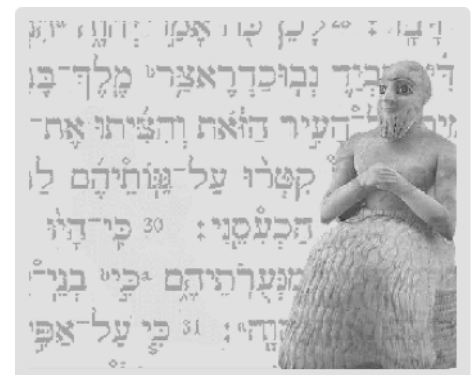# From Dialogic Tension to Social Address: Reconsidering Mandolfo's Proposed Didactic Voice in Lament Psalms

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From Dialogic Tension to Social Address: Reconsidering Mandolfo's Proposed Didactic Voice in Lament Psalms*

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In *God in the Dock*, Carleen Mandolfo seeks to explain why many individual lament psalms move from first person speech directed to God to third person speech about the divine, proposing that in multiple instances grammatical and content clues signal "interjections" of a secondary voice that interrupt the speech of the initial supplicant. As she writes: "In a number of laments, a third person, didactic voice, is inserted into what otherwise constitutes a prayer."[1] As a result, she argues that this material should be understood as addressed *to* the supplicant, rather than reflecting speech *by* him/her. Since such interjecting voices reflect "a very different tone" and even "different consciousnesses" than that of the initial supplicant,[2] she suggests that "the best way to 'turn toward' the socio-theological world of ancient Israel is by reading with ears tuned to hear more than one voice, and hence more than one worldview."[3] Mandolfo then engages in "dialogic reading" that seeks to identify this secondary voice and uncover underlying tension through the detailed exposition of multiple psalms.

In her book Mandolfo helpfully draws attention to the social audience of lament, and her recognition that these "prayers" seek to affect *both* social and divine audiences proves significant and

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[1] C. Mandolfo, *God in the Dock: Dialogic Tension in the Psalms of Lament* (JSOTSup, 357; London/New York: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 1.

[2] Ibid., 2.

[3] Ibid., 4.

often undervalued.[4] She also clearly situates her study methodologically, clarifying that she is not primarily interested in reconstructing the original *Sitz im Leben* of the material but rather in "delineating separate rhetorical *roles* within each psalm."[5] As a result, while many scholars have proposed diachronic explanations for the grammatical features she discusses, Mandolfo concentrates on the rhetorical function of the texts as they stand.[6] Thus, while aware of the Psalter's long composition and redaction history, this article focuses on Mandolfo's rhetorical reading of specific psalms and so largely brackets out diachronic discussion.[7]

Although there is much to commend Mandolfo's work, there are also persistent difficulties with her approach. While she claims "that the phenomenon being investigated is, at the very least, identifiable on a textual level,"[8] both the grammatical and content-based criteria for identifying a secondary didactic voice within these psalms prove tenuous. Ultimately, Mandolfo's proposal for a dialogical reading of these psalms does not prove convincing; passages where she proposes "voicing shifts" with multiple speakers are consistently better understood as reflecting shifts in address where the supplicant moves back and forth between divine and human audiences. Nonetheless, Mandolfo's sustained attention to "horizontal" social speech and her systematic attempt to explore its rhetorical function has pointed towards new interpretive possibilities.

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[4] Ibid., 6. On the difficulty of equating lament with prayer, see: W.D. Suderman, "Are Individual Complaint Psalms Really Prayers? Recognizing Social Address as Characteristic of Individual Complaints," in R. Heskett and B. Irwin (eds.), *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God Through Historically Dissimilar Traditions* (LHBOTS; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 153–60.

[5] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 29; original emphasis.

[6] Following her discussion of specific examples, Mandolfo employs Mikhail Bakhtin's work to link her rhetorical observations to a historical framework, explaining that: "Bakhtin provides textual scholars with a method of research that gleans the best from those approaches dedicated to probing either synchronic or diachronic inquiries exclusively." Ibid., 156.

[7] For an excellent resource that explores the historical development of particular psalms, see: F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005–11).

[8] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 28.

Reconsidering the Logic of "Dialogic Psalms": Psalms 4 and 7

Limiting herself to "psalms that primarily occur in the form of a prayer (human-to-deity discourse),"[9] Mandolfo seeks to distinguish between the main speaker and the "didactic voice" that interrupts this first level of speech. She proposes three criteria for identifying this secondary voice: first, the psalm shifts grammatically from direct speech to the divine to third person speech about Yhwh addressed to a human audience; second, this section of the psalm lacks first common singular (hereafter 1c.s.) referents pointing back to the initial supplicant;[10] and third, the content of this speech is "instructional" or "didactic" in nature.[11] Since Mandolfo initiates her study with Pss 4 and 7 as emblematic, I will explore the logic of her approach here in more detail.

Ps 4

Mandolfo identifies Ps 4 as a particularly strong example of a "dialogic psalm," placing it on the very first page of her book. Since it illustrates her argument for the presence of a secondary voice, Mandolfo's translation is worth citing in full:

> v. 2   When I call, answer me, God of my justice;
>
> when besieged, widen the ramparts for me.
>
> Pity me and hear my prayer.
>
> v. 3   People, how long will my glory be turned to shame?
>
> You love vanity, you seek falsehood. sela.
>
> *v. 4   Know that YHWH sets apart the devout for himself.*
>
> YHWH hears when I call to him.
>
> *v. 5   Tremble and sin not;*
>
> *speak in your heart (contemplate), upon your bed, and be silent, sela.*
>
> *v. 6   Offer offerings for Justice (for a just outcome), and trust YHWH.*
>
> v. 7   Many say, "Who will show us good?"
>
> Lift upon us the light of your presence, YHWH.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] To be more concise, some recurrent grammatical terminology related to person, gender and number will be abbreviated. Thus, first common singular will appear as 1c.s., third masculine plural as 3m.p., etc.

[11] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 29–30.

> v. 8   You have put joy in my heart;
>
> their grain and wine have increased.
>
> v. 9   In peace, I will both lie down and sleep;
>
> for you, YHWH, alone, cause me to dwell in security.[12]

Mandolfo notes that Ps 4 begins and ends with direct address to Yhwh (vv. 2, 7–9), and points out the pronounced shift to a human audience in v. 3.[13] She then italicizes both vv. 4a and 5–6 to identify these verses as a distinct "didactic voice" that responds to and instructs the supplicant, while speaking of Yhwh in third person. As Mandolfo explains:

> What is clear is that in what is essentially a prayer (human-to-God discourse), human-to-human discourse is interjected. . . Verse 2 makes it clear that the petitioner is asking God to vindicate her. In such a context, it seems somewhat unlikely that the petitioner would then take it upon herself to chastise directly the opponents. It is common throughout the psalms to hear the supplicant complain about enemies, but **it is rare to hear them directly addressed**. Instead of spoken *by* the petitioner, these verses might be addressed *to* the petitioner (and audience) in response to the request made in v. 2.[14]

In Mandolfo's view, the grammatical elements here are accompanied by "a confident, knowledgeable manner" that reflects a different voice.[15] The end of the psalm turns back to address God directly (vv. 7–9), employing various 1c.s. elements that signal a return to the petitioner's voice. In sum, Ps 4 progresses from an initial "petition," through "instruction" from a second voice to the congregation (including the petitioner), and finally to "resolution."[16]

What was initially described as a tentative proposal has now become more certain: "The fact is that this rhetorically complex psalm makes better sense if different discourses are heard in conversation."[17] However, Mandolfo's hypothetical reconstruction proves unnecessary, since the psalm is more consistent heard as a single speaker addressing multiple audiences than spoken by multiple voices.

Attending to shifts in address, Ps 4 proves relatively straightforward in both grammar and content. It begins with a standard invocation calling on God to "answer," "be gracious," and "listen"

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[12] Ibid., 30–31.
[13] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 31.
[14] Ibid., 32. Italics in original; bold added for emphasis.
[15] Ibid., 32–33.
[16] Ibid., 31.
[17] Ibid., 33.

(v. 2). Rather than an anomaly to be resolved, the string of m.pl. imperatives Mandolfo reads as markers of a separate voice (v. 4a, 5–6) coheres with the explicit address to the בני איש in v. 3.[18] While she admits that her division of v. 4 into two voices is "somewhat awkward," Mandolfo points to "the fact that vv. 4a and 5–6 share verbal forms and a similar exhortative tone" as evidence for a second voice.[19] However, she does not note that the strongest social exhortation of the psalm appears together with explicitly 1c.s. elements in v. 3, which proves striking given her assertion that social speech to the enemy is unusual (cf. Ps 6:9). While v. 7 quotes the "many," the end of the psalm then turns away from its social audience to return to address the divine directly (vv. 8–9). In other words, 1c.s. elements underscore the move away from the quotation of the "many" in the previous verse, not from a separate voice.[20]

Thus, Ps 4 moves with minimal difficulty from direct address to God, through extended social address, and finally to addressing Yhwh directly once again. Since the entire section from vv. 3–6 both speaks of Yhwh in third person *and* addresses a m.pl. social audience explicitly identified as the "sons of man," a reconstructed "didactic voice" and complicated rhetorical process proves unnecessary. The most that can be said on grammatical grounds is that the *audience* shifts in Ps 4; any perceived "shift in voice" results from the methodological assumptions Mandolfo employs rather than the wording itself.

Pointing to content as grounds for a second voice in Ps 4 also proves wanting. Although Mandolfo suggests a tension between the initial address to God requesting divine support and the middle verses implying that the psalmist is responsible for his own distress, such a discrepancy arises from the hypothesis of a second voice and her assertion that the same person does not normally address both divine and social audiences.[21] However, this tension disappears if these verses reflect the supplicant's speech to a social audience.[22]

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[18] As Erhard S. Gerstenberger notes, "the supplicant seems to confront the enemies face to face." E.S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1: With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (FOTL, 14; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 55.

[19] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 32.

[20] Where Mandolfo sees only the first line of v. 7 as the words of the "many," I concur with Hans-Joachim Kraus and Gerstenberger that the entire verse represents such attributed speech. See H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1– 59* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 144; Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 56.

[21] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 33–34.

[22] Mandolfo's claim that the petitioner needs to "search her own soul" assumes rather than demonstrates a second voice. Otherwise this aspect simply continues the social challenge begun in v.3. Ibid., 34.

With regards to content, Mandolfo's argument for a secondary didactic voice here emerges from her assertion that "it is rare to hear [enemies] directly addressed."[23] While this claim about the scarcity of social address provides the impetus for attributing such material in Ps 4 and elsewhere to someone else, the purported tensions Mandolfo identifies dissipate if one remains with the more clear grammatical division of the psalm based on shifting address.

If Ps 4 represents the paradigmatic example of a dialogic psalm, the criteria for this category warrant more scrutiny. Indeed, Mandolfo's next example further complicates her proposal by raising questions about the grammatical basis for her approach.

Ps 7

Mandolfo sees Ps 7 as a dialogic psalm that begins with the voice of the supplicant (vv. 2–8), moves back and forth between two voices (vv. 9–11), contains an extended section she attributes to a secondary voice (vv. 12–17), and finally returns to the voice of the supplicant (v. 18).

As Mandolfo notes, Ps 7 begins unambiguously with direct address to the divine, punctuated by 1c.s. elements pointing back to the supplicant. Since it proves pivotal for her argument, I have provided Mandolfo's rendition of the middle portion of the psalm:

> v. 7 Arise, YHWH, in your anger;
>
>   lift yourself up against the fury of those vexing me.
>
>   Rouse yourself on my behalf.
>
>   Ordain fairness!
>
> v. 8 Let the congregation of the tribes encompass you,
>
>   and for their sake return to the high place (seat of judgment?).
>
> *v. 9* *YHWH arbitrates between the peoples*;
>
>   judge me, YHWH, according to my innocence,
>
>   and according to my integrity within me.
>
> v. 10 Let the wickedness of the evil ones cease,
>
>   and establish the just.
>
>   *The one who tests the thoughts and emotions is a just god.*
>
> v. 11 My defense depends on a god
>
>   who saves the upright of heart.

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[23] Ibid., 32.

v. 12   God is a just judge, but a god who is indignant every day.[24]

While Mandolfo points to the continuation of m.s. imperatives and 2m.s. suffixed pronouns as indicators that v. 8 is a "continuation" of v. 7 spoken by the supplicant, she contends that the change to third person speech about Yhwh as well as the verb forms and a slight change in vocabulary in parallel elements "signals a new voice" in v. 9a, with vv. 9–10 then alternating back and forth between the two.[25] In her reading this secondary voice employs ידין to state a claim about "YHWH's attributes" in the indicative in the first colon that then moves into the supplicant's "plea . . . responding directly to the previous interjection" with the imperative שפטני in the second.[26] In effect, where the psalm addresses a social audience, she reads this as speech *to* rather than *by* the initial supplicant, distinguishing between imperative requests and descriptions of the divine. Finally, Mandolfo identifies Ps 7:12 as introducing an extended section of "didactic voice" (vv. 12–17).[27]

As with Ps 4 Mandolfo appeals to both grammar and content to make her case, and once again both criteria prove wanting. Most striking, this psalm challenges the two elements that provide the grammatical basis for her approach, where speech shifts away from direct address to the divine and there is a lack of 1c.s. elements referring back to the supplicant. While she initially describes Ps 7:11 as grammatically "ambiguous,"[28] Mandolfo notes that this verse both speaks of God in third person *and* contains explicit 1c.s. elements that point back to the initial speaker. While she compares the psalm's movement to a square dance, Mandolfo does not address the implications of her admission that in v. 11 "it seems we are hearing *the supplicant in conversation with someone other than God*."[29] If the supplicant addresses a social audience here, then the main grammatical basis for attributing other social address to a secondary voice dissipates.

Finally, Mandolfo also identifies the following section as reflecting a didactic voice, based on content:

> It seems somewhat illogical to assign vv. 13–17 to the supplicant (although scholars often do it). It seems unlikely that the voice that petitions the deity in a time of crisis to intercede against her enemies is the same voice that confidently asserts a

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[24] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 35. Italics are original, designating the "didactic voice" she proposes in the psalm.

[25] Ibid., 37. Mandolfo is more hesitant about v. 10: "Verse 10b *may* shift again; the deity . . . is once again described, not addressed." Emphasis added.

[26] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 37.

[27] Ibid., 37–38.

[28] Ibid., 37.

[29] Ibid., 38; emphasis added.

universal order that assures the self-destruction of the wicked.[30]

Although she describes the last verse of the psalm as a return to the supplicant's own voice (v. 18), Mandolfo does not note that here again, like in v. 11, the psalmist simultaneously employs 1c.s. speech and refers to God in third person.

In the end, Mandolfo concludes that the "dialogical structure of this psalm is particularly evident. The repetition of themes coupled with frequent changes in person serves to highlight this quality."[31] Once again, however, Mandolfo sidelines inconsistencies in her approach and dismisses a more grammatically straightforward reading of the psalm.

Where Mandolfo proposes a complex dialogue, Ps 7 proves unproblematic when concentrating on shifts in address. While the psalm begins with the supplicant's speech to God that then shifts momentarily away from speaking to the divine in v. 9, this need not reflect a shift in voice; indeed, pointing to shifting address as a primary criterion here proves problematic since vv. 11 and 18 provide clear examples where the supplicant talks about God in third person. Further, Mandolfo points to the change in vocabulary from דין to שפט as evidence for splitting the parallelism of v. 9. Rather than a signal of division, however, these terms prove to be a standard word pair also attested in Ugaritic material.[32] Further, this verse reflects what Robert Alter describes as a "characteristic movement of meaning" in Hebrew poetic parallelism, "one of heightening or intensification . . . of focusing, specification, concretization"[33] when it moves from the general statement "Yhwh arbitrates (between) *peoples*" to the more immediate and specific, "Judge *me*, O Yhwh." The appearance of the divine name as bookends at the beginning of the first statement and the end of the second further underscores this reading. While judgment is indeed central to the psalm, this verse already introduces this motif that dominates those to follow, making the hypothesis of a second voice unnecessary.

Mandolfo's description of vv. 9–12 alternating between the voice of the supplicant and a secondary didactic one also underappreciates elements that link these verses together. For instance, while she tentatively reads v. 10b as a didactic statement her claim that "the deity . . . is once again described, not addressed"[34] posits a rupture in the structure of the verse. Where the previous verse addresses Yhwh directly, the move to a jussive (יגמר־נא) and a 2m.s. verb before the concluding m.s. participle suggests the line reflects a vocative use.[35] Mandolfo's reading also treats the generic

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[30] Ibid., 39.
[31] Ibid., 40.
[32] R.D. Culver, "426 דין," *TWOT*, 188.
[33] R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 19.
[34] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 37.
[35] So P.C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50* (WBC, 19; Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 97;

term אלהים differently in short succession, rendering it as "*a god*" in vv. 10, 11, and 12b and "God" in v. 12a. Most striking, she proposes five shifts in speaker in as many verses *despite no grammatical shift away from third person description about the divine in the last three* (vv. 10–12). Further, where she argues that the indicative should be read as describing a divine attribute in v. 9, vv. 10–12 use participles to do so. Once again Mandolfo breaks up these common elements, attributing some of them to the supplicant (vv. 10a, 11) and others to a didactic voice (vv. 10b, 12). Finally, Mandolfo's concession that v. 11 reflects the *supplicant* addressing a social audience both provides a clear parallel for hearing the momentary shift to speak about the divine in v. 9 this way and prompts her admission that: "It is hard to show conclusively that a voicing shift occurs from v. 11 to v. 12 since in v. 11 we heard the supplicant speak of the deity indirectly as well."[36] Indeed, there is no grammatical shift to address God directly in the entire concluding section (vv. 11–18).

Beyond grammatical considerations, Mandolfo's reading of this psalm challenges her initial claim that these voices reflect a "very different tone" or "different consciousnesses."[37] While Mandolfo points to the description of "divine attributes" and the instructional nature of the discourse in vv. 13–17 as indicators, the absence of grammatical markers or tension between these proposed distinctive voices suggests that the middle of Ps 7 introduces the following material in a more straight-forward manner. While she refers to Erhard S. Gerstenberger's recognition of this section's "proverbial" nature, Mandolfo does not discuss the rhetorical possibilities of a change of audience rather than speaker here.[38]

Finally, Mandolfo's claim that vv. 13–17 reflect a "didactic voice" also raises questions concerning her previous description that this "tends to be more limited, and in the form of brief interjections" and "to be accompanied by a shift in voicing."[39] Although her proposed interjections earlier in the psalm fit this description, in this case Mandolfo attributes six consecutive verses to a secondary speaker with only a momentary return to the supplicant's voice at the end. Can such a long section be appropriately described as an interjection? Although she sees the final verse as reverting back to the supplicant, here again there is no shift in address. Rather, since both vv. 11 and 18 clearly speak about the divine in third person

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Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 167.

[36] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 38.

[37] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 2.

[38] Ibid., 39. Ps 6:8 reflects a similar shift in tone that reflects the rhetorical context of a shift to a social audience, in that case marked with a vocative address to "evildoers." For my brief description of this dramatic change and its rhetorical purpose, see W.D. Suderman, "The Cost of Losing Lament for the Community of Faith: On Brueggemann, Ecclesiology, and the Social Audience of Prayer," *JTI* 6 (2012), 201-17 (207).

[39] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 6.

while employing 1c.s. elements, the extended didactic section she proposes is framed by clear self-reference to the supplicant with no shift in address. As such, there is little difficulty hearing this section as the uninterrupted voice of the original speaker.

Mandolfo's appeal to a secondary voice here downplays a more straightforward reading that attends to shifting address rather than voice. While she claims it "unlikely" that the original petitioner could also state confidence in a "universal order,"[40] she does not explore how the end of the psalm could fulfill an important rhetorical function for the initial supplicant.[41] While the initial address *to God* is one of petition, a statement of confidence that God judges and evildoers fall into their own traps aimed *to a social audience* represents instruction but also a warning and even implicit threat.[42] Thus, the basic question with Mandolfo's proposal lies not in this material's didactic nature, but rather in why a second voice is required to give such instruction.

To sum up, Ps 7 creates problems for the criteria Mandolfo employs. Where she proposed that changes in voice are generally grammatically marked by a shift to third person speech about God and the absence of 1c.s. elements, here no such shift occurs (vv. 11–18) and both elements appear simultaneously (v. 11, 18). What is more, where different voices tend to reflect divergent perspectives and worldviews, little tension appears here; and where she describes the secondary voice as briefly interjecting into the supplicant's speech, her proposed didactic voice continues for six uninterrupted verses followed by the *supplicant's* brief interjection at the end.

There is little reason to propose a secondary voice in this psalm, in which the final section can be better read as discourse addressed to a social audience by the initial supplicant. As with Ps 4, increased attention to shifting *address* largely resolves the difficulties Mandolfo describes. Where Ps 4 was at best ambiguous regarding the presence of a second voice, Ps 7 raises questions regarding the basic criteria Mandolfo proposes. Perhaps most striking, the simultaneous presence of 1c.s. elements and third person speech about God suggests that such grammatical shifts do not correspond with changes in voice but rather in audience. Further, the extensive appeal to ambiguous content as a main criterion for

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[40] Ibid., 39.

[41] Gerstenberger's claim that "the supplication has to be repetitive in order to reach the divine addressee" would also benefit from greater attention to shifts in audience, since this section is not grammatically addressed to God. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 65.

[42] G.T. Sheppard, " 'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayer in the Book of Psalms," in D. Jobling, P.L. Day, and G.T. Sheppard (eds.), *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 1991), 73–78.

determining shifts in voice risks falling into assertion and circular reasoning.

RECONSIDERING "DIALOGIC PSALMS"

Having discussed her initial two examples in greater detail, the following critiques Mandolfo's remaining proposed dialogic psalms. While not treated in the same level of detail, the remaining examples reflect similar difficulties, and in each case it is not clear that her approach provides an improved alternative to one focused on shifts in address rather than voice.

Ps 9

Mandolfo points to both grammar and content to identify a didactic voice in Ps 9. Regarding the former, she notes the repeated shift from speaking directly to the divine and then about God in third person as well as verb forms used to describe divine attributes. In terms of content, Mandolfo identifies the focus on Yhwh as judge, the "more general" rhetoric, and the call to unconditional praise as evidence of two distinct voices.[43] In her view the didactic voice challenges the conditional stance of the supplicant, who commits to praise the divine if certain expectations are met. Even granting that Ps 9 can stand on its own,[44] Mandolfo's reading proves speculative in light of the whole psalm.

Grammatically, Mandolfo's strongest argument arises from the presence of clear shifts in address throughout Ps 9. As she points out, the psalm alternates between addressing Yhwh (vv. 2–7, 11, 14–15, 20–21) and speaking about the divine (vv. 8–10, 12–13, 17–19). However, her assertion that imperfect verbs should be understood as describing divine attributes rather than actions and so reflect an "instructional tone" is less certain.[45] While it is again not clear that a shift in audience represents a shift in voice, Mandolfo suggests that v. 11 may even reflect "a completely different voice."[46] Rather than seeking a progression in the psalm or exploring the rhetorical function of a speaker addressing different audiences, perceived distinctions multiply potential speakers.

The content to which Mandolfo appeals also proves unconvincing. While she describes Ps 9 as "teeming with juridical language,"[47] this is the case for both material addressed directly to

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[43] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 43–48.

[44] Scholarly views on this psalm are mixed since it contains features of both thanksgiving and lament, as well as acrostic elements linking it to Ps. 10 (Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 72–73). Nonetheless, Mandolfo believes Ps 9 can be read on its own "as a unified lament psalm." Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 43–44.

[45] Ibid., 44.

[46] Ibid., 46.

[47] Ibid., 47. What is more, the same word pair Mandolfo employs to distinguish a secondary voice in Ps 7 are treated has parallel elements that

God and that spoken to a social audience (cf. vv. 5, 8–9). Where she describes the rhetoric of the didactic voice as more "general" or "universal," this too is the case in material spoken by both proposed voices (vv. 6, 9, etc.).

V. 16, which Mandolfo sees as the beginning of the didactic voice (vv. 16–19), epitomizes the difficulty of her approach. Grammatically speaking, the explicit shift away from addressing Yhwh does not occur until the following verse.[48] While she groups v. 16 with what follows on the basis of content, in her reading the supplicant also refers generally to the "nations" in the context of divine judgement both towards the beginning and end of the psalm (vv. 6–7, 20). Mandolfo's description of the concluding verses is telling: "They [vv. 20–21] are odd in that they make no reference to the personal plight of the supplicant, but only request of YHWH that he assert his power over the גוים."[49] However, what Mandolfo describes as "odd" here proves consistent, since the final call for Yhwh to rise once again recalls the supplicant's initial description of God's previous salvific action (vv. 6–7, 20). Finally, while Mandolfo starkly contrasts the conditional and unconditional praise of the supplicant and didactic voice respectively, she does not discuss the כי clause in v. 19, which effactully places a condition on the preceding description of the divine; if the needy *are* forgotten then God has shirked a divine duty. Rather than a conflict of perspective, this conviction provides the foundational basis for the concluding call for divine judgment.

In sum, appeals to God as judge and the general tone of the psalm apply to both voices Mandolfo attempts to distinguish. Further, what she reads as a conflict between conditional and unconditional praise and support of the divine can just as readily function as intermittent calls for the surrounding community to join the supplicant in praise to be further convincing to the divine audience; the preceding statement of confidence need not be articulated to the supplicant, but rather the basis for a stirring call from him or her. The concluding summons for Yhwh to "rise" fittingly concludes the psalm by calling for divine action on behalf of the downtrodden, just as God has responded in the past.

Ps 12

In this case Mandolfo proposes two sections of didactic voice in Ps. 12:4–5, 7. Where she suggests that the unusual appearance of an explicit identification formula for Yhwh's direct speech reflects "the possibility of confusion over to whom to attribute the discourse, or the marker was added later"[50] such explicit identification

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appear in the mouth of both the supplicant and secondary speaker (vv. 5, 9).

[48] Ibid., 47–48.

[49] Ibid., 47.

[50] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 50.

of a secondary voice proves striking given the complexity of her proposal of multiple voices without comparable markers.

In this case the key for Mandolfo lies in reading Ps 12:4 as a future imperfect: "*YHWH will cut off all flattering lips.*"[51] On this basis she identifies vv. 4–5 as a didactic voice that responds to the supplicant's initial appeal regarding hostile speech. Noting that this verb could also be read as a jussive, Mandolfo states: "The first didactic voice (vv. 4–5) assures the supplicant that YHWH will handle the owners of the flattering lips as they deserve; or if we read יכרת as a jussive, then this same voice invokes YHWH to act in such a way."[52] Indeed, both the vocalization and consonantal text of this term corresponds directly to a *hiphil* jussive form, while the lack of a *hireq yod* makes her preferred reading less likely.[53]

While Mandolfo does not dwell on it, the majority jussive reading here creates a problem for her proposal. Instead of an imperfect claiming God's assured response, read as a jussive this verse repeats the preceding appeal for divine aid spoken by and not addressed to the initial supplicant. In other words, rather than "eliminate any concern on the part of the supplicant,"[54] this section underscores the initial petition and awaits a divine response as is common within individual laments.

In effect, Mandolfo's suggestion that the explicit marker for the divine voice reflects potential "confusion" sidesteps the more straightforward implication that secondary voices *can* be marked in the psalms,[55] which in turn begs the question why the persistent appearance of a distinct didactic voice would not be.[56]

Ps 25

Ps 25 is both a more consistent acrostic and reflects greater stylistic unity than Ps 9. While Mandolfo points to the clear shift of address from speaking to Yhwh to speaking about the divine as evidence of a didactic voice, once again the simultaneous appearance of both third person speech about the divine and 1c.s. markers prove problematic for her approach.

As Mandolfo notes, this psalm moves back and forth between speech to Yhwh (vv. 1–7, 11, 16–21) and speech about the divine

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[51] Ibid., 48. Emphasis original.

[52] Ibid., 52.

[53] Mandolfo reads the unpointed consonants here as a "simple imperfect," so that while "most read it" as a jussive she suggests that vv. 4–5 "may, with equal legitimacy, be read prophetically or as a statement of fact." Ibid., 50.

[54] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 52.

[55] Ibid., 50.

[56] In contrast, Rolf A. Jacobson provides a cogent reading of Ps 12 as the supplicant's appeal in which "the enemy quotation serves as the culmination of the they-complaint (vv. 2–4)." R.A. Jacobson, *Many Are Saying: The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup, 397; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 30–31.

(vv. 8–10, 12–14). While these grammatical shifts are quite clear, v. 15 raises a familiar dilemma, where 1c.s. elements appear simultaneously with third person speech about God (cf. Ps 7:11). Although Mandolfo notes this dynamic, she does not attempt to describe the function of this verse: "The tone of this verse is not exactly prayerful (though it contains a 1c.s. pronoun), not being addressed to YHWH, nor is it didactic, being too personal and case-specific to serve that purpose."[57] As with Ps 7, the presence of explicit speech to a social audience by the initial supplicant in the psalm raises a question regarding the main grammatical premise for proposing a secondary didactic voice.

In contrast, heard as the voice of the supplicant, v. 15 naturally concludes third person speech about God that precedes the shift to address God at the end; there is no problem here requiring an innovative solution. In terms of content, Mandolfo's appeal to implicit rather than explicit distinctions and her ambiguous claim that "the rhetorical goals of the two discourses diverge somewhat" reflect the difficulty with discerning two "different consciousnesses" here.[58] Indeed, what Mandolfo understands as an appeal for the supplicant to reflect a "lifestyle change" is more easily understood as the speaker encouraging the listening audience to commit to following the same teaching that s/he asks for at the outset (vv. 4–5).[59]

Ps 27

While Ps 27 moves back and forth between addressing a social audience (vv. 1–6, 10, 13–14) and the divine (vv. 7–9, 11–12), the frequent appearance of the "I" of the supplicant prompts Mandolfo to concede that "in this case it is clearly the petitioner who continues to speak, simply changing addressees, until v. 14."[60] Mandolfo then identifies only the last verse and its dual call to "wait for YHWH" as representing a didactic voice, based on the "didactic quality" of this verse versus the "confessional" nature of other material speaking about God in third person as well as the singular imperative verb, which she believes speaks to the speaker reflected in the rest of the psalm.[61]

First and most striking, while noting the supplicant's repeated address to both a divine and human audience, Mandolfo makes an admission that seems to undercut the foundation for her project: "The fact that there is no non-supplicant voice that speaks in

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[57] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 56.

[58] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 57–58.

[59] Ibid., 57.

[60] Ibid., 61. Mandolfo's claim that "v. 14 is the only verse in the 'complaint' section of the psalm (vv. 7–14) that is not directly addressed to YHWH" reflects tension with this earlier statement, as well as her further discussion of vv. 10 and 13. Ibid., 61–62.

[61] Ibid., 61.

descriptive terms of YHWH may be explained by the fact that *the supplicant plays the role of pedagogue himself*."⁶² Once we recognize that the supplicant can speak to and instruct a social audience the need for a second didactic voice, whether at the end of this psalm or elsewhere, disappears. Finally, Mandolfo's enumeration of a wide variety of verb forms to address both divine and social audiences raises questions as to why such elements are used elsewhere as evidence for shifts in voice.⁶³

Second, the use of two 2m.s. imperatives to a social audience in v. 14 does not mean that they represent words to rather than by the initial speaker. While Mandolfo's reading resonates with Hans-Joachim Kraus who saw this as an "oracle of salvation,"⁶⁴ she does not consider other possibilities such as the distributive use of a grammatically singular addressee for a plural audience. Further, as her translation reflects, the shift from direct speech to God to third person speech about the divine does not occur in v. 14 but in v. 13. And once again, here it is pronounced by the undisputed "I" of the supplicant: "Were it not that *I* trusted to look upon the goodness of YHWH in the land of the living."⁶⁵ The concluding imperative verbs then continue rather than initiate third person speech about the divine. Since there is no grammatical reason to posit a shift in speaker and given Mandolfo's admission that "the supplicant plays the role of pedagogue himself," proposing a second voice based on content here proves questionable.

In contrast to Mandolfo's approach, concentrating on shifts in address makes Ps 27 largely unremarkable. The speaker talks about Yhwh to a social audience (vv. 1–6) before turning to address God directly (vv. 7–12). While Mandolfo notes that the psalm shifts briefly to speak of God in third person in v. 10, this takes place in a subordinate כי clause, so that this brief aside takes place within a section predominantly spoken to the divine (cf. 28:5 below). The concluding section (vv. 13–14) turns back to the social audience, inviting others to adopt the psalmist's confidence stated at the outset.

In sum, where Mandolfo claims that the final verse counsels patience in contrast to the supplicant's call for immediate action earlier,⁶⁶ the invitation to "wait for Yhwh" provides a suitable return to address the social audience that dominated the beginning of the psalm.

Ps 28

In Ps 28 Mandolfo attributes two verses to a secondary voice (vv. 5, 8). While v. 8 may be the most promising example of a distinct

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⁶² Ibid., 62; emphasis added.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 337.

⁶⁵ Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 59; emphasis added.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 62–63.

didactic voice in her book, the first instance reflects problems described elsewhere.

Although v. 5 reflects a shift from speech to the divine to speaking about Yhwh, Mandolfo's reading requires treating the כי clause here as a voice distinct from its grammatical precedent. Where she suggests that a secondary voice here "would solve the difficulty" of such a shift in addressee,[67] this proposal proves striking since the same dynamic passes without comment in the preceding example (Ps 27:9–10). Further, although the shift to third person description of the divine in v. 5 is recognizable, this *continues* until the last verse where God is directly addressed pronominally ("your people . . . your inheritance," v. 9).

Ps. 28:8 may well be the most promising example of a secondary voice Mandolfo discusses, since it repeats vocabulary used immediately before in relation to the supplicant ("*my* strength" and "*my* shield," v. 7) to a third person description of the "anointed" ("*his* strength," v. 8). But even here, if one understands the original supplicant as the anointed, there is no shift away from direct address to God since both verses speak about Yhwh in third person.

Once again, concentrating on shifting address provides a more straightforward reading of Ps 28. The speaker addresses Yhwh at the outset (vv. 1–4), after which the כי clause in v. 5 transitions to speech about the divine (vv. 5–8), before returning to address God at the end (v. 9). And once again, shifts in address in this psalm do not correspond with Mandolfo's proposed secondary voice. Further, while she asserts that 1c.s. elements in vv. 6–7 do not reflect the same speaker as more generalized statements (vv. 5, 8), Mandolfo still attributes the concluding general benediction to the initial supplicant ("Deliver your people and bless your inheritance"). The speaker's ability to pronounce such a broad and seemingly liturgical blessing raises further questions as to why the "pedagogue" here should be seen as someone other than the initial supplicant.

Ps 31

Like with Ps 27, Mandolfo identifies the conclusion of Ps 31 as the only instance of a didactic voice in the psalm, since shifts to speak about the divine elsewhere contain 1c.s. elements (vv. 7, 22). While the connections between the end of Pss 27 and 31 are particularly strong, with both being clearly instructional and reflecting the same key terms (חזק, אמץ), Mandolfo appealed to the singular verb as strong evidence for a second voice in the former while in this case the final exhortation addresses an unspecified plural audience.

Concerning v. 23, Mandolfo argues: "It [this didactic section] shifts away from both the direct discourse of prayer, as well as from the specifics of the supplicant's case. Plural imperatives move the discourse into an entirely new arena in which an audience is

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[67] Ibid., 65.

given a summary appraisal of the preceding oration."[68] Even as she does so, Mandolfo admits that address to a social audience here coheres with the clear social speech of the supplicant elsewhere in the psalm. What is more, she also concedes that the conclusion summarizes but does not conflict with the perspective of the initial speaker, so that "there does not seem to be any tension between the two discourses."[69]

Given the supplicant's explicit speech to a social audience and the lack of tension between the two proposed voices, neither content nor grammar provides a compelling basis for a separate didactic voice here. Finally, given the close connection she makes with Ps 27 where she conceded "that the supplicant plays the role of pedagogue himself,"[70] once again there is little reason that the original speaker could not summarize his/her own appeal to a social audience.

Ps 55

Mandolfo describes the complexity of Ps 55 and explains why some treat it as illogical. In the end, she suggests that "reading the psalm as consisting of two main discourses—the chaotic, desperate discourse of the supplicant and an ordered, confident didactic discourse—helps make some sense of what otherwise seems a jumble of thoughts."[71] To this end she identifies three sections that represent the insertion of a didactic voice into the supplicant's appeal (vv. 16, 20, 23). In each case Mandolfo's proposal requires a selective reading of the textual evidence.

In the first instance, the key to Mandolfo's reading lies in translating the verb forms in v. 16 as confident "prophetic futures" that provide "a response to the petition and complaint that precedes it."[72] By doing so she proposes a counter-voice that creates an unnecessary break in the logic of the passage. Read as jussives, the verbs in this verse both build upon the previous intimate accusation of the friend and effectively continue the former appeal ("May he set death. . ., may they go down to Sheol").[73] While the psalm transitions from a singular adversary to plural enemies here, Bernd Janowski's work relating the grammatical number of enemies to their "type" and "enemy force" may prove helpful for understanding such movement, particularly given the pervasiveness of wickedness in the city described in the psalm.[74] Most significant, v.

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[68] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 73.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 62.

[71] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 78.

[72] Ibid., 79.

[73] Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 518; M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC, 20; Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), 50.

[74] B. Janowski, *Arguing with God: A Theological Anthropology of the Psalms*, trans. Armin Siedlecki (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013),

16 *continues* to speak about rather than to the divine and so does not reflect a dramatic shift from either what precedes or follows this verse. The basis for Mandolfo's perceived change in content from petition to confident assertion arises largely from her translation; read as a jussive this too represents a logical continuation of the preceding.[75]

Similarly, Mandolfo's suggestion that v. 20 represents a didactic voice builds on her portrayal of v. 19 as the content of the supplicant's self-quotation. Admittedly a difficult passage, Mandolfo reads the 3m.s. verb form (פדה) as a "precative perfect,"[76] which then allows her to propose v. 20 as a didactic response assuring the divine commitment to hear. Where she suggests that the confidence here "echo(es) the didactic interjection in v. 16" in contrast to the supplicant's speech,[77] a more straightforward reading would see this as a continuation of the supplicant's third person description of the divine. Where Mandolfo sets this apart as an anomaly in the supplicant's discourse, the better parallel to the imperfect "God hears" (ישמע) in v. 20 lies not in v. 16 but rather in v. 17: "(But) *I* will cry (אקרא) to God and Yhwh will save me (יושעיני)." Thus, the verb forms in the intervening verses, however glossed, are framed by imperfects related to the supplicant's call and God's response (vv. 17, 20).

Mandolfo's reading of a secondary voice addressing the initial supplicant as the singular addressee in v. 23 represents the strongest possibility in the psalm. However, given the immediately preceding critique of the friend's speech that seemed comforting but was in fact hostile, this verse may also represent a quotation of the enemy that implicitly rejects the legitimacy of the direct social confrontation earlier in the psalm.[78]

Finally, while Mandolfo sees v. 24 as a shift away from a didactic voice and back to that of the supplicant, the grammatical evidence here is debatable. This verse does return to speak to God directly and employs 1c.s. elements to point back to the supplicant. However, the grammatical form here is not unprecedented in Ps 55, which employs pronouns at the beginning of lines to underscore changes in focus elsewhere as well. Where twice ואתה emphatically underlines a shift in address, once to the intimate enemy and finally to return to speak to God (vv. 14, 24), אני highlights the contrast between the actions and desired plight of the

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[75] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 76 reads ישימות in v. 16 as ישים מות rather than ישי מות, rendering it as "He will set death." Cf. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 518 who renders the phrase "may death descend on them" from ישיא מות.

[76] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 76, 79.

[77] Ibid., 79.

[78] F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 55.

enemies and the supplicant's self-description (vv. 17, 24). Though there is a clear shift in address in v. 24, it is less certain that the final verse reflects a change in voice.

While Mandolfo proposes her reading as a way of bringing sense to a difficult psalm, attending to shifts in address results in a less chaotic picture. Indeed, one of the most striking features of the psalm is that, while the intervening verses move from describing hostility in the city, to confronting a singular "friend" directly, to speaking against plural adversaries while addressing a still broader audience, and then describing a social adversary, there is no explicit direct address to Yhwh in this entire section (vv. 11–23); God is only addressed again in the final verse. By suggesting that Ps 55 moves back and forth between different voices, Mandolfo exacerbates rather than resolves its perceived chaotic flow.[79]

Ps 102

As Mandolfo describes, the difficulty with Ps 102 lies in understanding the relationship between the outer frame that reflects an individual supplicant (vv. 2–13, 24–29) and the middle section expressing concern for Zion (v. 14–23). This dynamic has led some to classify it as a communal lament and others to propose a diachronic explanation.[80] Mandolfo argues that the section in Ps 102:17–23 should be seen as a secondary didactic voice "out of step with the central theme of the rest of the psalm, both in terms of grammar and content," after which "the supplicant's complaint is continued in v. 24 and finishes the psalm."[81] She then sees the concluding section (vv. 25–29) as an extended self-quotation to Yhwh.[82]

The difficulty with Mandolfo's reading lies in her attempt to account for the section about Zion she sees as spoken by the supplicant. While her initial description of vv. 14–16 "as a transition to the didactic portion" implies a logical progression, Mandolfo then suggests that the supplicant's continued complaint operates "as if the previous hymn never occurred."[83] Further, while Mandolfo rightly notes the shift away from direct address to God in v. 17, her appeal to a lack of 1c.s. elements in vv. 17–23 applies equally to vv. 14–16; both the Zion motif and the move away from self-referential elements occur in v. 14, not 17. In contrast to Mandolfo's description of vv. 17–23 as reflecting "third-person, hymn-like

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[79] See Suderman, "The Cost of Losing Lament," 204–7 for an alternative reading of shifts in address in Ps 55.

[80] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 84–85. For instance, see F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2011), 24–26.

[81] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 86.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

language," Gerstenberger sees the emphatic second person address to God (ואתה) in v. 13 as a "hymnic introduction" to what follows.[84] Whereas one can agree with Mandolfo against Gerstenberger that the transition occurs with the introduction of Zion in v. 14 rather than v. 13,[85] she does not clarify how her reading accounts for כי as initiating a distinct voice in v. 17. In fact, only in vv. 17 and 20 does Mandolfo render this term "because," while in the remaining eight occurrences she sees it as the grammatical continuation of preceding material.

Having identified it, Mandolfo does little to resolve the main interpretive difficulty here. Although she sees it as problematic to attribute vv. 17–23 to the initial supplicant, she does not adequately acknowledge that vv. 14–16 also seem out of place; it is not simply Mandolfo's proposed didactic voice that proves anomalous here but the entire Zion section (vv. 14–23), *including* the initial part that addresses the divine directly. Further, the psalm returns to use 1c.s. elements in v. 24, but without returning to address God directly.[86] Rather than "out of step" with the rest, vv. 17–23 continue the confidence of v. 16 and the Zion motif begun in v. 14. At best, Mandolfo's claim of discontinuity here needs further argumentation.

Once again, if one is to adopt a synchronic, rhetorical reading of the whole, hearing the entire psalm as the voice of the supplicant seems preferable while the gains of introducing a second, didactic voice are less clear. The first section of the psalm addresses God, with a shift in focus from appeal (vv. 2–3), to a description of the speaker's plight (vv. 3–12), to the confident assertion of Yhwh's enthronement (v. 13). Verse 14 introduces the Zion motif, which is clarified through a כי clause (v. 15). After v. 16 extends the recognition of Yhwh's enthronement to the "nations" and "kings," the כי statements in vv. 17 and 20 introduce the rationale for why this will occur, including the confident description of God responding to the cries of the "destitute" and "prisoner" that resonates with the psalm's opening section (vv. 18, 21). Verses 22–23 appropriately frame this section by linking back to the initial assertion in v. 16, through both the explicit repetition of שם יהוה and the plural noun forms that parallel those earlier (מלכי הארץ//ממלכות ;גוים//עמים). In contrast, Mandolfo functionally eliminates these connections without comment by rendering the first as "his name" and the

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[84] E.S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations* (FOTL, 15; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 210.

[85] Gerstenberger (ibid.) identifies vv. 13–23 as a whole as a "communal prayer," which he then sub-divides into shorter formal elements.

[86] Mandolfo's translation and statement that v. 24 reflects "discussion *about*, rather than *to*, YHWH" proves at odds with her description of this verse as addressed to the "deity (2m.s.)" in the summary table initially provided. Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 86, 84; original emphasis.

plural forms as singular ("the people" and "the king").[87] In effect, Mandolfo's rendering of v. 23 creates an internal focus instead of the fulfillment of v. 16 beyond Israel.

Thus, while Mandolfo notes a transition to third person speech about God in v. 17, she does not discuss the grammatical basis for her reading of כי in vv. 17 and 20 or the connections between vv. 23 and 16. Further, the shift in address she identifies continues in v. 24, where the presence of explicitly 1c.s. elements means that this would be the only verse where the *supplicant* speaks of God in third person. Heard as the same voice, this verse provides a relatively seamless transition back to the speaker's plight rather than the strong disjunction Mandolfo envisions.

Ps 130

While Mandolfo attributes the conclusion of Ps 130 to a secondary voice (vv. 7–8), her proposal is based largely on content rather than grammatical criteria, since the psalm shifts away from direct speech to Yhwh already in v. 5. Mandolfo's reading relies heavily on the contrast between the initial supplicant's "lack of strong confidence" and the secondary speaker's purported "absolute confidence."[88] However, this perceived distinction also corresponds with the explicit imperative address to Israel as the audience; the rhetorical demands of this change of audience may well occasion this shift in tone. Mandolfo's admission of a lack of tension between these proposed voices further undermines her case.[89]

Once again, by attending primarily to the audience being addressed the movement of the psalm poses little difficulty for a single speaker who moves from addressing Yhwh (vv. 1b–4), to self-description to a social audience (vv. 5–6), and finally an imperative call for others to follow her example (vv. 7–8). While Mandolfo describes Israel as the audience of the final strophe,[90] this is only the case in v. 7; v.8 speaks *about* both God and Israel in third person, seemingly introducing a second social audience (והוא יפדה את־ ישראל מכל עונתיו).

I concur with Mandolfo that: "An individual lament need not preclude the inclusion of broader participation, or at the least, a broader audience. . . An individual lament may occur within a communal context in which the supplicant's condition serves as a lesson for all."[91] However, neither need it preclude the possibility that the *supplicant him/herself* may also rally the surrounding community. The second voice Mandolfo proposes here is not convincing since the shift to third person speech about God does not

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[87] Ibid., 84.
[88] Ibid., 91.
[89] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 91.
[90] Ibid., 90.
[91] Ibid.

coincide with her didactic voice nor does the end of the psalm reflect a different perspective than the previous verses.

PSALMS 30 AND 32

Although she focuses primarily on laments, Mandolfo concludes with two thanksgiving psalms that recall elements of this genre (Pss 30, 32). While it does shift from direct address to Yhwh to speech about the divine in third person, as in previous examples her designation of Ps 30:5–6 as a didactic voice assumes that the initial speaker does not (or cannot) rally the surrounding social audience with imperative address. This assumption proves particularly striking given her admission that "there is no way, grammatical or otherwise, to be definitive about the identity of the speaker in vv. 5–6."[92]

Once again Mandolfo's judgment here coincides with her suggestion that "there is some discrepancy in world view between the supplicant's discourse of complaint and the instructional discourse," so that placing vv. 5–6 in the mouth of the initial supplicant would render them "ironic" or "tongue-in-cheek."[93] In doing so, however, Mandolfo does not adequately account for the psalm's overall character as thanksgiving, where recalling a former state of despair (vv. 8b–11) is framed by a thankful recognition of deliverance (vv. 2–4, 12–13).[94] Rather than ironic or contradictory, the invitation to the speaker's social audience to "sing to Yhwh" and recognize God's faithfulness (vv. 5–6) represents a public call for communal celebration that precedes the supplicant's fuller description of his former despair.[95]

Finally, Mandolfo's reading of Ps 32 both encapsulates the basic orientation of her dialogical approach and exemplifies difficulties within it. While Mandolfo also identifies vv. 1–2 as a didactic voice, the crux of the issue arises in the transition in vv. 7–8:

> v. 7 You are a hiding place for me,
>
>   you preserve me from trouble;
>
>   you encompass me with ringing shouts of deliverance. sela.
>
> *v. 8* *I will enlighten you and teach you*
>
>   *in the way which you should go.*

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[92] Ibid., 95.

[93] Ibid., 95–96.

[94] Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 133–35.

[95] As Gerstenberger says: "The prayer, we may say, is depicting Yahweh's saving intervention for the congregation, which in turn is to join the supplicant in praise." Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 134.

I will offer counsel with my eye upon you.[96]

While Mandolfo notes a shift in tone and audience here, she admits once again that "the voicing shift in v. 8 is not discernible grammatically" and even that "the pronouns used to mark the speaker and addressee remain the same in v. 8." Nonetheless, she argues for a shift to a didactic voice based on content.[97] Where earlier Mandolfo notes that "verses 1b–2 have *no telltale pronouns or verbal constructions* that would indicate a particular speaker or addressee,"[98] she passes over the three consecutive verb forms in v. 8 that emphatically underscore the 1c.s. element without comment: *I* will teach (אשכילך), *I* will enlighten (ואורך), and *I* will counsel (איעצה). In other words, here a clear shift to didactic speech is emphatically accompanied and introduced by the 1c.s. identification of the speaker. While Mandolfo focuses on the masculine plural audience of v. 9 and the "purely didactic" mode of v. 10, her silence regarding this key grammatical feature in v. 8 is remarkable since, employing the logic and a key criterion employed throughout the work, v. 8 should be seen as the voice of the supplicant rather than a secondary figure. Thus, while this verse does introduce a didactic portion of the psalm, applying her own logic it emerges from the initial speaker not a secondary voice.

Of all of her examples, Ps 32 most strongly illustrates the possibility Mandolfo resists throughout her study, namely that the supplicant him/herself is able to both speak to and instruct a social audience. Mandolfo's silence on the key grammatical feature emphatically stressed elsewhere reflects the basic difficulty this psalm creates for her approach, where a clear shift to didactic speech about God occurs simultaneously with 1c.s. grammatical elements pointing back to the speaker. What was raised as a possibility but dismissed as an ambiguous anomaly in Ps 7:11 emerges as a full-blown challenge to the basis of Mandolfo's approach in Ps 32; like in Ps 27, here again we must reckon with "the fact that *the supplicant plays the role of pedagogue himself*."[99]

FROM DIALOGIC TENSION TO SOCIAL ADDRESS: ENVISIONING AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Mandolfo provides a concise summary of her project in her final chapter: "The type of discourse of primary interest to this study involves horizontal movement—words of instruction uttered by humans to humans—inserted into what is primarily vertical discourse, that is, human to deity."[100] Mandolfo's consistent attention to speech to a human audience, referred to here as social address,

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[96] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 99.
[97] Ibid., 101.
[98] Ibid., 100–101; emphasis added.
[99] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 62.
[100] Ibid., 198.

proves significant since it pushes beyond the tendency to minimize such shifts.[101] However, Mandolfo also suggests that such human-to-human discourse is unusual and should often be attributed to a secondary voice in order to "help make sense of some of the very confusing rhetoric present in many psalms, which seem to make illogical shifts in mood, voicing and content."[102]

In the end, I would suggest two primary, interrelated limitations with Mandolfo's approach that demonstrate the need for more exploration. First, lament psalms contain much "horizontal" speech that is *not* didactic in nature. While Mandolfo's focus on "words of instruction" is understandable as a means of maintaining a manageable scope for her project, it artificially limits the discussion and gives the impression that speech to a social audience is less common than the grammar of the psalms reflects. Second, even when didactic material does appear, the supplicant in these psalms *is* able to "instruct" his/her social audience, as Mandolfo herself admits. This implies that the criteria of instructional speech (content) spoken to a social audience without 1c.s. elements pointing back to the supplicant (grammar) are not enough to demonstrate a secondary voice.

Rather than limit oneself to "words of instruction" or propose a secondary voice, it would be preferable to focus on identifying these shifts of address themselves in order to explore their rhetorical function more broadly. Not only can such an approach be more clearly demonstrated on grammatical grounds, but by attending to such shifts we see that, far from an aberration, speech to a social audience appears repeatedly. In this light, didactic social address by the supplicant simply reflects a further extension of this broader element of speaking to a human audience.

While a more extended discussion illustrating such an approach awaits an upcoming monograph, one brief example may suffice to demonstrate its potential. Mandolfo dismisses the presence of enemies as unreasonable, in one case asking for rhetorical effect: "would the petitioner's particular enemies be present at such

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[101] We have seen that some scholars' assumptions of the personal nature or private setting of individual laments prompt them to place such shifts in the mind or interior world of the psalmist. Similarly, Mitchell J. Dahood's proposal of a vocative *lamedh* in light of Ugaritic parallels, which transformed *lyhwh* from speaking about the divine to addressing God directly ("O Yhwh"), also sought to rectify what he saw as a problem in the Psalms. M.J. Dahood, "Vocative *Lamedh* in the Psalter," *VT* 16 (1966), 299–311. For a critique of Dahood's argument based on his use of Ugaritic parallels and the literary context of the psalms respectively, see P.D. Miller, Jr., "Vocative Lamed in the Psalter: A Reconsideration," *UF* 11 (1979), 617–37 and W.D. Suderman, "The Vocative *Lamedh* and Shifting Address in the Psalms: Reevaluating Dahood's Proposal," *VT* 65 (2015), 297–312.

[102] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 3.

a ritual?".[103] However, Gerald T. Sheppard has proposed this very possibility elsewhere in response to Claus Westermann:

> On this point, I am proposing the opposite circumstance, namely, that prayers are assumed to be overheard or, later, heard about by friends and enemies alike; and furthermore, "enemies" mentioned in these prayers, as often as not, belong to the very same social setting in which one prays. The presence of overhearing "enemies" is integral to the prayer situation and influences the perceived function of prayer socially, rhetorically, religiously, and politically.[104]

Mandolfo's attention to the "rhetorical *roles* within each psalm" allows for the possibility of such speech being heard or overheard by a social audience.[105]

Given the parameters of her study, Mandolfo does not explore the rhetorical significance of address to a social audience that is not instructional in nature. Also, by removing instruction to a human audience from the mouth of the original speaker, she tends to eliminate the possibility that the articulation of lament *itself* represents a means to confront the social enemy.[106] Indeed, despite noting that the supplicant can and does turn to address a social audience within the examples she provides (Pss 7; 27; 30; 32; 55), Mandolfo does not develop the implications of this observation. Where she repeatedly discovers (or creates) a complex dialogue between two voices, she consistently dismisses the other, and more grammatically straightforward, possibility of hearing the psalm as a unified "voice." Thus, while beyond the scope of the current article, it is worth reconsidering Mandolfo's claim that, "It is common throughout the psalms to hear the supplicant complain about enemies, *but it is rare to hear them directly addressed*."[107]

Finally, at various points the broader canonical context reinforces the type of social dynamics, human audience and rhetorical function of lament being proposed here. To cite three particularly salient examples: the superscriptions of several psalms effectually place readers as (biblical) David's social audience in various contexts (fleeing Absalom in Ps 3; hiding from Saul in a cave in Ps 57; etc.);[108] the extended dialogues within the book of Job emerge from the responses of the "friends," who have heard Job's initial lament on the ground in Job 3;[109] and Jesus crying "My God, my God, why

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[103] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 32.

[104] Sheppard, " 'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayer," 72.

[105] Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 29; original emphasis. For the distinction between "hearing" and "overhearing," cf. Sheppard, " 'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayer," 69–78 and Suderman, "Are Individual Complaint Psalms Really Prayers?," 163–69.

[106] Sheppard, " 'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayer," 75–78.

107 Mandolfo, *God in the Dock*, 32; emphasis added.

108 Sheppard, " 'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayer," 78–79.

109 Ibid., 72–73.

have you forsaken me?" from the cross publicly articulates the lament from Ps 22 that precipitates responses from his human listeners (Matt 27:46–49).[110] However one understands the original *Sitz im Leben* of laments—like many others, Mandolfo consistently places them in a cultic framework—these examples play directly upon the rhetorical dynamic of addressing both divine and human audiences beyond liturgical contexts.

CONCLUSION

Mandolfo points to both grammatical elements and content to propose "dialogic tension" whereby instructional, third person speech about God constitutes the "interjection" of a secondary voice into these psalms. While her sustained attention to the issue of speech to a human audience represents a significant contribution to Psalms scholarship, upon closer examination the criteria she proposes for identifying such a voice prove problematic and consequently her argument for a secondary "didactic voice" proves unconvincing. In the end, the most that can be grammatically demonstrated in the psalms she studies is that they shift to address different audiences, moving back and forth between speaking to God and social peers.

Thus, despite her rejection of such an approach, Pss 4, 7, and the others she cites are better understood through a sustained focus on shifting address to different audiences by the same "voice" rather than asserting "voicing shifts" or changes of speakers within them. Nonetheless, as the brief outline of an alternative approach illustrates, Mandolfo's admission that the supplicant can function as a "pedagogue himself" able to address both divine and human audiences holds significant promise for further investigation.

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110 U. Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2007), 551–52.