Reading the Book of Lamentations as a Whole:

Canonical-Literary Approach to the Scripture as Divine

Communicative Action

by

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SUMMARY

- **TITLE**: Reading the Book of Lamentations as a Whole: Canonical-Literary Approach to the Scripture as Divine Communicative Action

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This dissertation is basically a reading the book of Lamentation as a literary whole in a sense of a text-centred approach, which aims to interpret the Scripture as divine communicative action. The major philosophical resources that I employ in this study are the Speech-Act theory developed by J. Austin and J. Searle, and the concepts particularly exemplified in the work of K. Vanhoozer.

I look at repetition and literary techniques in Lamentations as a clue to its structural unity. In the body of the dissertation, Instead of historical-critical approaches, I claim that the meaning exists not 'behind the text,' but 'in the text itself as a whole.' One of the most important literary approaches to understanding the book of Lamentations is to note the poetic voices, which interweave in the text. The poetic voices are my main focus of understanding the book of Lamentations.

I explain the literary meaning reading the text and demonstrate that we must find the canonical level of the meaning which supervenes on the literary level. The meaning of a text

at a literary level must be carefully studied and modified by the 'fuller sense (or meaning)' derived from the canonical context. The 'fuller sense' of Scripture associated with divine authorship emerges only at the level of the whole canon. Here for the canonical meaning of the text, I focus on Vanhoozer's assertion, having proposed the suitability of speech act theory for the various tasks of biblical interpretation and theological hermeneutics.

When we read the text, there is no utterance from God in Lamentations. It is the missing voice. The main theme of Lamentations is "Where is the true comfort?". The text presents no comfort. In the literary context, God keeps silent (non-speaking). Canonically, however, Christian readers as God's people read the Bible, connecting it to Jesus Christ. Within the canonical context, we can indeed find an answer and God's answering speech (that is, His act), because Jesus is their true comforter acting as God's response. We can find this response in his teaching (e.g. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount) and in his mission (e.g. presenting his body as the temple, being Immanuel, God-with-us).

KEY WORDS

Alphabetically,

- Acrostic Form

- Canonical Approach

- Divine Discourse (Divine Communicative Act)

- J. Austin and J. Searle

- Kevin Vanhoozer

- Literary Criticism

- Locution/ Illocution/ Perlocution

- Mikhail M. Bakhtin

- Parallelism of Hebrew Poetry

- Polyphonic voice

- Speaking Voice (Persona)

- Speech Act Theory

- Text-Centred Approach

ABBREVIATIONS

AB   Anchor Bible

ABD   Anchor Bible Dictionary. ed. by D. N. Freedman, 6 vols. New York, 1992.

BEATAJ   Beiträge zur Erforschung des alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum

BAT   *Beitrage zur alttestamentlichen Theologie*

BHS   *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. ed. by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983.

Bib   *Biblica*

BibInt   *Biblical Interpretation*

BSac   *Bibliotheca Sacra*

CBC   Cambridge Bible Commentary

CBQ   *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CCOT   Communicator's Commentary Old Testament

CR   *Currents in Research*

CSR   *Christian Scholars Review*

CurTM   *Currents in Theology and Mission*

EBC   The Expositor's Bible Commentary

EJ   *Evangelical Journal*

FOTL   The Forms of the Old Testament Literature

HCOT   Historical Commentary on the Old Testament

HTS   *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*

ICC   International Critical Commentary

ITC   International Theological Commentary

IDB   The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. ed. by G. A. Buttrick. 4 vols. New York, 1962

JBL   *Journal of Biblical Literature*

JPS   Jewish Publication Society

JR   Journal of Religion

JSOT   *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

JSOTSup   Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series

MTeol   *Modern Theology*

NAC   New American Commentary

NCBC   New Century Bible Commentary

NIB   The New Interpreter's Bible

NIBC   New International Biblical Commentary

NICOT   The New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NIDOTTE   *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*

NIV	New International Version
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
OTE	*Old Testament Essay*
RS	*Religious Studies*
SBET	*Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Biblical Books

Gen	Genesis	Exod	Exodus
Deut	Deuteronomy	Ps (pl. Pss)	Psalm(s)
Prov	Proverbs	Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah	Lam	Lamentations
Hag	Haggai	Matt	Matthew
Mark	Mark	Luke	Luke

General Abbreviations

cf.	*confer* (compare)
ch(s)	chapter(s)
ed(s)	edtor(s), edited (by)
edn	edition
e.g.	*exempli gratia* (for example)
et al.	*et alii* (and others)
idem	the same
i.e.	*id est* (that is)
impf.	imperfect
p(p)	page(s)

pf.	perfect
sing.	singular
tr.	translation, translated (by)
v(v).	verse(s)

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Problems

Since the nineteenth century the major interpretive emphases of the Old Testament (even the New Testament) has been based on historical-critical approaches focused on reconstructions of Israel's history and the history of its religion. Up until very recently, scholars have heavily relied on such traditional historical methods in their exposition of the Old Testament text.

Historical-critical approaches seek what is termed the "true meaning" behind the text, using a number of different methods. These have been developed to search for what the writer could have meant in his own historical period and what the original reader could have understood when reading the text. According to this view, the prophet was a preacher who spoke orally, had ecstatic experiences and composed poetic oracles based on these experiences. The interpretive method aimed at discovering the original intention of the author in the light of the historical circumstances (see Conrad 1991: 6). This approach has instrumental in leading historical-critical scholars to reshape the text of the Old Testament in the light of their understanding of past events.

Source criticism, form criticism, tradition criticism and redaction criticism have all been pursued extensively, but the problems of the origin and formation of the Lamentation text have proved so far to be intractable to these approaches. H. Gunkel, the father of Old Testament form criticism, has had an especially enormous influence on the interpretation of the Psalms and the book of Lamentations as well as the rest of the Old Testament. He pays attention to the life situations (*Sitz im Leben*) that supposedly gave rise to a textual form. Based on this approach he concludes that the book of Lamentations contains many mixed

forms usually found in psalms. Most scholars have been influenced by Gunkel in their research and so do not view the book of Lamentations as a whole work nor do they fully comprehend the import of the book. This partial comprehension of the whole results in their failure to recognize some important keys binding each chapter together.

1.2 Rationale and Main Hypothesis

McKenzie and Haynes (1999:5) start the introduction of the book which they edited as follows:

> "*Everyone Interprets the Bible in their own way*. This sentiment is often expressed during informal discussions on the nature of the Bible and the beliefs to which it gives rise. And the statement contains an element of truth. Different people certainly come away from the Bible with different understandings; no two people see it exactly the same way. …. After all, if the 'experts' cannot agree on how the Bible should be read, what hope is there for the rest of us in discovering meaning there?"

I think that this statement is an appropriate expression of the issues impacting on the recent biblical interpretation. Interpreting the Bible is not the exclusive prerogative of scholars. Christians read and interpret the Bible almost every day, but the average reader of the Bible remains largely unaware of the techniques employed by professional biblical critics to arrive at meaningful interpretations. Even the educated non-specialists feel the distance from biblical scholarship.

E. Conrad, in his study 'Reading Isaiah (1991)', argues that a reader has to recognize the 'Otherness' of the text. Conrad does not focus on how the text developed. He suggests that we have to read the Bible as a literary whole, because we cannot discover who the

original authors were or in what historical context they wrote. The one thing clearly accessible to us is the text itself as it has been preserved. A literary whole that he said is the final form of the canon forms a literary whole. In his view the final text of the canon forms a literary whole and he strives to find out what that whole is. He says:

"My primary aim is to understand the text as a whole by paying special attention to its structure. My understanding of the structure of the book differs from that of redaction criticism in that I will be concerned with the text's aesthetic momentum, not its historical development. My reading … assumes the text is something as a whole and seeks to discover what that whole is. I am therefore not interested in relating parts of the text to a world external to it (its historical background or its history of literary development) but to the literary world of the text itself. I will be dealing with the 'final form' of the text, but I will be focusing on the form itself not on the process by which it became final (Conrad 1991:29-30)."

In the historical-critical approach, the structural unity of a text of the Old Testament is not obvious to contemporary readers of the text. This is because biblical critics customarily read by biblical critics as a largely disunified collection of material of disparate origin. It is possible, however, in a close reading of a text, to identify recurring rhetorical techniques and patterns that suggest its unity.

The literary world of the text, not a world external to the text (the intentions of the authors and the historical development of the text), is what is available for critical inquiry (see, Conrad 1991: 167-168, 1996: 315-316). For us, as contemporary readers of this ancient text, the world created by the text is the only appropriate context for understanding its parts.

When reading the Bible, as contemporary readers, we do not just try to gain some information from it, we try to hear the Word of God, the Creator, our Lord, and the Saviour

speaking to us. As Christian interpreters of the Bible, we must not think about God – at least not for very long – apart from the authorized witness of Scripture. Similarly, we must not think about Scripture – again, at least not for very long – apart from its divine author and its central subject matter. Nor must we think about hermeneutics – about interpreting Scripture – apart from Christian doctrine or biblical exegesis (Vanhoozer 2002:10). When interpreting the Bible, I do not try to distinguish whether it is merely an academic object or whether it is as instrument of God's Word. My purpose is to gain a fuller understanding of God's Word though a close reading. I believe that the academic study of theology must result in that which will be of service to the church and God's people.

This dissertation will call into question the assumption that Lamentations can be understood only as a collection, even an organized collection, of writings for the national pathos, as asserted by Historical Criticism. When reading the book of Lamentations, I will consider the text as a communicative action. For this I will use Vanhoozer's hermeneutical focus. His theory is that there are three elements in the communication process; the author, the text, and the reader. The text is central to this communication process. There is meaning in the text. The author's communicative intent supervenes *on the text* and *the text itself* is public evidence of the author's intent. In this dissertation I apply a kind of theological interpretation to the book of Lamentations.

I interpret the book of Lamentations as a canonical and literary whole. While reading from Lam.1 to Lam.4, the narrator as mediator, tenses the reader between two or three different voices. When reading Lm. 5, the reader recognizes the intention of the two voices in the text of Lm. 1 to 4. In Lm.5, the narrator uses the first person plural "we," indicating that he wants the reader to identify himself with the events or emotions of the sufferers. The real reader becomes the implied reader, not as an onlooker but as a participant. The final three verses in ch.5 are the rhetorical question related to Lm 5:1, "זְכֹר יְהוָה" (also, Lm. 3:19). The

narrator finally poses a problem about the restoration of Israel related to the nature of YHWH (5:19; also, 3:22-23, 31-33). This literary meaning is canonically connected with other texts of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

1.3 Aims

The present thesis aims to accomplish the following:

- an evaluation of the epistemological assumptions behind the diverse interpretative approaches adopted in the study of the book of Lamentations;

- a reasonable identification of the inherent nature of the book of Lamentations as a literary whole;

- the elaboration of a corresponding legitimate reading strategy for the Scripture as divine communicative action;

- the hermeneutics of the Old Testament as Christian/Jewish Canon, linking the meaning of biblical texts as communicative action between God and human to the theoretical principles of a contemporary literary and linguistic-philosophical theory, as proposed by Austin and Searle, and M.M. Bakhtin;

- a comprehension of the various voices in the book of Lamentations;

- the ethical significance of Lamentations to a reader who dialogues with God *through* the text, who meets God *in* the text, and who stands in front of God *before* the text;

- the application of reading the Scripture as canon based on the principles found in this study of Lamentations.

1.4 Investigative Procedure

In chapter 2, I deal with the introductory matter of the dissertation, including the reason for

this research, and the historical survey and evaluation of the interpretation of Lamentations. I review the approach of historical criticism.

In chapter 3, I establish my main hypothesis, legitimate methodology, and hermeneutical presupposition, following K. Vanhoozer's theological interpretation. I deal with speech-act theory by Austin, and Searle, related to Christian scholars, D. Evans, N. Wolterstoff, and A. C. Thiselton. Especially, I focus on Vanhoozer's concept of Scripture as a divine communicative act. Vanhoozer's Scripture act theory is based on finding the meaning of the Scripture (or the text of the Bible) at the canonical level which supervenes on the literary level. That is, the meaning of a text at a literary level must be carefully studied and modified by the 'fuller meaning' derived from the canonical context. The 'fuller sense' of Scripture associated with divine authorship emerges only at the level of the whole canon (see Vanhoozer 1998:263-4, 313-4).

In chapter 4, I apply the developed methodology to the book of Lamentations. Here I include a brief review of M. Bakhtin's polyphonic text for understanding the dialogue between the two voices in the text. I elucidate the canonical meaning of Lamentations related with the other texts of the Old and New Testaments.

In the final chapter, I conclude with the reader's final ethical responsibility of canonical reading the text of canon as it stands, because in speech act, the author's or speaker's intent (illocutionary act) requests the reader's or audience's reaction/effect in their common context. God as Author of the Word just speaks to His people. He has an intention and requests an appropriate response from them. Therefore His people who read His Word do not just gain some information about God, but respond by taking some positive action affecting their lifestyle (that is perlocutionary act; e.g. believing, confessing, proclaiming, loving, helping, enduring or serving). This dissertation of a canonical and theological reading strategy is a kind of confession. I conclude this chapter with a quotation from the

Westminster Confession of faith:

The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof.

- Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 1, art. IV -

Chapter 2: Historical Survey of the Interpretation of the Book of Lamentations

2.0 Introduction

There are many methods in Biblical interpretation. They have been developed with the use of philosophy, linguistics, and literary theory, etc. In the studies of the Old Testament, it is no exaggeration to say that interest in hermeneutics is reviving in our time. We need to understand these hermeneutical methods appropriately.

The interpretation of the book of Lamentations is shared with the interpretative flowering of the Old Testament. When scholars interpret the book of Lamentations, they use the same hermeneutical method used for Psalms: identifying several types of literature such as individual and communal lament, funeral song, etc. Scholars attempt to interpret the book of Lamentations in the light of the perspectives developed for Psalms under the influence of H. Gunkel.

H. Gunkel has had an enormous influence on the interpretation of Psalms and the book of Lamentations as well as the Old Testament. Gottwald wrote an important work on the book of Lamentations (see Gottwald: 1962), although his work is not as influential as H. Gunkel's. We cannot ignore Gottwald's influence on the interpretation of the book of Lamentations. His socio-literary approach presents an important model of interpretation for Lamentations.

The aim of this chapter is to review the recent interpretative methods used for the Old Testament and particularly for the Book of Lamentations. Firstly I will point out trends of interpretation in studying the book of Lamentations in the time after H. Gunkel. In a first section, I will briefly describe the interpretative flowering of the book of Lamentations. After

dealing with the Book of Lamentations, it is necessary to consider the main issues of the interpretation of the Old Testament in general. These are directly related to the interpretation of the Book of Lamentations, because the Book of Lamentations has been influenced by the general trends of interpretation of the Old Testament. In a second section I will describe the methods of interpretation of the Old Testament connected with Lamentations - by using R. Jakobson's communication model about the literary text. In the following section, I will discuss the differences in hermeneutical perspectives and the problems in the interpretation of the text in detail. At the end of the chapter, I will deal with the presuppositions of biblical critics in this section. I will evaluate each method used in the interpretation of the book of Lamentations and point out the necessity for a synthetic model supplementing the previous approaches.

2.1 Recent Trends of Interpretation of the Book of Lamentations

2.1.1 Under the Influence of Herman Gunkel

Gunkel was a towering figure in Old Testament studies who casted his shadow over the entire twentieth century. As the father of Old Testament form criticism, he gave us the categories of psalms with which we are now so familiar, such as individual laments, communal praises (hymns), royal and wisdom psalms. His focus was on the literary forms (i.e., *Gattungen* or genres) of individual psalms, and he paid attention to the life situations (*Sitz im Leben*) that supposedly gave rise to each form (Howard, 1999: 330-1).

A study of Lamentations may well aid the study of the genre of psalms at certain key points. For instance, both Hermann Gunkel (*Introduction to Psalms*, 1998) and Claus Westermann (*Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 1981) state that laments began as fairly simple forms and then were adapted into more complicated forms as time passed. When

writing about Lamentations, both conclude that the book contains many mixed forms of psalms. Most scholars have followed Gunkel and Westermann in their research.

2.1.2 After N. Gottwald

Gottwald asserts that it is impossible to understand the book of Lamentations in any other way than against the background of the historical and theological disaster of the end of Judah. In this part of Israel's history, the theological certainties about YHWH's control over history – as represented in Deuteronomy – are undermined (see 1962: 50-52; Odendaal 1991: 7). Gottwald (1962: 21) writes:

> In order to clear the way for fruitful study, the author wishes to make it plain that he does not believe that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations, nor is he satisfied with the usual critical alternative: three or more authors over a period of perhaps two centuries. He believes that at least the first four poems (which correspond to the first four chapters) are the work of a single poet. With respect to the concluding poem it is impossible to be dogmatic. All of the poems, however, are to be understood as stemming from the exilic period between 587 and 538 B.C. The uniform historical setting, the similarities of style and vocabulary, and the community of thought which they share make it possible to speak of the theology of the book of Lamentations.

Gottwald's subsequent analysis of the theology of Lamentations reveals an author skilled in mixing psalm forms who asks why Judah has been punished so severely although the people had repented during Josiah's reign (House 2004: 296). B. Albrektson(1963), R. Gordis (1974), D. R. Hillers (1972; 2nd ed. 1992), S. P. Re'emi (1984), and H. L. Ellison (1986), followed in the footsteps of Gottwald (see in particular, House 2004: 295-296).

The scholar representative of the structural method of exegesis on Lamentations is Renkema. He applies the results of previous studies in structural research to Lamentations. Renkema points out that we should not assume that biblical poets wrote their poetry in the same way as we read it in the twentieth century. He draws the conclusion that Lamentations was created by the same "structuring intellect" as the psalms, since they stem from the same circles as the psalms, i.e. they were written by the pre-exilic temple singers (see Hunter 1996: 21).

Johan Renkema asserts that Lamentations brings together a variety of poetic forms from sacred and secular circles. As a result it is impossible to analyze laments and praises as if they are consistently uniform compositions. It is impossible to treat the so-called hybrid psalms as if they are quite unusual. Thus, one must delve further into the nature and purpose of the psalms, as well as into the way they are conceived, shaped, and handed down to the community of faith (see House 2004: 280).

Renkema asserts that the book emerged in temple circles soon after the destruction of Jerusalem. In fact, he argues that the poems came from temple singers, a guild that remained active after the temple's razing. Hence, his basic point is not *Sitz im Leben* but *Sitz im Buch*.

2.1.3 Recent Approaches

The methodology used for Lamentations is connected with the one used for Psalms, because of the relation to the 'lament' g*enre* of Psalms identified by Gunkel. The research on Lamentations has not particularly been brought to public attention between Old Testament scholars. The recent extensive commentary (2001) by Gerstenberger serves as good example. Gerstenberger offers Form Critical study in light of parallels between Lamentation and Mesopotamian dirges. He treats Lamentations as secondary to Psalms, although he wrote two

23

voluminous works on Psalms and Lamentations. About this situation, P. House (2004: 278) points out as follows:

> One of the least controversial comments that one could write about Lamentations is that it has not received the sort of critical and popular attention that has been afforded many other OT books. There have been several significant contributions to Lamentations studies, but this book still remains fairly obscure to many scholars and general readers.

The interpretation of Lamentations, however, is in active progress. A variety of issues were explored recently. Since the 21st century commentaries and monographs on Lamentations have been published by Linafelt (2000), Gosdeck (2000), Gerstenberger (2001), O'Connor (2001 and 2002), Berlin(2002), N.C. Lee (2002), F.W. Bobbs-Allsopp(2002), and House (2004). Different approaches are used in these works.

For instance, Berlin's approach (2002) is literary, with emphasis on understanding the poetic discourse, vocabulary, imagery of the Masoretic Text comparing the passages in question with other biblical passages and with extrabiblical sources from the ancient Near East (see, Berlin 2002, ix). Berlin clearly states her viewpoint in the preface: "I will not belabour the historical background against which the poems are set, although I will mention it when it helps to clarify a reference (ix)."

In her recent research of Lamentations, Nancy C. Lee (2002) compares the book to lament literature in the ancient and contemporary worlds. Lee has developed an 'oral poetic(traditional)' method as a type of form criticism and 'socio-rhetoric' method as a rhetoric criticism along the lines of Walter Brueggemann's work. Lee (Lee 2002: 45-46; italics hers) says:

The oral poetic approach in the present study will analyze the poetic speeches in Lamentations as composed and performed by poets participating not only in their culture's rhetorical traditions (communal dirge and lament prayer), but who, as poetic singers, infused these genres with their own, individual artistry in *response* to their context, the destruction of their city Jerusalem. A socio-rhetorical approach will also be integrated in the analysis, since the poetry at hand not only reflects a traditional world (and its collapse), but just *how* the poets are reshaping a crumbled world shall be explored.

Although interest has recently increased in the study of Lamentations, this cannot be attributed to a change of methodology. Most recent scholars attempt to combine the diachronic method with the synchronic method. Some try to build their synchronic analysis on diachronic study, and vice versa. They have, however, continued their research along the same lines as Gunkel, Westermann and Gottwald.

2.2 Brief Survey on the Interpretation of the Old Testament

2.2.1 Author-Centred Approaches

We need to consider the interpretative methods of the Old Testament which influence the interpretation of the book of Lamentations. The consideration of Old Testament interpretation can help us to understand the methodologies used for the book of Lamentations.

The major emphases in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were on historical-critical approaches (dominated by the search for hypothetical sources behind – and radical reconstructions of – the text), and on reconstructions of Israel's history and the history of its religion (Howard 1999: 330). Up until very recently, scholars have heavily relied on methods such as traditional historical-critical methods (main focus on the real author of the text or the background behind the text), particularly source, form and redaction criticism. All

of these depend on the detection of literary and material tensions in the text in order to determine the history of the text.

Author-centred approaches assume that meaning lies in the author's intention, which was formulated in terms of the social, political, cultural, and ideological matrix of the author. In his book, W. Randolph Tate (1997: xx-xxi) described these features as follows:

> Without an immersion into the author's world and the occasion which prompted the text, one could not attain meaning with any acceptable degree of plausibility. The text was seen as a shell with many layers. If the layers were appropriately peeled away, the scholar could discover the core and its original setting. This was the locus of meaning. What circumstances prompted the author to write? What sources were used? What were the geographical location of the author and the ecclesiastical tradition of that location? What was the history of the text's development? These are the questions usually associated with the historical-critical method.

The historical-critical method belongs to the author-centred approaches. For the last two hundred years, the historical-critical scholarship has dominated the field of Biblical studies. A significant part of historical critical methodology aligns itself with modernist discourse which seeks to find the objective, determinate meaning of the text, through either reconstructing the universe of the author or attempting to discover the original intentions of the author. The purpose of historical-critical scholarship is to find the "true meaning" of the text, using a number of different methods, such as redaction, source, form and tradition history criticisms (see Nadar 2000: 7).

The three criticisms associated with the historical-critical method are *source* (often called literary-source), *form*, and *redaction* criticisms. Both source and form critics suppose that literary meaning rests in the original text and its *Sitz im Leben*. Since these primal texts

had been distorted through the church's subsequent use of them, these critics sought to salvage the original texts in their originating settings (Tate 1997: xxi).

John Barton pointed out that "the 'literary' (or *source*) critic (also known in older books as the 'higher' criticism) looks for such tell-tale signs of multiple authorship in biblical texts and tries to trace the development of the text through however many stages seem to have been involved (1996: 21)."

While source criticism seeks to discover the sources upon which the present texts rest, form critics desire to return to the oral phase of a particular literary form. The assumption is that the key to meaning lies in the original oral form, not in the final written form. Meaning is determined by the original form in its original sociological setting. Original form and setting are constitutive of meaning (Tate 1997: xxi).

I agree with Muilenburg's (1992: 52) remark on the form-critical methodology:

The reflections of form-critical methodology are to be discerned all along the horizons of Old Testament studies since the turn of the century, although it must be added that it has also been consistently ignored by substantial segments of Old Testament scholarship. … as in the work of Gerhard von Rad, which is based upon form-critical presuppositions. Many works have been devoted to detailed studies of the particular literary genres, such as Israelite law, the lament and dirge, historical narrative, the various types of Hebrew prophecy, and wisdom. In quite a different fashion, the method is reflected in recent studies of the covenant formulations, the covenantal lawsuits, and the covenant curses.

J. Barton (1996: 33) clearly asserts about form criticism:

Form criticism, especially as practiced by Hermann Gunkel, sharpened biblical critics'

awareness that they were involved in what we have called 'genre-recognition'. …… But a much more important change that resulted from form criticism was that interest shifted from the written to the pre-literary, oral level of many biblical texts. This came about because form critics discovered that there were *Guttungen* embedded within the written form of the text that must originally have had a *Sitz im Leben* in which they would have been *spoken*. And the form critics' contention was that we could not understand such portions of text properly if we tried to read them within *literary* conventions; for the conventions within which they were able to have meaning were essentially the conventions of the social life of ancient Israel, with its great variety of *speech-forms* appropriate to different public occasions, both formal and informal.

In its interest with the final form of the text, redaction criticism is more akin to present-day literary criticism than are source and form criticisms. Redaction criticism is dependent upon source and form criticism because of its stress upon the identification of the theological purpose which guided the author in the selection and organization of the individual, isolated forms (see Tate 1997: xxi). The goal of redaction-criticism is to understand the purpose and theology of the author by analyzing the text as a whole and the previous history of the material (see Perrin 1969: 42).

2.2.2 Text-Centred Approaches

Since the mid-twentieth century a reversal in the way interpreters approach the text has occurred. With the modern emphasis on the autonomy of the text and the role of the reader in the production of meaning, scholars have dislodged the text from its historical mooring (see Tate 1997: xxii).

S. Porter points out that the major question of all interpretation is the 'centre of authority', which in the case of literary criticism. He summarises the idea of "text as text-

itself" as follows: "The use of the term 'literary criticism' should be distinguished from 'source criticism', and refers to the broad category of critical techniques embraced by terms including New Criticism and Narrative criticism" (1995: 87).

As such, it is the textual autonomy and the communication structures, rather than the author or the reader that is of central interest in this approach. The author's intention and reader's presuppositions are largely excluded from the methods, and the focus is on the linguistic and literary relationships within the text. This necessity for close reading of the text has led to the development of structural tools and communication models (see Hawkins 1998: 59).

In Biblical studies the term 'New Criticism' has been rarely used, but most work that is known as 'literary' – whether it studies structure, themes, character, or the like, or whether it approaches the texts as unified wholes rather than the amalgam of sources, or whether it describes itself as 'synchronic' rather than 'diachronic', dealing with the text as it stands rather than with its prehistory – can properly be regarded as participating in this approach (see, Exum and Clines 1993:15-16).

New Criticism rejected the notion that back ground information holds the interpretive key to a text. The New Critics held that the author's intention is irrelevant to the literary critic, because meaning and value reside within the text of the finished, free-standing, and public work of literature itself (see Abrams 1981: 83). Although most recent literary critics would regard the position of the New Critics as extreme, it is now accepted as axiomatic in literary circles that the meaning of literature transcends the historical intentions of the author (see Powell 1990: 4-5). Even E.D. Hirsch admits that an author almost always means more than he is aware of meaning (see 1967: 48, 51).

J.C. Exum and D. Clines (1993: 16) describe Structuralism accurately and briefly as follows:

Structuralist theory concerns itself with patterns of human organization and thought. In the social sciences, structuralism analyses the structures that underlie social and cultural phenomena, identifying basic mental patterns, especially the tendency to construct the world in terms of binary oppositions, as forming models for social behaviour. In literary criticism likewise, structuralism looks beneath the phenomena, in this case the texts, for the underlying patterns of thought that come to expression in them. Structuralism proper shades off on one side into semiotics and the structural relations of signs, and on the other into narratology and the systems of construction that underlie both traditional and literary narratives.

Since a work is conceived out of already existing literary conventions, the meaning of a text is located in the conventions, not in the intention of the author (see, Longman 1987: 32). Since the authors have simply internalized the conventional system, they bring only that knowledge to the text. So the meaning resides in the conventional code and not in the author's intention or the reader's presuppositional world (Tate 1997: xxiii).

2.2.3 Reader-Centred Approaches

Different readers interpret a text differently. The reader brings to the text a vast world of experience, presuppositions, methodologies, interests, and competencies. The reader must actualize the meaning that is only potential in the text (see Tate 1997: xxiv). The critical strategies that may be grouped under the heading of reader-response criticism share a common focus on the reader as the creator of, or at the very least, an important contributor to, the meaning of texts. Rather than seeing 'meaning' as a property inherent in texts, whether put there by an author (as in traditional historical criticism) or somehow existing intrinsically in the shape, structure and wording of the texts (as in new criticism and rhetorical criticism),

reader-response criticism regards meaning as coming into being at the meeting point of text and reader – or, in a more extreme form, as being created by readers in the act of reading (see Exum and Clines 1993: 18-19).

The reader, therefore, plays a role in the "production" or "creation" of meaning and significance. This attitude toward the role of the reader relativizes the conventional view that the meaning of a text is like the content of a nut, simply awaiting its extraction by a reader. Radical reader-response approaches also challenge conventional views concerning the autonomy of the critic and the scientific and objective nature of the process of reading and criticism. Common to all reader-response approaches is the background of New Criticism with its insistence on the structural unity of a literary work and the process of close reading that uncovers that structure. The elements that were highlighted in New Criticism's close reading also remain important (see McKnight 1999: 230).

Among the principal theorists are Hans R. Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, Stanly Fish. W. Iser's theory centres on the existence of 'empty place' or 'gap' in the text. The reader needs to fill in the 'gaps' in the text. Late S. Fish emphasizes 'interpretative community', groups of readers who share certain aims and styles of interpretations (see Barton 1998: 210-212).

Reader-response criticism in biblical studies began with concern for genuine literary matters, a concern that surfaced in the 1960s and 1970s and became commonplace in the 1980s (McKnight 1999: 236-237). But Old Testament specialists seem as yet to have taken rather less interest in reader-response theory than their New Testament counterparts. Few scholars (e.g., E. Conrad and Katheryn P. Darr) are interested in reader-response criticism.

2.3 Comprehensive Evaluation of the Methods

2.3.1 Problems of the Historical-Critical Interpretation

Most scholars of the Old Testament have accepted the historical-critical approach as an

appropriate method for the interpretation of the text of Old Testament since the rise of this method in the early nineteenth century. The aim of historical-critical interpretation is to discover the intentions of the authors of biblical texts and to read the texts against their historical backgrounds (see Barton 1998: 10). Precisely because their focus is on events and historical processes, not on the biblical text itself, their goal cannot be the interpretation of the biblical text itself. In their quest the Old Testament becomes a source-book for history; it is used as a tool, sometimes the best and sometimes only one among several, for reconstructing the past. In so far as historical criticism uses the biblical text, it is of course biblical study; but its contribution to biblical interpretation is usually indirect (see Clines 1998: 44).

Increasingly over the last thirty years the hegemony of historical methods for interpreting the Bible has been challenged by biblical critics unhappy with either the results or the very assumptions of historical-critical scholarship. The division between critical methods that adhere to a historical paradigm for understanding texts and those that embrace a literary paradigm has been well documented in recent studies (McKenzie and Haynes 1999:6).

As contemporary readers of an ancient text that comes to us from the distant past, what is available to us, is the text of the Old Testament itself. Information concerning the authors and the circumstances that surrounded its origin(s) is lacking. It is the text that has come down to us, and it is the text that should be the object of our study. The aim of the historical-critical approach has been to read the text in the context of its original historical background and in terms of its original authors' intentions. Contemporary historical-critical readers attempt to bridge the gulf between the past and the present by reconstructing the text and in that sense returning to the time of the text's inception. It is, however, no longer possible to reconstruct the developmental history of the text and to uncover the intentions of its authors, than it is to relive the construction of stone monuments of our day. The gap with

the past has been bridged, but the text, not the author and the reader, does the travelling. As text coming from the past, the Bible is present for contemporary readers. The text, not its authors or original audience, is available to the contemporary reader for critical study. The Bible stands in the modern world as a literary monument from the ancient past (see Conrad 1991: 154-162, 2003: 5-7).

One fundamental disagreement between "historical" and "literary" methods of biblical criticism is found in their different assumptions about the relationship between texts and history. This Disagreement can be expressed in simple terms by saying that historical methods such as source criticism, form criticism, tradition-historical criticism, and redaction criticism all emphasize the historical, archaeological, or literary *backgrounds* or roots of a text, and the development of the text *through time*. Thus historical-critical methods are sometimes referred to as "diachronic." On the other hand, literary methods such as structural criticism, narrative criticism, reader-response criticism, and post-structualist criticism rather tend to focus on the text itself in its final form (in whatever way the final form might have been achieved), the relationships between a variety of textual elements (both surface and deep), and the interaction between texts and readers (see McKenzie and Haynes 1999: 7).

2.3.2 Lamentation and Historical-Critical Approach

Very recently, the focus in the studies of the Old Testament, as indicated above, has moved, from the historical reconstruction related to an author's intention or a process of the development of the text through time, to the final text as a literary work. This proves that the literary concern with the interpretation of the Old Testament has been growing for the last several years. The same tendency can be indicated in the case of the interpretation of the book of Lamentations.

Scholars have employed various interpretive methods for the book of Lamentations.

For most of the modern period, historical/literary concern about the written authorship of Lamentations held sway, particularly the refutation of Jeremianic authorship. Especially Form criticism made an important contribution to the interpretive analysis of Lamentations by its identification of two key genres in the book – the communal dirge and the lament (see Lee 2002:3).

I do not, however, agree with the way in which Form criticism was applied. Conrad (1991:32) points out:

The implementation of form criticism was made subordinate to the primary theories that governed historical-critical inquiry. The attempt of Form criticism proved a failure to attain its full literary potential. This was used as a technique only insofar as it contributed to the major goals of uncovering authorial intention and historical background. Form and setting were deemed important only for the information about realities external to the text. Form was thought to have little inherent importance and was valued because it supplied information about prophecy, cultic festivals, and other institutions.

Form criticism executed this way in the interpretation of Lamentations cannot see the text as a whole, because scholars divide generally the text into individual laments (dirges) and communal laments (dirge), based on the personal voice found in the text. This is interested in *Gattungen* (small units or genres) and *Sitz im Leben* (to interpret the text though the reconstruction of a history behind text) (see Gunkel 1998:26-29).

It has been commonplace to attempt to read the book of Lamentations against a specific historical background. Overwhelmingly the most common view is that these laments come from the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in c. 587 BCE. This has survived as a consensus position (see Hillers 1992: XIX-XX), long after the traditional

ascription to the prophet Jeremiah has been abandoned by almost everyone (see Joyce 1999: 247). Recently, however, there have been moves away from the attempt to locate the work in a known, particular historical period (e.g. Provan 1991: 7-19). It must indeed be admitted that specific clues to dating are difficult to discern in Lamentations. This is one of several features which Lamentations shares with the Psalms, which are of course notoriously hard to pin down to particular periods of Israel's history (Joyce 1999: 247-8).

We need to read the book of Lamentations as a literary whole. It is impossible to reconstruct the historical past for looking for the meaning of the text. Only the text has been handed down to us from the past to the present. I think that the meaning of the text is in the literary world in the text, neither behind the text nor in the historical reconstruction of the text. Literary Criticism is appropriate for explaining the meaning of the text, because it is focusing on the text itself.

2.3.3 Necessity of New Approach to the Text

Literary criticism deals with the poetic function of a text, whereas historical criticism deals with its referential function. Literary criticism focuses on the finished form of the text and emphasizes the unity of the text as a whole. This critical method views the text as an end in itself. All theories of literature understand the text as a form of communication through which a message is passed from the author to the reader. Historical criticism, on the other hand, has approached texts on the basis of an evolutionary model. They reconstruct a hypothetical pattern of the text's origins. Literary criticism is to describe the meaning of a text n terms of what it communicates between its author and its reader (see Powell 1990:7-10).

Although the book of Lamentation deals with a specific historical event, Lamentations is as a-historical as the Song of Songs is a-historical. It marks, with untempered immediacy,

the focal calamity of the Bible on the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. The lyric discharges the cumulative emotions suppressed in the narrative and anticipated or recalled in the Prophets. The alienation, temporal and social, of the Prophets suddenly becomes a collective experience. There is no more need to persuade, to find communicable symbols; the voice simply bears witness to its failure, turns over broken images and hopes. The barrenness and desolation of the poem are, then, also matters of rhetoric; the descriptive voice is direct, unenigmatic, as if the scene spoke for itself, and uses rhetorical techniques – repetition, metaphor, personification, and so forth – in the service of negation (see Landy 1987: 329).

Lamentations is an individual book. Although the book of Lamentations is found in different positions in the Christian Old Testament and the Hebrew Bible, it is not a additional source of the study of Psalms [as for instance in Gerstenberger's(2001) work]. When we interpret the book of Lamentations, first of all, we must accept the individual character of each book. Until now, the interpretation on the book of Lamentations has ignored this point. Of course I acknowledge literary approaches on Psalms.

In the book of Lamentations there are many literary references; the acrostic format, the solace of repeated poetic expression, several different voices, parallelism and etc. K. Vanhoozer's literary sense is equated with 'the literal meaning.' He asserts that "if the literal sense is the literary sense, we must attend to the literary form of the literary act," and "our main access to what a text is about is the text itself, the form in which the matter is described" (Vanhoozer 1998: 312). For Frei, as Vanhoozer touched upon Frei, the literal meaning of narrative is the story itself, and the literal reference is the *story's* world, not the historian's (see H. Frei 1980:). I think that the literal meaning of poetic is the same. The reality or the meaning of which the text speaks is "mediated to us through a variety of literary forms" (Vanhoozer 1998: 313).

I sympathize with Barr's point about three gaps of historical criticism: first, historical-

critical reading of the Bible by its professional practitioners has created a gulf between itself and the community of lay readers; second, the gulf that historical criticism has created is between itself and "the older exegetical tradition," which reads the Bible as a source of true knowledge about the objects described in the Bible – about God, about the creation of the world, about his redemption of mankind, about sin and salvation, about the possibility of future life; third, the gulf between historical-critical appreciation of the Bible and a more literary and cultural appreciation (see Barr, 1973: 13-22, it was summarized by Conrad, 1991:24-26).

In the next chapter, considering these points, I will suggest the preferable method on the interpretation of the Old Testament and, especially, of the book of Lamentations. That is the method based on the speech-act theory related with the communication theory.

Chapter 3: Methodology for Reading the Book of Lamentations

3.0 Introduction

In general, Christian communities read the Bible "as a source of true knowledge about the objects described in the Bible – about God, about the creation of the world, about his redemption of mankind, about sin and salvation, about the possibility of future life" (Barr 1974:13). The question that arises is, "what is a suitable strategy to adopt when we read the Bible?"

Whether we perceive it or not, no one reads a book without a 'reading strategy.' The historical-critical method of Biblical interpretation has also developed a reading strategy. As E. Conrad (1991:24) indicates, "Historical critics, as an interpretive community, have employed reading strategies so distinctive that an unbridgeable gulf has opened between them and other interpretive communities."

It is not possible to read a text without being influenced, to varying degrees by our presuppositions or world view. In the first section, I will develop my methodology (strategy) of reading the Bible (Lamentations). This methodology is related to the theological interpretation of Kevin Vanhoozer who applies speech act theory to the Biblical hermeneutics and Brevard S. Childs' Canonical approach.

Secondly, I will give a brief overview of speech act theory and its relation to biblical interpretation. I will deal with the concept of speech act theory by J. L. Austin and John Searle, and the interest in speech act analysis for biblical interpretation by D. Evans, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Anthony C. Thiselton, who have proposed the suitability of speech act theory as a basis for biblical interpretation and theological hermeneutics.

Finally, based on speech act theory, I will discuss the interpretation of the Bible as *Divine communicative action*. Following Vanhoozer's perspective, I see the Scripture as divine revelation and as communicative way between God and His people. The Scripture is *the corporate testimony* of Christian communities for God's self-revelation in history and in Jesus Christ (see, Vanhoozer, 1998:291-92). Taken as a literary whole and as a divine communicative act, the Scripture is God's self-attestation.

3.1 About Canonical-Literary Approach

3.1.1 A Review of the Canonical Approach

3.1.1.1 Major Works of Brevard S. Childs

The most notable work on the Canonical approach has been done by Brevard S. Childs[1], and James Sanders[2]. In Childs' *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (1970), he sketched the rise of the 'biblical theology' movement. Childs suggests that exegesis should not stop with relating a periscope to its original historical context but should explore the dialectic between individual text and full canonical context[3]. According to Childs, 'biblical theology' originated in a post-war rediscovery of the theological dimension of the biblical texts, in sharp reaction against the 'liberal' scholarship of the 1930s (Childs 1970:23)[4].

Childs' canonical approach was connected with two factors; the so called 'biblical theology' movement and dissatisfaction with the results of historical-critical scholarship. What had promised to be an objective analysis of the biblical texts in their original settings had proved impossible because it was based on the assumption that the scholar could stand outside the text in history in order to analyze the text. The growing suspicion that value-free,

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[1] *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Fortress, 1979), *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Fortress, 1985), *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament* (Fortress, 1992).
[2] *Torah and Canon* (Fortress, 1972), *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Fortress, 1984), *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text* (Fortress, 1987).
[3] see in particular chapters 5 and 6; see also Mckenzie & Haynes, *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 143.
[4] See Watson, *Text and Truth* (T&T Clark, 1997), 210.

objective historical work is impossible has posed one of the most serious challenges to the historical-critical method (Mckenzie and Haynes 1999: 144).

Childs' canonical approach was offered as an alternative to the 'biblical theology' movement[5]. He was not satisfied with the biblical theology of those times, because the biblical theology "accepted uncritically the biblical hermeneutical presupposition that one came to the Biblical text from a vantage point outside the text" (102). Childs emphasizes that biblical theology should not be abandoned, instead, it should rethink its own foundations (92). It should recognize that "the canon of the Christian church is the most appropriate context from which to do Biblical Theology" (99). According to Childs, the 'biblical theology movement' originated in a post-war rediscovery of the theological dimension of the biblical texts, in sharp reaction against the 'liberal' scholarship of the 1930s (23). In biblical theology's traditional historical-critical scholarship, useful material is amassed but 'the scale of priorities' is all wrong (142), older exegesis is arrogantly dismissed as 'pre-critical' (139), and the diachronic emphasis means that the final stage of the text is ignored (146). He rediscovered the hermeneutical significance of the 'canon', and removed to 'pre-critical' modes of biblical interpretation against the conventional historical-critical scholarship. This is his most important contribution to a renewed biblical theology.

At the level of major book projects that further develop what Childs calls a canonical approach, he published his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (1979) and, a few years later and even more boldly for an Old Testament scholar, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (1984). In *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, each Old Testament book is considered under three sections. He first deals with "Historical Critical Problems," then moves to "The Canonical Shape" of each book and finally to "Theological

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[5] *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Westminster Press, 1970). For the helpful discussion of B. Childs' indication in his book, see F. Watson, *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (T&T Clark, 1994), 30-45.

and Hermeneutical Implications" (see in details Sheppard 1998:579-581). This work deals with "each book in turn, arguing that traditional historical criticism had led to inadequacies, antinomies, and failures in appreciation, all of which would be resolved if sufficient attention was given to the canon" (Barr 1999:38).

P. House (1998: 43-44) evaluates Childs' work:

Childs's book offers possibilities for Old Testament theology. First, it suggests a fixed starting point for reflection: the final form of the Hebrew canon. The fixed canon's shaping in history informs one's grasp of the text, but that history is not the goal of the study. The canon's message has that position. Second, it suggests an order of study for theology. Childs's careful analysis of each book in its place in the Hebrew canon gives hi analysis focus. Third, it attempts to solve the history-faith dilemma by noting the canon's status as faith document written in a historical context. Fourth, it tries to locate authority in the whole canon, not just in selected universal ideas or in selected portions of the Old Testament. Childs's *Introduction* sparked heated debate among scholars committed to primarily historical background approaches to the Old Testament. In due time it provided Childs with a way to analyze Old Testament Theology itself.

Childs' *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (1985) and *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (1992) are large and sprawling works which represents the culmination of the canonical approach[6].

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[6] For the evaluation of Childs' these two works, see in particular Watson 1997:214-224; James Barr (1999:38) analyses Childs' assertions in these works under four broad outlines:
1) Old Testament theology is considered to be expressly a Christian activity, corresponding to the canonical place of the Old Testament;
2) there is much stress on the irrelevance of historical and critical work. The 'final text' is what matters, and 'reconstruction' of historically earlier forms and stages is speculative and theologically valueless. Theological evaluation reaches its highest point in 'canonical' perceptions;
3) not only does critical history lose its importance, but the *theological history, Heilsgeschichte* and the like, which had been so stressed by other writers, also fades into the background;

3.1.1.2 B. Childs' Concept of *Canonical approach*

Childs offers a re-visioning of the task of biblical interpretation, rather than simply another historical-critical methodology. He thus prefers using the terminology "canonical approach" to interpretation or "exegesis in a canonical context," which accommodates this broader point of view. Childs specifically avoids the terms "canon criticism" or "canonical criticism" to describe his perspective, because it implies that the canonical approach is considered another historical-critical technique which can take its place alongside approaches such as source criticism, form criticism, rhetorical criticism and similar methods (see Childs 1979: 82). Thus we need to understand Childs' definition of *canon*, or *canonical*.

How Does B. Childs use the term *canon*? Childs (1978: 53) defines it as follows:

> To speak of the Bible as canon is to emphasize its function as the Word of God in the context of the worshipping community of faith. The canon seeks to preserve the authority of the whole witness and to resist all attempts to assign varying degrees of theological value to the different layers of Scripture on the basis of literary or historical judgments.

J. Barr[7] (1984:68) evaluates the term "canon" as used by Childs as the understanding that "the process of religious interpretation by a historical faith community left its mark on the literary texts which did not continue to evolve and which became the normative interpretation of those events to which it bore witness."

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4) some of the problems that have concerned earlier Old Testament theologies seem also to fade away. Thus the question of the history of religion and influences from other religions magically disappears: since everything depends on the books as we have them, they are authoritative as Israel's 'confession', independently of where their content may have come from.

[7] J. Barr (1999: 38) classifies Childs' concept of "canon" in three categories:
1) canon as the collection of sacred books which must be seen as all belonging together;
2) canon as the final, canonical shape of each book;
3) canon as a holistic mode of appreciation.

Mary C. Callaway (1999: 147) also agrees with Childs' second and third categories of these[8]: "The term 'canonical' signifies both the historically final as well as the normative form of the text."

Childs' emphasis upon the final form of the text seems to be concerned with literary criticism. Childs does not, however, deny that the historical-critical method may be able to elicit some real (historical) information from the text, or to discover what its original authors meant. He is not concerned with specifically *literary* competence, but with something that may be described as *theological* competence (Childs 1979: 74)[9]. While using literary and historical methods, the canonical approach is primarily theological in its nature. For Childs the focus is not the process of reinterpretation or the hermeneutic leading to the final form of the text, but its *theological shape* (McKenzie and Haynes 1999: 147). To summarize:

1) The emphasis is upon *the final form of the text as Scripture* for the communities of faith;

2) The approach seeks to investigate the *theological dimensions* for understanding the effect of redaction on the final form of the text, that is, *theological **shape***.

A factor influencing the development of canonical criticism was growing dissatisfaction with the results of historical-critical scholarship. What had promised to be an objective analysis of the biblical texts in their original settings (the historical-critical criticisms) had proved impossible because it was based on the assumption that the scholar could stand outside of history in order to analyze it. It is easy from a distance to see the effect of Darwin's theory on Wellhausen's reconstruction of Israel's religion, or of existentialist philosophy on Bultmann's reading of the New Testament. The growing suspicion that value-free, objective historical work is impossible has posed one of the most serious challenges to

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[8] see also Scalise 1994: 50-56.
[9] For the critic argument, see Barton 1996: 79-88.

the historical-critical method (see McKenzie and Haynes 1999:144).

Although there is a growing dissatisfaction with the historical-critical approach, the canonical approach is concerned with historical studies pertaining to the biblical texts. As Keegan (1985:30) points out, "canonical critics perform historical studies but they do not read the biblical text historically." The canonical approach studies the historical processes of canonization. Canonical critics employ source, form, and redaction criticism, albeit with an ulterior motive. They are interested in source criticism because it is important to ascertain the ways in which the sources were resignified; they are interested inform criticism because knowing the *Sitz im Leben* is helpful for understanding how a community shaped and used the form; and they are interested in redaction criticism to the extent that it offers insights into the manner in which writers in the communities reinterpreted and reapplied their sources (see Tate 1997: 207-8).

By focusing on the early communities that preserved and shaped the traditions, canonical criticism resisted the unspoken hermeneutical assumption of historical criticism that biblical authority resided at the level of the "original author." On the other hand, canonical criticism was also a logical development of historical-critical work, whose history was a movement from smaller (sources) to larger (redaction) units of tradition. Canonical criticism can be understood as the next logical step after redaction criticism, moving from the last stage of redaction to ***the final form*** (or ***shape***) which became canon (Childs' concept) or ***the canonical process*** where scriptures in the earlier stages was already accepted as being canonical (Sander's concept). That is, canonical criticism attends to this rich stage in the formation of the Bible. Unlike redaction criticism, which investigates the editorial processes leading up to the final form of the text, canonical approach seeks to understand the effect of redaction on the final form of the text and to investigate its theological dimensions. Canonical approach is germane to an understanding of its nature, which can be characterized as a

hermeneutical approach, grounded in the historical-critical method (see McKenzie and Haynes 1999: 144-6).

J. Barton (1996) presents Childs' canonical approach as essentially a form of literary analysis - especially New Criticism - without reference to any historical context, but the canonical approach is different from the literary approach. The literary approach emphasizes an aesthetic of the text itself or the reception by the reader[10], but on the other hand, the historical approach still emphasizes the author-centred approach. I will suggest an alternative model of the canonical approach without relevance to Historical Criticism in the coming section.

3.1.2 A Review of the Literary Approach

3.1.2.1 From Historical-Critical to Literary

Before the rise of historical criticism in the early nineteenth century, literary issues formed a substantial part of biblical scholarship. This was true even of the early Enlightenment theologians, who were interested in historical details only when they could be used as evidence to attack the 'infallibility' of the biblical text. Form criticism represented a return to literary interests, but it took some time for this to become apparent. Gunkel's ideas were adapted to the needs of the kerygmatic theology of the 1920s, and it was not for another generation that the purely literary element surfaced once more (see Bray 1996: 482-3).

Literary criticism has featured prominently in Hebrew Bible scholarship on the Hebrew Bible since the rise of the historical-critical method in the early nineteenth century. Exum and Clines (1993: 11) state:

This Literary criticism of the Bible had as its goal – since it was foundational for historical-

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[10] Here I understand the broad literary approach that includes both the text-centred approach like New Criticism and the reader-centred approach like Reader-response Criticism.

critical study – the reconstruction of the history of the biblical literature. Its method was to analyse the stylistic and (to some extent) the ideological differences found in the various writings of the Hebrew Bible in order to separate earlier from later, simpler from more elaborated, elements in the text. The magisterial four-document theory of the sources of the Pentateuch given classic formulation by Julius Wellhausen, and the still regnant hypothesis of a Deuteronomistic edition of the books of Joshua to 2 Kings proposed by Martin Noth, are showcases of the methods and results of traditional literary criticism.

Herman Gunkel is a representative early developer as well as the archenemy of the traditional literary approach. With his interest in discovering the individual forms and their setting in life, the emphasis was on individual texts outside of their canonical context and on a sociological rather than a literary explanation of their origins. A definite gulf exists between Gunkel and contemporary aesthetic critics, but we should still recognize that Gunkel developed his understanding of form criticism in an interdisciplinary context. His use of the concepts of genre (*Gattung*), form (*Form*), and setting in life (*Sitz im Leben* or *des Volkes*) are heavily informed by literary and sociological theories of his day. Indeed one of the difficulties with biblical form criticism as traditionally practiced is not that it is a-literary in its understanding of genre but that it adopts a neoclassical concept of genre that was obsolete even in Gunkel's day. In any case, Gunkel advanced a literary approach to the study of Scripture by focusing attention on the all-important issue of identifying the genre of a text in the process of interpretation (see Longman 1987: 15-6).

But, in contemporary usage, it refers quite broadly to any attempt to understand biblical literature in a manner that parallels the interests and theories of modern literary critics and theorists generally. It denotes an approach to scripture that is often a-historical in interests and method. During the last half of the 20th century, a veritable host of diverse

approaches to the text have appeared, all of which, with varying degree of appropriateness, are commonly placed within the category of literary criticism. Many of these approaches are discussed separately, such as Structuralism, Narrative criticism, Deconstruction, Reception theory and Reader-response criticism, and so on (see Soulen and Soulen 2001:105-6)[11].

3.1.2.2 Characteristics of the Literary Approach in Biblical Interpretation

The relationship between modern literary approaches to the Bible and traditional historical-critical methodology is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, the literary approaches may be viewed as logical developments within and extensions of form and redaction criticism. This was discussed in the previous chapter and is in essence Longman's point on Gunkel's approach. On the other hand, these newer literary approaches incorporate concepts derived from movements in secular literary criticism that repudiate the significance of historical investigation for the interpretation of texts – after New criticism (see Powell 1990: 6-7).

According to R. Jakobson's communication model, most of the literary approaches in Biblical interpretative models are the text-centred and the reader-centred approaches. Literary criticism is "a broad field that encompasses a vast array of different methodologies. Just as biblical studies have seen the rise and fall of various approaches to interpretation, the history of literary criticism is replete with movements that favour particular theories" (Powell 1990: 11).

Where can the meaning of a text be found? Is it to be found in the author-centred, text-centred or reader-centred approach? Each can yield different meanings but which one leads us to the meaning of the text? As seen in the previous chapter, the twentieth century has witnessed a notable change in the way literary critics have understood a text to have meaning. At the beginning of the century the meaning of a text was primarily associated with authorial

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[11] For the brief description about these approaches, see Exum and Clines 1993: 15-25.

intentions. With the rise of the New Criticism and later of Structuralism, the text itself was emphasized as an object of study detached from matters surrounding its inception. More recently the meaning of a text is increasingly being understood as emerging in the reading process itself. The emergence of the reader in the establishment of meaning has radical implications for the historical-critical approach, which has predominated in the study of the Bible during the twentieth century (see Conrad 1991: 3). Recent literary criticism[12] is quickly moving from the text to reader as reflected in Feminist criticism, Political criticism, Deconstruction, etc. These criticisms are the newer literary criticism.

3.1.3 The Meaning of Canonical-Literary Approach

3.1.3.1 A Text-Centred Literary Approach

The creation or production of meaning is achieved by interaction not only between the text and the reader, but also between the author and the reader through the text. In the text, there is an internal structure or inherent nature. Only in the text, the author can meet the reader and the author can dialogue with the reader. The text is the place where the author and

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[12] To summarise the characteristics of literary criticism (see Powell 1990: 7-8):

1) *Literary criticism focuses on the finished form of the text*. The objective of literary-critical analysis is not to discover the process through which a text has come into being, but to study the text in the form that now exists.

2) *Literary criticism emphasizes the unity of the text as a whole*. Literary analysis does not dissect the text but discerns the connecting threads that hold it together. In historical-criticism, the texts are viewed as compilations of loosely related pericopes, and these individual units of tradition are most often the subject of analysis.

3) *Literary criticism deals with the poetic or aesthetic function of a text*, whereas historical criticism deals with its referential function. Historical criticism regards the text as a window through which the critic hopes to learn something about another time and place. Literary criticism, in contrast, regards the text as a mirror. The critic determines to look at the text, no through it, and whatever insight is obtained will be found in the encounter of the reader with the text itself.

4) *Literary criticism is based on communication models of speech-act theory*. The philosophical bases for literary criticism are derived from theories about communication.

the reader meet with each other. The inherent nature of texts (e.g., genre) leads itself to a legitimate reading strategy in the interpretation of the text. The author writes the text for communication with the reader. However, the reader cannot meet the real author, one can only meet the implied author. Also, the real author cannot meet the real reader, only the imagined reader. The author writes the text with the intention of creating meaning. The reader reads the text seeking for meaning. This meaning exists *in* the text.

The author's communicative intent supervenes *on the text* and *the text itself* is public evidence of the author's intent. According to Vanhoozer's argument, an interpretation counts as literary knowledge when it accounts for the author's enacted communicative intent as determined by aspects of the literary act. A text is the result of an author's choices. The interpreter (reader) seeks literary knowledge, an explanation as to how and why a text is the way it is and what it is about. One does this by imputing intentions to the author that account for the way the text is, in both its parts and its whole. According to this view, one does not validate interpretation by 'proving' the existence of the author's intention, one rather shows its explanatory power and fruitfulness by asking questions about the text to which certain descriptions of the literary act represent possible answers. The successful interpretation is the one that provides the best account as to why a text is the way it is rather than formulated another way (see Vanhoozer 1998:281-350, especially 303-335).

Vanhoozer introduces a crucial interpretive concept that is vital to correct reasoning about literary acts, and is thus vital to hermeneutic rationality in respect of the text: namely *Genre*. The concept of genre, however, should not confuse an interest in literary form with what is called 'form criticism' in Biblical studies. Form critics study short passages and trace them back to earlier, oral traditions, which served particular social functions (e.g., instructive sayings, proverbs, etc.). The effect of form criticism, however, has been to separate these passages from their literary context in order to relate them to a historically reconstructed

social or religious setting. To focus on genre, on the other hand, is to treat texts as literary wholes – unified communicative acts. The literal sense of a text is its literary sense, and this can only be determined by identifying the genre (see Vanhoozer 1998:331-342).

To invoke the notion of genre is to acknowledge a tacit agreement on how a text should be written and how it should be read. Genre is nothing less than *the controlling idea of the whole* (see Vanhoozer 1998:341-342). In Hirsch's words: "all understanding of verbal meaning is necessarily genre-bound (Hirsch 1967:79)." Finally, Genre creates a cooperative context (between the author and the reader), and generic competence (of the reader) requires that one attends both to the universal rules that govern all discourse as well as to the particular rules that govern particular literary forms. The world of the text is indeed a shared world. The context that authors share with readers is a literary context: to be precise, a generic context (see Vanhoozer 1998: 343).

Ricoeur (1976:25-44) observed that a text is distanced from its author as soon as it is written and launches out on a career of its own. Cut off from its author, the text is also cut off from any fixed context (Vanhoozer 1998:338). There is, Vanhoozer (see 1998:339-340) believes, at least one context that remains relatively fixed: the literary context, the genre. Genres offer room, as one might say, for him to write in – a habitation of mediated definiteness; a proportioned mental space; a literary matrix by which to order his experience during composition. An author enjoys freedom within limits; the author is a citizen of literature. An author can modify some conventions of a given genre, but not all of them.

What about texts, such as the book of Lamentations, whose authors and original contexts are unknown? For this question, Vanhoozer quotes Thiselton' discussion: "what the interpreter wants to discover is not the name or biography of an author, but rather the sense of textual wholeness" (see Vanhoozer 1998: 338-341). The text remains what it is even in the absence of the author.

The world displayed in the text may not correspond to any actual state of affairs. A narrative displays an interpreted world (I think, poetry has the same function). Authors of the narrative take up a *stance* or *perspective* toward the narrative. The perspective is established by the author by means of which the world of the text is presented to the reader. In other words, the way the story is told communicates the author's perspective of the world of the text. The reader reads the text following the author's perspective. The point of view or the perspective governs a work in general. This refers to the norms, values, and general worldview that the author establishes as operative for the story. To put it another way, the point of view may be defined as the standards of judgment by which readers are led to evaluate the events, characters, and settings that comprise the story. The reader must accept the author's perspective (or point of view). An initial acceptance of that point of view is essential as preliminary to such criticism, for without such acceptance the story can never be understood in the first place (see Powell 1990: 23-25)

Following Mary L. Pratt and Susan Lanser, the literary theorists, Vanhoozer argues that every text is a kind of communicative action. Every text belongs to a specific literary genre. In what we could term the 'narrative act (text),' the author projects a world towards the reader. Lanser finds 'speech act theory' particularly helpful in studying 'the point of view', that is, the author's *perspective* of the world displayed in the text. Lanser says: "In speech act theory, I found a philosophical basis for understanding literature as communicative act and text as message-in-context, as well as exciting new tools for analyzing discourse (Lanser 1990: 7)."

Vanhoozer expands this focus into a model of communication between God and his people. His position is based on theological concepts and the Christian confession – the Bible as Canon. Following Vanhoozer's perspective, I accept the Scripture as divine revelation and as the communicative way between God and His people. The Scripture is *the corporate*

testimony of Christian communities for God's self-revelation in history and in Jesus Christ. Taken as a literary whole and as a divine communicative act, the Scripture is God's self-attestation. For too long, biblical critics have sought to understand the biblical text by ignoring its plain testimony and instead have attempted to cross-examine extra-textual witnesses (e.g., other ancient literary sources, archaeological evidence, etc.). Inasmuch as one distrusts the Bible as testimony, one removes the most important means of knowing what the Scripture is about (see Vanhoozer 1998:291-92)[13].

3.1.3.2 The Text-Centred Canonical Approach

My reading of the Scripture as canon is theological and confessional. I, as a pastor standing in the Reformed tradition and as a theologian following the Reformed theology, believe that the Scripture is the Word of God. God communicates with his people through the Scripture. This means that I see the Scripture as a communicative action between God and His people which is related to Divine Authorship of the Scripture (see Vanhoozer, 1998:15-35, especially 198-200). This is my hermeneutical presupposition.

I agree with K. Vanhoozer's discussion (2002:194) which quotes from Paul Noble's comments (1995:340) on Childs' approach:

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[13] Vanhoozer agree with the concept of N. Wolterstorff's author. In the Biblical interpretation, two Christian scholars discuss the Bible as Divine discourse and as the Divine Revelation. By them, the ultimate real author of the Bible is God who speaks to His People. To sum up Vanhoozer's theory on literary reading:

1) In the text, the author tries to communicate with the reader;
2) The author's communicative intent supervenes *on the text* and *the text itself* is public evidence of the author's intent;
3) The literal meaning of the text can only be determined by identifying the *genre*. Genre is nothing less than *the controlling idea of the whole*. To focus on genre is to treat texts as literary wholes – unified communicative acts;
4) The reader must accept the author's perspective (or point of view), for the story can never be understood without such acceptance;
5) The Scripture as *the corporate testimony* of Christian communities for God's self-revelation in history and in Jesus Christ is the communicative way between God and His people, and it is also God's self-attestation.

In the fourth above, according to Vanhoozer 'the author' would rather mean 'the speaker or the implied author' than 'the historical-real author' of the text. In more detail, I will discuss the authorship of the Scripture in the next section (in Wolterstorff's section).

Brevard Childs argues that the canon was intentionally shaped so that it would function authoritatively for future generations in the believing community. The unity of the whole follows, Childs thinks, from its consistent witness to Jesus Christ. I welcome his emphasis on reading each part of Scripture in its larger canonical context, but I doubt that Childs has given a sufficient warrant for the practice. I agree with Paul Noble, who argues that Childs's approach tacitly depends upon and actually requires an explicit affirmation of divine authorship. Indeed, Childs's claim that the meaning of biblical texts can be arrived at only in the context of the canon as a whole 'is formally equivalent to believing that the Bible is so inspired as to be ultimately the work of a single Author.'

First of all, I will use an understanding of interpretation and literary knowledge, based on the notions of communicative rationality and of the text (Scripture) as a communicative act. The major philosophical resources that I employ in this study are the new Reformed epistemology found in the works of A. Plantinga, N. Wolterstorff (the Reformed philosophers), and the concepts particularly exemplified in the work of K. Vanhoozer, who sees Scripture as communicative action between God and his people. I will eventually interpret Lamentations according to their philosophical, hermeneutical, theological and literary standpoints. Vanhoozer firmly maintains the Christian faith against the elucidation of Deconstructionism as related to the 'death of author'.

If we are reading the Bible as the word of God, therefore, I suggest that the context that yields this maximal sense is the *canon*, taken as a unified communicative act. It is important to note that the canon is both a completed and a public act, and as such provides access to the divine intention. The canon as a whole becomes the unified act for which the divine intention serves as the unifying principle. In conclusion, the canon is a complete and

completed communicative act, structured by a divine authorial intention. The divine intention does not contravene the intention of the human author but rather supervenes on it. Between the contexts of the author and reader stand a number of textual contexts – narrative, generic, canonical – that enable us to extend biblical meaning into the present (see Vanhoozer 1998:263-5).

My reading of the Scripture as canon is based on Childs' assertion (1993:86-87):

The enterprise of Biblical Theology is theological because by faith seeking understanding in relation to the divine reality, the divine imperatives are no longer moored in the past, but continue to confront the hearer in the present as truth. Therefore it is constitutive of Biblical Theology that it be normative and not merely descriptive, and that it be responsive to the imperatives of the present and not just of the past. ....Therefore the aim of the enterprise involves the classic movement of faith seeking knowledge, of those who confess Christ struggling to understand the nature and will of the One who has already been revealed as Lord. The true expositor of the Christian scriptures is the one who awaits in anticipation toward becoming the interpreted rather than the interpreter. The very divine reality which the interpreter strives to grasp, is the very One who grasps the interpreter. The Christian doctrine of the role of the Holy Spirit is not a hermeneutical principle, but that divine reality itself who makes understanding of God possible.

Childs uses *canon* "to refer to the entire historical process of the formation of the Bible and its continuing authority in the life of faith communities." He uses the term *canonization* "to refer to the final stages of the process of determining what will be included in the canon." Therefore, while canon embraces "the entire process of the development and authority of the Bible, *canonization* focuses on the final boundary setting" (Scalise 1994:44).

I do not, however, agree with all the particulars of Childs' canonical approach. Childs' challenge to biblical scholars to move away from re-ordering biblical books as a plurality of texts by appealing to the canon raises the issue of canonical order. Although Childs calls his approach to interpretation 'canonical approach', he has tended to focus on individual books and has largely ignored the different number and order of books represented by a plurality of canons. The major criticism of Childs' approach has been his failure to recognize the plurality of canons and the way they are ordered (see Conrad 2003: 47)[14].

Childs claims that the canonizers intended scripture to function authoritatively for future generations too. We must not forget that the individual human authors of Scripture often intended their readers to receive their words not merely as human words but as the Word of God (see Childs 1993:60-68).

3.2 Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation

3.2.1 A Brief Review of Speech-Act Theory

3.2.1.1 J. L. Austin

My canonical and literary approach is concerned with speech-act theory, Vanhoozer's hermeneutical frame on the Scripture, borrowed from Austin and Searle. Speech act theory[15]

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[14] Philip Davies (1998: 52) makes this point when he says:

> Childs certainly makes many perceptive literary and ideological links within the books of the Old Testament, which make an interesting extension of the redaction-critical procedures of the 'historical critics.' But surely the crucial links for his procedure must be between the books. Most of Childs's analysis in fact operates at the level of individual books, and evidence that these were copied and recopied so as to reach a final theological shape (and this shape itself is often hard to verify!) does not explain the canon at all.

[15] For the background of two major speech-act theorists, Austin and Searle, see White 1988:1; Its foundations were laid in England during the post-World War II period by the renowned Oxford philosopher of language, John Langshaw Austin, whose untimely death from cancer in 1960 at the age of forty-nine, dealt a major blow to modern philosophy. Though the development of the theory can be seen in his early work in the 1930's and 40's, the book which today is the primary source of linguistic studies is the series of lectures that Austin gave as the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1955, unassumingly entitled, *How to do Things With Words* (1975). Austin's 'mantle' seems to have passed to one of his former students, the Berkeley philosopher, John R. Searle, whose book, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1969), systematized and developed the ground-breaking work done by Austin.

is a philosophical theory of language use which is being applied today to a wide range of phenomena from literary texts to religious rituals, from semantics to law.

Austin addressed the apparently quite limited question of whether there are uses of language that do more than refer to things, which actually bring things about: christening, promising, betting, arriving at verdicts, bequeathing. Such uses of language Austin called 'performatives' and distinguished from 'constatives.' The propositions of performative sentences are not such as can usually be called either true or false, though they may be successful or unsuccessful, or in Austin's terminology, felicitous or infelicitous. Thus a bet is neither true nor false, but either follows or violates understood rules: it is infelicitous to bet someone when the outcome is already known, or make a promise that one knows cannot be fulfilled. Further, the felicity of performatives would seem to depend on the existence of institutions (the social institution of marriage, the legal system) or on commonly understood rules; they depend on what John Searle calls 'institutional facts' (see Harris 1988: 33)

Austin believed that the study of language had been too focused on words rather than sentences. He held that the best way to study the word-world relation was to examine the situations in which we do (or do not) use certain expressions. Syntax, the study of a sentence's grammatical form, takes us only so far. Austin's main point is that *saying* is also a kind of *doing*; many utterances are *performative* ("I apologize"; "I bet you a dollar"). It is not that words themselves represent, much less picture, some physical or mental act; no, the utterance itself – performed in the right way in the appropriate circumstances – is the performance of the apology (see Vanhoozer 1998: 208-9).

Austin (1975: 109) made a three-fold distinction:

Locution   – the actual words uttered

Illocution – the force or intention behind the words

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Perlocution – the effect of the illocution on the hearer

For example, I might say: *It's hot in here!* (locution), meaning: *I want some fresh air!* (illocution) and the perlocutionary effect might be that someone opens the window. Generally speaking there is a close and predictable connection between locution and perlocutionary effect (see Thomas 1995: 49-50).

The *locutionary act* is the act of producing a coherent and acceptable grammatical utterance. Within this locutionary act three additional acts occur (Botha 1991c: 65). Austin (1975: 92-3) distinguishes these acts as follows:

To say anything is (A.a) always to perform the act of uttering certain noises (a 'phonetic' act) … (A.b) always to perform the act of uttering certain vocables or words … in a certain construction, i.e. conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar, with a certain intonation, etc. this act we may call a 'phatic' act … and (A.c) generally to perform the act of using that pheme or its constituents with a certain more or less definite 'sense' and a more or less definite 'reference' (which together are equivalent to 'meaning'). This act we may call a 'rhetic' act.

In analyses of texts, the *locutionary act* as such, is not usually studied. Speech act analysis concentrates on the illocution and perlocution. In our analysis we have, because of the nature of the study, only devoted limited space to the actual study of the locution, and concentrated more on the illocution and perlocution (see Botha 1991c: 65).

The *illocutionary act* of a speech act represented the attempt on the part of the writer to accomplish some purpose, such as, promising, informing, warning, putting forward as hypothesis, arguing, predicting, etc (Neufeld 1994: 44; see Austin 1975: 99-100). For

example, "what time is it?" could, depending on the context of utterance mean any of the following (Thomas 1995: 50):

The speaker wants the hearer to tell her the time;

The speaker is annoyed because the hearer is late;

The speaker thinks it is time the hearer went home.

The *perlocutionary act* is the act by which the speaker achieves certain intended effects in his/her hearer, in addition to those achieved by the illocutionary act (Botha 1991c: 66). For instance, a speech act with the illocutionary force of a warning, "get out of the building," might effect a response of alarm, anger, or curiosity, depending on the specific nature of the warning. The *perlocutionary act* of a speech act referred to the production of consequential effects on feelings, thoughts, or actions of the readers (see Neufeld 1994: 44-45). There is, however, a distinction between intended perlocution and real perlocution or reaction. If the speaker in our example intended to hurt the other person, then that is his/ her intended perlocution. If the hearer interprets the remark in such a way that he/ she does not take the speaker seriously, and assumes that he/ she is joking, then the real perlocution differs from the intended perlocution (see Botha 1991c: 66). Therefore a perlocutionary act should be limited "to the *intentional* production of effects on (or in) the hearer. Our reason is that only reference to intended effects is necessary to explain the overall rationale of a given speech act" (Bach and Harnish 1979: 17).

3.2.1.2 John Searle

Although there are many writers who still appeal directly and solely to Austin when discussing speech act, it is best to see Austin's work as laying a foundation which invited

development. This has been achieved most notably in the work of John Searle, who studied under Austin himself (Briggs 2001b: 43-44).

The main difference between Austin and Searle would be that Searle rejects Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary. Searle's basic contention is that although in theory one might see (Austin's) locutionary act as different from an illocutionary one, since they clearly represent different *concepts*, in practice they are never separate. This is because Austin's *rhetic* act is in fact illocutionary. Thus the locutionary act was always illocutionary in nature (Briggs 2001b: 46, italics his).

Searle (1995: 24) restates the general heading of speech act or distinct kinds of acts as follows:

Uttering words (morphemes, sentences) = performing *utterance acts*

Referring and predicating = performing *propositional acts*

Stating, questioning, commanding, promising, etc. = performing *illocutionary acts*

Searle explains that in performing an illocutionary act one characteristically performs propositional acts and utterance acts. But an utterance act can be done without performing the other two acts, for instance, one can utter words without saying anything (see Searle 1995: 24). Stated more clearly, "propositions are not acts in speech act theory, for the term proposition refers to the content of an utterance, not to an assertion or statement. In this respect Searle differs from most philosophers or linguists who usually consider statements to be propositions. For him a propositional act is the speaker's expression of a proposition" (Ito 2000: 14). One should note, but many do not, that the locutionary act has no place in Searle's scheme, and that, on the above account, it invites confusion to persist with the term if it is Austin's idea of 'locutionary' which is in view (Briggs 2001b: 47).

In his major work, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Searle (1995: 3) opens thus:

> How do words relate to the world? How is it possible that when a speaker stands before a hearer and emits an acoustic blast such remarkable things occur as: the speaker means something; the sounds he emits mean something; the hearer understands what is meant; the speaker makes a statement, asks a question, or gives an order?

In these sentences, Searle's central question is ultimately related to the question of meaning and communication. According to Searle, the speech act or acts performed in the utterance of a sentence are in general a function of the meaning of the sentence. The meaning of a sentence does not in all cases uniquely determine what speech act is performed in a given utterance of that sentence, for a speaker may mean more than what he actually says, but, in principle, it is always possible for him to say exactly what he means. Therefore, it is in principle possible for every speech act one performs or could perform to be uniquely determined by a given sentence (or set of sentences), given the assumptions that the speaker is speaking literally and that the context is appropriate. And for these reasons a study of the meaning of sentences is not, in principle, distinct from a study of speech acts. properly construed, they are the same study. Since every meaningful sentence in virtue of its meaning can be used to perform a particular speech act (or range of speech acts), and since every possible speech act can in principle be given an exact formulation in a sentence or sentences (assuming an appropriate context of utterance), *the study of the meanings of sentences and the study of speech acts are not two independent studies but one study from two different points of view* (see Searle 1995:18, italics mine).

3.2.2 Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation[16]

3.2.2.1 Donald Evans's *The Logic of Self-Involvement*

One of Austin's own students, Donald Evans, produced an early study in applications of the ideas of speech act theory to biblical language, and more recently there has been a growing literature involving the use of speech act theory in biblical and theological studies (see Briggs 2001b: 4). D. Evans entitled his book, *The Logic of Self-Involvement*, with the long subtitle, *A Philosophical Study of Everyday Language with Special Reference to the Christian Use of Language about God as Creator*. Evans says (1963: 17-8):

> My main point, in any case, is that the basic 'ordinary' language to which an analytic philosopher should appeal when he considers Christian conceptions is biblical language. If analytic philosophers have failed to do this, it is certainly not because their method precludes such an appeal. Let us therefore have a closer look at 'biblical language'.

The Logic of Self-Involvement is a subtle and difficult book with a far-reaching agenda. In it Evans attempts to show that when one uses language such as 'God is my creator' in the biblical context, then, logically specking, one makes certain self-involving commitments with respect to one's acknowledgement of status and role, as well as feeling and attitudes. Thus the use of biblical language draws the speaker logically into a certain kind of relationship with God and the speaker's fellow humans. This is an ambitious argument. It is "only partially

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[16] The study of the Bible in terms of speech act theory is by no means a new undertaking. **D. Evans**, in his book, *The Logic of Self-Involvement* (1963), proposed a new 'logic of self-involvement' on the basis of Austin's theory of performative language. **A. C. Thistleton** (1970) introduced aspects of speech act theory into the study of the parables. **G. B. Caird**'s work, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (1980), also owes much to Evans and to Austinian thought generally. The Austinian concept of performative language has also been given a centrally important role by **Timothy Polk** in his thorough-going and illuminating study of the confessions of Jeremiah (1984). Polk argues for the self-involving and self-constituting nature of much of the language of the confessions. **Jacobs** (1985) and **Snyman** (1983) utilized the methodology of speech act theory in dealing with the text of 1 Corinthians. Volume 41 of *Semeia* (1988) was entitled *Speech Act Theory and Biblical Criticism* used the same techniques. **E. Botha** (1991c) and **D. Neufeld** (1994) used speech act theory in a Johannine study (see White 1988: 54-57; Botha 1991c: 63). There are some works by **K. Vanhoozer** (1993, 1995, 2000, 2005) and **N. Wolterstorff** (1995), **R. Briggs** (2001b) and others which adopt a similar approach.

successful, but it merits close attention since it remains the most detailed attempt to articulate a speech-act view of construal in biblical interpretation, which is all the more remarkable since the book pre-dates almost all the post-Austin development of speech act theory" (Briggs 2001b:153)[17].

3.2.2.2 Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Divine Discourse* and Speech-Act Theory

How does the understanding of language and meaning affect the way of interpreting texts, and also of interpreting God, self, and the world? In this regard, we find that a recent contribution of N. Wolterstorff deserves a careful investigation (see Choi 1999: 258). In his book Divine Discourse, Nicholas Wolterstorff proposes the framework of speech action theory, as he calls it, as a way of articulating how it can be that God speaks through the biblical text, or more precisely in the biblical text. The view of so-called 'reformed epistemologists' like Wolterstorff which have played a role as a defensive polemic against a certain sort of philosophical argument, namely, that it is incoherent to read the bible in the belief that God may speak to the reader through that process, 'are designed solely to negate or blunt the attack of foundationalist epistemological theories on religious belief.' This book mounts an argument that the locutions of the bible may serve as the vehicles of divine illocutions, thus securing the literal claim that God speaks, since to speak is to engage in the production of illocutionary acts (see Briggs 2001b: 15)[18]. Wolterstorff (1995:75) writes:

> Now we must reflect on the very nature of speech, of discourse. That will complete the task of showing the difference between speech and revelation. More importantly, nothing short of digging down to the very nature of speech will give us a footing solid enough for addressing the question whether it is coherent to suppose that God speaks.

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[17] see also Neufeld 1994: 52-6
[18] See in more detail Wolterstorff 1995: 75-129.

To say it once more, when I speak of "speaking" (and "discoursing"), I will always have in mind speech actions – that is, actions which can function as what J. L. Austin called illocutionary actions. No doubt ordinary English usage is such that in speaking of "speaking," one could also have in mind locutionary actions: actions consisting of uttering or inscribing or signing some words. So my usage represents a regimentation of ordinary English.

In this work, Wolterstorff uses "the notion of double-agency discourse from speech-act theory to argue for a biblical hermeneutic that has as its goal hearing what God has said, and is saying, to us. The goal of interpretation becomes to hear the divine discourse" (Bartholomew 2001: xxxii).

Wolterstorff (1995: 261) sums up his project as follows:

After distinguishing various modes of speaking and offering an account of its nature, I went on to argue that, from a theistic perspective, God *could* speak; there is nothing impossible in that. From those issues of discourse theory and of philosophical theology, we moved on to issues of interpretation. Here I singled out for near-exclusive attention that long-enduring practice, though now intensely controverted practice within the Christian community of reading the Bible so as to discern what God said by way of authoring it. I defended the legitimacy in general of authorial-discourse interpretation; and I considered how one ought to go about interpreting scripture if it is the single divine voice that one is looking for. Now at last we are face to face with the question *does* God speak?

As I noted previously, Wolterstorff began his study with an assertion that God does speak. This is implicit in his commentary on Augustine's conversion experience (*tolle lege, tolle lege*). The question in this penultimate chapter, are we 'now at last face to face with the

question does God speak?' is somewhat odd, if not a little jarring. What did Wolterstorff defends in connection with Augustine's experience, if not the claim that in that experience God had spoken to Augustine. There is already an epistemological settlement in the claim that 'God speaks'. It is evident in the following acknowledgement: 'Our situation is not that we and a few others have recently begun to entertain the proposition that God speaks, and are now wondering whether to accept or reject the proposition. Countless human beings, down through the ages, and on into our own time and place, have in fact believed that God speaks. Let us, then pose our question in full recognition of that fact; let us ask how such beliefs are to be appraised' (1995: 261)[19].

Furthermore, in his article 'The Promise of Speech-Act Theory for Biblical Interpretation' in *After Pentecost* (2001), Wolterstorff proposes 'authorial-discourse interpretation', which leads to the development of the concept of 'double-agency discourse' in his work, *Divine Discourse*. Hesse's view of Wolterstorff's methodology is that 'the first stage of interpretation is to interpret what is said by the human writers themselves; the second stage of interpretation is the theological task of discerning what God is saying through the medium of these interpreted human texts involved some kind of commitment to a Christian ontology' (see Hesse 2001: 91-96).

He points out Derrida's polemic against the textual-sense hermeneutics, and explains his case for 'authorial-discourse interpretation', which is aimed at what the speaker said – that is, which illocutionary act he or she performed. Wolterstorff argues that this approach holds considerable promise for interpreting Scripture as divine discourse. Such a biblical hermeneutic is dogmatic in its explicit use of theological convictions in interpretation, notably at the 'second hermeneutic' of the double agency, in which one inquires after God's illocution in appropriating this text (see Bartholomew 2001: xxxii).

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[19] See also Asiedu 2001:283-310; especially in relation to this paragraph, 298-303.

Finally, he explains how he finds authorial-discourse theory usefully applicable as a way of understanding how the Bible can be, as a unity, 'God's speech act', even though it is mediated through fallible human writers. Thus a Christian may adopt the ontological premise that God speaks (performs illocutionary acts) through the Bible by using 'what the writers say' in the text for his own purposes (see Hesse 2001: 94). Wolterstorff ends the work with the following paragraph (2001: 89-90):

> The church over the centuries has explored a number of ways of understanding God's relation to these writings; to think of them as the medium of God's very speech is only one of those ways. …… As for myself, I do believe that Scripture is an instrument of divine discourse. But defending that conviction would require a theological, not a philosophical, essay. And in any case, my project for this present essay was limited to laying out the promise of speech-act theory for biblical interpretation. Whether that promise should be grasped, and in particular, whether it should be grasped in the way I have proposed, is a different – and let me say, more important – matter. For that hinges on whether Scripture is in fact, and literally so, the Word of the Lord.

3.2.2.3 Anthony C. Thiselton's Major interest

A. C. Thiselton is a major theorist in the field of speech act theory and Biblical interpretation. In 1970, he demonstrated the usefulness of speech act theory through his critical assessment of the study of the parables by E. Fuchs. Thisselton's approach was drawn on some parallels suggested by Robert Funk between the language-event of continental hermeneutics and the performative-utterance approach of Austin, Austin's theories became part of the framework for Thiselton's later work. Austin and Wittgenstein offer more nuanced tools for the task: "the crux of the matter is that assertions themselves may function in various ways and with

various effects" (Thiselton 1970: 437-68[20]). This discussion opened up "some new question and directions in the field of biblical interpretation. As the increasing number of literature shows, many scholars take advantage of this theory nowadays" (Choi 1999: 257).

Thiselton's conviction is that 'Speech-act theory has suffered undeserved neglect in biblical interpretation, in systematic theology, and in discussions of "religious language" in textbooks on the philosophy of religion'. In a series of works over the last thirty years he has sought to indicate some of the appropriate resources offered by speech act theory for these various tasks (see Briggs 2001b: 20).

Thiselton's major works, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (1980) and *The New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (1992), expertly and properly reflect on his varied interests in the Bible and language, the text and recent hermeneutical debates, especially the Bible and the postmodern ideas. In his other work, *Interpreting God and The Postmodern Self: On Meaning, Manipulation and Promise*, Thiselton deals with the problem of language and meaning in the postmodern age seriously and convergently.

In relation to speech act theory, Thiselton notes the crucial nature of the illocutionary/ perlocutionary distinction so central to speech act theory yet which lies beyond the reach of the purely functional approach to the effects of language on readers (see Briggs 2001b: 22). Thiselton (1994: 137) points out:

> The Authority of the Bible, then, derives from the operative statutory or institutional validity of transforming speech-acts in Scripture. These speech-acts remain temporally conditional, and engage with processes of understanding which are also temporal. But while corrigibility implies temporal relationality, it does not evaporate into what is often called radical relativism.

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[20] See also Briggs 2001b:20-21.

For interpretation serves to advance the reading community towards those verdicts and corroboration of promises and pledges which will become public and revealed as definitive at the last judgement.

We can see Thiselton's recent major interest related to speech-act theory, 'Communicative Action and Promise in Interdisciplinary, Biblical, and Theological Hermeneutics' in *The Promise of Hermeneutics* (1999). In the book, he focuses on the significance of the Scripture as *communicative action* with speech-act theory. Thiselton (1999: 223) writes:

We should note at the outset that a variety of genres and locutionary acts of utterance in biblical texts and elsewhere do not necessarily correspond with the illocutions that these forms of language may be used to perform. This constitutes a widely recognized principle in speech-act theory from J. L. Austin and John Searle to Steven Davis and others.

On 'Communicative Action and Promise in Interdisciplinary, Biblical, and Theological hermeneutics,' Thiselton (1999: 239) sums up two kinds of speech act, '*directives* and *promise*.' In the context of biblical theology, "the relation between illocutionary acts of *promise* and illocutionary *directives* sums up the heart of the gospel, including, more strictly, the Pauline contrast between gospel and law." More obviously these two may bring the world into conformity with the purposes of God. "*Directives* play a role, for faith entails obedience. A regime of *directives* corresponds to the dispensation of *law of change by human endeavour*. *Promise* provides the covenantal ground on which transformation by the gracious action of God ultimately depends. The covenant of *promise* is a dispensation of *grace: of change by divine agency, giving and given*."

3.2.3 Vanhoozer's Concept of Speech Act

Kevin Vanhoozer has proposed the suitability of speech act theory for the various tasks of biblical interpretation and theological hermeneutics, and his works have a direct bearing on my dissertation. On various forms of biblical criticism since the Enlightenment, Vanhoozer (2002: 128) considers that, since the Enlightenment, "various forms of Biblical criticism have progressively chipped away at the concept that the Bible is identified with divine revelation." According to his assertion, "the rootedness of the language and traditions of Scripture in human history became increasingly apparent, to the point that the Bible appeared to be a human-made rather than God-breathed product."

As shown in his articles and books, Vanhoozer's Scripture principle and hermeneutical perspectives are essentially theological. Vanhoozer, in his article, *The Spirit of Understanding: Special Revelation and General Hermeneutics* [21] , emphasizes "*All hermeneutics, not simply the special hermeneutics of Scripture, is 'theological.'* … I am arguing that general hermeneutics is inescapably theological. … Interpretation ultimately depends upon the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. *Faith*, that there is a real presence, a voice, a meaning in the text; *hope*, that the interpretive community can, in the power of the spirit, attain an adequate, not absolute, understanding; *love*, a mutual relation of self-giving between text and reader" (Vanhoozer 1997:160-1).

In his other book, *First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics* (2002), Vanhoozer (2002: 128, italics mine) emphasizes his perspective on the Scripture:

One of the major factors in the demise of the Scripture principle was the rise of historical criticism. What is perhaps less well documented is the extent to which the dispute about the

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[21] In Lundin's edition of essays, *Disciplining Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Christian Perspective* (1997).

Scripture principle was essentially *theological*. For what is at stake in debates about Scripture is ultimately one's doctrine of God. In this article therefore I propose to deal more with *theological* than with exegetical or historical arguments against the Scripture principle.

His emphasis was eventually clarified in his major work, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Knowledge*. In the book, Vanhoozer's main debaters are Jacques Derrida, Stanley Fish and postmodernists, who have emphasized 'indeterminacy of meaning' or 'preferability of meaning'. Vanhoozer clarifies his main interest (1998: 9):

Third, and most important, I became increasingly convinced that many of the contentious issues at the heart of current debates about biblical interpretation, about interpretation in general, and about postmodern interpretation in particular, were really *theological* issues. I began to see meaning as a theological phenomenon, involving a kind of transcendence, and the theory of interpretation as a theological task. Instead of a book on biblical interpretation, therefore, I have written a theology of interpretation. To be precise, it is a systematic and Trinitarian theology of interpretation that promotes the importance of Christian doctrine for the project of textual understanding. What started out as a work in hermeneutic theology has become a book on *theological hermeneutics*.

The title of Vanhoozer's book, *Is there a Meaning in This Text?* (1998), alludes to S. Fish's *Is There a Text in This Class?*. Vanhoozer objects to S. Fish's pragmatism and Derrida's deconstruction as the hermeneutic nonrealist. These authors agree with each other on the point that there is no such thing as innocent or objective reading. Vanhoozer claims that *meaning can be adequately known* through a process of "thick description" that views the

text as a complex literary act and respects its various levels (see Vanhoozer 1998:22-9).

It may be helpful at this stage to consider some aspects of Vanhoozer's hermeneutic theory. Vanhoozer (1998:324) emphasizes:

The primary goal of interpretation is textual understanding. … *Understanding is a matter of getting into cognitive contact with what the author was doing in a text and with what the text is about*. … We grasp the meaning of the text when we understand, not some fact about the text, but the text itself. My thesis, briefly put, is that the most adequate descriptions of texts are those that seek to understand the text as a complex communicative act.

Furthermore Vanhoozer (1998:325) concludes that "the text's existence and nature alike are ultimately inexplicable apart from some consideration of communicative agency." The text as a literary act, then, is the principal norm for valid interpretation.

By the way, why does he have such an interest in speech act? Vanhoozer explains (2002:163-4):

First, because thinking in terms of speech acts approximates the way the Bible itself treats human speech. Moreover, as Nicholas Wolterstorff has demonstrated, speech act categories have the potential to help us appreciate what it means to call the Scriptures God's Word. For me, however, the most important contribution speech act philosophy makes is to help us to break free of the tendency either to reduce meaning to reference or to attend only to the propositional content of Scripture. Viewing texts as doing things other than representing states of affairs opens up possibilities for transformative reading that the modern obsession with information has eclipsed. Finally, speech act philosophy commends itself as perhaps the most effective antidote to certain deconstructive toxins that threaten the very project of textual

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interpretation and hermeneutics.

The concept of a speech act, according to Kevin Vanhoozer, is "a helpful one with which to integrate and interpret the classical categories of revelation, inspiration and infallibility." It allows us to transcend the debilitating dichotomy between revelation as "God saying" and as "God doing." For the category speech act acknowledges that saying too is a doing, and that persons can do many things by "saying" (see 2002:129-30).

3.3 Reading Scripture as *Divine Communicative Action*

3.3.1 A Communication Model of Biblical Interpretation

Vanhoozer is emphatically a reformed epistemologist. He firmly believes that the Scripture, as the Word of God, is the communicative medium between God and His people. Vanhoozer's term of 'canonical' embraces 'dogmatic' or 'theological' concepts as does N. Wolterstorff: "Interpreting Scripture for divine discourse is an inherently and unabashedly 'dogmatic' mode of interpretation" (Wolterstorff 2001: 85).

The historical approach to exegesis interprets the Scripture in terms of relevant events and the persons involved. The danger is that reconstruction of the history can be thought of as the whole work of interpretation. This raises the issue of the relation of text to context *within the framework of questions about textuality*. Those who practice textuality as firmly anchored in the stream of history and therefore also regard the Scripture as inextricably interwoven with the events, life, and people which gave them meaning (see Neufeld 1994: 37)[22].

It is perhaps worth noting in this regard that many of the more substantial recent treatments of speech act theory in theological-biblical perspective do concern themselves with precisely the question of how speech act theory can contribute to

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[22]   Italics are his quotation from A. Thiselton, 1992:58.

various aspects of the hermeneutical task rather than with speech act theory as a form of criticism (Briggs 2001b:102-3).

Vanhoozer proposes "the model of communicative action for conceiving the Scriptures as the revelatory Word of God." According to Vanhoozer, the Bible is "a diverse collection of God's mighty speech acts which communicate the saving Word of God" (Vanhoozer 2002: 131).

As indicated previously, my hermeneutical presumption reflects on the theological (or canonical) and literary interpretation on the Bible. The Scripture is the text for a communication between God and humanity. I wish to reassert the approach to the Word of God adopted by the Reformers. Their characteristic interpretative methods are not separated into 'literal' (in my view, this term is applicable to 'literary') and 'historical' meaning. My understanding of the Scripture reflects Childs' and Vanhoozer's 'canonical' concept. The key for Childs is that the text itself, and only the text, renders its referent. What the texts are about is not something behind the text or over the text, but rather something in the text (see Vanhoozer 1998: 309).

3.3.2 Scripture-Act Theory

Vanhoozer follows Alvin Plantinga's advice (1983) to Christian philosophers: "What is needed is less accommodation to current fashion and more Christian self-confidence." Vanhoozer asks "why Christian faith should be excluded from the search for understanding when other faiths – including modernity's faith in instrumental reason, empiricism and naturalism – are not" (see Vanhoozer 2002:160). Vanhoozer's hermeneutical premise is "the search for understanding (credo ut intelligam)" (see 1998:30-2; also 2002:160-1).

In his article, *From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts: The Covenant of Discourse and the Discourse of the Covenant* in *Fist Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics* (2002),

Vanhoozer (2002:161) applies speech-act theory to the interpretation of Scripture extendedly:

> The present essay evaluates the extent to which speech act philosophy approximates and contributes to what theologians want to say about language. This is not to say that speech act categories will dominate the discussion. On the contrary, we will see that Christian convictions concerning, say, divine authorship, the canon and the covenant will lead us to both modify and intensify the typical speech act analysis. My goal is to let the "discourse of the covenant" (Scripture) inform and transform our understanding of the "covenant of discourse" (ordinary language and literature).

In this work, Vanhoozer's main interest is in the second part. In the first part, he explores what he calls the *covenant of discourse*: a philosophy and theology of communication. His hope is to achieve a certain consensus about language and understanding based on a strategic appropriation of certain philosophical concepts that will be acceptable to Christian biblical scholars and theologians. In the second part, he turns to the *discourse of the covenant*, that is, to a consideration of the Bible as written communication. Dealing with the canon – a complex, intertextual communicative act – will lead us to modify and develop our understanding of how biblical language works in ways that go beyond typical speech act theory.

However, the benefit of using speech act categories to describe the divine discourse in Scripture becomes apparent. Throughout the essay he examines not only what speech acts are, but the implications for looking at language as a form of human action as well, particularly for the sake of interpretation. Here too the leading theme of covenant proves helpful, insofar as interpretation is largely a matter of fulfilling one's covenantal obligation toward the communicative agents, canonical or not, who address us (see 2002: 161).

Human languages should not be thought of as free-floating sign systems that enjoy an existence independent of their users. A language is a vehicle for communication. Vanhoozer (2002:167) claims that *interpersonal communication is the primary function of language; its other functions, for example, its use in the articulation of thought, are derivative from that*[23]. By "speech act" or "discourse," then, he refers to language-in-communicative-use. Vanhoozer (2002:162-202) summarizes ten states for Scripture-act theory of his own accord; from one to seven, related to "the covenant of discourse (speech acts)", from eight to ten, related to "the discourse of covenant (canonical action or Scripture acts):

1. Language has a "design plan" that is inherently covenantal;

2. The paradigm for a Christian view of communication is the triune God in communicative action;

3. "Meaning" is the result of communicative action, of what an author has done in tending to certain words at a particular time in a specific manner;

4. The literal sense of an utterance or text is the sum total of those illocutionary acts performed by the author intentionally and with self-awareness;

5. Understanding consists in recognizing illocutionary acts and their results;

6. Interpretation is the process of inferring authorial intentions and of ascribing illocutionary acts;

7. An action that aims to produce perlocutionary effects on readers other than by means of understanding counts as strategic, not communicative, action;

8. To describe a generic (or canonic) illocution is to describe the communicative act that structures the text considered as a unified whole;

9. The Spirit speaks in and through Scripture precisely by rendering its illocutions at the

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[23] Italics are his quotation from William P. Alston (2000:154).

sentential, generic and canonic levels perlocutionarily efficacious;

10. What God does with Scripture is covenant with humanity by testifying to Jesus Christ (illocution) and by bringing about the reader's mutual indwelling with Christ (perlocution) through the Spirit's rendering Scripture efficacious.

He emphasizes the characters of the church as an interpretive community, a people of the book and a covenant community. He concludes that the church is first of all a community oriented to the discourse of the covenant, the Christian Scriptures, yet the church should also be a community that cares about the covenant of discourse in general (see 2002:200-2).

To sum up Vanhoozer's hierarchical arrangement on the interpretation of the Scripture: the more complex objects supervene on the simpler ones, as follows:

Object of Knowledge/ Data	**Method of Knowledge/ Discipline**
Canon	Canon Criticism, Biblical Theology
Genre	Genre Criticism, Literary Criticism
Parole	Speech-Act Philosophy, Discourse Analysis
Langue	Linguistics, Semiotics, Syntax

Thus, the canon is "made up of a variety of literary forms, which are in turn made up of a variety of utterances, which are in turn made up of a variety of words (see Vanhoozer 1998:336)."

Finally, Vanhoozer's Scripture act theory is to find out the meaning of the Scripture (or the text of the Bible) at the canonical level which supervenes on the literary level. In case of Scripture act theory, the literary level is related to text itself. The meaning of a text at a literary level must be carefully studied and modified by the '*fuller sense* (or *meaning*)'

derived from the canonical context. The 'fuller sense' of Scripture associated with divine authorship emerges only at the level of the whole canon (see Vanhoozer 1998:263-4, 313-4). As I note below, understanding the Bible as literature is related to propositional, poetic, and purposive aspects of text as a communicative act, and understanding the Bible as Canon is relating these (propositional, poetic, and purposive) aspects to the Bible considered as a unified divine communicative act, that is, the Word of God.

3.3.3 Literary Meaning of Text

3.3.3.1 Literary Features of the Scripture as a Text and Its Interpretation

As I stated in the previous chapter, literary approach stresses the text as a whole, because it asks the question of the effective force on the whole. In this section I deal with the *written* text as literature in this section.

In literary approach, meaning is related to a function of a text holds within such as literary context. The text, read and interpreted by the reader in its own contemporary setting, is the paramount concern in the literary approach (see Gillingham 1999:179). This approach focuses on linguistic and literary relationships within the text itself for understanding the meaning.

Literary approach has come a long way in demonstrating that the biblical texts in their final forms are works of tremendous literary power and aesthetic quality. This approach has not only shown that the biblical texts employ the syntactical, grammatical, and linguistic codes of the natural language in creatively pleasing ways, but has also succeeded in spotlighting the Bible's equally creative use of the literary languages of the different genres and sub-genres. These may include a whole range of literary devices, such as style, point of view, characterization, plot, thematic organization, and dynamics of reticence (see Tate 1997 67-69).

Most literary study of the Bible simply opts for humanistic literary criticism. It asks "aesthetic questions about its literary forms and rhetorical devices, without pursuing more theoretical questions about the meaning of meaning" (Morgan and Barton 1988: 219). The literary nature of the biblical text requires us "to start with the givenness of the text as is done in all literary works. This also implies that a text may be understood without any reference to its pre-history or sources used" (see Lim 2002:59).

Textual Features such as artistry, stylistic devices, figures of speech, compositional techniques, etc. are taken as a guide to meaning and solving knotty problems. This assumes that a text is organized around a structure and that the layout and language used direct the reader to specific meaning (see Lim 2002:33-4).

3.3.3.2 Literature as a Genre

One of the commonest ways of defining literature is by its literary genres or types. Through the centuries, people have regarded some genres as being literary in nature. Story or narrative and poetry are the most notable categories. Genre is the literary term for a type or kind of writing. A literary approach to the Bible is based on as awareness that literature itself is a genre. The concept of literary genre is so important that the Bible is organized according to different genres (see Ryken 1987:14-5).

As Vanhoozer states, the concept of genre, however, is more than a device for literary classification. Nor should one mistake an interest in literary form with what is called Form Criticism. Form Critics study short passages and trace them back to earlier, oral traditions, which served particular social functions. The effect of Form Criticism, however, has been to separate these passages from their literary context in order to relate them to a historically reconstructed social or religious setting. To focus on genre, on the other hand, is to treat texts as literary wholes - unified communicative act (see Vanhoozer 1998:336).

Just as we must develop linguistic competence in order to understand how words are used in everyday contexts, so we must develop literary competence in order to understand different types of texts. Each genre has its distinctive features and its own 'rules' or principles of operation. The rules that govern a particular literary genre are not extrinsic to the text but are rather embodied within it. Understanding texts is a matter of learning these rules to the point of being able to follow them (see Vanhoozer 1998:337-8). As readers, we "need to approach passages in the Bible with the right expectations. Our awareness of genre programs our encounter with a biblical text, telling us what to look for and how to interpret what we see" (see Ryken 1987:16).

According to L. Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1968), literary genres are like 'language games.' He came to see that there is no one correct way in which language works. There are rather different 'language games,' whereby words are used in very different ways to do different things. The meaning of a word or sentence thus lies in the rules for its actual use in a real-life situation. In Wittgenstein's view, we "will only understand a particular sentence, when we see it in the context of its use" (Vanhoozer 1998:208)[24]. "When language games change, then there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the meanings of words change" (Wittgenstein 1968: sect. 65). As the game has its own 'rules,' each genre has its distinctive features and its own 'rules'.

These metaphors on 'genre' illuminate "genre in three ways: genre explains the possibility of communication in a literary transaction; genres rest upon expectations that arise in readers when they confront a text; and authors can be coerced in composition to conform to genre expectations" (Longman III 1996:142). In my concept on literary genre, when literature genre changes, then there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the meanings of words change.

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[24] On the discussion for Wittgenstein in detail, see Thiselton 1980:357-385.

3.3.3.3 Two Types of Literary Genre in the Old Testament

Genre is of crucial importance, since the reader's identification of a text's genre directs his or her reading strategy (Dillard and Longman III 1994:30). David J. A. Clines (1992:28) says:

> The literature of the Old Testament is essentially story or poem. Whether we take the historical books, wisdom, prophecy, or psalmody, it is only some genealogical lists, land allocations, prose sermons, and laws (all of them set within a narrative framework) that escape the net of these two literary forms. The two genres are not, of course, mutually exclusive. It so happens, however, that examples of blends of story and poem (narrative poetry, ballads, epics) are rare, if not nonexistent, in Old Testament literature.

The two broad genre categories of the Old Testament are poetry and narrative. Large sections of the Old Testament are poetic. In the Old Testament, Psalms, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and Job are poetry. Even though Poetic verse in the Old Testament is Writings of the Hebrew Bible, the prophetic books also contain poetic verse and we also occasionally find poetic form in the New Testament. Furthermore, poetry is found in the Pentateuch (Gen. 49, Exod. 15, and Deut. 32-33) as well as the historical books (Judg. 5, 2 Sam. 22). Poetry makes up about one-third of the whole Bible (see Longman III 1987:168)[25]. Many parts of the Bible are poems or reflect poetic verse.

It is, however, difficult to define how to precisely distinguish poetry and prose in the Old Testament. In the influential book on Old Testament poetry, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (1981), Kugel introduced a new train of thought by rejecting even the term 'poetry' because "there is no word for 'poetry' in biblical Hebrew" (1981:69). He

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[25] In more detail, see Ryken & Longman III 1993:80-81.

argues that the distinction between poetry and prose is best understood as involving different points on a continuum, namely, that there is no sharp dividing line between poetry and prose (see Petersen and Richards 1992:13).

Though Kugel does not agree that it is accurate to speak of 'poetry' in the Bible, he also uses the terms poetry and prose with "heightened" and "unheightened" (see Long 2002:112). In respect of Kugel's assertion, Longman's comment (1987:169) is very appropriate:

These facts have led Kugel to reject the presence of poetry in the Bible. This position is overstated, however, because the difference between prose and poetry in the bible is gradated or fluid, which is to be expected, since all generic distinctions are fluid and not absolute or rigid.

In terms of a different in sound, Sternberg (1985:366) writes:

On the level of sound, for example, poetry radically differs from prose. Poetry is marked by a systematic organization of sound elements, quantitative (notably meter) and/or qualitative (rhyme, orchestration). In prose, even where we come across such patterns, their relevance is as a rule incomparably lower, because they are sporadic and our attention focuses on the larger units of sense.

In any case, we must recognize that biblical "poetry" exists not as an absolute category as well, but along a continuum with the more poetic on one end and the more prosaic on the other. Further, we must remember that biblical poetry may not fit our notions of what constitutes poetry (see Long 2002:112).

In dealing with the use of the term "poetry" in the Scripture, there are no sharply defined boundaries, only differing concentrations of linguistic features that may be evaluated in terms of their relative frequency, diversity, density, or position of occurrence on the one hand, and the nature and intensity of their rhetorical effect on the other. We thus find a variable continuum of literary types and genres that comprise the Old Testament, ranging from those that are more to those that are less poetic in terms of a complex bundle of interrelated stylistic qualities as below (see Wendland 1994:3):

POETRY ----------- prosaic poetry ----- poetic prose ----------- PROSE

I consider that a better way of distinguishing between poetry and prose in the Old Testament is that given by Longman (1987:169):

Poetry may be defined over against prose by reference to ordinary speech. Prose represents a certain departure from normal speech patterns and poetry a further departure. Poetry is a more self-consciously structured language. It is self-referring in the sense that increased attention is given to how something is said as well as to what is said. In this manner, poetry is characterized by a higher level of literary artifice than prose. Poetry may best be defined, then, through a description of the various conventions or devices encountered in the poems themselves. Prose is the relative absence of these devices. Instead of characterizing prose and poetry as discrete literary forms, we may better represent them as poles on a continuum …

Most would accept the description of general poetry. Biblical poetry, however, "is better regarded as a type of elevated discourse, composed of terse lines, and employing a high degree of parallelism and imagery. Other tropes and figures may also be present, but, most

commonly, it relies on word and sound repetition and patterning. There is no scholarly consensus regarding meter" (Berlin 2004:2098).

Although the Old Testament contains a considerable amount of poetry, it is written primarily in prose. Prose (or narrative) is closer to normal conversational language that is poetry. The language is ordinarily not as "high" or formal, and fewer metaphors or other images are used (Dillard and Longman III 1994:29-30). Prose consists of such elements as narrator, events, characters, settings[26].

In brief, poetry is highly stylized language that is usually easy to distinguish from prose stories. While there are characteristics of poetry, there is no single or even group of defining traits. In rare instances, particularly in some of the prophets, it is difficult to tell whether the passage is poetic or highly stylized prose. Terseness, parallelism, and imagery are the most common characteristics of Hebrew poetry (see Dillard and Longman III 1994:27-29). I will deal further with the details of Hebrew poetry in the next chapter.

3.3.4 Canonical Meaning of Text as *a fuller sense*

As stated above, the purpose of Vanhoozer's Scripture act theory is to find out the meaning of the Scripture at the canonical level which supervenes on the literary level. The meaning of a text at the literary level must observe a 'fuller sense (meaning)' in the canonical context. Scalise (1994:44) refers to this point:

> To think about the Bible as canon is to think about the authoritative role it has for communities
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> which read is as Scripture, God's holy Word for the people of God. Of course, people –
>
> whether they are Christian or not – can read the Bible in a variety of ways. The Bible can be

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[26] See particularly on 'narrative,' Powell 1990; Alter 1981; Bar-Efrat 1997, on 'narrative' of common literary theory, Chatman 1978; Bal 1985.

read as literature, as a source for archaeological information, as documents of ancient history or sources for the history of religion. Although each of these ways of reading the Bible may have a certain legitimacy, none of them represents the principal way in which Christians have read the Bible. Christian communities (and Jewish communities as well) have read the Bible as Scripture – God's written Word which is authoritative for their faith and practice.

According to Vanhoozer (1998:312-4), Observing a 'fuller sense (meaning)' at the canonical level is concerned with the educational function and the testimonial function of Scripture. This 'fuller sense' is attributed to divine authorship. Vanhoozer (1998:314) assert this point related to Old Testament as follows:

If there is a *sensus plenior* (fuller sense), then, it is on the level of God's gathering together the various partial and progressive communicative acts and purposes of the human authors into one "great canonical Design." …… The Old Testament Scriptures testify to God's gracious activity. Putting them together with the New Testament testimony does not "spiritualize" but "specifies" their reference. Jesus Christ – the fullest embodiment of God's gracious activity in Israel and in the world – is the literal referent of biblical testimony.

Vanhoozer's assertion for a 'fuller sense' has something in common with Childs' one. Childs (1989:8-9) asserts about his own canonical approach to Old Testament:

… I would argue that the Old Testament functions within Christian scripture as a witness to Jesus Christ precisely in its pre-Christian form. The task of Old Testament theology is … to hear its own theological testimony to the God of Israel whom the church confesses also to worship. Although Christians confess that God who revealed himself to Israel is the God and

Father of Jesus Christ, it is still necessary to hear Israel's witness in order to understand who the Father of Jesus Christ is.

Canonical Meaning of Scripture as a fuller sense can also be certified in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. In Vanhoozer' abstract (1998:313) on M. Bakhtin, Bakhtin offers an interesting account of how a work can grow in meaning. "Literary forms carry meaning potential that writers may sense but never fully command. A work's potential is its capacity to function in future circumstances, a capacity that for Childs is precisely the canonical function." To focus solely on what the author explicitly realizes is for Bakhtin (1986:4 and 5) to "enclose" the work "within the epoch":

Trying to understand and explain a work solely in terms of the conditions of its epoch alone, solely in terms of the conditions of the most immediate time, will never enable us to penetrate into its semantic depths. Enclosure within the epoch also makes it impossible to understand the work's future life in subsequent centuries; this life appears as a kind of paradox.

A work of literature … is revealed primarily in the differentiated unity of the culture of the epoch in which it was created, but it cannot be closed off in this epoch: its fullness is revealed only in *great time*.

Chapter 4: Reading the Book of Lamentations

4.0 Introduction

Scholars tend to employ Form Criticism for the interpretive analysis of Lamentations. However when studying the book of Lamentations, Form Criticism does not view the text as a whole. The focus is on understanding the text though a reconstruction of the history behind the text. In this chapter an alternative viewpoint is presented.

This chapter will call into question the assumption that Lamentations can only be understood as an edited collection, even an organized collection, of thoughts for the national pathos. When reading the book of Lamentations, I will consider the text as a communicative action as a literary whole. For this, I will use the hermeneutical focus stated in the previous chapter.

I will divide the first section into two parts. In the first part of the section, I will describe the general features of Hebrew poetry: parallelism, imagery language and etc. In the next, I will develop the theories of poetry and the reading strategy related to the book of Lamentations: acrostic form, speaking voices in the text.

In the second section, I will apply the theories to reading the book of Lamentations by chapters. When applying the theories to the text, I will use the speaking voices as main focus.

Thirdly, as I describe in the previous chapter, this meaning at the literary level must observe a '***fuller meaning***' derived from the canonical level. Canonical Reading is related to a unified divine communicative act at the level of the whole canon (Scripture). The canonical meaning is 'an illocutionary act' of the Biblical text and demands 'a perlocutionary act' of the people of God as the reader who reads a Biblical text as well as Lamentations.

4.1 Poetic Literature and the Book of Lamentations

4.1.1 Features of Hebrew Poetry

4.1.1.1 Parallelism

There is almost universal agreement that poetry is a distinct and unique kind of language. Definitions often describe it as intensified language, an especially concentrated and condensed form of literature. In general, almost all poetry is compact, full of imagery or figurative. Poetry relies more heavily than does prose on recurrent patterns of words and of sounds, and it makes more concentrated use of imagery, symbol, and metaphor. Furthermore, it appeals to a broad range of human experience, engaging not just the intellect but the senses, the emotions, and the intuition of the hearer or reader as well. Hebrew poetry shares these general features of poetry (see Hiebert 2000:1065).

Firstly, the most characteristic aspect of Hebrew poetry is a repetitive pattern, called *parallelism*. In general, most scholars distinguish semantic parallelism from grammatical parallelism. Parallelism is the pairing of a line or lines that are linguistically equivalent. Modern discussions on Hebrew poetry begin with Bishop Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753). Bishop Lowth identified parallelism as the essential characteristic of Hebrew poetry and identified several types of parallelism he found in the Bible: ***synonymous*** (in which essentially the same thought is repeated in different words); ***antithetic*** (in which the same thought is repeated using contrasting terms); and ***synthetic*** (in which the thought introduced in the first colon or line is simply carried forward in the second) (see Travers 2005:594; Long 2002:116). Most recent scholars still follow Bishop Lowth's idea[27].

Lowth's parallelism has received intense scrutiny over the past few years from Kugel,

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[27] For a critical discussion of Lowth's three categories of parallelism, see in particular Kugel 1981:1-59.

Alter, Berlin and others. They assert that parallelism is not just repetitive. This is in contrast with Lowth whom Kaiser and Silva (1994:88) quote, stating that "a second line of poem is *equivalent* with a first in sense" (Lowth, 1834: ix). Kugel indicates that parallelism is not a key to the definition of Hebrew poetry, because many poems have no parallelism or just a weak form of it. He has, however, modified the concept of semantic parallelism as follows: In an A/B bicolon, "B was connected to A, had something in common with it, but was not expected to be (nor regarded as) mere restatement." That is, "B will have an emphatic character: even when it uses the most conventional synonyms or formulae, its very reassertion is a kind of strengthening and reinforcing." Simplifying his discussion we get the following: "A is so, and what's more, B is so" (1981:8).

Following Kugel, Alter delicately develops semantic parallelism. Alter (1985:23) notices:

And … many of the poets are alive to the aesthetic possibilities of counterpointing a predominant intensification or specification of meaning in parallelism with lines founded on synonymity or balanced complementarity. In any case, the system of versification as a whole definitely encourages dynamic interplay between versets in which feelings get stronger, images sharper, actions more powerful or more extreme.

Philips Long supports Alter's viewpoint by aptly stating that "the relationship between semantically parallel lines is not one of *stasis* but of *dynamic movement*" (2002:117).

Berlin says parallelism is "the most prominent rhetorical figure of ancient Near Eastern poetry" (*ABD* 5. 155). Berlin also indicates that "parallelism is not in and of itself a mark of poetry as opposed to prose, or even of elevated style as opposed to ordinary discourse; it is a common feature of all language" (1992:4-5). Though Berlin basically agrees

with Kugel's struggle with terms like 'prose' and 'poetry,' Berlin (1992:5-6) points out:

> It is not parallelism per se, but the predominance of parallelism, …. which marks the poetic expression of the Bible. And since the difference between poetic and less-poetic sections is a matter of degree, we would not expect different kinds of parallelism in "prose" and "poetry," but only different perceptions of their dominance. …… parallelism appears to be the constructive principle on which a poem is built, while a prose passage might have just as much parallelism but not seem to be built on this structure.

The question regarding parallelism is "not how much parallelism a text has, but how much of it is effective and meaningful in terms of focusing the message on itself" (Berlin 1992:9-10). Emphasizing the linguistic approach to the study of Biblical poetry, Berlin observes the grammatical aspect of Hebrew poetry. This is "not totally separable from the semantic aspect, since words affect meaning." But this aspect of parallelism (grammatical parallelism) "benefited from much more fruitful study in later years than did the semantic aspect" (Berlin 1992:65). Berlin (1992:31) writes:

> The grammatical aspect of parallelism – grammatical equivalence and or contrast – is one of the fundamental aspects of biblical parallelism. There is almost always some degree of grammatical correspondence between parallel lines, and in many cases it is the basic structuring device of the parallelism – the feature that creates the perception of parallelism.

The grammatical similarity between two cola in a bicolon will cause the reader to read them closely together, and subtle variations between the cola in terms of syntax add interest to the line. It is another factor that leads us to describe the poetic line as exhibiting both

coherence and variance, similarity and dissimilarity, symmetry and asymmetry. It simply describes the relationship between the syntax and morphology of cola in a poetic line. Poetry is the free variation in syntax. Frequently, the syntactic shape within a poetic line will be the same but with subtle differences. The similar aspects of the cola in a line have the effect that readers will take the two cola as one unit, but the dissimilarity reminds them that the second colon is not a similar statement but a furtherance or sharpening of the first. Such variation breaks the monotony of repetition and lends interest to the line (see Longman III 1987:172-3).

4.1.1.2 Terseness

Terseness is a general feature of the poetries of the world. Poetic line tends to be shorter or more concise than the clauses used in prose. Lines of biblical poetry are generally no longer than three or four words. Hebrew poetry, like most poetry, is very elliptic and compact in its expression[28]. As Kugel (1981:87) points out:

> For terseness too is a form of heightening in biblical style, indeed, one of the most striking and commonly used. It amounts to far more than the concision and compression of expression that one associates with poetry.

Berlin (1992:5) says of Hebrew poetry, "Elevated style is largely the product of two elements: terseness and parallelism," and is basically in agreement with on Kugel's saying, "where these two occur to a high degree we have what would be called poetry; where they are largely (but never entirely) lacking, we have less-poetic expression, which corresponds to what we call prose." Poetry is made terse by its simultaneous exercise of several devices, including conciseness, ellipsis, lack of connectives, and figures of speech. Unlike prose, poetry "builds on the individual word and line, not the sentence. Much is said in little"

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[28] See in more detail, Berlin 2004:2098-2099.

(Travers 2005:595).

The fundamental unit of Hebrew poetry is the line, not the sentence, as in prose. The line is composed of two or more short clauses that are often called cola (singular: colon) by biblical scholars. The most frequent line has two cola (a bicolon), each colon containing three words (see Longman and Ryken 1993:82). In contrast to the sentences of a prose passage with varied in terms of length, cola of poetic passages tend to be equal in length (see Longman III 1987:170).

Hebrew poetry frequently drops a noun or the verb out of the second line[29], thus leaving no parallel grammatical form to balance the line. Even more difficult for interpreters is the decided preference for Hebrew poetry to be written generally without conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or) and with few temporal indicators (when, then, afterward and etc.) or logical connectors (thus, therefore) (Kiser and Silva 1994: 91)[30].

4.1.1.3 Imagery or Figurative Language (Metaphor)

In a discussion of poetry, we cannot omit referring to 'imagery or metaphor,' as these are often thought to be the essence of poetry. It is not merely a question of inserting metaphors here and there for decoration; imagery, like parallelism, is pervasive in poetry. Poetry envisions the world metaphorically, and it offers an alternative way of seeing reality (see Berlin 2004:2101-4). The use of imagery in poetry is very rich. Of course, prose often uses imagery or figurative language, but poetry employs it more frequently than prose. This is

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[29] This is a technique often used in Hebrew poetry. Without repeating the same words in the second colon, the verb or the noun in the first colon is understood, for instance, in Psalm 33:12:

אַ֥שְׁרֵי הַגּ֗וֹי אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָ֥ה אֱלֹהָ֑יו
הָ֝עָ֗ם בָּחַ֥ר לְנַחֲלָ֥ה לֽוֹ

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
　the people he chose for his inheritance

The opening word, **blessed**, is missing from the second colon, but to make sense of the line we must supply the word. Such ellipsis is quite common in Biblical poetry (cf. Longman III 1996:170).
[30] See also Longman III 1996: 170; Long 2002:113-115.

different to literal language. It includes metaphor, symbol, irony, prosopopoeia (personification), and even the anthropomorphisms so common in the Psalms (see Travers 2005:595).

Imagery is an "ambiguous" term (Abrams 1981:78). According to T. Hawkes (1972:60)[31], "all language, by the nature of its 'transferring relation to 'reality' … is fundamentally metaphorical." It is a way to increase the emotional impact. It is "not decorations or crutches for illiterate people; rather, they convey meaning in terms that could not be communicated exactly the same in any other way" and "a theological statement framed in terms of the image and its context in the psalm at large" (Travers 2005:595). The aspect of Hebrew poetry that deserves attention is "its heavy reliance on images and symbols to explore and communicate the central elements of religious life" (Hiebert 2000:1067).

Imagery involves the use of figurative language to create a picture or some other sensory perception in the mind of the reader. An image is not to be taken literally (Long 2002:118). When I read the book of Lamentations, I focus on the figurative language and imagery in it, because the picture which imagery creates is particularly important in understanding the text of Lamentations. I deal with this further below.

4.1.1.4 Others

The discussions related to Lamentations as a literature of Hebrew poetry are on metre, especially so-called, '*qinah*' in Lamentations and other lament literature. Few scholars discuss 'metre or rhythm' as feature of Hebrew poetry. On metre, however, Kugel (1981:141) comments:

This is somewhat spare basement of that imposing structure, the patristic and medieval notion

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[31] This quotation is from Longman III (1996:174).

that the Psalms, Job, and other biblical books are "metrical." Nearly two thousand years of scanning, syllable-counting, and the like have failed to yield a consistent metric structure in them – certainly nothing to which the terms "hexameter," "pentameter," or "trimester" might be meaningfully applied.

Alter also writes that "there is little evidence that the counting of stresses was actually observed as a governing norm for a poem, in the way a Greek or Roman poet watched his iambs or hexameters throughout a poem, and so the term metre should probably be abandoned for biblical verse" (1985:9).

The main characteristic of this metre is that the second colon of the parallel line is consistently shorter than the first. It is usually described as a 3:2 metre, as opposed to the more balanced 3:3 form. The unbalanced metre has often been described as a kind of "limping" rhythm, supposedly appropriate for the mourners who are dragging themselves along in a funeral procession. There is little doubt that the poetry of dirge and lament often has this characteristic of a longer first line and shorter second line, but it is doubtful that we are dealing with metre here, as opposed to some kind of consistent rhythm (Dillard and Longman III 1994:309). The fact that this form is also found in non-lament poetry weakens the close connection drawn between the 'qinah' and the lament[32].

I think that this is a question of reference connected between poetic language and the world of reality. If language is to have meaning, then it must have reference. To argue that poetic language is not a univocal language of significance containing the locus of the true and

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[32] See in particular Hillers 1992:xxx-xxxvii and 18; also Renkema 1998:33-34. On the 'qinah,' Iain Provan (1991:7) properly indicates:

> The question of the poetic metre of the poems has been much discussed. Unfortunately, there is nothing approaching a consensus on this matter. Whichever way we judge it, clearly chapter 5 is quite different metrically from chapters 1-4, in which the so-called **qinah** metre first identified by Budde, 'Klagelied,' predominates. We should not at present be on safe ground, however, if we were to venture further than this general observation.

the false does not mean that poetic language is without reference or of value as truth (see Roffey 1997:64). Some structuralist and formalist schools in contemporary literary criticism would deny this, seeking the 'destruction of reference' (Ricoeur 1978:224). In the search for the meaning of reference in poetic language, Ricoeur (1985:177) acknowledges:

> In written language, the reference is no longer ostensive; poems, essays, works of fiction speak of things, events, states of affairs and characters which are evoked but which are not there. And yet literary texts are about something.

Finally, Ricoeur argues that '*poiesis*' reflects reality not by imitating it through idealism, but through re-creating its phenomenal reality by means of *muthos*, literature. Here Ricoeur seems to follow the concept of Auerbach's *Mimesis* (1968); *poiesis* is *mimesis*, for the poetic does represent in some way the forms of reality (see Hart 1989:118). Thus, Ricoeur in "Mimesis, Reference and Refiguration in *Time and Narrative*" (1989) argues that in reading, the world of the text and the world of the reader intersect (99-100). The reader appropriates the projection of the world contained within the text. Following the concept of Ricoeur's (poetic) discourse, I read the book of Lamentations as containing equivocal language, that which is ordinary language as well as that which is self-consciously poetic. This means that the text is read as a kind of 'poetic discourse.' For this reason, I do not deal with the concept of 'metre and qinah' during interpreting the text. Here I do not deal with these features of Biblical poetry, because they are not required for an understanding of the meaning of the text as a poetic discourse.

4.1.2 Strategy for Reading the Book of Lamentations

4.1.2.1 The Book of Lamentations as Poetry

The book of Lamentations should be viewed as a literary work written as poetry. When we read a poem as literature, poetry as a text is not a historical event but a history interpreted and universalized. To read a text as history is to read it as a specific event, as what happened to particular individuals in geographically and temporally limited contexts. To read a text as literature is to read it as a universal truth (see McKnight 1985:10).

The most obvious feature of literature is that it images its subject matter. It prefers the concrete to the abstract. It appeals to our image-making and image-perceiving capacity. The result is that the subject of literature is not abstract information but human experience. The tendency of literature to speak a language of images is most apparent in poetry (see Ryken 1987:14).

As Brooks and Cleanth (1976:6) writes, poetry "focuses on the feelings and attitudes." The book of Lamentations is written in poetic language to express the emotion of human experience. Poetic language does not appeal to personal logical thought, but to the emotional mind. Nevertheless, the poetic language of Lamentations is very structured by the use of the acrostic form.

No other trope so epitomizes poetry and poetic meaning as the metaphor, saying one thing in terms of another, transferring the connotations of one thing to another (Dobbs-Allsopp, 2002:14). The book of Lamentations contains metaphorical language. As Berlin (2002:3) mentions:

Imagery, a hallmark of poetry, "is ubiquitous in Lamentations. … In the past, most studies of biblical poetry have slighted metaphor in favor of formal poetic devices like metre and parallelism, and most commentaries pay minimal attention to explaining the imagery. … Much of the meaning of the poetry resides in its metaphors, …

4.1.2.2 Speaking Voices (Persona) in Lamentations

4.1.2.2.1 Different Voices in Lamentations

One of the most important approaches to understanding the book of Lamentations is to note the poetic voices, which interweave in the text. It has become customary to identify the various speaking voices in the poems. This is part and parcel of a literary understanding of the poems and the perspectives they express (Berlin 2002:6). For example, in chapter 1, there are at least two voices: the anonymous speaker of the first half of the poem, and Zion, the speaker in its second half. Precisely how many speakers there are in the remainder of the book has been a matter of dispute (see Provan 1991:6). This (speaking voices) is my main focus of understanding the book of Lamentations.

In his article, "The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations (1974:41-9)," Lanahan suggests a stylistic analysis as an aid to identifying the speaking voice. Lanahan has identified five voices (personae) expressing different viewpoints in Lamentations: a reporter (1:1-11b, 15a, 17; 2:1-19); Zion (1:9c, 11c-22; 2:20-22); a defeated soldier (Lam. 3); a bourgeois (Lam. 4); and the community as a whole (Lam. 5). Provan (1991:6-7) on the other hand finds three voices: the main speaker (narrator), Zion, and the people of Jerusalem. As Berlin mentions, we must "distinguish between the real author and the implied author" (2002:6). According to Berlin there are more than five voices in Lamentations (see Berlin 2002:6-7 and each chapter's commentary). I differ from Berlin in the number of voice identified in the text.

Berlin imagines "the chapters as spoken by different voices who stand in different locations in reference to the destruction." This interpretive strategy affords her "a focal point for interpreting the individual chapter and provides, in turn, a coherent way to think of the combination of the chapters" (2002:7). However where Berlin distinguishes several speaking voices I consider that there are just two (or the implied author). Each chapter presents the

destruction to the reader from a different scene or picture (I alter 'perspective' into 'scene or picture' in Berlin's sentence).

The speaking voices have something of the character of dialogues, as Provan indicates. He thinks that the first four poems have something of the character of dialogues, and there are hints of differing perspectives between the voices who participate (1991:7). He decides Lam.5 is monologue. However, I think Lam.5 also has dialogue characteristics. In each of the five chapters, though the voices of narrator as mediator before God, the implied author tries to communicate with between God and others (Jerusalem, Zion or etc.), as well as the implied reader.

4.1.2.2.2 The Speaking Voices in the Created Poetic World of Lamentations

The literary world of the poetic text is not some free-floating indeterminate referent, but is directly related to what its creator – the author – has said and done. In the book of Lamentations, there are various voices. The real reader looks into the created world in the text through these voices. These voices are the eyes of a narrator. They evolve into a perspective (viewpoint). The reader walks in the world of the text following the narrator. These voices are mixed from Lam. 1 to Lam. 4. In Lam. 5, the reader meets the first personal plural voice. In previous chapters of Lamentations, the reader would recognize two or three different voices in each chapter. The voices directed to both God and Jerusalem in previous chapters disappear in Lam. 5, and only a communal voice remains. This single voice in Lam. 5 plays a vital role in what is the most important chapter of the book.

Most commentaries of the book of Lamentations have identified the various voices. The first voice is characterized by a third person discourse and often identified as a narrator. Critics equate the second voice with the personified Jerusalem herself. Her voice is identified throughout the poem by the use of first person discourse. The narrator is a dramatic speaking

voice that exists within the created world of the poem (see Miller 2001:393).

While reading from Lam.1 to Lam.4, the narrator as mediator tenses the reader between two or three different voices. Finally, when reading Lam.5, the reader recognizes the intention of the text which presents only two voices has two different directional voices. In Lam.5, the implied author intends to be identified with the reader as is evident by the use of the word "we" in the text. The real reader becomes the implied reader, not as an onlooker or an observer but as a participant. The final three verses of Lam.5 are the rhetorical question related to Lam 5:1, "זְכֹר יְהוָה" (also, Lam. 3:19). The narrator finally poses a problem about the restoration of Israel related to the nature of YHWH (5:19; also, 3:22-23, 31-33).

When we analyse the book of Lamentations, it is important to focus on the dialogic direction (direct and indirect voiced discourse). Though we see God's voice through the prophetic voice (which I call the 'indirect voice'), when we read the text, we find that God's voice does not exist in the text. It is the missing voice. Continually, the voice in the first person calls to YHWH and waits for His response. I believe that, YHWH's silent voice, together with the several voices and other literary devices in Lamentations functions to create the meaning of the text. The narrator as the implied author, with approximately two personae, plays the role of prophetic mediator. The voices of the narrator are directed in two ways - to God, and also to His people/Jerusalem. The narrator performs the most determinate role as a mediator in the text. This concept will be proved in the following sections below.

Provan (1991:6-7, 33-4, 57-8, 80-4, 109-10, 123-4) finds three voices in Lamentations: (1) the narrator, (2) Zion, and (3) the people of Jerusalem. Provan's analysis of the number of speakers in each chapter may prove instructive. K. M. Heim (1999:144-5) outlines Provan's analysis of the number of speakers:

Lam.1: Two speakers:

(1) a narrator (vv.1-11, interrupted in vv. 9c and 11c)

(2) a sufferer, personified Zion (vv. 9c, 11c-22)

Lam.2: Two speakers:

(1) the narrator (vv. 1-19), with two addresses,

(i) to the reader (vv. 1-12),

(ii) to Zion (vv. 13-19)

(2) personified Zion (vv. 20-22)

Lam.3: Two speakers:

(1) the narrator (vv. 1-33, 37-66)

(2) personified Zion (vv. 34-36)

Lam.4: Two speakers:

(1) the narrator (vv. 1-16, 21-22)

(3) the people of Jerusalem (vv. 17-20)

Lam.5: One speaker:

(3) the people of Jerusalem

I agree with this analytical table by Provan and K. Heim, but I adjust Lam. 1 as follows:

Lam.1: Two speakers:

(1) a narrator (vv.1-11b, 17; except in vv. 9c and 11c)

(2) a sufferer, personified Zion (vv. 9c, 11c-16, 18-22), with two addresses,

(i) to the passers-by or the peoples (vv. 12-16, 18-19)

(ii) to God (vv. 9c, 11c and 20-22)

4.1.2.2.3 Persona and Polyphonic text

In order to investigate the nature and significance of the various shifts of voices in the text and investigate respective theoretical problems in studies of Lamentations studies, we need to describe M. Bakhtin's helpful notion on the polyphonic text. I follow C. W. Miller's suggestion (2001:393-408), which is based on M. Bakhtin's notion. Bakhtin's 'polyphony' is only briefly reviewed here because it is not the major concept needed to understand the text of Lamentations, but a minor, though important one[33].

One major contribution to the study of poetry offered by the New Critics is their shift in focus away from a historical and biographical concern with the poet (for example, 'the poet said ……) to an emphasis on the role of the dramatically conceived speaker in a poem (for example, 'the speaker says ……') (see Brooks and Warren 1976:14-15). R. Scholes (1969:11) utters that all poetry is immanently dramatic and he writes:

> We approach the dramatic element in poetry by assuming that every poem shares some qualities with a speech in a play: that it is spoken aloud by a 'speaker' who is a character in a situation which implies a certain relationship with other characters; and we assume that this speech is 'overheard' by an audience.

Dramatic speakers, to which critics often refer as the poet's mask or persona, are a creation of the poem's author and as such must exist within the poem. The dramatic speaking voice is within the world of the poem in the same way that the dramatic character is in the world of the play (see Miller 1996:19-20). Brooks and Warren (1976:15) comment:

> The notion of the mask – of the voice special to the poem – does not imply that the poet specifically, in the literal person, is not the ultimate speaker and that we are not, in

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[33] For Bakhtin's notion, see Miller 2001:393-7; in more detail, Bakhtin 1984:181-204.

the end, concerned with that person. After all, the poet is the creator of the poem's world and of its persona, and that experience provides the material of poetry.

Language in the poem contains two levels: the semantic level, which one equates with the dramatic speakers, and the level of poetic artifice, which is a creation of the actual poet (see Miller 1998:20)[34]. Readers imaginatively hear the words of the poem as those of the dramatic speaker. One does not hear the poetic devices, for example, rhythm or metre, as a part of the dramatic speaker's utterance, but recognises them as the work of the poet (see Rader 1976:133). Therefore we must carefully understand the speaking voices (persona) and also acknowledge the relation the speakers in the text to the other poetic components.

According to Miller (2001:394), when one acknowledges that two separate and distinct voices do exist in Lam. 1, one may no longer approach the poem as if it were monologic, for the "coming together of two utterances equally and directly oriented toward a referential object," asserts Bakhtin, is the way in which a "weakening or destruction of a monologic context occurs." Their voices, having destroyed the monologic context, must now enter into a dialogical relationship with each other, for as Bakhtin (1984:188-9) suggests:

Two discourses equally and directly oriented toward a referential object within the limits of a single context cannot exist side by side without intersecting dialogically, regardless of whether they confirm, mutually supplement, or (conversely) contradict one another, or find themselves in some other dialogic relationship (that of question and answer, for example). Two equally weighted discourses on one and the same theme, once having come together, must inevitably orient themselves to one another, two embodied meanings cannot lie side by side like two

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[34] Miller revised Wright's discussion of persona and poet. Wright (1960:19) said, "for there are always two levels of speech in a work of literature – that on which the characters speak to each other, to themselves, to an implied audience, or to God, and that on which the writer speaks to us."

objects – they must come into inner contact; that is they must enter into a semantic bond.

4.1.2.3 Acrostic Form

The literary features of the book of Lamentations, dealt with this section from now on, are not general ones as usual in commentaries. I only comment on literary features as they relate to my reading strategy for Lamentations. These characteristics are only briefly dealt with here, but when I interpret the text of Lamentations, I give the explanation related to the text in detail.

The book of Lamentations is unique among the poetic books of the Old Testament. As mentioned by most scholars (see any commentaries on the book of Lamentations), the striking feature of Lamentations is its acrostic form. The first four chapters are full acrostics. This means that the verses are arranged in such a form that their first letters are all consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In chapters 1, 2, and 3, three-line verses are employed, while the fourth chapter consists of two-line verses. The third chapter goes further in its employment of the acrostic form in that every line of every verse starts with the appropriate initial letter of the verse (see Hunter 54-55). Chapter 5 does not fit this pattern in that the acrostic format is absent. However the force of the alphabet is nevertheless palpable, as the poem consists of precisely 22 verses, one for each of the Hebrew alphabetic characters (see Dobbs-Alssopp 2002:17). Chapter 5 thus mirrors an acrostic form. On the acrostic form of Lamentations, I give a diagram from O'Connor (2002:12)[35]:

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[35] In the diagram, 'a' is 'א' (the first Hebrew alphabet), 'b' is 'ב' (the second), and so forth. Chapter 1 to chapter 2 contain 22 verses. Each of 22 verses contains 3 lines, making a poem of 66 lines. Only the first word of the verse in these two chapters begins with the appropriate alphabetic letter. Though chapter 3 also contains 66 lines, but each line is a verse. The poem intensifies the acrostic because it devotes 3 verses to each alphabetic letter. Three verses begin with same Hebrew alphabetic letter. Chapter 4 resembles chapter 1 and 2, but it contains only 22 verses of 2 lines each to make a poem of 44 lines. Chapter 5 abandons the acrostic form altogether. It contains only 22 lines and verses, and has no alphabetic arrangement.

Chapter 1	a _____	**Chapter 2**	a _____
acrostic	_____	acrostic	_____
22 verses of three lines	_____	22 verses of three lines	_____
each, one verse per letter	b _____	each, one verse per letter	b _____
(66 lines)	_____	(66 lines)	_____
	_____		_____

Chapter 3	a _____	**Chapter 4**	a _____
acrostic	a _____	acrostic	_____
66 verses of one lines	a _____	22 verses of two lines	b _____
each with three verses per	b _____	each (44 lines)	_____
letter (66 lines)	b _____		
	b _____		

Chapter 5   not an acrostic / 22 verses of one line each (22 lines) _____

The acrostic form occurs in some other parts of the Bible; Pss. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145; Prov. 31:10-31; Hag. 1. In Ps. 111, 112 and 119. The acrostic form is fairly flexible. Some scholars have suggested that it is used as an easy way to memorize the passage, others have seen it as a way to express completeness in the poem. On alphabetic acrostics, I think we should carefully note Berlin's viewpoint (2002:4-5):

It is perhaps a sublime literary touch that the poems of this book, which express the inexpressible, use such a formal and rigid style, whose controlling structural device is the very

letters that signify and give shape to language. The world order of Lamentations has been disrupted; no order exists any longer in the real world. But as if to counteract this chaos, the poet has constructed his own linguistic order hat he marks out graphically for us by the orderly progression of the letters of the alphabet.

Furthermore, Dobbs-Alssopp's three ways of considering the function of acrostic usage (2002:18) should be helped the understanding of acrostic text:

First, and most basically, it serves as the literal and very arbitrary container for this poetry. As such, the acrostic is no less and no more significant than other poetic forms better known to us …… Second, the acrostic, like other formal features in Lamentations, has a pronounced cohering effect, both on each individual poem and on the sequence of poems as a whole. The patterned repetition of the alphabet helps hold together the otherwise scattered and chaotic lyrics. Third, the acrostic in the variation of its deployment throughout the sequence gives this poetry a trajectory and a sense of dynamism. Beyond such purely literary uses, the acrostic means symbolically, semantically, even theologically.

We cannot really know how the acrostic form plays a role for the production of meaning. The acrostic form is, however, an important argument against historical-critical scholars, who assert the book of Lamentations is a combination of several different literary types. This is shown in the aesthetic and linguistic structure of Lamentations as a whole, it is not a compound of different poems, but rather like an individual lament, a funeral song, a communal lament.

On the acrostic form, P. House's comment (2004:307) is very stimulating:

The aesthetic option may lead to further helpful observations on the book's structure and contents. For example the book's acrostics exhibit various differences in length of line, frequency of identical letters, and slight variation in alphabetic ordering, which creates distinct poems by means of the acrostic form (see Renkema, 48). Though such differences are hard to see in translation, they were evident to the book's original audience. These variations mark the poems as different yet very much connected works, a fact that has ramifications for determining the book's message. They also indicate that the subtle differences between the poems are original to the text (contra Westermann, 63), which has implications for the book's unity and authorship.

I will deal with the secondary feature of the book of Lamentations as poetry. When analysing the text, I will describe the function of acrostic form related to the intention of text itself and reader's reading strategy.

4.2 Literary Reading the Book of Lamentations

4.2.1 Lamentations 1

4.2.1.1 Text and Translation

Hebrew	Translation
אֵיכָה	[1] Alas
יָשְׁבָה בָדָד הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עָם	The city sits alone once great with people
הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבָּתִי בַגּוֹיִם	She has become like a widow, who was great among the nations
שָׂרָתִי בַּמְּדִינוֹת הָיְתָה לָמַס	A princess among the provinces, she has become a slave.
בָּכוֹ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה וְדִמְעָתָהּ עַל לֶחֱיָהּ	[2] She weeps bitterly in the night her tears are on her cheeks.
אֵין־לָהּ מְנַחֵם מִכָּל־אֹהֲבֶיהָ	She has none to comfort her among all her lovers.
כָּל־רֵעֶיהָ בָּגְדוּ בָהּ הָיוּ לָהּ לְאֹיְבִים	All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her foes.
גָּלְתָה יְהוּדָה מֵעֹנִי וּמֵרֹב עֲבֹדָה	[3] Judah has gone into exile under affliction and hard servitude;
הִיא יָשְׁבָה בַגּוֹיִם לֹא מָצְאָה מָנוֹחַ	She dwells among the nations, she does not find rest.
כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ הִשִּׂיגוּהָ בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים	All her pursuers overtook her in the midst of distress.

דַּרְכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת מִבְּלִי בָּאֵי מוֹעֵד

^{4} The roads of Zion mourn for no one comes to the feasts.

כָּל־שְׁעָרֶיהָ שׁוֹמֵמִין כֹּהֲנֶיהָ נֶאֱנָחִים

All her gates are desolate; her priests are groaning,

בְּתוּלֹתֶיהָ נּוּגוֹת וְהִיא מַר־לָהּ

Her virgins grieve, and she suffers bitterly.

הָיוּ צָרֶיהָ לְרֹאשׁ אֹיְבֶיהָ שָׁלוּ

^{5} Her foes have become (her) master, her enemies prosper;

כִּי־יְהוָה הוֹגָהּ עַל רֹב־פְּשָׁעֶיהָ

Because YHWH has made her grieve for her many transgressions.

עוֹלָלֶיהָ הָלְכוּ שְׁבִי לִפְנֵי־צָר

Her children went into captivity before the foe.

וַיֵּצֵא (מִן־בַּת) [מִבַּת־] צִיּוֹן כָּל־הֲדָרָהּ

^{6} And departed from Daughter Zion is all her majesty

הָיוּ שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאַיָּלִים לֹא־מָצְאוּ מִרְעֶה

Her princes have become like stags that do not find pasture.

וַיֵּלְכוּ בְלֹא־כֹחַ לִפְנֵי רוֹדֵף

They went without strength before the pursuer.

זָכְרָה יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם יְמֵי עָנְיָהּ וּמְרוּדֶיהָ

^{7} Jerusalem remembers the days of her affliction and her wandering

כֹּל מַחֲמֻדֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִימֵי קֶדֶם

All her precious things that were from the days of old.

בִּנְפֹל עַמָּהּ בְּיַד־צָר וְאֵין עוֹזֵר לָהּ

When her people fell by the hand of the foe and no one helping her.

רָאוּהָ צָרִים שָׂחֲקוּ עַל מִשְׁבַּתֶּהָ

Foe saw her, they mocked at her collapse.

חֵטְא חָטְאָה יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם עַל־כֵּן לְנִידָה הָיָתָה

^{8} Jerusalem sinned greatly, therefore she has been banished.

כָּל־מְכַבְּדֶיהָ הִזִּילוּהָ כִּי־רָאוּ עֶרְוָתָהּ

All who honoured her despised her, for they saw her nakedness.

גַּם־הִיא נֶאֶנְחָה וַתָּשָׁב אָחוֹר

Indeed, she herself groans and turns away.

טֻמְאָתָהּ בְּשׁוּלֶיהָ לֹא זָכְרָה אַחֲרִיתָהּ

^{9} Her uncleanness was in her skirts; She did not consider her future.

וַתֵּרֶד פְּלָאִים אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ

Thus she has fallen astonishingly; there is none to comfort her.

רְאֵה יְהוָה אֶת־עָנְיִי כִּי הִגְדִּיל אוֹיֵב

See, YHWH, my affliction, for the enemy has magnified himself.

יָדוֹ פָּרַשׂ צָר עַל כָּל־מַחֲמַדֶּיהָ

^{10} The foe has stretched out his hand upon all her precious things.

כִּי־רָאֲתָה גוֹיִם בָּאוּ מִקְדָּשָׁהּ

For she has seen nations coming into her sanctuary,

אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָה לֹא־יָבֹאוּ בַקָּהָל לָךְ

whom you commanded not to enter into your assembly.

כָּל־עַמָּהּ נֶאֱנָחִים מְבַקְּשִׁים לֶחֶם

^{11} All her people are groaning, seeking bread.

נָתְנוּ מַחֲמוֹדֵּיהֶם בְּאֹכֶל לְהָשִׁיב נָפֶשׁ

They have given their precious things for food to revive their strength.

רְאֵה יְהוָה וְהַבִּיטָה כִּי הָיִיתִי זוֹלֵלָה

See, YHWH, and look, for I am despised.

לוֹא אֲלֵיכֶם כָּל־עֹבְרֵי דֶרֶךְ הַבִּיטוּ וּרְאוּ

^{12} Is it nothing to all you who pass by? Look and see!

אִם־יֵשׁ מַכְאוֹב כְּמַכְאֹבִי אֲשֶׁר עוֹלַל לִי

Is there any pain like my pain, which was severely dealt upon me,

אֲשֶׁר הוֹגָה יְהוָה בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ

which YHWH inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.

מִמָּרוֹם שָׁלַח־אֵשׁ בְּעַצְמֹתַי וַיִּרְדֶּנָּה

^{13} From on high he sent fire into my bones, and it came down.

פָּרַשׂ רֶשֶׁת לְרַגְלַי הֱשִׁיבַנִי אָחוֹר

He spread a net for my feet; he turned me back.

נְתָנַנִי שֹׁמֵמָה כָּל־הַיּוֹם דָּוָה

He left me desolate, faint all day long.

נִשְׂקַד עֹל פְּשָׁעַי בְּיָדוֹ יִשְׂתָּרְגוּ	¹⁴ My transgressions were bound in a yoke, by his hand they were woven together.
עָלוּ עַל־צַוָּארִי הִכְשִׁיל כֹּחִי	They came upon my neck; He made my strength fail.
נְתָנַנִי אֲדֹנָי בִּידֵי לֹא־אוּכַל קוּם	The Lord gave me into the hands of those I cannot withstand.
סִלָּה כָל־אַבִּירַי אֲדֹנָי בְּקִרְבִּי	¹⁵ The Lord has rejected all my strong men in my midst.
קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד לִשְׁבֹּר בַּחוּרָי	He has summoned an army against me to crush my young men.
גַּת דָּרַךְ אֲדֹנָי לִבְתוּלַת בַּת־יְהוּדָה	As in a wine-press The Lord has trodden the virgin Daughter Judah.
עַל־אֵלֶּה אֲנִי בוֹכִיָּה עֵינִי עֵינִי יֹרְדָה מַּיִם	¹⁶ For these things I weep; my eye, my eye runs down with tears,
כִּי־רָחַק מִמֶּנִּי מְנַחֵם מֵשִׁיב נַפְשִׁי	because a comforter is far from me, one who restores my soul.
הָיוּ בָנַי שׁוֹמֵמִים כִּי גָבַר אוֹיֵב	My children are desolate because the enemy prevailed.
פֵּרְשָׂה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ	¹⁷ Zion stretches out her hands; there is no one to comfort her.
צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב סְבִיבָיו צָרָיו	YHWH has commanded against Jacob that the neighbour become his foes.
הָיְתָה יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם לְנִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם	Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.
צַדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה כִּי פִיהוּ מָרִיתִי	¹⁸ YHWH is righteous, for I have rebelled against his word.
שִׁמְעוּ־נָא כָל־עַמִּים וּרְאוּ מַכְאֹבִי	Hear, all you peoples, and behold my pain.
בְּתוּלֹתַי וּבַחוּרַי הָלְכוּ בַשֶּׁבִי	My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity.
קָרָאתִי לַמְאַהֲבַי הֵמָּה רִמּוּנִי	¹⁹ I called to my lovers; they deceived me.
כֹּהֲנַי וּזְקֵנַי בָּעִיר גָּוָעוּ	My priests and my elders perished in the city
כִּי־בִקְשׁוּ אֹכֶל לָמוֹ וְיָשִׁיבוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם	while they sought food for themselves to revive their strength.
רְאֵה יְהוָה כִּי־צַר־לִי מֵעַי חֳמַרְמָרוּ	²⁰ See, YHWH, for I am in distress; my soul (bowels) is in tumult.
נֶהְפַּךְ לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי כִּי מָרוֹ מָרִיתִי	My heart is turned over inside me, for I have been very rebellious.
מִחוּץ שִׁכְּלָה־חֶרֶב בַּבַּיִת כַּמָּוֶת	In the street the sword bereaves, in the house it is like death.
שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נֶאֱנָחָה אָנִי אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי	²¹ They heard that I groan; there is none to comfort me.
כָּל־אֹיְבַי שָׁמְעוּ רָעָתִי שָׂשׂוּ כִּי אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ	All my enemies heard of my trouble; they rejoice that you did it.
הֵבֵאתָ יוֹם־קָרָאתָ וְיִהְיוּ כָמוֹנִי	You brought the day you proclaimed; let them be like me.
תָּבֹא כָל־רָעָתָם לְפָנֶיךָ וְעוֹלֵל לָמוֹ	²² Let all their wrongdoing come before you and deal with them,
כַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹלַלְתָּ לִי עַל כָּל־פְּשָׁעָי	as you have dealt with me for all my transgressions,
כִּי־רַבּוֹת אַנְחֹתַי וְלִבִּי דַוָּי	because my groans are many, and my heart is faint.

4.2.1.2 Structure of Speaking Voices

Lam. 1 is the alternation of speeches by two different speakers, who are a third person

narrator and a sufferer, personified Zion (Jerusalem). Presenting the alternative speakers in

Lam. 1:

verses	Persona	Addressee
1-9b	**Narrator**	Impersonal Object
9c	*Sufferer*	YHWH
10-11b	**Narrator**	Impersonal Object
11c	*Sufferer*	YHWH
12-16		Passers-by
17	**Narrator**	Impersonal Object
18-19	*Sufferer*	Passers-by
20-22		YHWH

4.2.1.3 Analysis and Interpretation

The narrator starts with the particle interjection 'אֵיכָה' in Lam.1, 2, 4, but in Lam.5,

the imperative "זְכֹר"(Remember). The beginning word of each chapter (except Lam.3)

functions as a code giving a literary atmosphere related to each entire chapter to the reader.

As divide above, Lam. 1 by speaker divides two parts: (1) vv. 1-11, and (2) vv. 12-22.

In Lam. 1, the reader does not easily distinguish two voices. As the emotions are

mixed, the voices are also mixed in a confused way. Though I deal with this later, it is an

important key for understanding relationship between the narrator and the sufferer,

personified Jerusalem.

1-11b (A narrator, except in vv. 9c and 11c, including v.17)

The first word of the chapter, 'אֵיכָה,' signals the discourse of lament, as it does also in

chapters 2 and 4. After using this word, the comprehensive treatment of Jerusalem's pain

begins with an exclamation that the rest of the poem explains. In that sense, 'אֵיכָה' introduces the chapter (and the book) as a whole and as the first letter of the alphabet (see Berlin 2002:49; also House 2004:344). This is the definite word for the opening and the genre of Lamentations, and establishes the scenario for the reading strategy.

The narrator is a distant observer here and is unemotional. The narrator describes the daughter (of) Zion's plight and knows all about her – her glorious past, her grim present, and how she came to her sorry state. The narrator convinces us to accept his perspective of Zion's suffering (see O'Conner 2002:17). The narrator is an "objective" reporter who describes the world as he sees it.

In this poetic discourse, what makes this narrator appear objective is that the narrator simply talks about Jerusalem, without revealing anything about himself (Heim 1999:147). As Berlin indicates, these verses are "a portrait of Jerusalem, destroyed, shamed, and dejected. The picture opens with the unnamed city, sitting empty and alone, in contrast to the thriving metropolis she once was" (2002:49). In this part, the narrator sets "the scene for the poem and the book. The city is shamed, devastated, and its people are on the brink of death," and gives "little hint of his feelings as he describes the devastation before him" (O'Connor 2002:23).

In 1:17, the voice provides a sensitive and contextually appropriate narrative comment, describing Jerusalem as she utters v. 16 and 21 (cf. narrator's voice in v. 2b), highlighting the fact that she has no comforters (Heim 1999:150). The narrator sympathizes with Jerusalem's plight and attests to the validity of her statements (House 2004:356-7). The narrator still continues the metaphor, initially mentioned in vv. 8-9, of Jerusalem as an impure woman. V. 17 echoes vv. 9-10, which also speak of Jerusalem's impurity and the absence of comforters. In v. 10 the enemy spreads out his hand in an act of violation, and here Jerusalem spreads out her hand beseeching comfort. God had commanded the enemy not to enter his sanctuary, but here God commands that the neighbours become enemies (Berlin 2002:58-9).

1:12-22, with 9c, 11c (A sufferer, personified Zion, with two addresses)

The second half of Lam. 1 opens with Jerusalem's entreaty to the passersby to observe her pain and suffering, which she says God has caused. The language here, "that which the Lord inflicted," intentionally echoes the only finite clause in the first half of the poem (Lam 1:5b) of which God is the subject (see Dobbs-Allsopp 2002:68).

Many phrases in this section echo those in the first part of the chapter, but with developments in thought and a change of viewpoint. Zion's weeping as reported by the narrator in v. 2 is repeated from her own perspective in v. 16. The enemy who boasts in v. 9 prevails in v.16. The enemies who were commanded not to enter the temple in v. 10 are commanded to destroy Jacob in v. 17.

A sufferer, the personified daughter Zion, becomes the principal speaker in the second half of the poem. The poem binds her words to the narrator's by beginning them as the last line of v. 11 (see O'Connor 2002:23). Both 9c and 11c are petitions to the Lord and are very similar in language and form, while v. 12 opens with a defiant challenge to some passers-by who do not seem to be in sympathy with Jerusalem (Heim 1999:148).

(1) 12-19, except in 17 (to the passers-by or the peoples)

In vv. 12-16 and vv. 18-19 Jerusalem becomes the speaker, addressing the passersby and the peoples. She (Jerusalem) still seeks sympathy from others, in this case "the peoples" (v. 18b), who are, perhaps, the same as the "passersby" (v. 12) (see Berlin 2002:59).

Although the words, 'not to/for you' (לוֹא אֲלֵיכֶם), in v. 12a, are not easy to translate, Provan (1991:48), Gordis (1974:157), Albrektson (1963:68-9), and Heim (1999:149), agree that the translation "is it nothing to you?" makes sense of the imperatives in the line's second part and is supported by the context.

Since God does not respond to Zion's demand for God to see her suffering (9c, 11c), she turns away from God. She turns to passersby, who turn out to be equally indifferent (see Heim 1999:149; also O'Connor 2002:25).

In vv. 13-15, God is the enemy of Jerusalem. He attacked and defeated Jerusalem. The plaintive and very subjective statement of castigated Jerusalem is directed toward those passersby. It practically accuses YHWH of being the instigator of sanctions, without even mentioning his motives or justifications. This text involves a neutral audience (Gerstenberger 2001:480). As O'Connor (2002:26) says of these verses:

> God's burning anger is the subject of these verses. Daughter Zion uses active verbs that pile upon one another in a torrent of violence, and YHWH is the agent of that violence. He set her bones on fire, spread a net for her feet, turned her back. He left her "devastated" (1:13). He yokes her with her own transgressions, treads upon her like grapes in a winepress (1:14-15). … The recognition that God is the batterer compounds her pain.

In v. 16, the narrator's record of Jerusalem's weeping in v. 2 is repeated in her own voice. She weeps because of God's awful treatment of her and because she is unable to get anyone to see, to look, to pay attention to her plight (cf. v. 9c, 11c, 12a). She speaks of her eye twice (עֵינִי עֵינִי) – "my eye, my eye runs down with tears" – as if wordless weeping itself conveyed all her suffering[36]. Jerusalem concludes her speech by invoking images quite reminiscent of the narrator's comments in vv. 1-3. Her crying is constant and heartfelt, just as the narrator reported in v. 2a. V. 17 spoken by the narrator, indicates that the same comforters may be in view (see House 2004:360).

In vv. 18-19, Jerusalem's perspective changes. She explicitly vindicates the Lord's

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[36] See O'Connor 2002:27; also Provan 1991:52; Renkema 1998:171-2.

dealings with her and acknowledges her guilt. She points out her deteriorated relationship to former "lovers" who have deceived her (Heim 1999:150). In v. 18a Jerusalem declares to the people that "YHWH is righteous" (צַדִּיק הוּא יהוה). Even as Jerusalem declares her guilt from her own mouth, she still seeks sympathy from others, in vv. 18-19 "the people," perhaps the same as the "passersby" (v. 12), or perhaps the nations of the world, who are hereby instructed about God's ways. After calling on the peoples to see her pain, she calls on God in vv. 20-22 (Berlin 2002:59).

(2) 9c, 11c and 20-22 (to God)

Although these phrases are put into the mouth of Jerusalem, the speech fragments in v. 9c and 11c are reported speech quoted by the default speaker, for v. 11c leads into Jerusalem's reproach of some passersby without transition, despite the different addressee (Heim 1999:149). In 9c, Jerusalem speaks for the first time, unexpectedly bursting into the narrator's speech. She again interjects into the speech in v. 11c.

In the centre of Lam. 1, v. 11c, Jerusalem displaces the narrator as the principal speaker. When she speaks, her voice has an emotional intensity and urgency lacking in the narrator's speech. Her focus is on the immediacy of her pain in the present. She addresses YHWH and intensifies her demands in what may be a poetic shout: "look (רְאֵה)" and "see/consider (הַבִּיטָה)." The first imperative repeats her demand from v. 9c, but the second verb heightens the urgency (O'Connor 2001:1032).

As in v. 9c, 11c and 12a the invitation to "look (רְאֵה in 9c and 11c, רְאוּ in 12a)" was first extended to God (v. 9c, 11c) and then to the onlookers (v. 12a), so in v. 18b the invitation to the peoples (רְאוּ) is followed, in v. 20a by an appeal to God as she repeatedly begs YHWH to "look (רְאֵה)" at her pain (see Provan 1991:54).

The translation of two words in v. 21a and 21c, 'שָׁמְעוּ' and 'הֵבֵאתָ,' are difficult. For

the translation of 'שָׁמְעוּ' O'Conner (2003:25, 28) and Hillers (1992:14-15) suggest "hear (the verb as an imperative, שָׁמְעוּ)," following LXX (ἀκούσατε). But as I. Provan (1991:55) points out, 'they heard (the verb qal perfect 3rd person plural)' is best retained. Because "it makes perfectly good sense, in the context of the address to God, either as an indefinite reference to the enemies referred to in the next line (21b)." On the perfect tense of 'הֵבֵאתָ' Berlin[37] follows Gottlieb's suggestion (1978:21-22). They read this verb as an imperative, for " 'יום הבאת describes the restoration which the man praying hopes for," not to the destruction of Jerusalem (Gottlieb 1978:21-22). However, a perfect tense, "you brought" is certainly more likely in the context, since the 'day' with which the verses of 1:12 and 2:1; 7; 16; 21-22 are otherwise concerned is clearly the day of judgement on Israel rather than the day of judgement upon her enemies (see Provan 1991:56). Vv. 20-22 are directed to the Lord and urges him to punish her enemies with the same severity that she herself has received from Him (Heim 1999:150).

4.2.2 Lamentations 2

4.2.2.1 Text and Translation

איכה	[1] Alas
יַעֵיב בְּאַפּוֹ אֲדֹנָי אֶת־בַּת־צִיּוֹן	The Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud in his anger.
הִשְׁלִיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ תִּפְאֶרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל	He has cast from heaven to earth the glory of Israel.
וְלֹא־זָכַר הֲדֹם־רַגְלָיו בְּיוֹם אַפּוֹ	Indeed he has not remembered his footstool on the day of his anger.
בִּלַּע אֲדֹנָי לֹא חָמַל אֵת כָּל־נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב	[2] The Lord swallowed up without pity all the dwellings of Jacob.
הָרַס בְּעֶבְרָתוֹ מִבְצְרֵי בַת־יְהוּדָה	He threw down the strongholds of Daughter Judah;
הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ חִלֵּל מַמְלָכָה וְשָׂרֶיהָ	He brought down to the ground in dishonour the kingdom and its rulers.

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[37] Berlin (2002:61) says: "there is a long exegetical tradition that takes the phrase as a wish for the future, that God will bring that day he has already set for the judgment against Israel's enemies, just as he had brought the time he had set for the judgment against Israel (v. 15)."

נֶּדַע בָּחֳרִי־אַף כֹּל קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל

הֵשִׁיב אָחוֹר יְמִינוֹ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב

וַיִּבְעַר בְּיַעֲקֹב כְּאֵשׁ לֶהָבָה אָכְלָה סָבִיב

³ He has cut down in his burning anger all the horn (strength) of Israel;

He has turned back his right hand from the face of the enemy.

Indeed he has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire consuming all around.

דָּרַךְ קַשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב נִצָּב יְמִינוֹ

כְּצָר וַיַּהֲרֹג כֹּל מַחֲמַדֵּי־עָיִן

בְּאֹהֶל בַּת־צִיּוֹן שָׁפַךְ כָּאֵשׁ חֲמָתוֹ

⁴ He has bent His bow like an enemy, setting his right hand.

Like a foe he has killed all the pride of our eyes.

In the tent of Daughter Zion, he has poured out his anger like fire.

הָיָה אֲדֹנָי כְּאוֹיֵב בִּלַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל

בִּלַּע כָּל־אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ שִׁחֵת מִבְצָרָיו

וַיֶּרֶב בְּבַת־יְהוּדָה תַּאֲנִיָּה וַאֲנִיָּה

⁵ The Lord became like an enemy; he destroyed Israel.

He destroyed all her palaces; he laid in ruins his strongholds.

Indeed he multiplied in Daughter Judah mourning and mourning.

וַיַּחְמֹס כַּגַּן שֻׂכּוֹ שִׁחֵת מוֹעֲדוֹ

שִׁכַּח יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן מוֹעֵד וְשַׁבָּת

וַיִּנְאַץ בְּזַעַם־אַפּוֹ מֶלֶךְ וְכֹהֵן

⁶ Indeed he has broken down his booth like a garden, he has laid in ruins his place for appointed feasts.

YHWH has brought to an end in Zion appointed feasts and sabbath.

Indeed he has spurned in the indignant anger king and priest.

זָנַח אֲדֹנָי מִזְבְּחוֹ נִאֵר מִקְדָּשׁוֹ

הִסְגִּיר בְּיַד־אוֹיֵב חוֹמֹת אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ

קוֹל נָתְנוּ בְּבֵית־יְהוָה כְּיוֹם מוֹעֵד

⁷ The Lord has rejected his altar; he has disowned his sanctuary.

He has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces.

They have made a noise in the house of YHWH, as on a feast day.

חָשַׁב יְהוָה לְהַשְׁחִית חוֹמַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן

נָטָה קָו לֹא־הֵשִׁיב יָדוֹ מִבַּלֵּעַ

וַיַּאֲבֶל־חֵל וְחוֹמָה יַחְדָּו אֻמְלָלוּ

⁸ YHWH determined to lay in ruins the wall of Daughter Zion.

He stretched out a line; he did not return his hand from destroying.

Indeed he caused fortress and wall to mourn; they languished together.

טָבְעוּ בָאָרֶץ שְׁעָרֶיהָ אִבַּד וְשִׁבַּר בְּרִיחֶיהָ

מַלְכָּהּ וְשָׂרֶיהָ בַגּוֹיִם אֵין תּוֹרָה

גַּם־נְבִיאֶיהָ לֹא־מָצְאוּ חָזוֹן מֵיְהוָה

⁹ Her gates sunk into the ground; he destroyed and broken her bars.

Her king and her princes are among the nations; there is no law.

Even her prophets have not found a vision from YHWH.

יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יִדְּמוּ זִקְנֵי בַּת־צִיּוֹן

הֶעֱלוּ עָפָר עַל־רֹאשָׁם חָגְרוּ שַׂקִּים

הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן בְּתוּלֹת יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם

¹⁰ The elders of Daughter Zion sit on the ground, they are silent.

They throw dust on their heads; They put on sackcloth.

The virgins of Jerusalem bowed their heads down to the ground.

כָּלוּ בַדְּמָעוֹת עֵינַי חֳמַרְמְרוּ מֵעַי

נִשְׁפַּךְ לָאָרֶץ כְּבֵדִיעַל־שֶׁבֶר בַּת־עַמִּי

בֵּעָטֵף עוֹלֵל וְיוֹנֵק בִּרְחֹבוֹת קִרְיָה

¹¹ My eyes were worn out with tears, My soul is in tumult;

My heart is poured out on the ground because of the breaking of the daughter of my people,

Because children and infants faint in the streets of the city.

לְאִמֹּתָם יֹאמְרוּ אַיֵּה דָּגָן וָיָיִן	¹² They say to their mothers, "Where is grain and wine?"
בְּהִתְעַטְּפָם כֶּחָלָל בִּרְחֹבוֹת עִיר	As they faint like wounded men In the streets of the city,
בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם אֶל־חֵיק אִמֹּתָם	As their lives are poured out on their mothers' bosom.
מָה־אֲעִידֵךְ מָה אֲדַמֶּה־לָּךְ הַבַּת יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם	¹³ What can I say for you? What can I compare for you, O Daughter Jerusalem?
מָה אַשְׁוֶה־לָּךְ וַאֲנַחֲמֵךְ בְּתוּלַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן	What can I liken to you that I comfort you, O virgin Daughter Zion?
כִּי־גָדוֹל כַּיָּם שִׁבְרֵךְ מִי יִרְפָּא־לָךְ	For great as the sea is your breaking, Who can heal you?
נְבִיאַיִךְ חָזוּ לָךְ שָׁוְא וְתָפֵל	¹⁴ Your prophets have seen for you false and foolish visions.
וְלֹא־גִלּוּ עַל־עֲוֹנֵךְ לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבִיתֵךְ	And they did not expose your iniquity to restore your captivity,
וַיֶּחֱזוּ לָךְ מַשְׂאוֹת שָׁוְא וּמַדּוּחִים	But they have seen for you false and misleading oracles.
סָפְקוּ עָלַיִךְ כַּפַּיִם כָּל־עֹבְרֵי דֶרֶךְ	¹⁵ All who pass along the way clap their hands against you;
שָׁרְקוּ וַיָּנִעוּ רֹאשָׁם עַל־בַּת יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם	They hiss and shake their heads against Daughter Jerusalem,
הֲזֹאת הָעִיר שֶׁיֹּאמְרוּ כְּלִילַת יֹפִי	"Is this the city that they said, 'the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth '?"
פָּצוּ עָלַיִךְ פִּיהֶם כָּל־אוֹיְבַיִךְ	¹⁶ All your enemies have opened their mouths against you.
שָׁרְקוּ וַיַּחַרְקוּ־שֵׁן אָמְרוּ בִּלָּעְנוּ	They hiss and gnash their teeth; they said, "We swallowed her up.
אַךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שֶׁקִּוִּינֻהוּ מָצָאנוּ רָאִינוּ	Ah, this is the day we waited for. We have found it, we have seen it."
עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמָם בִּצַּע אֶמְרָתוֹ	¹⁷ YHWH did what he purposed; He has accomplished his word,
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי־קֶדֶם הָרַס וְלֹא חָמָל	which he commanded from days of old; he threw down and did not pity,
וַיְשַׂמַּח עָלַיִךְ אוֹיֵב הֵרִים קֶרֶן צָרָיִךְ	And he made the enemy rejoice over you; he raised the horn of your foes.
צָעַק לִבָּם אֶל־אֲדֹנָי חוֹמַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן	¹⁸ Their heart cried out to the Lord, "O wall of Daughter Zion.
הוֹרִידִי כַנַּחַל דִּמְעָה יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה	Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night.
אַל־תִּתְּנִי פוּגַת לָךְ אַל־תִּדֹּם בַּת־עֵינֵךְ	Give yourself no rest, give your eyes no respite.
קוּמִי רֹנִּי בַלַּיְלָ לְרֹאשׁ אַשְׁמֻרוֹת	¹⁹ Arise, cry out in the night at the beginning of the watches.
שִׁפְכִי כַמַּיִם לִבֵּךְ נֹכַח פְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי	Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord.
שְׂאִי אֵלָיו כַּפַּיִךְ עַל־נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלָלַיִךְ	Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children
הָעֲטוּפִים בְּרָעָב בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוּצוֹת	who faint for at the head of every street.
רְאֵה יְהוָה וְהַבִּיטָה לְמִי עוֹלַלְתָּ כֹּה	²⁰ See, YHWH, and look, to whom have you done this?
אִם־תֹּאכַלְנָה נָשִׁים פִּרְיָם עֹלֲלֵי טִפֻּחִים	Should women eat their offspring, the children their tender care?
אִם־יֵהָרֵג בְּמִקְדַּשׁ אֲדֹנָי כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא	Should priest and prophet be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord?

שָׁכְבוּ לָאָרֶץ חוּצוֹת נַעַר וְזָקֵן	²¹ The young and the old lie down on the ground in the street.
בְּתוּלֹתַי וּבַחוּרַי נָפְלוּ בֶחָרֶב	My virgins and my young men fell by the sword.
הָרַגְתָּ בְּיוֹם אַפֶּךָ טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חָמָלְתָּ	You killed on the day of your anger, you slaughtered without pity.
תִּקְרָא כְיוֹם מוֹעֵד מְגוּרַי מִסָּבִיב	²² You invited as to the day of an appointed feast my terrors on every side.
וְלֹא הָיָה בְּיוֹם אַף־יְהוָה פָּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד	And on the day of YHWH's anger no one escaped or survived.
אֲשֶׁר־טִפַּחְתִּי וְרִבִּיתִי אֹיְבִי כִלָּם	Those whom I cared for and reared, my enemy destroyed them.

4.2.2.2 Structure of Speaking Voices

verses	Persona	Addressee
1-12	**Narrator**	Impersonal Object
13-19		*Sufferer*
20-22	*Sufferer*	YHWH

4.2.2.3 Analysis and Interpretation

Like Lam. 1, Lam. 2 also follows the same formal pattern. What was said about the setting of Lam. 1 largely applies to Lam. 2. The speakers of Lam. 1, the narrator and Jerusalem (Daughter Zion) continue their discourse in Lam. 2. Similarities between the first two chapters of Lamentations suggest that they are closely related and comment upon each other (see O'Connor 2001: 1036).

When compared to Lam. 1, the length and contents of the speeches by the narrator and Jerusalem in Lam. 2 undergo a considerable change. While Jerusalem has much less to say, the narrator grows more articulate and reflective, directly addressing Jerusalem and struggling with her to grasp the enormity of the events she has experienced (Gottwald 1988:649).

However, although the narrator uses the same particle interjection 'אֵיכָה' as the first word of Lam. 1, the tone of Lam. 2 is very different from that of Lam. 1. In Lam. 1:1 the narrator seems to sympathize Jerusalem (*the city sits alone*), but in Lam. 2:1, he speaks about

the Lord's anger towards Daughter Zion (*the Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud in his anger*). The perspective of Lam. 1 is favourable to the Jerusalem's, but in the beginning of Lam. 2, the narrator states the case from the Lord's perspective. Little by little in Lam. 2, the narrator "drops his dispassionate stance and becomes wholly engaged in Zion's tragedy. He forgets her guilt and his accusations in chapter 1 and turns furiously against the divine attacker" (O'Connor 2002:35).

Although God's anger is referred to in other chapters (1:12; 3:1, 43, 66; 4:11; 5:22), in Lam. 2 we find a most detailed and resolute treatment of this difficult matter. It is clear that YHWH is the key subject of this chapter. Forty times in the first ten verses the narrator mentions that point (see Kaiser 1982:61-63). From the start to the finish of Lam. 2, the poem charts what it means to experience God's direct, purposeful, and unstinting judgment. It also moves readers from a description of the situation (vv. 1-10), to concern and counsel for Jerusalem (vv. 11-19), and finally to the direct address of God (vv. 20-22) (see House 2004:375).

Like Lam. 1, this chapter features alternating speakers. But Lam. 2 does not divide as symmetrically as Lam. 1, because the narrator does most of the speaking. The narrator details Jerusalem's situation in third-person indirect discourse in 2:1-10. As before (1:20-22), Jerusalem addresses YHWH directly in first-person speech in 2:20-22.

2:1-19 (the narrator)

In Lam. 2, there is first-person speech that appears to speak of Jerusalem in third-person terms (2:11-12). There is also first-person speech that addresses Jerusalem directly (2:13-19). The speaker in 2:11-19 has great sympathy for Jerusalem and therefore urges her to seek the Lord (2:18-19). To explain this shift in rhetorical tactics, scholars have suggested three possible reasons (see House 2004:372-3): (1) that the narrator may have become

converted to the city's point of view (see O'Connor 2002:31-34); (2) the Lord may now be speaking to Jerusalem (see Gerstenberger, 2001:487-9); (3) Jerusalem may be speaking in 2:11-12 and the narrator in 2:13-19 (see Miller, 111-5). In the following paragraph I will make good use of many of O'Conner's and Berlin's insights (as to the narrator's voice).

In this section, the poem divides into two parts. The first, vv. 1-10, deals with the way YHWH has dealt with Jerusalem and in which the narrator describes how the Lord has covered Jerusalem with a cloud of anger on "the day of his anger." The second, vv. 11-19, is a speech from the narrator to Jerusalem, the narrator's own response to Zion/Jerusalem is given with deeply sympathetic emotion.

(1) 2:1-10 (God's Anger)

The narrator speaks of God's overflowing anger and its effects on Zion. The narrator speaks to Zion using third person speech about how the day of the Lord's anger has come. He addresses us instead of God, but it is God's involvement that obsesses him (see O'Connor 2002:31).

God is the subject of the punishment-oriented verbs. This drumbeat of what God has done is not so much a series of accusations as it is a thorough statement of fact. The text stresses God's merciless attack (vv. 1-3), God's treating Israel like an enemy (vv. 4-5), and God's devastation of temple (vv. 6-7), defences (vv. 8-9a), and leaders (vv. 9b-10). Lam. 2:1-10 clearly details what God has done to Israel, apparently as an explanation of what 1:21c describes as "the day you have announced." This section ends with a description of this day's impact on Jerusalem (see House 2004:373 and 375).

Berlin (2002:67) describes the language used in this section:

The language in vv. 1-10 projects a feeling of strength and power in two ways. First, it employs

many verbs signifying strong and violent action: hurled down, consumed, chopped off, destroyed, demolished, wrecked. It is with this brute force that God has acted. Second, it describes in detail the fortifications of the city – its walls, citadels, strongholds, ramparts and gates. These architectural features are physically strong and, more important in this poem, are high. They will all come crashing down, sinking into the earth. We are, as it were, witnessing in slow motion the physical demolition of the city.

(2) 11-19 (Zion's Mourning)

In this part, the narrator still concentrates on Zion's suffering. He no longer, however, speaks as a distant observer, but is now an overwrought participant in Zion's unbearable reality. According to Nancy Lee (see 2002:146-158), he is expressing a prophetic viewpoint much like that of Jeremiah. God's anger of the first part of this chapter blends into Jerusalem's mourning in the second part.

The narrator weeps over the destruction of his people and notes the horrifying fate of Jerusalem's children (vv. 11-12). From v. 13, the narrator speaks directly to Jerusalem. He mourns Jerusalem's trust of false prophets and her present status as an object of scorn (vv. 13-17). In this part, the passersby mentioned earlier return, and now they overtly respond cynically to Jerusalem's demand (cf. 1:12) Finally, the narrator bids Daughter Zion's wall to cry out to God and counsels the people to turn to the Lord (vv. 18-19).

The rhetorical questions occur especially in v. 13. These questions demands negative answers: "*What can I say for you? What can I compare for you, O Daughter Jerusalem? What can I liken to you that I comfort you, O virgin Daughter Zion? For great as the sea is your breaking, who can heal you*?" At last, the narrator confronts her suffering in its totality, its incomparability, and in the inability of his words to bear witness to it (O'Connor 2001:1041).

Most scholars consider the 'I' in this passage to refer to the narrator. But, as indicated above, Gerstenberger concludes that God is the speaker (see 2001:487). He bases his conclusion on the use of the third person in Lam. 2, arguing that the voice is not that of both the narrator and Jerusalem, House (2004:374) gives a concise explanation:

The third-speaker hypothesis makes the most sense for three reasons. First, it seems unlikely that the narrator would change from third-person to first-person speech with no intervening speech to signal this change. K. M. O'Connor thinks that 2:1-10 prepares readers for this switch but that the rhetoric of 2:1-10 does not warrant this conclusion. Still, she is right to argue that 2:11-22 do diverge from 2:1-10. Second, as Lee asserts, the language in 2:11-22 is very close to the two-person prophetic dialogue found in Jeremiah. Though Lee also considers 2:1-10 very close in style to Jeremiah, she finds more parallels between 2:11-22 and the prophet's style. Third, chap. 3 begins with first-person speech by one who has suffered yet also advises Israel how to react to what God has done. It is possible that the two non-Jerusalem first-person speakers in chaps. 2 and 3 are the same.

Though Gerstenberger's suggestion that God speaks here is appealing, as House (2004:374) writes, "the character's mourning and advising fit the prophets more closely."

2:20-22 (personified Zion)

Jerusalem responds to the narrator's advice in vv. 18-19 by calling out to the Lord. As in her previous appeals to the Lord, using the same verbs to gain divine attention here, she once again asks God to "look (רְאֵה)," and "see/consider (הַבִּיטָה)," as in 1:9c, 1:11c and 1:20a, what terrors the day of anger has brought on the chosen people.

The initial words of these sentences are very similar to the opening lines of her other

speeches in Lam. 1 in which YHWH is the addressee (see in detail Miller 1996:136):

ראה יהוה את־עניי כי הגדיל אויב	1:9c
ראה יהוה והביטה כי הייתי זוללה	1:11c
ראה יהוה כי צר־לי	1:20a
ראה יהוה והביטה למי עוללת כה	2:20a

All four speeches begin with the same imperative "ראה" and vocative YHWH. Lam. 1:11c and 2;20a have a second imperative, which is also identical "הביטה." In each of the first three instances, a "כי" clause introduces a motivation for YHWH to respond: an enemy has magnified himself (1:9c), Jerusalem has become despised (1:11c), and Jerusalem is greatly distressed (1:20a). In Lam. 2:20a, instead of being introduced by a "כי," the clause begins with "למי." It is no less motivational, however. That is to say, if YHWH would only consider who it is YHWH is mistreating, then, according to Jerusalem, YHWH would surely desist (Miller 1996:136). But some scholars suggest "למי" refers to those whom YHWH has elected as YHWH's own special people (see in particular, Westermann 1994:146). It seems more likely, however, that "למי" should be associated with the persons Jerusalem lists in the subsequent verse, especially the innocent children and the religious leaders mentioned in v.20.

On the difference between 1:20-22 and 2:21-22, House (2004:374) very appropriately states:

Like 1:20-22, this part calls on YHWH to "look." But 1:20-22 admits sin and asks God to judge enemies, while 2:20-22 asks God to consider who he has judged and how horribly he has done so. Both texts reference God's יום, "day" (1:21; 2:22), so these differences make it possible to chart a variety of implications of that "day." Indeed 2:1 begins the poem with God's

"day," and 2:22 concludes the piece with a reference to this event. The whole poem must be read with this theme in mind.

As Heim (1999:154) indicates, in this part Jerusalem "responds to the narrator's rhetorical question from v. 13 by pointing out to the Lord that she has been treated more severely than anyone else. Jerusalem's sufferings are incomparable. While this can be no comfort to her, she uses this insight to imply to the Lord that the severity of his judgment has gone beyond the measure appropriate for her sins."

As in Lam. 1, Jerusalem also uses rhetorical questions, but nobody answers. God also does not answer. God is silent. Unlike most communal laments, it never praises God or calls on his strength or goodness to save the people. In its final verses the chapter returns to the theme of God's anger with which it began, "the day of God's anger." "The day of YHWH" refers to a future day when God would triumph over Israel's enemies. In this poem, however, the day has become a day of anger and catastrophe from which there is no escape (O'Connor 2002:43). Like Lam. 1, this chapter ends with despair, but a despair born of anger rather than of sadness (Berlin 2002:77). There is no hope.

4.2.3 Lamentations 3

4.2.3.1 Text and Translation

אֲנִי הַגֶּבֶר רָאָה עֳנִי בְּשֵׁבֶט עֶבְרָתוֹ	[1] I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his anger.
אוֹתִי נָהַג וַיֹּלַךְ חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אוֹר	[2] Me he has led and driven into darkness and no light.
אַךְ בִּי יָשֻׁב יַהֲפֹךְ יָדוֹ כָּל־הַיּוֹם	[3] Surely against me he turns again and again his hand all the day.
בִּלָּה בְשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי שִׁבַּר עַצְמוֹתָי	[4] He has swallowed my flesh and my skin, he has broken my bones.
בָּנָה עָלַי וַיַּקַּף רֹאשׁ וּתְלָאָה	[5] He has besieged and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.
בְּמַחֲשַׁכִּים הוֹשִׁיבַנִי כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם	[6] He has made me dwell in dark places like those long dead.

נָדַר בַּעֲדִי וְלֹא אֵצֵא הִכְבִּיד נְחָשְׁתִּי	[7] He has walled me in and I cannot escape; he has made my chain heavy.
גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וַאֲשַׁוֵּעַ שָׂתַם תְּפִלָּתִי	[8] Even when I cry out and call for help, he shuts out my prayer.
גָּדַר דְּרָכַי בְּגָזִית נְתִיבֹתַי עִוָּה	[9] He has walled in my ways with hewn stones; he has twisted my paths.
דֹּב אֹרֵב הוּא לִי אֲרְיֵה בְּמִסְתָּרִים	[10] He is like a bear lying in wait to me, a lion in secret places.
דְּרָכַי סוֹרֵר וַיְפַשְּׁחֵנִי שָׂמַנִי שֹׁמֵם	[11] He turned aside my path and tore me to pieces; he made me desolate.
דָּרַךְ קַשְׁתּוֹ וַיַּצִּיבֵנִי כַּמַּטָּרָא לַחֵץ	[12] He bent his bow and set me up like a target for the arrow.
הֵבִיא בְּכִלְיוֹתָי בְּנֵי אַשְׁפָּתוֹ	[13] He shot into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver.
הָיִיתִי שְּׂחֹק לְכָל־עַמִּי נְגִינָתָם כָּל־הַיּוֹם	[14] I become a laughingstock to all my people, their taunt song all the day.
הִשְׂבִּיעַנִי בַמְּרוֹרִים הִרְוַנִי לַעֲנָה	[15] He filled me with bitterness; he made me drunk with wormwood.
וַיַּגְרֵס בֶּחָצָץ שִׁנָּי הִכְפִּישַׁנִי בָּאֵפֶר	[16] He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has made me cower in the dust.
וַתִּזְנַח מִשָּׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי נָשִׁיתִי טוֹבָה	[17] My soul is rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness.
וָאֹמַר אָבַד נִצְחִי וְתוֹחַלְתִּי מֵיהוָה	[18] And I said, "My endurance has perished, and my hope from YHWH."
זְכָר־עָנְיִי וּמְרוּדִי לַעֲנָה וָרֹאשׁ	[19] Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and the gall.
זָכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר וְתָשִׁיחַ עָלַי נַפְשִׁי	[20] I certainly remember and my soul is downcast within me.
זֹאת אָשִׁיב אֶל־לִבִּי עַל־כֵּן אוֹחִיל	[21] This I call to my mind, therefore I have hope.
חַסְדֵי יְהוָה כִּי לֹא־תָמְנוּ כִּי לֹא־כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו	[22] YHWH's steadfast love never cease, for his mercies never end.
חֲדָשִׁים לַבְּקָרִים רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתֶךָ	[23] (They are) new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
חֶלְקִי יְהוָה אָמְרָה נַפְשִׁי עַל־כֵּן אוֹחִיל לוֹ	[24] "YHWH is my portion," says my soul; therefore I have hope in him.
טוֹב יְהוָה לְקֹוָו לְנֶפֶשׁ תִּדְרְשֶׁנּוּ	[25] YHWH is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.
טוֹב וְיָחִיל וְדוּמָם לִתְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה	[26] It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of YHWH.
טוֹב לַגֶּבֶר כִּי־יִשָּׂא עֹל בִּנְעוּרָיו	[27] It is good for the man that he bears the yoke in his youth.
יֵשֵׁב בָּדָד וְיִדֹּם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו	[28] Let him sit alone and keep silent for he laid it on him.
יִתֵּן בֶּעָפָר פִּיהוּ אוּלַי יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה	[29] Let him put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope.
יִתֵּן לְמַכֵּהוּ לֶחִי יִשְׂבַּע בְּחֶרְפָּה	[30] Let him give his cheek to the striking, let him be filled with

	disgrace.
כִּי לֹא יִזְנַח לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי	[31] For the Lord will not reject forever,
כִּי אִם־הוֹגָה וְרִחַם כְּרֹב חֲסָדּוֹ	[32] For though he causes grief, he will have compassion, according to his great steadfast love.
כִּי לֹא עִנָּה מִלִּבּוֹ וַיַּגֶּה בְּנֵי־אִישׁ	[33] For he does not afflict from his heart, nor grieve the sons of men.
לְדַכֵּא תַּחַת רַגְלָיו כֹּל אֲסִירֵי אָרֶץ	[34] To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the land,
לְהַטּוֹת מִשְׁפַּט־גָּבֶר נֶגֶד פְּנֵי עֶלְיוֹן	[35] To turn aside the justice of a man in the presence of the Most High,
לְעַוֵּת אָדָם בְּרִיבוֹ אֲדֹנָי לֹא רָאָה	[36] To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord does not see.
מִי זֶה אָמַר וַתֶּהִי אֲדֹנָי לֹא צִוָּה	[37] Who spoke this and it comes to pass, if the Lord did not commanded?
מִפִּי עֶלְיוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא הָרָעוֹת וְהַטּוֹב	[38] From the mouth of the Most High, do not the good and the bad go out?
מַה־יִּתְאוֹנֵן אָדָם חָי גֶּבֶר עַל־חֲטָאוֹ	[39] Why should a living man complain, a man about his sins?
נַחְפְּשָׂה דְרָכֵינוּ וְנַחְקֹרָה וְנָשׁוּבָה עַד־יְהוָה	[40] Let us search and examine our ways, and let us return to YHWH.
נִשָּׂא לְבָבֵנוּ אֶל־כַּפָּיִם אֶל־אֵל בַּשָּׁמָיִם	[41] Let us lift up our heart and hands to God in the heavens;
נַחְנוּ פָשַׁעְנוּ וּמָרִינוּ אַתָּה לֹא סָלָחְתָּ	[42] We have transgressed and rebelled, you have not forgiven.
סַכֹּתָה בָאַף וַתִּרְדְּפֵנוּ הָרַגְתָּ לֹא חָמָלְתָּ	[43] You have covered with anger and pursued us; you have killed and not shown pity.
סַכּוֹתָה בֶעָנָן לָךְ מֵעֲבוֹר תְּפִלָּה	[44] You have covered yourself with a cloud; no prayer can pass through.
סְחִי וּמָאוֹס תְּשִׂימֵנוּ בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים	[45] Offscouring and refuse have made us in the midst of the peoples.
פָּצוּ עָלֵינוּ פִּיהֶם כָּל־אֹיְבֵינוּ	[46] They have opened their mouths against us, all our enemies.
פַּחַד וָפַחַת הָיָה לָנוּ הַשֵּׁאת וְהַשָּׁבֶר	[47] Panic and pitfall have come to us, devastation and destruction.
פַּלְגֵי־מַיִם תֵּרַד עֵינִי עַל־שֶׁבֶר בַּת־עַמִּי	[48] Streams of tears run down (from) my eyes because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.
עֵינִי נִגְּרָה וְלֹא תִדְמֶה מֵאֵין הֲפֻגוֹת	[49] My eyes flow and do not cease; there is no end.
עַד־יַשְׁקִיף וְיֵרֶא יְהוָה מִשָּׁמָיִם	[50] Until he looks down and sees, YHWH from heaven.
עֵינִי עוֹלְלָה לְנַפְשִׁי מִכֹּל בְּנוֹת עִירִי	[51] My eyes bring pain to my soul because of all the daughters of my city.
צוֹד צָדוּנִי כַּצִּפּוֹר אֹיְבַי חִנָּם	[52] They hunted me like a bird, my enemies, for mo cause.

צָמְתוּ בַבּוֹר חַיָּי וַיַּדּוּ־אֶבֶן בִּי	[53] They put an end in the pit to my life and threw a stone on me.
צָפוּ־מַיִם עַל־רֹאשִׁי אָמַרְתִּי נִגְזָרְתִּי	[54] Waters flowed over my head; I said, "I am cut off!"
קָרָאתִי שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה מִבּוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת	[55] I called on your name, YHWH, from the depths of a pit.
קוֹלִי שָׁמָעְתָּ אַל־תַּעְלֵם אָזְנְךָ לְרַוְחָתִי לְשַׁוְעָתִי	[56] You heard my voice, did not close your ears to my cry for help."
קָרַבְתָּ בְּיוֹם אֶקְרָאֶךָּ אָמַרְתָּ אַל־תִּירָא	[57] You came near on the day I called you; you said, "Do not fear."
רַבְתָּ אֲדֹנָי רִיבֵי נַפְשִׁי גָּאַלְתָּ חַיָּי	[58] Lord, you have pleaded my soul's cause; you have redeemed my life.
רָאִיתָה יְהוָה עַוָּתָתִי שָׁפְטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי	[59] YHWH, You have seen the wrong done to me; judge my cause.
רָאִיתָה כָּל־נִקְמָתָם כָּל־מַחְשְׁבֹתָם לִי	[60] You have seen all their vengeance, all their plots against me.
שָׁמַעְתָּ חֶרְפָּתָם יְהוָה כָּל־מַחְשְׁבֹתָם עָלָי	[61] You have heard their taunt, YHWH, all their plots against me.
שִׂפְתֵי קָמַי וְהֶגְיוֹנָם עָלַי כָּל־הַיּוֹם	[62] The lips of those who rise up against me all the day.
שִׁבְתָּם וְקִימָתָם הַבִּיטָה אֲנִי מַנְגִּינָתָם	[63] Look on their sitting and their rising; I am their mocking song.
תָּשִׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּל יְהוָה כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם	[64] Requite them, YHWH, according to the work of their hands.
תִּתֵּן לָהֶם מְגִנַּת־לֵב תַּאֲלָתְךָ לָהֶם	[65] Give them dullness of heart, your curse on them.
תִּרְדֹּף בְּאַף וְתַשְׁמִידֵם מִתַּחַת שְׁמֵי יְהוָה	[66] Pursue in anger and destroy them from under the heavens of YHWH.

4.2.3.2 Structure of Speaking Voices

verses	Persona	Addressee
1-33	Narrator	Impersonal Object and YHWH (19)
34-36	*Sufferer*	Impersonal Object
37-66	Narrator	Impersonal Object and YHWH

4.2.3.3 Analysis and Interpretation

According to Westermann (1994:168-9), Lam. 3 consists of three basic parts with different types, interspersed by two expansions (vv.26-41 and vv. 59-63): (1) vv. 1-25, form-critically a personal psalm of lamentation, to which vv. 64-66 have been appended as a (fragmentary) conclusion; (2) vv. 42-51, a (fragmentary) communal psalm of lamentation; (3)

vv. 52-58, a personal psalm of praise (again, in fragmentary state). Gerstenberger (2001:496) also concludes that "the text utilizes various elements from older complaint and lament rituals to form a new genre of mourning song, adequate for the ongoing commemorative services in Judean congregations in and near Jerusalem, but also in the diaspora." According to Gerstenberger (497), Lam. 3 is to set an "agenda of communal lament."

As above, most scholars observe that Lam. 3 contains elements of various genres: aspects of communal lament, individual lament, wisdom-based psalmic observations, and instructions like those found (for detail of how scholars' opinions on Lam. 3, differ, see House 2004:405-8; House divides these opinions into six groups). In this section, I adopt Provan's view that there are two voices.

3:1-33, and 37-66 (the voice of the narrator)

In Lam. 3, we cannot find the opening word "אֵיכָה," as we do in Lam. 1, 2, and 4. On the literary feature of Lam. 3, O'Connor (2001:1046-7) writes:

> Further distinguishing chap. 3 from the surrounding chapters is the intensification of the acrostic form. Each of three successive lines begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet in chap. 3. In addition, the poem's language repeats, overlaps, and interweaves across stanzas with greater density than in other poems. … This linguistic interweaving within and across stanzas creates a density of language, an overlapping of sound, and a joining of horrors that express the entrapment of the speaker and contribute to the poem's literary strategies of encirclement.

There has been some debate among scholars as to the number of the speakers in Lam. 3, as states above about aspects of communal lament or individual, and etc. The main opinion

of theirs is "how do we understand 'the man (גֶּבֶר)' in 3:1.," that is, what is the identity of the "I" in Lam. 3 (cf. Hillers 1992:120-3; Mintz 1982:9-10). As Provan (1991:80-1, italic his) points out:

> The reader who comes to 3:1 via chapter 2 would not naturally assume that the *geber* here is to be identified with her. Nor is this likely, upon further consideration, to have been in the mind of the author; for the third poem was never intended to be read independently of the second, but was rather composed with the second in mind. The reference simply to '*his* anger' in 3:1, with no further definition of the subject, clearly indicates that 2:22 (with its explicit reference to 'the anger of *the Lord'*) and chapter 2 as a whole (with its general theme of 'swallowed up in anger') were always read before it.

Lam. 3 opens with a lament by the narrator (vv. 1-18) in which he describes his own experience of the pain which he has endured as one of the suffering people of God. Vv. 19-21 represent the man in transition between this despair and a renewal of hope as vv. 22-33 go on to express his confidence in ultimate deliverance. Having thus argued himself from despair to hope, the narrator is now in a position to offer exhortation and encouragement to others. Vv. 37-39 are best understood as the narrator reasserting his basic thought. In 40-47, the narrator leads the people in a prayer of confession of sin and description of what their enemies have done, though he is now concerned more with the suffering of others than with his own (vv. 48-51). In vv. 52-66, however, he returns once again to explore his own prayer of confidence in the Lord, pleading with God for deliverance from his plight (see Provan 1991:83, 98-100; also House 2004:430).

Furthermore, 3:48 and 51 clearly make a distinction between the one weeping and the people/city, the statement of 3:48 being very similar to that of the narrator in 2:11b. It seems

much more likely then, that it is this narrator, whose voice has already dominated chapter 1 and 2, who himself is the speaker for most of chapter 3. As in chapters 1 and 2, he feels himself to be closely identified with Zion and her people (Provan 1991:81). Like the example of 3:42, he identifies with Jerusalem. The narrator is no longer just an observer.

Does it mean that Jerusalem does not speak at all in Lam. 3? Provan (1991:81, see in more detail 81-3) gives a suitable answer:

> That is not to say that Zion does not speak at all in the third poem. It seems likely that 3:34-36 constitute an objection, spoken by a second voice, to the narrator's message of hope in the preceding verses, vv. 37-39 representing the narrator's response to this objection. The identity of the objector is not revealed. Since in the first and second poems the second speaker is Zion, …… the natural assumption must be that it is she who speaks here also.

The rhetorical questions of vv 37-38 affirm the Lord's sovereignty and goodness in the face of suffering. This naturally leads to the other rhetorical question of v. 39. While different plausible translations of this verse have been suggested, the basic point of the question is clear: a sinful man is responsible for his suffering and should consequently not complain about his circumstances (Heim 1999:159; see also Provan 1991:99).

3:34-36 (the voice of personified Zion)

According to Provan (1991:97), this is "a difficult part. The natural assumption would be that the same voice is speaking here as in vv. 1-33":

> It is difficult on this interpretation to see, however, how vv. 37-38 follow on from vv. 34-36. For vv. 37-38 seem to be the response to an objection to the narrator's speech. …… It seems

better, however, to understand vv. 34-36 themselves, … as constituting the objection implied by vv. 37-38.

Westermann (1994:177) considers vv. 33-38 to be a "theological warrant for the preceding." According him, these verses are 'didactic midrash' removed from the language of the Psalms. Furthermore, "a similar set of verses occurs at Isa. 45:6-7. In terms of their function, vv. 34-36 develop the theme of v. 37: God sees the evil that human beings do. Thus vv. 34, 35, and 36a are all dependent on v. 36b."

As Kaiser (1982:90) indicates, vv. 34-36 form one long sentence. The infinitives that open each of the three lines must wait for the main verb on which they depend until the last words of v. 36. NRSV and NIV translate v. 36b as a rhetorical question, "does the Lord see it?" In view of the whole context, I think that it is better to translate the verse as a statement rather than as a question: "the Lord does not approve/see," because the statement that God does not see serves to point up all the places in Lamentations where God is requested to see and look upon the destruction (1:9c, 11c, 20a; 2:20a; 3:59-60, 63; 5:1).[38] As Provan (1991:98) expresses it, this is "the paradoxical picture of God standing apart from events for which he is described as responsible elsewhere in the stanza."

4.2.4 Lamentations 4

4.2.4.1 Text and Translation

אֵיכָה	[1] Alas
יוּעַם זָהָב יִשְׁנֶא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב	The gold has become dim, the pure gold has changed.
תִּשְׁתַּפֵּכְנָה אַבְנֵי־קֹדֶשׁ בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוּצוֹת	The sacred stones are scattered at the head of every street.
בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים הַמְסֻלָּאִים בַּפָּז	[2] The precious sons of Zion, worth their weighed in fine gold,
אֵיכָה נֶחְשְׁבוּ לְנִבְלֵי־חֶרֶשׂ מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר	Alas, they are regarded as earthen pots, the work of a potter's

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[38] See Dobbs-Allsopp 2002:121; also O'Connor 2001:1052, 2002:51-2. I think, because of the acrostic form of the poem, to begin each verse with the letter "לֹ," v. 36b is located the end of stanza (see Provan 1991:98).

hands.

גַּם־תַּנִּין חָלְצוּ שַׁד הֵינִיקוּ גּוּרֵיהֶן	[3] Even the jackals offer the breast; they nurse their young.
בַּת־עַמִּי לְאַכְזָר כִּי עֵנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר	The daughter of my people has become cruel, like ostriches in the desert.
דָּבַק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק אֶל־חִכּוֹ בַּצָּמָא	[4] The tongue of the nursing cleaves to the roof of its mouth in thirst;
עוֹלָלִים שָׁאֲלוּ לֶחֶם פֹּרֵשׂ אֵין לָהֶם	The children ask for bread; no one breaks it for them.
הָאֹכְלִים לְמַעֲדַנִּים נָשַׁמּוּ בַּחוּצוֹת	[5] Those who ate delicacies are desolate in the streets;
הָאֱמֻנִים עֲלֵי תוֹלָע חִבְּקוּ אַשְׁפַּתּוֹת	Those who were brought up in purple embrace ash heaps.
וַיִּגְדַּל עֲוֹן בַּת־עַמִּי מֵחַטַּאת סְדֹם	[6] The iniquity of the daughter of my people has been greater than the sin of Sodom,
הַהֲפוּכָה כְמוֹ־רָגַע וְלֹא־חָלוּ בָהּ יָדָיִם	Which was overthrown in a moment, and no hands were raised against it.
זַכּוּ נְזִירֶיהָ מִשֶּׁלֶג צַחוּ מֵחָלָב	[7] Her consecrated ones (Nazirites) were purer than snow; they were whiter than milk;
אָדְמוּ עֶצֶם מִפְּנִינִים סַפִּיר גִּזְרָתָם	Their body were ruddy than corals, Their forms like sapphire.
חָשַׁךְ מִשְּׁחוֹר תָּאֳרָם לֹא נִכְּרוּ בַּחוּצוֹת	[8] Their forms are blacker than soot; they are not recognized in the streets;
צָפַד עוֹרָם עַל־עַצְמָם יָבֵשׁ הָיָה כָעֵץ	Their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become dry as wood.
טוֹבִים הָיוּ חַלְלֵי־חֶרֶב מֵחַלְלֵי רָעָב	[9] Better off were those pierced by the sword than those pierced by famine,
שֶׁהֵם יָזוּבוּ מְדֻקָּרִים מִתְּנוּבֹת שָׂדָי	Those who pine away, stricken by want of the fruits of the field.
יְדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיּוֹת בִּשְּׁלוּ יַלְדֵיהֶן	[10] The hands of compassionate women boiled their own children.
הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹ בְּשֶׁבֶר בַּת־עַמִּי	They became their food in the destruction of the daughter of my people.
כִּלָּה יְהוָה אֶת־חֲמָתוֹ שָׁפַךְ חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ	[11] YHWH accomplished his anger; he poured out his burning anger.
וַיַּצֶּת־אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן וַתֹּאכַל יְסוֹדֹתֶיהָ	He kindled a fire in Zion and it consumed her foundations.
לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ מַלְכֵי־אֶרֶץ וְכֹל יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל	[12] The kings of the earth did not believe nor all the world's inhabitants,
כִּי יָבֹא צַר וְאוֹיֵב בְּשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלָם	That the foe and the enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem.
מֵחַטֹּאת נְבִיאֶיהָ עֲוֹנֹת כֹּהֲנֶיהָ	[13] Because of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests,
הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ דַּם צַדִּיקִים	Who shed in her midst the blood of the righteous;

נָעוּ עִוְרִים בַּחוּצוֹת נְגֹאֲלוּ בַּדָּם בְּלֹא יוּכְלוּ יִגְּעוּ בִּלְבֻשֵׁיהֶם	[14] They wandered, blind, in the streets; they were defiled with blood that no one could touch their garments.
סוּרוּ טָמֵא קָרְאוּ לָמוֹ סוּרוּ סוּרוּ אַל־תִּגָּעוּ	[15] "Away, unclean," they called to them. "away, away, do not touch!" For they departed, indeed, they wandered. Those among the nations said, "They shall no longer dwell."
כִּי נָצוּ גַּם־נָעוּ אָמְרוּ בַּגּוֹיִם לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לָגוּר	
פְּנֵי יְהוָה חִלְּקָם לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַבִּיטָם פְּנֵי כֹהֲנִים לֹא נָשָׂאוּ זְקֵנִים לֹא חָנָנוּ	[16] The face of YHWH has scattered them, he no longer look on them; The face of the priests they did not honour; to the elders they did not show favour.
עוֹדֵינָה תִּכְלֶינָה עֵינֵינוּ אֶל־עֶזְרָתֵנוּ הָבֶל בְּצִפִּיָּתֵנוּ צִפִּינוּ אֶל־גּוֹי לֹא יוֹשִׁעַ	[17] Our eyes were ever looking to our help in vain. In our watching we watched for a nation that did not save.
צָדוּ צְעָדֵינוּ מִלֶּכֶת בִּרְחֹבֹתֵינוּ קָרַב קִצֵּינוּ מָלְאוּ יָמֵינוּ כִּי־בָא קִצֵּינוּ	[18] They hunted our steps so that we could not walk in our streets. Our end drew near, our days were fulfilled, for our end came.
קַלִּים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ מִנִּשְׁרֵי שָׁמָיִם עַל־הֶהָרִים דְּלָקֻנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ	[19] Our pursuers were swifter than the eagles in the heavens; They chased us on the mountains; they lay in wait for us in the desert.
רוּחַ אַפֵּינוּ מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה נִלְכַּד בִּשְׁחִיתוֹתָם אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ נִחְיֶה בַגּוֹיִם	[20] The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of YHWH, was captured in their pits, Of whom we said, "under his shadow we will live among the nations."
שִׂישִׂי וְשִׂמְחִי בַּת־אֱדוֹם יוֹשַׁבְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ עוּץ גַּם־עָלַיִךְ תַּעֲבָר־כּוֹס תִּשְׁכְּרִי וְתִתְעָרִי	[21] Rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom, who dwells in the land of Uz; Even to you the cup will pass; you will become drunk and strip yourself naked.
תַּם־עֲוֹנֵךְ בַּת־צִיּוֹן לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַגְלוֹתֵךְ פָּקַד עֲוֹנֵךְ בַּת־אֱדוֹם גִּלָּה עַל־חַטֹּאתָיִךְ	[22] Your iniquity will end, Daughter Zion, he will no longer exile you He will visit your iniquity, Daughter Edom, he will uncover your sins.

4.2.4.2 Structure of Speaking Voices

verses	Persona	Addressee
1-16	Narrator	Impersonal Object
17-20	*Sufferer*	Impersonal Object

4.2.4.3 Analysis and Interpretation

As in previous chapters, two voices exist in Lam. 4: the narrator (1-16, 21-22) and the people of Zion/Jerusalem (17-20). After expressing the theological reflection of the previous chapter, with pain, loss, grief, and tear of Jerusalem, with which the narrator identified with himself, Lam. 4 once more describes the gloomy and melancholy scene hanging over Jerusalem as depicted in Lam. 1 and 2.

With regard to the scene in Lam. 4, O'Connor (2001: 1059) uses the phrase, "a sense of exhaustion and remoteness," and House (2004:434) thinks that "the text (Lam. 4) returns to statements about Jerusalem's losses, her children's agony, and the Lord has punished a sinful people." Gotwald (1988:650) states, "this lament, teeming with vivid scenes of hardship and disgrace among the survivors in Jerusalem, is divided, like chapter 1 and 2, between two speakers."

Here I quote Berlin's (2002:103) description of Lam. 4:

The main theme of this chapter is degradation: everything beautiful has been sullied, things of priceless value are treated as if worthless. Precious and beautiful objects are metaphors for the most precious things – human beings. …… the picture is not only one of heartrending snapshots of individuals in their misery, but of the abrogation of all that was normal in Judean society, a drastic reversal of fortunes, socially and physically, caused by the ravages of wartime famine. …… all human dignity has been lost.

The narrator appears again as the poem's main speaker, but there is no consensus on the identity and number of the speakers in Lam. 4.Unlike previous chapters, there is no prayer

131

to God, by Jerusalem the sufferer.

4:1-16, 21-22 (the narrator)

Most scholars divide 1-10 from 11-16 describing the division as being a shifting of voices [see O'Connor (2001:1059-64, 2002:59-66); House (2004:435-46); Berlin (2002:104-13); Westermann (1994:197-208); and in particular, Miller (1996:181-6)]. However, as stated above in the section on Lam. 3, the reader who reads Lam. 4 in sequence after reading the previous chapters recognizes that the narrator still continues speaking from v.1 to v.16, though the voice of the speaker seems to change in v. 11. This view is held because the descriptive tone of both 1-10 and 11-16, including vv. 21-22, is naturally equated with a prophetic viewpoint and is attributed to the narrator as a member of the Jerusalem community (cf. see above on shifting voices in Lam. 3). His voice includes both the observer's and sufferer's eyes.

As Berlin (2002:103) indicates, this chapter is 'a poetic rendition of the conditions of famine and the most graphic of Lamentations in its description of the physical suffering of the people of Jerusalem." The narrator describes the naked condition of Jerusalem by reason of their sin.

Lam. 4 ends with a bright future. The statement of v. 22a describing Zion's bright future is most remarkable to the reader who has read this far in the book. In contrast to the marked lack of hope throughout Lam. 1 and 2, and the tortured vacillation between faith and doubt in Lam. 3, the end of Lam. 4 is a note of assurance (see Provan 1991:110, 123). It seems to response the narrator's demand in Lam. 3:64-66 and Jerusalem's appeal in Lam. 1:22.

4:17-20 (the people/community of Jerusalem)

It is difficult to decide who the speaker is in 4:17-20. According to Provan (1991:121):

It seems more natural, however, to preserve in these verses the distinction which exists elsewhere in the poem (as indeed in chapters 1 and 2) between narrator and sufferers (cf. vv. 1-3, 21-22), taking the 'we' of these verses as strictly identical with the 'they' of vv. 14-16. … The view adopted here, then, is that it is the people of Zion who speak in vv. 17-20, the narrator concluding the poem with vv. 21-22.

Lanahan (1974:48) indicates that "the bourgeois has some sense of identity with his fellow-citizens." Hillers (1992:150) states that the plural form of the first person "we" identifies the speaker very closely with his people. As Heim (1999:165) states, the individual and the community "blend into one another." The citizens of Jerusalem as a group express their recognition that no one could save them from their fate, whether those outside (v. 17) or inside the community (v. 20) (see Provan 1991:110).

4.2.5 Lamentations 5

4.2.5.1 Text and Translation

זְכֹר יְהוָה מֶה־הָיָה לָנוּ הַבֵּיט וּרְאֵה אֶת־חֶרְפָּתֵנוּ	[1] Remember, YHWH, what has happened to us; Look and see our disgrace.
נַחֲלָתֵנוּ נֶהֶפְכָה לְזָרִים בָּתֵּינוּ לְנָכְרִים	[2] Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our houses to foreigners.
יְתוֹמִים הָיִינוּ אֵין אָב אִמֹּתֵינוּ כְּאַלְמָנוֹת	[3] We have become orphans fatherless, our mothers are like widows.
מֵימֵינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ עֵצֵינוּ בִּמְחִיר יָבֹאוּ	[4] Our water for silver we drink; Our wood for a price they bring.
עַל צַוָּארֵנוּ נִרְדָּפְנוּ יָגַעְנוּ לֹא הוּנַח־לָנוּ	[5] On our necks we are hard driven; we are weary and have no rest.

מִצְרַיִם נָתַנּוּ יָד אַשּׁוּר לִשְׂבֹּעַ לָחֶם	[6] We have given the hand to Egypt, Assyria to get enough bread.
אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ אֵינָם אֲנַחְנוּ עֲוֹנֹתֵיהֶם סָבָלְנוּ	[7] Our fathers sinned; they are no more; we bear their iniquities.
עֲבָדִים מָשְׁלוּ בָנוּ פֹּרֵק אֵין מִיָּדָם	[8] Servants rule over us; there is no one to tear us from their hand.
בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לַחְמֵנוּ מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר	[9] At the danger of our lives we get our bread because of the sword in the desert.
עוֹרֵנוּ כְּתַנּוּר נִכְמָרוּ מִפְּנֵי זַלְעֲפוֹת רָעָב	[10] Our skin is like a hot oven from the burning heat of famine.
נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עִנּוּ בְּתֻלֹת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה	[11] Women in Zion are raped, virgins in the cities of Judah.
שָׂרִים בְּיָדָם נִתְלוּ פְּנֵי זְקֵנִים לֹא נֶהְדָּרוּ	[12] Princes are hung up by their hands; the faces of elders are not respected.
בַּחוּרִים טְחוֹן נָשָׂאוּ וּנְעָרִים בָּעֵץ כָּשָׁלוּ	[13] Young men carry the grinding mill, and boys bagger under (loads) of wood.
זְקֵנִים מִשַּׁעַר שָׁבָתוּ בַּחוּרִים מִנְּגִינָתָם	[14] Elders have ceased from the gate, young men from their music.
שָׁבַת מְשׂוֹשׂ לִבֵּנוּ נֶהְפַּךְ לְאֵבֶל מְחֹלֵנוּ	[15] The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned into mourning.
נָפְלָה עֲטֶרֶת רֹאשֵׁנוּ אוֹי־נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ	[16] The crown has fallen from our head; woe to us for we have sinned.
עַל־זֶה הָיָה דָוֶה לִבֵּנוּ עַל־אֵלֶּה חָשְׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ	[17] Because of this our heart are faint, because of these things our eyes are dimmed.
עַל הַר־צִיּוֹן שֶׁשָּׁמֵם שׁוּעָלִים הִלְּכוּ־בוֹ	[18] Because Mount Zion is desolate, jackals prowl in it.
אַתָּה יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב כִּסְאֲךָ לְדֹר וָדוֹר	[19] You, YHWH, sit on your throne forever to all generation.
לָמָּה לָנֶצַח תִּשְׁכָּחֵנוּ תַּעַזְבֵנוּ לְאֹרֶךְ יָמִים	[20] Why do you forget us forever? Why do you forsake us so many days?
הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ וְנָשׁוּבָ חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם	[21] Restore us to you, YHWH, and we shall be restored; renew our days as of old.
כִּי אִם־מָאֹס מְאַסְתָּנוּ קָצַפְתָּ עָלֵינוּ עַד־מְאֹד	[22] Unless You have utterly rejected us and are exceedingly angry with us.

4.2.5.2 Structure of Speaking Voices

verses	Persona	Addressee
1-22	Narrator and *Sufferer* (we)	YHWH

4.2.5.3 Analysis and Interpretation

In Lam. 5, there is only one voice. But, unlike the previous chapters, Lam. 5 reflects several different features: there is no an alphabetic acrostic; it is shorter than the other chapters; there is only one voice; the opening phrase is different to the opening word 'אֵיכָה' found in Lam. 1, 2, and 4. When a reader peruses Lamentations in sequence he finds that chapter 5 is also very different from Lam. 4, because at the end of Lam. 4 (vv. 21-22, especially v. 22a) the reader read the faint hope expressed by the narrator's voice. The subject of Lam. 5 switches to a focus on YHWH and again, as in earlier chapters contains an appeal to God to "***remember*** (זְכֹר יְהוָה)" what has come upon Jerusalem. All Lam. 5 is directly addressed to YHWH.

According to most scholars, Lam. 5 follows the traditional pattern of the communal lament. Gerstenberger (2001:502)[39] writes:

> Finding forms of the complaint genre in ch. 5 is proof of the mixture of styles and genres in late communal commemorations. In other words, mourning services in memory of past catastrophes developed their own genre of lament, built upon traditional forms of complaining and lamenting. Variations of late complaint, emphasizing the guilt of the fathers, can be found in Ezra 9; Nehemiah 9; Daniel 9.

The features of Lam. 5 raise interpretive questions: why does Lam. 5 become even shorter than Lam. 4 and abandon the acrostic format altogether?; why does the book end on such a sour, despairing note? To answer these questions in the past, interpreters speculated that each poem existed independently before being complied into a loose anthology with little arrangement or coherence (O'Connor 2002:71). But recent scholars, like Provan, Dobbs-

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[39] In contrast, see Provan, 1991:124-5.

Allsopp, Berlin, O'Connor, Renkema, and Linafelt, assume that the book of Lamentations is a carefully crafted work of art, although they approach the text from different viewpoints.

The voice of Lam. 5 is the first person plural speaker representing the people/community of Jerusalem. This voice was already evident in 4:17-20. Although the narrator's voice is not identified as in the previous chapters, he may be included with this plural voice.

Lam. 5 is framed by a call to God to "remember (זְכֹר יְהוָה)" (v. 1a) and the realization that he continues to "forget (שָׁכַח)" his people (v. 20a) (Berlin 2002:116). Furthermore, the Jerusalem community repeats verbs used in the previous chapters (1:9c, 11c, 20a; 2:20) in v. 1b, "see/consider (הַבִּיט)" and "look (רְאֵה)." Dealing with the framework of Lam. 5, Heim (1999:166) says:

> Together with the plea for restoration in v. 21, this petition (v. 1) frames the lament and, together with the descriptive praise in v. 19, dominates its tone. The request in v. 21 is a prayer for the restoration of the Jerusalem community to its former relationship with God, and consequently the reestablishment of its former socio-political integrity. However, the accusation of God implicit in the questions of v. 20 and the doubtful question "- or have you utterly rejected us?" in v. 22, which serve as a motivation for the Lord to grant the preceding request, remain the final word in the book.

After complaining about the conditions of Jerusalem in the body of Lam. 5 (vv. 2-18), with v. 19, "complaint gives way to petition. Remembrance of events gives way to remembrance of the nature of God, which is the ground of the petition" (Provan 1991:133). In vv. 20-22, we meet an unconfident ending. This is not a happy ending, unlike the so-called

communal lament in Psalms[40]. It is difficult to conclude Lam. 5 as a communal lament. The understanding of Lam. 5 is closed to connect to the other chapters, because Lam. 5 is best understood as an original unity. In next section, I will find the meaning of Lam. 5, relating to the other chapters in the book[41].

4.2.2 The Intention of Text Itself and the Reader

In order to understand the intention of text itself, firstly, we must observe the two perspectives (narrator and Jerusalem) of the implied author. As I stated in previous chapters, meaning is related to the function of a text within the overall literary context. The implied author intends something through the dialogue between two voices. Such a voice in the poetic text is similar to 'the point of view' in the narrative. I recognize the existence of two different voices that alternatively dialogue throughout the book of Lamentations

In Lam. 1, the narrator as the first speaker uses third-person indirect speech. Readers are informed about Jerusalem's situation (1:1-9b, 10-11) and the narrator's knowledge about the reason for her desperate situation (1:17) in this manner. The second speaker, Jerusalem/Zion, expresses herself through the first-person indirect and direct speech. She apparently speaks to readers in 1:12-16 and 1:18-19 (indirect) and to YHWH (direct) in 1:9c, 11c, and 20-22. These alternating speeches help move the poem from description to agreement between speakers, to confession, and finally to pleas for relief from enemies (House 2004:365). Lam. 1 contains the primary contents, dialogued between two voices from Lam. 2 to Lam. 5. Readers will understand other chapters in light of Lam. 1.

Though these voices are untidy in Lam.1, they are arranged chapter by chapter,. The narrator who stands outside of the suffering, speech by speech, is gradually drawn into it.

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[40] On the structure of "Lament Psalm" and "communal lament" in *Psalms*, see John Day (1995); he points to Ps. 12; 44; 60; 74; 79; 80; 83; 85; 94; 126; 137 as being communal lament.
[41] As Provan (1991:134) indicates, "the mood of the fifth poem is consonant with that of the book as a whole, which struggles to find hope, but is only occasionally truly hopeful."

From Lam. 1, little by little, Jerusalem loudly speaks to God about her/their tribulation/distress. Finally, in all the verses of Lam. 5, we read the impassioned petition of Jerusalem to God.

The narrator, using imagery and metaphor, introduces Jerusalem, Daughter Zion as a female. She is also pictured as a fallen and abandoned woman. Discerningly O'Connor (2001:1027) refers as follows to the two voices in the book of Lamentations:

Although the two voices (narrator and Jerusalem) overlap and echo each other, they do not address each other, the narrator speaks to the implied reader about her, and she, Jerusalem addresses God alone. Despite the absence of dialogue between them, the two voices offer double testimony of witness and sufferer. Together they create a geography of pain. Their discourse gives pain form and shape in a map of Daughter Zion's outer and inner world. The narrator tells what has happened to her; she reports how it feels to suffer as she does.

As well as the frequent change of speakers in Lamentations, the different speeches often shift from one addressee to another, sometimes within the same discourse. Lastly, several addresses contain embedded utterances by two speakers (see Heim 1999:144). For example, in Lam. 1, the sufferer personified as Zion speaks to God (9c, 11c, 20-22), and the passersby (v. 12) or all people (v. 18). In Lam. 2, the narrator has two addresses, to the reader and Zion, and Zion again speaks to God (20-22).

In Lamentations, the narrator indeed is a participant in the woes of Jerusalem. The narrator "has endured what Jerusalem has endured, seen what they have seen, questioned what they have questioned. Therefore, his observations, exhortations, and prayers are authentic and relevant for the original reader and to each successive generation of readers" (House 2004:429).

With regard to this phenomenon, K. Heim (1999:146, italics his) states:

Readers of Lamentations are confronted by a profusion of utterances, speakers, and voices. These utterances are directed at different audiences within the textual world of the book. They convey different, and often competing, messages, and they struggle for the readers' attention. Questions like "Whose voice is the author's? Who is speaking in a particular section? Which voice is 'right'?" are virtually impossible to answer, and the result is bewilderment and disorientation. …… It is possible, then, that the polyphonic nature of Lamentations may not be caused by a stitching together of different sources; nor does it necessarily reflect confusion on behalf of the final editor(s) of the book. …… Consequently, analyses of Lamentations which start from a definite number of speakers, such as Provan and others have done, may have by-passed the actual *reading process*.

Lam. 1 prepares the way for Lam. 2 by vividly depicting the city's destruction, its effect on Daughter Zion, and her momentous grief and shame over the loss of her children. But Lam. 2 shifts attention from Jerusalem's condition to its cause, the furious rage of YHWH. Both the narrator and Jerusalem accuse God unrelentingly of overseeing, catalyzing, and executing atrocities against the woman (see O'Connor 2001:1036).

Lam. 2 advances the book's thematic movement. in certain specific ways it builds on the description in Lam. 1 of the lonely, sinful, devastated, yet praying city by addressing the specific elements of the day of the Lord introduced in 1:12 and 1:21. In particular, 2:1-10 carefully chronicles God's activity as warrior, as Israel's enemy, and as the one who planned Jerusalem's downfall. It introduces a first-person speaker who agrees with the narrator and Jerusalem's perspective on why the punishment came, but who takes the step of advising Jerusalem to pray on behalf of the innocent, a prayer he evidently believes the Lord will

answer. Lam. 2 depicts Jerusalem accepting this advice. She laments by describing the people's suffering and asking if such things should occur. In particular she prays for her little ones, the group most vulnerable and most harmed in days of punishment. Other instructions and responses unfold in Lam. 3-5 (House 2004:398).

Since a clear identification of speakers seems impossible, Heim refers to utterances rather than speakers; "Readers who, apart from such a strict scheme, take each utterance identified below on its own terms may in fact be responding to the book's invitation to take part in the anguished debates of the Jerusalem community (1999:146). I think that his suggestion is a development of Provan's. Though I also agree with Heim's suggestion to use the term 'utterance,' which I prefer to the term (poetic) 'discourse,' because I deal with Lamentations as the literary text. In the poetic discourses of the text, different speakers/voices are directed at different readers/addressees. Of course, I differ slightly from Heim in the classification of the text.

Especially, I believe that in Lam. 1, 2, and 5, the discourse directed to God (1:9c, 11c, 20-22; 2:20-22; 5:1-22) is very important in understanding the text. I will focus on the function of these discourses as related to the entire text (in particular, Lam. 5) in interpreting the book of Lamentations. In the process of reading of Lamentations, the different addressees in these discourses (like God, the passersby, Edom and etc.) mainly appear as negative characters. On this point, why does Lamentations indicate God as negative character? Definitely, in 3:34-36, the indirect speech to God, when all the prisoners of the land are crushed under foot, when human rights are perverted in the presence of the Most High, and when one's case is subverted (NRSV), YHWH does not see. The narrator's theological confusion between his confidence in God (3:21-33) and the affliction he has experienced (3:1-20) does not resolve until the end of Lamentations. As O'Connor (2002:52) points out, in Lamentations "God is blind, and does not respond."

In the end of Lam. 5, the reader once again reads the rhetorical paradoxes such as the statements of 3:34-36 related to 3:22-33. Though the reader reads all the chapters of this sort book, he/she will not find any response or answer from God. According to House (2004:430), this poetic rhetoric device "offers a full-orbed approach to the problems the book addresses, for it allows readers who have sinned to state pain yet also to find a way to renew relationship with the Lord."

Jerusalem's voice is identified throughout the book of Lamentations by the use of first person (both singular and plural) discourse. One often overlooked element in this standard reading of Lamentations, however, is the fact that the narrator, like Jerusalem, is a dramatic speaking voice that exists within the created poetic world. Both speakers, in other words, are personifications, who are given their existence by the poet. This apparently mundane observation carries serious consequences for the reading of Lamentations[42].

According to Bakhtin's notion of 'the polyphony of the text,' their voices must now enter into a dialogical relationship with each other (see Bakhtin 1984:188-9). According to Miller (2001:395), Bakhtin's understanding of the dialogic possibilities of double-voiced discourse help us to understand better how the two voices in Lamentations intersect dialogically.

Miller (2001:397) suggests that the narrator's entire speech is transformed by the influence of Jerusalem's speech. One obvious indication of this transformation is a change of the narrator's addressee. The addressee of the narrator's first speech (1:1-9b) was an un-named other, but Jerusalem breaks into the narrator's speech (1:9c) and addresses YHWH. When the narrator speaks again, it is not to his original addressee, but now he, too, directs his words to YHWH (for more detail, see Miller 2001:397-408; but note that he only analyses Lam. 1).

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[42] To fit my point, I slightly amended this quotation from Miller 2001:393.

If we apply Miller's analysis to rest chapters of Lamentations, we can understand the rhetorical devices as paradoxical speech, such as that in Lam. 3:34-36 and Lam. 5:20-22. After Lam. 1, the narrator's monopoly of viewpoint is now broken. He may choose not to respond directly to Jerusalem's speech, but he is not at liberty to ignore it totally. As in the analysis of Lam. 1 by Miller, Jerusalem re-uses words taken from the narrator's speech and, furthermore, keeps the same semantic meaning as originally voiced.

Though I do not totally accept Miller's analysis of Lam. 1, he gives us good insight into the existence of two voices. I accept his point and apply it to the whole of Lamentations. Especially, the narrator's same repeated statements, "אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ (no one to comfort her)" in 1: 2b, 9b, and 17a, appear again as Jerusalem's petition, "אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי" in 1:21b, and with a small difference in 1:16b (this is my addition, as this latter verse has the same basic meaning). In addition to Miller's analysis, 1:2 which expresses the narrator's indirect voice, has semantic equivalence with 1:16, Jerusalem's direct voice.

The narrator has used the same words to describe Jerusalem on three separate occasions (1:2b, 9b, 17a). In each of the previous occurrences, however, this phrase was not spoken to gain sympathy for Jerusalem's plight, but uttered in a context describing the depths to which she had sunk on account of her many sins (narrator's report). Jerusalem, like the narrator, wishes to focus attention on her lack of comforters. She places this phrase, however, in a new context, which underlines her distress and suffering. The focus becomes Jerusalem's troubled existence, rather than any possible wrongdoing. She portrays herself as a sympathetic figure, who can do no more than sigh over her pitiful situation and who does not even have someone to offer her comfort (Miller 2001:401).

In her speech, Jerusalem takes the narrator's direct and unconditional words and reuses them in the direction of their original semantic intention. Jerusalem, like the narrator, affirms that captivity, starvation, and a comfortless existence are negative experiences.

Moreover, she assents to the notion that she has done wrong. Jerusalem does not contradict what the narrator has previously said, she merely recontexualizes the comments, thus making them conditional and open to new purposes. Rather than pointing to Jerusalem's sinful culpability, which was their original purpose, they now direct attention to her woeful suffering, her victimization at the hands of her enemy, and the inappropriateness of YHWH's response to her wrongdoing (Miller 2001:402).

In Lam. 5, there are many words which Jerusalem and the narrator used in previous chapters. I just want to focus on 5:1 and 5:20-21. In Lam. 1, two voices are mixed together. As I classify the previous chapter, the narrator's voice is heard in 1:1-9b, 10-11b, 17, and Jerusalem's in 1:9c, 11c-16, 18-22. The narrator speaks of the disastrous scene which occur at Jerusalem, using indirect speech (like a kind of report), while Jerusalem speaks to the passersby or the peoples (vv. 12-16, 18-19), and to YHWH (vv. 9c, 11c, and 20-22).

Little by little, the narrator's voice is changing from that of an observer (in Lam. 1) to that of a member of the Jerusalem community (Lam.3, 4). In the end of his speech (Lam. 4:21-22), he speaks of Jerusalem's hope which he mentioned in Lam. 3:21-33, that Jerusalem's punishment will end, but Edom, represented as an enemy of Jerusalem, will perish. Nevertheless, though Jerusalem constantly asks that God should see and look at His people (1:9c, 11c, 20-22; 2:20-22), God does not respond and so she is depressed and her voice is gloomy (3:34-36; 4:17-20). Jerusalem seems to become desperate about her/their fate.

In the reading process from Lam.1 to Lam. 5, the reader who reads up to Lam. 4, is confused in mind because of the mixed voices presented in the text. When reading Lam. 5, the reader recognizes a plural speech unifying both the narrator and Jerusalem. The narrator's voice and the voice of Jerusalem have become more and more interlinked and intertwined and are now evident as a single, unified voice. Here we need to pay attention to the Jerusalem's petitions as they appear from 1:9c to 5:1b. This is a main frame for understanding

Lamentations.

The verbs, "see/consider (הַבִּיט)" and "look (רְאֵה)," used in 1:9c and 11c, are the first words of the Jerusalem speech. In 5:1 broken the acrostic pattern evident in the first four chapters is broken. Here the author puts an impassioned "remember (זְכֹר יְהוָה)" (1a) before "see/consider" and "look" (1b), in the opening phrase of Jerusalem's plea to God. The first verb of 5:1 "remember" is used twice by the narrator, first in indirect negative (descriptive) speech (וְלֹא־זָכַר, not remember) in 2:1, and then in direct (imperative) speech to YHWH in 3:19. When reading Lamentation as a literary whole, Lam 5:1 reflects these two sentences, and the reader is reminded the statements in the context of Lam. 2:1 and 3:19.

This word "remember" relates to "hope" in the contextual situation of 3:19 (see 3:18 and 21). 'We' as the unified Jerusalem and the narrator re-uses this verb in the beginning of Lam. 5. 'We' as Jerusalem community does not contradict what the narrator has said in 3:19, but is merely recontexualized the word, in addition to two words, "see" and "look." The nuance of the two words in 5:1b is different from the sphere of meaning in Lam. 1. Though Jerusalem constantly demands that God should see and look, God does not answer. He is silent. Finally, Jerusalem take a negative voice tone (3:34-36). God does not ever see any suffering and pain caused by injustice. Finally, these verbs of 5:1 have both nuances. Thus, I think that it is a kind of monological polyphonic text.

The 'We' in Lam. 5 challenges the monological nature of the utterance by the narrator and Jerusalem by reusing their words in way that is different from their original intention. They (we) force the words of the narrator and Jerusalem to serve directly different aims from what was their original intention (see Miller 2001:406). Miller (2001:407) points out in his analysis of Lam. 1:

The constant clash of voices, in other words, is marked by simultaneity, instead of any sort of

progression of thought, which, according to Bakhtin, is one of the distinguishing features of a polyphonic text – "not evolution, but coexistence and interaction." When one comes to the end of Lamentations 1, neither voice has gained a dominant position. There is no final conclusion; the conflict between the two speakers remains unresolved and unresolvable. The voices exist, in other words, "as an eternal harmony of unmerged voices."

According to Bakhtin (1984:88), the simultaneity and unfinalizability of Lamentations function to create a "live event, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two … consciousnesses," which, in turn, serves to draw the reader into that dialogic event as one of the wills that clash in the confrontation of disparate perspectives. The meaning of Lamentations, therefore, does not ultimately reside in the viewpoint of either one of the speakers, but rather in the dialogue that the two voices initiate with the reader – a dialogue, moreover, that rejects the binary hierarchizing of "either … or" and embraces the unfinalizable interaction of "both … and" (Miller 2001:407).

As I indicates above, Lam. 5 is framed by a call to God to "remember (זְכֹר יְהוָה)" in v. 1a and the realization that He continues to "forget (שָׁכַח)" us as his people in v. 20a. Semantically, the implied author intends to let the reader attach "see/look" to "remember," and "not see" to "ignore."

The implied author is related God's seeing to His remembrance, and His no seeing to ignorance. When the narrator sees Jerusalem, there is no one to comfort her on account of her sins. Her suffering is the judgment of God. Whenever Jerusalem sees her own condition, it is the same. Finally, we, with whom the narrator and Jerusalem are identified, also fail to find a response from God, as in Jerusalem's speech.

Though Lam. 5 is a monologic text, two previous voices are mixed. The recognition of the multivocality and polyvalence of this text, in other words, helps one better understand

the power this poem has exercised over so many persons in the past – a power that rests not merely on its remarkable poetry, but a power that is "predicated on the adoption of a double-voiced discourse that promotes mediation rather than ideological settlement of hierarchal binary oppositions."[43] This is a poetic-rhetorical device which the implied author (or the poet) invents.

Finally Miller (2001:408) concludes:

The dialogue begun in this poem continues both forward and backward, including other voices from other times, but always without seeking a closure that would ultimately silence any voice. Readers, therefore, may no longer cling blindly to any assurance of a decisive or guaranteed interpretation, but must be fully open to the play of the variegated and conflicting discourses that have become a part of this poem's ongoing dialogue. One must recognize, as well, that this essay is but one aspect of that continuing conversation among the many speakers, readers, and interpreters of this poem.

Though in Lam. 1 and 2, the narrator stands outside of the destruction and thereby offers the reader an objective perspective, from Lam. 3 he stands inside the destructive scene. When reading Lamentations as a polyphonic text composed of two "unmerged consciousnesses," the text is no longer read as a monological description of Jerusalem's many egregious sins and the justification of her/their cruel punishment, in which Jerusalem's voice ultimately retreats into insignificance. Instead, Lamentations becomes the locus of conflict and struggle between two equally weighted voices, where one observes both speakers using "double-voiced" discourse to provoke an ongoing dialogue, not only between the two voices (the narrator and Jerusalem/ Jerusalem's community), but among the speakers within the

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[43] See Miller 2001:407; he quotes M. Servodidio, "Ana Rossetti's Double-Voiced Discourse of Desire," in *Revista Hispanica Moderna*, no. 45, 1992: 319.

poem and the reader who stand outside of it (see Miller 2001:408).

The conclusion of Lam. 5 is much more powerful than any monological text. There is no answer to the phenomenon of why, although Jerusalem repeatedly asks God to see and remember her/their tragic disaster, there is no response from God – there is no comforting, there is no "seeing, there is no "remembering" by Him. Though the narrator mentions the hope in Lam. 3 and 4:21-22, Lam. 5, at the end of Lamentations, the sense of hopelessness returns because there is no response from God. In the text readers are confronted with the phenomenon of their own existence. The text, moreover, demands that the reader takes part in an ongoing dialogue with the text itself, without any answer from God.

4.3 Canonical Reading of the Text

4.3.1 Canonical Function of Lamentations 5

In the previous section, I analysed Lamentations as the 'covenant of discourse' (literary meaning), borrowed from Vanhoozer's term. As I stated previously, poetry as a text is not a historical event but a history interpreted and universalized. When reading a text as poetical literature, we are to read it as a universal truth (see McKnight 1985:10).

The book of Lamentations as a universal truth contains an interpretations of a tragic history. We as the reader look at the catastrophic scene through the voices/eyes of the narrator, Jerusalem, and God (actually, there is no God's voice, but His voice/eyes, speak indirectly through the narrator and Jerusalem) in the poetic world created by the poet/ the implied author. Now the reader meets many characters (e.g. God, the passersby, the people, the Jerusalem's enemy, and etc.) in the text. Lamentations focuses on the speaker's feelings/emotions and attitudes, not the logical reason of Jerusalem's catastrophe.

If we read the book of Lamentations as I analyse, the reader, who recognize the shift from a double (polyphonic) discourse (Lam. 1-4) towards a monological discourse (Lam. 5)

will acknowledge the 'we' as being a single voice which incorporates two voices; those of the narrator and Jerusalem. This voice, however, appears first in Lam. 4:17-20. The unexpected shift of speaker in Lam. 4 is a signal that alerts the reader that this shift is to occur as it did in Lam. 1:9c. It is similar to the shift in Lam. 3:40-47 where he moves from the plural form thus identifying himself with the 'we' as his community, and appealing for return to God with confession of their sin.

Taken as a part of the book as a whole, Lam. 5 summarizes the purpose and message of Lamentations (House 2004: 473). The affirmative concept of Lam. 3:21-33, 55-57, and Lam. 4: 21-22 on God, for example, are two of the few instances in the whole of Lamentations where have such positive sentiments. These sentiments are summarized by the statement in Lam. 5:19: "You, YHWH, sit on your throne forever to all generation." After this theological statement, Lam. 5:20-22 returns, as shown in previous chapters, to the main subject of Lamentations, the petition to God as a comforter, a caretaker, and a renewer.

But, Salters (2003:348) puts the following question: "why else would they/she address YHWH? Why link the disaster with the people's behaviour? Why refer to YHWH's everlasting rule? And why request restoration?" House (2004:397) gives a possible answer, "Lamentations is for "a renewed relationship with the covenant God who is the only source of the hope they recognize." The term, "covenant (בְּרִית)" does not appear in the book of Lamentations, for Jerusalem and the narrator know the covenant curses found in the Law and that. Jerusalem's sins link up with the covenant curses (cf. Deut. 28). Finally, the suffering and sorrow of Jerusalem, or the Jerusalem community (even the narrator) is the suffering of God's covenant people. In Lamentations, they are calling on YHWH, who made a covenant with them/Israel. Also, the reader who reads the Old Testament would definitely know 'who Jerusalem is,' and 'how they are related to YHWH.'

The implied author tries to share the suffering and pain of God's people, by using the

petition with first person speech, shifting the speaker frequently, repeating the same content, confessing the sins, and asking the rhetorical questions. Lam. 5 plays a role as a place where all people, including the narrator and Jerusalem, the implied author and the implied reader, the poet and the reader, and past and present covenant people of God, join in. The sorrow of the people presented in Lamentations, in other words Jerusalem's suffering, becomes the sorrow of the present, the suffering of the reader who reads Lamentations. Lam. 5, therefore, performs a role which is to "press the reader to cease trying to avoid the book's expressions of pain and confessions of sin" (House 2004:303).

4.3.2 Re-reading the Text as Divine Communicative Action: Canonical Interpretation of Lamentations as *a fuller meaning*

There is no utterance from God in Lamentations, if any, it is only in 3:57; "do not fear." How can we accept Lamentations as a divine communicative act? Does Lamentations only contain the complaint and petition to God? These questions are semantically equivalent "is there a canonical meaning in the book of Lamentations?"

As I explained in the previous chapter, it is important to acknowledge that we come to the data with an interpretive frameworks (premise) already in place. Here I want to elucidate my premise in a slightly different way, borrowing Vanhoozer's sentences (2002:286), such as I explained in the previous chapter:

> While scholars in the academy may read the "Hebrew Bible" in isolation from the New Testament, Christians cannot; for the Rule insists that we make a theological connection between the God of Israel and the Father of Jesus Christ, and hence a hermeneutical connection between the two choirs of witnesses.

To call the Bible "Scripture" is, therefore, to acknowledge a divine intention that does not contravene but supervenes on the communicative intentions of its human authors (the meaning of text). This means that the divine intention comes into its own when the parts of the text are read in light of the canonical context. If one takes divine authorship of Scripture seriously, then literal interpretation must have recourse to the canonical context, for the meaning of the parts is related to the whole of Scripture (Vanhoozer 2002:292). Now I describe the canonical/theological meaning (fuller meaning) of Lamentations.

4.3.2.1 From the Old Testament

In the book of Lamentations there are many illocutionary acts. Here I accept Searle' alternative taxonomy of illocutionary acts as derived from Austin. Searle refines Austin's illocutionary acts, and indicates that there are five types of illocution; Assertives (suggest, put forward, insist, boast, deduce, hypothesize, and etc.), Directives (ask, order, command, request, pray, invite, permit, advise, and etc.), Commissives (promise, vow, pledge, covenant, contract, swear, promise, and etc.), Expressives (thank, apologize, deplore, welcome, congratulate, and etc.), and Declarations (bless, baptize, bid, and etc.) (1979:1-29, especially 12-20).

In Lamentations, there are many types of illocutionary Directives act, e.g. "see/look, YHWH," "consider, YHWH," and "remember, YHWH" (I refer mainly, to 1:9c, 11c, 20a; 2:20a; 3:19; 5:1a, 1b) in direct speech like Jerusalem's first personal speech. As I point out, though the term covenant does not appear in the book of Lamentations, it is a basic concept in canonical context. The reason that they direct demands to God is that they are His covenant people. The literate reader of the Old Testament can easily remember a past event in the Old Testament which ties Israel to God. That is the first part of the book of Exodus, precisely Exod. 2:23-25; "The Israelites *groaned* … and *cried out … to God*. God heard their groaning

and he *remembered* (זָכַר) his covenant. God *saw* (רָאָה) the Israelites …" Especially, comparing Lam. 3 and Ex. 2:23-25, House (2005:14) states:

Having stated that he has seen 'affliction' in 3:1 and has been fed 'wormwood' in 3:15, the speaker asks God to 'remember' these facts (3:19). God's ability to remember his relationship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob results in national deliverance through the exodus in Exodus 2:23-25. Apparently the speaker desires this sort of salvation again, and the circumstances certainly call for something extraordinary on God's part. Next, the speaker professes confidence that the Lord 'will indeed remember' this sorrowful situation, with the result that God will 'meditate' on what to do to help (3:20).

These two texts (Ex. 2:23-25 and Lam.) share the same verbal and thematic scene in several ways: groaning (Ex.) and weeping (Lam.), crying out and crying for help to God (Ex.) and demanding God to see (Lam.). Both texts are concerned about Israel's/Jerusalem's suffering, but differ in some points: the descriptive style (literary form), the focus on a performer of utterance, and the final of event. The form of Lamentations is a long poem, but the text of Ex. 2:23-25 is a short narrative. In Lamentations the voice of narrator and Jerusalem/Jerusalem community mainly focus on Jerusalem's suffering and the lack of any response from God. However in Ex. 2:23-25, God appears as a main character, directly looks at their suffering and remembers the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Lamentations shows a perspective of Israel/Jerusalem (in main, Directives of illocutionary act), while in the text of Exodus, the perspective is God's (only Assertives). Definitely, Lamentations seems to end in the darkness of despair without hope, but Ex. 2:23-25 ends with hope and a bright prospect for the future.

Is there really no hope in Lamentations? Does this text show the silence of God? The

answer is 'no.' This is not a fuller meaning as thick description, but just thin description. On a 'thin description' of interpretation of text, Vanhoozer (2002:297-8) points out:

By "thin description" I mean one that offers a minimal interpretation only, one that confines itself, say, to lexical issues or to issues of historical reference. What gets lost is precisely the dimension of the author's communicative action: what one is doing in using just these words in just this way. The problem with thin interpretation is that it fails to penetrate (to pierce!) the text deeply enough to reach the theological dimension.

Compared with so-called individual and communal lament psalm, the literal form and structure of Lamentations is very characteristic. Following John Day's analysis (1995), in the Psalms, there is the certainty of God's hearing in the end of many individual laments (Ps. 6:8ff.; 7:10f.; 13:5f.; 28:6ff.; 31:19ff.; 52:8f.; 55:23; 56:9ff.; 57ff.; 61:5; 94:22f.; 130:7f.; 140:12f.). In communal lament, though starting with a call to God, what follows next has no rule of structure, and it is very different from the descriptive expressions of Lamentations. Finally, we can compare Jeremiah's laments   with his prophetic text.

If a Christian reader reads Lamentations in succession, he/she will read it after reading the book of Jeremiah. In the Christian Bible, the book of Jeremiah is followed by the book of Lamentations. But in Hebrew Bible, it is a different place. The literate reader can easily remember the image of Jeremiah's suffering and laments, because of the similarities of the two texts. Jer. 15:5-9 is very similar to Lamentations in a literary linguistic style and text image, except in the use of the "speaking voice" in Lamentations. Jer. 15:15-18 is also similar to Lamentations, even as far as the speaking voice is concerned. However, these texts give God's answer to Jeremiah [Jer.15:19-21(NIV), italics mine]:

Therefore this is what the LORD says:

If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me;

if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman.

Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them.

I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze;

they will fight against you but will not overcome you,

for I am with you to rescue and save you," declares the LORD.

I will save you from the hands of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the cruel.

In Lam. 3:40-42, and 5:21 (NIV), we find a proper answer to the declaration of God given above:

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD

Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven, and say:

We have sinned and rebelled and you have not forgiven.

Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old

In some parts of Lamentations we suddenly meet the definite expression, like 1:18, 3:22-39, 5:19. Strangely enough, each of these sentences appears at the beginning, the middle, and the end of Lamentations. I believe that this is the intended reading strategy. The reader reads the book of Lamentations following the voices of the narrator and Jerusalem. In the reading process, readers find that there is no reference to the existence of God, he does not respond to Jerusalem's complaint and the narrator even helps Jerusalem's petition. All this is located just before Jerusalem's negative statements. But, kindly enough, the implied author

corrects the reader's reading and reminds the reader that "God is righteous (1:18)," "the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end (3:22)," "Great is God's faithfulness (3:23)," and "God sits on your throne forever (5:19)."

Especially, in the middle of a speaking about Jerusalem's affliction and suffering in Lam. 3:1 to 20, the narrator changes the tone of the speeches. Unexpectedly, he speaks of hope based of God's character (3:21-23). Here the reader who does close reading of Lamentations is reminded of the text, like Ex. 34:6-7 (NIV, italics mine):

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming,

"The LORD, the LORD, the *compassionate* and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in *love* and *faithfulness*, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

Both texts use similar words. The one cause for hope is "the steadfast love (חֶסֶד) of YHWH" (see Hillers 1992:128). This word is God's 'covenant-type love (or mercy)'. In Ex. 34:6-7, the Lord forgives Israel and restores his covenant with them after the golden calf incident and Moses' resulting intercession on their behalf (see House 2005:14). House (2005:15) says:

Exodus 34:6-7 also depicts God's judgment as nearly as thorough, or perhaps every bit as thorough as his kindness. The inevitable conclusion that the speaker must draw from this passage and from his own experience is that God's lack of kindness or covenant memory is not the problem. The problem must lie elsewhere, and in the context of the whole of the book of Lamentations it must reside in the sins of the covenant people.

Indeed, God's covenant mercy and compassion are 'new every morning' (3:23). They cannot be exhausted, though sinners must not take them for granted. Again, as the whole of Lamentations and Exodus 34:6-7 indicate, the Lord punishes those who prove themselves unfaithful.

If so, finally we can understand the ending of Lamentations. The thin description of this part is a petition using a complaining voice. But Christian readers following the intention of the implied author read of the hope of the coming of LORD's salvation, linked with His covenant love. The rhetorical expression at the end of Lamentations must be read as the rightful demand of His suffering people who wait quietly for LORD's salvation. Therefore God speaks to His people through the narrator's voice in Lam 3:25-33, as His people read the text, they will hear echoes of these sentiments ringing in their minds:

YHWH is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of YHWH.

It is good for the man that he bears the yoke in his youth.

Let him sit alone and keep silent for he laid it on him.

Let him put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope.

Let him give his cheek to the striking, let him be filled with disgrace.

For the Lord will not reject forever,

For though he causes grief, he will have compassion, according to his great steadfast love.

For he does not afflict from his heart, nor grieve the sons of men.

4.3.2.2 To the New Testament

"Blessed are those who *mourn*, for they will be *comforted*" (Mt. 5:4, NIV)

In Lamentations, there is no comforter for Jerusalem who is weeping and mourning. In the whole of Lamentations, repeatedly both voices, the narrator and Jerusalem, emphasize this condition (in the narrator's voice, 1:2b, 9b, 17a; 2:13b, and in Jerusalem's voice, 1:21). We meet the above passage summarizing the content of Lamentations, in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, called 'the Beatitudes' of the gospel of Matthew. Though there is a paucity of internal textual evidence as to whether there is a relationship between these texts, readers can easily recognize the same theme which these two texts contain.

In other passages the (implied) author of Matthew's gospel introduces Jesus as the one who "fulfils the law and the prophets" (5:17). Readers can realize this most obviously in this repeated assertion (1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10). Ch. 5 of Matthew's Gospel is the first of Jesus' discourse. In the Sermon on the Mountain, 5:11 is especially close to the emotional condition of Lamentations as well as Is. 61:1-3. If the Sermon on the Mount is itself as a Christological document, Jesus is the man who comforts those who mourn. The calling out and petition of Lamentations is fulfilled in Jesus as a comforter of the people, indeed, Jesus is the answer of God to Jerusalem's demand for helping, seeing, remembering, and comforting. Furthermore, according to the teaching of the New Testament, as in Mt. 5:10, until Jesus comes again, God's people, those who are saved by Jesus Christ, will be insulted, and persecuted during their lives, because of Jesus. Canonically, Lamentations is the book for them.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under

her wings, but you were not willing (Mt. 23:37, NIV)

"Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." (Mat. 24:2, NIV)

Matthew's Gospel once again makes allusion to Lamentations. David M. Moffitt (2006:306; in more detail, refer his article; here I briefly mention the expression obviously connected with both texts) accurately points out:

> In Matt. 23:1-24:2, Jesus, while in the temple, pronounces a series of woes upon the religious leaders in Jerusalem that culminate in his declaration that all the righteous blood shed from Abel to Zechariah would come upon that generation. That this pronouncement of judgment has the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple behind it becomes clear when Jesus (who, in the context of Matthew, is Immanuel, "God with us" in 1:23) "laments" over Jerusalem in 23:37, claims that the temple will be left desolate in 23:38, and then embodies the departure of the Shekinah from "that house by walking out of the temple in 24:1. the import of this episode is immediately explained in 24:2 – the temple, and by implication the city in which it sits, will be destroyed.

The implied author, Matthew alludes to Lamentations three times in chs. 23 and 27 of his Gospel (23:35; 27:34; 27:39). The fact that these allusions come from Lam. 2, 3, and 4, that the allusion to Lam. 4:13 resonates throughout the scenes that immediately precede the crucifixion (see Mt. 27:19, 24-25), and that the allusion to Lam. 2:15 is so closely related thematically to the way Matthew uses Lam. 4:13. indicate that the allusions to Lamentations function as scriptural warrant for interpreting certain historical events theologically and

polemically – namely, for understanding Jesus' crucifixion as the act of righteous bloodshed par excellence that directly results in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (see Moffitt 2006:319). With regard to the death of Jesus at the instigation of the religious leaders which eventually led to the temple's destruction, Matthew (the implied author) applied a theological paradigm for interpreting the destruction of the temple. In this way, Matthew, albeit in light of his conviction that Jesus is the Messiah, is, like so many of the prophets before him, calling his kinsfolk to repent if they would truly possess the kingdom (see Moffitt 2006:320).

When reading the New Testament, the Christian reader understands the temple as Jesus' body. Jesus' life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection determine the Christian's identity. When they read Lamentations, they identify themselves with the sufferer of Lamentations and they also find a comforter. In the New Testament, Jesus crucified his body as the temple for our salvation. If the temple is a symbol of God's presence with Israel in the Old Testament, Jesus is himself the very person of God, that is, God's presence with His people (Immanuel) in the New Testament. Jesus is canonically the real comforter as well as the response of God's faithfulness and steadfast love (mercy).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The purpose of this study is to offer a proposal for literary and canonical reading of the book of Lamentations. I have investigated the Book of Lamentations in the sense of a text-centred approach.

In chapter one, we surveyed the terrain of Old Testament hermeneutics. This survey revealed the diversity within recent Old Testament hermeneutics. In order to read the book of Lamentations I emphasised the text-centred approach reading the text as a literary whole.

In the body of the dissertation, I assert the legitimate interpretation of the book of Lamentations as divine communicative action. Instead of historical-critical approaches, I claim that the meaning exists not 'behind the text,' but 'in the text itself as a whole.' I also explain the literary meaning reading the text and demonstrate that we must find the canonical level of the meaning which supervenes on the literary level. Here for the canonical meaning of the text, I focus on Vanhoozer's assertion, having proposed the suitability of speech act theory for the various tasks of biblical interpretation and theological hermeneutics.

Most literary study of the Bible simply opts for humanistic literary criticism, like aesthetic questions, structural feature, literary forms, rhetorical devices, etc. According to Vanhoozer, the Bible is "a diverse collection of God's mighty speech acts which communicate the saving Word of God" (Vanhoozer 2002: 131). Vanhoozer's theory is to find out the meaning of the Scripture (or the text of the Bible) at the canonical level which supervenes on the literary level. In case of his Scripture act theory, the literary level is related to text itself. The meaning of a text at a literary level must be carefully studied and modified by the '*fuller sense* (or *meaning*)' derived from the canonical context. The 'fuller sense' of

Scripture associated with divine authorship emerges only at the level of the whole canon (see Vanhoozer 1998:263-4, 313-4). As I note in the previous chapter, understanding the Bible as literature is related to propositional, poetic, and purposive aspects of text as a communicative act, and understanding the Bible as Canon is relating these (propositional, poetic, and purposive) aspects to the Bible considered as a unified divine communicative act, that is, the Word of God.

Following this concept, I apply it to the book of Lamentations. This is to read the Bible as divine communicative act; God speaks with communicative intent to His people though the text (the Word). If one seriously considers divine authorship of the Bible, he/she must think about the canonical level of the textual (literary) meaning. We rather have here an author (or Author) with communicative intent who produced the literary text to be the Bible for the readers of his own generation (the implied and real reader in the text) as well as the next generation (the canonical or Christian reader), having a testimonial and educational function.

One of the most important approaches to understanding the book of Lamentations is to note the poetic voices, which interweave in the text. The poetic voices are my main focus of understanding the book of Lamentations. In each of the five chapters, though the voices of narrator as mediator before God, the implied author tries to communicate with between God and others (Jerusalem, Zion or etc.), as well as the implied reader. When we read the text, there is no utterance from God in Lamentations. It is the missing voice. Continually, the voice in the first person calls to YHWH and waits for His response. I believe that, YHWH's silent voice, together with other literary devices in Lamentations functions to create the meaning of the text.

The main theme of Lamentations is "Where is the true comfort?", "where is God's response?". The text presents no comfort. There seems to be no concern for the sufferer, even

by his/their covenant God. They keep waiting for God's response and continue crying out to Him. In the literary context, God keeps silent (non-speaking). Canonically, however, Christian readers as God's people read the Bible, connecting it to Jesus Christ. Within the canonical context, we can indeed find an answer and God's answering speech (that is, His act), because Jesus is their true comforter acting as God's response. We can find this response in his teaching (e.g. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount) and in his mission (e.g. presenting his body as the temple, being Immanuel, God-with-us).

5.2 Theological Short Appendix: Theological Understanding of the LORD's Day in Lamentations

When reading the book of Lamentations, we meet the depiction of the actual experience of the LORD's day as Judgment. I agree that the book of Lamentations takes the Jerusalem's deconstruction as the historical background to the text. In all respects, this concept, however, is just the background behind the text. I want to emphasize that there is a difference between the 'real' event and the literary event adhered (stuck) to the text. The event adhered to the text is an interpreted event by the writer/author. In the Bible the text reflects this theological interpretation.

But up till now there was not enough discussion on this concept in the book of Lamentations. As Barry Webb (2000:79) asserts, Lamentations, "more than any other Old Testament book, show us God's wrath as a directly experienced reality." Lamentations as theological text deals with this adhered interpretative event, the experience of the historical event, as the LORD's day of judgment. The coming of the LORD's day is on account of Jerusalem's sin (1:5, 8, 18; 3:42; 5:16, cf.5:7). But more than this, the end of the LORD's judgment day, that is, the day of hope when renewing Jerusalem will take place, is the ultimate purpose of Lamentations. As I formerly indicated, this renewal is connected to God's

covenant steadfast love and his faithfulness. Most discussions about the LORD's day are done in the study of the twelve minor Prophets. Theologically I think that the concept of the LORD's day is also related to Lamentations and the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. The reason is that canonical/theological concept of the coming of God's Kingdom in the New Testament has something in common with the Old. As the book of Lamentations speaks about the LORD's day as an event occurring between past judgment and future (soon coming) hope, in many parables and discourses of the Gospels (e.g. Matt. 18:23-5; 25:14-30; 25:31-46, Mark 13:1-37, Luke 16:19-31; 17:22-24; 19:11-27, etc), we find the LORD's day as the judgment[44] and the eschatological hope longing for the coming of the Christ's Kingdom through the repentance.

Although I did not explain Is. 61:1-9 in relation to Lamentations in this dissertation, Is 61:1-9 does indeed play the canonical role of 'bridge' between Lamentations and Jesus' discourse in Matthew's Gospel, especially in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' In Isaiah's text, we can find a similarity of verbal and thematic usages. Is. 61:1-9 directly indicates 'the day of the Lord' as one of judgment ('the day of vengeance' in 61:2), but also as the year of the LORD'S favour to all who mourn. Especially, in 61:3-4, the imagery of the text is very similar to that of Lamentations. Being canonically related to Is. 61:8 and Lam. 1:18a, can be seen as God's answer to the sufferer's demand for a reply in Lamentations.

I therefore claim that we can sufficiently understand the meaning of the Biblical text, when we read the Bible canonically. If we just read the book of Lamentations on its own at a literary level, we cannot understand the intent of the text, at most as a 'thin description' (on literary level), that God does not answer His people, and does not see the suffering of His people. But this is not the only communicated intent of God as the Author. In Lamentations, God allows his people to complain about their suffering. This is not, however, an unfounded

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[44] Especially, Luke 21:5-24 and Lam. 4:1-17 similarly share the description of the miserable state of the judgment.

complaint. Lm. 3:22-33 and Lm. 5:19 play the role of giving validity to their complaint. The book of Lamentations is the painful outcry of God's people, based on *God's covenant steadfast love and his faithfulness*, waiting upon the day of the LORD's favour, appealing to God's righteousness.

5.3 Epilogue

In conclusion, canonical reading aims at following God's intent and requests a reaction from His people. What is then God's intent in Lamentations? I believe that the expected reaction (the perlocutionary act) is one of 'enduring and waiting' until his coming again. What I implicate in the answer therefore suggests an eschatological reading within the canonical context, because the sufferer(s) depicted in the text is(are) waiting for God's response in the form of "renewing our days as of old". It is an account of trusting on God's steadfast love and confessing their sins, renewing the covenant relationship between God and the sufferer(s). As presented in the text, they are crying out in a time between the day of the LORD's Judgment (because of their disobedience) and the day of renewing by the Lord (relying on His covenant steadfast love).

The Christian community (both as universal church and as local church) following Jesus as the new Israel can accept this eschatological concept for interpreting Lamentations, when it is re-interpreted in the canonical context, because they are also living between Jesus' coming and His parousia (re-coming as the renewing day of all creation and the day of God's judgment). Because of Jesus they are often insulted and persecuted during their lives living between these two parameters. They must keep on to endure until the final day of God's promise (salvation and judgment), like their suffering ancestors of faith in Lamentations did, following the teaching of the Lamentations text. It is necessary to trust in the LORD's steadfast love, because that is their only hope.

In the sufferer's appeal to God in the book of Lamentations, we can find a very appropriate response to the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, representing simultaneously the canonical-theological meaning of the book of Lamentations (Williamson 1993:5).

Q: **What is your only *comfort* in life and death?**

A: That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto *my faithful Savior Jesus Christ*; who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, wherefore by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto Him.

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