cave of Treasures - The Third Thousand years, Fol. 19a, col. 2)* . The Georgian version of *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* was compiled between the ninth and eleventh centuries, by which time 'blackness' was made absolutely explicit as a result of the curse of slavery. The original curse of slavery gradually became a dual curse of slavery and blackness together (Goldenberg, 2003:174).

Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) speaks of the events surrounding Noah as a 'foreshadowing' of future events:

> "and he was drunken," that is, He suffered; "and was naked," that is, His weakness appeared in His suffering, as the apostle says, "though He was crucified through weakness." Wherefore the same apostle says, "The weakness of God is stronger than men; and the foolishness of God is wiser than men." And when to the expression "he

> was naked" Scripture adds "in his house," it elegantly intimates that Jesus was to suffer the cross and death at the hands of His own household, His own kith and kin, the Jews (*City of God*, Book XVI, Chapter II).

Ham went public with his father's nakedness, and Shem and Japheth went inside to cover and honour their father. For Augustine, this foreshadows the crucifixion of Christ, who is to be crucified from within his own house (by the Jews). Ham represents 'the tribe of heretics, hot with the spirit, not of patience, but of impatience'. Shem and Japheth represent the circumcised and the uncircumcised, and them walking backwards signifies 'the memory of the past', and the garment 'the sacrament', for this is the celebration of the church's passion of Christ already accomplished (*City of God*, Book XVI, Chapter 2).

Clement of Alexandria (ca 150-215 CE) wrote that Ham was cursed for what he had done to his father, and blamed Ham and his descendants for the existence of slavery, magic, and the worship of idols (*The Recognitions of Clement*, Book I, Chs. XXX-XXXI).

Isidore of Seville (ca. 560-636), widely regarded as the last of the Fathers of the Church, described the physical world by means of a T-O map. The T-O map is a medieval world map from the 1472 Augsburg edition of the *Etymologiae*, with the letter T inside an O. The T is the Mediterranean, the Nile, and the Don (formerly called the Tanais) dividing the three continents, Asia, Europe and Africa, and the O is the encircling ocean (Livingston, 2002). The T-O map drawn up by Isidore of Seville depicts the known world of his time as tripartite, associating Asia with Shem, Europe with Japheth, and Africa with Ham (Sollors, 1997, 84–85). Medieval commentators support the notion of slavery and the partition of humankind originating from Genesis 9. Ham, Shem, and Japheth represent those who are servants, those who are free and those who are soldiers, respectively. The Cathedral Church of our Lady of Chartres in France,

built during the medieval period, has windows depicting Noah's sons as 'forerunners of those who pray (priesthood), those who fight (knighthood), and those who work (serfs and working class'" (Haynes, 2002, 30).

Figure 4: T-O Map. Source: Sollors (1997: 85).

Martin Luther, the sixteenth century Church reformer, accepted the church fathers' teachings about Ham. Luther suggested that Ham 'filled the world with idolatry' (*Lectures on Genesis,* Chapter IX); that Ham 'engage[d] in building a city and a tower, and establish[ed] himself as lord of all Asia', and established 'a new government and a new religion' (*Lectures on Genesis,* Chapter IX). Luther accepted Augustine's definition of Ham meaning 'hot'. He further explains that 'because the pope's church condemns our doctrine, we know that it is not the church of Christ but the church of Satan and truly, like Ham, "a slave of slave"' (*Lectures on Genesis,* Chapter IX).

John Calvin followed the same interpretive line as Luther and Clement with regards to Ham's actions. He noted that, 'by reproachfully laughing at his father, [Ham] betrays his own depraved and malignant disposition' (*Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis,* Chapter

I). For Calvin, Ham represented wickedness, the ungodly and the crooked. He concludes that Ham must have dishonoured his father to give himself licence of 'sinning with impunity' (*Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, Chapter I). Calvin, however, differed from the traditional interpretation in that he refused to exonerate Noah. Given Noah's shameful disposition, prostrating himself naked in a drunken state, Calvin noted that Noah 'deserved to be laughed at because he defaced the image of God' (*Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, Chapter I). The seriousness of Noah's sin is reflected in his dishonour. Calvin regarded Ham's mocking as a punishment 'divinely inflicted upon [Noah]', and so he is branded with an eternal mark of disgrace' (*Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, Chapter I).

5.5.3 Christian literature: the early modern period

In the early modern period, and with the rise of colonialism, with Europe's increased involvement in the African slave trade, there was growing support of the notion that 'Noah's curse [is] an explanation for racial slavery. Azurara, a Portuguese scholar, found justification for African slavery in Genesis 9' (Haynes 2002, 34). Thomas Newton, a leading exegete of the eighteenth century and chaplain to George II of Great Britain, made an original contribution to the interpretation of the text of Genesis 9, commenting that a correction of the text might be needed. He grappled with fact that Canaan was cursed by Noah, even though Ham was the offender.

> Ham the father of Canaan is mentioned in the preceding part of the story; and how then came the person of a sudden to be changed into Canaan? The Arabic version in these three verses hath the father of Canaan instead of Canaan. Some copies of the Septuagint likewise have Ham instead of Canaan, as if Canaan was a corruption of the text (Newton 1817, 12).

Newton suggests that the copyist could have mistakenly written Canaan instead of Ham the father of Canaan (Newton 1817, 13–14). Newton's commentary provided an explanation for the 'logical inconsistencies' as found in the text, and thus became a source for many who advocated the curse of Ham as a justification for slavery, especially in the American South, with preference of citing the Arabic version rather than the English version of this text (Haynes 2002, 34,237). Goldenberg (2003, 142) notes that the notion of Blacks as the 'children of Ham' was well entrenched in the South and North of America, a notion that can be backdated to at least 1700, when the Puritan Samuel Sewall advocated against slavery and argued against such a notion.

The ideology of connecting the Curse of Ham to blackness and slavery was, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, further shaped and entrenched to the point that the 'sons of Ham' (so-called dark-skinned people), were condemned to be slaves forever. 'The ideology of Ham was employed as a justification for slavery and was more generally focused on Africa. Europe had the right to subdue the sons of Ham' (Meiring 2016, 234).

Knust (2014: 399) comments that biblical writers have justified Canaan's subjugation, and a perpetual punishment of slavery was fitting of the crime committed. The story of Noah and his sons has served as an 'orienting device for over three millennia, reinforcing particular alignments of body, place, nation, and world, each of which has proven capable of twisting bodies and communities into congealed histories of past approaches that have taught "us" both who we are and who we must be' (Knust, 2014, 408).

5.5.4 Islamic literature

The curse-of-Ham narrative does not appear in the Qur'an at all (Bashir, 2019: 96), and neither does the name 'Ham' appear in any of the qur'anic renderings of Noah (Firestone, 2007: 54). This narrative nevertheless became part of the Islamic discourse given its importance in the neighbouring Judaic and Christian discourses, even though it was seldom invoked by Islamic scholars 'to justify slavery' (Bashir, 2019: 96). The earliest written Islamic literature on the curse-narrative happened in the ninth century, by Ibn Hishäm, which followed earlier Jewish writings indicating that Ham's sin was because of him having sexual relations while in the ark during the time of the flood. As a result, Ham's wife gave birth to a black boy, who was named Kush. Reuven Firestone (2007: 55) considers this an innovation of the rabbinic material because the blackened skin came as a result of Noah's prayer (the term used for prayer could also mean curse) and not by divine will. In this Islamic version the result came about by Noah's prayer, for Noah asked God to blacken the skin as a means of identifying the guilty party. Another early Islamic writer, Ibn Sa'd (d.845), in his *Kitäb al-tabaqat al kabïr*, followed much of the Jewish folklore. According to Ibn Sa'd, Ham was the father of the Ethiopians, and Ham fathered the Blacks, the Berbers and the Copts. There was no curse associated with either Canaan or Ham (Firestone, 2007: 56-57). Ibn Qutayba, writing in 889, and using the Torah as authority of the narrative, very clearly has Ham cursed by Noah and becoming a slave to his brothers. Despite this being based on the Torah, it differs from it in that Ham was cursed and not Canaan. One explanation as to why this was so could be that the 'Torah' could have been a reference to the whole Jewish exegetical works. This could also be the earliest rendition of Ham being cursed, instead of Canaan, as per the biblical text. There is no mention of Ham being associated with blackness. In a second, independent rendition of the curse narrative, and with no connection to the biblical text, Ibn Qutayba does in fact connect blackness to Ham, this

being God's curse on Ham presumably invoked by Noah. As redactor, Ibn Qutayba would join these two traditions together to provide a curse on Ham inclusive of both slavery and blackness that would become a 'proof text' for what may already be 'common knowledge' for his time (Firestone, 2007: 58). By the late ninth century, Al-Ya'qûbi (d. 891-2) appears to have corrected the version of Ibn Qutayba, by showing that Noah did not curse Ham, and that the curse was in fact directed at Canaan. Ibn Qutayba's version seems to resurface in the works of Tabarî (d. 923), in which Ham rather than Canaan was cursed with future slavery. Tabarî's tradition is found not in the Torah, but in the 'people of the Torah', and the punishment of slavery was to be for both Ham and Canaan, with Ham being cited as the one who was to become a slave to his brothers (Firestone, 2007: 61). A notable difference between the Islamic literature and the biblical account is the absence of Noah's drunkenness which is cause for his nakedness. As Bashir (2019: 98) remarked, this could be because prophets were held in high regard. The cause of the curse in Islamic literature is either attributed to Ham viewing his father's nakedness, or Ham having sex on the ark.

5.6 Conclusion

The connection of colour and racism to the curse of Noah is not to be found in the primary text, nor the early Jewish interpretation of the text. The connection of colour to the curse may have been a construct of the early church fathers, in the third to fourth centuries. By the seventh century the demarcation of the known world seems to be influenced by the story of Noah and his sons. Ham was connected to the continent of Africa, a sign of the growing popularization of the curse of Ham, and the extent to which it was beginning to shape the minds of the church leaders. By the Middle Ages, Ham, Shem and Japheth were believed to be representing servant, free and soldier, respectively, and with the rise of colonialism, the idea of connecting Africa and blacks to a life of slavery was firmly entrenched. The belief that blacks was condemned to

eternal slavery was so firmly entrenched that even the oppressed themselves began to accept their ‘fate’ as divinely ordered.

Chapter 6

An Africentric-postcolonial biblical interpretation: tools for conceptualising and analysing

6.1 Introduction

African biblical scholarship[26] has given rise to an emerging discipline of African biblical hermeneutics. Kofi Appiah-Kubi points to a very pertinent question posed by Jesus to his disciples in Caesarea Philippi, 'Who do you say that I am?' (Mark 8:9, Mt 16:15, Lk 9:20). Jesus wanted to know from them what they say who he was, without any interference from a different voice (Mbuvi, 2017: 151). Likewise, an African answer to such a question would have to be an authentic African voice. Paul the Apostle must have been aware of the extent of his reach if he could couch his speech in Greek culture and philosophy. Addressing the Greeks in Athens (Acts 17: 16-34), Paul quotes a renowned Greek philosopher and poet to bring his theological argument home (Mbuvi, 2017: 151). It is on this principle (found even in the Bible) that an African biblical interpretation, for Africans, by Africans, is warranted. This chapter will first explore the potential of African Biblical Interpretation (hereafter, **ABI**), tracing it back to the 1930's and tracing its growth and development to the current era. It will also point out any critiques levelled at **ABI**, and what needs to be done for any lack in its hermeneutics. Secondly, this chapter explores the appropriateness of **ABI** as an interpretive tool for this project and argues for the additional postcolonial tools that will make for an Africentric – Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation.

[26] For example, John Mbiti (1971; 1986), Justin Ukpong (1994; 1995; 2000), and Gerald West (1993; 2007).

6.2 African biblical interpretation

Justin S. Ukpong (2000: 4) stipulates three phases of development in the method of **ABI,** each phase within an approximate timeline, and each phase with a specific emphasis. The first phase (1930's – 1970's) is described as 'reactive and apologetic' and focussed on 'legitimising African religion and culture, dominated by a comparative method'. The second phase (1970's – 1990's) moved from being reactive to reactive-proactive, with the introduction of liberation hermeneutics as an evaluative method within the framework of African culture and context. The third phase (1990's onward) continued being proactive and recognised both the role of the ordinary person (as opposed to the academics, but also inclusive of the academics), and the 'African context as the *subject* of biblical interpretation, dominated by liberation and inculturation methodologies.' I wish not to dwell on the first phase[27] as clarified by Ukpong, but rather focus on the next two phases and the development of conceptual and analysing tools for consideration in this study.

6.2.1 African biblical interpretation from the 1970's to 1990's

The second phase gave rise to the inculturation movement within theology. This coincided with the great liberation theologies that emerged in response to the religio-socio-political challenges of the day. Christianity was challenged to be more relevant to the African socio-political context, and hence the birth of the inculturation movement. This approach is expressed in two models: (i) the study of Africa in the Bible, and (ii) evaluative studies. This created an awareness and concern for the secular issues, which, in turn, gave rise to the theologies of

[27] Ukpong (2000: 6) stipulates the weaknesses of this approach, among others, no hermeneutic conclusions, and no concern for secular issues.

liberation to ‘confront all forms of oppression, poverty and marginalisation in society’ (Ukpong, 2000: 7).

6.2.1.1 The study of Africa in the Bible

This study of Africa in the Bible allows for the investigation of anything African or from Africa in the bible. Africa has contributed to the history of salvation, and indeed has had many connections and influences with ancient Israel. Western scholarship seems to have excluded Africans from the bible. This approach to study and identify Africa in the Bible, seeks to rectify the negative images of Africans and Africa (Ukpong, 2000: 7). Cain H. Felder (1989: 43) argues that there are ample examples of Black presence in the Bible, even though the Old Testament is not vocal about racial distinction. Rather, groups are distinguished based on ‘national identity and ethnic tribes’ (Felder, 1989: 43). The criteria for salvation as defined by these groups may determine whether any other group may be allowed to be part of them, or not. There are more than 1417 references to Africa and Africans in the Bible, and more than 740 references to Egypt in the Old Testament (Adamo, 2018: 2). Felder contends that Blacks have indeed played a definitive role in the salvific history of Israel, albeit it at many instances in a secondary role. Tirhaka (2 Kings 19:9), the Black ancient Pharaoh, for example, was Israel’s only hope to stave off an impending Assyrian assault by Sennacherib. Also, the reference to ‘Zephaniah the son of Cushi’ (Zeph. 1: 1) may indicate that one of the books of the Old Testament was authored by a Black African. Interestingly, the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, was translated in Egypt before the advent of Christianity (Mbiti, 1986: 22). Peter Unseth (1999: 157) asserts that there is sufficient proof of African presence in the Bible, and that Israel and the Middle East have had much awareness of the presence and contact with Black Africans. The term *Kushites* as a reference to Black African presence appears mostly in the Hebrew Bible, whereas the New Testament and the Septuagint

translation of the Old Testament uses the term *Ethiopians* (Hays, 1996: 271). Western biblical studies would rather group Egypt with the nations of the ancient Near East instead of Africa. The Old Testament verse, 'out of Egypt I called my son' (Hosea 11:1), which is quoted in the story of the 'Flight into Egypt' (Matthew 2: 13-22), could very well be rendered 'out of Africa I called my son'. Such changes may startle the Anglo-Saxons, says Felder (1989: 13), since Egypt is considered as Middle Eastern, non-Black, even a non-Black Ethiopia, although 'Egypt was intimately (culturally, linguistically, and racially) a part of Black Africa' (Felder, 1989: 13). Mark, to whom one of the four gospels is attributed, was an African from Alexandria. Mark was born in Cyrene, an inland city in Africa. During his lifetime he travelled the eastern Mediterranean and upon his return to Africa, he settled in Alexandria (Oliver, 2016: 4). The presence of Africa in the biblical text, no doubt, is rather prominent, yet also challenging. The challenge arises, however, in how these are read, and what should indeed be reread and interpreted with caution, given that some texts may present problems with interpretation, especially when it becomes a justification for racial discrimination and the blessing of some ethnic groups and the cursing of others.

6.2.1.2 Evaluative studies

Evaluative studies focus on the encounter between African religion, culture, and the Bible, and an evaluation of the potential theologies that might undergird such encounters. Sociological and anthropological approaches are used to analyse the African situation, and historical-critical methods to unpack the biblical text. Evaluative studies present up to five different approaches to be followed. The first approach is about reading African culture, religion, beliefs, concepts, and practices in the light of the biblical witness, to arrive at an outcome that will validate these Africanist practices and beliefs (Ukpong, 2000: 9). The second approach is almost the same as the first, except that the social reality is presented as a liability to be challenged by a biblical

critique (Ukpong, 2000: 10). The third approach seeks to interpret a certain biblical text against the background of African life experiences. The idea is to arrive at a new understanding of the biblical text in the light of such experiences. The fourth approach involves the use of 'bridgeheads' in either the biblical text or African culture that African people can identify with, to ensure continuity between African culture and Christianity, and to communicate a biblical message. African Christology, for example, sees Jesus as the grand ancestor (Pobee, 1979: 94). The fifth approach is about studying the biblical text for a new discovery or a new foundation of African Christian life. An example of this approach would be an analysis of biblical foundations for inculturation (Ukpong, 2000: 10-11).

6.2.1.3 Liberation Theology

The basic understanding of Liberation Theology is that God takes the side of the oppressed and marginalised, and the Bible is being used as a source to support these notions. Of particular interest is the biblical stories of God taking the side of the Hebrews when they were oppressed by a foreign nation, and Jesus' option for the poor and marginalised in the gospels. These stories are brought into the life of the African people and interpreted against the background of African life experiences. The struggles of the African people find resonance in the pain and difficulties of individuals and nations in the Bible[28].

Liberation theology was born at the time when the grand narratives of the West took over the control and power of the Latin narratives. This discourse is one that came out of the struggles of the people. It was born out of a rebellious activity that forced the struggle against oppression to be put on the agenda of those doing theology. It is important for liberation theologians to be

[28] See for example Jean-Marc Éla (1994: 146-147), in which the pain of Africa is read against the crucifixion of Jesus.

connected in a very practical way with the people at grassroots level as they theologise and reflect on their faith. Liberation theology begins this task by doing an analysis of the social reality. The theory of dialectical analysis, as put forward by Marxism, is utilized as a science of 'experimentation and verification'. It examines conflicts and imbalances and asks pertinent questions as to the causes and contributory factors that led to the social construction of reality[29]. It is not Marxism that is being applied, but, as Leonardo Boff (1984: 50) puts it, 'a Marxist science, and only science that will serve our purposes'.

6.2.1.4 Black theology

Black theology arose out of the Black Consciousness Movement, whereby African people became aware that *being black* is the only reason for their oppression. When applying this model, the Bible is being interpreted in the light of the oppression experienced, and the experiences in the light of the Bible. The Bible is regarded as a source for liberation and empowerment, for God is on the side of the oppressed. Not all who stand for Black theology may adopt this position, for the Bible cannot uncritically be accepted as a resource for liberation. The Bible itself can be oppressive, for example the sanction of slavery, and therefore needs to be liberated itself. Itumeleng Mosala (1989: 13-42) proposes that the Bible first be liberated from its oppressive language before it can become a meaningful resource in the interest of the black struggle. The biblical text, Mosala (1989: 36) asserts, must be understood as an ideological (maybe even spiritual) production of the socio-historical processes of Israel, depicting somehow the classism and politics of their production.

[29] This phrase is also a title of a book, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1967), by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The central thesis of the book is that 'reality is socially constructed' (1967: 1). Interaction between societal groups and individuals create, over time, ideas, concepts, and beliefs of the actions of each other. People become accustomed to such ideas, concepts, and beliefs, and thus assume shared and communal social roles, which leads to institutionalized behaviours.

6.2.1.5 Feminist theology

Feminist theology begins with a critique of the Bible and the conventional modes of biblical interpretation that supports women subordination. The Bible uses androcentric language and presents God as a male. Biblical interpretation has also been rather androcentric. The first approach of Feminist theology is to challenge the androcentric and patriarchal language of the Bible, and the interpretations that seem to perpetuate such language (see, for example, Van Wyk, 2018: 2). The second approach is to reread oppressive feminist biblical texts in their literary and cultural contexts. For example, the creation story of Eve from Adam's rib is not to be understood as a sign of inferiority (Davidson, 1988: 7), but rather a sign of identity in nature, and their marital status as equal partners (Davidson, 1988: 16). The third approach is identifying the positive contribution brought about by women both in the biblical text and the church. Jesus' attitude to women, and in contrast to the societal norms of the time, is a case in point (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 1991: 73-80). The fourth approach involves a focus on the biblical theology for interpretation of both negative and positive texts on women. As an example, the biblical theology that humanity is made in the image and likeness of God, is an affirmation of the equality of male and female (see, for example, Johnson, 1984: 460-465). The fifth approach seeks to interpret the biblical text from women's experience. A rereading of polygamy in the Bible, for example, shows biblical critique instead of commending this practice (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 1991: 108-116).

6.2.2 African biblical interpretation from the 1990's onward

ABI from 1990's onward became noted for its assertiveness and being proactive. It latches on to the themes of inculturation and liberation as developed in the previous stage. The reading of

the text becomes not just one for the academia, but also the ordinary African who becomes a partner in biblical interpretation. In addition, the reading of the text is set against the background of the African context. Africa and Africans become the subject of the interpretation, also known as *inculturation hermeneutics*. Whereas in black theology the starting point is black consciousness, in contextual Bible study the starting point is racial oppression and poverty. It recognises ordinary African readers of the Bible and seeks empowerment and affirmation that will speak into their life situation flowing from the critical study of the Bible. Interaction between the ordinary and the academic readers is important for the use of critical resources and for the development of a critical awareness in reading the bible (Ukpong, 2000: 15). The inculturation hermeneutic model seeks to read the Bible from both a secular and religious point of view, taking cognisance of the socio-politico-cultural and economic aspects of secular life. This reading is to be inclusive of the indigenous culture worldview, the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised. The people's context becomes the subject of the interpretation of the biblical text. This model seeks to steer away from dichotomies such as sacred and profane, spirit and matter, but rather focuses on the universal aspect and connectedness of God, humanity, the world, the sense of community, and the individual sense of connectedness to all of these (Ukpong, 1995: 8-9). 'The basic hermeneutic theory at work is that the meaning of a text is a function of the interaction between the text in its context and the reader in his/her context' (Ukpong, 2000: 17). This model starts off with an analysis of both the social reality of the reader, and an analysis of the context of the text. The text is then read in the context of the analysed social reality with a critical awareness of the contemporary situation that will evoke 'appropriate reactions, response and commitments about the context' (Ukpong, 2000: 17).

ABI allows the socio-political and economic realities to be a subject of interpretation. The analysis of the text uses the African worldview and culture as a base and point of departure and rereads scripture from a thought-out Africentric perspective (Adamo, 2001: 8-9).

6.3 A critique of African biblical interpretation

A key question levelled against **ABI** is whether an adequate diagnosis has been made of the nature of the African worldview, and whether **ABI** helps the African people to deal with their most pressing issues (Ngong, 2014: 176). With regards the African worldview, Jacob K. Olupona (2001: 167) argues that at the centre of African Indigenous Religious Traditions is the notion of the supernatural interacting with ordinary human life. Humans are the perpetual presence of the spiritual. The spiritualised world needs to be sensibly managed otherwise it may jeopardise human life. The spiritual world guides the affairs of the human world and keeps at bay any malicious spirit or material beings that may want to inflict harm or hurt. Kingsley Larbi (2001) pleads for the maintenance of the 'cosmological balance' between the physical and the spiritual spheres. The argument is that the spiritual and the physical not be seen as two distinct spheres of life, but rather that there is no dichotomy between the two, and that the operation of the spiritual and the physical is of one unified cosmology. The argument against **ABI** is that the spiritual side of this worldview is given more emphasis than the material world. The material world is seen as somehow un-African. **ABI** recognises the importance of the spiritualised aspect in which many Africans experience the deity in their daily lives, but at the expense of neglecting the material world. 'Rationalistic critiques are often seen as outside this enchanted worldview, in fact, as Western' (Ngong, 2014: 178). Whereas Ngong's critique is levelled at an overemphasis of the spiritual aspect of this methodology, Byang Kato (1975: 53-54) criticises the exultation of 'African culture, philosophy and religion beyond proportion'. Andrew M. Mbuvi (2017: 155) counter-argues that Kato's perception perpetuates the 'colonial

negative evaluation of the ways that African religious cosmology communicates realities about the Christian God'. There is also a failure of recognition of how the African religious reality is embedded in the African reality.

A second critique levelled against **ABI** is the fact that **ABI** is pitted against the Western conceptual frame of reference as if there is nothing good in it. The inculturation hermeneutic of **ABI** seeks to read the Bible in Africa for Africans as if the continent has never encountered the West. David Ngong (2014: 178-179) argues that the African identity is presented as if it had never met Western identity, and as if the two have never profoundly impacted each other. Africa and the West have interacted for at least five hundred years, and therefore identities of the people in both have been mixed (Ngong, 2014: 186). By not recognising the impact and influence of Western rationalism, Ngong asserts, 'inculturation hermeneutics fails to take seriously the now settled issue of complexity in contemporary African identity.' A hermeneutic for Africans by Africans cannot be devoid of any Western influence. One cannot ignore the many years of Christian heritage nor the scholarly work of the West. We recognise the need to break from the Western hermeneutical hegemony (Dada, 2010: 167), yet also note that, to some extent, Africa may need to tap into some aspects of the Western world. R. S. Sugirtharajah (2004: 249) notes that African post-colonial hermeneutics do recognise that both African post-colonial identity and African post-colonial biblical interpretation are partially constituted by colonialism. **ABI** does not claim authenticity in the sense that it never recognised the other influences, but in fact it embraces the multiplicity of identities and differences that constitute the post-colonial African context. **ABI** in all its forms, whether inculturation, liberation, feminist, or post-colonial, seeks to critically engage the pre-colonial heritage, and to invoke the African indigenous past, and indeed, the pre-colonial economic power (West, 2016b: 53-54) to have a bearing on the present.

Another argument levelled against **ABI** is that it operates from a marginalised position, in other words, those for whom this methodology of reading the Bible is meant for, always find themselves in a marginalised position, being victims of the powerful world players (Ngong, 2014: 177). **ABI** has not yet developed to a point where readers are equipped to deal with critical issues relating to the health of the continent. Ngong (2014: 183) speaks of a scientific imagination that is needed to enable and promote critical rationality, interrogate apparent certainties, and is critical for Africa's renewal in the modern world, this, especially in the light of Africa still being dependent on foreign powers such as the West, and lately Asian countries such as Japan, China, and India (Ngong, 2014: 184). As an example, many African scholars still run to the West and Europe to have their works published. Maluleke (2000: 202) pleads for more African agency 'against all odds', and not to be 'victims, wallowing in self-pity', but to exercise 'their agency in struggles for survival and integrity'. While Maluleke acknowledges the presence of African agency, especially born out of their struggles against other dominant powers, he still questions the full maturity of such agency. African people still seem to be too much dependent on the rest of the world. Dependency seems to be the dominant motif for African agency not being effectively cultivated yet (Ngong, 2014: 184). Scientific imagination, Ngong (2014: 185) argues, was not given much of a chance by scholars of African Christianity because such is regarded as Western. Ngong continues this argument saying that scholars of **ABI** encourage spiritualised cosmology as if it was exclusively African.

ABI is a work in progress and will eventually come into its own. For now, it is an appropriate vehicle for an African biblical hermeneutic to read the Bible within the African people's own concerns and challenges. As **ABI** evolves, it will fine-tune its methodology to continue the very important work of analysing both the lived reality of the people, and the biblical text,

considering the current socio-political and economic situation of the people, and how such was shaped and formed both by the pre-colonial and the colonial periods.

6.4 Biblical analysis: a critical reading of the text

Scholars like Norman Gottwald (1979) and Itumeleng Mosala (1989) argue in favour of the socio-historical analysis of the text (for it gives them a window to trace the tracks of the marginalised in biblical history). Mosala (1989: 20) contends that the text of the Bible can be problematic given that it is a product of the 'social, historical, cultural, gender, racial and ideological struggles … which indelibly bear the marks of their origins and history'. It will be a battle to recover such origins and history in the text and to engage them anew in a different setting of human struggles. He further states that the reader might be tricked by the subtle presence of the oppressor and oppression in the text, especially in the literature of Yahwistic and Jesus movements, for which a concerted effort is needed to recognise and expose the presence of oppressor and oppression. The deception in the text may lead to a fatal mistake of recognising the 'oppression for liberation and an oppressor for a liberator' (Mosala, 1989: 26). As an example, the story of Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan shows no understanding of human rights, except when the text is rescued by a 'sociological reassessment of the rise of ancient Israel' (Mosala, 1989: 29). Norman Gottwald (1979: 191-219) unpacks the three hypotheses of the Israelite occupation of Canaanite land. These are (i) the Conquest Model, (ii) the Immigration Model, and (iii) the Revolt Model. Each of the three can adequately give credence to the protracted and ongoing animosity and hostility between Israel and Canaan. Mosala questions why the tradition of the Conquest is even part of the text of the Bible in the first place and contends that 'not all of the Bible is on the side of human rights or of oppressed and exploited people' (1989: 30). This is an important aspect to take cognisance of for anyone who wishes to do a reading of a biblical text in support of an oppressed and exploited people.

Yahwism gives justification and credence to the notion of Israel being the people of Yahweh, as demonstrated in the shaping and the creation of a god who always takes the side of a people who models their existence and identity on divine justification, as pointed out by Gottwald (1979: 693):

> Yahweh is unlike the other gods of the ancient Near East as Israel's egalitarian intertribal order is unlike the other ancient Near Eastern social systems. Yahweh forbids other gods in Israel as Israel forbids other systems of communal organization within its intertribal order… Yahweh was so different from the other gods because "he" was the god of such a different people.

Mosala (1989: 16) points out that the truth of God siding with the oppressed is only one truth of the many biblical truths. There is also a truth of the struggle between Yahweh and Baal. There is a struggle between 'the God of Israelite landless peasants and subdued slaves and the God of Israelite royal, noble, landlord, and priestly classes.' That the Bible is inherently oppressive is a given. The Bible, Mosala says, is a document for the ruling class, and represents the ideological and political interest of the ruling class (1989:120-121). Thus, the Bible cannot be a primary starting hermeneutical point. Much de-idealisation needs to be done before the Bible can be hermeneutically ready for any reading of the struggle for liberation (Mosala, 1989: 121). Given that this is a document for the ruling class, there may be inferences of the voices of the subservient class, hence those that are hermeneutically aware of the liberating themes ought to 'discover kin struggles in the biblical communities … to serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary struggles' (Mosala, 1989: 188).

Takatso Mofokeng (1988: 34) considers the Bible to be a catalyst for three dialectical realities: (i) the Bible occupies a central position in the ongoing colonisation, oppression and

exploitation; (ii) the paradox of being converted to Christianity and yet being colonised as part of that conversion, and (iii) a commitment to bring an end to exploitation of humans by humans, a commitment passed on from one generation to another. Mofokeng holds that the Bible is both a problem and a solution. Externally the Bible has been abused by the oppressive forces as a justification for their operations, and internally the Bible has numerous 'texts, stories and traditions' that lends itself to oppressive interpretations and oppressive use 'because of their oppressive inherent nature'. Mofokeng cautions that any attempt 'to "save" or "co-opt" these oppressive texts for the oppressed only serve the interests of the oppressors' (1988:37-38).

In his article, 'The historicity of myth and the myth of historicity', West (2004: 136) argues that history in terms of what really happened, is not found, but shaped and fashioned by those who are scholarly engaged with it. This will inevitably lead to the creation of myths, some becoming real powerful myths, such as the myth of an ethnic or geographical Israel (Whitelam, 1996: 222); the myth of a God-ordained conquest; the myth of an anti-Palestinian or an anti-Jewish Jesus; and, may I add, the myth of subjecting African people to slavery as a godly imperative. It is important then for the reader from the working or marginalised class to bring their questions to be read against the world behind the text. Mosala advocates a two-step methodology. Historical-critical tools are used to identify the underlying sources of the final canonical form of the text, and to locate these sources within a specific time frame and place. Secondly, he reconstructs the class struggles of the text using sociological resources (for example, the Marxist historical-materialist form of analysis), identifying the source layer within a particular social setting. Using a form of social-systemic analysis, and with the assistance of redaction criticism, Mosala unpacks the different textual-source layers to detect the various ideological voices. The two voices further most from each other are the two end voices, at the one end the exploited class, and the other the final form of the canonised text.

The final form of the text is not necessarily devoid of a marginalised voice. However, the final form most likely will represent the voice and the interests of the ruling class. The next layer (co-opted by the final form) represents the voice and interests of the professional class who operates in support of the ruling class. The prophets will be the next layer in a mediatory role between the ruling classes and the under classes, but who will hold on to the ruling class as a reference point. They too will act and do on the whims of the ruling class. Finally, the bottom most layer representing the voices of the marginalised (Mosala, 1989: 41-42). Key to Mosala's understanding of the role of the prophet, for example, is that the voice of the prophet is still a re-presentation of the voice of the marginalised at the bottom. In other words, the voice of the prophet is already a redacted version of the voice of the people, especially in a ruling class dominant document, and that the true voice of the people will only come to the fore when the document or the text itself is one that favours the underclass (Mosala, 1989: 148-149).

West (2016a: 43) argues for a biblical analysis that is tri-polar. This is the intersection of three analytical poles: (i) the African context; (ii) the biblical text, and (iii) the ideological forms of dialogue between the African context and the biblical text. Context and text are connected via a form of dialogical appropriation which can result in at least six different emphases of **ABI**: 'inculturation, liberation, feminist, psychological, postcolonial, and queer biblical hermeneutics' (West, 2016a: 44). In terms of an envisaged outcome for this project, in which we want to do a rereading of the Genesis text of the pronouncement of Noah's curse, each of these six emphases may have something to say to the coloured people of the Cape.

6.5 A postcolonial reading of the text

Postcolonialism is an emerging hermeneutic that seeks to 'represent the minority voices' (Sugirtharajah, 2004: 244). **ABI** is slow to engage the postcolonial theories of Euro-American

biblical hermeneutics (West, 2016a, 49) given the complicity of the Bible with European imperialism, yet this cannot be avoided. A post-modernist, postcolonial community is one that has experienced the effects of colonialism; hence their make-up is very much tainted by Euro-American influences. Musa Dube (2000: 16) notes that the 'economic, political, and cultural relationships cannot be separated from the global impact and constructions of Western/modern imperialism, which still remain potent in forms of neocolonialism, military arrogance, and globalization'. The term *postcolonial* is used to describe the modern and post-modernist history, tracing it to back to the time of colonialism, the postcolonial era (also noted as the era of political independence), right up to the contemporary era (Ashcroft, et al., 2002: 1-2). Postcolonial criticism is a 'textual and praxiological practice', an investigative work on matters 'ranging from slavery to migration', and addressing issues of ethnicity and gender, usually undertaken by the people in the Third World and other minorities in the diaspora (Sugirtharajah, 2004: 246-247).

R. S. Sugirtharajah suggests that postcolonial criticism follow a fourfold task. First, an investigation of biblical documents for 'colonial entanglements.' The Hebrew Bible was born in contexts of colonialism (Egyptian, Persian, Assyrian, Roman and Hellenistic), and written and compiled during the empires of David and Solomon. Postcolonial criticism will investigate the text for any traces of colonialism, stigmatisation, negative characterisation, nationalism, deterritorialization, ethnicity, identity (among others), and the extent that these have shaped and formed the production of the text. Of particular importance will be the silencing of voices in the text (Sugirtharajah, 2004: 251). Secondly, the task of postcolonial criticism will be to engage in a 'reconstructive reading' of the text. This rereading will be done from a perspective of the victims embedded in the text. It will consider the mingling of different communities and cultures, and how such communities would have assimilated and cross-pollinated each other

(Sugirtharajah, 2004: 252). It will not so much play on the role of opposites and difference, and, for example, the conflicts between Yahweh and Baal, which has, as a result, an identity creation of otherness given to the subordinate and oppressed group of people. Thirdly, Sugirtharajah (2004: 255) advocates an interrogation of both the colonial and metropolitan perceptions. This is to highlight the effects of colonialism on the texts, and how such may even be carried forward to any interpretive commentary on the text. This is an interrogation on anything that might reinscribe the colonial ideology. Fourthly, an investigation of 'contested colonial interests and concerns.' This is a study of the processes of self-preservation, appropriation, and rebellion of the 'abused victims or the grateful beneficiaries' in the light of their oppression (Sugirtharajah, 2004: 257).

Musa Dube (2000: 16-18) identifies seven themes that can be investigated within the context of South Africa and Southern Africa using postcolonial criticism. These are land, race, power, readers, international connection, contemporary history and liberation, and gender. These seven themes listed are based on an anonymous story, orally narrated and passed on by word of mouth during the liberations struggle in South Africa, which goes something like this: 'when the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us, "let us pray". After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible' (Mofokeng, 1988: 34). This short story summarises the Southern African colonial story. It covers the themes of land, race, power, the readers of the Bible, the arrival of the colonisers, liberation, and gender. Biblical rhetoric has been used to justify land grabs by the colonial powers. Land is central to the postcolonial biblical hermeneutic. There is an inseparable connection between the land invasion and possession of Western powers and the dispossession of Black Africans to the biblical text. That the white man had the Bible, gives biblical legitimacy to the white man to victimise the Black race. Postcolonialist hermeneutics will

indeed have to examine and investigate race relations stemming from colonialism. Closely connected to the issue of race is the issue of power. 'Power is unequally distributed both geographically and racially' (Dube, 2000: 17), and this inequality is once again legitimised by the presence of the Bible in the hand of the white man. A postcolonial interpretation demands how such inequalities were attained through the reading of the Bible, and why it is that biblical texts endorse unequal power distribution along racial differences. Even more, why, in a postcolonial era, is this inequality still so pervasive, and how can the disempowered people and geographical areas be re-empowered? In the South African context of land dispossession, the notion of chosenness in Afrikaner Calvinism was read and understood, by the Afrikaner Bible readers, as a legitimation of land dispossession. Missionaries and colonists supposedly wanted to convert the indigenous people to Christianity, but this conversion strategy ended up with a 'self-serving paradigm of claims of chosenness or superiority' (Dube, 2000: 17). Notions of land dispossession are found in the conquest story (the Exodus-Canaanite mythology), and the New Testament texts under Roman imperialism. These texts have been read in a quest to support imperial expansion in far-off and foreign lands. The notion of *ubuntu*[30] reminds us that we need one another to build us up to full humanity. In the same vein, I want to suggest that people and communities across national boundaries and across the Orient and Occident areas, need to work together for the common good of all. Dube (2000: 18) alludes to this in her notion of international connections. Western hermeneutics dominated biblical interpretations which had a 'direct impact on African realities.' This cannot be ignored or wished away, but 'calls for a global ethical commitment in the postcolonial world of Bible readers' (Dube, 2000: 18). There ought to be a recognition of the oppressive interpretations of the past that identified the indigenous people as non-Christian Other, and a determination to redress this for restitution.

[30] In Africa, and in particular Southern Africa, the concept of *ubuntu* is primarily about relationships, whether among us as humanity, or humans in relation to other forms of life and existence. At the centre of *ubuntu* is the idea *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, that is, 'persons depend on persons to be persons' (Shutte, 2001: 3).

When the Bible arrived in Southern Africa in the hands of the white man, it was already inextricably connected to other disciplines beyond faith and religion. The Bible was exchanged for the land, which connects it to the 'realities of politics, economics and social affairs.' Therefore, any postcolonial biblical interpretations cannot be devoid of any of the inherent histories the Bible had carried. Whereas Africa may have gained its political freedom and independence, there is still so much to be set free in very much every other sphere of life, such as economics, the African mindset, culture and spirituality, social constructs, the academia, etc, and such would greatly benefit by liberation hermeneutics that take into consideration the historical baggage of the Bible.

A postcolonial reading of the text should take heed of the caution articulated by Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò (2023) with regards decolonisation. Táíwò differentiates between two distinct meanings of decolonisation. Decolonisation$_1$ is defined as 'making a colony into a self-governing entity with its political and economic fortunes under its own direction (though not necessarily control)' (Táíwò, 2023: 3). Decolonisation$_2$ is defined as 'forcing an ex-colony to forswear, on pain of being forever under the yoke of colonisation, any and every cultural, political, intellectual, social and linguistic artefact, idea, process, institution and practice that retains even the slightest whiff of the colonial past' (Táíwò, 2023: 3). Decolonisation$_1$ is no longer an issue within Africa and thus can be defended. Decolonisation$_2$, however, is built on and trades on decolonisation$_1$'s good name, and thus rejected by Táíwò. Táíwò advocates for a complete abandonment of what he calls the decolonisation trope since it protects the real issues of decolonisation$_2$ from scrutiny under decolonisation$_1$'s desirability. Decolonising$_2$ purges anything that reflects an inheritance from colonisers and thus negates the agency of the previously colonised in dealing with these inheritances. As Táíwò (2023: 184) puts it: 'the ultimate problem with decolonisation discourse is its oft-unapprehended failure to take

seriously the complexity of African agency and the many ways it has grappled with both colonialism and its legacy'. J.F. Ade Ajayi (2000: 165-174), the African historian, argued that colonialism was a mere "episode" in African history and that there is no evidence that justifies an epochal break in African history and experience.

6.6 A psychological reading of the text

Reading the Bible through the lens of trauma has increasingly become a necessary tool for biblical scholars (see for example David M. Carr (2014), David G. Garber, Jr. (2015), and Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette, eds. (2016)). Trauma theory has been explored since the early 2000's to unpack especially some of the most difficult and painful texts of the Bible (Garber, 2015: 24). Christopher Frechette and Elizabeth Boase (2016: 4) suggest that three dominant threads inform biblical trauma hermeneutics: psychological, sociology, and literary and cultural studies. Psychology helps with issues related to the effects of trauma, survival, recovery, and resilience. Sociology helps with the collective dimensions of the trauma. Literary and cultural studies help with the 'role and function of texts' both as a witness to the trauma and nurturing healing and resilience. Judith Herman (1997: 155) stipulates a three-step process for recovery from trauma. These are (i) to establish safety, (ii) to mourn the traumatic experience, and (iii) to re-integrate into ordinary life. All three tasks are to be done among and in solidarity with others. To mourn is to remember, interpret, and grieve. Recovery is dependent upon a sufficient memory to construct a coherent trauma narrative. This trauma narrative is an act of meaning-making[31]. A trauma narrative has two aims: (i) to produce an

[31] S. E. Taylor (1983: 1161) describes *meaning* as such: 'Specifically, meaning is an effort to understand the event: why it happened and what impact it has had. The search for meaning attempts to answer the question, What is the significance of the event? Meaning is exemplified by, but not exclusively determined by, the results of an attributional search that answers the question, What caused the event to happen? Meaning is also reflected in the answer to the question, What does my life mean now?' For more information on meaning-making, see Crystal L Park (2010), *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol 136 (2), 257-301 and John Hospers (1997: 2-4), *An Introduction*

honest account of the full experience, including the feelings, despite the fact that these may be fragmented, and (ii) to interpret the trauma so that any harmful assumptions or beliefs can be confronted and replaced (Frechette and Boase, 2016: 6). In addition to narrative trauma, expressions and symbolic representations can also be in the form of poetry, music, art, and religious ritual. Frechette and Boase (2016: 7) note that such symbolic forms of expression help to construct meaning and assist with the reinterpretation of the trauma, and foster dialogue in a safe and supportive presence of others as witnesses. Understanding the ancient context in which the text was produced and reading it within the present context of pain and suffering, a hermeneutic of trauma, may 'offer new insights on questions in the areas of systematic, moral, and pastoral theology, as well as inform pastoral praxis with those affected by trauma' (Frechette and Boase, 2016: 13).

6.7 Conclusion

Having explored **ABI**, and the additional hermeneutics of postcolonial analysis, I would like to propose the term *Africentric – Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation* to analyse and reread the text under discussion in this study. The various strands of African hermeneutics will each make its unique contribution to this end. This will include Inculturation and Liberation hermeneutics (of which Black theology is an example), the latter tapping in the Marxist conceptual framework and, with regards the Bible, operating from a hermeneutic of suspicion. The premise is that the Bible as a document that supports and empowers an already powerful ruling class. The interpretive methodology is one of a structured and systemic analysis of both the biblical text (with its sites of production) and the African context, using historical-materialist categories

to Philosophical Analysis, Hospers presents an excellent description of the multiplicity of meanings, for example, meaning as definition; meaning as intention; meaning as implication; meaning as purpose; meaning as import for the future; and so on.

of analysis. Dialogue in terms of content between the African context and the biblical text is crucial, but so too dialogue between the context and text in terms of methodology (West, 2016a: 48). I now turn my focus on a rereading of the Genesis text in the context of the coloured people of the Cape, in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

A rereading of Genesis 9:18-27 in the context of the coloured people of the Cape

7.1 Introduction

The narrative as found in Genesis 9:18-27 is fraught with exegetical difficulties[32]. Western scholarship has focused much on trying to find answers to many of the ambiguities in the text, for example, why was Canaan cursed when Ham was the offender? What was the offence of Ham: was it voyeurism, paternal incest, maternal incest, or castration? What would be the justification for Noah to make a pronouncement so grave as condemnation to slavery? These concerns would have been addressed elsewhere and does not form part of this investigation. Instead, under this heading I will investigate the potential presence of colonial manifestations. The focus on colonial entanglements will include themes as land, the connection between covenant, curse and colonialism, a psychological reading, and reading for international solidarity. I will investigate the work of the redactor and the utterances of the narrator in support of a particular outcome of Israelite land invasion and domination. This chapter will employ some of the tools for an Africentric – Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation as espoused in the previous chapter.

[32] F. W. Basset (1971: 232-237) presents various interpretations of this text. Basset argues that this narrative is about a sexual offence committed by Ham against his father, after which the Canaanite line of Ham's descendants is cursed. Gene Rice (1972: 5-27) argues that the curse is associated with a justification of Israelite conquest of Canaanite and in Davidic times, with no relationship to the Hamites.

7.2 The text and context of Genesis 9:18-27

Genesis 9:18-27 forms part of the primeval history of the Hebrew Bible, attributed to the Yahwist (J) writer. Genesis 2-11 is primarily concerned with the origin of the world and humankind (Levin, 2007: 209). The narratives as found in Genesis 1-11 are all concerned with crime and punishment in one way or another (Westermann, 1984: 47). The individual Genesis stories were written at different times and at a later stage put together as a continuous literature narrative. The primeval history could have only been penned after the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, which is believed to be the time when the Israelite people were called into a people of God (Levin, 2007: 209). The sequence of events since the start of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 has developed to such an extent that by the time of Noah and his three sons — Shem, Ham and Japheth — there is clearly a noticeable sign of a variation of arts of civilisation, such as 'the raising of cattle and arable farming, urban building, music, [and] wrought-iron work' (Levin, 2007: 213). The story of Noah could be seen as a second creation story and him being the second father of humankind (after Adam). The world is once more cast in chaos, and Noah emerges as the hero in rescuing and then repopulating the earth. The story of Noah and his sons, with themes of nakedness and shame, seems to replicate the creation story in the opening chapters of Genesis. John Stevenson (2015: 3) presents the following comparison between the creation story and that of Noah and his sons:

Adam and Eve	**Noah**
They eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil	He drinks the fruit of the vine

Their eyes were opened so that they saw their nakedness	He became drunk and uncovered himself
The nakedness was confessed by Adam and questioned by God	The nakedness was reported by Ham to his two brothers
They made coats of skin to try to cover their nakedness	Two of his sons went backwards into a tent with a garment to cover Noah's nakedness
God made for them coats of skin	

Christopher Levin (2007: 218) notes that the geographical location of most of the main characters in the Genesis narrative, is that of a stranger in exile. 'Hagar in the desert (Genesis 16); Lot in Sodom (Genesis 19); Abraham's servant in Mesopotamia (Genesis 24); Isaac among the Philistines (Genesis 26); Jacob in Haran (Genesis 29-30); and Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 39-45)', among others. Levin argues that there is an exception to this rule; that is, the stories about Abraham (Genesis 12-22). The geographical setting for Abraham is in the Israelite mountains, an Israelite country that 'has been artificially declared a foreign land by way of the distinctions between Israelites and Canaanites' (Levin, 2007: 218). Canaanite land was promised to the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12:7). Sidnie Crawford (2012: 367-368) identifies, among others, two themes evident in this narrative of Noah's curse: land-dispossession and sexual wrongdoing. In Genesis 9:24-25, when Noah awakes from his drunken stupor, and realised that his son Ham had dishonoured him, Canaan was cursed. This explains why the Israelites had taken control of Canaanite land[33]. The second theme connected to the land, sexual wrongdoing,

[33] See for example Numbers 33:50-53.

gives legitimacy to the Israelites to dispossess the land. Those who have lost their land have been declared guilty of sexual sin (even if only by association).

Levin (2007: 221) argues that there is a constant separation of God's people from the rest of humanity, going right back to the anthropogony at the beginning of the Hebrew scriptures. This rift, Levin says, begins with the siblings born of Adam and Eve. Yahweh would accept Abel's offering but not Cain's (Genesis 4:4-5), and when Cain murders his brother Abel, he was cursed (Genesis 4:11-12). A third son was born to Adam and Eve, Seth, who became the ancestral line for Noah. Yahweh's bias for a specific people and against the majority of people only got worse, so much so that Noah became Yahweh's favourite. He was the only one to have found favour with Yahweh (Genesis 6:8), and all other human beings were to be drowned in the flood. Flooding is part of the curse that started with Cain. The earth was cursed so that it would not yield any fruit to Cain. The people were cursed and drowned in the flood. This comes to a halt when Yahweh finds favour in Noah and pronounces that never again will the earth be cursed, and all living creatures be destroyed (Genesis 8:21). Noah and his descendants will thus only receive blessings, for the curse has been lifted. Despite the lifting of the curse, the separation of humankind continues. Fire is rained on Sodom (Genesis 19:24). Canaan is cursed because of an indecent act of Ham. Egypt and the Canaanites are counted as descendants of Ham. Shem becomes the father of all children that belong to Yahweh (Genesis 10:21), and who stands against the descendants of Ham. Humankind is divided into two groups: those who are the people of Yahweh, and those who are not. Yahweh's people enjoy Yahweh's blessings, and those who are not Yahweh's people, are cursed. 'The line of blessing and the line of curse run counter to each other until the end of the work' (Levine, 2007: 222).

7.3 The theme of land in the Torah

The curse narrative as found in Genesis 9 forms part of the themes that are articulated within the broader context of the Torah in the Hebrew Bible, and hence under this heading I will discuss the theme of land as expressed in the rest of the Torah. I do this on the basis that Canaan, being cursed by Noah, is a reference to the people of Canaan, and that the curse narrative was indeed a prophecy pronounced and later to be fulfilled when the Canaanites were dispossessed of their land. The theme of land is very prominent throughout the first six books of the Hebrew Bible, that is Genesis to Joshua (Prior, 1997: 16). The land of Canaan seems to be of particular interest to the deity and the people of Israel, for this is the land that has been promised to the eponymous leaders and patriarchs of Israel (see, for example, Genesis 17:5-8; 26:3-4; 28:4, 13-15; and 35:12). The Israelites have lingered in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40). This is indeed a very long time, stretching over many generations of the Israelite nation. Given this length of time, and spending all this time as slaves in Egypt, they must have longed for the promises of Yahweh to be fulfilled soonest. Thus, Genesis and the rest of the Torah became for the Israelites a blueprint to live by. The Hebrew Bible 'enjoys a unique authority', and even more so, and especially the Torah, for it 'emanates from heaven' (Prior, 1997: 33). The promise of land was further inculcated by the utterances of Moses and Joshua, and the laws given in the book of Deuteronomy, with an emphasis on the link between the people and the land (Prior, 1997: 26). The book of Exodus perpetuates this theme of land, with Moses as the leader, to whom Yahweh gives the promises and the law, and who speeds on the people to get to the land of Canaan (Prior, 1997: 19). Yahweh was a tribal god of war, before the conceptualisation was enlarged and refined over time. Yahweh will send terror and pestilences to drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, and extend the borders of their newfound land, and hand over the inhabitants of the land to them. No covenant is to be made with the people who are being driven out of the land, and their gods are not to be worshipped (Exodus 23:27-33). The book of

Deuteronomy continues with the theme of the promised land. Specific instructions are given, and sanctioned by Yahweh, to go to the land of the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 1:6-8), and to take over the land, for Yahweh will go before them and fight for them, and hand over the inhabitants of the land to be captured, to destroy the cities, and to kill the men, women, and children (Deuteronomy 2:33-34). Also, the shrines and altars, the idols of their gods, and the names of their gods and names of places must be destroyed (Deuteronomy 12:2-3). Once all done, Yahweh will choose a dwelling for Yahweh's name (Deuteronomy 12: 11). The book of Leviticus reiterates the gift of the land. 'Yahweh insists on the observance of his statutes, rather than of those of Egypt or Canaan (Leviticus 18.1-5). Adherence to the laws of purity is required to ensure residence in the land (Leviticus 18)' (Prior, 1997: 23). Joshua succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites and continues the legacy of destruction of foreign nations and dispossessing their lands.

Michael Prior (1997: 26) points out that the 'treatment of the land and its indigenous inhabitants' poses a moral problem. The Hebrew slaves who left Egypt had invaded a land already occupied, and the people there had been systematically plundered and killed, all of which was divinely mandated and approved. '*Prima facie*, judged by the standards of ethics and human rights to which our society has become accustomed, the first six books of the Hebrew Bible reflect some ethnocentric, racist and xenophobic sentiments that appear to receive the highest possible legitimacy in the form of divine approval' (Prior, 1997: 34). Land-grabs have been given divine legitimacy. No consideration whatsoever has been given to the people who had occupied the land before the Israelites arrived there. Pekka Pitkänen (2017: 26) suggests that we keep in mind that these biblical texts have been written from the perspective of Israel, and that when we read these texts we should note 'their genres and their unique combinations'. Bailey (1995: 138) asserts that an exegesis of the text will most likely

support the ‘oppressive claims’ which makes for ‘racial utilization of these texts’. The text is clear that the Canaanites shall be the slaves of the Shemites forever. African people may want to argue that we are not ‘descendants of Canaan’, but ‘descendants of Ham’, and hence the curse is not as such applied to us as Africans. Bailey (1995: 138) cautions that such thinking does not help with the interpretation of liberation hermeneutics. The literary motif here is ‘holy hatred’ of one nation over another which makes this biblical text very problematic.

7.4 Investigating the text for colonial entanglements: Yahweh and Noah

Yahweh seems to be conspicuous in Yahweh’s absence, except for the invocation of the deity by Noah in verses 26 and 27. Yahweh had been alongside Noah all along throughout the flood, and after, being an ever presence to Noah and his family. All this culminated in the covenant that Yahweh now makes with Noah and his family, and all creation. However, in this curse narrative, nothing is heard from Yahweh. Given the gravity of the curse, which makes us to understand that the offence was humongous, surely Yahweh should have stepped in? Is this a case of an absent god? Yahweh only makes an appearance again in Genesis 11:5-7: ‘The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, “Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech”’. The action here on Yahweh’s part will bring about the same “divide and rule” tactics of Noah when he cursed Canaan. Noah’s curse brought about dissention, disagreement, and animosity among the siblings. Yahweh’s actions are in line with Noah’s. A united people are to be separated by language and scattered accordingly. ‘The names of Noah’s sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) are often associated with humankind’s expansion and dispersion after the flood, with Shem often mapped onto Asia (including the Middle East), Ham onto Africa, and Japheth onto Europe’

(Heller and McElhinny, 2017: 47). These associations, which are absent in the text, informed and led to the colonisation of the text and the indigenous people. Noah, through his sons, became the patriarch of all peoples on earth, including the Canaanites, whom he cursed with servitude. In the same way, the colonists, together with the other ethnic groups found at the Cape, were the progenitors of the coloured people. In other words, the colonists are part of the ancestry of the coloured people, and like the father-figure of Noah, they too, labelled their mixed-race offspring as cursed by referring to them as descendants of Ham. Language and religion were the forerunners of creating difference and separation among people, 'before the rise of biological accounts of racial difference in evolutionary thought' (Heller and McElhinny, 2017: 29). In the Cape Colony the Khoikhoi was referred to as *Hottentots*[34], a derogatory term that means stuttering. Language was used as a means of differentiation and subjugation. The label of *Hottentot* was imposed upon the Khoikhoi people by the colonists to justify separation and to create an other. Language and religion were used to mark people as different. Language was also very much a tool to prevent solidarity and camaraderie among the slaves. 'One of the practices used to manage enslaved people in order to try to prevent revolt was mixing people with different language backgrounds' (Heller and McElhinny, 2017: 74). In the actual curse narrative Yahweh has no voice at all. In contrast to the Khoisan God, Yahweh has failed to be present, and has failed to fight the cause of the victims in this narrative. The Khoisan God would have been prepared to go to battle with the enemy of the people even if it would leave the deity wounded[35]. A wounded deity is a sign of a deity who takes a keen interest in all the affairs of the people. Yahweh, on all accounts, seems to be present and alongside the people, but not in this narrative, which is the one in which Yahweh's presence is really needed. Does Yahweh's absence approve Noah's actions, and by extension, an approval of the nation of

[34] Hottentot comes from the Dutch *hotteren-totteren* which means stuttering (with reference to the Khoikhoi click language).
[35] For an in-depth discussion on the wounded God of the Khoisan people, refer to Boezak (2017).

Israel subjecting the Canaanites? When one extends this interpretation to the Cape colony, would the God of the Afrikaners likewise approve of the treatment meted out to the indigenous people? In all these scenarios, the deity turns a blind eye to the cry of the victims, and the silence and absence of the deity gives full approval to the dominant group to exploit and oppress the victims.

Noah has been given much voice by the narrator. In fact, verses 25-27 is the only time that Noah speaks in the entire book of Genesis. Does Noah represent Yahweh, and thus makes pronouncements of blessings and curses on behalf of Yahweh? Are these pronouncements made on the families of nations? Victor Hamilton (1990: 421) considers Noah's pronouncement as an appeal to Yahweh. Palmer Robertson (1998: 185), however, argues for a prophetic utterance in Noah's pronouncement. Robertson argues that Canaan was the only son of Ham that was cursed, to avoid the cursing of the other sons of Ham, and indeed their posterity. Isolating Canaan to be the only one to receive the curse is to pinpoint a particular nation in this prophecy. Seeing this pronouncement as a divine prophecy would emphasise an 'etiological and ethnic' perspective; in other words, the curse was primarily earmarked on the Canaanite people, and not so much on Canaan the person, which, if it was, the pronouncement would have reflected a familial theme (Ogalo, 2023a: 2). One could argue that Noah, who suddenly is given a voice in this narrative in the absence of Yahweh, now takes the place of Yahweh as it were, and here takes sides with the descendants of Shem (and by extension, Japheth) against those of Ham. 'Noah was supplicating God to deal with each group of people as they deserved, to the ancestor and descendants alike. Since this request was in harmony with God's will for the preservation of moral purity, He granted it' (Ross, 1980: 234-235). Noah was considered a righteous man in the sight of Yahweh, unlike the rest of humanity whom Yahweh had destroyed in the flood, and then allowed for a new start through the descendants of Noah.

He was considered blameless and walking with God (Genesis 6:9 and 7:1). But this characterization soon degraded into one of a drunken state and naked exposure. The narrator uses a pronominal suffix to describe Noah awaking from his stupor, which is an apt description of Noah's degrading character. Verse 24 reads: 'When Noah awoke *from his wine* and knew what his youngest son had done to him' (RSV – my emphasis), this, in contrast to verse 21: 'and he *drank of the wine*, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent' (RSV – my emphasis). Verse 24 could also have been rendered *from the wine*, but the narrator uses *from his wine* instead, 'which has a characterizing force against Noah (Ogalo, 2023a: 13). Having had too much to drink, and exposing himself naked are negative characterizations for Noah. Considering some parallel texts of nakedness in the Hebrew Bible, one grasps the extent of shame associated with the naked body. We read in Isaiah 20:4: 'so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians captives and the Ethiopians exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt' (RSV). Genesis 42:9 and 42:12 speak about the weakness and vulnerability caused by nakedness. Isaiah 19:7 refers to a bare place. Nakedness is associated with being unclean, indecent, and shameful (Ogalo, 2023b: 43). And it is in this weakened state that Noah pronounces his curse on Canaan. No word is being said about any wrong that Noah has committed.

7.5 Power and victimisation

The narrator, instead of highlighting any wrong on Noah's part, simply shows that Noah was aggrieved by the events, particularly Ham's behaviour, and now sets the scene to build a case for Noah (Ogalo, 2023a: 6). The narrator sets out to build a case of power relations. There is a rising tension that hinges on social ideology that pits Noah against his son, Ham (Ogalo, 2023a: 8). In verses 18 and 22 Ham has been described as the 'father of Canaan'. This association of Ham with Canaan fades as the plot moves to verse 24. Ham's association has now been shifted

away from Canaan to that of a son in opposition to his father. A conundrum occurs when, in verse 24, the narrator speaks of what Noah's youngest son had done to him. Does this reference to the youngest son refer to Ham, the offender in this narrative, or Canaan, the accursed? The adjective 'young' is used thirty times in the Hebrew Bible, in most cases showing the order of birth or indicating persons in terms of age. It could also, according to Ogalo (2023a: 9), be an indication of a lower status of people or things. Sometimes the use of the word indicating 'young' could also be very ambiguous, for example in Genesis 44: 20, where the term could either mean young in terms of Jacob's age, or young in relation to Benjamin's brothers. It could also refer to some kind of insignificance, such as 'the little one'. The use of the word young in this narrative could also serve as a rhetorical device in an effort for Joseph not to detain his brothers in Egypt. Another example of ambiguity with regards the meaning of the word young is found in 2 Samuel 9:12. The term young could be used here to describe Mica in relation to his father, Mephibosheth, or it could refer to his birth order. However, the context of this text would render the birth order irrelevant, and thus opens the door for a possibility of referencing David's kindness despite a potential threat to his reign (Ogalo, 2023a: 10). The same ambiguity could be seen in the rendition of Noah's youngest son. In this context, does the term refer to whomsoever it refers to as being young in relation to Noah, or does it refer to the father's youngest son? If it does refer to Ham as being the youngest son, then this would surely stand in stark contradiction to other texts where the naming of the sons of Noah is in the order of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, such as Genesis 5:32; Genesis 6:10; Genesis 9:18; Genesis 10:1; and 1 Chronicles 1:4. Ogalo (2023a: 11) notes that in Genesis 10:1, the sons of Noah are listed as Shem, Ham and Japheth, whereas in Genesis 10:1-32, where the listing of names include the genealogy, the order is given as Japheth, Ham, and Shem. A similar pattern is followed in 1 Chronicles 1:4, the order given as Shem, Ham, and Japheth, whereas in 1 Chronicles 1:5-27 the order is recorded as Japheth, Ham, and Shem. Ogalo notes that the order of the descendants

is often rendered in support of their significance and in support of the plot of the narrative. Ogalo (2023a: 11-12) further argues that, should we maintain the consistency in which the three sons of Noah appear, with Ham being the middle son, and if we accept that the phrase in verse 24 refers to Ham, them the term 'youngest son' could also be rendered as 'young son' in relation to Noah. Reading the text as referring to Ham as the young son of Noah shifts the comparison with regards to age from his brothers to that of a status in relation to his father. Ogalo argues that 'young' is the more credible translation that carries with it an ideological function which seeks to rectify the twisted power dynamics arising from the conflict between Noah and Ham. In this regard, Ham is being labelled as Noah's 'little son', or 'less significant' to the father, or 'contemptible'. The use of the term 'young' as a descriptor of Ham communicates the power position of Noah and the insignificance of Ham in this 'social power hierarchy' (Ogalo, 2023a: 12).

7.6 A case of mistaken identity: redaction and the merging of two traditions

The explanations above have rendered Ham as a victim of circumstances. But what if Ham had indeed been the perpetrator, not in the sense of seeing the nakedness of Noah, but rather, being the one to whom the actual planting of a vineyard, drinking the fruit of the vine, lying in his tent drunk and naked, applies? And then, upon knowing that Canaan has seen his nakedness, now curses Canaan to eternal slavery? Applying Mosala's (1989: 41-42) critique of the different textual-source layers to detect the various ideological voices, I now wish to unpack the process of redaction of the Genesis text in more detail. The idea is to identify the various layers and voices within the final canonical form, the role of the redactor, and the reasons for any redaction applied to a potential original text and/or source. David Frankel (2021: 53) argues that the original story of the curse of Canaan may not have been a curse of servitude of Canaan to his uncles, Shem, and Japheth, but to his actual brothers, Cush, Mizraim and Put, Ham's

other sons. This understanding will tie in very well when one considers the actual curse formulation in Genesis 9: 25: 'Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers'. The brothers are not mentioned by name. This interpretation also ties in with verse 24 where the cursed-one is being referred to as the youngest son, for indeed, Canaan was the youngest son of Ham. Frankel (2021: 54) further argues that the curse of Canaan (instead of Ham, who is by implication the cause of the misdeed in the text) fits perfectly with the historical reality of Egypt having occupied and ruled in Canaanite land for more than three hundred years, sometimes with harsh conditions of oppression. This leads to the suggestion that Ham might be the original father in the narrative instead of Noah. Following this suggestion, several other anomalies will also be cleared in the text. First, the opening line in verse 20 of the main character of this narrative speaks of a 'man of the soil', which comes across as an introduction of a new character in Genesis. Noah is no new character at all, for by this time he had already been introduced as 'righteous' and 'perfect' and has already been involved in the flood narrative. Drunkenness and self-exposure would not be befitting to Noah's stature whom the narrator has already honoured as righteous and blameless. The Noah of Genesis 9:20-27 must be from a different cycle of tradition than the one who was the hero of the flood (Skinner, 1910: 181). Two different traditions seem to be merged here, the curse narrative and the flood narrative, and the curse narrative seems not to know anything about the flood narrative (Skinner, 1910: 182). The timing of Canaan in the narrative, so soon after Noah and his sons, and their wives exited the ark, also seems not plausible. In the flood narratives the sons are adults already, yet, in the curse narrative, they appear to be youth still living with their father in the tent (Darshan, 2013: 526-527). The texts[36] give the impression that none of the sons of Noah already had any children. Given all the discrepancies above, it makes sense that two independent Yahwistic narratives, each depicting a different Noah, had been stitched together

[36] See for example Genesis 7:7, Genesis 8:15-16, and Genesis 9:1.

(Skinner, 1910: 182). Also, the setting of the curse narrative just after the flood narrative does not make sense, suggesting that the original setting could have been elsewhere in Genesis, for it can operate as an independent narrative with no attachments whatsoever to the flood narrative. In a different setting, the hero of the curse narrative could be Ham and not Noah. Frankel (2021: 55) argues for this interpretation, saying that Ham was most likely the first vintner, in the same way as 'Jabal was the first herdsman, Jubal the first player of the lyre and pipe, and Tubal-cain the first metalsmith' (see Genesis 4:20-22). These genealogical notes have as an attachment to it the specialist work each of these persons have been called to do and to be, which begs the question, why would it not be repeated in Genesis 10:6 where the sons of Ham are named? Unless it was removed in the original setting. Genesis 10:6 may well have read: 'Ham, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard …'. Frankel maintains that only when the story was transferred from its original location from Genesis 10:6 to Genesis 9:18b, that the redactor had to add "Now Ham was the father of Canaan", which could have given rise to Canaan's reference in verse 24 as the youngest son. More questions arise: why would the redactor move the story from Genesis 10 and insert it on Genesis 9? And why would the redactor change the name of Ham to that of Noah? Frankel (2021: 55-56) asserts that the compelling argument for these redactional changes would be to legitimise the servitude of the Canaanites to Israel instead of Egypt. With Noah having replaced Ham as the offended father, those who would enslave Canaan would be Shem, who is the ancestor of the Israelites. Canaan would be his slave (verse 26b), that is Shem's slave, and not Egypt's (Egypt / Mizraim is the second son of Ham). Also, a curse pronouncement coming from the mouth of Noah (instead of Ham) will have more 'potency and efficacy' (Frankel, 2021: 56). And thirdly, portraying Ham as a culprit instead of a victim would allow the redactor to portray 'the Egyptians as no less sordid and disreputable than the cursed Canaanites'. A final reason for these redactions is that

servitude to Egypt may be seen as a norm and become a theme, especially since the formation of Israel identity came after the exodus from Egypt.

Following on what has been analysed above about the redactions and the setting, or the moving of the original curse narrative out of its original context, suppose Ham was the main character in this narrative to whom a wrong was committed to by his youngest son, Canaan. And suppose that verses 20 to 24 would have read as follows:

> And *Canaan*, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his brothers outside. Then *Cush, Mizraim* and *Put* took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When *Ham* awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said,
>
> "Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers."
>
> (Italics my substitution of names).

From this rearrangement of the text above, we can see that, after cursing Canaan, presumably Ham would have blessed each of his other sons, Cush, Mizraim and Put, and with each blessing the added refrain 'let Canaan be his slave'. Such an arrangements of names would in fact explain the more than three hundred years of Egyptian occupation of Canaanite land and would have completely obliterated Shem (or Israel) as a potential occupier of Canaanite land. This would not have been in the interest of either the redactor nor the narrator, and indeed would not have been good for the Israelites as they sought justification for their own invasion of Canaanite land after their exodus from Egypt. Frankel (2021: 56-57), however, argues that it would be most unlikely in early Israelite story-telling that Ham would have given a blessing to Egypt and other allied foreign nations, and thus the chances are that the original text may have

only expressed Ham in his drunken state and exposed, Canaan discovering his nakedness, and Canaan being cursed as a slave to his brothers without having mentioned any names of the brothers. The redactor, Frankel argues, would have substituted Noah's name for that of Ham, and extended the text to include the names of Shem and Japheth and the blessings pronounced on them. Interestingly, in a comparative study of curses levelled at sons from ancient Greek and Ugaritic literature, Stanley Gevirtz (1969: 56-61) notes that none of these parallel stories of curses presents a blessing to a brother of the accursed. This may have been the case, too, in the original biblical curse narrative of Ham cursing his son, Canaan. Not only had the name of Ham been substituted for that of Noah, but the redactor would also have had good reason to include Shem, the ancestor of Israel, to walk backwards and cover the naked body of Noah for him (Shem) to have earned a blessing for his commendable deed. Japheth participates in this to a lesser extent, maybe because the original text would have Canaan as a slave to his brothers.

7.7 Covenant, curse, and colonialism

Blessings and curses play an important role in the religious life of Israel and their relationship with Yahweh. Deuteronomy 27 and 28 present an extensive discussion on biblical curses and blessings, both being presented as an extension of the covenant relationship that Yahweh requires. The basic premise is that being in a relationship with Yahweh is seen as a blessing; and not being in a relationship with Yahweh is a curse (Hachalinga, 2017: 58). Both blessings and curses are regarded as key biblical concepts, and always discussed in relation to each other. In Genesis 9 we see Noah pronouncing both a curse and a blessing. Curses played an important role in the divine-human relationship in the Hebrew Bible. 'In the Torah, blessing and curse come directly from God and are closely related to the "covenant" design' (Hakimifar, 2021: 13). It is Yahweh who ordinarily pronounces the curse, for example, the curse on the serpent (Genesis 3:14); and Adam and Eve (Genesis 3: 16-19); on Cain (Genesis 4:11-12); on

Abraham's enemies (Genesis 12:3); and on those who put their trust in their own strength (Jeremiah 17:5). When Yahweh pronounces a curse, it is '[1] a denunciation of sin (Nu. 5:21, 23; Dt. 29:19–20), [2] his judgment on sin (Nu. 5:22, 24, 27; Isa. 24:6), [3] the person who is suffering the consequences of sin by the judgment of God who is called a curse (Nu. 5:21,27; Je. 29:18)' (Douglas, et al, 1982: 256). Yahweh's grace and Yahweh's wrath are the same word. 'The word which promises life is but a savour of death and judgment to the rebel, and therefore a curse. When God's curse falls on his disobedient people, it is not the abrogation but rather the implementation of his covenant (Lv. 25:14–45)' (Douglas, et al, 1982: 256).

The curse pronouncement of Noah follows on the last words spoken by Yahweh before the curse narrative, which is about the covenant with Noah and his sons and the rest of creation, and about the rainbow that will be a sign of the covenant between Yahweh and all creation. Yahweh, the Israelite deity, tells Abraham to leave his home and go to the land of the Canaanites which was promised to Abraham and his descendants. Later, in the book of Exodus, Yahweh instructs Moses to lead the people from slavery in Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. The Israelites, after conquering the Canaanites, and after the death of Moses, finally settled in Canaan, thereby fulfilling the divine prophecies of 'colonising migration and settler colonialism' (Pitkänen, 2017: 26).

For the Israelites to settle in the land of Canaan, they either had to displace the indigenous people or eliminate them (Deuteronomy 7; Exodus 23:23-31). Upon occupying Canaan, Abraham built altars there to stake his claim as the legal occupier (see Genesis 12:7-8; 13:14–17). This legitimacy of landownership is by virtue of conquest of the indigenous people, through which the colonist violently, or otherwise, take over the land of the people. Moses continues this legacy of land-grabs and building of altars (see Deuteronomy 27: 1-8; Joshua

8:30-35). Once the land has been claimed, and the altars built, a ceremony of conquest follows, a ceremony that reminds the new inhabitants of the promises to the patriarchs in Genesis (Pitkänen, 2017: 27). The land to be invaded had been explored and inspected in the cases of both Abraham and Moses, thus asserting a claim on it. Several centuries later these promises of land were fulfilled as recorded in the books of Numbers and Joshua. Of course, a typical action of taking over other's land would be to rename parts or all of the land, examples of which are Hill of Foreskins (Joshua 5:2-3), Valley of Achor (Joshua 7:26), Hebron (Joshua 14:15), Debir (Joshua 15:15), Jerusalem (Judges 19:10), Bethel (Judges 1:23), and Dan (Joshua 19: 47). The names of the gods of the previous inhabitants, and their altars, are also to be annihilated (Deuteronomy 12:3). Once destroyed, the name of Yahweh is to be established in the land (Deuteronomy 12: 4-31). These stories of the promise of land by Yahweh, and the conquest and land occupation, run throughout the book of Genesis. The curse narrative is a prophecy of Israel's conquest over Canaan. The genealogies in Genesis 10 marks out Israel's place among the nations. And the exodus story indeed underlines the fulfilment of the promises of Yahweh to Israel. The curse narrative granted the Israelites a justification to displace the Canaanites, even if it meant genocide, because of the lower worth as illustrated in the curse of the eponymous father, Canaan (Pitkänen, 2017: 28).

7.8 A psychological reading of the text

Much emotional details and trauma can be found in this narrative, even though such are not explicitly mentioned in the text. Noah pronounces a judgement, one that is done from an aggrieved and partial point of view, and would no doubt include feelings of bitterness, despair, anguish, and even hostility, and language of shame (Ogalo, 2023a: 4). The narrator presents to the reader the urgency of Noah's emotions, as is found in verse 24-25: 'When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan;

a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers''' (RSV). Noah *knew* what his youngest son had done *to him*! Ogale (2023a: 5) argues that the context in which the prepositional phrase 'to him' is used, explains how aggrieved Noah was. 'To him' emphasizes Noah as the victim and Ham as the aggressor and gives justification to what Noah is about to say in verse 25. This prepositional phrase is in line with many other examples where similar expressions of emotions are shown, such as when Isaac has offended Abimelech, and Abimelech questions: 'What is this that you have done *to us*?' (Genesis 26:10 – RSV, my emphasis); and where Balak questions Balaam, 'What have you done *to me*?' (Numbers 23:11 – RSV, my emphasis). These expressions are loaded with emotions. And in this narrative these emotions are presented with more force when Noah is given a voice in his judgement: 'a slave of slaves shall he be'. The narrator's language usage in verse 24 is building up a case for Noah's judgement in verses 25 – 27. The narrator is setting the stage for Noah's utterances to be received as acceptable and justified. A poetic, hyperbolic form of language usage is employed in the expression of the actual curse: 'slave of slaves shall he be'. This is a slave of the lowest degree. "Slave of slaves' expresses a superlative in the same way as King of kings, Lord of lords, book of books, the holy of holies, and song of songs (Ogalo, 2023a: 7). Each of these scenarios uses a construct state before the plural of the same word that presents the most extreme and most intense expression of that word. *Slave of slaves* presents us with 'total subservience', a condition of 'extreme servitude' (Ogalo, 2023a: 7). This is justice being dispensed by the aggrieved person who does so with so much emotional entanglement. The curse against Canaan is repeated in verses 26 and 27 in the context of the blessing pronouncements, which confirms the extent to which Noah feels aggrieved (Ogalo, 2023a: 8).

7.9 Reading for international solidarity

Domination and oppression of an indigenous people (who, judged by the *standards* of the settlers, are not regarded as God's people), is not unique to either the Canaanites in antiquity or South Africa in modern times. The promise of the land as 'God's gift', seen as a 'fulfilment of God's contractual agreement with the people of Israel' (Prior, 1997: 39), and subsequently a contractual agreement with colonialists, found expression in so many parts of the world from the fifteenth century onward. The notion that Yahweh had convicted the Israelites to annihilate the Canaanites sanctioned the actions of British colonialism in North America, Australia, and Ireland, the Dutch to conquer the indigenous people at the Cape, and the Zionists to dispossess the Palestinians of their land (Prior, 1997: 39). In each of these scenarios there was an absolute disregard for the rightful occupants of the land. The Bible, and its interpretation within 'mainstream Christian theology and university studies', together with Zionist backing from within both the Christian and Jewish sectors, becomes a 'title deed' (Prior, 1997: 45) for taking away Palestinian land. Prior further argues that the Bible is used as an instrument of oppression, and that those theologians who are opposing the exploitation of the original inhabitants of the land and have a soft spot for the biblical text, fail to see the problematic with the text and blame it on wrongful interpretation. There are common themes that resonate with colonialism throughout the world, and indeed the colonisation of Canaan by the Israelites. These are (i) the belief that the colonists are a chosen or a privileged people, (ii) that they are racially superior, (iii) that the indigenes need to be displaced or exterminated, (iv) corralling and/or enslavement of indigenes, (v) miscegenation and/or intermarriage, conversion of indigenes, (vi) compunction, and, above all, (vii) a religious motivation and justification for the land dispossession (Prior, 1997: 176).

How does the Bible describe the coming together of people with different cultures and traditions? Kwesi Dickson (1991: 3) finds attitudes in the Hebrew Bible that are rather exclusive[37]. Dickson notes that the exclusivist perspective seems to be a dominant prevalence, and that this exclusivism has been carried over to the New Testament. Dickson (1991: 59) maintains that, in the New Testament, the 'early church was unable to face…the issue of continuity between the Jewish and Christian traditions and other peoples' traditions.' Western Christianity, and the Reformation, Dickson (1991: 85-86) says, held on to such exclusivism in their quest to colonise Africa. According to V. Y. Mudimbe (1994: xiii), the Torah was a master charter to the Jews just as the New Testament was the master charter to the Western Christianity. Mudimbe traces texts from the Greco-Roman world, and what was evident in these texts was that the other was always constructed as barbarians and savages. Colonialism capitalised on these ideas in a more pronounced way, believing that it was 'the mission of the stronger race to help their inferior brethren to grow up' (Mudimbe, 1994: 37). Mudimbe further notes that 'from a Christian point of view, to oppose the process of colonization or that of slavery could only be morally wrong'. This would give justification to their processes of civilising, Christianising, colonizing and even slavery as part of a mission to save (Dube, 2000: 10).

7.10 Conclusion: a reconstructive reading of the text

To reconstruct the reading of the curse narrative, it is important that we first locate ourselves in terms of the text. We need to know where we stand; on whose side are we on? Bailey (1995:138) argues that the oppressed people, when reading the Bible, can so easily fall into the literary trap of the outsider/insider motif. Oppressed people find themselves opting for the

[37] See, for example, Deut. 7:14; 8:19–20; 18:9–14; 23:4; Isa. 44:6; Neh. 7:5; Ezra 9:12.

insider characters in the text, even though their own stories may be close to those of the outsiders. Oppressed people so easily adopt the ideology of the oppressor. Reading the text, one ought to first and foremost notice the prejudice and the unfairness of Yahweh. Can one believe in a God that wants to kill the Canaanites? The text is completely silent about the plight of the Canaanites. The voice of the Canaanites does not matter to the narrator. Nothing is said about the lamentation of the dispossessed people (Prior, 1997: 43). Whereas the Bible could be a source of inspiration for the task of liberation, so too 'it has functioned as a charter of oppression' (Prior, 1997: 40). Land is indeed a central theme of biblical faith. Walter Brueggemann (1997: 48) celebrates the gift of the land as a significant moment before the entry to the promised land but stops short of condemning the treatment meted out to the indigenous people. Brueggemann offers no critique 'of the moral character of the values implied in the biblical account' (Prior, 1997: 254). W. D. Davies (1991: 87) argues against those who hold that the land together with the doctrine of chosenness/election are primitive expressions of Judaic faith. Davies is also silent on the tension and conflict that will erupt when the colonists invade other people's land. Kenneth Cragg[38] (as quoted in Davies, 1991: 101) points to the moral issue at hand: the granting of a covenanted land to a covenanted people through a covenanted story in conflict with the identity of the other inhabitants, will only result in a perpetual crisis. J.S. Whale[39] tackles this moral question head-on and criticises Davies for his indifference to this moral issue. He notes that Davies ought to know 'that conquest is always cruel, even when perpetrated by God's Elect' (as quoted in Davies, 1991: 116). Terrible injustices have taken place under the banner of colonialism which have been mandated and justified by the Bible and theological discourses. Prior (1997: 261) notes that 'one of the features of the deployment of the Bible as a legitimation for colonialism and exploitation is the

[38] Kenneth Cragg and J. S. Whale were part of a symposium that presented Response Papers to *The territorial dimension of Judaism*, by W. D. Davies (1991), and these Response Papers were published in Davies (1991).
[39] See Note 36 above.

absence of serious consideration for the victims of such activity'. The Canaanites' right to their own land had been curtailed because of their 'idolatry and abominations' (Deuteronomy 9:5), and therefore a justification of violence against them. Niditch (1993: 4) observes that the 'violence of the Hebrew Scriptures has inspired violence, has served as a model of and model for persecution, subjugation, and extermination for millennia beyond its own reality'. Prior (1997: 263) poignantly points out that the biblical narrative defines the terms of discrimination, 'leaving the believers with all the rights and unbelievers with none'. Our morality and our concern for the dignity of other people will compel us (as a Gospel imperative) to question the biblical concepts of chosen people and promised land, and what it will mean for those who are not chosen and receive no promise.

What were the other options for the Israelites to settle in the land of Canaan without annihilating the indigenes? Could one argue for a place in the sun for both the Israelites and the Canaanites? The initial meeting of the Cape Khoisan and the European settlers were rather amicable (Prior, 1997: 72). The Khoisan did not perceive the settlers as a threat, but rather as potential trade allies. With time the settlers became a more dominant force and made more demands on the Khoisan for their livestock and land which resulted in strained relations. What then would have been the potential for an amicable sharing of the land had it not been for the Israelites who arrived in Canaan with their preconceived notions of idolatry and false images of the gods of the Canaanites? Indeed, there are examples in the Bible where indigenous people were assimilated, for example Rahab (Joshua 6:25) and the Gibeonites (Joshua 9). Assimilation, however, should not be granted by the Israelites to the indigenous people, for the Israelites are not the original occupiers of the land. It really should be the other way around because the Israelites are the settlers. We note also that the Israelites were not a homogenous group of people who came out of Egypt to Canaan. People coming from outside had joined the 'settler

collective', and such people included a 'mixed multitude' (Exodus 12:38). Included also was Caleb the Kenizzite (Joshua 14:6). Added to that, Israelite law does allow for the foreigner to be taken care of (Leviticus 17–25; Deuteronomy 14:1–21). As can be seen from these examples, the 'settler collective' comprised of a number of people from different backgrounds who made up the collective. Some would have initially been indigenous Israelites or exogenous others. The 'settler collective' may have included 'abject others' who at one time may have been permanently excluded from the 'settler polity'. The Israelites included people who had been subject to the *karat* punishment, a punishment that would cut you off from the people (Leviticus 7:20–27; 17:4–14; 18:29). The Edomites and the Egyptians could be included in the Israelite community in the third generation (see Deuteronomy 23:1–7). Of course, with Israel being in Egypt for 430 years, these assimilating processes must have taken a few centuries for the Israelite community to become a collective people (Pitkänen, 2017: 27). Based on the process of Israelite composition and formation as a nation, and their Levitical law, a potential re-reading of the text should allow for a peaceful settlement of the Israelites in Canaan. After all, the Israelite were not at all that pure an ethnic group as they claimed to be. They presented themselves as a separatist group that could not co-habit with any other ethnic groups in the land that Yahweh had led them to.

Jennifer Knust (2015: 408) argues that it is possible that Canaan could be constitutive of both Israel and Canaan, bound by 'ties of desire and difference', and therefore 'Noah, Shem, Japheth, Ham, and Canaan are one and cannot be driven apart'. Ham's act could be considered as an invitation to laughter instead of being blamed for an offence. Ham's sin may have not been the seeing, but rather his hilarious laughter, and this may have upset 'the patriarchal – hierarchical status quo' (Knust, 2014: 409). Focusing on Ham's laughter as the punchline in the story, Knust (2014:409) proposes a re-telling of the story as follows:

Having survived the end of the world, Noah, that ‘man of the soil’, plants a vineyard and, not knowing any better, drinks himself into a stupor. His son Ham happens upon him, sprawled naked in the tent, and has a good laugh at his father’s expense. Rather than join in the fun, however, his meticulously righteous brothers outdo themselves with a performance of blameless piety, nearly tripping as they walk backwards into the tent so as to avoid seeing (horrors!) a penis. The disheveled patriarch, still too drunk to tell his sons and grandsons apart, awakens and lashes out at Ham’s son Canaan, making himself appear even more foolish. The self-righteous and entitled Shem, however, takes it all way too seriously. Misconstruing his father’s drunken ditty for a perpetually binding pronouncement, he writes up the story as he sees it, attempting to preserve it all in a book that he can use against his brothers later. But he had better watch out: In this story, the Canaanites may well have the last laugh.

Chapter 8

Conclusion: 'Gam'— from pejorative to ameliorative

8.1 Introduction

The myth of the curse of Ham is still very much alive in the minds and hearts of the people of South Africa. Meiring (2016: 237) asserts that throughout the ages, in South Africa, the curse-of-Ham ideology became particularly internalised by the 'sons of Ham', in other words, Black males were exploited for cheap labour during both the colonial and apartheid eras. Such would be inscribed upon the memory of the people and passed on from one generation to another (Jansen, 2009: 52) in both white Afrikanerdom and Black families. Many a white person still sees Blacks as barbaric (Jansen, 2009: 82), and for many South Africans the curse ideology is still embedded in 'the emotional, psychic, spiritual, social, economic, political and psychological lives of the community' (Jansen, 2009: 171). Meiring (2016: 238) asserts that the curse ideology has become embedded in 'the blood of those who received the curse and the blessings of Noah'. This is an ideology, Mazrui (1990: 13) explains, with tendencies that divide 'the human race between believers and unbelievers, between the virtuous and the sinful, between the good and the evil, between us and them.' This was an ideology earmarked specifically for the indigenous people who were considered other, even though the colonists were the ones who dispossessed, oppressed, and even killed in a land that did not belong to them. Mazrui (1990: 6) observes that 'Europe on the whole was prepared to offer its religion, languages and culture to Africans—but only in exchange for land, mines, labor, energy and other economic riches of Africa.' This narrative needs changing, starting with reading the Bible otherwise, demythologising the myth, and then to celebrate the unique contribution that 'Gam'

can bring about in our quest for nation building. This concluding chapter is an attempt to capture that vision.

8.2 Reading the Bible 'otherwise'[40]: an alternative method to Afrikaner Calvinist reading

The Bible was used as a justification for many of the European ideologies imposed on the indigenous people of Southern Africa. As a start, with the settlement of the *Vereenichde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) (Dutch East India Company) during the latter part of the seventeenth century, the Bible came along as a *sieketrooster* (a sick-comforter), and 'baptised, married, buried … and generated the myths that sustained European conquest (West, 2016b: 36). One of the responsibilities of the *sieketrooster* was to do the *public reading* of the Bible. By the turn of the eighteenth century the Cape was under British control, and the responsibility of the public reading of the Bible was first done by the British military and the chaplains. The ministry done by them was primarily for the internal maintenance of the colonists, but soon spread to include the African souls with the arrival of the London Missionary Society (**LMS**). The **LMS** targeted the Africans of the interior with the 'blessed message of Salvation' (West, 2016b: 37). Robert Moffat, a **LMS** missionary, was the first to translate the Bible into an African vernacular. Initially only the catechism was translated into the vernacular. Gerald West (2016b: 38) asserts that this Bible translation could have been nothing more than an extended form of the catechesis as he (Moffat) understood it[41]. In Chapter 4 above we have noted how

[40] The term 'otherwise' is borrowed from West, 2007, *Reading other-wise: socially engaged biblical scholars reading with their local communities.* West advocates for a reading of the Bible by scholars in association with 'ordinary readers.' The ordinary reader, who is not a scholar, is one that is trained in the contexts of family, church, and community, as opposed to the scholar who is trained in the context of the academia. See West (2007: 1-4).

[41] For more information on the Bible translations done by the missionaries in South Africa, kindly refer to Moffat (1824) *Missionary labours and scenes in southern Africa*, and West (2016b) *The stolen Bible: from tool of imperialism to African icon.*

the Afrikaner family arranged their own *huisgodsdiens* (home church), with the father of the family being the sole interpreter of especially the Old Testament, in the absence of the nearest local church and with a lack of theological formation and training. That such interpretations of the Bible could have been riddled with colonial language of oppression and exploitation would not stand in good stead as the African people try to make the Bible relevant to their lives. The Bible is a very influential piece of literature in Africa. It has much relevance on African religious life and culture, including the socio-politico-economic realities of Africans. West (2004: 128) gives some examples of what such experiences might be for the reader who brings their lived-reality in relation to scripture: a young, black, unemployed person might wonder if ancient Israel emerged from a marginalised group of people; African women might ask about any hierarchical structures in terms of gender among the Israelites; and the African student might consider if an 'organic intellectual' Jesus got involved with the poor and marginalised.

Clodovis Boff recognised the need for Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) for ordinary down to earth people to reflect and deliberate upon their own experiences. In pursuance of this ideal, he dedicated one-half of each year to scholarly activities, and the other half to pastoral activities among the Indians in Acre, the westernmost state in Brazil (Hennelly, 1989: 81). This missionary journey, besides being in solidarity with the people as he reflected on the living conditions of the rubber-gatherers and peasants, was also going to be the pioneer of organizing basic communities. The Church was to become, in the words of Clodovis and Leonardo Boff (1986: 56), 'a Church *with* the poor, in a spirit of solidarity – and even as a Church as the poor, or a Church *with* the poor, in a spirit of identification' as opposed to 'a Church *for* the poor, in a spirit of paternalism'.

Carlos Mesters (1981: 198-199) tells of a scenario in Brazil of about ninety farmers from the backlands and riverbanks, most of whom could not read. They came together to reflect on their own experiences, and especially the fight for their land, and what the word of God had to say about it. They also grappled with the mixed messages that they perceived coming from the Bible, in that sometimes the Bible justifies subservience to the landlord, and at other times it seems as if the Bible speaks in favour of the tenant farmers rights. Mesters identifies three components in the reading of the Bible as experienced by the tenant farmers: (1) hearing the word of God as the text (the Bible), (2) hearing the word of God within a con-text (the community, or situation in which it is read), and (3) hearing the word of God as pre-text (the real life situation that the farmers found themselves in). Mesters stresses the importance of having all three components for an interpretation of the Bible that can make sense in the real issues that people are facing and experiencing. He argues that when the 'three elements are integrated – Bible, community, real-life situation – then the word of God becomes a reinforcement, a stimulus for hope and courage. Bit by bit it helps people to overcome their fears' (Mesters, 1981: 200). Mesters is convinced that it is unimportant whether the groups start with the Bible, or the community, or the real-life situation, as long as all three components are included. It is important to bring to the table the text as found in the Bible, to understand the context in which it is read (in other words an awareness of the scenario), and to bring it into the experience of the people. The Bible, as Mesters (1981: 197) suggests, becomes the 'motor', hidden somewhere in the bonnet of the car, not visible, yet giving the driving force for the vehicle to move. The stories of the Old Testament and the Gospel stories that are being shared in the group discussions become the basis for the people to bring in their own experiences, and as they do the Bible disappears, and their real-life stories and concrete struggles become the focus of the group discussions.

Another example closer to home comes from the Umtata Women's Theology Group, a group of women from different denominations who started coming together in 1987 in Umtata, Eastern Cape Province, to do Bible study, with particular focus on how women were depicted in the Old Testament, how Jesus related to women, and the position of women in the early years of the Christian Church. Welekazi Sokutu, one of the leaders, when asked about their response to the HIV/AIDS virus, said the following: 'We came to the conclusion that HIV is not a punishment from God. We also concluded that our role is not to judge people with HIV. Looking at the responses of Jesus to the people who were suffering from similar problems, we felt that we, as Christians, were called to take care of people suffering from HIV/AIDS, and to give them hope' (Byamugisha, et al., 2002: 32). The Bible study soon turned into practical action. Sokutu continued: 'We had been working on the spiritual aspects of the HIV epidemic, but we felt that we needed to become more involved in the social aspects' (Byamugisha, et al., 2002: 33). The group soon found themselves involved in efforts to support orphans and chronically ill people, raising community awareness of the problem by speaking to church groups and women's organisations, making regular visits to a local NGO-run hospice and TB-hospital, where they offer spiritual, emotional, and social support to people living with HIV / AIDS. Several Bible Study Booklets have since been published, amongst others on topics such as the theology of sexuality, separation and divorce, ageing, bereavement and death, and HIV / AIDS (Byamugisha, et al., 2002: 31-33). Ordinary grassroots people can explore the relevance of their faith, and of the Bible, within the context of their experiences and communities. Bible study sessions can become a space for encounters of a new kind, where the Bible is read and understood as life-giving and empowering, understood through the experiences and the struggles of women.

Lastly, the issue of gender is very much noticeable by its absence. White males came with the Bible in their hand, the story goes. Dube (2000: 20) notes that the absence of gender very much 'captures gender relationships and oppression in imperialism', even worse so for marginalised women. Women bear the brunt of both the imperial colonial system and patriarchy. As a result, a lot more investigative work needs to be done in the field of the African womanist movement.

Alice Walker (1983: xi-xii) defines womanism as:

> A black feminist of color … Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or *willful* behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one… Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health.

This definition of womanism differs from that of feminism in that it focuses on holistic family values (an entire people, male and female) in contrast to feminism that primarily advocates for gender equality. Western feminist movements (particularly in the United Kingdom and the USA) grew out of a need to overturn legal inequalities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with women's right to vote being the fundamental issue to be addressed. A second wave of women's feminist movements arose during the 1960's to the 1980's in response to societal inequalities and gender norms in Western countries. However, in Africa, the issues that women contend with are a lot more than just gender issues. Shireen Hassim (2006: 36) argues that most South African women 'were at pains to distinguish their struggles from those of feminists and [chose] to associate instead with the dominant nationalists' movement.' Sisonke Msimang (2002: 8) argues that feminism should be a lot more than simply addressing women's subordination. If it was confined to women's subordination, then the issues of Black women and women who are poor, immigrants, lesbian, or at the periphery will not be addressed by

feminist movements. Msimang continues to say that the word 'women' is limited in its interpretation to 'those women who have more power than other women', given the history of the feminist movement. This definition needs to be broadened so that the enemies of women can clearly be identified, enemies such as 'patriarchy, racism, heterosexism, and conservative religious and cultural practices' (Msimang, 2002: 8). Womanism shapes a womanist reading of the text. A womanist reading of a text may want to explore more than just the issue of gender, and will include both ethnicity and class as well, all of which impacts on the lived reality of African women.

Black historical experience must be read in the context of the Bible (West, 1982: 109), but also, the Bible ought to be read in the experience of the poor and marginalized Black people. The subject of interpretation is the experience of the poor, what they have gone through, and how that experience can be interpreted in the light of the Bible (Ukpong, 1995: 5). The degree of participation here is for everyone to be involved. Reading the Bible is to be done by the people for the people. This is not just an intellectual theologising of the experiences of the people done by academics and seminarians. Everyone is included, from the leadership right down to the young children in the community, including women's groups, prayer cells, Bible study groups and children doing Sunday school or catechism classes. Churches have several formal and informal educational platforms, ranging from seminaries and secondary educational institutions to Sunday school and confirmation classes. In addition, they also provide numerous platforms for debate and adult education, ranging from Bible studies to marriage preparation and baptism preparation classes. There is a well-developed infrastructure for education in most sectors of the faith-based community. Such structures can be put to good use as the people deliberate and exchange views and learn from one another as they seek means and ways to

address their own experiences in the light of the Bible. Each one brings to the table their unique that will complement the whole.

8.3 Demythologising the Text

What empowers the myth to linger on for so long? We know that the biblical text is devoid of any curse on Ham. Thus, the curse of Ham is a construct of exegetes, colonists, and many who were involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The myth, and the application thereof, has 'since the fifteenth century endorsed the justification of the confiscation of freedom of those who are perceived, and who were taught to perceive themselves, through a distortion of the Scriptures, as descendants of Ham and Canaan" (Mbiafu, 2002: 9). The legacy of unjust eisegeses over many centuries ensured the survival, and the legitimation of the myth that Africans are destined for eternal slavery. The 'myth was disseminated, taught, and inculcated in Africans' (Mbiafu, 2002: 10), ensuring a reproduction of colonial religious discourse by even the victims of this curse. Humanity needs myths to live by, hence the need to demythologise whatever is destructive, and to remythologise for restitution and restoration. This will be the task of everyone, and perhaps, especially, the ones who have been and continue to suffer under the myth of the curse of Ham.

As a start to demythologise the curse of Ham, we need to change the status of Ham in the story from perpetrator to victim. The mythical perspective of the story presents Noah as the victim and Ham as the perpetrator which granted much potency to the myth over time. René Girard (1996: 17) argues for an interpretation of the text that allows for a 'counter-mythical thrust in the treatment of victimage', a reading that advocates and supports the 'perspective of the victim rather than the mythical perspective of the persecutors.' Stephen Haynes (2002: 215-217) gives an 'imaginative retelling' from the perspective of the silent victim. The retelling begins with a

history of no victim and no crisis. The flood happened, and only those on the ark survived. Life took on a new meaning for Noah and his family as they settled into a new way of life, this time Noah being a vine-grower. Noah developed a 'survivor guilt' mentality since the days of the flood, and drinking from the fruit of the vine was one way for him to cope. The flood story haunted him, leaving him with nightmares and non-stop conversations with his God in his dreams. Ham's tent was nearest to Noah's, and thus he could clearly hear how Noah was tormented. He peeped in, and saw that his father was lying uncovered, and thought of ways to cover his father. Things became so bad that later both Shem and Japheth, who, at all times tried to win the favour of their father, could also pick up the conversations and came in to investigate, and was informed by Ham of their father's nakedness. Both Shem and Japheth then grabbed a blanket and walked backwards to cover their father, everything done to win their father's blessing. The next morning Noah blessed Shem and Japheth, apparently for their good deeds, even though it was Ham who alerted them to the condition of Noah and asked them to come up with a plan. There seems to have been false accusations made against either Ham or Canaan, who were henceforth to be treated as slaves. Thus, the victimisation of Ham begins. Here we have a willing victim in Ham who became a scapegoat and took upon himself the victimisation of all who are to be discriminated against because of their race which is sustained by the myth of this story. Ham's victimisation will be, in a sense, a forerunner to the victimisation of Jesus who would later become the scapegoat for all and take upon himself the sin of the world (Haynes, 2002: 218).

Haynes (2002: 199) points out that Noah may have been a victim of his own *phamakon*[42]. Noah's consumption of alcohol may have been a remedy to his fatigue, but it could also,

[42] '[T]he word *pharmakon* in classical Greek means both poison and the antidote for poison, both sickness and cure—in short, any substance capable of perpetrating a very good or very bad action, according to the circumstances and the dosage. The pharmakon is thus a magic drug or volatile elixir, whose administration best

potentially, have been toxic to his 'body and mind'. Haynes points out that the abuse of alcohol could impact a lot more people than an individual. Potentially it could also impact on more than a single generation. As a start, Noah's drinking may have led to his family being a dysfunctional family. Noah's careless drinking of his *phamakon* has indeed had a negative effect on his closest family, his sons, who reacted differently to what they have seen (or not seen). A false sense of peace and security is advanced by those who are ignorant to the inherent issues of alcohol abuse, often at the cost of 'exclusion and vilification' of others who cannot 'ignore the disease'. Ham reveals the naked truth of his father's alcohol abuse, and Shem and Japheth close ranks behind the abuser. The one who speaks or the victim, is victimised. Ham's inability to save his father, and his family, from the pharmakon's grip, could only lead to a greater toxication of family life, even in generations to follow, after the death of the abuser (Haynes, 2002: 199).

8.4 Demythologising the 'conquest myth'.

Having started with the text, I now want to move on to some other aspects of the myth that needs demythologising. As a justification to their right to conquer and settle in a land that does not belong to them, colonists create and spread certain myths, which, for most of these colonial settlements are not true at all. Prior (1997: 177) stipulates the following common myths:

(i) Unoccupied, virgin land; or, if there was habitation, it would be labelled as irregular.

(ii) The indigenes were given an inferior status, thus justifying the mission to civilise and evangelise.

(iii) The myth of 'self-defence': the colonisers assume for themselves an inalienable right to resist any opposition from the indigenes.

be left by ordinary men in the hands of those who enjoy special knowledge and exceptional powers—priests, magicians, shamans, doctors, and so on' (Girard, 1977: 95).

In dealing with the myth of the so-called unoccupied land and those inhabiting the land, Francis Jennings (1976: 15) gives the following description in terms of colonial invasion in North America, a description that is stereotypical for many a colonised land around the world:

> The basic conquest myth postulates that America was virgin land, or wilderness, inhabited by nonpeople called savages; that these savages were creatures sometimes defined as demons, sometimes as beasts "in the shape of men"; that their mode of existence and cast of mind were such as to make them incapable of civilization and therefore of full humanity; that civilization was required by divine sanction or the imperative of progress to conquer the wilderness and make it a garden; that the savage creatures of the wilderness, being unable to adapt to any environment other than the wild, stubbornly and viciously resisted God or fate, and thereby incurred their suicidal extermination; that civilization and its bearers were refined and ennobled in their contest with the dark powers of the wilderness; and that it all was inevitable (Jennings 1976: 15).

Colonists act on behalf of their Christian god, and they take upon themselves the right to kill to the glory of this god. These explanations serve to justify their actions and their right to live in the lands that they have dispossessed, often given in retrospect. This myth is further refined by a *pretence* that the land was empty on their arrival, and if there were any inhabitants, it was one of sparsely habitation by unsettled people. If, for whatever reason this pretence of an unoccupied land cannot be upheld anymore, the myth would move to the next level declaring that those who were found inhabiting the land were of an 'inferior category' (Prior, 1997: 178). It is at this point that the myth of racial superiority takes root. Racism would guarantee the settlers' right to exploit the indigenes based on their so-called inferiority status, and, more than

that, any slight difference of physical attributes among the indigenous people would be further exploited. Differentiation among the indigenes will cause dissention and disagreement among the Indigenes, strengthening the arm of the settlers. A case in point is indeed the situation at the Cape Colony where the Afrikaners identified three principal races in pre-colonial time. *Bushmen* (that is the San people) were labelled as savages and considered the oldest race in the region. *Hottentots* (that is the Khoikhoi) were slightly higher regarded than the San and were believed to have trekked from the north. The third group was labelled *Kaffirs*, who were regarded as barbarians whose origins were believed to be most likely Asian, and who trekked southward in comparatively recent times (Thompson, 1985: 96-97).

The peopling of South Africa started long before any European arrival[43] to this region. The original San-hunter groups of people, also known as the ancestors to the Khoisan people, are the earliest inhabitants of the southern parts of the African continent, dating back to at least 14,000 years ago (Oliver and Oliver, 2017: 2). Yet the colonists declared the land *terra nullius*, except for what they called a few wandering noble savages. 'The year 1652 has been presented as the genesis of social history in South Africa … the colonial myth that presents 17th century southern Africa as "an empty land" free of Africans, save for a few wandering San and Khoe' (Mellet, 2020: 12). Victims of the curse-of-Ham narrative must begin to change their language for it to be purged of any of the guilt that was laid upon them and devalue them as human beings (Mbiafu, 2002: 9). The true stories must be told to counter the incorrect versions of the colonialists. 'Africans should never again agree to be subjected by, protected by, or evangelized by anyone' (Mbiafu, 2002: 13).

[43] Bartholomeu Dias led the first European expedition around the Cape of the Good Hope in 1488, followed by Vasco Da Gama in 1497 (Pletcher, 2010: 51, 54).

8.5 Protest poetry as a tool for demythologising.

I have already cited some examples of 'Gam' in poetry in Chapter 3 above. Under this sub-heading I now wish to suggest the use of protest poetry as a counter to the curse-of-Ham narrative. S.V. Petersen (1979: 5) in his poem *Bede* (Prayers) emphasises the theme of an absent God. Petersen writes:

'n Duisend jaar gelee teen God	A Thousand years ago against God
En mens gesondig het …	And humanity I sinned
Dat selfs U, Heer, van my moes wyk …	That even You, Lord, had to depart from me...
My nie wou reinig van die slyk?	Not want to cleanse me from the sludge?

In a time of increased racial discrimination based on pigmentocracy, not even God was around. Boezak (2017: 4) in his commentary on this poem, says that the play on words suggests that Petersen may have accepted the counsel and decision of God, but in fact, this is not so, as the wry irony of this apparent acceptance suggests. This was no apathetic acceptance of the status quo, but in fact a total rejection thereof. Adam Small, poet and philosopher, was known for his satirical jabs at religion – vulgar attacks on the conservative and even racist role that the Christian church played in the apartheid society. Vernon February (1981: 106) comments on Small's writing style:

> Small is capable of ironic depiction, of inverting the Christian myth, of using the vulgar argot, which by sheer contrast with the original Biblical passage and elevated language,

irritates. But Small is by no way anti-clerical in the négritude vein. His products are not vituperative ejaculations of hatred.

The poem *Groot Krismisgabet* (Great Christmas Prayer) by Small (2011: 28-32) is an engagement with God about life in the slums and the townships, for which the Bethlehem stable is a metaphor. Small is never anti-Christian but does have issues with a perverted form of Christianity (Boezak, 2017: 5). Small (1961: 7), in his book *Die eerste steen?* (The first stone?), begins a process of finding positivity even in the negative connotations attached to *Gam*:

en Heer	and Lord
Laat ons	Let our
Vernedering nou die vuurproef van ons liefde word	Humiliation now become the trial by fire of our love

Nico Koopman (2016: 540) in a tribute to Small, acknowledges Small's contribution in Afrikaans literature that helped to transform dehumanization, enmity, injustice and oppression, to human dignity, healing, reconciliation, justice and freedom.

The Black Consciousness Poetry of James Matthews, born of the coloured working class in Bo-Kaap (Adhikari, 2005: 135), gives voice to the anger that many coloured people felt, placed within the broader African context so as not to isolate any one particular ethnic group in their pain, but to find solidarity among all the African peoples of South Africa, this especially after the Soweto uprisings and the death of Stephen Biko (Adhikari, 2005: 138). The compilation *Cry Rage!* opens with the following poem:

I am no minstrel

who sings of joy . . .

but the words I write

are of pain and of rage . . .

my heart drowned in bitterness

with the agony of what white man's law has done (Matthews and Thomas, 1972:1).

Matthews' protest poetry served a 'consciousness-raising function' (Adhikari, 2005: 138), particularly among the coloured communities throughout South Africa, in which he brought an awareness of the Black Consciousness thinking, instead of them being cocooned in their ethnic racial thinking. Coloured identity is affirmed in the broader identity of blackness, as this following poem demonstrates:

I am Black

my Blackness fills me to the brim

like a beaker of well-seasoned wine

that sends my senses reeling with pride (Matthews, 1974: 64).

In the next few lines Matthews shows full solidarity with and identification of coloured people of Cape Town (Manenberg) with both the Black masses of South Africa (Soweto), and, even beyond the borders of South Africa, solidarity with the Black people globally (Harlem and Notting Hill).

Our pain has linked us

from Manenberg to Soweto

I share the pain of my black brother

and a mother in a Harlem ghetto

with that of a soul brother in Notting Hill (Matthews and Thomas, 1972: 12).

Matthews does not hold back with regards the dispossession of the land of the indigenous people and the subsequent economic exploitation they have suffered at the hands of the colonists:

the fields that were ours

our cattle can no longer graze

and like the cattle we are herded

to starve on barren soil

we die in the earth's depth

to fill his coffer with gold

his lust for shiny pebbles

outweighs his concern for our lives (Matthews & Thomas, 1972: 5).

Finally, in the introduction to *Cry Rage!*, Matthews shows 'contempt for white man's two-faced morality', and hurls at them what sounds to be a counter-curse:

Goddam them!

They know what they've done (Matthews and Thompson, 1972: 28)

the word of the white man

has the value of dirt (Matthews and Thompson, 1972: 5)

. . . and, white man

should you die

i won't even

laugh or cry . . .

to waste on

you as much

as a sigh (Matthews, 1974: 19).

Matthews' anger and rage was not only directed at the white people. He also reprimanded those coloured people who danced to the tune of white politics, and associating themselves with whiteness, which he saw as a betrayal of their black heritage.

white syphilization

taints blacks

makes them

carbon copies

imitating white. . .

the women

faces smeared

skin bleached

hair straightened

… wake up

black fools! (Matthews: 1974: 29).

Matthews has no issue regarding himself as a coloured person, yet he does so within the context of being a Black man, for being Black is part of his political stance. Black does not mean rejecting being coloured, and there is, or should be, no contradiction between being both Black

and coloured. Most coloured people, however, still embrace their 'colouredness', hence this social reality cannot just be dismissed merely as a 'white, ruling-class invention' (Adhikari, 2005: 144-145). Embracing an identity of being both Black and coloured may mean that coloured people should let go of their 'colouredness' as a social identity and find their true identity as part of the greater black population of South Africa, in the same vein as the Zulus, Xhosas, Tswanas and Sothos (and many others) do.

8.6 Conclusion: 'We are the ones we have been waiting for'[44]

This study has shown that coloured identity carries with it a baggage of racial and ethnic slurs, and added to that, the term *Gam* gives it an added negative label. Such negativities are of grave concern as the coloured people consider their position and relationality among other racial and ethnic groups within the South African population (Petrus and Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 87-88). Theodore Petrus and Wendy Isaacs-Martin posit a symbological approach to dispel these existing stereotypes and the negativity it produces, one that 'involves identifying and interpreting the symbols of coloured identity, as well as the meanings of these symbols and the contexts within which they occur (2012: 88). Coloured people are considered a 'heterogeneity' (Petrus and Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 89), hence the difficulty to find a one-size-fits-all definition of coloured identity. Symbology, as it relates to coloured identity, is used to probe each of the symbols of race, ethnicity, and culture to determine its 'sensory and ideological meanings' (Petrus and Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 89). Race and ethnicity have been used as the primary determinants of coloured identity, and with time this identity was built into the stratification of population groups as an intermediary stratum (Adhikari, 2006b: 143). Stratification happened

[44] This is a common phrase invoked for community organising and mobilisation, emphasising that no messiah will come to rescue the people, nor 'the arrival of any new revolutionary agent' (Žižek, 2009: 154), but the people themselves.

not only on a macroscopic level (that is, racial and ethnic differentiation among South African population groups), but also on a microscopic level (that is stratification even among coloured people themselves). The symbolism of stratification that emerges here is one of inferiority, both within the broader South African population groups and among the smaller divisions within the coloured population (Petrus and Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 89). The legislation of a coloured racial group (as promulgated in the Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950) attempted to create a homogenous racial group out of a heterogenous group of people. A negative symbol attached to the term 'coloured' grew out of the fact that it forcefully created an ethnic boundary of people with different cultures and backgrounds. This fact has been confirmed when the government was forced to create several sub-groups among the coloured people, such as Cape Coloured, Malays, Griquas, the Chinese group, the Indian group, the other Asiatic group, and the other Coloureds (Whisson, 1971: 46). Besides the status of inferiority, the term 'coloured' also took on a status of marginality given that neither the group as a whole, nor any of the sub-groups, could identify with any 'recognised' group in the broader South African population groups. This would also entrench 'social and economic stratification, dislocation and disintegration' (Petrus and Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 89) both within and among the coloured people, and their relationality with the other population groups in South Africa. Culture is often associated with race and ethnicity, thus an assumption that a racially and ethnic homogeneous group would share a common culture. Culture and cultural heritage would include a shared history of the ethnic group, a shared language, 'religion, belief system, art, music, dress, traditions and lifeways' (Nagel, 1994: 161). Given the lack of an 'essentialist homogenous coloured culture', coloured people also suffer a 'cultural marginalisation of coloured identity' (Petrus and Isaacs-Martin, 2012: 89). Coloured people have no common language and no shared history, and their fragmentated and complex cultural history cannot

sufficiently answer the question 'what we are', a question that would ordinarily be answered by group culture (Nagel, 1994: 162).

This study has also shown that *Gam* (as opposed to 'Ham') is a concept uniquely applied to the coloured people of the Cape, a critical term for further research in religion scholarship. Whereas the term 'Ham' was initially used to justify the subjugation of the African people into slavery, the contemporary use of *Gam* serves more to ascribe some particular attributes to the coloured people. Also, whereas this term *Gam* was initially used by Dutch colonial and other settlers in the Cape, based on their interpretation of the biblical text of the curse of Ham, to justify the exploitation of the Indigenous people of the Cape, its usage now is primarily confined to those who so self-identify. It is noted that those who so self-identify use this notion to differentiate and separate themselves from the more politically powerful and social elites. This self-identification is clearly not only to separate themselves from other racial or social class groups in South Africa, but also a separation from other so-called coloured people who do not self-identify as *Gam*. Lower class coloured people, many of whom may not be familiar with the biblical account of the curse of Ham, would frequently apply the term *Gam* to themselves. Being both 'brown and poor' is enough reason to characterise oneself as *Gam* (Stone, 1972:33). This self-identification of *Gam* may also occur among middle class coloured people, showing an underdog position in racial classification. The use of *Gam* is mostly embedded in a community and public context rather than domestic or private relations (Stone, 1972:33-34).

Gerald Stone lists seven characteristic traits evident among coloured people that further elucidate a manifestation of the *Gam* label. These are as follows:

(i) *Gam* is unfortunate: those so labelled as *Gam* are coloured and poor.

(ii) *Gam* is repulsive: *Gam* is intrinsically bad, as expressed in the "pejorative connotations of all comments" on coloured people.

(iii) *Gam* is a fool: those so labelled are mocked, belittled, and are addressed by nicknames that are obscene and often refer to the size or other aspect of a body part.

(iv) *Gam* is stupid: the 'stupidity' of coloured people is their misfortune, which is natural and deserved. Coloureds exploit, bicker and backbite each other instead of supporting and co-operating with one another.

(v) *Gam* is ignorant: when a previously impoverished coloured family makes progress in life and moves up socially, it is often glanced at as pretence and condemned.

(vi) *Gam* is disreputable: besides being coloured and poor, *Gam* often times is involved in brawling, excessive drinking, urinating in public, begging from whites, violating the norms of respectability.

(vii) *Gam* is a rebel against the moral order: coloured people show a lack of self-restraint and gratitude.

These characteristics of *Gam* are not purposefully lived out but are stereotyped by those who identify with low-class coloured people, simultaneously mocking and condoning their disreputability (Stone, 1972: 36-37). Coloured identity is marked by 'immorality, sexual promiscuity, illegitimacy, impurity and untrustworthiness' (Erasmus, 2001:17), and 'propensities to criminality, gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, and vulgar behaviour' (Adhikari, 2006a, 482). Coloured people do not just regard themselves as economically and politically powerless. They also reinforce their social status in the expressions they use to describe themselves, such as "*Gam is mos so"* (Ham is like that) and "*Dis uitgesit vir jou"* (it is meant to be). Such expressions speak of an attitude of accepting the status quo, believing that their condition will not change (van der Ross, 1979:36). The notion of *Gam* may have a

two-edged-sword interpretation: for those on the inside it presents a hidden intimate transcript of community and communality in the expression *ons bruinmense* (we brown people), yet, for those on the outside it presents a public script of coloured identity that is 'angry' (Stone, 1972: 30), a group of people that have failed the public script in social class (economics and means), political clout and intellectual ability. Stone (1972: 30) purports this to be a failed identity. The public script would not only give it a failed mark, but also, if called upon to comment on this mark, give a description of *vuil* (vile, dirty). *Gam* stigmatisation means 'cultural deprivation' by the outside forces, by both those so-called coloured people who do not so identify, and others. To avoid such stigmatisation, individuals within this graded group, claim an underdog identity to create for themselves a 'safe space' of their own creation as a coping mechanism. Such shared circumstances and the common reaction of a community shape and conceptualise values and rituals that become a manifestation of culture (Stone, 1972: 32).

Concepts and conceptualisation of any term is shaped, formed, and influenced by the interaction within a particular group, and that with others outside the group. These concepts are forever challenged as it can take on new and different meanings. May it be that the term *Gam* so undergo a metamorphosis for the better, for both those who so self-identify, and those who look from the outside in. Consideration should be given to use the term *Gam* as a catalyst for camaraderie and empowerment, and a struggle against slavery, oppression, and exploitation. Cape society, during the period of slavery, was made up of complex relationships between slaves and other population groups at the Cape: Khoisan, Xhosa, Sotho-Tswana, Dutch East India Company servants and employees, and the regular number of sailors who would berth from time to time. The black minority groups in the colonial society led to the formation of a common identity, a common historical narrative, a social positioning, as well as tapping into the training and education they saw the free burghers would receive from the

religious leaders. The Dutch Reformed Church had no rule or canon that prevented slaves from becoming members of the church. However, any prospective member had to undergo training and basic literacy classes, which needed time for studying and attending these classes, something that slaves had no control of (Groenewald, 2010, 30). Free burghers were given instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, and the "Heidelberg Catechism and 'Hellenbroek', a book containing questions and answers upon the whole religious systems", as was taught in the church, and for candidates who wished to be "catechised and subsequently examined to become members of the church" (Borcherds, 1861: 18). Baptised slave children were given very basic schooling until the age of ten, by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) at the Slave Lodge, all of which was to fit into the economics of slavery at the Cape (Groenewald, 2010: 34). Slaves could not legally get married at the Cape until 1823 (Shell, 1994: 320-321). Sexual relationships, even when two people were committed to each other in a monogamous relationship, but not legally married, were considered 'concubinage' under Roman-Dutch law (Groenewald, 2010: 36). The Dutch Reformed Church may have considered free burghers, slaves and masters to be equal before God, yet the reality presented to slaves and free was one of differences in opportunities and statuses, including the right to get married, which meant that slaves and slaveowners could never really be equal in church (Groenewald, 2010: 36). The slaves had to weigh up what their chances were and what opportunities they had to escape from their masters (knowing that if their attempt was unsuccessful, they might very well pay with their lives). If escaping was not an option, perhaps consideration would have been given to uprisings and rebellions. Their organization among themselves, and those groups that might have been supportive and sympathetic, would bring about a new culture of solidarity and humaneness, thus leaving a legacy for their descendants in modern South Africa.

This study has noted that a historical rabbinic, and the subsequent Christian and Islamic readings of the curse of Ham narrative do not do justice to the original text as found in the Hebrew Bible. Despite the fact that no colour and no racism is found in the curse of Noah, the exegeses of the text abound with racial slurs, particular geared towards Africa and Africans, condemning Black people to eternal slavery.

An Africentric-postcolonial biblical interpretation was suggested for a re-reading of this text within the context of the coloured people of the Cape. This approach allowed for specific themes to be addressed within the text, themes that the coloured people (and the Black people in general in South Africa) could identify with as per their experiences throughout colonialism and slavery. Land, colonial entanglements, power and victimisation, and covenant and curse, are but some of the themes that are addressed. In addition, this study points out the power play within the text, where the redactors manipulate the various traditions of this story for a specific outcome according to their agenda. African-postcolonial biblical interpretation also allows for solidarity with other people across the world in similar situations of colonialism and oppression, where the very same notions of 'chosenness', 'God's elect' and 'promised land' were invoked to replace and obliterate the indigenous people. A case in point is the current situation in Palestine. The voice of the Canaanites in the text is completely silent, just as the plight of the Palestinians is drowned by the rhetoric of the powers that be today. Jacob Wright (2023: 470) poses this question, 'Is the biblical model of peoplehood adaptable to the exigencies of modern secular democracies?' Wright answers his question by saying that new ways must be found to build kinship, a copy of what the biblical writers have done. Story telling created community in the Bible and remains a powerful tool of building community even today. 'At this moment of populistic upheaval – fomented by cynical, corrupt leaders who deem themselves to be above the law – we need narratives that reflect the diversity of our

communities, temper the hostility that often characterizes national discourses, and offer tangible reasons why we should cultivate affection for our laws. As we create these narratives, perhaps we will discover a unifying force under whose aegis we will be able to face an otherwise frightening future' (Wright, 2023: 470).

Given the heterogeneity of coloured people, in ethnicity and race, as well as culture, and instead of heterogeneity being a cause for marginalisation, negative symbology, and dislocation, why not consider it as a symbol of unification and community building? Coloured identity can become a catalyst for a new South African mindset, by changing the historically negative associations with 'colouredism' to something positive, with potential positive spin-offs for both the microscopic, coloured people and the macroscopic, South African society. Petrus and Isaacs-Martin (2012: 100) argue that the 'notion of coloured identity as a symbol makes it possible for coloured people to realise that they have agency and choice regarding the meanings that they feel the identity should have for them'. The refrain 'we are not white enough' is a statement of trauma, indelibly marked on the psyche of coloured people dating back to an era of slavery and colonialism. The fact that coloured people, and especially the fair-skinned ones, missed out on being classified as white, and thereby missing out on the privileges of whiteness, may have led to self-condemnation and an acceptance of divine judgement. The refrain 'we are not black enough' may be a continuation of the belief that coloured people are being side-lined with the political power having shifted from white to black, and coloured people finding themselves still in a marginalised position. This narrative needs changing, and a new rhetoric is needed to get rid of the negative descriptions of 'not being enough' to something positive such as 'we are more than enough', or 'we are the ones we have been waiting for'.

Sarah Tishkoff and her colleagues show that the Cape Mixed Ancestry (CMA), commonly referred to as the Cape Coloured people in South Africa (Tishkoff, et al, 2009: 1037), presents with the 'highest levels of intercontinental admixture of any global population' (Tishkoff, et al, 2009: 1043). The genetic evidence shows that twenty five percent of their ancestry can be traced to the southern Khoisan, twenty percent to India, nineteen percent to the Niger-Kordofanian ancestry, nineteen percent to Europe, eight percent to east Asia, and three percent to Cushitic ancestry (Tishkoff, et al, 2009: 1043). This diversity of genes could very well be ascribed to the many ships that docked at the Cape of Good Hope over a very long period, long before the Dutch settlement at the Cape. The Cape of Good Hope became a melting pot of the local indigenes, the Europeans, those brought in as slaves from Asia and other places in Africa. The heritage within the coloured population is quite diverse in terms of culture, language, religion, race, and ethnicity. Zimitri Erasmus (2001: 21-22) asserts that the culture of coloured people is based on a creolisation or blending of elements of different cultural identities linked to European, Khoisan, and Asian identities. This mixed heritage comes with a responsibility. That is, if they have the biggest genetic diversity in the world, they then literally represent every human being in the world. *Gam* can become a catalyst for our common humanity, and therefore, coloured people can indeed claim that 'we are the ones we have been waiting for', both for themselves, but also as a catalyst for nation building in South Africa.

Bibliography

Aaron, David H. 1995. Early rabbinic exegesis on Noah's son Ham and the so-called 'Hamitic myth'. *Journal of the American academy of religion,* 63, no 4. Pp 721-759.

Acta Synodi, Dutch Reformed Church, 1857

Adamo, David T. 2001. *Exploration in African biblical studies*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Adamo, David Tuesday. 2018. The portrayal of Africa and Africans in the book of Jeremiah. *In die skriflig*, 52(1), 1-9.

Adamo, David Tuesday. 2020. Decolonising the reading of Psalm 8 in an African (Yoruba) context. *Journal for semetics*, Volume 29, Issue 2. p1-21.

Adhikari, Mohamed. 1992. The sons of Ham: slavery and the making of coloured identity. South *African historical journal* 27, no. 1 (1992): 95–112.

Adhikari, Mohamed. 2004. `Not black enough': changing expressions of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa. *South African historical journal* 51. (2004): 167-178.

Adhikari, Mohamed. 2005. *Not white enough, not black enough: racial identity in the South African coloured community*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Adhikari, Mohamed. 2006a. Hope, fear, shame, frustration: continuity and change in the expression of coloured identity in white supremacist South Africa, 1910-1994. *Journal of southern African studies*, Volume 32, Number 3, September 2006, pp.467-487

Adhikari, Mohamed. 2006b. `God made the white man, God made the black man...': popular racial stereotyping of coloured people in apartheid South Africa. *Journal of southern African studies*, Volume 55, 2006 pp.142-164

Adhikari, Mohamed. 2013. Introduction: predicaments of marginality: cultural creativity and political adaptation in southern Africa's coloured communities, in *Burdened by race: Coloured identities in southern Africa*, edited by Mohamed Adhikari. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Adiele, Pius Onyemechi. 2017. *The popes, the Catholic Church and the transatlantic enslavement of black Africans 1418-1839.* New York: George Olms Verlag.

Ahluwalia, Pal and Zegeye, Abebe. 2003. Between black and white: rethinking coloured identity. *African identities* Volume 1 Number 2 pp. 253-280.

Anderson, Bernard W. 1988. *The living world of the Old Testament* (Fourth Edition). Essex, UK: Longman.

Aristotle. 2007. *On rhetoric: a theory of civic discourse*, trans by George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth; and Tiffen, Helen (eds). 2002. *The empire writes back: theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.

Augustine. 1995. *City of God.* Vol II of *A select library of Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian church series, 8 vols.* Edited by Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans.

Avalos, Hector. 2011. *Slavery, abolitionism, and the ethics of biblical scholarship.* Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press.

Ajayi, J.F. Ade. 2000. Colonialism: An Episode in African History, in *Tradition and Change in Africa: The Essays of J.F. Ade Ajayi*, edited by Toyin Falola. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 165–74.

Bailey, Randall C. 1991. Africans in Old Testament poetry and narratives, in *Stony the road we trod*, edited by Cain Hope Felder. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Bailey, Randall C. 1995. They're nothing but incestuous bastards: the polemical use of sex and sexuality in Hebrew canon narratives, in *Reading from this place: social location and biblical interpretation in the United States*, Volume 1, edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Barrow, John. 1801. *An account of travels into the interior of southern Africa in the years 1797 and 1798.* London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies.

Bashir, Haroon. 2019. Black excellence and the curse of Ham: debating race and slavery in the Islamic tradition. *ReOrient*, vol. 5, nr1: 92-116.

Basset, F. W. 1971. Noah's nakedness and the curse of Canaan, a case of incest? *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 21, Fasc. 2 (Apr. 1971), pp. 232-237.

Becker, H. P. 1940. Constructive typology in the social sciences, in H. E. Barnes, H. P. Becker, & F. B. Becker (eds.), *Contemporary social theory* (pp. 17–46). New York: D. Appleton-Century.

Bergsma, John Sietze, and Hahn, Scott Walker. 2005. Noah's nakedness and the curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27). *Journal of biblical literature*, Vol. 124, No. 1, pp. 25-40.

Berger, Peter L, and Luckmann, Thomas. 1997. *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociality of knowledge.* Garden City: Anchor Books.

Best, George. 1578. *A true discourse of the late voyages of discoverie for the finding of a passage to Cathaya.* London: Bynnyman.

Bickford-Smith, Vivian. 1994. Meanings of freedom: social position and identity among ex-slaves and their descendants in Cape Town, 1875–1910, in Worden, N. and Crais, C. (eds.) *Breaking the chains*, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Blaikie, William Garden. 2019. *The personal life of David Livingstone*. Frankfurt am Main: Outlook Verlag GmbH.

Blaylock, H. 1967. *Toward a theory of minority group relations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Bloom, L. 1967. The coloured people of South Africa. *Phylon.* Vol. 28, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1967), pp. 139-150. Clark Atlanta University.

Boezak, W., 2017. Die gewonde God: 'n teologies-etiese besinning, veral vanuit Khoisan-perspektief. *HTS Teologiese studies/Theological studies* 73(4).

Boff, Clodovis & Boff, Leonardo. 1984. *Salvation and liberation: in search of a balance between faith and politics*. New York: Orbis Books.

Boff, Clodovis & Boff, Leonardo. 1986. *Liberation theology: from confrontation to dialogue.* New York: Harper & Row.

Bonacich, E. 1972. A theory of ethnic antagonism: the split labor market" *American sociological review* 37(5): 547–59.

Borcherds, P. B. 1861. *An auto-biographical memoir of Petrus Borchardus Borcherds* Cape Town: A. S Robertson

Brink, André P. 1974. *Looking on darkness*. London: Fontana.

Brueggemann, Walter. 1977. *The land: place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Burns, Justine. 2006. Racial stereotypes, stigma and trust in post-apartheid South Africa. *Economic modelling*, Vol. 23 pp. 805-821.

Butchart, Alexander. 1998. *The anatomy of power. European constructions of the African body* Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Byamugisha, Gideon, Steinitz, Lucy Y., Williams, Glen, and Zondi, Phumzile. 2002. *Journeys of faith: church-based responses to HIV and AIDS in three southern African countries*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Caliguire, D. 1996. Voices from the communities, in W. James, D. Caliguire and K. Cullinan (eds) *Now that we are free: coloured communities in a democratic South Africa.* Cape Town: Creda Press.

Calvin, John. 1948. *Commentaries on the first book of Moses called Genesis, 2 Volumes.* Vol I. Translated by John King. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans.

Cape of Good Hope. 1904. *Census of the Cape of Good Hope.* G 19-1905, 10.4

Carr, David M. 2014. *Holy resilience: the Bible's traumatic origins*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Catholicae Ecclesiae, November 20, 1890. *Leonis Papae Allocutiones*, 1898, IV, 112.

Charles II. 1660. Commission to Edward Hyde, Lord Chancellor (1 December 1660), in Brodhead, ed., *Documents relative to the colonial history of the State of New-York*, III.

Chidester, David. 1996. *Savage systems: colonialism and comparative religion in Southern Africa.* Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Cleaveland, Timothy. 2015. Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti and his Islamic critique of racial slavery in the Maghrib. *The Journal of North African Studies*. Vol. 20, No. 1, 42–64,

Clement. 1979. The apostolic fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, Vol VIII of *The Anti-Nicene fathers: translations of the writings of the fathers down to AD 325.* Edited and translated by Alexander Roberts and James Coxe Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. Grand Rapids, Mich: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Cohen, H. Hirsch. 1974. *The drunkenness of Noah* (Judaic Studies 4); Alabama: University of Alabama Press.

Corbett, E.P.J. 1965. *Classical rhetoric for the modern student* New York: Oxford University Press.

Crawford, Sidnie. 2012. Genesis in the Dead Sea scrolls, in *The book of Genesis: composition, reception and interpretation*, eds. Craig Evans, Joel Lohr and David Petersen. Leiden & Boston: BRILL.

Dada, Adekunle Oyinlove. 2010. Repositioning contextual biblical hermeneutics in Africa towards holistic empowerment. *Black theology* 8.2 (2010) 160-174.

Darshan, Guy. 2013. The biblical account of the post-diluvian generation (Genesis 9:20-10:32) in the Light of Greek genealogy literature. *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 63, Fasc. 4 (2013), pp. 515-535

Davidson, Richard M. 1988. The theology of sexuality in the beginning: Genesis 1-2. *Andrews university seminary studies*, Spring 1988, Vol. 26, No. 1, 5-24.

Davies, W. D. 1991. *The territorial dimension of Judaism: with a symposium and further reflections.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Devarenne, Nicole. 2010. The language of Ham and the language of Cain: 'dialect' and linguistic hybridity in the work of Adam Small. *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* Vol 45(3): 389–408.

De Wet, Chris, L. 2018. *The unbound God: slavery and formation of early Christian thought.* New York: Routledge

Diala, Isidore. 2000. Biblical mythology in André Brink's anti-apartheid crusade. *Research in African literatures*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), pp. 80-94. Published by Indiana University Press.

Dickman, Mike. 1997. *The lava of this land: South African poetry 1960-1996*. Evanston: Triquarterly.

Dickson, Kwesi. 1991. *Uncompleted mission: Christianity and exclusivism*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.

Douglas, J.D., Hillyer, N., Bruce, F.F., Guthrie, D., Millard, A.R., Packer, J.I., and Wiseman, D.J., Editors. 1982. *New Bible dictionary,* Second Edition. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.

De Gruchy, John. 2005. *Nationalism, land and labour 1911*-1922. Cape Town, RICSA/UCT.

De Mist, J. A. 1920. *The memorandum on the Cape of Commissary J. A. de Mist (*1802; VRS edn., Cape Town).

Dube, M. W. 2000. *Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible*. Danvers, MA: Chalice.

Du Pré, R.H. 1994. *Separate but unequal: the coloured people of South Africa – a political history*. Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers.

Dutch Reformed Churches Union, Act No. 23 of 1911.

Dutch Reformed Church Synod, October 1974. *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of scripture.* Officially translation of the Report *Ras, volk en nasie en volkeverhoudinge in die lig van die skrif.* Approved and accepted by the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church. Cape Town – Pretoria: Dutch Reformed Church Publishers.

Du Toit, André. 1983. No chosen people: the myth of the Calvinist origins of Afrikaner nationalism and racial ideology. *The American historical review*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Oct. 1983), pp. 920-952.

Du Toit, Brian. 1984. Missionaries, anthropologists, and the policies of the Dutch Reformed Church. *The journal of modern African studies* 22, no. 4 (1984).

Éla, Jean-Marc. 1994. Christianity and liberation in Africa, in *Paths of African theology* ed R Gibellini. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Erasmus, Zimitri, and Pieterse, Edgar. 1999. Conceptualising coloured identities in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, in *National identity and democracy in Africa,* edited by Mai Palmberg. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council and Mayibuye Centre of the University of the Western Cape.

Erasmus, Z. 2001. Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa, in Erasmus, Z (ed.) *Coloured by history shaped by place: new perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

Erasmus, Z., ed. 2001. *Coloured by history, shaped by place: new perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

Esterhuyse, W.P. 1979. *Afskeid van apartheid.* Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Farred G. 2001. Where does the rainbow nation end? Colouredness and citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa. *The new centennial review*, Volume 1, no. 1.

February, V., 1981, *Mind your colour: the 'coloured' stereotype in South African literature,* London: Kegan Paul.

Felder, Cain H. 1989. *Troubling biblical waters: race, class and family*. New York: Orbis.

Felder, Cain Hope. 1991. Race, racism and the biblical narratives, in *Stony the road we trod*, edited by Cain Hope Felder. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Foner, Philip S., ed. 1995. *The black panthers speak*. Boston: Da Capo Press

Frankel, D. 2017. *Noah, Ham and the curse of Canaan: who did what to whom in the tent?* TheTorah.com. 2017. https://thetorah.com/article/noah-ham-and-the-curse-of-canaan-who-did-what-to-whom-in-the-tent

Frankel, David. 2021. Noah's drunkenness and the curse of Canaan: a new approach. *Journal of biblical literature*, no. 1 (2021), p 49-68.

Frechette, Christopher G. and Boase, Elizabeth. 2016. Defining 'trauma' as a useful lens for biblical interpretation, in *Bible through the lens of trauma*, eds Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette, vol. 86, Semeia Studies. Atlanta: SBL Press.

Fredrickson, G. M. 1981. *White supremacy: a comparative study in American and South African history*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fryer, Peter. 1984. *Staying power: the history of black people in Britain*. London: Pluto Press.

Garber, David G. Jr. 2015. Trauma theory and biblical studies. *Currents in biblical research.* Vol. 14(1) 24–44.

Gevirtz, Stanley. 1969. A father's curse. *Mosaic: an interdisciplinary critical journal* 2 (1969); 59-61.

Giliomee, H. 2003. *The Afrikaners: biography of a people*. Cape Town: Tafelberg

Giliomee, Herman. 2012. Geoffrey Cronjé, in *Dictionary of African biography*, ed. Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong and Henry Louis Gates Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Girard, René. 1977. *Violence and the sacred.* Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Girard, René. 1996. *The Girard reader*. Edited by James G. Williams. New York: Crossroad.

Godwyn, Morgan. 1680. *The negro's and Indians advocate, suing for their admission into the church. or, a persuasive to the instructing and baptizing the negro's and Indians in our plantations.* London: Morgan Godwyn.

Goldenberg, David M. 1997. The curse of Ham: a case of rabbinic racism? in *Struggles in the promised land*, edited by Jack Salzman and Cornel West, 21-51. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goldenberg, David M. 2003. *The curse of Ham: race and slavery in early Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Goldin, Ian. 2014. The reconstitution of coloured identity in the Western Cape, in *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa*, Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, eds. New York: Routledge.

Gottwald, Norman K. 1979. *The tribes of Yahweh: a sociology of the religion of liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Graves, Robert, and Patai, Raphael. 1964. *Hebrew myths: the book of Genesis.* Garden City: Doubleday.

Groenewald, Gerald. 2010. Slavery and the church in Stellenbosch District during the eighteenth century. *South African journal of cultural history* 24, no. 2 (January 2010): 25–36.

Habekost, Christian. 1993. Vrebal riddim: the politics and aesthetics of African-Caribbean dub poetry. *Cross / Cultures* vol. 10. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Hachalinga, Passmore. 2017. How curses impact people and biblical responses. *Journal of Adventist mission studies*, Vol. 13 [2017], No. 1, Art. 7. P 55-63.

Hakimifar, Khalil. 2021. 'Blessing' and 'curse' in the torah and their relationships with the 'covenant'. *Ilāhīyāt-i taṭbīqī*, 2021, Vol.12 (26), p.13-28

Hamilton, Victor. 1990. *The book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*. Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

Hanekom, T. N. 1953.*Kerk en volk: die verhouding tussen Afrikaanse lewenskringe.* Cape Town: NG Kerk-Boekhandel.

Hassim, Shireen. 2006. *Women's organisations and democracy in South Africa: contesting authority*. Scottsville, KwaZulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Haynes, Stephen R. 2002. *Noah's curse: the biblical justification of American slavery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hays, Daniel J. 1996. The Cushites: a black nation in ancient history. *Bibliotheca sacra* 153/611 (1996) 270-280.

Hechter, M. 1975. *Internal colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536–1966.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Heller, Monica and McElhinny, Bonnie. 2017. *Language, capitalism, colonialism: toward a critical history.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hendricks, Cheryl. 2004. The burdens of the past & challenges of the present: coloured identity & the 'rainbow nation', in *Ethnicity and democracy in Africa*, edited by Bruce Berman, Dickson Eyoh and Will Kymlicka. Oxford: James Currey Ltd.

Hennelly, Alfred (S.J.). 1989. *Theology for a liberating church: the new praxis of freedom.* Washington D.C.; Georgetown University Press.

Herbert, Thomas. 1634. *A relation of some yeares travaile, begunne anno 1626 into Afrique, and the greater Asia, especially the territories of the Persian monarchie and some points of the oriental Indies, and isles adjacent. of their religion, language, habit, discent, ceremonies, and other matters concerning them.* London: William Stansby and Jacob Bloom.

Herbert, Thomas. 1677. *Some yeares travels into Africa and Asia the Great. Describing the famous of Persia and Industani, as also divers other kingdoms in the orientall Indies and isle adjacent*. 3rd ed. London: R. Everingham for R. Scot, T. Basset, J. Wright, and R. Chiswell.

Herman, Judith L. 1997. *Trauma and recovery: the aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York: Basic Books.

Holtzman, Glen. 2018. Cuckoo coloureds: cacophonic auralities and hidden visibilities of so-called coloured identities in South Africa. *South African journal of philosophy*, 37(4): 527–537.

Honderich, Ted. 1995. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Hospers, John, 1997. *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, Fourth Edition. New York: Routledge.

Idowu, E. Bolaji. 1973. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Jacobs, S. and Z. Levenson. 2018. The limits of coloured nationalism. *Mail & Guardian*. https://mg.co.za/article/2018-06-13-00-the-limits-of-coloured-nationalism

Jansen, Jonathan. 2009. *Knowledge in the blood: confronting race and the apartheid past*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Janssens, G. H. 2014. *The Dutch revolt and Catholic exile in reformation Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jennings, Francis. 1976. *The Invasion of America: Indians, colonialism, and the cant of conquest*. New York: W.H. Norton and Company.

Johnson, Elizabeth A, C.S.J. 1984. The incomprehensibility of God and the image of God male and female. *Theological studies* (Baltimore), 1984, Vol.45 (3), p.441-465

Johnson, Sylvester A. 2004. *The myth of Ham in nineteenth-century American Christianity race, heathens, and the people of God*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, T. No date given. *The Hamitic curse*. Unpublished paper.

Joustra, R. 2018. Abraham Kuyper among the Nations. *Politics and Religion*, 11(1), 146-168.

Justin Martyr. 1997. *Dialogue with Trypho* 139.1. Original Text in *Iustini Martyris: Dialogus cum Tryphone,* edited by Miroslav Marcovich. Translation by A. C. Coxe, ANF 1:269.

Kaplan, M. Lindsay. 2002. *The merchant of Venice: texts and contexts.* New York: Bedford/St Martin's.

Kato, B. 1975. *Theological pitfalls in Africa*. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House.

Knust, Jennifer. 2014. Who's afraid of Canaan's curse? Genesis 9:18-29 and the challenge of reparative reading. *Biblical interpretation* 22, no. 4-5, 2014, 388-413.

Koloniaal Archief 4035. n.d. Adam Tas, et al. – XVII, The Hague.

Koopman, Nico. 2016. *Ons kom van vêr: bydraes oor bruin Afrikaanssprekendes se rol in die ontwikkeling van Afrikaans*, edited by Carstens, W. A. M. and Le Cordeur, Michael. Kaapstad: Naledi.

Kuyper, A. 1884. *Plancius-rede.* Amsterdam: J. H. Kruyt.

Larbi, E. Kingsley. 2001. The nature of continuity and discontinuity of the Ghanaian Pentecostal concept of salvation in African cosmology. *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-charismatic research 10*.

Latrobe, C I. 1818. *Journal of a visit to South Africa, in 1815, and 1816, with some account of the missionary settlements of the United Brethren, near the Cape of Good Hope*. London: L.B. Seely and R. Ackermann.

Levin, Christopher. 2007. The Yahwistic: the earliest editor in the Pentateuch. *Journal of biblical literature*, 126, No 2. p 209-230.

Lewis, Gavin. 1987. *Between the wire and the wall: a history of South African 'coloured' politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Livingston, Michael. 2002. Modern medieval map myths: the flat world, ancient sea-kings and dragons. http://strangehorizons.com/non-fiction/articles/modern-medieval-map-myths-the-flat-world-ancient-sea-kings-and-dragons/

Livingstone, David. 1858. *Missionary Travels and researches in South Africa*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.

Livingstone, David. 1960. *Livingstone's private journals, 1851-3,* ed. I. Schapera. Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Livingstone, David. 1974. The Transvaal Boers and slavery, in I. Schapera, ed., David Livingstone*: South African papers 1849-1853.* VRS edn. Cape Town.

Loubser, Jan. 1968. Calvinism, equality, and inclusion: the case of Afrikaner Calvinism, in *The protestant ethic and modernization: a comparative view*, edited by S.N. Eisenstadt, 367-383. New York: Basic Books.

Loubser, J. A. 1987. *The Apartheid Bible: a critical review of racial theology in South Africa.* Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Luther, Martin. 1955. Lectures on Genesis', Vol II of *Luther's works, 55 Volumes.* Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. St Louis: Concordia.

Mabokela, Reitumetse Obakeng. 1997. The evolution of admissions and retention policies at an historically white South African university. *The journal of negro education.* Autumn, 1997, Vol. 66, No. 4, Education in a New South Africa: the crises of conflict, the challenges of change (Autumn, 1997), pp. 423-433

Maccoby, H. 1999. *Ritual and morality: the ritual purity system and its place in Judaism*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

MacCrone, I. D. 1937. *Race attitudes in South Africa: historical, experimental and psychological studies.* London, Oxford University Press.

Mackinnon, James. 1887. *South African traits*. Edinburgh: Gremmell.

Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam. 2000. Black and African theology after apartheid and the cold war — an emerging paradigm. *Exchange* (Leiden, Netherlands) Vol 29/3.

Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam, and Nadar, Sarojini. 2002. Breaking the covenant of violence against women. *Journal of theology for southern Africa.* 114 (November 2002), 5-17.

Mancall, Peter. 2007. *Hakluyt's promise: An Elizabethan's obsession for an English America.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale.

Marais, J. S. 1957. *The Cape coloured people: 1652-1937.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Martìnex F. Garcìa and Tigchelaar, E. 1997. *The dead sea scrolls study edition, I.* Leiden.

Mathee, Mohamed Shahid. 2016. Curse motives in the 'Curse of Ham' narrative: land for Yahweh's landless people? *Journal for Semitics*, 25,2 (2016) 726-747.

Matthews, J., and G. Thomas. 1972. *Cry rage!* Johannesburg: Spro-cas Publications.

Matthews, J., ed. 1974. *Black voices shout! an anthology of poetry*. Cape Town: BLAC.

Maxwell, John F. 1975. *Slavery and the Catholic Church.* London: Barry Rose Publishers.

Mazrui, Ali A. 1990. *Cultural forces in world politics.* London: James Currey.

Mbiafu, Edmond Mfaboum. 2002. Mongo Beti and the 'curse' of Ham: myth and history in Africa. *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 33, No. 2, Summer 2002.

Mbiti, J. S. 1971. *New Testament eschatology in an African background: a study of the encounter between New Testament theology and African traditional concepts*. London: London University Press.

Mbiti, J. S., 1986. *Bible and theology in African Christianity.* Nairobi, Kenya: Oxford University Press.

Mbuvi, Andrew M. 2017. African biblical studies: an introduction to an emerging discipline. *Currents in biblical research,* Vol. 15(2) 149–178.

M'Carter, John. 1869. *The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.* London: Inglis

McKenzie, S. L. 1993. Ham/Canaan, Cursing of, in *The Oxford companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan. New York: Oxford University Press.

McKnight, Scot. 2017. *The Letter to Philemon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.

Meiring, Jacob J.S. 2016. Shem, Ham, Japheth and Zuma - Genesis 9:25–27 and masculinities in South Africa. *Stellenbosch theological journal*, 2, no. 1 (2016): 223-40.

Mellet, Tariq Patric. 2020. *The lie of 1652: A decolonised history of land*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Mellet, Patric Tariq. 2022. *Cleaner's Boy: A Resistance Road to a Liberated Life*. Cape Town: Tafelberg,

Mesters, Carlos. 1981. The use of the Bible in Christian communities of the common people, in Sergio Torres and John Eagleson (editors), *The challenge of basic Christian communities*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Min, P. G. 2008. *Ethnic solidarity for economic survival: Korean greengrocers in New York City*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Moffat, Robert. 1842. *Missionary labours and scenes in southern Africa*. London: John Snow.

Mofokeng, Takatso. 1988. Black Christians, the Bible and liberation. *Journal of black theology* 2 (1988): 34–42.

Moodie, T. Dunbar. 1975. *The rise of Afrikanerdom: power, apartheid and the Afrikaner civil religion.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mosala, Itumeleng J. 1989. *Biblical hermeneutics and black theology in South Africa*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Msimang, Sisonke. 2002. Introduction: African feminisms II: reflections on politics made personal. *Agenda empowering women for gender equity*, No. 54. pp.3-15.

Mudimbe, V. Y. 1994. *The idea of Africa.* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Nagel, J., 1994. Constructing ethnicity: creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social problems*, 41(1), pp.152-176.

Nasimiyu-Wasike, Anne. 1991. Christology and an African woman's experience, in *Faces of Jesus in Africa,* ed. Robert Schreiter. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Neusner, Jacob. 1973. *The idea of purity in ancient Judaism*. Leiden: Brill.

Newton, Thomas. 1817. *Dissertations on the prophecies which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling the world.* Vol I. London: R & R Gilbert.

Ngong, David T., 2014. Reading the Bible in Africa: a critique of enchanted Bible reading. *Exchange* (Leiden, Netherlands) Vol 43 (2); 174-191.

Niditch, Susan. 1985. *Chaos to cosmos: studies in biblical patterns of creation*. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985.

Niditch, Susan. 1993. *War in the Hebrew Bible: a study of the ethics of violence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Niederberger, O. 1959. *Kirche – mission – rasse: die missionsauffassung der Niederländisch-reforierten kirchen von Südafrika*. Switzerland: Schöneck-Beckenried.

Oded, B. 1986. The table of nations (Genesis 10): a socio-cultural approach. *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 98 (1986), p14-31.

Ogalo, G., 2023a. Emotions and ideology in the Noah-Ham conflict (Genesis 9: 24–27): a narrative clue for Noah's characterization. *Shahidi hub international journal of theology & religious studies*, 3(1), pp.1-16.

Ogalo, G., 2023b. Rethinking Ham's offense: a balance of responsibility in Noah's curse narrative (Gen 9: 18–27). *Shahidi hub international journal of theology & religious studies*, 3(1), pp.37-52.

Oliver, E. & Oliver, W.H., 2017. The colonisation of South Africa: a unique case. *HTS Teologiese studies / Theological studies* 73(3).

Oliver, Willem. 2016. Mark the Evangelist: His African memory. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72(4).

Olupona, Jacob K. 2001. Sacred cosmos: an ethnography of African indigenous religious traditions, in: Vincent L. Wimbush (ed.), *African Americans and the Bible: sacred texts and social textures*, New York: Continuum.

Olyan, S. 2000. *Rites and rank: hierarchy in biblical representations of cult*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ouzgane, Lahoucine. 2002. Guest editorial: An introduction. *The journal of men's studies,* 10, no. 3.

Park, Crystal L. 2010. Making sense of the meaning literature: an integrative review of meaning making and its effects on adjustment to stressful life events. *Psychological bulletin*, Vol 136(2), March 2010. pp. 257-301.

Petersen, S. V. 1944. *Die enkeling.* Port Elizabeth / Cape Town: Unie-Volkspers.

Petersen, S.V., 1979. *Alleenstryd: 'n kern uit sy verse*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg Uitgewers.

Philip, John. 1828. *Researches in South Africa*, 2 vols. London: James Duncan, Paternoster-Row.

Philo. *Philo / with an English translation by P.H. Golson & G.H. Whittaker.* Vol. III. London: Heinemann, 1929-53.

Petrus, Theodore and Isaacs-Martin, Wendy. 2012. The multiple meanings of coloured identity in South Africa. *Africa insight*, Vol 42 (1)-June 2012.

Pitkänen, Pekka. 2017. Settler colonialism in ancient Israel, in *The Routledge handbook of the history of settler colonialism,* edited by Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini. London and New York: Routledge.

Pletcher, Kenneth (ed). 2010. *The Britannica guide to explorers and explorations that changed the modern world.* New York: Britannica Educational Publishing.

Pobee, John S. 1979. *Toward an African theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Postel, Guillaume. 1636. *De cosmographica disciplina et signorum cœlestium vera configuration.* Libri II, Volume 1. Leiden: Maire.

Prior, Michael. 1997. *The Bible and colonialism: a moral critique*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Radke, Heather. 2022. *Butts: A Backstory*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Reddy, T. 2001. The politics of naming: the construction of coloured subjects in South Africa, in Zimitri Erasmus (ed.), *Coloured by history, shaped by place: new perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town*, Cape Town: Kwela Books and SAHO.

Rendsburg, Gary A. 1997. Ancient Hebrew phenology, in *Phonolgies of Asia and Africa,* Alan S Kaye (ed). Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Pp 65-83.

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No 108 of 1996.*

Rice, Gene. 1972. The curse that never was (Genesis 9:18-27). *Journal of religious thought*, 29 (1972), 5-27.

Robertson, O. P. 1998. Current critical questions concerning the 'curse of ham' (Gen 9:20-27). *Journal of the evangelical theological society* 41, no. 2 (June 1998): 177-188

Ross, Allen P. 1980. The curse of Canaan. *Bibliotheca sacra* 137 (1980) 223-40.

Rowell, Edward Z. 1932. Prolegomena to Argumentation. *Quarterly journal of speech*, XVIII

Ruiters, Michele. 2013. Collaboration, assimilation and contestation: emerging constructions of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa, in *Burdened by race: coloured identities in southern Africa,* edited by Mohamed Adhikari. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Salemink, Theo and Van Dijk, Bert. 1989. *Apartheid en kerkelijk verzet: in de schaduw van nazi-Duitsland* (Amersfoort/Leuven: De Horstink).

Sanders, Edith R. 1969. The Hamitic hypothesis: its origin and functions in time perspective. *The journal of African history,* Vol. 10, No. 4 (1969), pp. 521-532.

Scholtz, G.D. 1958. Die ontstaan van die Suid-Afrikaanse rasse-patroon. *Tydskrif vir rasse-aangeleenthede*, 9, 143, Stellenbosch: South African Bureau of Racial Affairs.

Schwartz, Regina M. 1997. *The curse of Cain: the violent legacy of monotheism.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Scully, Pamela. 1995. Rape, race, and colonial culture: the sexual politics of identity in the nineteenth century Cape Colony, South Africa. *The American historical review*, Vol. 100, No. 2 (Apr. 1995), pp 335-359. Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association.

Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean. 1999. *Black Venus: sexualized savages, primal fears, and primitive narratives in French*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Shell R C H. 1992. Religion, civic status and slavery from Dordt to the Trek. *Kronos*, No. 19 (November 1992), pp 28-63. University of the Western Cape.

Shell R C H. 1994. *Children of bondage: a social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1838*. Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 40–65.

Shutte, Augustine. 2001. *Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Skinner, John. 1910. *A critical and exegetical commentary on Genesis.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Small, Adam. 1961. *Kitaar my kruis*, Pretoria: HAUM.

Small, A., 1961, *Die eerste steen?* Kaapstad/Pretoria: HAUM.

Small, A., 2011, *Kô lat ons sing: 'n keur uit Adam Small se gedigte*, saamst. S. van Wyk, Kaapstad: Kwela Boeke.

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). 1893. *Classified digest of the records of the society for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts, 1701-1892*. London: SPG.

Sollors, Werner. 1997. *Neither black, nor white, yet both: thematic explorations of interracial literature.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Spoelstra, C. 1906. *Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederduitsch-Gereformeerde Kerken in Zuid-Afrika, Deel 1: brieven van die Kaapsche Kerken aan die Classis Amsterdam, 1655-1804.* Amsterdam: Hollandsch Afrikaansche Uitgevers-Maatchappij,

Spoelstra, C. 1907. *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederduitsch-Gereformeerde Kerken in Zuid-Afrika. Deel II. brieven van de Classis Amsterdam aan de Kaapsche Kerken enz (1651-1804).* (Amsterdam: Hollandsch-Afrikaansche Uitgevers-Maatschappij).

Steinmetz, Devora. 1994. Vineyard, farm, and garden: the drunkenness of Noah in the context of primeval history. *Journal of biblical literature*. Vol. 113, No. 2, pp 193-207

Stevenson, John. 2015. A contextual consideration of Genesis 9:27. *South Florida Bible college & theological seminary journal.* (2015), Volume III. 1-12.

Stringfellow, Thornton. 1861. *Slavery: it's origins, nature, and history considered in the light of the Bible teachings, moral justice, and political wisdom.* New York: John F. Trow.

Stokes, Randall G. 1975. Afrikaner Calvinism and economic action: the Weberian thesis in South Africa. *The American journal of sociology* 81, no. 1: 62-81.

Stone, G. 1972. Identity among lower class coloured people, in *Coloured citizenship in South Africa*, edited by Michael G. Whisson and Hendrik W. van der Merwe. Cape Town: The Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies.

Stoop, Jan. 1984. Die vervloeking van Gam in Afrika, in *In new faces of Africa: essays in honour of Ben (Barend Jacobus) Marais*, eds. J Hofmeyr and W Vorster. Pretoria: UNISA.

Statistics South Africa. 2012. *Census 2011 municipal report: Western Cape.* ISBN 978-0-621-41459-2.

Statistics South Africa. 2022. *Mid-year population estimates 2022 (P0302).* Pretoria: Statssa.

Stevens, G. M. 1998. 'Racialised' discourses: understanding perceptions of threat in post-apartheid South Africa. *South African journal of psychology*, 28 (4) pp. 204-14.

Sugirtharajah, R. S. 2004. *The Bible and the third world: precolonial, colonial and postcolonial encounters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sweet, James H. 1997. The Iberian roots of American racist thought. *The William and Mary Quarterly*. 54 (1), 143–66.

Táíwò, Olúfẹ́mi. 2022. *Against decolonisation: Taking African agency seriously*. London: Hurst & Company.

Tamale, Sylvia, ed. 2011. *African sexualities: a reader*. Oxford: Pambazuka Press.

Tas, Adam. 1705-1706. *The diary of Adam Tas*, edited by L.Fouché (1914). https://archive.org/details/diaryofadamtas00tasa

Taylor, S. E. 1983. Adjustment to threatening events: a theory of cognitive adaptation. *American psychologist*, 38, 1161–1171.

Theodor, J., and Albeck, Chanoch. 1965. *Midrash Genesis Rabba (Hebrew). 3 Vol's.* Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books.

Thompson, Leonard. 1985. *The political mythology of apartheid*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Tishkoff, Sarah, et al. 2009. The genetic structure and history of Africans and African Americans. *Science* 324,1035-1044(2009). DOI:10.1126/science.1172257.

Tiryakian, E.A. 1957. Apartheid and religion, *Theology today 14* (3); 385-400.

Trotter, Henry. 2013. Trauma and memory: the impact of apartheid-era forced removals on coloured identity in Cape Town, in *Burdened by race: coloured identities in southern Africa,* edited by Mohamed Adhikari. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Truth and reconciliation commission (TRC), Volume 7, Part 4, as was presented to President Nelson Mandela on 29 October 1998.

Ukpong, Justin S. 1995. Rereading the Bible with African eyes: inculturation and hermeneutics. *Journal of theology for southern Africa*, 91, June 1995. (3-14).

Ukpong, Justin S. 2000. Developments in biblical interpretation in Africa. *Journal of theology for southern Africa* 108 (November 2000) 3-18.

Union of South Africa. 1937. *Report of the commission of inquiry regarding cape coloured population of the Union*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Union of South Africa. 1949. *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949*. JSTOR, jstor.org/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.leg19490708.028.020.055. Accessed 7 June 2021.

Union of South Africa. 1950. *Population Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950.* JSTOR, jstor.org/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.leg19500707.028.020.030. Accessed 7 June 2021.

Unseth, Peter. 1999. Hebrew Kush: Sudan, Ethiopia, or where? *Africa journal of evangelical theology* 18/2.

Van der Linde, Jan. 1993. *Over Noach met zijn zonen: de Cham-ideologie en de leugens tegen Cham tot vandaag*. Utrecht, Leiden: Interuniversitair Instituut voor Missiologie en Oecunemica.

Van der Ross, R. E. 1979. *Myths and attitudes*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers Ltd.

Van der Ross, R. E. 2015. *In our own skins: a political history of the Coloured People.* Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.

Van Jaarsveld, F.A. 1964. *The Afrikaner's interpretation of South African history*. Cape Town: Simondium Publishers.

Van Jaarsveld, F. A. 1976. *Van van Riebeeck tot Vorster* 1652-1974. Johannesburg: Perskor.

Van Wyk, T., 2018. An unfinished reformation: the persistence of gender-exclusive language in theology and the maintenance of a patriarchal church culture. *Verbum et ecclesia* 39(1), a1890. https://doi.org/ 10.4102/ve.v39i1.1890.

Vermeersch, Peter. 2011. *Theories of ethnic mobilisation: overview and recent trends*. Leuven, Belgium: Centre for research on peace and development, University of Leuven.

Villet, B. and Villet, G, 1982. *Blood river: the passionate saga of South Africa's Afrikaners and of life in their embattled land.* New York: Everest House.

Walker, Alice. 1983. *In search of our mother's gardens*. London: Women's Press.

Walker, Eric A. 1934. *The great trek*. London: Black.

Wallis Budge, E. A. 1950. *Caves of treasures: translated from the Syriac text of the British Museum MS. ADD 25875.* London: The Religious Tract Society.

Walvin, James. 2008. Slavery, the Slave Trade and the Churches. *Quaker Studies*: Vol. 12: Iss. 2, Article 3.

Watts, James W. 2020. Biblical rhetoric of separatism and universalism and its intolerant consequences. *Religions 11*, no. 4: 176.

Wesley, John. 1774. *Thoughts upon slavery*. London: R. Hawes.

West, Cornel. 1982. *Prophecy deliverance! An Afro-American revolutionary Christianity.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

West, Gerald O. 2004. The historicity of myth and the myth of historicity: locating the ordinary African 'reader' of the Bible in the debate. *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2004), pp. 127-144.

West, Gerald O. 2016a. Accountable African biblical scholarship: post-colonial and tri-polar. *Canon and Culture* 10(2).

West, Gerald O. 2016b. *The stolen Bible*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

West, Gerald O. ed., 2007. *Reading other-wise: socially engaged biblical scholars reading with their local communities* (No. 62). Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Westermann, Clause. 1984. *Genesis 1-11: a commentary*. Translated by John J. Scullion S.J., Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

Westermann, Claus. 1987. *Genesis: a practical commentary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Whisson, M.G., 1971. *The coloured people*. Rondebosch: The Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies.

Whitelam, Keith W. 1996. *The invention of ancient Israel: the silencing of Palestinian history*. London: Routledge.

Whitford, David M. 2009. *The curse of Ham in the early modern era: the Bible and the justifications for slavery*. Burlington, NJ: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Willet, Andrew. 1608. *Hexapla in Genesin, that is, a sixfold commentary upon Genesis.* London: Thomas Creede.

Wittenberg, G 1991. 'Let Canaan be his slave' (Gen 9:26). Is Ham also cursed? *Journal of theology for southern Africa* 74:46–56.

Wright, Jacob L. 2023 *Why the Bible began: An Alternative History of Scripture and Its Origins*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yamauchi, Edwin M. 2004. *Africa and the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Žižek, S., 2009. *First as tragedy, then as farce.* London: Verso.