ESTABLISH JUSTICE IN THE LAND: RHETORIC AND THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

by

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DECLARATION

I, FERRY YEFTA MAMAHIT, declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit to the University of Pretoria for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work and has not been submitted by me to any other university for degree purposes at this or any tertiary institution.

Signature : _____

Date : _____

ABSTRACT

Title : Establish justice in the land: rhetoric and theology of social justice in the book of Amos
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The aim of this research is to construct a biblical theology of social justice drawn specifically from the book of Amos. This is done on the basis of rhetorical analysis. The use of rhetorical analysis is considered to correspond with the genre of the selected texts analyzed (Am 2:6-8; 5:1-17; and 8:4-6), which are mostly rhetorical and relates to the issue of social justice in nature. The rhetorical criticism used in this research combines both diachronic and synchronic approaches, and consists of several steps such as dividing the rhetorical units, finding rhetorical situations, drawing rhetorical inventions, describing rhetorical dispositions and identifying rhetorical techniques.

The analysis shows that the prophet Amos used a wide variety of literary devices to persuade his audience, the people of Israel, such as chiasm, rhetorical entrapment, oracle against the nations (OAN), N + 1 formula, inclusion and progression, woe oracle, dirge or lament, wordplay, hymn, wisdom techniques, imagery, sevenfold structure, cause-effect form of speech and "quoting what the accused have said." These primary devices are utilized in the context or in the imagery of a courtroom. In this connection, Amos used the epideictic, judicial and deliberative rhetoric in order to bring his audience to the "divine court" for the religious and social sins that they have committed.

These rhetorical devices function as a means of exposing a theological intention of the utterances of Amos, which is establishing justice in the land of Israel. The

message of social justice is mainly based on the covenantal relationship between YHWH and his people, as seen in traditions of creation and redemption in the Old Testament, particularly in the Torah (the codes of law) and the former prophetic writings. The covenant calls for God's people to love YHWH and to act socially just toward other fellow human beings. As a concept, this research proposes a triangular relational model. YHWH, as the theological angle must be independent, and his people, either the powerful (the political angle) or the powerless (the social angle), are dependent on him. Meanwhile, the powerful and the powerless are interdependent with each other. Keeping a balanced relationship among the angles means manifesting the ideal state of social justice in the land.

This research shows that the covenant was broken by the Israelites when the powerful disobeyed YHWH and did social injustices toward other human beings. The powerful became independent both toward YHWH and the powerless. As a result, YHWH took responsibility and action to keep his covenant, and called his rebellious people back into repentance and obedience. In other words, justice must be maintained in the land of Israel. Such a divine decision was carried out in the context of the day of Lord (DOL), a day of either judgment or salvation. The option of death and life are offered to be chosen by the powerful. However, God's people deliberately choose death, and, consequently, their end is near. YHWH himself definitely will defeat and exile them by using the mighty army of Assyria.

Key terms: Amos
Theology of social justice
Rhetorical analysis
Literary devices
Covenant
Covenanted relationship
A triangular relational model of social justice
YHWH
The powerful
The powerless

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Ferry Yefta Mamahit
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Giving close attention to the book of Amos, one will easily see that the prophet Amos is presenting a prophecy of justice. The prophecy itself has its background in the ancient Israelite setting, the situation in the eight century BCE, which was quite perplexing. It can be described as an advanced state of decay—socially, morally, and religiously—where society was experiencing great injustice. The lack of conscience and euphoria of the rich, the abuse of power, and the exploitation of the poor by the ruling classes in the land became a common phenomenon (cf Prēvost 1998:26). For example, as Bright (2000:259-260) describes it, "a small farmer found himself often at the mercy of the wealthy landlords who took advantage of the plight of the poor in order to enlarge their holdings." As a result, social injustice became one of the main problems during that time.

In the midst of this situation, God commissioned Amos to go and prophecy social justice to the Israelites. This was not an ordinary or easy task for him because it implied tension and even confrontation. The message Amos delivered came from the idea that God himself opposed and confronted injustices carried out by human beings (cf Freedman 1990:252), especially those who were in political and religious authority. He, through the mouth of the prophet, demanded justice among his people. Mitchell (1990:190) argues that Amos "dwells on the irresistible, inescapable power of God only for the sake of enforcing demand growing out of his character. The attribute of justice or righteousness is especially

prominent. Jehovah is represented as condemning injustice." This demand basically had a religious background. In other words, it had its foundation in the very character of YHWH, the God of the covenant. Accordingly, as far as the prophet is concerned, YHWH himself acts justly and he requires that men act justly in their relation with him and with one another. Hyatt (1949:346) pinpoints that "Injustice violates the fundamental idea that all of the Israelites constitute the people of YHWH. When the rich oppress the poor, or merchants cheat their customers, then the fundamental idea of the covenant is violated."

Such a predicament has been addressed by the foundation of divine laws applied in the land of Israel. The Mosaic Law and the Prophets (cf Mt 22:40) have declared that every Israelite must "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your minds" (Dt 6:5) and "love your neighbour as yourself" (Lv 19:18). Although the laws of YHWH were declared and read on a regular basis, and the religious rituals were performed on a daily basis, oppression and abusive actions to the poor and the marginalized filled the everyday life of the society during Amos' time. It seems that the people of Israel observed only the vertical aspects of divine laws, such as worship, while at the same time, neglected the horizontal aspects of it. In this connection, one may think that the major problem is on the question of why the Israelites kept their religious rituals while at the same time neglected their responsibility to do justice to their fellow citizens.

The main problem of this research, however, is not primarily on the said exposure of historical reality behind the messages Amos delivered, but rather on the development of theological significance of social justice in his messages. It deals with the problem of disharmony, the existence of the gap between the success (religious rigour, economic prosperity, and political stability) and the failure (social injustices) of the people of God. The reality seems to be quite far from the ideals of the covenant, the right relationship between God and his people and the right relationship among his covenanted people. These seemed to be the problem that the prophet Amos encountered during his time.

Moreover, in a more complex way, the problem does not only lie on the theological development of social justice but also on the very nature of the book

of Amos. The book has been subjected to a wide array of disparate opinions by Old Testament scholars. From the bibliographical entries ever published, for example Mays (1959), Kelley (1966), Roberts (1970), Craghan (1972), van der Wal (1986), and Carroll R (2002), one may see that the book of Amos has attracted an extraordinary amount of scholarly study in the last few decades (cf Hasel 1991 [b]:26). It is shown that there is an explosion of publications in the forms of commentaries, dissertations, monographs, books and articles on the book of Amos. In this regard, Petersen (1998:107) comments that "Amos and the scholarships devoted to it offer a microcosm work on prophetic literature. Virtually every method or perspective available has been exercised on these nine chapters. As a result, no prophetic book has a bibliography comparable in size to that on Amos."

Unfortunately, most of references on Amos have common problems, with which my research also shares. Firstly, the problem that deals with the method or approach applied to the texts of Amos. Particularly, it is focused on the issue of synchronic and diachronic orientation to the texts. According to Carroll R (2002:18-30), scholars approach the book of Amos with three foci of concentrations: first, "Behind the text." The terms "behind the text" here refers to the approaches that concentrate on some sort of historical reconstruction (for example, the works of Wolff [1977], Coote [1981], Lang [1981] and Barstad [1984]). Such an approach is considered as a diachronic approach to the readings of Amos; second, "within the text." It deals with an approach of investigating other means of textual study, especially the literary study (for example, De Ward & Smalley [1979], Gese [1987], Gitay [1980], Wendland [1988], and Andersen & Freedman [1989]). The said approach tends to hold on the reception of the final form of the text. Therefore, it is basically a synchronic approach to Amos' texts; and third, "In the front of the text." This term connotes that the main concern of the method is on the impact of the contemporary readers and their appropriation of the given text. Such an approach has its emphasis on the concern for justice and the prophetic denunciation of oppression as seen, for example, in liberation theology within the Two-Thirds World (for instance, the works of Miranda [1974], Tamez [1982], Croatto [1987], Schwantes [1987], and Padilla [1989]).

Thus, the exponents of this approach also tend to heavily emphasize on the synchronic way of interpreting the texts of Amos.

These varying approaches have ended up with diverse results as shown in the works of Old Testament scholars. Those who concentrate on the "behind the text" approach are inclined to put more emphasis on the complexity of historical-critical method. Meanwhile, those who have given more attention to the "within the text" approach deal with the specialized literary theories. Next, those who focus on the "in the front of the text" seem to propose fresh voices around the world, seeking a life free from social, economic, political, or gender oppression as seen in liberation theologies, feminism, womanist view, and concerned evangelicals (see Carroll R 2002:50). As a consequence, the study of the book of Amos can no longer be done through one dominating approach, which is the tendency of most scholars. It seems that scholars naturally tend to gravitate to one or two of these three orientations or emphases according to their interests and training.

Secondly, is the problem related to the task of Old Testament theology. The main question is should OT theology be considered as a descriptive or normative study. This issue has separated scholars into different parties. On the one hand, those who hold on to the descriptive study (Gabler, Wrede, Eichrodt, von Rad, Jacob, Wright, Terrein, Stendahl, and others) maintain that the task of the Old testament theology is only to describe historically the subject to be studied or to answer a question: what it meant? (Hasel 1991[a]:28-34). Other modern scholars believe that Old Testament theology does not have any connection with today's life, for example, as Barr—objecting that there cannot be a normative ethical principle of the Bible—states that "the Bible is not in fact a problem-solver" (1973:142). For him, the authority of the Bible becomes, therefore, not an absolute standard by which behaviour can be judged but a sufficient standard that facilitates contemporary behaviour (Barr 1971:24-40).

On the other hand, those who hold on the normative approach (Eissfeldt, Vriezen, Childs, de Vaux, Porteous, and others) believe that the task is not only to describe but also to interpret the subject theologically (what it means?), and it is conceived as normative for faith and life (Hasel 1991[a]:28-34). This implies that the Bible

with its all recorded events and realities in the past does not only have a significant meaning to the ancient people but also to the contemporary people and context. The past also deals with today's reality of human beings. Westermann (1986:45) argues that "The Bible deals with the whole, the sum total of reality. Therefore, to speak of God is to speak of reality. The Bible begins with creation of the world and of mankind. The whole is thought of as an extension of time and space." This view is a bit uncomfortable especially for those who are not convinced of the authority of the Bible.

Thirdly, the problem situated in the scarcity of thorough study on the theme "social justice" in most Old Testament theology references. Observing recent publications on the Old Testament theology, one can hardly find a literature written on the theme of social justice. It seems that such a theme has been taken for granted by some Old Testament scholars. For the past few years, discussion of this theological theme was rarely done in a comprehensive way. With the exception of Brueggemann's work (1997:421-434, 644-646) that includes a longer discussion on " to listen and to practice justice" and Knierim's work under the sub-title "Food, land and justice" (1995:225-243), recent Old Testament theology textbooks (House [1998], Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim & Petersen [1999], Gerstenberger [2002], Rendtorff [2005], Goldingay [2006], and Waltke [2007]) have not given enough space yet to discuss this theme thoroughly. Only few dozens of pages were dedicated to discuss this central topic of Amos. Thus, most of these resources do not discuss the topic in a well defined way.

Fourthly, as will be seen in the next discussion ("History of Research" section), the theme "social justice" has never been theologically constructed from the book of Amos (in this case, the texts are Amos 2:6-8; 5:1-17; and 5:4-8), especially through a rhetorical analysis. These texts are chosen because they explicitly deal with the issues of social justice. At least, in these passages, the occurrence of the terms "justice" is very obvious. One cannot just ignore the significant occurrence of the idea of "social justice" since it is explicitly written in most parts of the book of Amos. Albeit major commentaries on Amos (Mays [1969], Hammershaimb [1970], Wolff [1977/1984], Soggin [1982], Stuart [1987], Andersen & Freedman

[1989], Finley [1990], Paul [1990], Niehaus [1992], Smith [1995], Birch [1997], Auld [1999], and Sweeney [2000]) are abundant and have studied these texts in a deeper way, still, there are no thorough theological investigations made particularly on such a topic. In my assumption, the discussions in most of Amos' commentaries lack comprehensiveness in dealing with "a theology of social justice."

Based on above observations, the problems of my research can be formulated in the following research questions: since publications are already abundant, why did the researcher write another subject on Amos? In dealing with the issue of the orientation to Amos texts studied, which orientation or perspective this research will follow, synchronic or diachronic? In relation to the issue of the task of Old Testament theology, toward what study this research tends to identify itself, descriptive or normative? In comparison with other Old Testament theology references that include a discussion on the theme "social justice," what is the significance of this research?

Moreover, the central questions are raised around the issue of theology of social justice in the book of Amos as proposed through rhetorical criticism: to begin with, what are the historical issues in the book of Amos? Who did write the book of Amos? What is Amos' main profession? What are the historico-political backgrounds of Amos' time? What are the socio-religious backgrounds during Amos' time? Next, what are the meanings of the texts (i.e. Am 2:6-8; 5:1-17; and 8:4-8) analyzed? In applying rhetorical analysis to the given texts, this research will question about what the rhetorical unit, situation, invention, disposition and techniques of each particular passage are. Finally, what is the overall theological concept of social justice in the book of Amos? What is the origin of a theology of social justice in the Old Testament? What are the theological aspects of social justice within the book? and finally, how to construct a theology of social justice derived from the book?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

My research, entitled "Establish justice in the land: rhetoric and theology of social justice in the book of Amos," aims to answer above questions in a more comprehensive way. The main objective is that this research will propose a biblical theology of social justice drawn particularly from the book of Amos using a rhetorical analysis. Subordinate to the core objective, the minor purposes of this research are: firstly, this research seeks to reveal the historical issues "behind the text." It deals with the historical reconstruction of the book of Amos in general, which includes discussions on the authorship, the original professions of the prophet, historical-political background, as well as socio-religious background. Using such a diachronic approach is necessary in order to get insights into the backdrop of the prophet's message on social justice. It is expected that such information may contribute to a better understanding of the texts studied.

Secondly, my research aims to rhetorically analyze selected passages in the book of Amos, especially those related to the issue of social justice (Am. 2:6-8; 5:1-17; 8:4-6). This analysis strives to identify the text's rhetorical unit as argumentative units that will affect the audience's reasoning and imagination, and to examine the specific rhetorical situation that the discourse is designed to present as determined by the choices made by the rhetorician. This also seeks to describe both rhetorical invention and disposition, where the mode(s) of convincing and the organization of material are pointed and to identify the literary devices used creatively and effectively by the rhetorician. Finally, this analysis tries to evaluate the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies used by the speaker in order to convince his audiences. By using rhetorical criticism, I expect to find the intended meaning of these passages, particularly, concerning the issue of social justice.

Thirdly, and finally, this research attempts to construct a biblical theology of social justice in the book of Amos. It seeks to explain theological implications about social justice behind the use of rhetorical devices employed by the prophet Amos. The focus then is on the finding of theological relational aspects of social justice as found in the book, a triangular relational model of social justice, that is relations between YHWH and the powerful, the powerful and the powerless and

the powerless and YHWH. At the end, these relational aspects are projected to propose a biblical theological construction under a main theme, an establishment of social justice in the land of Israel.

1.3 HISTORY OF RESEARCH

During the last two decades, several distinguished Old Testament scholars have presented outstanding studies around the theme of social justice. Several different approaches to the issue have been proposed. The work of Wolterstorff (1983), *Until justice and peace embrace*, was originally part of the series of Kuyper Lectures at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1981. Inspired by the original Calvinist reform, he "open[s] the discussion by considering what the social vision and practice of the reform was and bring[s] the contributions of thinkers in the reformed/Presbyterian tradition of Christianity into a discussion of more specific issues" (Wolterstorff 1983:viii). The discussion of social justice in this book—as it is related to politics—undeniably is strongly influenced by Reformed theological tradition. Hence, the nature of the dialogue is more on the level of socio-political theology from a Calvinistic perspective rather than a biblical theology (cf Echeverria 1985: 207). Although there is a discussion about justice from the Old Testament perspective, the explanation is by far too short. It seems that this papaer was intended to be an biblical overview written in only a few pages.

The use of socio-historical tools analysis, considered an approach where one seeks to reconstruct social developments within the course of Israelite history, is best represented by the extensive and consistent works of Gottwald, *The tribes of YHWH: a sociology of religion of liberated Israel* (1979), "Sociological method in the study of ancient Israel" (1983), *The Hebrew Bible: A socio-literary introduction* (1985), *Social ccientific: criticism of the Hebrew Bible and its social world* (1986), "From tribal existence to empire: the socio-historical context of the rise of Hebrew prophets" (1990). In these works, he tries to consistently employ social analysis to reconstruct ancient Israel's social setting. He comes up with the

conclusion that a peasant revolt against the opposing rulers of Canaan was the impetus for the emergence of Israel as a people with a distinctive religious orientation. If one does close and critical reading on his work, one will find that the work is too speculative, especially while the author was using heavy presuppositions from neo-Marxist sociological disciplines to interpret the texts. It is still, however, a reconstructive approach which needs to be improved in the future, particularly in its methodological validity.

There was a similar—and yet different—approach recently used by Habel in his work, *This land is mine: six biblical land ideologies* (1995[a]). Here, the use of textual analysis is reliable. Instead of reconstructing the social history behind the texts, the author aimed at demonstrating the social order promoted by the texts. The focus of his publication is to interpret a range of documents from an alien time and culture with the assumption that the texts were the products of social groups and forces at work in ancient society. It is interesting that Habel (1995[a]:279) himself later finds out that these two approaches can increase more argumentations by honestly saying, "the first has a vested interest in uncovering history and has a particular sociological bias, the second is influenced by particular literary theories of textual analysis. Interpreters today therefore tend to identify their particular bias before proceeding with their analysis."

Birch, in his *Let justice roll down: The Old Testament, ethics, and Christian life* (1991), uniquely uses a moral or ethical approach to the issue. He plainly states that he intends to propose a volume on Old Testament and Christian ethics, which "attempts to relate the testimonies and stories of Israel's faith as recorded in the Hebrew canon to the character and conduct of Christians and the Christian community in our time" (Birch 1991:18). This work gives the readers a general explanation on the foundation of "moral ethics" methodologically, historically and theologically as it is written in the Hebrew canon. In addition, his work is based on biblical theological perspectives, as one infers that he is much influenced by Von Rad's "retelling" method of doing theology, although without the latter's fine interest in the historical-critical analysis of the text (cf Knight 1994:74-77), and he uses a methodology that tries to bridge biblical studies and Christian ethics.

Unfortunately, after doing critical reading on the book, one can hardly find a comprehensive discussion on the issue of social justice, since the work itself seems to be heavily loaded with biblical proofs and discussions from the socio-ethical perspective rather than a solid biblical theology of social justice.

A festschrift for Benjamin Uffenheimer, *Justice and righteousness: biblical themes and their influence* (1992), edited by Reventlow and Hoffman, offers a more comprehensive discussion on the theme in comparison to works mentioned above. It is basically a compilation of different articles on the topic of "justice and righteousness" written by several scholars. The readers of the book are expected "to be guided by these keywords to one of the central ideas of the Bible which has had an immense impact on the thinking of the modern world" (Reventlow & Hoffman 1992:7). In spite of the relevance of the theme, the focus of this work is not on proposing a biblical theology of social justice from the book of Amos, rather it presents a long discussion on the theme within a broader historical range, that is, from ancient to modern contexts.

Interestingly, one chapter of this book written by Moshe Weinfield, "Justice and righteousness" also appeared few years later in a book, *Social justice in ancient Israel and in the ancient Near East* (1995). It is undoubtedly a more extensive study on the theme as compared to the former writings. The author indicates that this book aims to clarify the term "justice and righteous," especially the meaning of the expression "doing justice and righteousness." It is a study that demonstrates "the concept of doing justice and righteousness in the literature of Ancient Israel and of the Ancient Near East which implies maintaining justice in society, so that equality and freedom prevail" (Weinfeld 1995:5). To propose this intention, the author exegetically examines biblical materials on the issue of justice and righteousness from the perspective of the Law, the Rulers and the people as individuals and as groups. At the same time, he relates them to the concepts that existed in the context of the Near Eastern nations. A close and critical reading of this book shows that there is a lack of attention to particular prophetic books such as Amos. In general, both books are still considered as the best studies on the issue of social justice from a biblical perspective.

Similar to these works but a more concise one is a work done by Bruce Malchow, *Social justice in the Hebrew Bible* (1996). In this book the discussion of the theme covers almost all the books in the Old Testaments, including the law codes, the prophetic books, the psalms, the later narrative works and wisdom literature. Compared to the above works, although Malchow's also focuses on the same theme, his discussion does not refer to the issue of social justice itself but rather to the *origin* of the concept. He mentions that "Israel did not originate the concept of social justice. It was present in the other countries of the Near East before Israel, and Israel received the legacy of their thought on the subject" (Malchow 1996:xiv). This work is actually a discussion about how other ancient cultural traditions have influenced Old Testament concepts of social justice.

There are similar local resources focused on the same theme. One is written by an Indonesian Catholic scholar, Banawiratna, *Keadilan sosial dalam Kitab Suci* ("*Social justice in the Bible*" [1997]). The author gives a thematic survey on the subject from both Old and New Testaments and proposes some practical implications for implementing justice to the society. Although the focus of the work is clear, it is still too broad and, in relation with this study, is not concentrated on a particular book of the Bible. Another one, edited by Singgih, *Amos dan krisis fundamental Indonesia* ("*Amos and Indonesian Fundamental Crisis*" [2000]), seems to be more focused on discussing the crisis in the Indonesian contemporary situation than the way justice is reflected in the book of Amos. Unfortunately, this is actually not a book about a theology of social justice. Although the author has discussed the issue in a few pages, still, it cannot be categorized as a comprehensive biblical theological work on the theme, because the emphasis of the book is actually not on the issue of justice but on the repentance of the people as it is suggested in Amos 5:6a.

What is more, Carroll R (2002:163-170) lists several selected doctoral dissertations that have been written on the book of Amos (from 1985 to 2000), but only a few of them are specifically dealt with the theme of social justice. To mention some, the work of Mbele, "La justice sociale ou l'ultimate possibilité de salut pour Israel selon le prophète Amos" (1988) analyzes the book from the

perspective of social justice as set over against final salvation for the nation of Israel. Heyns' work "Amos—advocate for freedom and justice: a socio-historical investigation" (1992) attempts to reconstruct the social context for the message and ministry of the prophet. Pangumbu Shaondo also analyzes the social message of the book of Amos and argues that this constitutes a plea in favor of the oppressed lower class in his work "L'intervention sociale d'Amos—une contribution à l'ètude de la mission prophétique en Afrique aujourd'hui" (1992).

In addition, using a cultural anthropological approach, Ramírez's work "The social location of the prophet Amos in the light of a cultural anthropological model" (1993) attempts to present a more complex and realistic approach to the social setting of the prophet by utilizing the group/grid model in order to supplement form critical studies. Lastly, the work of Mahaffey "An investigation of social justice as it relates to the message of Amos" (1993) proposes a very basic exegesis of relevant texts in Amos with the aim of ascertaining the basis for prophetic condemnation of social injustice by other nations and within Israel. It is important to note that, at the present time, no doctoral research has been done in proposing "a theology" (particularly "an Old Testament theology") of social justice in the book of Amos from a rhetorical analysis.

So far, there are excellent resources produced and are available in discussing the issue of social justice from different perspectives. The approaches they employed to the issue seem to be valid enough and resulted in the production of outstanding and valuable materials. Unfortunately, all the discussions are not specific and complete enough in terms of utilizing a sound biblical theological approach. They are seemingly overloaded with sociological, textual, theological or even ethical approaches and discussions, or lacked focus, especially on the comprehensive work of the issue from particular prophetic books of the Bible (i.e. Amos, Hosea and Micah). It is always necessary to study the subject from a particular prophetic standpoint for, according to Mays (1983:6), "in their sayings, the prophetic stance on justice receives its classic expression." Although some works are able to link together the social justice and a particular book (in this case, Amos), they do not use a rhetorical approach and construct a biblical theology. To conclude, all of

the previous works have had approaches different from this research, they have not used rhetorical analysis. Moreover, they have not proposed to construct a theology of social justice drawn from the book of Amos.

1.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Against this backdrop, this research will try to fill the indicated research gap by proposing a biblical theology of social justice which is focused on the Book of Amos and is formulated by using a rhetorical approach on selected texts in the book of Amos, especially related to the issues of social justice. In an attempt to understand the meaning of several texts such as these, one cannot avoid the exegetical process. Exegesis itself might be defined as a thorough, analytical study of a biblical passage done so as to arrive at a useful interpretation of the passage (cf Stuart 2001:1). This definition clearly describes the primary task of the interpreter or hermeneutic, to reveal the meaning of the texts (see Morgan & Barton 1988:6). Hirsch (1967:8) believes that albeit that the significance of the text does change, the meaning is still represented by the text itself, and every communicative action presupposes the possibility of attaining such understanding (cf Vanhoozer 1998:218). In a more specific way, Steck (1998:3) defines Old Testament exegesis as "the endeavor to determine the historical, scientific and documentable meaning of the texts which have been transmitted in the Old Testament."

It implies that any interpretation requires a scientific approach to the Bible in terms of being critical and controlable in every step and treatment in order to find out the meaning of the text according to its specific genre. Barton (1984:19) insists that "biblical criticism has been concerned with enabling the reader to acquire the competence necessary to read the various types of literature that make up the Bible." Thus, this approach is considered scientific because the subject of study can be determined by investigating main passages to the degree that its understanding of the text(s) was grounded exclusively upon knowledge and

arguments whose appropriateness to the subject can be evaluated by others, and whose rationale can be substantiated (see Steck 1998:3).

1.4.1 Rhetorical Criticism

As an art and a science of interpreting the scripture, the term "exegesis" is indeed too general and wide in scope. It may include all approaches available to the scriptures, such as form, redaction, literary, historical, grammatical and other related analysis. To make it more specific, this study will mainly employ a more recent methodology to intepret the text, namely rhetorical criticism. The main reason why this research utilizes such a method is that this approach is well suited for the genre of texts selected in this study. Barton (1984:19) reminds us that before studying the various texts of the Old Testament one should have "literary competence" and the ability of "genre-recognition."

Besides, according to Gitay (1980:293), "Since prophetic speech is discourse address, the entire range of rhetoric must be utilized in studying prophetic genres." This implies that to have a better understanding of the meaning of the text, an interpreter should use a proper exegetical method fitted to the genre of the text since scriptures utilized many forms of speech. Goldingay (1995:4) suggests that "the interpretation (or exposition) of them [texts] needs to allow for its diverse forms, and to reflect them." In this connection, since I consider the genre of the texts as rhetorical, the proper approach to interpret them is by using rhetorical analysis. This thought is based on the literary study of Dorsey (1999:277) on the book of Amos, "The book is a masterpiece of rhetorical skill; and it is carefully and effectively structured." Studies done by other scholars on these particular passages have shown a similar perspective (De Waard 1977:170-77; Smalley 1979:118-27; Gitay 1980:293-309; Van der Wal 1983:107-13; Dorsey 1992:305-30).

Furthermore, there are other reasons why this research uses the rhetorical approach: first, it generally treats the text as it is. It means that this approach

accepts the biblical text studied as a final form. Unlike form criticism, a rhetorical analysis is not concerned with fragmenting the text into numerous hypothetical sources, fragments, and interpolations. It goes beyond form critics in its view of the biblical texts albeit form criticism recently recognized the literary forms in the final text. It is more synchronic in nature (cf Mathews 1999:205) because it underscores the unity of the Bible, or a passage, based on consistency of style and argument (cf Muilenburg 1951: 475-77), and only examines the present or final form of biblical texts (see Dozeman, 1992:714).

Secondly, it has its root in historical data. Accordingly, a holistic approach to interpretation should comprise two elements, the literary analysis and grammatical-historical studies (cf Mathews 1999:208). It means that there is a close relationship between the final text and the ancient reader. To understand how the texts affected the ancient audience means to understand the ancient audience to whom it was addressed. The readers of the text are not seen as passive recipients of a speech, but as thinking people who are able to interact with the text and choose whether to respond to the message or not (see Wuellner 1987: 461). In other words, after reading the final text, the reader should respond properly to what is being read.

Thirdly, it focuses on the meaning of the text. The primary task of any biblical interpretation is to find out the message of a given text (Kennedy 1984:159), "what the text does say, and how does it go about saying it?" Therefore, the focus of rhetorical analysis is not on the history of Israelite religious beliefs, or the uses of literary genres, or even on the redaction history of the text, but rather, on the meaning of the text. Such a meaning can be drawn from the study of the function of the text using rhetorical analysis. Therefore, through the rhetorical approach, the interpreter is enabled "to understand better how a text functioned in its historical context and . . . to express the message of a text so that it can be persuasive to its contemporary audience" (Watson 1988:182).

The term rhetorical criticism is closely associated with literary criticism. According to Hauser (1994:3), "rhetorical criticism has much in common with the other literary analyses which have grown rapidly among Old Testament scholars

in recent years." To be more specific, the common ground of the two is found on the point that both of them have shared a similar focus of study, the biblical texts, and they have shared the same literary concerns. Exum and Clines (1993:16) explain that "Rhetorical criticism, sharing the outlook of new [literary] criticism about the primacy of the text itself, and often operating under the banner, 'final form of the text,' concerns itself with the way the language of the texts is deployed to convey the meaning." The biblical texts here become the main focus of all biblical studies and the groundwork for all critical approaches, as it was stated, "It is the text as the Word of God that motivates the religious reader to interpret theologically and ecclesiastically" (Mathews 1999:206). Also, the relationship between these approaches was not only laid in the field of textual or literary matters but also in its historical development, where the rhetorical approach was considered as a part of the development of a literary one.

This association, however, is not always easy to understand. Since literary criticism is closely related to both source and form criticisms (cf Hauser 1994:3), this may create confusion in trying to understand the terms used. It means that the former could not reduce its scope and meaning to become the latter. Longman III (1987:7) reminds us, "Due to the possibility of confusion, some have advocated the use of the term *aesthetic criticism* to describe literary criticism. Others desire to broaden the scope of *rhetorical criticism*, though it usually refers only to matters of style." It is a reaction to terminological confusion and a desire to affirm the superiority of literary criticism over source and form criticisms, and then over the rhetorical or any other terms. This view indeed insists on refusing the literary approach to be reduced to any other literary form of interpretation, or to narrow down the concept of literary criticism.

Moreover, in a recent literary approach, especially among the new literary criticism scholars or those who used the feminist, political, psychoanalytic, reader-response, and deconstructionist criticisms, rhetorical criticism can not only be associated with literary criticism as if it was considered as an "old" literary criticism. Along with structuralism, and "old" new criticism, they claimed that rhetorical criticism was no longer considered as a new literary approach (see

Exum & Clines 1993:15-20). Therefore, it is difficult to understand rhetorical criticism when it is related to literary criticism, since literary criticism has a broad and uncertain meaning.

In spite of this unresolved issue, I will still utilize rhetorical criticism because it is considerably more specific in treating the texts than literary criticim which is too broad in scope. This approach has a significant place in biblical studies nowadays since its first appearance in Muilenburg writing's, "Form Criticism and Beyond" (1969:1-18) at his inauguration as a president of the *Society of Biblical Literature* in 1968. His proposal basically is a reaction against the older literary studies used by biblical scholars in the past few decades, such as source and form criticisms. Although very helpful in understanding the texts, these approaches had definite limitations in some points. Source criticism is limited because "[its] tendency to use literary criteria derived from modern culture as a basis for finding inconsistencies in the biblical text and separating it into earlier sources, or source criticism's tendency to dice the biblical text into tiny components" (Hauser, 1994:9).

Form criticism, popularized by Gunkel, is no longer adequate to handle the issue of literary style and persuasion of the texts. Muilenburg (1969:1-2) infers that "the circumspect scholar will not fail to supplement his [Gunkel's] form-critical analysis with a careful inspection of the literary unit in its precise and unique formulation. He will not be completely bound by the traditional elements of motifs of the literary genre; his task will not be completed until he has taken full account of the features which lie beyond the spectrum of genre." Significantly, rhetorical criticism is proposed as a proper approach that will be able to deal with the weaknesses of both source and form criticisms. House (1992:6) observes that rhetorical criticism is "a new way" of reading the biblical texts, especially the Old Testament, as an improvement of the old method, namely literary criticism which included source and form criticism.

To understand what rhetorical crticism is, one should refer to an early explanation given by Muilenburg himself. Any valid method of interpretation of the text requires an attention to *stylistics*, as he writes, "What I am interested in, above all,

is understanding the nature of Hebrew literary composition, in exhibiting the structural patterns that are employed for the fashioning of literary unit, whether in poetry or in prose, and in discerning the many and various devices by which the predications are formulated and ordered into a unified whole" (Muilenburg 1969:8). In addition, he further explains that the rhetorical approach concerns at least two things, "to define the limits or scope of literary unit, or to recognize precisely where and how it begins and where and how it ends" (Muilenburg 1969:9); and "to recognize the structure of a composition and to discern a configuration of its component parts, to delineate the warp and woof out of which the literary fabric is woven, and to note the various rhetorical devices that are employed for the marking" (Muilenburg 1969:10). Throughout his early works, Muilenburg set the agenda and example about what he meant by rhetorical criticism, such as the concern of literary composition, structural patterns, and literary devices of the text. Therefore, his proposal remained focused on the stylistic dimension of the text, as Howard (1994:87) proposes, "rhetorical criticism has tended to be primarily a literary concern, with emphasis upon stylistics."

However, the stress on stylistics has led some scholars in the rhetorical discipline, such as Gitay (1981), Kennedy (1984), Sternberg (1985), Wuellner (1987:448-63), and Mack (1990), to discontentment. They wanted better approaches developed which would be more comprehensive. Influenced by classical understanding of rhetoric, especially by Aristotle, who postulates that rhetoric is "the faculty of observing any given case the available means of persuasion" (as quoted by Tull, 1999:158), they give an *addendum* to it, the concern of persuasion of the literary devices on the reader. It is believed that this addition will give a more comprehensive understanding on the approach because the concern is not only on the literary artistry of the text but also on its persuasive effect on the original audience or the *ancient* reader. Majercik (1992:710) pinpoints it by saying, "Rhetoric is an art of composition by which language is made descriptive, interpretive, or persuasive."

In the same vein, Hauser (1994:4) adds that a rhetoric will basically do two things in studying a text: analyze the literature to the maximum extent possible, from the perspective of literary composition practiced in the works of ancient Israelite writers; and articulate the impact of the literary unit on its audience. Thus, rhetorical criticism, ideally, must give attention to both stylistics (literary artistry) and persuasion, as Kim (1997:92) writes, "there must be an oscillation of the two axes: 'the art of composition,' which emphasizes the aspect of artful speech in terms of structure (*dispositio*) and style (*elocutio*) and 'the art of persuasion,' which emphasizes the act of communication among the speaker, discourse and audience through the artisitic formulation of speech and writing."

This research is also aware of the limitations or weaknesses that the rhetorical approach has. Since its tendency is to stress more on the stylistics, rhetorical criticism (in Muilenburg's proposal) remains a series of observations about literary style, a description of literary features, verse by verse. This has resulted in at least two consequences: first, the loss of the purpose of interpretation. Black II (1989:253-54) identifies that this proposal is virtually synonymous with "literary artistry." As mentioned above, it is difficult to draw a line between the rhetorical and literary one because both of them have the same concern. Patrick and Scult (1990:12) critically say that this is not rhetorical criticism, in a real sense, but only "stylistic criticism."

Furthermore, stressing more on stylistics can reduce the uniqueness of this approach to merely a literary approach. Clifford (1980:18) accentuates the fact that "Reduced to concern of style, with the artistry of textual disposition and textual structure, rhetorical criticism has become indistinguishable from literary criticism." Such observations imply that the artistry exists for its own sake, and does not actually answer what is the purpose of the rhetorical devices. The rhetorical approach should go beyond the analysis of the genre of the text and also seek to convey a message, not merely to see "how this text uniquely shapes the conventions of genre and adds its own *novum*" (Clifford, 1980:18).

A second problem is the lack of interest in the historical characteristics of the text, such as the author and the original readers. A responsible interpretation of the

biblical text requires attention to these aspects. As Kaiser, Jr. (1981:3) once mentioned, "the understanding of a text, therefore, is always determined by the horizon of both author and reader." If one tries to find the effect of rhetorical devices on the original reader, he or she must not fail to give attention to the historical settings of the text. Because of the lack of interest in historical issues, rhetorical study can become less historical in its approach to the text. It is thought that rhetorical study, which overemphasize the stylistics of the text, tends to overlook the "setting in life" of the text. Kim (1997:93) criticizes this by saying, "rhetorical critics, as a branch of literary ctiticism, lacks interest in historical aspects of biblical text and tends to be a-historical and a-sociological." In a more appropriate way, although rhetorical criticism is thought of as having a different primary emphasis than other criticisms. It should not avoid the generic study of forms and the *Sitz im Leben* in which they are used. Hauser (1994:9) insists that "rhetorical critics normally prefer to leave the task of recovering the history and life of Israel to others," to source critics, and mainly, to form critics.

Realizing the limitations of rhetorical criticism, this research aims to be more critical by using both Muilenburg's model of rhetorical study and also later rhetorical methods. This means that the rhetorical method of interpretation will be used carefully in order for it to be most useful. To begin with, rhetorical study thus should continue to concentrate on the stylistics. This is to deal with the problems that both form and source critics left out. Since rhetorical criticism is a method of analyzing literary stuctures and techniques in the Old Testament text (Muilenburg 1969:1-18), this approach considers the text as having its own unique literary qualities. Watson (1988:182) states that this criticism seeks a knowledge of the forms, genres, structures, stylistic devices, and rhetorical techniques common to the literature of the Ancient Near East to understand better how these can contribute to the interpretation of the text. In a more specific way, these can be observed through some stylistic features of the text, such as chiasms and inclusios, repetition of the key words, strophic structure, repetitions of the particles and the vocatives, and rhetorical questions (see Tull 1999:158).

Next, rhetorical study will pay attention to both the author and the original readers, especially the author's intention and the persuasive effect on the original audience or ancient readers. This is to address the problem that Muilenburg's proposal presents, namely the overemphasis on styles. Rhetorical criticism is not only concerned with the literary styles and settings of the text but also with the function, as Kessler (1982:11) says, "Not only the setting, but also the function or intention (*Ziel*) is emphasized, which is a traditional rhetorical concern." It is recommended that "if this criticism is to be useful it must embrace more than a style, that is, the discovery of the author's intent and how it is transmitted through a text to an audience" (Kennedy 1984:12).

Besides, the close examination of the rhetorical devices and techniques, attention to the intention should bring an interpreter nearer to what the text is saying. Watson (1988:182) outlines the need for studying this aspect, "to achieve a better understanding of the movement of the author's thought, intent, message, and to determine how the rhetoric would be experienced by the audience." Tull (1999:175) interestingly concludes that "a text is more than the sum of its words. As important as stylistic analysis is for attending to particulars, it does not sufficiently account for all that texts do and come to mean . . . . a text is designed to maximize its persuasive powers." Thus, an interpreter, while using any given approach or analysis, should struggle to find out both the intention of the author (cf Knierim, 1973:435-468) and the response of its original readers.

Finally, rhetorical study should gain insight from other approaches as well. All approaches are important and complementary to each other. While proposing the rhetorical approach, Muilenburg argued that it should be considered as a supplementation to other criticisms, especially form criticism (cf Trible 1994:25-26). This means that in doing exegetical work the rhetorical approach is not independent, since it can not stand on its own apart from other approaches. It often includes other analysis needed in doing a complete exegesis, such as:

(1) historical analysis, which aims to reconstruct and then present the historical setting of the text (see Stuart 2001:30-33);

(2) literary analysis, a method of unpacking the meaning of the text, which includes formulating the thematic statement of the passage, tracing the train of thought and plot development from verse to verse (its structure), and identifying the genre and social setting of the passage. The analysis, in short, focuses on the issue of the text's literary integrity and the larger literary context (see Steck 1998:52); and

(3) form analysis, that is, to reconstruct the oral history of the constituent literary forms of the text. It is a "genre-critical" analysis of a passage where the questions must be asked about the matters such as who is speaking to whom, in what situation, and making use of what form. It thus "asks especially what institution or what circle of people took part in the transmission and further development of material handed down, how the individual traditions grew into union with each other, and how finally the longer sources, collections and books were preserved and originated" (Kaiser 1975:41).

In addition, rhetorical criticism—and other appropriate criticisms—should become valid elements in fomulating an Old Testament theology. It is believed that certain biblical texts, above all else, are theological texts because they focus on the relationship between God and the world (cf Knierim, 1995:67). It is clear that any intepretation of the text using any critical method should result in theological prepositions. Brueggemann (1997:54) once infers that rhetorical criticism—along with form criticism that prepared the way for its emergence—was a major force in Old Testament studies, and "one that has become indispensable for the work of Old Testament theology." This view is not widely accepted. Botha and Vorster (1996:17) disagree and consider it as "an impossible marriage between 'the harlot of the art' and 'the queen of sciences.'" They feel that since the rhetorical approach has its root in the art of speech in Greek and Roman tradition, it cannot be used to propose a theology.

However, this research believes that rhetorical criticism can still be used as one of the valid methods in constructing a biblical theology. Kim (1997:94) maintains that "we should better regard the encounter between theology and rhetoric as a promising marriage between 'the queen of the art' and 'the king of sciences.'

Rhetorical analysis will not only embellish but also articulate what theology is going to say and do. Since "all religious systems are rhetorical" (Kennedy 1984:7), therefore, "rhetorical criticism has the potential to contribute to the current endeavour to rejuvenate the discipline of biblical theology . . . [and] it can also help biblical theology to adopt a view of religious language that appreciates the communicative force of the biblical texts" (Möller 2005:689). Therefore, in carrying out a theological task, it is necessary to consider the best methods in interpreting the text. In this case, this study uses as the primary exegetical tool, rhetorical criticism, along with other important biblical criticisms applicable to the text that is being studied. Based on the rhetorical analysis of the text and the other relevant criticisms, the theological message of the text will be formulated.

In a more practical way, there are several essential features of rhetorical criticism (Dozeman 1992:714) need to be considered: First, the affirmation that every text is both typical, in the sense that it has a rhetoric purpose, and unique, in the sense that it contains unique configuration of details that an interpreter would impose on the text, rhetorical criticism is concerned with unique features within a given text (cf Trible 1978:9; see also Melugin 1979:91). Second, form and content must be interrelated in the interpretation of any text (Greenwood 1970:419). Third, rhetorical criticism has two foci, namely, to determine the boundaries of the larger literary units and to describe those rhetorical devices which unify particular texts (cf Kessler 1974:25-26; see also Kuntz 1982:141). The purpose of this approach is, in the end, on revealing the intrinsic meaning of the texts that will be analyzed.

In applying a rhetorical-critical approach to the texts, I intend to primarily adopt dan modified the five steps that Kennedy (1984:33-38) proposed: investigating the rhetorical unit, situation, categories (genres), problem (text's style and strategy), and effectiveness. The reason in choosing this procedure is that it presents a lucid and systematic model for rhetorical-critical exegesis that is under-girded by classical erudition (cf Möller 2005:690). However, in this research, the third (identifying "rhetorical genre[s]") and fourth ("rhetorical strategy') steps in Kennedy's model will be modified together under a different name, the "rhetorical techniques" step. His fifth step ("rhetorical effectiveness") will also be used as

the last step but rename as the "review of analysis." This arrangement is not done on the basis of my own creativity but in consideration of both effectiveness and systematization.

This research will include Kennedy's model integrated with Black's (1965), Kessler's (1974:22-36), and Wuellner's (1987:448-63) concepts of *inventio* (invention) and *dispotitio* (disposition) as two further and independent steps (Roth 1999: 296-8). Therefore, the rhetorical procedure used in this chapter will be explained and implemented as follows: first, the critic identifies the text's *rhetorical unit(s)*, understood as argumentative units that affect the audience's reasoning and imagination. Second, the focus is on the specific *rhetorical situation* and the imperative stimulus or exigency that the discourse is designed to present as determined by the choices made by the rhetorician. Third, the identification of *rhetorical invention* that includes pointing out invention, as a mode of convincing and the way it is used in an attempt to convince, as well as disposition, which concerns the organization of the material. Fourth, *rhetorical techniques* (similar to Kennedy's "text's style and rhetorical strategy"), which consists of different approaches to the audience and the different kinds of persuasive techniques, particularly the literary devices, used creatively and effectively by the rhetorician. Fifth, *review of analysis* that focuses on the discourse's rhetorical effectiveness, seeking to establish whether, or to what extent, it is a fitting response to the original exigency (see Möller 2005:690).

The above rhetorical approach will be applied to selected texts of the book of Amos including Amos 2:6-8, 5:7-15 and 24, and 8:4-7. There are at least two considerations why these specific passages are chosen as materials to be rhetorically analyzed. First, they are clearly related to the issue of social justice. A close reading of the texts will explicitly lead one to the description of the practices of injustice in Israel's society. Bird (1993:39-40) insists that these texts contain plain vocabularies of "justice," "the poor" and "the crimes against them" as it is expressed through the abuses of the power directed against weak members of society. Secondly and most importantly, these texts are considered as complete and independent units. As mentioned earlier, an independent unit is

required as one of the basic elements in doing rhetorical analysis. In analyzing division of units carefully, Hubbard (1989:163, 220) argues that such passages are independent units under the topic of "oppression" and "injustice" (see also the division chart of Andersen & Freedman 1989:14-15).

1.4.2 Brueggemann's Biblical-theological Method

Since so many methods—with their different strengths and weaknesses—have already been proposed in the field of Old Testament theological study, this research purposively uses an approach modeled by one of the contemporary Old Testament scholars, Walter Brueggemann. In his work, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, dispute, advocacy* (1997), Brueggemann proposes a different approach to Old Testament theology, namely a pluralistic approach. This approach tried to free itself from the dominant models available to us from the works *inter alia* Eichrodt and Von Rad, that became the governing models for doing Old Testament theology in the twentieth century.

The reason for stating this is that the context for interpretation changes from time to time. One can no longer use a method that maintains hegemony, such as a singular faith articulation in the text, an agreement on the use of critical method and a dominant interpretive community. Instead, in doing Old Testament theology, one must consider three things (Brueggemann 1997:xiv-xvi):

(1) *a pluralism of faith affirmation* and articulation of YHWH in the text itself;
(2) *a pluralism of methods*, that has displaced the long-standing hegemony of historical critical approaches; and
(3) *a pluralism of interpretive community.*

When proposing this model, Brueggemann is not concerned with focusing any effort on substantive and thematic matters, as it has been done generally in this discipline, but rather on the *processes, procedures* and *interactionist potential*. This is expressed in his metaphor and the imagery he uses of a courtroom trial which focuses on the processive, interactionist modes of assertion and counter

assertion to find the truth. This focus leads to the concept of presenting the utterance of the theological claim—as a *testimony*—which is embodied in the biblical text itself, of allowing competing and conflicting testimonies from the witnesses. Out of this form comes a verdict, an affirmed rendering of reality and an accepted version of truth (as a *dispute*), and promoting a rendering of truth and a version of reality against other renderings and versions (as an *advocacy*). Thus, in summary, the main concept that the author wants to propose is that the reality of pluralism in the text, in the methods of interpretation and in the interpretive community gives new direction and, at the same time, changes the approach for doing contemporary Old Testament theology (see Brueggemann 1997: iv-vii; cf 1995:455-469).

Although Brueggemann's model for doing Old Testament theology may be considered more relevant to modern issues, it invites several criticisms. One of them is focused on his method, considering it as reductionism. Criticizing Childs for being reductionist—since Childs' canonical approach allows limitations in the reading of the Old Testament text to what is useful for Christian theology, and, thus, disapproving of Levenson's Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament (1997:92-93)—Brueggemann ironically falls into the same pit of reductionism by imposing his approach. The main problem is that he was not open to dialogue with other views, especially the rich of traditions of the past generations of both Christians and Jews. To put it in Olson's (1998:176-178) words, "he could not recognize that no reader or interpreter can avoid bringing some interpretive framework to impose on a text such as the Bible." As a scholar who proposes a scholarly work, he is expected to be more fair, open and complementary to different perspectives in order to find a better consensus in understanding the biblical truth.

Other criticisms are more focused on Brueggemann's view on "the utteredness" of the text at the expense of ontology. The emphasis on the importance of the speech about God or the *rethoric* (the testimony) in his work, although it is creative enough, might be dangerous. Barr (1999:545) criticizes him because this emphasis will lead to a conclusion that the God of Israel is "generated" or

constituted by the texts of Israel. The insistence on the concept of "the God of the Old Testament theology or YHWH lives in, with, and under this speech, and in the end, depends on Israel's testimony for an access point in the world" (Brueggemann 1997:66, 714) may be somewhat misleading. The texts or the speeches are the means to reveal God, and not vice versa. They are supposed to signify what or who is the signifier. Accordingly, at such a point, Brueggemann's approach seems to have missed one of the most fundamental truths related to the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible; that the text itself points to a God whose power is not dependent on any human utterance or other human form of power (cf Bellis 2001:233).

The last criticism is on his view of the history behind the text. Brueggemann (1997:57) insists that "The world behind the text is not available . . . . [M]oreover, were the world behind the text available; it would not be in any direct way generative for theological interpretation." It seems, at least to him, that historical inquiries of the text are impossible and yet unnecessary. As a consequence, he is more focused on the text in its final form and what it means for the present time. Barr (1999:545) indicates that Brueggemann's position which emphasized the non-historical approach would actually end up with abandoning the history and the historical criticism method in the study of the text, as he says, "It is not only that historical criticism is neglected or rejected: *history altogether* is very largely ignored." Therefore, as the importance of history is overlooked, it ends up with the rejection both of the possibility of knowing anything about this world and the usefulness of such knowledge for theological interpretation (cf Bellis 2001:233). It is also important to consider Anderson's (1999:26) comment on Brueggemann's view, when he says that "there is a problem by 'bracketing out' all questions of historicity, what really happened with the historical circumstances that prompted the testimony, because the dimension of facticity and historicity cannot be ignored theologically."

In spite of several deficiencies in Brueggemann's proposal, what he has offered is worthy of being considered as a proper approach to doing Old Testament theology for the Asian (or the Pacific) context (see Bennett 2002:89). The main reason

behind this statement is that he tried to be faithful both to the texts and to the context. He highly viewed both in doing his theology. On the one hand, the texts are very important because the God of the Old Testament, as the subject of theology, is spoken of through them. In other words, he wants to say that "those are of the Israel's speech—Israel's testimony—about God" (Brueggemann 1997:177). It seems that for him dealing with the text is a serious matter. The necessity of the texts is also shown in his statement, "that the God of Old Testament theology as such lives in, with, and under the rhetorical enterprise of this text, and nowhere else and in no other way,'' and he adds that "for Old Testament faith, *the utterance is everything*" (Brueggemann 1997:66, 122).

Brueggemann defends the importance of the scripture (the Bible) for both the person and the culture. In his work, *The Bible makes sense* (1987) he argued that the Scripture has to do with the fidelity and vitality of the church for it is a present resource for faith, an "answer" to the deepest questions of life, a statement of presuppositions, where the testimony about God is in the posture of confession, not proof, a partner in whom one may dialogue, a central direction and a rich diversity, in which one must be always open to move in both directions with any given text, and a lens through which all of life is to be discerned (cf Brueggemann 1987:147-154). In this regard, exegesis as a means to study the biblical texts became very important to his approach. On this, Brueggemann (2002:359) affirms that "The biblical text is itself a sufficient cause for wonder. By using an exegetical method that focuses resolutely upon the text, teachers can help people find themselves addressed and reimagined by this 'strange new world' of the Bible." This research will take up the same attitude and the steps which he proposed, that is, giving consideration both to the text and the exegetical method.

On the other hand, Brueggemann considers the context seriously. The context here refers both to the original context of the texts and the contemporary context of the modern readers. In doing his theology, he deals with "these contexts" creatively as well as constructively. As already mentioned above, his approach is a kind of escapism from the hegemony of dominating methods in the history of Old Testament theology. He indicates that two things that are sure about Old

Testament theology now are: (1) the ways of Eichrodt and von Rad are no longer adequate and (2) there is no consensus among us (scholars) about what comes next (Brueggemann 1992:111). Not wanting to follow the old ways and be determined by it, he calls for a new fresh approach in proposing theology.

The assumption behind his proposal is that the context in which we are doing theology has been changing. One must seriously consider the contemporary context before engaging with it. The situation surrounding the theological task can be seen in at least three main areas:

(1) the postmodern interpretive situation where new socio-political situations, new hermeneutical approaches, new issues and studies in the Old Testament discipline lay behind the scene;
(2) the centrist enterprises represented by some Old Testament scholars, such as Childs, Levenson, Barr and Rendtorff;
(3) the interpretations from those who operate from the margin of discipline like those who consider themselves as feminist, liberation, and black theologians (see all of chapter two, 1997:61-102).

It is his intention to suggest that a contextual approach, or a consideration of the contemporary situation is a must in proposing a relevant Old Testament theology.

This can be seen in his dealing with the contextual issues from other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, literary theory and the wider postmodern debate. It is done in order to relate biblical interpretation with interdisciplinary aspects of life, where, in his terms, it is "a conversation" between text and the context, "This interpretation knows the One to whom we must give answer. This One is the subject of the text and the interpretation; we dare to say this One is the voice that haunts the text, our interpretation, and our faithful living" (Brueggemann 1991:134). Thus, there is a significant thing in his biblical theological approach for he was able to bridge the two poles, as Moberly (1999:472, 475) comments, "(his) consistent concern has been to relate the biblical text to Christian life today . . . (he) has undoubtedly put his finger on something both central to the biblical material and regularly absent from modern biblical scholarship: valid language

about God cannot be separated from human engagement in particular demanding forms of living." This research is intended to follow Brueggemann's theological method in providing a biblical theology that can be used as materials for constructing the contemporary social theology. As he once strongly affirmed, "Old Testament theology is not simply a religious exercise, but also a moral shape to the public process that *curbs* the raw exercise of power" (Brueggemann 1997:113).

In this connection, this research uses *an Old Testament theological method* in developing the theological significance of social justice implied by the selected passages in the book of Amos. According to Schultz, "determining the theology of a 'given text' is an essential part of the exegetical process" (1997:182; cf also Childs, 1993:323-47; Talstra 1999:102; Deurloo & Venema, 1999:10) and in reconstructing a more comprehensive concept of this theological subject from a wider perspective of the book, the whole concept of the testament, or even the whole Bible. Further, the theology of each passage must be viewed in the light of its larger theological context, including both the theology of the biblical book in which it is found as well as the larger concentric circles of theological context, for example the theology of major divisions or genres of the Old Testament, the theology of the Old Testament as a whole, and of the entire Bible (see Schultz 1997:182).

Seeking the unity and correlation between these three elements (text, book and testament) is very important in reconstructing a sound Old Testament theology. On this matter, Hasel (1991[a]:204) contends, "an Old Testament theology not only seeks to know the theology of various books, or groups of writings; it also attempts to draw together and present the major themes of this testament. To live up to its name, Old Testament theology must allow its themes, motifs, and concepts to be formed for it by the Old Testament itself." Therefore, the main purpose of drawing theological implications from the results of exegetical work is to find *what it means*, the general theological principles derived from the passage (cf Broyles 2001:59-60).

Since the theological theme "social justice' does not exclusively belong to the book of Amos, it is imperative to interrelate it to other similar concepts found particularly in other parts or books of the Old Testament. It considers what Knierim (1984:25-58) has suggested namely that involvement in any exegetical work might result in proposing a plurality of theologies. It is proper to consider the issue of the plurality of the Old Testament theology. The effort of drawing theological implications from the particular or selected biblical passages will thus contribute to the whole theological concept of social justice in the Old Testament. Based on this, theology of social justice as proposed in this research may be considered as one of the theologies on the same theme that can be drawn from a particular book.

Theology of social justice as proposed through this research will consider two aspects: first, it is a part of God's activity in the historical context. this means that the struggle for social justice is a part of YHWH's work manifested in "the redemptive acts of God" (Wright, 1952:11), or, it is a common biblical theological term, in "the covenant or salvation history" (Eichrodt 1961:17, 27, 81-87; Von Rad 1962:105-21); and second, it is a part of Israel's religious experience in daily life. Consequently, it is important to study the origin of the idea of social justice from all of the books of the Old Testament. This effort would provide both the historical and theological backgrounds in order that I would gain a better understanding of the theological concept of social justice in the book of Amos.

1.5 RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

To conduct the intended study, this research will be organized into several steps or chapters: Chapter One will give a short introduction to the problem. This includes an explanation on why I chose the research problem and topic, that is, basically to complement the theological studies of the theme social justice in the book of Amos done by other scholars. It is assumed that there ia a lack of study using rhetorical analysis to particular texts related to the issue of social justice in the book of Amos. As a result, there is no in depth study reconstructing a

theology of social justice based on a rhetorical analysis of the texts. This chapter also critically discusses the methodologies used in this research, namely, the rhetorical analysis and theological method based on Walter Brueggemann's approach.

In Chapter Two, discussion will be focused on the critical historical issues in the book of Amos. This part will consider both introductory critical argumentation and historical information on the background of the book of Amos. The issue about the authorship of the book and the authentication of Amos' profession as a prophet of YHWH will be discussed. This is important because in recent studies, especially after the period of pre-critical studies in biblical scholarship, the book of Amos has been under unending scrutiny from modern critical perspectives. This chapter will also give attention to the historico-political and socio-religious settings of the life and ministry of Amos.

From Chapter Three to Chapter Five, the research will deal with the interpretation of particular texts in the book of Amos related to the issue of social justice, such as Amos 2:6-8; 5:1-17; and 8:4-8. In this section, these biblical materials will be analyzed by using, primarily, rhetorical criticism. This is an analysis that follows several steps: finding rhetorical unit, explaining rhetorical situation(s), exposing rhetorical invention and disposition, identifyng rhetorical techniques, and, finally, reviewing the effectiveness of the rhetoric used. To complement it, other approaches will be used as well, such as grammatical, semantical, literary, genre, structural and compositional analysis. Attention will be given to the structure in which a pericope is found, the overall structure of the book of Amos, and the social context of the words being used (this includes not only references to historical data, but also to probable socio-contextual factors that can help us to understand what Amos intends in his prophecy).

In Chapter Six, attention will be paid to the issue of proposing a biblical (Old Testament) theology drawn from the book of Amos. This theology will be formulated in terms of issues like the theological concept of social justice in Amos, describing theological aspects of social justice, such as YHWH, the

powerful and the powerless in Israel, how these aspects are related to each other in a triangular relation, and reconstructing the theology of social justice derived from the book. These will explain the theological significances of social justice in the book of Amos. However, focusing merely on the theological standpoint of one prophet will not be enough. It is also necessary to compare it to the writings of other prophets and even to the rest of the Old Testament. This is done in order to get a more comprehensive theological perspective on the issue of social justice.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, a summary of the research will be given. This chapter also discusses the practical implications of the study, particularly the importance of theological message of social justice in this present age. Majority of world's population are suffering and prone to the problem of social injustice. In my own context of life in Indonesia, the issue of social justice is relevant to be addressed. Thus, this research may contribute something positive to the issue.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL ISSUES IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

Before rhetorically analyzing the texts related to the issue of social justice in the book of Amos, it is necessary to discuss major historical issues of the book in a more critical way, such as, the authorship of the book, the person of Amos and the situation when he wrote his message. It is relevant to the main purpose of biblical-exegetical interpretation which, according to Kaiser (1981:2), is "to ask the historical question of the meaning the biblical text has within its original horizon of meaning." Culler (1981:48) similarly insists that historical approach could be meant as "what its author meant by it, or what it would have meant to an ideal audience of its day, or what accounts for its every detail without violating the historical norms of the genre." Since the main purpose of an interpretation of the text is to understand "what the author meant" in its original context or historical setting, one cannot thus ignore the usefulness of the historical critical methods which "have proven quite successful in illuminating the history, religion, and culture of Ancient Israel" (Dobbs-Allsopp 1999:235).

As early as this chapter, it is important to acknowledge that this research is aware of the difficulty in dealing with historical issues of the book of Amos, especially in reconstructing the history of Israel in eighth century BCE. If a historical reconstruction implies observations of what is "behind the text," including efforts such as "to trace the compositional growth and redaction history of the book of Amos, to uncover archaeological data, to elucidate textual particulars, or to explain the complexities of the actual world of the eighth-century [BCE] prophet on the basis of social theory" (Carroll R 2002:18). Therefore, one should be suspicious of the values proposed for reconstructing with confidence actual

ipsissima verba, the "very words" of the real Amos, settings and events. The reason for saying this is because of the existence of the historical gap between the ancient texts and modern interpreters of the book. Modern studies of the book of Amos can only do "a reading back" and, accordingly, it is harder to get back to what the prophet(s) actually might have said and thought (cf Auld 1983:3-23).

As a consequence, scholars have come up with different approaches and conclusions on this issue. Those who held an historical-critical approach concerned with the search of historical Amos and, on the issue of the authorship of the book, they (Wolff and others) proposed that the book has undergone several stages of development or multilayered redactions. Moving beyond this approach, other recent approaches engage in a discussion of various literary, structuralist, "close reading," or semiotic methods (cf Hasel 1991[b]:24). Up to the present, conclusively, there are at least two major approaches in studying Amos and his book: diachronic (using all forms of modern historical-critical research) and synchronic. This leads to the fact that there is always a plurality of methods used in the study of the book of Amos (see Schöckel 1988:285-92; Levenson 1988:19-59) which resulted in a diversity of understandings and interpretations of the book.

Since this research tends to be more synchronic, its main concern is, therefore, on the study of its literary expressions, specifically of its rhetorical devices. In this context, being synchronic implies that one has to be heuristic in approaching the texts studied. Since rhetorical analysis synchronically treats the text as it stands as the basis of exegesis (cf Roth 1999:398), the focus of the research is on the final form of the texts and, thus, it lies on a heuristic model, an assumption that the nearer something is to the source, the nearer it is to the truth. Differing from the usual rhetorical approach which is considered "lacking of historical attention," my study will deliberately embrace the historical issues of the book. It is in accordance with Möller's view (2005:689) that rhetorical analysis "promises to combine the three foci of the author ("the world behind the text"), the discourse ("the world within the text") and the reader ("the world in the front of the text")."

This chapter tries to present the historical information about them in order to complement what is lacking in a typical rhetorical approach.

With an assumption that discussion on historical issues is complementary as well as preliminary in studying the texts rhetorically, this research also holds the importance of historical studies in the process of analysis. As Jakobson and Tynjanov (1985:29, as cited by Doobs-Allsopp 2006:15) point out, every synchronic system has its past and its future as inseparable structural elements of the system, such as the linguistic and literary background and the tendency toward innovation in language and literature. This means that the synchronic approach is always part and parcel of a diachronic one, and should not ignore the force of the latter. In this regard, Kessler (1982:5, 12) assumes that there must be continuity (or connection) between diachronic and synchronic approaches. Therefore, albeit whatever heuristic benefits may be gained from synchronically oriented studies, at the end, "pure synchronic approach" is inadequate and even impossible.

2.1 THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF AMOS

In reading Amos 1:1 which says, "The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa," one may be lead to an assumption that the author of the book of Amos is the prophet himself. There are scholars "who agree that the prophecy of Amos, at least in essence, was an authentic production of the man whose name it bears" (McComiskey 1985:270). Gordis (1971:225), for example, argues, "Barring minor additions, the book is the authentic works of Amos." The main reason for saying that Amos was the author of the book is usually based on the analysis of the message and the style of writing. McComiskey (1985:270, 275) again suggests, "the consonant of Amos's message with eight-century milieu and his vividly forthright style of writing make it difficult to think otherwise; and, in a more simple way, the superscription of the book (1:1) attributes the work to Amos." Further, another reason proposed to support this view holds that the unity of the messages and forms of writing are able to support that this book is written by a single author, namely the prophet himself, by saying that "The traditional and

pre-critical views agreed that the book of Amos was written by the prophet himself" (Dillard & Longman III 1994:377). In other words, the more traditional or pre-critical view maintains that Amos is the author of the book.

However, since the beginning of the modern critical biblical scholarship, the study of the book of Amos—particularly on the authorship of the book—has drastically been changing, and as a consequence, the above view is no longer maintained. Stuart (1987:298) observes that, due to a tendency towards atomism in the analysis of the collections of prophetic oracles, the book is judged to be the product of centuries of development from an original core of genuine material. This may lead to an assumption that in order to reach its final form, "the prophecies of Amos must have circulated orally, probably in fragmenting form," as Soggin suggests (1982:244).

Other views similarly believe that the book has undergone stages of development or "a gradual process of growth" (Schmidt 1984:196). Rendtorff (1986:220) also insists that "the present collection has undergone a lengthy history in which a number of stages can be distinguished, though (in contrast, to say, the book of Hosea) the original units have largely been preserved." Those who do not agree that the writings are the product of the prophet himself therefore believe that the book is not the authentic work of Amos. A good example of it is the theory of Coote (1981:5-6) that divides the composition of the book into three stages. The author himself composed a short work (for example, the oracles), represented by the present chapters 2, 4 and 6. Next, an editor B, to some extent making use of the existing prophetic tradition (perhaps even some of the A materials), composed the present chapters 3, 5, and 7, and finally, another editor C, rewrote the composition of A and B with the addition of an opening and closing section—the present chapters, 1 and 8. In addition, Wolff (1977:107-113) identifies six layers of development of the composition of the book: from the words of Amos himself, the literary fixation in cycles, the old school of Amos, the exposition of the Josianic age, the Deuteronomistic redaction, and then, the stage of postexilic eschatology of salvation.

To support this view, the issue about different styles of writing in different sections of the book, particularly in the third-person account of 7:10-17, is raised. This section seems to interrupt the natural sequences of the book. Wolff (1977:106-107) argues that this is an interruption of the vision reports, and adds another element such as "the insertion of various strophes of a hymn at widely separated points in the book (4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6)." According to Soggin (1982:243), although the book of Amos has relatively a well-ordered form, "the only problem is that 7:10-17 interrupts the context of visions, which we would in fact expect at the beginning of the book, if his ministry began with them." This view is being held by modern critical views which question the singularity of the author of the book.

In a more moderate way, Schmidt (1984:196) believes that rather than saying that this is an interruption, it is better to take it as an insertion or as a supplement to the whole body of the work. Meanwhile, Achtemeier (1999:171) suggests, "[this] has been inserted to the series of the visions." All of these refer to a conclusion that there must have been another person(s) who laboured on the composition of the book throughout a period of time albeit it remains uncertain "who this person was." Scholars end up with different identification of who it was. For example, it might be just "another hand" (Eisfeldt 1965:399), or the old school of Amos (Wolff 1977:108), or a circle of friends or disciples (Schmidt 1984:196). It then ended up in a multi-interpretation on the origin of the texts of Amos.

This research, however, takes a slightly different view in contrast with the views mentioned above. There are at least two reasons for this: first, it is proper to acknowledge that different styles occur in the composition. A careful reading of the book certainly shows that there is indeed a third-person language used in it. The assumption here is that there was a third person who wrote Amos 7:10-17, and that he might have been an eye witness (Achtemeier 1999:171) or someone in the audience (Hayes 1988:39). It is important here to note that this only applies to this particular section, with one or two minor exceptions, and the more important thing is that it cannot be applied to all parts of the book.

To believe that this book is the product of certain redactive intrusions, especially within a long period of time, is quite unconvincing and, of course, is not based on solid reasoning. Paul (1991:6) argues against it by saying that "all of the arguments for later interpolations and redactions, including a Deuteronomistic one, shown to be based on fragile foundations and inconclusive evidence." It should be kept in mind that, although they were collected by someone else, in the process, some parts of the sayings must have been recorded immediately to form the basis of the final book. As a result, there is no evidence that the book is the end product of a structural development. Rosenbaum (1990:6) supports this by saying that these inserted materials are, "perhaps written down, shortly after they were spoken, thus making most suggestions for 'redaction' superfluous."

The second reason is that it is proper to assume that the writing of the book in its totality has its origin in the prophet Amos himself. Hammershaimb (1970:14) maintains that although the theory of composition can be applied to a few passages, this does not affect the genuineness of the rest of the sayings. In a more convincing way, Rosenbaum (1990:6) believes that "one man named Amos wrote the Book. This is not a tautology since it is conceivable that a Southerner speaking in the North might employ a northern scribe to record his words." Paul (1991:6) once infers that "When each case is examined and analyzed on its own, without preconceived conjectures and unsupported hypotheses, the book in its entirety (with one or two exceptions) can be reclaimed for its rightful author, the prophet Amos." In the same vein, Smith (1995:29) believes that "there is, therefore, no reason to ascribe any part of this book to any other than the prophet Amos." It thus implies that to believe in the existence of a group of disciples or others who contributed to the final shape of the book is very hazardous and speculative.

To sum up, one cannot ignore the fact that there was a "collector" of some materials inserted in the book, but it should not lead to a conclusion that all of the book was the product of a structural development over a long period. This research follows what Andersen and Freedman (1989:4) suggest on this issue: "instead of a low estimate of the text, we have a high estimate of the author. We

also have confidence that the text has been preserved with a high degree of the fidelity to its original, or at least, early state."

By holding this position, I am aware of the fact that whatever view is held, one cannot avoid his or her own subjectivity. Hasel (1991[b]:24) wisely reminds us that "there is no such thing as a purely objective or scientific study of the book." Therefore, every historical (re)construction done is always a construction and never the final truth. Coggins (2000:80) asserts that there can be no "right" answer to questions around the problem of "the historical Amos." Admittedly, my position, approach and proposal in this section ("the authorship of the book") may also contain some weaknesses and, most importantly, subject to be scrutinized and improved in the future.

2.2 THE PROFESSIONS OF AMOS

The name "Amos" is not recorded elsewhere in the Old Testament. The only way to find any information about him comes from the book itself. One can only have direct access to the person from the book itself, as Hammershaimb (1970:11) indicates: "We know nothing about the prophet other than what can be gathered from the book itself." In a similar word, Stuart (1987:284) also informs us that "We know nothing of his [Amos] personal history aside from the book. . . . What little we know of Amos, then, we know mainly through his message." It is therefore quite difficult to be certain who the prophet is. It is consequently necessary then to be always reminded that an interpreter should not go far from what is written in the text to avoid subjective speculations.

The first verse of the book informs that he was a shepherd by profession. From what is written, אשר־היה בנקדים מתקוע ("who was among the sheep-breeders of Tekoa"), one may clearly infer that he is a sheepbreeder rather than an ordinary shepherd. Although the word נקד generally means "shepherd," there are other possible meanings of the word like "sheep-raiser," "sheep-dealer," "sheep-tender," or simply "sheep-breeder" (cf Holladay 1988:245). It can then be

suggested that "Amos was by profession a shepherd, which probably means that he was an independent sheep owner rather than a shepherd looking after sheep belonging to others" (Eisfeldt 1965:396). Thus, Amos may be a big sheep-owner or someone who possesses a large number of sheep or goats. Economically, he was independent because an ancient language study which was an investigation of *nqd* in Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Moabites languages reveals that the persons refered to as *noqed* were managers of sheep and had a high status in society rather than just being ordinary shepherds (see Craigie 1982: 29-33).

The word itself appears again in the Old Testament and refers to a description of "Mesha, King of Moab" (2 Ki 3:4). King Mesha was required to pay Ahab, the King of Israel, 100,000 lambs and wool from 100,000 rams. Based on this, there is one assumption which tries to relate the profession of Amos to cultic activity . Watts (1958:6; cf Kapelrud 1961:69, 78) observes that the appearance of the term in Ugaritic texts, which referred to "Chief of the priest and chief of *nôqdîm*," has led a number of scholars to see some cultic meaning in the word, such as "*noqed* is the shepherd of the temple's flocks." It suggests that he is a person who tends to herds destined for sacrificial use. However, several criticisms state that this view lacks valid support. Vawter (1981:30) argues that "although there is evidence from the usage of other contemporary languages that it had to do with some kind of official standing, (it is) not necessarily connected with the temple or sanctuary, as had sometimes been thought." Looking from the other side of Amos' occupation, Blenkinsopp (1983:41) insists that "since it is difficult to imagine how dressing sycamore figs could be a cultic activity the observation is probably beside the point."

Another view, still focusing on the connection between the occupations of a prophet and the temple, proposes a different perspective: Amos often appears at the temple not as a temple official but as a religious person who does business. He did not only travel to the northern kingdom in order to do business, in which he sold his products there (cf Hammershaimb 1970:12), but also served as "one of those who would present a portion of the Judean agricultural and animal produce as tribute to the suzerain Israel at the royal sanctuary at Beth El" (Sweeney

2000:197). It is understandable because at that time, Judah was allied as a vassal to Israel during the reigns of Kings Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam, son of Joash of Israel.

Although the text mentions that he is a sheep-breeder, Amos himself also acknowledges his profession by another term בוקר (see Am 7:14). The word *bôqer* has a different meaning from *noqed* as the previous may be generally considered as denominative form of *bqr* (cow, ox), which is usually used as a collective name for a herd of cattle, and so literally the word means "herdsman" or "cattleman" (cf BDB:133). This difference creates a problem, indicating a contradiction between this title and the use of *noqed* in Amos 1:1. Different answers have been proposed to answer the problem. Kapelrud (1961:7) indicates that this might be a so called "scribal error" for writing the word *noqed*, because it is quite possible for the scribes to interchange Hebrew characters from נ (n) to ב (b) (also, ד [d] to ר [r]) in the process of copying the manuscripts. It implies that there must be an emendation of the text.

Unfortunately, this view seems to be too speculative since there is no valid textual evidence in this regard. Wolff (1984:306-307) tries to find another way to solve the problem, especially when he suggested that the reading of *bôqer* as *noqed* might be influenced by the Septuagint reading in Am 1:1, αιοπολος ("sheep"), but such reading of Am 1:1 is possibly influenced by the use of this Greek word in Am 7:14. As the effort to find a better answer is still ongoing, it is necessary to think that although it is difficult to understand the contradiction between the application of these words to denote the profession of Amos, one may consider a comprehensive translation such as "livestock breeder" (Stuart 1987:376) as a good rendering and a way out. This translation seems to be more appropriate in covering all nuances of significance of the terms and, therefore, Amos is probably the owner of both large and small sheep, thus justifying the application of both the titles *bôqer* and *noqed* to the prophet.

Amos was not only a livestock breeder but also a sycamore-fig tree cultivator. In Am 7:14, he claims that he is not only a livestock breeder but also a בולס שקמים.

The word *bôles* that describes his activity with regard to *šiqmîm* is *hapax legomenon*, the significance of which is unclear. The verb בולס generally refers to "an activity of gathering figs" (BDB:118). Since the word indicates that a person may gather sycamore leaves and/or fruits to use as fodder for his sheep and cattle, it is therefore possible that this activity closely relates to Amos' other occupation, a herdsman, and thus, this suggestion can be considered as the most feasible interpretation on the issue (see Wright 1976:363).

Another possible meaning of the term is an activity of "piercing the fig-like fruit of the Palestinian sycamore to hasten its ripening" (Flanagan 1966:3; cf McKeating 1971:58). According to an ancient writer, Theophrastus (372-287 BCE), this was a very common practice in ancient times, as quoted by Wright (1976:363), "It cannot ripen unless it is scraped; but they scrape it with iron claws; the fruit thus scraped ripen in four days." This activity basically refers to a process by which the unripe sycamore fruits are slashed, pierced or cut at the tip to let the juice run out and promote the process of ripening, as Moore (1995:29) briefly states, "perhaps Amos bruised the fruit with the stick to provoke them to ripen and to make them edible."

In spite of these differences, whatever the activity indicated by this term, there must be a relationship between Amos and the sycamore tree. No one can explain for sure what it was; as Watts (1958:8) suggests, "it is not clear whether Amos is described as a simple worker or as an owner of sycamores." Although what the prophet did with the sycamore tree is unknown, one can be sure that his main occupation is a herdsman with a second occupation which had something to do with trees, presumably as "a side-line" (Hammershaimb 1970:11) or "a seasonal occupation" (Winward 1989:37). However, a quite recent study indicates that Amos worked with both sycamores and livestock. According to Steiner (2003:120-122), he perhaps leased fields containing sycamore trees, possibly in Jericho Valley, to feed his animals in the winter, and since the sycamore is the only tree in the region that bears fruit in the winter and since much of its fruit is unfit for humans but good for sheep.

A more critical study of the book shows that the problem is not restricted to who Amos was and what his original occupation was, but also includes the problem of the location of Tekoa, where he came from (cf Heicksen 1970:81-89). The first verse of the book records that he is from Tekoa (1:1). The use of a preposition such as מן before the noun תקוע indicates the place where the prophet came from. Scholars have different opinions about this location, which could be a place currently known as Khirbet Tequ'a. On the one hand, some traditional views believe that it is a town located in Judah, or more specifically, the location of the town would be a few miles south of Jerusalem (scholars vary in measuring the distance: 5 miles [Paul 1991:1]; 6 miles [Macpherson 1971:5], 10 miles [Stuart 1987:284], or even 12.5 miles [Eisfeldt 1965:396]). If one relates this place to the job of Amos as a cattle–breeder, there will be no problem at all, because this place is thought as a proper site to cultivate cattle.

Contrary to this view, it become a problem when one relates it to his other occupation as a sycamore cultivator. Since sycamore trees cannot grow in the highland, about 2,800 feet above the sea level, Tekoa cannot be the proper place to cultivate them. Eisfeldt (1965:396) insists that "Amos may have owned land either in the hill country which runs down to the Mediterranean, or in the valley of the Dead Sea, which may both well have stood in close economic relationship to Tekoa." It assumes that Amos had cultivated sycamore trees, at least, in the lowland area that belonged to him. Thus, based on the efforts to match Amos' occupations with this place, the most common view is likely to identify the place as a Judean Tekoa.

On the other hand, some believe that this place was located in the northern kingdom of Israel. The earliest proposal for this came from the study of Schmidt, who showed that Tekoa was a town somewhere in Israelite territory (1920:158-71; cf. Calvin 1950:147ff, and Speier 1955:305-310). To support this view, scholars held different opinions on identifying the exact location of this place. Koch (1985:70) assumes that the place was somewhere in Galilee of the northern kingdom, as he argued that "it would be therefore more obvious to think of a Galilean Tekoa, which is attested in postbiblical times." Unfortunately he

proposed it without giving any more explanation or even solid argument for it. Accordingly, as this study developed, it was discovered that the idea of a Galilean Tekoa most probably comes from the tradition of Israel, such as that of the Talmud (cf Hayes 1988:43).

Although not giving the exact location, other opinions see the issue in connection with Amos' contemporary, the prophet Isaiah. Davies' (1981:200) assessment on this asked the question why a Southerner was called to correct the North when Isaiah's career did not indicate such problems. A more recent elaborated argument on this view focuses on the analysis of the internal evidence of the book itself. This is a proposal that tries to prove that Amos is a northerner in origin. To begin with, sycamore trees do not grow in the South. Next, Amaziah's use of the words 'flee' (instead of 'return') and 'treason' (7:10) indicates that Amos must be a northern-born citizen and an Israelite official who came from a mid-level position in the government of Israel; and finally, the language and dialect used by Amos is peculiar for a Southerner (Rosenbaum 1990:49-55, 85-95).

The argument of a Northern Amos above fails to convince other scholars. Criticizing Schmidt's proposal, Eisfeldt (1965:396) opposes the view of the northern Tekoa by insisting that this place is now the modern Khirbet Tequ'a, and not "a place of the same name, otherwise unknown, in the northern kingdom." The problem with this opinion is that Eisfeldt does not support his argumentation with abundant and accurate information. His proposal seems to be considered as obsolete, for it does not keep up with the progress of biblical research especially in the area of biblical archaeology or sociology. Although his argument seems to be "stereotype" and has not been based on extensive research, still, Eisfeldt's opinion seems to be more determinative than Schmidt's.

To counter the argumentations of Rosenbaum on the issue of "Amos of Israel," Hasel in addition uses the view of Weippert (1985:1-5)—who studied the pictures, images, and metaphors Amos employed in his messages. In his study, he stated that Amos did not belong to the well-to-do strata of Judaic society, but functioned as a "peasant" and "farmer" (Hasel 1991[b]:38). It is difficult to consider Rosenbaum's northern Tekoa as a definite claim because it seems to be very

speculative. In fact, he does not mention where the exact site of this place is in Israel. In contrast to Paul's commentary on the book (1991), Hasel (1991[b]:39) infers that this conclusion seems to be inflexible because in Paul's careful research, it is simply stated that Amos did "own cattle" and "tend sheep and goats," nothing more. Although the efforts in finding a new and different alternative in interpreting the place should be appreciated, these are not able to convince most scholars that the place "must" be somewhere in the northern kingdom. Gowan's observation (1996:352) on it is that "efforts to make Amos a citizen of the northern kingdom, from a Tekoa in Galilee, have not been persuasive to many scholars."

Furthermore, scholars do not only pay attention to the historical issues such as Amos' occupations or where he came from but also his profession as God's prophet. They questioned the response of Amos to Amaziah's order to flee to Judah and continue his prophetic activities there: לא־נביא אנכי ולא־בן־נביא אנכי ("I *was* no prophet, Nor *was* I a son of a prophet) (7:14). The dispute is specifically about the translation of Amos' reply. Grammatical analysis shows that the arrangement of this statement is without a copula that connects the subject and the predicate, as Ward (1982:54) observes, "Properly speaking, there are no tenses in Hebrew, so one must decide on the basis of the context whether the temporal reference intended is present or past."

The problem here lies on how one should translate this sentence, in the present tense or past (cf Huffmon 1977:209-212). In other words, the problem may be stated in a simple question, "does verse 14 describe Amos's present situation (RSV and NEB: 'I am not a prophet and not a son of a prophet') or his previous state (JB and NEB: 'I was not a prophet and was not a son of a prophet')?" However, Auld (2000:26) points out that "the problem [is] rather easier to state than to settle." This problem of trying to determine a certain translation may also employ a certain interpretation. Thus, since there is no indication of the tense or a verb, it is difficult to translate this verbless sentence meaningfully and to understand the complexity of the issues involved.

Disagreements on the translation, however, create different perspectives on Amos' profession as a prophet. Those who hold the "present tense" view of interpretation prefer to translate the sentence "I (am) not a prophet and I (am) not the son of a prophet" (Wolff 1984:312-313; Hayes 1988:230; Smith 1989:230, 239-40). This view believes that Amos never claimed to be a prophet in the sense that he was not a חזה as Amaziah called him (7:12), at least in his present condition. It is hence quite natural that his reply refers to the present, not to his past. To support this view, Wolff (1984:312) asserts that "the nominal clauses are of necessity heard as statements concerning the present status of the prophet." Auld (1999:26) also puts it in the same way, "In Hebrew such nominal sentences (sentence without a verb) are reckoned to imply present time unless the context demands otherwise."

Besides, Amos also does not claim himself to be a נביא in the sense that he is a cultic prophet. Kapelrud (1961:11) maintains that such a prophet was one who had a recognized position or function in the faith community's worship or practice. Such an opinion is supported by Bič (1969:20) who proposed that Amos was an *Opferneschauer*, an "inspector of sacrifices" (Hasel 1991[b]:43), or he was holding the "office" of a prophet (Reventlow 1962:14-24). After all, Smith (1989:239) insists that "The purpose of 7:14 is not to give a biographical account of Amos; its purpose is to explain the basis for the authoritative message that YHWH commanded Amos to deliver to 'my people Israel' (cf. 7:8). . . Amos is counterdicting Amaziah's demand that he not prophesy at Bethel (7:12-13) by showing that this is a denial of the command of God." Thus, Amos's reply can be considered as a dissociation of himself from the type of prophets, either as a הזה or as a professional נביא. In other words, he is actually not intending to deny the office of the prophet but to emphasize the function or the act he is taking from YHWH in the present situation, and most importantly, to deny that Amaziah had any authority over him and any right to send him away.

On the other hand, others prefer the "past tense" view of interpretation. If that is the case, the translation will be "I (was) not a prophet and I (was) not the son of a prophet" (Kapelrud 1961:7; Mays 1969:134; Soggin 1985:165; Andersen &

Freedmann 1989:762; Paul 1991:238; Niehaus, 1992:462-63). The advocates of the preterite interpretation are convinced that there is a contrast between the text of 7:14 and texts like 2:11 and 3:7-8, and especially in the second part of Amos' reply in 7:15b itself. Rowley (1947:194), for example, argues that "It is strange that in Am. vii 15 the prophet should use the verb that is cognate with the title which he is said to repudiate in v. 14. If he denies the title of *nabi*, he yet claims the function."

As the second part of the reply begins in the past tense, it is therefore proper to consider that the first part also refers to a past condition. Watts insists that "Amos was not a prophet at the time when YHWH gave him the commission to prophesy to Israel" (1958:33). In the same vein, Niehaus (1992:462-63) proposes that "this verbless clause is best translated as a past tense (with the LXX: ημην, "I was") for two reasons: (1) because to translate it as present contradicts the fact that Amos *is* a prophet (see 3:3, 7-8) and (2) because it comports well with the context, which recalls what Amos *was* before he became a prophet." Such an argument implies that, in the first place, Amos did not begin his career as a prophet but then became one. It thus can be assumed that "Amos was not a prophet to begin with, but on the basis of his call to prophetic activity he *became* prophet" (Hasel 1991[b]:43).

Since a certain translation will determine the contents of Amos' profession, the writer is of the opinion that it is proper and fair enough to keep the literal translation as it is stated, "No prophet I, nor prophet's son" as it stands (McKeating 1978:58). This translation is preferable because it is far from speculation. Both present and past translations, and even other variants of translation such as "Am I a prophet? . . ." (Ackroyd 1956:94; Driver 1973:108), "No! I am a prophet, but not a son of a prophet" (Cohen 1961:176; Zevit 1975:783-790 and 1979:505-509; Hoffmann 1977:209-212; Stuart 1987:369-370), or "I am indeed (reading *lû'* for *lō'*) a prophet, but not a son of a prophet" (Richardson 1966:89), all have resulted in a more complicated explanation than the literal one.

In order to avoid such speculative conclusions, it is suggested that the interpreter should focus his attention on the central point of the story, the conflict of

authority, so that the absence of copula to express the time value of the nominal sentences of v. 14 would not be a big problem. Gowan (1996:410) says, "The issue at the heart of the confrontation is much the same no matter how vv. 14-15 is read, Amaziah claimed authority over where Amos may speak. Amos refuses to acknowledge any such authority, for he is acting neither as a member of any prophetic group nor his own." It is therefore possible to translate the nominal clauses in 7:14 in several different ways as long as one keeps giving attention to the meaning of Amos' reply, that is, to establish a sharp contrast, for one, between a prophet by virtue of office (נביא) and one called by YHWH. Second, between a "prophet's disciple" (בן־נביא) trained by a prophet and one sent by YHWH, and finally, between a salaried cult official and his own independent activity sanctioned by YHWH alone (Wolff 1984:313). The coming of Amos to Bethel is not as "a representative of one of the prophetical guilds but as a layman under divine order to perform the function of the prophet" (Smith 1989:28; Noble 1998:430-431).

There is still more to be discussed about the person of Amos as scholars have studied Amos in a broader perspective over the decades. Carroll R (2002:4-18) quite extensively observes that most of the studies done tried to relate Amos to early religious traditions in Israel, such as ethical monotheism (Wellhausen), ecstatic prophetism (Hölscher and Lindblom), cultic associations (Haldar, Johnson, Mowinckel, and Würthwein), covenant theology (Crenshaw, Fensham, Mays, Clements, and Bright), and wisdom tradition (Wolff). Because of the growing expansion of studies on this subject, it is necessary to scrutinize these proposals. However, this research is not intended to go farther in discussing them in detail, since this study focuses merely on Amos' utterances on social justice.

It is true that one should be aware of drawing too fast any conclusion about what kind of prophet Amos was. Hayes (1988:39) once reminds us that "too little is known about Amos's background to speculate on how this influenced his preaching. His language and thought are probably more reflective of the culture at large than of a particular segment such as the cult and wisdom circles." It has to be realized that there is a difficulty to reveal historically the person of Amos if

it is based solely on studying the book. Since the book has its own limitations, it is thus advisable not to go beyond what has been literarily informed or written by the book or by Amos' words.

To conclude, although it sounds doubtful, Auld (1983:3-23) reminds us that we can only look at the prophets, particularly Amos, "through the looking glass" or in a blurred way because they often did not well describe themselves and their tasks. In reconstructing historically what lies "behind the texts" one has to consider that "the goal was not necessarily to 'get behind it' by various kinds of reconstructions (whether by form or tradition criticism, archaeology, anthropology, or sociology), but rather 'to move within the text' in order to grasp better its structure and inner workings" (Carroll R 2002:24).

2.3 THE HISTORICO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to Amos's time, the kingdom of Israel was situated in between the superpowers of the Middle East from the ninth to the eighth century BCE. The Assyrian empire was in the process of building up a great and strong empire in the ancient Near East, and became a serious threat to the smaller nations surrounding it. Under the rules of Ashur-nasir-pal II (998-859) and then Shalmaneser III (858-824), strong Assyrian campaigns were directed towards the west in order to gain control of the trade routes and commerce (cf Grayson 1982: 253-69).

As a result, the western kingdoms as far north as Asia Minor and as far south as Egypt formed an anti-Assyrian coalition, which was promoted by three figures: Irhuleni of Hamath, Hadadezer of Damascus and Ahab of Israel from the Omride dynasty (see Hayes 1988:16-17). However, after several years, the anti-Assyrian allied forces could not maintain their unity. The main problem emerged from within one of the strongest members of the allied forces, Syria (Aram-Damascus). Hayes (1988:17) indicates that after the death of Hadadezer, Hazael of Syria replaced him through a *coup de etat*, and for some unknown reasons, the coalition dissolved because he turned his back upon Assyria and started attacking his own neighbouring allies.

The situation then got worse for Israel because, while fighting against their long-time adversary (the Assyrians), the Syrians simultaneously became a new enemy and threat for their former allies. Interestingly, albeit the coalition crumpled and Damascus became the single major contender of Assyria, Hazael was able to defend his territory from the attacks of the mighty army of Shalmaneser III. Also, he was able to take control of the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Ki 10:32-33) making her a vassal kingdom.

In Israel, the situation was deteriorating because the Omride dynasty was becoming weaker at this time. The successor of Ahab, Jehoram, was wounded in the battle at Ramoth-Gilead (2 Ki 8:25-28) while he was protecting Israelite holdings against Hazael's attack, and then left the army under the command of Jehu, the Israelite army commander (2 Ki 8:29; 9:14-15). After holding a leadership position in Israel for quite a while, Jehu unpredictably started fighting against the legal throne by killing the Israelite kings, Jehoram and Ahaziah as well as many leaders both in Israel and Judah (2 Ki 9:21-10:4). The main reason behind his murderous actions was that he was an anti-Omride (see Rosenbaum 1990:17).

Moreover, he welcomed Shalmaneser III as a new ally and paid tribute to him, as recorded in the Black Obelisk. Before departing from Syria-Palestine, Shalmanezer received homage from Jehu, and bestowed his blessing upon him as the new king of Israel (cf Hayes 1988:17). By making a vassal treaty with the Assyrians he was trying to secure his new kingdom. Unfortunately, the Israelites could not escape the strong dominion of Damascus. The Syrians gained power and attacked Israel. This situation got worse because the Syrian kings, Hazael and Benhadad, treated Israel mercilessly (2 Ki 10:32; 12:17-18; 13:7). Jehu (839-822 BCE) was not able to keep his control over the Trans-Jordan territory, and even his successor, Jehoahaz (821-805 BCE) failed to gain back the lost territories and finally surrendered to the Syrians as their vassal state (2 Ki 13:3, 7, 21).

Damascus' dominion over the southern vassal kingdoms came to an end when the great Assyrian forces, under a fairly aggressive and successful king, Adad Nirari III, attacked Damascus (cf Grayson 1982:271-76). The pressure from the north

caused the Arameans to become weaker in some places in the south. Around 805 BCE, the Assyrians successfully defeated Syria. However, after this victory and the death of Adad Nirari III, Assyria was attacked from the north by the kingdom of Urartu (present-day Armenia) and its army was largely immobilized on the northern frontier (see Soggin 1987:2). They could not cope with such a critical situation because the next three kings of Assyria were weak leaders.

From the south, there was also no serious threat because Egypt was fragmented by Libyan and Sudanese kings, and was no longer a strong influence in Palestine (cf Smith 1989:1). Fortunately, this created a situation where Israel and Judah too became strong independent nations in that region. The result of the absence of Assyrian pressure towards the west was that Johoahaz and later Jehoash, as his successor, were able to regain some Israelite independence and occasionally take offensive against Damascus. In 798 BCE, Joash or Jehoash (798-782 BCE) became the king of Israel and, taking advantage of Aram's preoccupation with Assyria, defeated Damascus three times with encouragement from Elisha (cf Rosenbaum 1990:20). He then defeated Judah that was under the rule of Amaziah (796-767 BCE). This Judean king made a fatal error by challenging Joash who responded by demolishing a portion of Jerusalem's wall, looting the Temple and the palace treasury, taking hostages to Samaria, and in the end reducing Judah to vassalage. As a result, despite the outstanding leadership of Amaziah's son and successor Uzziah, Judah continued to be overshadowed by the Norhtern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, Joash's son and successor (see King 1988:30).

With the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 BCE) in Israel and with the reign of Uzziah (791-740 BCE) in Judah, both kingdoms entered a golden age in terms of political expansion and socio-economic prosperity. Taking advantage of the foreign political situation and the absence of an Israelite-Judean war—there was cooperation between the two—the Northern Kingdom enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II, who had pursued a vigorous policy of expansion east of Jordan with great success (cf Mays 1969:2). Smith (1989:1) indicates that during this period the Israelites were able to recapture the territories

previously taken from them (2 Ki 13:25) and extend the border of Israel as far north as Hamath (2 Ki 14:25; Am 6:14).

After the former boundaries were restored, Israel became the largest and most influential country along the eastern Mediterranean coast, and the name of Jerobam II certainly was widely known (see Wood 1979:276). Along with this, as long as Uzziah ruled the Southern Kingdom, the Judeans also enjoyed the same prosperity. This Judean king, who was an excellent administrator, brought his country to the zenith of its power through expansion and military might, though it remained a vassal to Northern Kingdom of Israel, Judah developed agriculture by establishing military-agricultural settlements in the Negev, which in turn protected the trade routes (cf King 1988:31).

In addition, the alliance of the kingdoms of Israel and resulted in the emergence of a new power. Whether this was a formal alliance or these kingdoms plotted their strategy together, is still uncertain, but, as Andersen and Freedman (1989:21) inferred, "it seems clear that they intended together to restore the classic boundaries of the united kingdom of David and Solomon." Accordingly, the expansion of their territories is believed to be much larger than at any time before these kingdoms were separated. As Coote and Coote (1990:47) state, "The allied of the kingdoms of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah of Judah rivaled Solomon's empire in extent."

2.4 THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

The change of social structures in Israel's history contributed to the issue of social gap. Before the monarchic period, the Israelites were still living in tribal societies and they shared the egalitarian value of living. However, times were changing. The settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan changed in their social and economic structures. But some elements of tribal structures continued long after the settlement gradually were replaced by the appearance of the monarchy. This happened because the concept of "royalty" created a class consciousness that had

not previously existed, and, as a result, there was an emergence of a new class of royal officials in their society (cf Jensen 2006:68).

Consequently, the political centre existed in the society, wherein "all powers" in every aspect of life were accumulated in a certain group of people. Gottwald (2001:227) indicates that such a centre would, "in any event, have included the monarch, the members of the royal family, the chief officers of the main government responsible for the chains of command that carried out state decisions, and advisors to the court who might have official assignment or might be consulted on an ad hoc basis." This situation became bad because of the absence of a "power" controller in the society.

This condition continued on throughout the monarchic period in the northern kingdom of Israel, and until the middle of the eighth century BCE. In the final half of Jeroboam's tenure, Israel had reached probably its height in terms of economic prosperity (cf Stuart 1987:283). The success of Israel's political expansion and stability brought prosperity to the nation in general. Amos reported that agriculture in Israel flourished in spite of occasional crop failures (4:6-9). It is also important to mention here that in the context of a vassalage and an agrarian economy, the people of Judah would have to pay a share of their agricultural harvest and animal stock to both the Judean and Israelite monarchies (see Sweeney 2003:193).

While they controlled the strategic trade routes, they also gained profits through international trade. The control over the trade routes and the lively commerce nourished a growing wealthy class who lived in an elaborate way and brought, as Smith (1989:2) noted, "the new wealth and access to expensive ivories and furniture (3:15; 6:4)." Unfortunately, not all people of Israel enjoyed such luxurious living. It was only, in fact, experienced by a very few people. Mostly the ruling elite of Israel who were also the governing class, as Coote (1981:25) indicates, "Comprising from 1 to 3 percent of the population, they typically own 50 to 70 percent or more of the land. . . . [and] control by far the greater amount of power and wealth in the society, and their positions of power exercise domain over the peasantry."

In some studies of the social history of Israel, this development has been called "early capitalism." Mays (1987:148), proposing this view, gives several reasons for saying it, namely: the shift of primary social goods and land from the functional support to that of capital; the reorientation of social goals from personal values to economic profit; and the subordination of judicial processes to the interest of the entrepreneur. It can be elaborated as follows, as Mays (1987:149) adds that kings had appropriated land for the partial support of this administrative class, but they were left to some degree to manage their own support. They needed a basic capital to allow them to serve the crown. As officials, they also had the opportunity to gain from international trade. Their emergence created a group who had a vested interest in the accumulation of land and goods as capital. They were not originally an economic class, but they soon became one. Therefore, as the capitalists became the so-called ruling class, "the officials" and "the leaders," they became socio-economically powerful and tended to be corrupt.

It seems that during Amos' time, materialism had become prevalent, hedonism and selfishness increased, and social disparity intensified. The prophet also observed the luxury and extravagance of the wealthy, their summer and winter palaces adorned with costly ivory (3:15) and their gorgeous coachs with damask pillows (3:12) on which they reclined at their sumptuous feasts (6:4-6). Even the women were likened by Amos to fat cows of Bashan (4:1) who were addicted to wine and without compassion for the poor and needy (cf Kleven 1996:215-227). The market was cornered by profiteering usurious commerce, false weights and fraudulent merchandise (refuse given for wheat) (8:5-6). There was no justice in the land (3:10) for every judge was corrupt (v. 12) and they turned "justice into poison" and "the fruit of righteousness into wormwood" (5:7). According to Kuhl (1960:61), Amos could objectively see such things because, "The man from Tekoa was sufficiently detached from affairs and people to realise the full extent of the abuses and wrongs in society in Samarian society."

The consequence was that this situation created the stark contrast between the luxury of the rich and the misery of the poor; where the rich enjoy indolent, indulgent existence (4:1ff; 6:1-6) in winter and summer houses (3;13; 6:11) and

the poor become a tempting target for legal and economic exploitation (2:6-8; 4;1; 5:10-12; 8:4-6) (cf Mays 1969:2-3). In reality, it seems that the rich prospered at the expense of the poor (4:1) by crushing the needy, taking possession of the land of those who had fallen into debt or subjecting them to slavery (2:6; 8:4, 6), denying them justice in the lay courts at the city gates (2:7; 5:10, 12), and cheating them in the marketplace (8:5). Smith (1989:2) thus concludes that social conditions in Israel during Amos' time was soured by sin and greed.

As Israel experienced economic boom, there was also an increase in religious activity. The shrines at Bethel, Dan, Gilgal, and Beersheba were constructed and had constant streams of worshippers bringing sacrificial animals (cf Miller & Hayes 1986:312). The first two Israelite shrines, at Bethel and Gilgal, considered as the state temples, and the last two, at the high places of Gilgal and Beersheba provided spiritual identity to the nation (5:5; 8:1-14). The main architect behind these physical projects was Jeroboam II, who was closely related to Jeroboam I, the first king of Israel and the founder of the cult at Bethel according to Deuteronomistic tradition (see Coote 1981:22). In order to observe religious activities at the temple, he appointed Amaziah to take the role of a high priest at Bethel.

From the perspective of the Israelites, this religious "awakening" was closely related to economic success. There was a belief that economic success was a sign of God's favour towards them. From the perspective of Deuteronomistic theology, it was a common concept to believe that the success of Israel is a sign of divine favour (cf Wright 1965:202). It seems that such eagerness in building religious physical objects was the expression of the people's gratitude for God's blessing and favour. Unfortunately, this motivation was ironically turned into self-satisfaction. While these activities happened, the ruling elite still oppressed the peasants who were really downtrodden and poor as mentioned earlier.

It is understandable that behind the religious awakening, there also rose a religious hypocrisy. Stuart (1987:284) argues that "Israel was a people often orthodox in style of worship but disobedient in personal and social behavior," or, as Achtemeier (1999:170) directly points out, "the conscience of the rich placated by

participation in an elaborate cultus." The Israelites thus were in a paradoxical situation. The economic and formal religious ascent were in co-existence with the moral and social decline. The more the Israelites built their shrines and offered sacrifices, the more they treated the poor and the powerless unfairly, as Smith (1995:26) observes, "Israel's frequent attendance at the shrines to make sacrifices did not result in moral, spiritual and social uprightness."

On the one hand, the Israelites did not only commit sins in the social sense but also religious ones. Amos's critics were not only directed toward social matters (2:6-8; 3:9-11, 13-15; 4:1-3; 5:7, 10-13; 6;1-8, 11-12; 8:4-7) but also towards cultic issues (4:4-5; 5:4-6, 14-15, 21-27; 8:9-10). Although religious issues were not emphasized by Amos as much as the social ones, such a problem was quite serious. Accordingly, the Israelite religious institutions and theology were being perverted, misunderstood and rejected, and although they performed elaborate rituals as proud demonstrations of piety (4:4-5), they were unrelated to justice and righteousness (5:21-24) or to real seeking after God (5:4-6) (see Smith 1989:2; Mays 1969:2-3).

Besides, in a more specific way, Barstad (1987:127-38) argues that the root of the religious sin of the Israelites was their worshipping other deities and because of this Amos insisted that YHWH is the sole legitimate God and the true source of fertility. It seems that the situation at that time was very contradictive. On the one hand, the religious life of the Israelites in terms of its performances and elaborations was very sophisticated; on the other hand, they neglected the very important substance of their religious faith, trusting and patronizing God with humility and having compassion to other fellow humans.

As a result, this acute hypocritical attitude was strongly opposed by God and so Amos showed God's disapproval of such religious activities by announcing God's judgment upon the religious sites, by giving counsel to stay away from the sites, and by declaring God's rejection of their religious activities (Am 3:14; 4:4-5; 5:4-5; 5:22-24). This would culminate in the coming of the day of the Lord, which "instead of being a panacea for all the nations' ills, would bring disaster, as

perverted religion and empty ritual must lead to political and economic crashes" (Kaiser, Jr. 1998:354). It is predictable that the fate of the people is at hand.

The coming of Amos represented the judgment of God against Israel's disobedience and sins (see Williamson 2000:291-306). Carrying God's commission, he challenged the Israelites because they had sinned against him by treating the divine and other fellow humans improperly. God's speech of judgment directly pointed to Israel but the action of judgment itself was indirectly being done by using the hand of the old powerful nation, the Assyrians. With the rise of Tiglath-Pileser III to the Assyrian throne in approximately 745 BCE, that mighty empire again embarked on an imperialistic policy, which included Palestine (cf Chisholm Jr. 1990:10) and started again to regain influence in the west. Such a renewed westward campaign was supported by the mighty Assyrian army, which at that time had reached a high degree of competence and superiority to all opponents in equipment, technique and tactics (see Hermann 1975:243).

The Assyrian expansion was inescapable and became a serious external threat to the Israelites. It seemed that, on the one hand, the major political factor in the downfall of the northern Kingdom was the restoration of Assyrian power under Tiglath-Pileser (cf Flanders, Crapps & Smith 1988:289). On the other hand, internal factor also contributed to the downfall of Israel, and the death of Jeroboam II (753 BCE). After his death, Israel had no longer any strong leadership and suffered under political unrest for years. Jeroboam's son, Zachariah (746-745 BCE) was in power only six months before being assassinated by Shallum (745). With the death of Zachariah, the four generations of Jehu came to an end (cf Kaiser, Jr. 1998:352), and in a period of three decades (754-722 BCE) the powerful Northern Kingdom ceased to exist as an independent nation (cf Schultz 2000:196).

The destruction of Samaria may be considered the end of the Israelite Kingdom. Historically then this is the background of the preaching of the eighth century BCE prophets (cf King 1984:14-), including Amos. According to their interpretation, the fall of Samaria was the result of Jeroboam's sin because it had allowed Israelites to engage in idolatrous practices and ignore their covenantal

obligations (see Matthews 2005:125). What was sown in sinful behaviours, such as violating God's law (and covenant) and mistreating other fellow humans was reaped in fates and miseries, destruction of the nation and, worst of all, the exile. Amos' message of judgment and doom was thus fulfilled and became a reality although the people who heard him did not believe him.

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The issue of the authorship of the book of Amos has been debated for many decades. There is no absolute answer to the real original author of the book. Based on the unity of the book, "the pre-critical view" believed that the author of the book is Amos himself. In contrast, based on differences in style and the appearances of the writing, "the critical view" argues that the book was composed gradually in several different stages coming from different sources, and therefore, there is no single author to whom the composition can be attributed to.

However, with the recognition of different styles in the composition of the book and the possibility that the original author was the prophet himself, I take a different opinion. I believe that Amos is the single author of the book who used different styles of writing and compositions for his rhetorical purpose. The purpose of using these different styles can, in my opinion, be considered as a rhetorical strategy, especially in order to persuade the audience both to hear and to believe the message he delivered.

Although one proposal holds that Amos is from the northern kingdom (Israel), a more convincing view believes that he is from Tekoa in the Southern region (Judean Tekoa). The reason for saying this is because the previous view can not exactly show where the place or location is in the Northern region. In addition, regarding his occupation, the prophet Amos had several occupations, being a sheep-breeder as well as a sycamore-fig tree cultivator. As a livestock-breeder, he probably was the owner of both cattle and sheep as the terms בקר and נקד indicate. It means that he was economically self-reliant and had a high status in society rather than being an ordinary shepherd.

As a sycamore-fig tree cultivator, although there is no assurance of whether he was a simple worker or an owner of sycamores, it is possible that he owned or perhaps leased the fields containing sycamore trees or leased it to others. Since he perhaps owned cattle, he may also have been the owner of the sycamores. Both occupations are linked because the fruit of this kind of tree is unfit for human consumption but good for cattle.

Scholars are also still in debate on the profession of Amos as a prophet, particularly in translating his words: לא־נביא אנכי ולא־בן־נביא אנכי (Am 7:14), where he himself confesses that he is not a prophet and not the son of the prophet. The problem here lies on the issue of whether this information is referring to the past or present. The interpretation that it refers to the present argues that Amos never claimed himself to be a prophet in the sense of חזה or נביא, thus, he denies that he is not a prophet by profession but "a prophet" by function. On the other hand, the interpretation of this information as reference to the past holds that the prophet was not a prophet at the time when God gave him the commission to prophesy to Israel, but, on the basis of his call, he later became one.

I prefer to take a literal interpretation on these words and argues that both are correct since both interpretations gave attention to the meaning of Amos' reply, to establish a sharp contrast between a prophet by virtue of office (נביא), a prophet's disciple (בן־נביא), and a salaried cult official (a commercial prophet) and Amos' own independent activity as sanctioned by YHWH. It is more likely to consider him as a layman under divine order to perform the function of a prophet.

The context of the life and ministry of Amos was unique in the sense that both Israel and Judah existed in a peaceful and prosperous situation. In Israel, Jeroboam II, fourth king of the Jehu dynasty, brought Israel into unusual political stability and expanded Israel's territory. He restored the borders of his kingdom to Lebo-Hamath in the north and to the sea of Arabah in the south, as indicated in 2 Kings 14:25. The expansion was set against a background of long conflict between Israel and her northern neighbour, the Syrian kingdom of Damascus. The threat from Syria was put on hold for the moment, as the vigorous Adad-

nirari III ascended the throne of Assyria and turned attention to the Aramean states that had been in the forefront of resistance. As the Syrian army became weaker, Israel, under Jeroboam II, became stronger and had military successes against Syria. Israel was able to gain control of Damascus and Hamath (2 Ki 14:28). Thus, with Syria subdued, Assyria was no longer presenting any threat, and Judah could become an ally, the Israelite territory was quite stable.

The successes of political expansion and stability in Israel brought prosperity to many in the nation. In the final half of Jeroboam's tenure, Israel probably reached its zenith in terms of economic prosperity (cf King 1983:3-15). This was a situation that could have brought good times for all. However, that was not the case. The settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan had changed their social and economic structures. Some elements of tribal structures continued long after the settlement but gradually they were replaced by the appearance of the monarchy. This was because the concept of "royalty" created a class consciousness that had not previously existed, and, as a result, there was an emergence of a new class of royal officials in their society. There arouse social gap between the powerful rich and the peasant, and it continued to grow.

In addition, as the ruling classes controlled the strategic trade routes they consequently gained profits through international trade. The control over trade routes and lively commerce nourished the rising of this wealthy class who lived comfortable lives. In other words, these commercial activities created the sort of income that allowed its holders to accumulate prosperity and other forms of wealth. As a consequence, this situation created a distinct contrast between the luxury of the rich and the misery of the poor. The rich then used their wealth to exploit the weakness of the poor, even to the extent of appropriating their property and enslaving them for debts they could not pay. The worst aspect was that they used their resources to bribe judges and other officials so as to obtain unjust judgments against the poor and strip them of their property and other rights. Thus, the social condition in Israel during Amos' time was spoiled by both sinfulness and greediness.

As Israel experienced this economic boom, there was an increase of religious activities. Several religious shrines were constructed and had constant streams of worshippers bringing numbers of sacrificial animals. There was a belief that the prosperity gained was a sign of YHWH's favour. Although these religious movements seemed to be a positive expression of the people's gratitude toward God's blessing and favour, but in reality, they point out self-satisfaction. Moreover, in this so-called religious awakening the ruling elites actually developed a hypocritical lifestyle because, while doing such religious activities, they were also practicing social injustices by means of oppressing and abusing the poor and the unfortunate. Thus, the core problem in Israel during Amos' time was in fact really religious. Some people in Israel neglected the very substance of their faith, to trust and serve God in humility and be compassionate to their fellow Israelite citizens.

Into these historico-political and socio-religious scenes the prophet Amos stepped in. Amos was sent by God to channel the roar of the lion (Am 3:8). God had spoken out against his people and Amos was the herald God chose to convey his words of challenge and rebuke. He was indeed not sent to pagans who had never heard God's word, but to his fellow citizens (the Israelites), God's own people who failed to recognize sin in their lives. His main mission was clear, to warn people about their failure to live the way God expected and show them the consequences that could follow. At the end, he delivered a harsh message to them in order to represent the judgment of YHWH against their disobedience and sin. In YHWH's sight, the sin of his people was very serious, especially in violating his covenant by practicing social injustice. Through the fall of Samaria, Amos' message of judgment and doom was fulfilled and brought into reality.

CHAPTER THREE

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS 2:6-8

3.1 RHETORICAL UNIT

Amos 2:6-8 must be discussed in the context of Amos 1:3-2:16. This is a large unit in the book of Amos known as the Oracle against the Nations (OAN). This unit is comprised of several smaller oracles found in subunits 1:3-5, 1:6-8, 1:9-10, 1:11-12, 1:13-15, 2:1-3, 2:4-5, and 2:6-16. The division of it can be seen as follows:

UNIT	SUB-UNIT	SUB-SUB UNIT
Oracle against the Nations (OAN) Amos 1:3-2:16	Syria (1:3-5)	
	Philistia (1:6-8)	
	Tyre (1:9-10)	
	Edom (1:11-12)	
	Ammon (1:13-15)	
	Moab (2:1-3)	
	Judah (2:4-5)	
	Israel (2:6-16)	Description of specific sins of the Israelites (2:6-8)
		Rejection of God's acts for the Israelites (2:9-12)
		Punishment of destruction upon the Israelites (2:13-16)

This division clearly shows that each oracle of these oracles can be considered as an independent sub-unit because it contains a specific subject. In this relation, each sub-sub-unit, for example, Amos 2:6-8 in the sub-unit of the oracle against Israel, may also be thought as an independent or complete "rhetorical unit."

Aside from that, the completeness of the unit can be seen in the uniqueness of elements the oracle against Israel has, as compared to the preceding series. This uniqueness is found in the length and the details of the contents. Hayes (1995:163) explains several different aspects, such as the expansion of both

description of the wrongs (vv. 6-8, 12), the depiction of the coming judgement (vv. 13-16), the accusation is no longer concerned with international matters but with domestic ones, the reference is made to specific events in the past, the interspersion between the second and third person, and the stylized announcement of judgement—ארמנות ושלחתי אש בחומת באכלה ("I will send fire and it will consume the fortress")—is dropped. The sharing of common forms while simultaneously showing unique aspects indicates that each oracle is an independent and a complete literary unit.

As seen in the divisions of the units earlier, Amos 2:6-8, as sub unit of the oracle against Israel (Am 2:6-16) and a sub-sub-unit of OAN (Am 1:3-2:16), is an independent literary unit. As a complete unit, this section starts with the introduction, followed by the content of the oracle and ends with a conclusion. The messenger formula כה אמר יהוה ("Thus says YHWH") is considered as the introductory part of the section. It introduces the content of the oracle. In ancient Near Eastern cultures, this type of introduction was used to introduce letters and proclamations (cf Gowan 1996:353-354), or simply serve as an announcement introducing messages. It means that these words mark the beginning of a new unit.

After elaborating on the contents of the indictments, Amos uses the closing formula, נאם־יהוה ("Says the LORD") and it subsequently closes the oracle. It is called "the divine oracle formula" ("oracle/utterance of YHWH"), and, in the case of Amos, this oracle or utterance that the prophet delivered appears in the form of a speech. According to Wolff (1977:92), this speech "always stands at the end of an oracle, in order to distinguish it in a solemn way as speech of YHWH," and it is also important to be noticed that this closing formula is inseparable with its twin, the introductory formula. Both of them are considered as definite boundaries that limit the section as a whole unit and demarcate it from other sections. Thus, the oracle against Israel forms one independent speech unit that here can serve as a rhetorical unit.

The text of Amos 2:6-8 is a sub-unit of the larger unit in 2:6-16 called "the indictment." It can be seen that this section does not constitute a complete statement because the theme of wine is continued in verse 12. Accordingly, this section (2:6b-8, and continued in 12) is the most difficult part to be analyzed because the crimes committed by the Israelites may be counted as 7, 9 or even 10, depending on how the units are arranged, but "if allowance is made for the virtually synonymous parallelism throughout and the sins are viewed conceptually, only four crimes appear" (Chisholm 1990:193). In the same vein, telescoping an N+1 ("N" represents a number usually 3 or 7) pattern in the book of Amos, O'Connell (1996:60) maintains that the author deliberately and consistently used 3+1 pattern in presenting the indictments against Israel, for example, oppression of the poor (2:6b-7a), cultic profanity (2:7b), abusing pledges and fines (2:8), and Israel's disrespect for prophets and Nazirites (2:12).

In contrast to this, others prefer not to see verses 7b-8 as parallelism. It is because "the elements are not identical and therefore no two are quite parallel, and it is simply thought that this section is structured in a total of seven charges (2:6b-8), which the adding of another accusations (v. 12) would then constitute the eighth wrong" (Hayes 1995:163). It is important then to think that, whatever forms the enumeration takes, this section (2:6-8 and 2:12) should be viewed inseparably and considered as a whole unit. Although the reason for punishment (vv.6b-8) is interrupted by a historical retrospective (vv. 9-11), Gowan (1996:365) insists, "that actually leads to a concluding accusation in v. 12, so vv. 6b-12 should be taken as a whole, leading to the announcement of judgement in vv. 13-16." To conclude, it seems that Amos 2:6-8 forms a subunit along with other subunits 2:9-11 and 2:12-16, and, most importantly, should be read in conjunction with 2:12. Therefore, this unit will be the main materials to be analyzed in discussing the issue of social justice.

3.2 RHETORICAL SITUATION

After the rhetorical unit has been determined, it is important to next concentrate on the context "behind" the speech, especially on the persons, the circumstances and the events which led to the composition of the specific text. The creative speech of the prophet is essentially not delivered in a vacuum. It is his reaction to a certain situation. In doing rhetorical analysis, it is necessary, therefore, "to trace the problem which gives rise to the given discourse" (Gitay 1980:296). As mentioned before, the real audience of the book as a whole is the Israelites. The question then will be "What does ישראל mean?" or, in a more specific way, "Does it refer to the state or to the people?" Based on the study of the term as it occured in the book, Wolff (1977:165) once explains that "when Amos says 'Israel' he intends to level the following accusation against the people of God." The word "Israel," therefore, may refer to a group people who have special relationship with YHWH as expressed by the parallel term עמי ישראל (7:8, 15-17) with its first person possessive pronominal suffix.

This term, however, is contradictory in the sense that it stands in opposition to reality. Instead of being the people who are very dear to him, God is now accusing his very people for their wrongdoings. Although it frequently occurs in the oracles against other nations (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4), the term פשעים (pl. construct of פשע), which may be literally translated as "transgressions" (ASV, RSV, NASB and NKJV) has its special meaning in the context of this oracle against Israel. It may express "the completeness of Israel's sinfulness" (Hayes 1988:107) as supported by the using of the enumeration ("three . . . and four") formula, and most importantly, the word indicates the excessive rebellion against a covenant or a divine law (Smith 1989:65). The words of Amos may cause the hearers to think "Is it true that YHWH will punish us?" since they considered themselves as God's chosen people with all of its privileges.

The OAN (Am 1:3-2:16), as the context of Amos 2:6-8, has its background in the situation of Israel and the surrounding nations in the eighth century BCE. The mentioning of other nations, being the enemies of the Israelites, may have caused

the hearers to be overconfident with their special existence. One after another Israel's neighbours are included in the list of judgment. The charge, after all, is directed to Israel herself. The listener might think that Judah, the seventh, was the end of the list, and "his captive northern audience, who must have been enjoying every minute of it, would psychologically be in a state of mind which would lead them to believe that he had reached his climax with his fulmination against Judah" (Paul 1981:197).

Besides, the moving from the foreigners (Aram, Philistia, Tyre) to blood relatives (Edom, Ammon, Moab), and to Judah, Israel's sister kingdom to the south (1:3-2:5) should create an excitement on the side of the hearers for, as Chisholm (1990:189) indicates, they "must have listened with delight to this series of messages, especially when their long-time rival Judah appeared, like a capstone, as the seventh nation in the list." Although the prophet also addresses oracles to other nations, these are actually introductory to the main target of his message, the Israelites. It is a surprise created by Amos, because the Israelites may have enjoyed hearing the accusation of the nations without ever realizing that it would end up with themselves as the prophet's intended audience. Dorsey (1992:306-307) thus concludes that the previous seven oracles against the nations in 1:3-2:5, "presumably functions as a foil for the unit's main objective, the stinging message of 2:6-16," and he added that "The 7+1 pattern here would have served a clever rhetorical function, viz., to ensure the surprise effect."

The mentioning of Israel at the end of the list of judgment may also mean that the nation was the culmination or centre point of the judgment of YHWH. Paul (1981:197) argues that the prophet Amos resorted to this alternate pattern for a complementary reason, that is, to express finality and climactic culmination. In the context of religious polemics, Barstad considers this section (2:6-8) as "the pronouncement against Israel closes the climactic list of words of judgment toward other nations" (1984:11-15). Chisholm (1990:72) also says that "Chapters 1-2 include a series of oracles against various nations, culminating in splendid rhetorical fashion with a judgement against Israel," or, as Hayes (1995:163)

indicates that Amos "after this rhetorical and geographical circumambulation, hones in on the center, his actual audience," the Israelites.

By hearing this indictment the audience could no longer argue against the accusation addressed to them. It supposedly led them to realize that they were not better than other nations, because the oppressive acts they committed were equal to the terrible war crimes committed by the neighbouring nations. The using of the structure of the oracles thus is effective to corner the listeners because "the disturbing and shocking message is that the nation's socio-economic offences are comparable to violent acts perpetrated by foreign nations against Israel and other peoples" (Wood 2002:24).

In addition, Amos seems to challenge the common belief of the audience at that time that they are the chosen people of God, who have more privileges and favour from God than any other nation on the earth. In this regard, Barton (1980:47-48) specifically infers that there were some popular beliefs held by the audience during the eighth-century BCE Israel, such as, the audience must suppose that Israel had a specially privileged position and hence was indemnified against punishment; Amos' hearers clearly did not expect their prophets to proclaim judgement on Israel; and Israelites rather had mutual obligations as individuals than that they as nation ought to observe the conventions of war. Because of this deemed special status or privilege they ignored their moral and social responsibilities, that is, to treat the lowly in a correct manner. In their mind, it is hard to believe that YHWH will punish his own people who mistreated their fellow citizens.

However, Amos seems to have made a special effort in order to convince his audience that things were what they seem to be. By using a rhetorical strategy, namely "a rhetoric of entrapment" (Alter 1985:144), the prophet mentioned the preceding seven oracles with the intention to eventually focus the accusation on Israel. Chisholm (1990:189) pinpoints that "Rather than being self-contained pronouncements of judgment, the earlier messages set up the climactic denunciation of the prophet's primary target group, the sinful Northern

Kingdom." Israel thus can not hide their own status in the presence of YHWH, because in fact they have violated the covenant by mistreating others.

The formula "for three . . . and for four . . ." (2:6a), also repeated several times in the preceding oracles, functions not only to bring the audience to realize that they were the main target of God's judgement, but also to prepare them to respond. In the case of Israel, God could not tolerate the transgression of his people which have reached its climax. He had to take an action of punishment (v. 6a) against them in order to reveal his divine justice (2:13-16). In these verses, Amos dramatically describes the panic that will overwhelm the Israelite military.

It is also important to note here that rhetorically this formula is not just a response but also initiates a kind of debate. The prophetical utterance, as Möller (2000:510) describes, is "a form of speech done in the context of presenting readers with debate between the prophet Amos and his eighth-century audience." In an extensive rhetorical study on the book of Amos, it is insisted that the prophet intentionally uses the rhetoric of persuasion in the sense that "the presentation of the debating prophet is the primary rhetorical means employed by the book's authors or final redactors in order to achieve their communicative aims" (Möller 2003:2). Therefore, whether this section is viewed as a surprise, a climax, a debate, or whatever, the bottom line is, the texts are rhetorically arranged or structured in order to prepare Amos' audience to hear the charges.

3.3 RHETORICAL INVENTION

A rhetorical analysis is also concerned with the way the author persuades his audience, for example, the modes and manner used in the attempt to convince (Gitay [1980]:297), or simply "the proofs" of a speech or writing, called *inventio*. Before stating the indictments, Amos has to establish his position as a prophet of YHWH. He definitely has to use the messenger formula "Thus said the Lord" (כה אמר יהוה 2:6) in order to settle his authority. Since the beginning of his oracle, the prophet considered himself as a prophet who spoke to the Israelites on behalf of YHWH. There must be a link between what he prophesies and YHWH

as the source of his authority. Therefore, the verb חזה intriguingly is translated not only as "saw" but also as "envisioned in visions" (NAS), or even as "prophesied" (JPS).

It implies that the words of Amos here should be understood as divinely inspired because they are revealed directly by YHWH to the prophet. Mays (1969:20) indicates that this was "a conventional way of saying that his words were received as revelation before they were spoken" as also experienced by other prophets such as Isaiah (1:1; 2:1) and Micah (1:1). The source of all utterances of the prophets, particularly the prophet Amos, is YHWH who roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem. Wolff (1977:91-92) suggests that the use of this formula was "strictly tied to the commissioned from YHWH and on the principle is formulated in the divine first person. . . . When YHWH comes to the fore in the messenger speech, it is consistently as the first person speaker." The words of Amos thus are the words of YHWH given through a divine revelation, and as a result, they have divine authority and origin (cf Smith 1989:22).

In Amos 2:6-8, the enumeration formula of the transgressions (. . . על־ארבעה ועל־שלשה) committed by the people may function as a preliminary pointer to the "proofs" of the accusation, and by elaborating their wrongdoings, the people will soon realize that they are worthy to be punished. According to Mays (1969:24), the use of the formula by the prophet generally was "in order to present the coming action of YHWH as a response to an accumulation of offences that has outrun the tolerance of God." Amos pointed out that there was a relationship of cause and effect between Israel's sins and God's punishment. It applies a kind of "action and reaction" or "sow and reap" principle for, according to Blenkinsopp (1984:88-89), there is a close link between indictment (Am 2:6-8) and verdict (vv. 13-16).

Jeremias (1998:34) also notes that the sequence of the listed transgressions possibly underscore a continual increase in culpability. All listed transgressions seem to expose not only the total or complete quantity of the rebellion but also the quality of the "sins" (NIV). In this context, the enumeration formula also

expresses the seriousness of the transgression by the people in the eyes of YHWH because it points to "the multiplicity and intensity of the atrocities committed by the nation" (Kim 1996:40). Through the elaboration of the wrongdoings of the people, Amos most likely is trying to state that his charges are not going in the wrong direction.

The use of the word פשעים (pl. construct of פשע) in Amos 2:6a may indicate that the prophet rhetorically envisages what the sins were. The word translated as "crimes" moreover, cannot be understood as merely crimes in an ordinary sense but refers also to crimes in a moral sense, a rebellion against authority. Paul (1991:45) considers it a revolt against YHWH when he said that "for such crimes they are found guilty of revolting against the Lord of history, who, in turn, holds them directly accountable and executes punitive action against them." In a more concrete way, Andersen and Freedman (1989:231-232) argue that "Just offences against conscience in days long before any declarations of human rights as such, or more specifically wilful violations of formal agreements, which made them directly answerable to YHWH himself." Thus, the word "crimes" here is closely related to the sins against YHWH, the God of covenant.

This implies that all the violations committed by the Israelites were actually actions that break the covenant that YHWH established, being acts of "rebelliousness against YHWH's sovereign law" (Stuart 1987:310). Based on the study of Ancient Near Eastern treaties, Niehaus (1992:340) specifically points out that the rebellious acts performed by the nations, including Israel, were seen as violations against the covenant of YHWH. He established the covenant of creation with all creatures and conducted a recreation in the covenant of Noah which demanded respectful treatment for all human beings as creatures created in God's image. The above views therefore are in agreement with the nature of the word "crimes" that must be placed in a covenantal framework, as effectively used by the prophet to prove his charge of the people of the covenant.

Different to other oracles, the prophet announced Israel's crimes in a long and detailed list of indictments. Listing the crimes in such an extended form seems to

demonstrate that he was intending to prove the wrongs in a concrete and all encompassing description. It needs actually more than eight lines, even if Amos 6:12 is included, with its sevenfold sinful acts—following Dorsey's suggestion (1992:277)—in order to explain all the crimes of Israel (Am 2:6-8). In comparison with other oracles, the intention to extend Israel's transgressions is to describe the sins in a more tangible way.

Coote (1981:16, 32)—categorizing Israel's section as "Stage A," the original edition of the prophet Amos—argues that the oracle was quite distinctive because all indictments contributed to a single basic message: the powerful in Israel have oppressed the powerless, or the ruling elite have oppressed the poor. With a clearer picture of the societal conditions prevailing in the time of Amos, the terms of his announcement take on a new concreteness. In the same vein, Dorsey (1999:278) maintains that "Both *its accusation section* and its punishment section are *several times longer* than those preceding oracles, *serving to highlight this oracle*" (italics mine).

The extended list is also aimed at portraying the completeness or totality of Israel's sins. If it is related to the use of the "sevenfold" pattern in the section, it seems that the prophet was proposing the notion of completeness. Rosenbaum (1990:55) once reminds us that "whatever one decides about the formula 'three, yea four' in the oracles against other nations, in the Israel oracle three plus four equals seven—the number of completeness even if used in negative situations." Paul (1991:30, 76) similarly argues that Amos' using of a series of wrongdoings in an elaborated and extensive way was to convey the concept of totality, and the reason behind it was that the Israelites have received abundant ongoing blessings from YHWH (vv. 9-12). Therefore, there is no way of escape or self justification to be made by the audience after hearing the charges that the prophet announced to them.

3.4 RHETORICAL DISPOSITION

In order to expose the charges, the author of the book organizes the materials carefully. Before looking closely at the texts, it is necessary to see how Amos 2:6-8 is poetically structured:

[Verse line]	Verse	Strophe	Stanza
כה אמר יהוה	a. YHWH announces	A. Introductory formula	Announcement of God's punishment on a multitude of sins e. g. abuse of powerless people and performing heathen practices
על־שלשה פשעי ישראל	b. For three/four categories of transgression I will not revert my punishment	B. Indictment:	
ועל־ארבעה לא אשיבנו			
על־מכרם בכסף צדק	c. They sell people for nothing	C. 1) Categories of people mistreated	
ואביון בעבור נעלים			
על־עפר־ארץ בראש דלים השאפים	d. The lowly are discriminated		
ודרך ענוים יטו			
ואיש ואביו ילכו אל־הנערה	e. Their profanation brings shame to YHWH's name	C.2) Cultic profanation	
למען חלל את־שם קדשי			
ועל־בגדים חבלים יטו	f. Repeated pattern: deed + place of profanation at cult places		
אצל כל־מזבח			
ויין עמושים ישתו ויין			
ביתאלהיהם			

From the perspective of rhetorical analysis, the first verse line כה אמר יהוה (v. 6) may be considered as introduction (*exordium*) since it contains an introductory formula (first strophe). The second and third verse lines, על־שלשה פשעי ישראל indicate the statement (*narratio*) of the transgression in "three and four" formula (second stophe). In the third line, a conclusion (*peroratio*) is given in a short phrase לא אשיבנו which connotes the result of such indictments. At the end of the unit, the body of speech (*probatio*) is elaborated in each succeding line (Am 2:6b-8) as seen in the fourth strophe, "categories of people mistreated" such as על־מכרם בכסף צדיק ואביון בעבור נעלים (selling people for nothing) and האשפים על־עפר־ארץ בראש דלים ודרך ענוים יטו (discriminating the lowly); and in the fifth strophe, "cultic profanation" such as ואיש ואביו ילכו אל־הנערה למען חלל את־שם קדשי (insulting the name of YHWH through profanation) and ועל־בגדים חבלים יטו אצל כל־מזבח ויין ענושים ישתו בית אלהיהם (repeating the deed and place of profanation at cultic places). It is clear that all the strophes and verses point to the

stanza, the central idea of the unit, "God will punish the multitude of sins done by the Israelites."

The careful introduction arranged at the beginning of the unit (Am 2:6a) seems to be a stunning one. The introductory phrase כה אמר יהוה ("Thus says YHWH"), as it also occurs at the head of the other oracles of the nations, does not simply introduce the content but also affirms divine origin and authority. According to Frye (1983:212) this was considered as a divine speech formula that had an expression of the biblical "voice of authority." It thus refers to the one who is sending the message (Smith 1989:43) that is YHWH himself. The term "YHWH" has a specific religious significant meaning in the hearts and minds of the Israelites. The *tetragrammaton* יהוה is considered to be the most sacred name because it refers directly to the God who has established a covenant with his people, as Kapelrud (1961:47) writes, "YHWH and Israel were standing in a special relationship to each other, that of the *bĕrit*, the Covenant."

However, in the context of the OAN (Am 1:3-2:16), this name can be related to God's control over the universe. The word itself, according to Wright (1965:225-37), connotes that YHWH, the God of Israel, holds universal claims and exercises universal imperium. This simply means that YHWH also has total sovereignty over all of the nations as Smith (1989:68) argues, "God has spoken; the nations have committed sins; they will be held accountable for their inhumanity to man; God will destroy these centers of power and the leaders who do such things." As the audience hear the word "YHWH," they give heed to the message, as Smith (1989:64) adds that "the audience acceptance of the word of God as authoritative for others enabled the prophet to gain maximum advantage." Although the audience still thinks that their relationship with YHWH was unshakeable, the following words may turn their thoughts upside-down, because the fact is that God actually intends to punish his own people.

In addition, if one observes Hayes' study (1968:87), saying that the OAN might have presented in multiple contexts in ancient Israel, for example in "cultic services of lamentations" or in "the royal court," it is possible that such an

introductory formula has been said in the context of Israel's religious and authoritative sanctuary. Kapelrud (1961:75-76) once infers that denunciation of Israel as a whole for its sins goes far beyond anything that could have formed part of a regular ritual pattern. The choosing of both place and the word "YHWH" is not accidental because it is the most effective way to attract the attention of the audience. In the setting of the sanctuary, the people most likely hear what the prophet said, especially when hearing the phrase "Thus says YHWH."

Upon hearing such a formula, the people may have expected to hear a "blessing" from God as reward for what they have religiously done, but then they realized that it was not so. In contrast, it was the announcement of both accusation and declaration of punishment addressed to themselves, as Dorsey (1992:306) argues that "in each oracle the formulaic introduction is followed by a prophetic utterance containing the same two elements, always presented in the same order: (1) accusation against the nation; and (2) declaration of YHWH's intended punishment upon that nation." Therefore, Amos intentionally spoke this introductory formula in the setting of the sanctuary because "the rhetorical effect of his highly stylized oracles hammers home the message in a way which cannot be avoided" (Smith 1989:69).

Amos uses the phrase על־שלשה פשעי ישראל ועל־ארבעה ("for three transgressions of Israel, even four") as a statement of the case, or as *narration*, which purposively sets the direction for the literary proofs that follow. Such an enumeration formula points to the word פשעי which—also used in other oracles against the nations—is generally translated to mean "transgressions" or "crimes" (Stuart 1987:310). Chisholm (1990:75) also means it in the same way, "[the word] suggests that the sins of various nations shared the same basic character." If attention is given to its context, particularly to other oracles against the nations, the word may refer to a sort of criminal action, as Soggin (1987:46) translates it, "the innumerable crimes of Israel." In Amos 2:6a, the word in itself is not specific enough in explaining the multiplicity of the crimes committed by the Israelites. It is too general in the sense that it may refer to any kind or any quantity of wrongs.

The word "crimes" thus cannot be well understood without the elaboration of its counterpart in the succeeding verses. This implies that the formula is programmatically used by the prophet to set the direction for proving the case. Accordingly it is a common literary technique in the Old Testament in proposing lists, where such a graduated numerical saying is usually followed by a list of items corresponding to the second number, and in the case of Israel, it pointed to the crimes specified in the next verses (cf Chisholm 1990:74). By giving his statement of the case in this way, the author seems to prepare his highlighting of the corruption of the people.

Amos also sets the body of the speech or *probatio* in this section (Am 2:6-8). It means that the prophet explains the contents of his speech or writing. This is part of the section where the indictments are emphasized. To begin with, the prophet accuses the Israelites for selling into debt-slavery the innocent and the needy (v. 6b) (to understand the concept, see Chirichigno 1993:145-185). The first clause of the text, על־מכרם בכסף צדיק, may be literally translated "they sell the righteous for/on account of silver/money" (ASV differently translates the verb "have sold"), it is, yet, not clear enough what this action means. Scholars differ in explaining what such a phrase means, and most of them focus their study on how to give a proper meaning to כסף within its context. The "silver or money" then may indicate several things, for example, a debt owed to a creditor (Mays 1969:45), the purchase price of a slave (Fendler 1973:38; Soggin 1987:47), or a bribe given to a judge in the courts (Hammershaimb 1970:46).

However, the majority of interpretation on the text holds the first to be unlikely. The reason for this, albeit having its counterpart with other verses (Is 1:23 and Mi 3:9), is that this view does not fit with the meaning of the verb מכר ("to sell"). Smith (1989:82) maintains that the concept of bribery or court injustice is not preferable, because "the term 'to sell' when used of the needy is always in the context of debts and slavery (Exod. 21:7-8; Lev. 25:39-40; Deut. 15:12-14)." The צדיק ("righteous" or "innocent") is being sold into slavery either because of the loan that he was not able to pay, or was falsely charged of owing money or the small debt that too insignificant (cf Paul 1991:77). The victim therefore was

being accused of being unable to pay his debts and was sold into slavery, although the accusation was not true.

The second clause ואביון בעבור נעלים ("[and] the needy for the sake of a pair of sandals") follows the first in a connecting line. It means that the innocent is not the only one who suffers injustice but here there is another one, האביון ("the needy"). Wolff (1977:165) defines the person as the one who was "in need" of help. It may imply that a needy person cannot defend himself (or herself) from being forced into debt slavery. The needy has no money, power and legal recourse in the courts, and lacking of these things might cause him or her to be a means for others to get rich (cf Finley 1990:164). The placement of אביון along with צדיק, however, has associating effects, so that, both of them may be called "the righteous needy" (Stuart 1987:316). Moreover, since the line על-מכרם בכסף צדיק stands in a parallel with its next line ואביון בעבור נעלים, these lines may naturally have the same thought or concept. If this is the case, the righteous needy, in reality, was sold into slavery not only for the sake of "silver" but also of "sandals" (בעבור נעלים).

To understand the term נעלים is quite difficult. It is because of translating it as "a pair of sandals" is seemingly imprecise. Hayes (1988:109-110) explains that others argued that the text has nothing to do with sandals, for example, the Aramaic Targum understood it as "possession of them" while the medieval Jewish exegete Rashi understood it as "a field owned by a poor" located between two fields owned by the judge, being forced to sell to the latter in order to secure the property and "lock" (from נעל "to lock, to close") it in. Giving another conclusion, Paul (1991:78-79) insists that this term should be derived from its root עלים ("to hide") and thus refers to a "hidden gift" or "payoff."

This view, however, seems to be more problematic because since it may imply a bribe (1 Sam 12:3; Gordis 1971:213-215)—as discussed before, the bribery view is unconvincing—"the hidden gift" is not a better translation. For the sake of its clarity, it is advisable to consider that בעבור נעלים "probably indicates hyperbolically the ridiculously low price for which they were sold" (Stuart

1989:316). Moreover, giving textological notes on the texts (Am 2:6b-7a), Orel (1997:411) argues that the sandals still may be connected with the legal transfer of land and/or slavery, and, on the other hand, they still may be a symbol of social status as in Egypt where even a specific role of sandal-bearers and keepers of the sandal bag is known. Orel (1997:411) then conclusively adds that whatever the judicial meaning of נעלים may be, in Amos 2:6b-7a they become a symbol of the rich and powerful, a striking symbol of the prophet's political poetry. Thus, the issue in both accusations in this verse is evidently the unreasonable and unjust sale of the innocent and the powerless into slavery by the rich and the powerful.

Next, the Israelites are accused of practicing the abuse of the poor (v. 7a). It is important to note that the long clause האשפים על-עפר-ארץ בראש דלים has a difficult syntax. The problem lies in the question "how the clause should be read?" since neither שאף ("pant"/"gasp") nor שוף ("trample/crush") may be the root of האשפים: "Those who gasp/pant after on the dust of the earth, on the head of the poor," or, "those who cruch/trample the dust of the earth, on the head of the poor." Both translations might lead to different meanings. The former, as De Waard and Smalley (1979:48) point out, implies three things: "(a) as a picture of extreme greed: the rich landowners even long to own the small quantity of earth people throw on their heads as a sign of mourning; (b) as a picture of the way the poor people are pushed down: the rich are only satisfied when they see the poor in a miserable condition; and (c) as "they long for land at the expense of the poor."

In contrast, the latter is also possible because it is also true to read האשפים as "they trample" if שוף is its root (cf Stuart 1987:307). Smith (1989:83) similarly argues that the latter option is widely accepted because the imagery was similar to Amos 4:1 "who crush the needy" and Isaiah 3:15 "What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" To solve this problem, in my opinion, it is preferable to reconcile both forms and to see them as correct because their meaning is almost the same, "to trample." It can be explained by considering that "They are either biforms (cf. BDB) of each other or possibly the *aleph* has been inserted through the linguistic process of mixing (cf. ושבתי in Ps.

23:6, where the expected form is וישבתי) or as a vowel letter" (Finley 1990:132). The word "trample" here conotes that the Israelites "step upon the heads of the poor as though they were stepping upon the ground beneath them, that is, they treat the underprivileged with contempt and abuse" (Paul 1991:80). The Isrealites therefore are charged for their mistreatment of the poor or the weak by exploting them socio-economically.

The parallel to the above clause is the short clause ודרך ענוים יטו ("and turn aside the way of the humble"). This clause is a direct parallel to verse 7a because the main idea of these paralled lines is the same, the poor people were not able to defend themselves from the action of the oppressor. Accordingly, such a statement may have an additional meaning especially if it is understood in a legal sense. Mays insists that the meaning of the clause is "a locution for the pervertion of legal procedure" because, he continued, "'Way' (*derek*) is a synonym for 'justice' (*mišpāt*); cf. also *hittah mišpāt* in Ex 23.6, and *hittah saddīq* in Isa. 29.21. Both 6b and 7a are charges that the courts are being used to oppress the poor instead of to maintain *mišpāt*" (1969:46). In the same vein, De Waard and Smalley (1979:48-49) suggests that there is a possibility to translate the clause as "they keep the miserable from getting justice."

However, to understand it in a legal context is not necessary because the clause may be taken in other ways. For example, if the word ענוים is translated naturally as "tenant farmers," the action of the oppressor may include perverting the normal behaviour of tenant farmers (cf Rosenbaum 1990:56). It also may be meant figuratively, where "turn aside the way" is similar to "push off the road" which figuratively expresses "the idea that the underprivileged class is bullied and oppressed by the wealthy, who deprive and block them from obtaining the privileges and prerogatives to which they are naturally entitled" (Paul 1991:81).

The above discussion shows that whether the meaning of this clause is a legal, natural, or even figurative one, the point is clear that the oppressor manipulated the way of life of the afflicted inhumanly where the former "push them [the latter] around, control their life, determine how they will live, and deprive them of their

rights (Pr 22:22; 30:14)" (Smith 1989:84). Rhetorically, it seems that Amos is using clear and derogatory imagery in this text (v. 7a and b) to show the factual sin of the Israelites, that is their violation of human rights and dignity, so that they can not escape divine judgment.

The second half of 2:7 describes another kind of transgression committed by the Israelites, ואיש ואביו ילכו אל־הנערה למען חלל את־שם קדשי ("and a man and his father go into the same maid in order to profane my holy name"). The key to understand this phrase is the word הנערה ("the maiden"), which literally means "young woman" (BDB:655). Commentators however vary in identifying the meaning of the word. The word may have several interpretations such as a secular prostitute that has no relation with any cultic connotation (cf Gordis 1979-1980: 216), a cultic prostitute because such a word is "a current term for sacred prostitute, and is therefore a synonym of *q^{e}dēšāh*" (Soggin 1987:48), or a waitress at a house of feasting, that is "a pagan religious meal or banquet" (Barstad 1984:33-36).

Unfortunately, these views all seem to be speculative since the explanation presented is far from the original meaning of the word. Chisholm (1990:82; Mays 1969:46; Gowan 1996:365) argues against these views and maintains that the word does not connote either as cult or prostitution, "Though fitting nicely with verse 8, the view that the girl is a cult prostitute is unlikely, since the Hebrew word here translated 'girl' never refers elsewhere to a prostitute." Another possible meaning of it is "a slave girl," because "nowhere in the Old Testament does the word 'girl' means 'prostitute,' nor anything equivalent in ancient translations" (De Waard & Smalley 1979:49) that is similar to "a female servant" (Stuart 1987:317), or "someone who is minor, or is personally dependent on a master" (Jeremias 1998:37).

Since there are many options of interpretation, it is more preferable to put in consideration a literal meaning of the word. Both Wolff (1977:167) and Paul (1990:82-83) agree that נערה should have a more specific connotation, because it literally means "a young woman or maiden," and it should be read together with

its previous paired words such as דלים and ענוים. "A young woman" here just simply points out an oppressed person, one of the members of the defenseless and exploited human beings in northern Israel. Such a young woman suffers injustice. The use of the verb ילכו (Qal impf. 3 m. p. from הלך which literally means "to go, come or walk") probably implies that "illicit sexual acts are involved here" (Soggin 1987:48). Based on his observation of the term in the Akkadian occurences, Paul (1982:492-494) proves that the word should be understood in the sexual sense, "the interdialectical semantic and cognate equivalent of Hebrew הלך אל, has the same idiomatic meaning, 'to have sexual intecourse.'"

Further, Paul continues convincingly that "The semantic development is also attested in Aramaic, in which the expression אזל אל/על (= Heb. הלך אל) is employed in Talmudic and Geonic literature for sexual intercourse" (1991:82). Since this act was done by both איש ("a man") and אביו ("his father"), the issue was clear that there was a sexual adulteration, where both a son and his father made the same young woman—it could be "a slave female"—an object of sexual intercourse. Stuart (1987:317) observes that such a practice "made all odious by the possibility that it may be involuntarily on the part of the woman."

In the context of the Law, the practice of sexual adulteration, where the pairs have sex with the same person, is strongly prohibited and condemned (Lv 18:8, 15; 20:12; Dt 22:23-29; 27:20). The description Amos used here, according to Wolff (1977:167), is "a radicalizing of the apodictic stipulation." Consequently, this practice is an act of desecrating the holy name of YHWH, למען חלל את־שם קדשי ("thereby profaning my holy name"). Since the particle למען expresses result or purpose ("in order that" BDB:775), most likely Amos wanted to emphasize that "when you violate this girl, you thereby polute My holy name as well" (Finley 1990:131).

Amos 6:8 describes the last wrongs of the Israelites, that is exploitation of the destitute for pleasure (Smith 1989:86). The indictment is divided into two parts: firstly, the act of exploiting of the debtors (v. 8a), ועל־בגדים חבלים יטו אצל כל־מזבה ("and on garments seized as pledges they stretch out themselves beside every

altar"). The action of taking of someone's בגדים (large "cloaks" or "garments") in pawn and of keeping it until the next day is illegal according to the law because it is probably the only thing that that person has as a cover of his body, and it should not be kept as pledge overnight (Ex 22:26[26]; Deut 24:12-26[27], especially in 24:15, the widow's garment cannot be taken in pledge at all). Such an illicit practice done by the Israelites is worsened by the using of the garments as reclining mats where they could "stretch out themselves down"—as the word יטו (Hi. impf. 3 m. p. of נטה) literary meant—on them. Paul (1991:86) suggests that the use of the preposition על "makes clear that the garments are not being spread but that they are stretching themselves 'upon' (על) these very garments," and it includes the orgy, the wild party characterized by excessive drinking and sexual activities (cf Soggin 1987:49; see also Niehaus 1992:367).

Some then argue that this practice possibly took place in the context of cultic ceremonies or feasts (Smith 1989:86; see also Gowan 1996:365), particularly when it is related to the succeeding phrase "beside every altar" and "drinking wine." Niehaus (1992:367) further emphasizes that כל-מזבח may refer to multiple altars of YHWH and these "were at various locations: Bethel (3:14), Dan (8:14), Gilgal (Hs 12:12 [11]), and other local sanctuaries (Hs 8:11; 10:1-2, 8)." The indictment thus clearly indicates that the prophet intended "to condemn wealthy creditors who, rather than providing their own lounging materials while enjoying a meal of sacrificial flesh, were using garments belonging to debtors with no respect for their poor owners who could not afford the pleasure of such sacrifice" (Hayes 1995:164).

Secondly, the verse indicates the misuse of the debtors' property (v. 8b), ויין ענושים ישתו בית אלהיהם ("and wine purchased from those fined, they drink in the house of their god"). It is difficult to identify whether the expression of יין ענושים ("wine purchased from fine") would be legalized or not during that time. Mays (1969:47) once reminded us that "The line between legality and illegality of these practices would be difficult to draw in technical sense from the material available." As a result, those who were fined *probably* paid their fines in

money—then used it to purchase wine—or in wine that had been seized because the debtors did not have money to pay. Hayes (1988:114) gives a probable explanation to this unclear use of the verb ענש, which could refer to the penalty imposed on a man who, while struggling with another, bumped into a pregnant woman causing her to miscarry (Ex 21:22), and to a man who was convicted of slander against his new bride and her parents (Dt 22:19; Pr 22:3; 27:12).

In either case, it is proper to think that the former was sentenced to these fines in the violation of the law by the rich officials while the latter violated the law which they committed in order to hold their orgies. The issue then continues in the fact that this practice happened in בית אלהיהם ("the house of their god[s]"). The term בית is an ambiguous word that could be used to denote a variety of places of divine worship, but in practice it also functioned as economic, cultural and civic centres (see King 1988:90). To sum up, Amos denounced the actions that went beyond the prescription of the law, that is, those in power unjustly extorted money legally (or even illegally) and used it to indulge themselves in malpractice, and this is considered as the absence of moral conscience and social compassion.

It is important to note here that the structure of the section (Am 2:6-8) shows an unusual arrangement. Instead of placing it at the end of the unit, the conclusion part (*peroratio*)—לא אשיבמו ("I will not turn [its] punishment back")—is placed in the beginning of the section. However, the prophet probably has his own purpose in placing this part here. As a complete sentence, such a phrase cannot be separated from its preceding one,על-שלשה פשעי ישראל ועל-ארבעה ("for three transgressions of Israel, even four") because the latter gives exact meaning to the former. This phrase then is descriptively elaborated in details in the successive verses, particularly at the end of the stanza (vv. 13-16). Interestingly, the term שיבנו is commonly used in the context of covenant or treaty, the phrase לא אשיבנו not only means YHWH intended to punish Israel but also that He intends to terminate the covenant with his people (cf Barré 1986:630).

However, other views are also proposed to enrich the meaning of the phrase. As an example, based on the study of the object marker ל (the plene version of לא)

which is needed for the word שוב, Andersen and Freedman (1989:233) believe that it may be meant as a rhetorical question, "Shall I not withdraw it?" In the same vein, Muraoka (1985:118-19) argues that although the phrase was not using the interrogative ה, this rhetorical question possibly pointed out incredibility, irony, sarcasm, and repugnance, and that the negative question may be somewhat emphatic.

Another view differently holds that it is a retrieval of God's intention to punish Israel, as Linville (2000:424) writes, "YHWH may be speaking of withdrawal of his word of punishment, the impending of punishment or some other related concept . . . In the end, however, YHWH relents (9:11-15)." These differences are important to underline that the placing of the phrase at the beginning has a rhetorical impact on the listeners to be shocked. The overall effect is not only to produce surprise but also to elicit horror in the intended audience (cf Barton 1980:3) because there would be a universal act of divine punishment (see Raabe 2002:667). The phrase לא אשיבמו in the beginning of the section (v. 6a) implies that because of the gross sinfulness of God's people, the punishment is definite and final.

3.5 RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES

The author generally uses certain techniques in order to persuade the audience. The whole oracle against Israel (6:6-16), particularly the indictment section (6:6-8) uses a certain rhetorical genre called *judicial rhetoric*, because all the accusations are wrapped in the courtroom language. It seems that through the prophet, YHWH as the prosecutor is bringing the case against the Israelites into a legal court and delivers a word of indictments upon them. As the prophet internalized the words he received, he then delivered them in a specific way as if YHWH himself spoke these exact words directly to the audience. Wolff (1977:100) argues that "demonstrations of guilt and disputations have merely an ancillary function [where] the irreducible force, which inspirationally overwhelmed Amos, enabled him to reshape received forms with the view toward

his directly threatened audience." The accusations themselves were clearly directed to the past only, the sinful acts that the people already did, as is shown by the usage of some perfect form of verbs.

3.5.1 Alternating Syntactical Structure

The structure of the passage, however, does not simply denote the "already" but also the "repetition and duration" aspect of the actions. One can notice that there is an alternating syntactical structure in the description of the sin in this section, for example, it begins with the perfect infinitive (6b) then perfect participle (7a), until it shifts to the imperfects (7ab-8). Jeremias (1998:35) suggests that "The temporal sequence implied by the infinitive and participle is unspecific; by contrast, the imperfects shows that . . . no particular, exceptional, one-time deeds are being portrayed, but rather the typical, enduring behaviour of the inhabitants." This technique seems to be effective in explaining the urgency and the seriousness of the case to be dealt with.

3.5.2 Numerical (N+1) Formula

Prior to the announcement of the contents of the oracle, namely the indictment and the punishment, the message delivered by Amos to the Israelites takes the reason-announcement form, which is a widely used genre in the prophetic tradition (cf Westermann 1967:142-176). This can be seen in the usage of the numerical (N+1) formula על־שלשה פשעי ("For the three transgression of . . .) followed by ועל־ארבעה לא אשיבנו ("and four I will not turn it back"), which is considered as a teaching technique usually used in the wisdom literature (Job 5:19-26; 33:14-18; Pr 6:16-19; 30:15-31; Sir 23:16-31; 25:7-11; 26:5-6, 28; 50:25-26). The mentioned numbers, however, cannot be meant: "for three sins of (the specific nation) I will forgive; but for four (that is, the fourth) I shall not" as medieval Jewish commentators have understood it (cf Paul 1991:29), or simply as

an addition of three and four to get "a perfect number of seven" as some have suggested, but it preferably points out "the multiple offences" of the wrongs (Gowan 1996:354).

It is proper to understand that the numerical formula does not only have a literal sense but also a symbolical one. Following this numerical formula, Amos then listed the indictments and punishments written in a highly stylistic way. The list itself is carefully and effectively structured and arranged to form a sevenfold structuring, for example seven transgressions of Israel (2:6-8, 12): selling the needy, trampling the poor, turning away the afflicted, sexually exploiting a young woman, keeping garments taken in pledge, and drinking wine taken in payment of fines, and seven consequences of the announced punishments (2:14-16): the swift will not be able to flee, the strong will be weak, the mighty will not escape, the bowman will fall, the fast runner will not escape, the horseman will not escape, and the stout hearted will flee naked (cf Limburg 1987:217-222; see also Dorsey 1992:277).

3.5.3 Oracle against Nations (OAN)

An oracle against a nation, in general, which is composed of stipulations (in the treaty), penalties, and curses, is usually delivered by a prophet as part of the royal court procedure (see Hayes 1968:91). The OAN itself is a kind of literature genre used to be employed in prophetic writings. This means that the appearance of an OAN is found not only in Amos but also in other parts of the Hebrew Biblel, such as in the later prophetic writings (Is 13-23; Jr 46-51; Ezk 25-32; Zph 2; Ob 1-6; Nah 2:14-3:4; Hab 2:6-17; 3:7-15) (see Raabe 1995:236). Compared to other prophetic oracles, Amos' OAN is considered unique because this prophecy is the first oracle of this type and no other book among the Old Testament writing prophets begins with an OAN (cf Hasel 1991[b]:57).

Albeit many scholars have devoted themselves to the study of this OAN, none of them is in agreement with one another on some of the issues, particularly on the

unity and authenticity of Amos' OAN. Auld (1999:41-49) fells that the biggest question is on the unity of 1:3-2:16, and it is important to note this because one should not neglect a major break before 2:6ff. Compared to the previous ones, the last part of the oracles (the oracles against Israel) is different in length and details. Hayes (1995:153) indicates this by saying that "the Israel section (2:6-16) differs from all preceding oracles, possessing both a lengthy statement of offences (2:6b-12) and a lengthy pronouncement of coming disasters (2:13-16) as well as two attributive formulas ("says YHWH" or declares "YHWH" *ne'um* YHWH)."

Such formulas, in the study of forms of prophetic speech, are usually called the "messenger formula." Accordingly, their appearance at the beginning or end of a speech indicates that the prophet's message comes from God, because in the prophetic literature the formula highlights the divine origin of the prophet's words (cf Cook 2005:17). In this connection, one may notice that all the messenger oracles, including those of Israel, share the same form comprising of five common elements: the introductory messenger formula כה אמר יהוה ("Thus says YHWH"); certainty of deserved punishment; evidence (specifications of crimes); announcement of curse (punishment); and a concluding formula אמר יהוה or נאם יהוה (Stuart 1987:308-309). Smith (1989:34) reduces these elements to four, namely the source of the message; an indictment; the punishment; and a concluding divine confirmation formula. Smith's points are similar with the construction of an oracle offered by Mays (1969:23): the messenger formula, the indictment, the announcement of punishment and concluding messenger formula. The purpose of this speech, above all, is clear, that YHWH has spoken and the people must listen.

3.5.4 Word Repetition

Amos 2:6-8 (and 12) also contains word repetition when describing Israel's sinful condition. The paragraph begins with the construction על (in a causal sense "because"), infinitive construct and pronominal suffix (used as subject).

Accordingly, the purpose of this arrangement is "to state a specific accusation or introducing a list of charges against the nation" (Chisholm 1990:191), that is a common appearance in the first paragraph of the indictment of each oracle. It is then modified and elaborated to "על plus a specific wrong" pattern, in which such a pattern appears repeatedly throughout the whole paragraph. The use of this repeated pattern may raise curiosity because it seems that it is arranged deliberately for a certain purpose.

Although the intended purpose of the author in repeating such a pattern is usually to give "a literary boundary" or to set a complete rhetorical unit to the paragraph of indictment, as Smith (1989:75) suggests, "[this repetition] rhetorically held together" the paragraph, it is necessary to give attention to the work of Christensen (1975:69-71) who extensively studied this pattern and tentatively came to a conclusion that this repetition might refer mainly to "a single crime," i.e. that the Israelites have perverted justice. It means that though the crimes are multiple in their nature, they actually point to one single thought. In other words, although the pattern is expanded with the repetition of the preposition על ("because of") and whatever follows, it simply focuses on a single idea. The repetition of this pattern throughout the section is able to exert a rhetorical effect on the audience, to advance the clarity of the case.

3.5.5 War Oracle

To convince the Israelites about the consequences of their sins, the prophet also used the "war oracle" form in order to confirm that at present they themselves were also one of the enemies of YHWH. The expression על־שלשה פשעי ישראל ועל־ארבעה לא אשיבנו ("because of three and because of four I will not turn back my wrath"), as it occurs in the other OAN's of Amos, seems to use the language of war or, at least, draws it from the context of warfare, as Hayes (1968:84) proposes that "the recognition of warfare as an original *Sitz im Leben* for Israelites oracles against foreign nations is supported by the use of oracles and curses

against the enemy during military undertaking in other Near Eastern cultures." When it was used by YHWH, it was connected to "the Holy War tradition." Christensen (1975:12-15) also believes that the language of war was used in pre-Amos materials such as oracular divinations (Jdg 1:1-2; 7:9-14; 20:23-28; 1 Sm 14:18-19; Hs 4:12), the summons to the battle (Nm 14:41-43; 21:34; 31:1-4; Jos 6:1-5; 8:1-8; Jdg 19-20), the summon to flight (Dt 28:25), and the prophecy of victory or defeat (Nm 24:15-24).

However, Barton (1980:9) reminds us that although it is valid to think that there was such a tradition, it "has played no part at all in shaping these oracles." It means that the Holy War concept probably influenced Amos but it was not taken directly from earlier known war oracles. According to Smith (1989:30-31), "The terminology and rhetoric of the oracle may include political war propaganda in order to gain audience acceptance, but the climax is a clear break from expected tradition." Therefore, the war oracle used in the Israel section serves as a rhetorical challenge from YHWH who stands against his very foe, the Israelites, because their transgressions have violated his covenant.

3.5.6 Paralleled Structure

The elements of accusation are also uniquely arranged not only in a stylistic way but also in a rhetorical way. The Israelites' wrongdoings are listed in a parallel structure following the pattern of על-שלשה . . . ועל-ארבעה. The arrangement of the paralleled lists may vary from one to another. On the one hand, it may refer to four crimes, as Christensen (1975: 66, 71) argues. The parallels should then be seen more from a conceptual point of view rather than from the formal usage of the verbs that makes the number of crimes reach up to eight. In this case, the enumeration will be three plus one equals to four. It also has significance in Hebrew thought. Jeremias (1998:34) proposes that the transgressions of Israel enumerated in the texts (vv. 6-8)—which he divided into four—stand *pars in toto* for a thoroughly selfish society.

On the other hand, the list itself may refer to seven—derived from the structure of *parallelismus membrorum*—where the two numbers ("three" and "four") represent the most natural components of the number seven and shows clear traces of psychological and rhetorical elements, and in Hebrew it expresses a "sense of totality" (Weiss 1967:419-422). In the same vein, the study of Limburg (1987:222) shows that the "three and four" is simply "three plus four," or seven as actually listed in the Israel oracle, and it possibly means "a totality of transgressions." Although the meaning of enumeration is different in each case (four or seven) depending on how the text is divided in that specific case, the enumeration itself can be understood as stipulation (see Hayes 1995:163). Both sides seem to be adequate in giving a rhetorical impact to the audience because whatever approach is being used, the enumerative pattern is intentionally used "to aid imagination" (Niehaus 1992:340) and arranged "to emphasize that Israel's guilt surpassed that of its neighbours" (Chisholm 1990:197).

3.5.7 Chiasms

The indictment of Israel (Am 2:6-8) also contains a chiasmus. Accordingly, the chiastic pattern in general is quite common in Amos' work. De Waard and Smalley (1979:189-214) once infered that the whole book of Amos could be organized as a chiasm. In contrast, Wendland (1988:1-51) argues against it because it was somewhat forced for the chiastic pattern could not be applied to all of the book of Amos. In Amos, the chiastic structure has its own purpose, as Ryken (1987:334) identifies that the chiasm in the book of Amos, as a specific genre, could be categorized as "the major work of informal satire in the Bible" and later he believed that it "utilizes a rhetoric of subversion" (see Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:342). It means that the chiastic structure was arranged, in the case of the prophet Amos, to attack the institutions and society of Israel.

In a more specific way, the chiastic structure appears in Israel's section, especially in verse 7, in the form of ABB′A′:

השאפים על־עפר־ארץ A "they who crush against the dust of the earth"	בראש דלים (B) "the head of the poor"
ודרך עמוים B′ "the way of the meek"	יטו (A′) "they pervert"

Niehaus (1992:366) suggests that this structure of the bicolon gave an elegant articulation to a horrible fact, and by stating it in a chiastic form, both social and sexual evils come under the spotlight of God's judgement. By composing such a chiastic structure, it seems that the author was intentionally highlighting Israel's predicaments. Thus, whether the usage is found in the whole book of Amos or only in a section of it, the function of the chiastic structure is always the same, that is, to clearly expose and firmly accuse the crimes of the Israelites. In other words, to use discourse analysis terminology, the structure is arranged in order to highlight the wrongdoings of Israel (cf Dorsey 1992:306).

In addition, seen from the aspect of the artistry of the writing, all the oracles (Am 1-2) take the form of a geographical chiasmus: Syria to the northeast (1:3-5), Philistia to the southwest (1:6-8), Tyre to the northwest (1:9-10), and Edom, Ammon, and Moab to the southeast (1:11-2:3), and finally to Judah in the south (2:4-5) and Israel at the centre (2:6-16) (cf Niehaus 1992:323; see also Stuart 1987:290-91). Among other nations, Israel becomes the focus of attention. In other words, this chiasm intends to highlight the nation of Israel as the centre of divine judgment where the accusation finally hits its main target.

Still focusing on a geographical arrangement, Steinmann (1992:683-689) similarly insists that all the oracles were arranged by the author in certain patterns, such as the geographical orientation (from northeast to southwest to northwest to southeast before moving to Judah and Israel) and the nature of the state (from city-state to nations and to special nations). As a result, it is clear that such arranged oracles are all pointed at Israel as the main or central focus of divine accusation. A long elaboration of Israel's sinfulness (Am 2:6-8) probably supports the authorial intention in the use of this geographical chiasm.

In this connection, Stuart (1987:309) affirms that "the oracle against Israel is longer and more detailed than any of the others because it constitutes the climax to the entire group of oracles." It means that, seen from the purpose of the writing, the oracle against Israel can be considered as a continuation or even a culmination of other oracles since all the nations are guilty in the sight of YHWH. Additionally, the listing of nations, ending up in Israel, most likely indicates that YHWH is the only ruler of the universe because it is believed that YHWH, the God of Israel, held universal claims and exercised universal imperium, and therefore, "he not only condemned his faithless people Israel but also executed wrath against all who display opposition or indifference to the divine will (Nah 1:2-8)" (Raabe 1995:243).

3.5.8 Judicial Rhetoric

According to its genre, this unit is a judicial rhetoric, suited to condemn specific actions as a judgement on the past (Kennedy 1999:4). The language of Israel's indictment (Am 2:6-8) may be thought of as the language of the courtroom. The judge in a court of law judges past actions and is primarily concerned with justice. YHWH here stands as the supreme judge who accuses the nations, and particularly God's own people, the Israelites, for their sinful acts done in the past. The prophet Amos, as a channel of divine utterance, speaks on behalf of the source of all utterances, that is YHWH himself who roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem, as Van der Wal (1983:109) considers that "a series of oracles against 8 nations, is framed by the combination of the verb *š'g* 'to roar' with the noun *'ryh* 'lion' in Am. 3.8 or *Yhwh* in Am. 1.2. Both terms *ryh* and *Yhwh* are used in synonymous parallelism."

3.6 REVIEW OF ANALYSIS

Because of their sinfulness, treating others inhumanly, all nations mentioned in Amos' OAN (1:3-2:16) cannot escape God's judgment, including Judah and

Israel. The judgement will finally reach its climax in Israel, as Mays (1969:23) observes, "the style is that of reports for general announcement from a court which has already deliberated and reached its verdict." Besides, the using of a sequential technique which leads up to the climax, the oracle against Israel, is the author's technique to turn "the usual climax of positive words about Israel against the nation into a sweeping and extended misuse of the oracles to the nation form" (Dell 1995:55). This changing of customary form of accusation against the nations into its opposite is exactly what was done in the context of the judicial accusation against the abusive people.

Möller (2000:510) similarly asserts that prophetical utterances delivered in a courtroom are a form of speech in which the prophet addressed his audience using oracles, in such a way that it presents readers with the debate between the prophet Amos and his eighth-century BCE audience (see also Gitay 2000:173-187). In a more specific way, Barstad (1984:11-15) views this section (2:6-8) in the context of religious polemics where the pronouncement against Israel closes the climactic list of words of judgment towards other nations. As a speech, this form of utterance thus seeks to draw attention from the audience in a forensic sphere. The intention of Amos in delivering his oracle to Israel is definitely to convict his audience that they are guilty of violating "the law of YHWH" (Noble 1993:74), particularly on the issues of social justice.

The Israelites commit serious crimes, namely social oppressions, toward other fellow Israelites such as selling the innocent and poor for financial profits (v. 6), oppressing the weak (v. 7a), misusing the defenceless (v. 7b), profaning God's name by mistreating a low-ranking (female) servant or slave described in the practice of sexual abuse (v. 7b), and exploiting the debtors and the misuse of their property for pleasure (v.8). Smith (1989:92-93) argues that "the oppressors in Israel do not take advantage of some foreign individuals in a time of war but turn their own brothers into slaves, their own servants into objects of abuse for their own pleasure, and their legal system into a shameful affair (2:6-8)."

As a result, divine reaction against Israel is clear, that is, they must be punished because they are responsible for what they have done. As God's chosen people,

they had received the truth literally written in the Mosaic Law and surely had known all the consequences of violating it because it gave explicit regulations or prohibitions for each of these crimes (cf Finley 1990:17; see also Sailhamer 1974:438-39). The people, at this point, had once again broken the covenant of YHWH, and the God of the covenant once again had to punish them for it. Upon hearing the verdict, the audience thus cannot escape or look for an excuse. All that had been spoken in such oracle was solely in the context of convincing the audience and proving their wrongs.

Using a literary device called rhetorical entrapment, the prophet shockingly appeals to the audience in a both rational and ethical manner (see Partlow 2007:23-32). The audience most likely enjoyed hearing the accusations addressed to other neighbouring nations as if they all deserved to be punished. The unexpected and final outcome, however, was suddenly pointed at them, where they were actually the climax or the main target of it. Since the beginning of the OAN, the prophet argued against the nations based on the common sense of morality which all people are supposed to have through conscience, but he finally condemned the last two nations (Judah and Israel) on the basis of revelation. According to Smith (1989:92), "If God's judgment was valid on the basis of acts contrary to conscience, how much greater is the responsibility for those people who have specific divine revelation on how to live," and he added that "Accountability and severity of justice are both related to the degree of responsibility." It is unreasonable to think that the powerful who are responsible to take care of and to defend the poor and the weak, did just the opposite.

In addition, the crimes listed in this section (Am 2:6-8) relate to social justice within Israel. It focuses mainly on the issue of moral ethics, particularly the lack of social compassion described in mistreating other people in daily practices and misusing the worship service for excessive celebrations (cf Dietrich 1992:321). The prophet warned the people that the oppressions of the weak was, as Ward (1991:203) says, "destructive of the fabric of Israelite society, and therefore jeopardizes the nation's integrity and its survival," and he further noted that "it is clear that Amos' oracle proclaims one of the central ethical ideas of the prophetic

canon." Thus, the prophet is trying to convince them that whatever the audience did to others is reasonably and morally wrong both in the sight of YHWH and of all human beings. It seems that the rhetorical strategy used by the prophet in this section may reach its purpose, to deeply appeal to the heart and mind of his audience.

CHAPTER FOUR

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS 5:1-17

4.1 RHETORICAL UNIT

Demarcating the rhetorical unit of this section (Am 5:1-17) is quite difficult. The problem lies in the varied divisions that have been proposed by scholars so far. To name a few of them, the study of expressions and usages (*ausdrucksmerkmale und wendungen*) in the Hebrew text done by Koch (1976) who then divides the book into three units (Am 1-2, 3-4, and Am 5:1-9:6), considering Amos 9:7-15 as a kind of appendix to the previous sections; Auld (1999:56) who infers that such a division can basically be derived from the study of the introductory and concluding formulae; the study of *inclusio* by Van der Wal (1983:109-25) who divides it even into two parts (Am 1-6 and 7-9); the study of the sevenfold structures by Limburg (1987:218-19) who divides it into seven sequences, considering the major segments as intentional rather than coincidental (Am 1:1-2; 1:3-2:16; 3:1-15; 4:1-13; 5:1-6:14; 7:1-8:3; 8:4-9:15); the study on the motif of covenant lawsuit, particularly in the form of a poem and pronouncement of judgment and the prophetic vision by Niehaus (1992:339-94) who divides the book into three sections (Am 1:3-2:16; 3:1-6:14; and 7:1-9:15); the study of the literary structures, particularly done on thematic considerations, which proposed that the book consists of a superscription plus three main parts (1:2-3; 3:9-6:14; 7:1-9:15) (cf Noble 1995:210); and, slightly different from the previous, the study of the literary structure of the book by Dorsey (1999:277-86) that shows that the unit can be divided into seven parts (Am 1-2; 3; 4; 5:1-17; 5:18-6:14; 7:1-8:3; 8:4-9:15). These views point out that it is not an easy task to decide on the independent units of the section.

In spite of this difficulty, I have to take a stand in order to determine an independent and complete rhetorical unit of the passage. The intention of the study is to follow the last two views mentioned above (those of Noble and Dorsey), where the divisions are based on the study of literary structure. The main reason for taking this step is that since the main approach of this study is a rhetorical one, the attention to literary device becomes its main preference. Such literary means is also used by the works of other scholars, such as De Waard, who believes that the whole book of Amos shares the same chiastic climax as the smaller unit of 5:1-17 (1977:170-77; also Lust 1981:129-54; Tromp 1984:56-84).

Noble (1995:210-11) also puts the section of Amos 5:1-17 in part two (3:9-6:14) of his three divisions, calling it "a palisthropic judgment oracle." It is arranged in a chiastic form. He inserts the section into the larger unit of 5:1-17 where it functions as the central part of the oracle. The following pattern is then formed:

E (5:1-3)
F (5:4-6)
G (5:7, 10)
H (5:8-9)
G′ (5:11-13)
F′ (5:14-15)
E′ (5:6-17)

It indicates that the section functions as an independent unit in the context of a larger unit. In the same vein, Dorsey (1999:281) sees the section as part of a larger independent unit (5:1-17), and, although arranged in the same chiastic form, this larger unit may be divided in different ways, especially if it is compared to above, for example,

A (5:1-3)
B (5:4-6a)
C (5:6b-7)
D (5:8-9)
C′ (5:10-13)
B′ (5:14-15)
A′ (5:16-17)

Therefore, the use of a chiastic form seems to support the rhetorical intention of the author, treating this larger section (5:1-17) as an independent unit.

As mentioned above, the text of Amos 5:1-17 can be thought of as an independent unit. In a more schematic way, it can be seen in the following table (Smith 1989:155-156):

UNIT	SUB-UNIT	SUB-SUB-UNIT
A Lament Over Israel Amos 5:1-17	Lament over the death of Israel (5:1-3)	Call to hear the lament (5:1)
		Lament over dying (5:2)
		Extent of death (5:3)
	Warning about life and death (5:4-6)	Seek YHWH for life, not temples (5:4-5)
		Seek YHWH or he will destroy (5:6)
	No justice is the reason for death (5:7)	Changing justice causes lying on the ground (5:7)
	A reminder's of YHWH's power to bring judgment (5:8-9)	God's power to bring change (5:8)
		God's power to destroy (5:9)
	Oppression is the reason for judgment (5:10-13)	Rejecting legal justice (5:10)
		Riches of oppression will not be enjoyed (5:11)
		God knows the oppressive people (5:12)
		Results of oppression will end in disaster (5:13)
	Exhortation about life and justice (5:14-15)	Seek good, God may be with you (5:14)
		Do good, God may be gracious (5:15)
	Future laments when God visits Israel (5:16-17)	Everywhere, they will mourn (5:16)
		God's presence will bring mourning (5:17)

Möller (2003:74) asserts that this section has its boundaries, called "rhetorical markers," in "the introductory phrase in v. 1 and the words . . . הוי המתאוים in v. 18, which open the subsequent woe oracle." An introductory formula (5:1) attentively begins the section, שמעו את־הדבר הזה . . . בית ישראל ("Hear this word . . . O house of Israel"). It is, in addition, not merely an introduction but also in the literary form of a funerary lamentation. Wolff (1977:235-36) compares this "hear" pattern with the same lament in Lamentation 1:18 and assumed that, in this section, "the lament is opened with the call to attention [which] is especially understandable if indeed the initial function of such a call was to announce a recent injustice and nothingness."

Stuart (1987:344) also asserts that "it contains the characteristic features of a funerary lament, albeit adapted to the judgment purpose." The contents of such a lament (5:1-2) is a funeral lament comparing Israel to a young woman who has been mortally wounded and left to die (cf Chisholm 1990:89). Having presented the contents of the message, such as exhortation (vv. 4-6, 14-15), accusation (vv. 7, 10-13), and hymn or doxology (vv. 8-9), at the end of the unit (5:17b), the author uses the closing formula אמר יהוה ("says YHWH") to close this funeral lament. Consider what Smith (1989:158) writes, "The introductory and concluding focus on lamentation and death set the tone for the whole unit," such a structure (the introduction, the content and the closing) evidently makes the section a complete rhetorical unit.

Before proceeding to further discussion, it is important to note that the text of Amos 5:7-15 cannot be treated as an independent unit. It means that such a passage cannot stand on its own without its complementary part because a chiastic structure requires concentric arrangement, in this case, 5:4-6 should be paired with 5:16-17. In agreement with Smith's chiastic structure (1989:158), it cannot be discussed apart from its surrounding chiastic pair, in this case, Amos 5:4-6 (B: "Exhortation") as the direct counterpart of 5:14-15 (B': "Exhortation"). Similarly, Noble places 5:1-3 (F: Lamentations for Israel) in parallel with 5:16-17 (F': Lamentations for Israel) as a chiastic pair (1995:211). The work of Möller (2003:68) also arranges the same verses (vv. 4-6, B "Exhortation to seek YHWH") in parallel with their chiastic paired verses (vv. 14-15, B' "Exhortation to seek good"). Moreover, a stronger argument is presented by Niehaus (1992:413) who reasons that Amos 5:1-17 is a complete unit, because it is known literarily as the "Covenant Lawsuit" written in lament form, as he divided this section in the following outline:

Covenant Lawsuit-Lament Form (5:1-17):
1. Call to Lament (5:4-6)
2. Direct Address to the Fallen (5:7-13)
3. Brief Exhortation (5:14-15)

For the purpose of this study, however, it is better to see 5:1-17 as a whole for rhetorical analysis. It means that aside from such a passage as 5:4-6, other texts (like 5:1-3 and 5:16-17) must be included in the analysis. This will exactly give a literary wholeness to the given texts. Dorsey (1992:305-30) emphasizes the necessity of working with such a complete rhetorical unit while simultaneously underscoring the use of heptads in conjunction with chiasms and envisioning a chiasm of seven sections for the prophetic text with its centre in 5:1-17.

In addition, Hayes (1988:153) once argues that this section is a rhetorical unit basing his opinion on the three basic internal characteristics of the unit: firstly, statements of calamity (vv.2-3, 5b, 11a-b; 13, 16-17), accusations against the people for wrongdoing (vv.7, 10, 11aa, 12), and admonitions exhorting particular types of action (vv. 4-5a, 6, 14, 15); secondly, statements of Amos (vv. 1-2, 6-9, 14-15) and YHWH (vv. 3-5, 10-13, 16-17); and thirdly, the hymnic participial matter (vv. 8-9) as a central position in the unit. In other words, the text of Amos 5:7-15 can only be used complementing it with 5:1-3, 4-6, and 16-17. Therefore, it is necessary to include such complementary texts into the analysis in order to maintain the completeness of the unit.

4.2 RHETORICAL SITUATION

A rhetorical unit expresses the real situation of the given discourse. The focus of the word of YHWH is still on the Israelites. Sharing the same opening formula ("Hear this word . . .") with its parallels (Am 3:1, 4:1 and 8:4; see Mays 1969:84), the content of Amos 5:1 points to the main subject, Israel. The term itself can also point to "the house of Israel" (ביא ישראל)—although in 4:1, it is analogically compared with "cows of Bashan" (פרות הבשן)—that surely refers to "Israel" collectively, or, the people of Israel as a whole. The repetition of the term ישראל in its succeeding verses (5:2, 3, and implicitly in 6 [and 15], בית יוסף ["House of Joseph") indicates that the central message is addressed to the Israelites.

It is interesting to note that the use of the term בית ("house") in the unit has its own significance, especially if it is related to the word "Bethel." It seems that there is a close relationship between the house of Israel and "the house of God" (as a literal meaning of Bethel [5:5]). Along with Gilgal and Beersheba, the Israelites made Bethel the centre of worship, where, in Amos' time, it was thought of as the chief sanctuary of the Northern Kingdom. In other words, such places play an important role in the religious life of the people of God. According to Mays (1969:75; cf. Kraus 1966:146-65), "Clearly, one could not name two more hallowed and venerable places of the worship of the Lord." There was a common belief among Amos' contemporaries, that to seek YHWH and to seek the sanctuary were one and the same thing (cf Wolff 1983:20). The mentioning of such sites gives an impression that the context of the prophet's speech is a collection of religious people in a religious atmosphere.

However, it is restrictive if one focuses only on the relationship between the house of Israel and the house of God, because the context is definitely religious. A close reading of the text shows that an adverb of negation על, especially a negative particle לא ("do not")—used to denote both the contingent and absolute prohibition—implies that there is a serious problem the prophet is dealing with here. The phrase על־הדרשו ("Do not seek") confirms this problem. Although Amos 4:4-5's summons (באו "Come to") seems to be in opposition to the call here in 5:5 ("not to come"), it actually expresses the shocking irony of the prophet's instruction (Smith 1989:141) saying the same thing. The Israelites came to such places as Bethel and Gilgal to transgress. The pilgrimages to these sanctuaries had become a camouflage for selfishness and contempt of other people (see Wolff 1983:20). The problem thus occurred when such a religious act is not accompanied with the right attitude and conduct before YHWH, and it turns negative. It can also be seen when attention is given to the term "Bethel." Soggin (1987:84) argued that "Bethel is often called *bēt-'āwen*, even if sometimes the texts would seem to distinguish the two terms as relating to different places (Jos 7:2; 18:12; 1 Sm 13:5; 14:23; Hs 4:15; 10:5)".

Moreover, it is later proposed that "the house of God" would be turned to "the house of nothingness" (בית-און "Bethaven" [Hs 4:15), a disparaging nickname for Bethel. This can be clearly seen in the words of Amos as he rhetorically arranged a pun ובית-אל יהיה לאון ("and Bethel shall come to nought ['*aven*]") in 5:5 (King 1988:40, 97). It can be seen here that the relationship of the words ("houses") indicates some interconnectivity. The main issue may be put in the following words: a problematic subject ("house of Israel") in a problematic place ("house of God") will lead to a problematic situation ("house of nought"). Thus, the choosing of the terms here is not accidental but creatively and literally engineered by the author in order to describe who the people of God really are.

The unit also contains a *qinah*, a song or lament, drawn from the word קינה which literally means "elegy" or "dirge" (BDB:884) in 5:1. It is mainly a song or lament at a funeral. According to De Waard and Smalley (1979:96), "The funeral song or 'mourning song' was the chief funeral ceremony in Israel. It was a poem of grief on the death of kinsman, friend or leader," and they added that "In Amos this kind of song for an individual is changed into one for the people of Israel as a whole, so it becomes a political mourning song." This song is intentionally set for what is to follow, the wrongdoings of the Israelites (vv. 7, 10-13) and the calamities they shall experience (vv. 5-6) in the future. Since the focus is on the fall of Israel, the announcement made in the unit therefore describes how the Israelites have sinned against YHWH, by turning the sanctuary into death (5:4-6), practicing injustice (5:7), allowing injustice at the gate (5:10-13).

This announcement also proclaims the inevitable judgement for the people. It means that if they do not repent from such sinful practices, divine punishment will consequently fall upon them, and there will be great mourning in the streets coming from their mouths (5:16-17). In this regard, it is common in the prophetic and liturgical utterance that a lamentation is accompanied by a woe (Jr 22:18; cf. Am 5:1-2 and 5:7-13), where, in fact, a lament is always a cry of "alas" (הוי). In Amos, the lament appears in the context of prophetic oracles of disaster and figuratively personifying the northern kingdom as "maiden Israel" (Fleischer 2004:19-21). Further, Andersen and Freedman (1989:44) argue, "In this oracle

the outcome is portrayed as having already occurred, and the supposition is that there is no change in the situation and it will be done." While announcing both Israel's sins and divine punishment, there is a sense of urgency here, especially when an imperative is used at the beginning of the sentence דרשוני והוי ("Seek me that you may live" [5:4]).

While singing this קינה, the prophet may wear rented garments and put ashes upon his head. According to Fosbroke and Lovett (1956:810), "For the prophet himself this was no mere dramatizing of an idea. His heart was torn with the sense of tragic, untimely end of his people." Such a lament must take effect on the audience because it creates a strong feeling of sorrow on the side of its hearer. The people of Israel who were gathering in the sanctuary must have been greatly surprised because the prophet used familiar, and yet shocking language. Finley (1990:224) argues that "The entire nation ('house of Israel") must listen to a lament to be recited at its own funeral. The effect must have been quite shocking."

Looking at the background of the term *qinah*, one may get a clear description of what the effect such a genre had, because a lament is used here to mourn the death of a young, unmarried person, who had no children to carry on his or her name, and it was an occasion for the most intense feelings of grief in the ancient Israel (Gowan 1998:26). In addition, Fleischer (2004:20) explains that "the purpose of *qinah* was to stimulate tears of those affected by someone's death (2 Sm 1:24; 3:34; Jr 9:17). As a rule the *qinah* was taken up alongside the bier of the departed in the family home or at the tomb." It means that the prophet intentionally used such a lament in order to let the audience realize what to expect. The death penalty awaits them, if they do not repent from their sinful acts. Therefore, the lament itself is a rhetorical strategy used by the speaker to get the attention of the audience, as Gowan (1998:26) says, "It must have been a highly offensive message, but is one of the various ways Amos tried to get the attention of a people who, from what we know, would have no reason to think he could be speaking the truth."

4.3 RHETORICAL INVENTION

It is necessary to give attention to the argumentative speech of the prophet in order to find the way he convinced his audience. Quoting Aristotle, Gitay (1980:297) proposes that one can do this by appealing to reason, as a primary factor recognized by all rhetoricians. Applying it to the unit analyzed (5:1-17), it can be seen that Amos supports his message by first establishing authority. The imperative opening שמעו את־הדבר ("Hear this word") has no effect if it is spoken by a man, but if it comes from YHWH his speech will have its own authority. It means that Amos' message has to be backed up with divine authority. For this reason, he then continued with the messenger formula כי כה אמר יהוה אדני ("For thus says the Lord YHWH" [5:4]).

Moreover, Amos seems to know that to deliver bad news requires divine authority. Amos' news seems to be out of place in the ears of the people because, instead of hearing good news, the message describes a disaster the people will experience. As a result, they do not easily receive such a message, especially if the prophet does not explain the source of his speech. Soggin (1987:83) argues that, "In the present context, where someone may have wanted to contradict the prophet, pointing out the generally favourable situation, the prophet explains the source of his information." From the very beginning the prophet has to be clear that the message delivered comes from YHWH and not from himself.

Amos also uses the cause-effect approach to appeal to the reason of his hearers. Because of religious misconduct toward God they will encounter a terrible thing. By focusing themselves only on the ritual sites, they intended themselves to find life outside YHWH. The use of imperatives הדרשו (from דרש "to seek") and תבאו (from בוא "to come in") in the context of verse 4 connotes that the Israelites has indeed religiously searched for God, but in the wrong places. Going to and worshiping in these shrines are surely in vain for they end up being destroyed by him. It is also useless because these places will not be protected because God has forsaken them to the enemy, and this action will only bring the worshiper into the danger of being swept away into exile (see Smith 1989:163-4).

As a result, it is clear that YHWH will punish them by the death that will follow. There are some indications that historically the setting of this speech took place during the time of Pekah, the son of Amaliah. Pekah made a regional coalition with the West (pro-Syrian and anti-Assyrian), and, as a result, the Assyrians later on suppressed them by destroying Gilgal, Bethel (Am 3:12; 9:1), and Samaria (Am 4:1-3; 6:8-10), as the prophet announced (cf Hayes 1988:158-9). Through such an announcement, the Israelites were confronted with a horrific scene (5:2), where the dead body of בתולת חשראל ("the virgin of Israel) figuratively represented them to have been left in the open field. In the OT prophetic tradition, this language is used by both Isaiah (2 Ki 19:21; Is 23:12) and Jeremiah (Jr 18:13; 31:4, 21) and it refers mostly to Jerusalem, the religious centre of the southern kingdom of Judah. In Amos' speech, however, it pointed to Bethel (and other Israelite shrines), its counterpart in the north. In Amos 5:2, the prophet thus uses the perfects נפלה ("has fallen") and נטשה ("has forsaken") as if the audience already experienced the result of their sins (cf Hammershaimb 1970:76).

In addition, the people of Israel practice injustice to their fellow countrymen. It is necessary to remember that justice and righteousness is not only related to YHWH but also to other human beings. Failing to treat others with the right attitude and in a correct manner is seen as wickedness in the eyes of YHWH. The prophet intends to prove the wrongdoings of the people by using a couplet משפט ("justice") and צדקה ("righteousness") that are figuratively dishonoured (5:7). Stuart (1987:347) insists that "The Israelites have thrown justice (משפט) upward and righteousness (צדקה) downward: the chiastic 9:9 couplet artistically calumniates the general rejection of practices represent to summarize what the covenant demands (cf. 5:24; 6:12)." The prophet does not stop with such figurative language, later he even elaborated on it in a concrete and detailed list in the following verses (vv. 10-12): שנה ("to hate") one who rebukes, תעב ("to abhor") the one who speaks uprightly, בשס ("to trade down") on the poor, לקח ("to take") grain taxes from him, צרר ('to afflict") the just, לקח ("to take") bribes, and נטה ("to divert") the poor from justice.

It is clear here that to mistreat another fellow human being is to break off from the divine covenant because such an action does not fulfill what the covenant requires. As a result, YHWH, the covenant God of Israel, will bring disaster to his covenantal people, especially because of the futility of their labours. Jeremias (1998:93) concludes that "The prophet threatens them with an imprecatory form common in the ancient Orient (the so-called curse of futility), one that associates a meaningful activity with a meaningless outcome; such people are heading to destruction."

The prophet also emphasizes seeking YHWH as the proper response to the threatening word of YHWH. After hearing of all the sins and the consequences, supposedly the audience will realize that their sin will cause them to experience destruction. An imperative to hear (שמעו) what God says (5:1) is not the end of the speech, because the audience must do what God commands them, that is to seek (דרשוני) him (5:4b). It is said that the word "to seek" does not mean "inquire about" or "search for" something or someone lost or inaccessible, but, when YHWH is the object "'seek" frequently means "turn to YHWH" (for help in a specific situation), and then by extension "hold to YHWH" (as a way of life) (cf Mays 1969:87).

This call is repeated later in the next passage (5:6 and 14, when the subject changes to "good" [טוב]). It is an important appeal that will turn all curses to blessing. To seek YHWH here means to gain life. In contrast, to seek the cultic shrines means to lose life. The motivation behind this appeal is salvation. Hayes (1988:157) maintains that "the motivation offered for seeking YHWH was survival," and he adds, "The motivation for not seeking cultic centres was a warning about what would overtake these places." However, the bottom line is that the people had already rejected God. The prophet argues that, in reality, the practices of worship done by the people deny that they are truly seeking God. Accordingly, the quotation of the cultic promise "Seek me and live" is more than ironic in a chapter whose main theme is death and, therefore, "it has an almost wistful tone, for Amos knows he is addressing a dying people who have forgotten how to seek the Lord" (Gowan 1999:387).

All "cause-and-effect" patterns discussed basically point to one focus, שמו יהוה ("The LORD is his name"). The prophet Amos seeks to present a clear picture of YHWH, the very person whom the people reject. It is important to note that the form of this phrase is similar to that of 4:13 and 9:5-6, while each is slightly different from the others. In these verses, the expression is related to the redemptive activity of YHWH. In 5:8b, however, it seems that the prophet led the audience to see both sides of YHWH: he has the power to bring change (5:8a) as well as the power to judge (5:9). Andersen and Freedman (1989:494) argue that the people here are encountering the divine who charges, judges, and threatens nations with destruction and clearly must be in control of the visible order things.

The prophet presents a more balanced view of יהוה in order to propose that he is not only God who can do everything on their behalf but can punish as well. In other words, both blessing and curse are always caused by YHWH. Stuart (1987:348) believes that this "hymn fragment" serves the purpose of an ironic lament: it reinforces the point that YHWH can come in judgment, not just in aid of their needs, and can stand against his people and not only in their favour. For rhetorical purposes, the prophet proves that there is a relationship of cause and effect, that is, the coming of the destructions is on its way and it surely is caused by YHWH who is all powerful to do such a thing.

4.4 RHETORICAL DISPOSITION

Amos structures the unit (Am 5:1-17) in a way that the arrangement will create a rhetorical impact to his audience. It is, therefore, carefully arranged in a chiastic structure, as can be seen below:

[Verse Line]	Verse	Strophe	Stanza
שמעו את־הדבר הזה	a. A call to lament	A. Introduction	A Funeral Song for the Nation
אשר שנכי נשא עליכם קינה בית ישראל	b. A lament over the dying Israel		
נפלה לא־תוסחף קום בתולת ישראל			
נטשה על־אדמתה			
אין מקמה			

כי כה אמר אדני יהוה	c. The extent of the death in Israel	B. Lamentation (A)	A Funeral Song for the Nation
העיר היצאת אלף			
תשאיר מאה			
והיוצאת מאה תשאיר			
עשרה לבית ישראל			
כי כה אמר יהוה לבית ישראל	d. Seek YHWH and live, not the holy places	C. Exhortation (B)	
דרשוני וחיו			
ואל־תדרשו בית־אל	d.1. Bethel		
והגלגל לא תבאו	d.2. Gilgal		
ובאר שבע לא תעברו	d.3. Beersheba		
כי הגלגל גלה יגלה	e. YHWH will destroy these places		
ובית־אל יהיה לאון			
דרשו את־יהוה	f. Seek YHWH and all of its conse-quences		
וחיו פן־יצלח כאש בית יוסף			
ואכלה ואין־מכבה לבית־אל			
ההפכים ללענה	g. Israel's injustice and oppression	D. Accusation (C)	
משפט וצדקה לארץ הניחו			
עשה כימה וכסיל	h. YHWH's power to bring change in the universe	E. Hymn (D)	
והפך לבקר צלמות			
ויום לילה החשיך			
הקורא למן־הים			
וישפכם על־פני הארץ			
יהוה שמו	i. YHWH's name	F. YHWH (E)	
המבליג שד על־עז	j. YHWH's power to destroy fortress	G. Hymn (D′)	
ושדעל־מבצר יבוא			
שנאו בשער מוכים	k. Rejection of legal justice	H. Accusation (C′)	
ודבר תמים יתעבו			
לכן יען בושסכם על־דל	l. Trampling and Robbing the poor		
ומשאת־בר תקחו ממנו			
בתי גזית בניתם	m. Uselessness of the riches gained from oppresion		
ולא־תשבו בם			
כרמי־חמד נטעתם			
ולא תשתו את־יינם			
כי ידעתי רבים פשעיכם	n. YHWH knows the sinful acts of oppresion, bribery and deprivation		
ועצמים חטאציכם			
צררי צדיק לקחי כפר			
ואביונים בשער הטו			
לכן המשכיל בעת ההיא ידם	o. Comment of a follower of wisdom		
כי עת רעה היא			
דרשו־טוב ואל־רע	p. Seek good, not evil, so that you may live	I. Exhortation (B′)	
למען תחיו			
ויהי־כן יהוה אלהי־צבאות אתכם			
כאשר אמרתם			
שנאו־רע ואהבו טוב	q. Hate evil, love good, so that you may receive mercy		
והציגו בשער משפט			
אולי יחנן יהוה אלהי־צבאות שארית			

יוסף			A Funeral Song for the Nation
לכן כה־אמר יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני	r. There will be mournings in all over Israel	J. Lamentation (A′)	
בכל־רחבות מספד			
ובכל־חוצות יאמרו			
הו־הו			
וקראו אכר אל־אבל			
ומספד אל־יודעי נהי	s. YHWH's passing will result in mourning		
ובכל־כרמים מספד			
כי־אעבר בקרנך			
אמר יהוה	t. YHWH's words	K. Closing	

Above organization clearly shows a concentric pattern as indicated by most scholars (cf De Waard 1977:170-77; also Lust 1981:129-54; Tromp 1984:56-84; Wilcke 1986:89-96; Smith 1989:158; De Waard & Smalley 1989:189-92; Noble 1995:210-11; Dorsey 1999:281).

Although this passage seems to be concentric in its structure, some have argued against it. Smith (1989:158) admits that this structural possibility contains "many problems in understanding how these parts fit together and how the meaning is developed within the chiastic structure." One of the main reasons in objecting to this argument is that the C-C′ part of this section—between 5:7 and 5:10-13—is not arranged in balance, particularly the number of the lines. The C′ part has more lines than the C part. It is argued that both should be put together as one unit, because 5:8-9 is seen as an interruption, during the editorial development (Mays 1969:90), and rejected as later addition (cf Rudolph 1971:194-198). Another objection is that there is no logical consistency of the content of the exhortations, for example, between 5:4-6 and 5:14-15. The exhortation in the latter is cultically oriented, while the previous is more directly related to moral issues of behaviour (cf. Smith 1989:159).

Based on this disproportion in the chiastic structure, unfortunately, the idea exists that such part does not originate from the prophet Amos himself. The artistic style of the final texts, however, does not guarantee the authorship of Amos. Soggin (1989:81; see also Jeremias 1998:220-21) maintains that "While the symmetry and coherence of structures of this kind is always impressive, there is no need for them to go back to the author himself or even to the earliest phase of the redaction." In a moderate way, Coote (1981:80) also argues against it,

especially against De Waard's proposal, "When he discovered the chiastic pattern in 5:4-15, he did not know *why* it was used here, since he did not relate it to the design of the entire book."

Regardless of such a "minor" problem, this research, however, takes up a position which is in agreement with the chiastic pattern of the unit and develops its argument based on it. The proposed concentric pattern will take the form as follows:

A Lamentation (5:1-3)
B Exhortation (5:4-6)
C Accusation (5:7)
D Climax: YHWH (5:8-9)
C′ Accusation (5:10-13)
B′ Exhortation (5:14-15)
A′ Lamentation (5:16-17)

It is important to note here that although such a concentric pattern has many criticisms, my research is to maintain the main concern of rhetorical approach, that is to find the rhetorical purpose of the author's utterance. Even if there is no logical consistency, for instance: between 5:4-6 and 5:14-15, the purpose of the exhortation is clear, to testify that YHWH remains the life of his people even in a situation in which they deserve the sentence of death (cf Mays 1969:90). In the same vein, Smith (1989:159) proposes that regardless how "these pieces all fit in a somewhat complicated manner, but the rhetorical building blocks, the repetition of the themes and structural balances are too frequent to be accidental."

4.4.1 A-A' (Amos 5:1-3; 5:16-17)

4.4.1.1 Amos 5:1-3

The introductory formula שמעו שת־הדבר הזה ("Hear the word" [5:1]) begins the unit rhetorically as an *exordium*. Dorsey infers that this introduction "signals the audience the beginning of the next major unit" (1992:312). It is thought that יהוה אלהי־צבאות שמו ("The LORD, the God of hosts, is his name"), considered as a

doxology, closes its previous literary unit (Am 4:4-13). Most scholars consequently see this formula as an introduction to a new major literary unit (Wolff 1977:231; also Limburg 1987:217-8; Andersen & Freedman 1989:461ff; Paul 1991:158ff). Although it is not clear who the speaker is, such a formula also serves as an announcement of prophetic speech.

According to Stuart (1987:345), regardless who the speaker is (either Amos or YHWH or both), "it is remembered that the prophet is a spokesperson for God, not an author in the typical sense." The important thing about this opening is that the message has the authority of YHWH as its source. Soggin (1987:83) insists that "this is not a particular political acumen or a particular gift of looking into future but a message received from YHWH." The text is clear enough in expressing that it is an authoritative appeal spoken to the hearers in order that they may give heed to the speech. As seen in Amos 3:1 and 4:1, the introductory address which contains an imperative שמעו ("listen!"), is simply the summons to listen and can be categorized as "an attention-getting device" (Stuart 1987:345).

The following content of the message surprisingly does not deal with any positive and encouraging words of God as the audience may expect, but it is rather a plea for mourning. Amos seems to be in a position to set the statement of the case (*narratio*), especially when he uses the phrase אשר אנכי נשא עליכם קינה ("which I take up against you, a lamentation") in the setting of a lamentation sung for Israel's own funeral. Niehaus (1992:409) emphasized that this lament is not *over* the people of Israel, but *against* them, in the manner of prophetic condemnation of the Lord's enemies. He thus calls the people to mourn over divine judgment that is going to fall upon them shortly. Although the disaster will not come immediately, the lament indicates that it surely will occur and come to happen. Finley (1990:223) once suggests, "The announcement of a funeral dirge for Israel forcefully proclaims the inevitability of judgment for the people."

It is important to note that while delivering his message, the prophet employs a "prophetic past," for instance a past complete action נפלה ("fallen," *Qal* perfect of נפל "to fall"), to emphasize that such a disastrous condition is not a prediction but

a present state of collapse. Accordingly, as De Waard and Smalley (1979:96) affirm, "This means that what will happen to the hearers in the future is presented as an already accomplished fact and the effect of Amos' hearers was something like someone reading in the newspaper that he is dead." Therefore, the purpose of the prophet is to convince the nation that the death is at their doorstep, and this obituary will hopefully awaken the nation to its true status: it is dead (see Smith 1989:161).

Through a funeral dirge (the whole A), to some extent, Amos describes the spiritual condition of the people. The phrase in the first line (5:2) נפלה לא־תוסחף קום בתולת ישראל ("Fallen, no more to rise, the virgin of Israel") points out the finality of the fate the people will experience shortly. The term נפל is technically used in the context of war. It indicates the body of one who has fallen in the battle (cf Soggin 1987:83). It is interesting that the prophet uses the imagery of בתולת ("the virgin") as metaphor for the people of Israel. The intention of the use of this image is to give "a metaphor which heightens the sense of tragedy. The personification of the nation as a young virgin in the prime of life, unconquered and unfulfilled in her role as wife or mother, indicates the waste of her life" (Smith 1989:162).

Some relate it to the experience of Jephthah's daughter when she bewails her virginity (Jdg 11:37) because she is surely going to die after accepting the foolish vow of her father to sacrifice the first living being to greet him (cf Soggin 1987:82; see also Gowan 1996:385). The next phrase נטשה על־אדמתה אין מקמה ("she lies forsaken on her land, no one lifts her up") assures that the death is final and total. It connotes that the condition of the virgin is hopeless. The metaphor is further explained in a more concrete way in the next parallelism (5:3) העיר היצאת אלף תשאיר מאה/והיוצאת מאה תשאיר עשרה לבית ישראל ("the city [A] that goes [B] out a thousand [C] shall have a hundred [D] left/and that which goes [B′] out by a hundred [C′] shall have ten [D′] left to the house of Israel [A′]").

The scene of this poem seems to be in connection with the context of the word נפלה ('fallen") in the previous verse, one who falls in the battle. It is a description

of a coming military disaster. Finley (1990:225) believes that it is truly a historical event because, "about forty years later, the nation was overwhelmed by the Assyrian might. Only an insignificant portion of the people survived; the national existence of Israel came to an end." The audience may not be able to imagine how the strong army of Jeroboam II will be defeated, and, the case is clear and yet surprisingly that such a disaster is brought about by YHWH himself as it is definitely written כי כה אמר אדני יהוה ("For thus says the Lord YHWH"). The prophet insists that YHWH is the God of the covenant who has spoken and surely will fulfil his word.

4.4.1.2 Amos 5:16-17

The corresponding concentric part of A is Amos 5:16-17a (A′). A close reading of the texts shows that this passage is related to the main issue of 5:2-3 (A): the tones and sounds of lamentation (cf Paul 1991:178). According to Coote (1981:81) both sections have pairs of parallel lines corroborating the chiasm where the preposition "therefore" (לכן) in 5:16 refers to 5:1-3, rather than to 5:14-15. The use of similar repeated words, like מספד ("wailing"), אל־אבל ("to mourning") and נהי ("mourning song") in A′ most likely supports the connectivity between them, because it directly describes the figurative speech of the prophet used in A. The prophet uses the pairs of parallel lines in A-A′ to picture the punishment of the oppressors when the land will be filled with future funerals.

It can be concluded that "the description of rites for the dead to be held in the future was one of the prophetic devices for painting the terrible reality of coming judgment" (Mays 1969:98). As a consequence, there will be cries of despairing grief echoed by the repeated interjections of הו-הו ("Alas! Alas!" [5:17]). Hammershaimb (1970:86) proposes that this is an imitation of the cry of the mourners derived from the most frequent of the cry lament הוי (see Jr 22:18). Such grief will take place widely in the land, from Israel's בכל־רחבות ("all the broad open places" or "all plazas") to ובכל־חוצות ("all streets"), and be lifted up by the people, from the אכר ("the ploughman") to the נהי ("skilful mourner"). It

describes the total involvement of the entire community in both the tragic devastation of the land and decimation of the populace on the one hand, and the pervasive lamentation or mourning to follow, on the other hand (see Andersen & Freedman 1989:514). All of these expressions thus clearly anticipate a negative outcome that is going to happen.

Amos then gives a reason why these people have to lament: כי־אעבר בקרבך ("for I will pass through your midst") at the end of the oracle (5:17). There are several possible references to this phrase. It may, first, point out the absence of the presence of YHWH among the people. The absence of YHWH means the lost of the source of life and it results in the lost of life itself. It is thought that such an action is a real catastrophe for "religious" people like the Israelites. Wolff (1977:249) argues that "it is like an echo of the third and fourth visions (7:8; 8:2); YHWH no longer 'passes by' (עבר ל), sparing his people (cf. 9:4) . . . His presence alone, his personal intervention, will effect Israel's death." Secondly, it may indicate the departing event of the exodus when YHWH spared the lives of Israelites' firstborns by "passing through" Egypt (Ex 11:4; 12:12, 23). Feinberg (1976:105) suggests that this verse (5:17) was closely related to the action of YHWH in Egypt during the Israelite captivity.

Smith (1989:173) also explains, "This time God will not pass over Israel and deliver them, he will destroy them as he devastated the Egyptians. They will grieve like the Egyptians when God's hand of death falls upon them." Based on his study of the ancient ritual background, Hauan (1986:337-48) argues against such a view because the statement of the prophet here seems to be in connection with a covenant ritual in which YHWH "passes through" the pieces of a sacrifice (as in Gn 15). These options indicate that עבר has a wide variety of nuances, from "abandon" to "slice" (Stuart 1987:350). Since no single meaning of the phrase can be indicated, it is important to think that, rhetorically, the prophet intends to effectively communicate YHWH's final decree when using such an alarming linguistic expression. Paul (1991:19) states, "Amos, however, once more leaves the exact nature of the imminent and ominous catastrophic confrontation (בקרבך,

"in your midst") between the Deity and Israel unstated and unspecified in order to heighten its threatening and terrifying effect."

4.4.2 B-B' (Amos 5:4-6; 5:14-15)

4.4.2.1 Amos 5:4-6

The prophet continues to deliver the body of the speech (*probatio*) represented in the paired sections B-B′ (5:4-6; 14-15). Although the B section (5:4-6) shares the same formula בכי כה אמר יהוה ("for thus says the LORD") with the previous verse (5:3), it has a quite different content here. While the focus of Amos 5:3 is on the disaster of the house of Israel, the focus of the B section is on the imperative to "seek YHWH and live." The phrase דרשוני וחיו ("Seek me and live") has its significant meaning in the context of Israelite law. Mays (1969:87) argued that "by seeking YHWH in these sites they broke the prohibitions of pilgrimages to the shrines." Andersen and Freedman (1989:481) explain that the main reason for not visiting these places, "All of these shrines and their cults are equally corrupt and all are under the ban of God through his prophet . . .; they are places of corruption, and their festivals are occasions of sin."

Moreover, the word דרש is a *terminus technicus* which pertains to frequenting a sanctuary or to inquiring the will of God through oracles delivered by the men of God. Amos, on one hand, uses it to totally reject these commonly held ideas, and on the other hand, to intensely demand the people to seek the Lord directly and not at the pilgrim sites (cf Paul 1991:162). It means that the most important thing for the people now is to turn their desires Godward in a far deeper sense, a longing for God himself, rather than for something he can give, such as divine words or blessings. It is an irony emphasized by the prophet that the rites in cultic places are not identical to seeking the Lord. Upon hearing this announcement, the people must have been very astonished.

The B section is also structured with geographical information. Amos mentions places such as Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba to catch the attention of the audience

because these sites are known as religious centres and even the most frequented sanctuaries. The first on the list is בית־אל (Bethel). Amos considers it as a main centre of worship in northern Israel (3:14; 4:4), as King (1988:40) writes, "Bethel was the chief sanctuary of the Northern Kingdom; it was also a royal sanctuary, where Amaziah was the official priest." After preventing the prophet to speak (7:10) and expelling him, the priest claimed, "It [Bethel] is king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom" (7:13).

The second site is גלגל (Gilgal). One tradition holds that this place is also one of the important holy shrines inherited from the conquest period (Jos 4:19-24). Mays (1969:88) argues that this place "had a significant place in the traditions of the conquest and enjoyed popularity as a holy site from the times of tribal league." It is also the site where Saul was anointed as king of Israel (1 Sm 11). Later, by the eighth century, it was apparently a substitute for Dan as a Northern pilgrimage shrine (cf Stuart 1989:337).

The last site mentioned is באר שבע (Beersheba). It is one of the most prominent places of worship in the history of Israel, because it was "a venerable shrine, tracing its history as a sacred site to patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (King 1988:48) and mentioned again in a cultic context in Amos 8:14. Although it is located in southern Judah, the people of Israel in the north still considered it as a sanctuary that must be visited. In this regard, Paul (1990:163) emphasizes that even as late as the middle of the eighth century worshippers from northern Israel continued to cross the border (עתעברו) into Judah in order to frequent this ancient cultic site. However, although highly seen as one of the important sanctuaries, it is subjected to conquest and destruction because YHWH definitely is directing his wrath against it (5:6) as stated by the phrase פן־יצלח . . . ואכלה ("Lest he burst out like fire . . . and consumes it"). Amos here seems to be familiar with using terms of fire in order to speak of divine judgment as seen in "the oracles against nations"(1:3-2:5).

4.4.2.2 Amos 5:14-15

The prophet uses different wording דרשו־טוב ואל־רע ("Seek good and not evil") in the B′ section (5:14-15) in order to repeat the same message of the B section (5:4-6), a call to repentance (see Chisholm 1990:91). It means that both B and B′ stress the same issue, that is, to quest for YHWH and for life. Dahood (1968:296) assumes that the word טוב stands not for the abstraction of "goodness," but for the embodiment of goodness (the Good One), while Andersen and Freedman (1989:507) argue that such a word was used for YHWH as a counter-deity in the Canaanite pantheon. Therefore, the word "the good" should be understood as indicating YHWH himself, "the Good or the Good [one]." On the other hand, albeit the word טוב ("the good") may indicate an identification of YHWH and the good, it refers to the attitude to concur with the will of God. Soggin (1987:87) suggests that the word indicates the "basic attitude through which the people accept that they are the people of God in accordance with the vocation that they have received, in that God has become their God."

In my opinion, both religious (YHWH) and moral ("the good") senses are valid as both deal with the main issue, משפט ("justice") that must prevail in the gate. To seek YHWH (and "the good") means to find life and to live with God's demand for social justice. In the context of the unit being analyzed, it should always be understood that the right relationship with YHWH implies the right relationship with other fellow citizens (5:7, 12). Such an antithetical imperative pair טוב/רע, "seek good and not evil" (5:14) and " hate evil and love good" (5:15), thus, seems to be a precondition for the שארית יוסף ("remnant of Joseph"), faithful Israelites who will survive divine judgment in Amos' imagination (cf Hasel 1991[b]:196-205; see also Finley 1990:241), and experience the presence of יהוה אלהי־צבאות ("the LORD God of hosts") and his mercy.

4.4.3 C-C' (Amos 5:7; 5:10-13)

4.4.3.1 Amos 5:7

In this section (5:7; 10-13), Amos gives an intense exhortation (*exhortatio*) to the people of Israel. As mentioned before, the lines in C (5:7) are not in balance with those in C′ (5:10-13) and it causes a problem, whether these verses can be neatly paired in this chiastic structure or not. Without ignoring such a difficulty, that is how to explain this imbalance, this study will remain focused on a more important issue: the main thought as it is structured in these verses, particularly if attention is given to the continuation of the "Woe" concept (5:7) in the use of verbs in 5:10-12 (cf Andersen & Freedman 1989:483). In 5:7, Amos speaks about two pairs of vital terms, a *parallelismus membrorum*: משפט ("justice") and צדקה ("righteousness") repeated several times in the succeeding verses (5:24; 6:12, with 5:15 as a stepping stone). Supposedly both justice and righteousness are very essential in the life of the people of God.

Yet, reality shows exactly the opposite: the absence of such qualities. Instead of holding fast to them, the Israelites turn justice to wormwood and lay righteousness to rest in the earth. Since לענה ("wormwood") is a Palestinian plant of exceedingly bitter taste (Am 6:12b), it is used figuratively here to denote bitter things or perverted justice (BDB:542). In parallel, it figuratively signifies cheating people out of their rights (see De Waard & Smalley 1979:104). There is an abandonment of righteousness among the people that makes civil justice itself helpless. It can be concluded that the people of God fail to move toward the goal because they do not stand for guiding standards for behaviour, namely, "justice and righteousness."

4.4.3.2 Amos 5:10-13

In the C′ section (5:10-13), Amos elaborates on this concept of perverting justice and abandoning righteousness. Before discussing its elaboration, we have to address the textual issue of the section first. There is an objection to the

authenticity of the line, especially one that breaks the flow of a passage such as the text of Amos 5:13. Mays (1969:98) maintains that this text is an addition to the original text of Amos, "a judicious comment of a follower of wisdom." If attention is given to the term המשכיל ("the prudent man"), it seems that such an argument is right, because the term also frequently occurs in the wisdom literature, especially the book of Proverb (10:5, 19; 17:2; 21:11).

However, looking from literary perspective, Garrett (1984:275) argues against it by proving that Mays' argument is unconvincing because the chiastic pattern of the section (5:10 [A], 11a [B], 11b-12a [C]; 12b [B′]; 13 [A′]) demonstrated that both A ("the prudent man's word are hated") and A′ ("the prudent man must keep silent") are in parallel, at least in the concept of their contents. Garrett (1984:276) then continues in his conclusion that "the proposal that 5:13 is a later insertion is not only unnecessary but against the evidence, as it is very unlikely that Amos would write an unfinished chiasmus that was later completed by one of the wisdom writers." From a rhetorical perspective, this previous notion is most likely more compelling since it maintains the consistency of the correlation of the thought and the unity of the literary unit.

Despite such a problem, the next discussion will be focused on the issue of the exhortation itself. Amos delivers a complete list of indictments in this section. To begin with, the Israelites are condemned שנאו בשער מוכים ודבר תמים יתעבו ("They hated one who rebukes the wrong in the gate, and whoever speaks uprightly they abhor" [5:10]). The first line in this paralellism indicates that the people rejects the legal justice practiced in the community. The word שנאו ([Qal perfect. 3rd pers. pl. of שנא]) refers to an act of despising anyone who took a stand for justice, or simply, "they hate" (Holladay 1988:353). The word יתעבו ("they abhor" [Hiphil imperfect. 3rd. pl. of תעב) means that "they render abomidable" (Davidson 1970:767). The using of both the perfect and imperfect form of the word without a conjunction ו ("and") in between is very common in the classical poetic sequence and clearly shares the same tense and aspectual features (cf Andersen & Freedman 1989:496).

These verbs, in addition, have similar objects, מוכיח ודבר תמים ("the advocate of right" [Mays 1969:93] and "the speaker of the whole truth" [Finley 1990:237]). These sinful practices take place in the very centre of legal administration and official bussiness, בשער ("in the gate"). Although such a place was rejected as *locus* of legal issues (see Hayes 1988:162-3), it indeed describes that "the gate" was a place where public legal hearings took place and where justice was administered by מוכיח (cf Paul 1991:170-1; Boecker 1980:21-52), especially when it is related to other texts of the book (Am 5:12, 15; cf. Ex 23:1-3; 6:8; Is 29:21; Mi 3:9). The prophet thus emphasizes that there is no hope to find justice in the place where justice should be because any voice that is raised in protest comes across only hatred and abhorrence on the part of those who are responsible for the administration of it.

Next, the result of such actions is לכן יען בושסכם על־דל ומשאת־בר תקחו ממנו ("You tread down the poor and take grain taxes from him" [5:11]). The combination of the particles ל and כן (לכן) placed before this phrase designates that there is a relationship between Amos 5:10 and 11, and the prophet makes a transition of announcement of the judgment where personal pronouns are changed from "one who" and "they" to "you." The result is not only to make this message more personal but also more comprehensive in demonstrating the guilt, especially if it is compared with its counterpart section (C [Am 5:7]). Amos here directly addresses both a condemnation and a sentence of judgment to the leaders of society.

The phrase יען בושסכם may be translated as "because of your trampling" (Poel. inf. const. of בשס [BDB:143]), albeit it often is related to the Akkadian בוש which means "to levy, extort taxes" (see also Cohen 1978:49). It is similar to the accusations in previous passages like Amos 2:6; 4:1; and later 8:4 (cf Smith 1989:168). There is indication here that this direct address style uncovers the court's corruption where the old institution of the court in the gate is being undermined to make way for economic exploitation of על־דל or "the weak" (Mays 1969:94). The second line points to the practice of exactions of wheat as taxes. The phrase משאת־בר תקחו ממני indicates that the impoverished small farmer must

pay in corn or grain (בר [BDB:141]) and it is done under coercion. De Waard and Smalley (1979:108) insist that "the idea of forcing people is well expressed by the verb."

By taking advantage of the poor, the rich are able to live in luxuries, as Chisholm (1990:91) infers that " [they] exploited the poor economically (v. 11a) and then used their ill-gotten gain to build extravagant houses and plant vineyards (v. 11b)." However, the expected end result of these practices is frustated: they cannot experience this expected luxurious life, dwelling in houses built from hewn stones (בתי גזית בנתם) and drinking from pleasant vineyards (כרמי־חמד נטעתם), because such people are heading for destruction. Hayes (1988:164) says, "the judgment to come upon the oppressors was the loss of property; someone else would live in their hewn-stone houses and drink the wine from their excellent vineyards (see Is 5:8-10)."

Amos continues his list of charges with uncovering other social sins, צררי צדיק לקחי כפר ואביונים בשער הטו ("Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate " [5:12]). Stuart (1987:349) explains what was going on during that time was that "Consciously, purposely, Israelite leading citizens were persecuting the righteous (or "innocent" צדיק) by taking bribe money either for declaring poor peoples' cases against the rich to be without merit, or by ruling in favor of rich plaintiffs or defendants against poor plaintiffs or defendants (cf. Ex 23:6-8; 1 Sm 12:3; Is 10:2; 29:21; Ml 3:5)." Unfairness exists in the legal court because the rich can buy justice to defend their cases, for example, a crime they have commited while the poor cannot do the same. It denounces those who are charged with the administration of justice who practice corruption, particularly bribery.

The word כפר connotes that money given can be considered as a bribe. It is done in order to keep silent or to blind someone's eyes (as in 1 Sm 12:3 [Holladay 1988:163]), even where murder has been committed. Money can buy a verdict while the poor have no chance of a fair hearing in court. In this regard, one may notice that the sentence placed before such accusations, כי ידעתי רבים פשעיכם

ועצמים חטאציכם ("For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins"), seems to interupt the flow of the message spoken throughout 5:10-11. Nevertheless, as Finley (1990:239) writes, "it serves a climactic function, with a pronouncement of punishment wedged between the accusations or rebukes." While adding the misdeeds of the Israelites, the prophet seems to emphasize that the sins of Israel are abundant and uncountable, and, up to this point, he gives a proper reason why YHWH should punish them.

Amos continues the section with the sentence לכן המשכיל בעת ההיא ידם כי עת רעה היא ("Therefore the prudent keep silent at the time, for it is an evil time" [5:13]) as a logical consequence of the pervertion of justice that existed in Israel (see Jackson 1986:434-435). Albeit considered as an interpolation, this sentence has a connection with the issue of the accusation in the previous verse. The appearances of a combining preposition לכן in the unit (5:11, 13, 16), or even in the whole book of Amos (3:11; 4:12; 6:7; 7:17), are always meant as an introduction to the actual punishment (cf Paul 1990:175). However, the description of such a punishment is not quite clear since the noun המשכיל ("the prudent") may point to different opinions. On one hand, it may refer to "a wise man" who brings his case to the corrupted court and yet cannot do anything except keeps quiet because to raise complaint or plead his case will only lead to trouble for him (cf Mays 1969:98; see also Hammershaimb 1970:84).

On the other hand, a more recent approach believes that since it is related to the root of שכל ("prudent, prosperous, successful"), the subject may denote the "prosperous, successful, or clever" wealthy inhabitants or those who oppress the innocent and, consequently, "although the wicked have prospered and become quite successful through their prudent influence on the important people at the proper time, they themselves will soon be silenced when God's disastrous day comes upon them (3:14; 4:2; 6:3)," as Smith (1989:170) infers. In spite of such differences, the meaning of the text seems to point toward one main aspect, the hopelessness of attempting to do anything about injustice in the courts (cf Gowan 1996:360). Therefore, it is futile to seek justice in the legal system for the court has already been seriously corrupted by the practice of bribery and money politics.

4.4.4 D (Amos 5:8-9)

The climax of the unit is found in the D segment (5:8-9) because it describes who YHWH is. Using a concentric structure like this in putting these verses as the focal point, Amos intends to lead his audience to the ultimate truth, that is, no one can find justice among human beings, only in YHWH, the Lord, the Almighty One. The putting of this doxology at the center of the unit is most likely to support the intention of "seeking YHWH" as mentioned in its context (5:6, and of course the parallel text of it, 5:14). YHWH is exalted for his power to create, עשה כימה וכסיל ("He who made the Pleiades and Orion"). It means that he is able to create "stars" or "constelations" as they are symbolized by כימה and כסיל (De Waard & Smalley 1979:105). He is also exalted because of his power to rule, והפך לבקר צלמות ויום לילה החשיך ("and who turn the darkness to dawn, and darkens day into night").

The word חפך ("to turn"), is thematically related to what has been said in 5:7. It implies that YHWH is able to control the daily cycle of darkness and light (cf Chisholm 1990:90) as it is pictured in the creation of the universe (Gn 1). Lastly, it is an exaltation of his power to take control over the natural forces such as water, הקורא למן־הים וישפכם על־פני הארץ ("who summons the sea's waters and pours them out on the earth"). Amos seems to have in mind here the overwhelming action of YHWH, particularly in the "creation-decreation" context, where he ordered the waters of the flood. It may even indicate his power as the sovereign Judge (see Finley1990:234). The main idea of these words is that YHWH presents himself as the supreme ruler of the physical world. Creatively, the prophet describes it in a short statement forming the climax, יהוה שמו ("YHWH is his name").

On the other hand, YHWH is also known as the God who destroys. Amos here wants to explain the other side of YHWH, that is, he is not only able to create what is good but also to punish or to destroy what is evil, המבליג שד על־עז ושד על־מבצר יבוא ("who causes the devastation to burst against the strong so that the devastation comes upon the fortress"). The emphasis here is on the idea of the

irresistible power of God that makes havoc (שד) of the defenses that human beings consider invulnerable such as על־עז ("the strong") and על־מבצר ("the fortress"). It is clear that the term על־מבצר is not the same as על־ארמנות (the word used in 3:9-11) which refers to Samaria's palaces in which the spoil of oppression is stored, but rather to Israel's fortification, the defences that will protect the nation against invasion (see Carroll R 1992:231).

Besides, the word is more closely related to the context of the next verses (5:10-12) because it is in tune with Amos' direct attack on the wealthy and the powerful members of society who carry out injustices (cf Smith 1989:166). Through this doxology, the prophet intends to present a complete picture of God who both rules and judges fairly so that sins must be punished and the sinners be destroyed. As devastation will definitely come, there is a compelling reason for the people of Israel who committed sins to lament as it is consistently urged by the prophet at the beginning of this unit (5:2).

In addition, albeit considered as out of context (5:1-17), it is probably useful for our understanding of the texts analyzed to include Amos 5:24 in this discussion. Structurally, this verse is part of another unit (5:18-6:14). Although it is separated, this other unit may be considered as a context of the previous one. If Amos 5:1-17 focuses on the covenant lawsuit which is written in lament form, this unit (5:18-6:14) focuses more on the announcement of judgement (cf Niehaus 1992:328). Therefore, such a judgement gives a proper reason for the people to lament, because, as Jackson (1986:435) writes, "the wealthy oppressors who have unjustly deprived the poor of their rights (Am 5:10-12), but who will soon lament their deeds in the coming catasthrope (Am 5:16-17).

In this regard, the content of its sub-unit (5:21-27) expresses indictment and judgement of false religiosity and idolatry. It means that both units (5:1-17 and 5:18-6:14) are in a close relation with one another, because both lament and judgements were spoken in the same context, the setting of worship service ("the wrong worship [5:21-23] in the wrong place [5:5]). The prophet here seems to be dealing with the practice of false worship service which is hated by YHWH. As a

result of false practices of worship done by the Israelites, an announcement of judgement falls on them: "the judgement of YHWH and his righteous punishment will roll down on Israel like a mighty river" (see Mays 1969: 105-110).

Moreover, this verse (5:24) is closely related to 5:15 in terms of the issue addressed. In this text, Amos continues to emphasize the importance of the right living before YHWH, ויגל כמים משפט וצדקה כנחל איתן ("but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream"). The main themes of the book, משפט וצדקה ("justice and righteousness"), are echoed back in this verse (5:24; cf. 5:7, 15; 6:12). The context is always the same, the priority of right living over the religious festivals. In addition, the use of the verb יגל (Niphal. imperf. 3rd masc. juss. from גלל) in this verse suggests a demand on God's part for the people to show a just and right living.

Comparing it with other text (Is 1:16f), Hammershaimb maintains that the prophet after a powerful utterance against the sacrifices of the people ends by demanding that they should cease from evil, and instead care for what is right (1970:91). Such a call (5:23-24) has two sides, a negative, where the Israelites must reject its religious celebration, and a positive, where they were to establish justice (cf Chisholm 1990:93). In Wellhausen's words "The old antithesis: no cult, but rather justice," as quoted by Carroll R (2002:6), seems to fit well in this situation. It implies that the prophet proposes a sharp contrast between the view of Israelites and YHWH on the theme (see Smith 1989:187), where the latter have violated or perverted justice and righteousness and it brings them to the state of death, while the former have intended both of them to succeed in the land.

4.5 RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES

The unit (Am 5:1-17) contains more literary techniques than the other units studied in this research. Discussion about it will be focused on the major literary styles used by the prophet.

4.5.1 Chiasms

For one, Amos dominantly uses *chiastic patterns* (*chiasmus*) in this unit. It can be seen in the whole structure of the unit as it has been discussed in the previous section. Smith (1989:158; similar to Dorsey's chiastic structure [1992:312-13]) presents a simple scheme, as follows:

A 5:1-3 lament
  B 5:4-6 exhortation
    C 5:7 accusation of no justice
      D 5:8a-c hymn
        E 5:8c YHWH is his name
      D′ 5:9 hymn
    C′ 5:10-13 accusation of no justice
  B′ 5:14-15 exhortation
A′ 5:16-17 lament

Although this proposed chiastic pattern is not totally convincing (cf Hunter 1982:56-60; Andersen & Freedman 1989:462f), it is based on the logical order of the strophes, revealing its present literary sense and reflecting numerous other internal connections which contribute to its impressive poetics (cf Carroll R 1992:222). If a chiasmus functions to provide a framework around the nucleus of a document, suggesting as pivot point "YHWH is his name" (Coote 1981:80, 82), it is most likely that Amos—while employing this pattern for the whole unit—tries to focus his message on YHWH himself. His trust has been betrayed and his law has been violated by the Israelites.

Some chiastic patterns also appear elsewhere in the text. As early as Amos 5:4-5, a chiastic pattern (De Waard 1977:172) is found in the form of:

A אל־תדרשו but do not seek	B בית־אל at Bethel
B′ והגלגל and to Gilgal	A′ לא תבאו you shall not go
B″ ובאר שבע and to Beersheba	A″ לא תעברו you shall not cross the border

This chiasm uses the names of towns particularly related to the popular public shrines such as Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba. These are the places where the people of Israel go to perform religious rituals allegedly to worship God.

In opposition to this, God prohibits them to go to these sites, because he does not present himself there. He rather encourages them to seek Him instead. The prohibition concerning worship at the popular shrines is "antithetical to the encouragement to seek God" (Smith 1989:163). Rhetorically, this style should make an effect on the audiences. By structuring the parallels into a neat chiastic pattern between three colas, the prophet intentionally directs them to the point of the Lord's message. He gives a warning and a reason why such seeking of YHWH will not only be fruitless, but will even be no longer allowed (see Niehaus 1992:415).

Another example occurs in Amos 5:7. The structure of this verse seems to support such a chiastic pattern:

A ההפכים you who turn	B ללענה upward	C משפט justice
C′ וצדקה and righteousness	B′ לארץ earthward	A′ הניחו you throw

One may notice that the centre of the subject presented in this pattern is the people of Israel (cf Watts 1954:215-216). Connected to the larger unit, particularly to the issue of section C (5:7), the action of the people to overturn (הפך) justice is pertinent to the accusation of the absence of justice in the land. In this regard, the chiastic 9:9 couplet artistically calumniates the general rejection of practices represented by two terms so common in the OT to summarize what the covenant demands (5:24; 6:12) (see Stuart 1987:347).

This verse also presents an irony, because "justice and righteousness were the only ingredients in Israel that would have quenched the burning head of God's wrath, but instead the Israelites converted them into evil" (Finley 1990:229). Throughout 5:1-6, Amos concentrates on the failure of the people to seek YHWH, albeit his audience may not realize it because of their religious zeal in sacrifices

and prayers. Therefore, this chiasm may function as a reversal where the prophet emphasizes the truth about Israel's failure in establishing justice.

In this connection, Amos also uses other chiastic patterns in order to draw a sharp contrast between the people (v. 7) and God himself. An example can be seen in Amos 5:8b:

A והפך and who turns	B לבקר to morning	C צלמות black darkness
C′ ויום and day	B′ לילה to night	A′ החשיך he darkens

Although there is a juxtaposed appearance of the verb הפך ("to turn" or "to overturn" [BDB:245]) in both verses (5:7 and 8), the context seems to be diverse as far as subject is concerned. For the purpose of getting the attention of his audience, it seems that the prophet uses this verb to cause a displacement by his attempt to put a "catchword" in sequence (cf Mays 1969:95). Moreover, the content of the two verses positions them antithetically: whereas Israel "turns" justice into its opposite, YHWH "turns" the darkness (the term used here often refers to the dangerous proximity of the realm of the dead) to light and light to darkness (cf Jeremias 1998:90-91). Thus, it is understandable that the centre of this chiastic pattern points to YHWH himself, not the Israelites. The end of the verse יהוה שמו ("YHWH is his name") concludes the argument of the prophet.

Amos then continues to use a chiastic pattern in the succeeding verse (5:9), especially emphasizing the core of his message:

A המבליג the one who flashes forth	B שד destruction	C על־עז upon the strong
B′ ושד and destruction	C′ על־מבצר upon the fortified city	A′ יבוא comes

The structure of this chiasm is similar to that of 5:8. The subject of the verse, again, seems to be YHWH. The emphasis here, however, is to describe the

negative side of God's action, to bring שד ("destruction") or doom upon Israel. YHWH is no longer considered as the God who creates the constellations and controls the daily cycle of light and darkness, but the one who devastates as the word מבליג implies (according to Gelston [2002:495], it is misread in the LXX as מבליג or ο διαρων that means "to disperse, to distribute"). Although the repetition of שד seems to violate the "law of variation between within *parallelismus membrorum*" (Wollf 1977:230), it actually demonstrates that the same fate awaits both man and his fortifications (see Carroll R 1992:231). By doing this, the prophet gives an exhortation that the Israelites may trust in their strength and be sure that their defences (fortified strongholds) will protect them against invasion. At the end, however, YHWH, the God of Israel, will bring destruction upon them.

In Amos 5:10, again, a chiastic pattern occurs in order to expose the condition of the oppressors:

A שנאו they hate	B בשער מוכיח in the gate the one who reproves
B′ ודהר תמים and the one who speaks truth	A′ יתעבו they abhor

Relating it to its paralleled section (C [5:7]), this verse affirms the action of the people, especially in violating justice. It describes the condition of certain wealthy people who own their houses of hewn stones and vineyards (v. 11). It lashes against the officials who used to administer justice in the gate. They become rich because of their deliberate mistreatment of their poorer neighbours, perhaps through unfair taxation ("levies of grain") and even bribery, when the influence of their status itself was not sufficient (cf Gowan 1996:390). The use of a chiasm in this verse likely focuses on what is really happening in the gate (see also the occurrence of this term in 5:12)—the arena for legal decisions and business transactions—where the evil extends beyond the purely legal. It therefore points to the fact that it is difficult to find justice in the place where justice is supposed to be.

In addition, Amos creatively expands the concept of social injustice within the whole C′ section (5:10-13) using a chiastic structure (cf Finley 1990:236):

A Hatred for the truth (5:10)
B Oppression of the poor (5:11a)
C Judgment (5:11b, c)
B′ Oppression of the poor (5:12)
A′ Silencing the truth (5:13)

At the same time, Amos 5:13 has its own chiastic form and follows a similar structure and content as can be seen in the scheme below (cf Garret 1984:275):

A The prudent man's words are hated
B The wealthy abuse the poor in the gate
C Judgement will fall on the wealthy
B′ the wealthy abuse the poor in the gate
A′ The prudent man must keep silent

The focus of both chiastic structures are clearly on the outcome of Israel's injustice, the oppression of the poor. Amos rebukes the people for mistreating the poor, such as imposing heavy rent and exacting a payment of grain from the poor, harassing the innocent, taking bribes, and turning aside the needy. In short, the prophet strongly condemns the people for practicing dishonest business and perverting justice.

The last chiastic pattern in this unit is Amos 5:14-15. It focuses on the elaboration of the issue in its counterpart section (B [5:4-6]), a call to repentance (cf Andersen & Freedman 1989:507):

	A דרשו־טוב	B ואל־רע
5:14a	seek the Good [good]	and do not [seek] the Evil [evil]
	B′ שנאו־רע	A′ ואהבו
5:15a	hate the Evil [One]	and love the Good [One]

It is clear that in this structure an antithetical word pair is used to form a chiasm: טוב/רע, "seek good and not evil" (5:14) and " hate evil and love good" (5:15). This word pair refers to social justice/injustice, as verse 15 makes clear. It is believed that to repent, by establishing a just society, will give substance to an

otherwise empty confession, and, such a repentance will involve a total commitment to a new way of life, that is, Israel must completely reject evil and be totally devoted to good (see Chrisholm 1990:91).

4.5.2 Inclusion and Progression

Uniquely, Amos utilizes *inclusio* and *progression* in the unit. An inclusio, rhetorically, may be thought of as a strategy to present the unity of the thought in one complete unit. It is important to be underscored that *an inclusio*, though it is not always the case, sometimes becomes the result of a chiastic structure, because each section in such a structure is formed by similar (identical) words/concept at the beginning and at the end of a section, or "ends on the identical words with which it started" (Paul 1991:164). It clearly occurs, for example, in a larger section (A-A′) as seen in the "lamentation" theme (v. 1 and v. 17), or in a smaller sections such as in B (5:4-6) with "seek/live" (v.4 and v. 6), in C′ (5:10-13) with "the gate" (v.10 and v. 12), and in B′ (5:14-15) with its "seek good/love good" (v. 14). Thus, the function of an *inclusio* is to present a whole or complete thought as well as to emphasize it.

Besides, the prophet uses *a progression* in this rhetorical unit. A progression, as one of the rhetorical devices, can be defined as "a rhetorical unit, that organizes the data from the author in a multi-phased, hierarchial structure, wherein the elements are arranged in an ascending or decending order" (Amit 2003:9). This can be seen in an inverted form in Amos 5:3 in the degression of the number of soldiers of Israel:

	היצאת אלף
(from)	the marching out thousand
	↓
	תשאיר מאה
(to)	will have left hundred
	↓
	תשאיר עשרה
(to)	will have left ten

It is clear that this structure describes the result of defeat in war and the corresponding decimation of the army, where decimation can be interpreted or applied in two different ways: it may refer to the loss of 10 percent, meaning that 90 percent survived, which is severe enough in terms of military casualties and losses; or it may mean loss of 90 percent and survival of 10 percent, which for all practical purpose means the end of the army and the nation (cf Andersen & Freedman 1989:477). Another example of this progression can be seen in the judgment against Israel:

העיר היצאת אלף תשאיר
(from) military defeat
(first unit [5:3])
↓
והיוצאת מאה תשאיר עשרה לבית ישראל
(to) the destruction of Israel's cities
(second unit [5:3])
↓
הגלגל גלה יגלה ובית־אל יהיה לאון
(to) exile
(third unit [5:5])

Referring to the above definition and examples, such a progression seems to be in a descending order (see the direction of the arrows above) and its final step is considered as a climactic one, the end of the army (the nation) and the exile. This progression of judgment emphasizes that there is a reason for the people to lament because, they will soon be defeated, destroyed and exiled as result of practicing injustice. Amos strategically used this figure of progression in order to call his audience to repentance, as Dorsey (1992:314) writes, "Israel, this is your choice: repentance, or lamentation over your nation's utter destruction."

4.5.3 Elegy/Dirge

Next, Amos uses *an elegy* or *a dirge* to attract the attention of his audience. It is not difficult to identify such a lament as a funeral song (קינה) because one can notice from its literary genre and in its metre that "every line is formed of 3+2

stresses" (Soggin 1987:82). As an example, it can be seen in the structure of the text (Am 5:2) below (adapted from Bjørndalen's 1986:161-74):

קום	לא־תוסיף	נפלה	(3)
ישראל	בתולת		(2)
אדמתה	על	נטשה	(3)
מקימה	אין		(2)
אלף	חיצאת	העיר	(3)
מאה	תשאיר		(2)
מאה	והיוצאת	(העיר)	(3)
עשרה	תשאיר		(2)

Such a structure is well known in both prophetic and liturgical form. Moreover, the use of קינה is very common in Hebrew culture. It is sang over a corpse or at the grave during the deceased's burial (in the death of Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sm 1:17-27; or, in the death of Abner 3:31-34). Hayes (1988:154) indicates that the phrase "to raise up a lament" or "to lift up a *qinah*" refers specifically to the reciting of an elegy over the deceased (2 Chr 35:25). The prophets have used the imagery of a funeral and the recitation of the *qinah* to symbolize the future fate of those over whom the *qinah* was spoken (Jr 7:29; 9:10; Ezk 19:1; 26:17; 27:2, 32; 28:12; 32:2). Accordingly, Amos used this song in a cultic setting where the people gathered for some festival and expected to hear and participate in words of joy, however, he confronted a "captive" audience with his unusual fashion paradoxically overwhelming them with the unexpected (see Paul 1990:159). In a rhetorical sense, a dirge or a lamentation has to be an effective way to present an awful future to Amos' audience, as a *fait accompli* (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:295).

It is important to be reminded that some scholars have been debating on such a prophetic literary form. Fohrer (1961:309) indicates that there is a level of difficulty in understanding the prophetic text, "The interpretation of the prophets is doubtless more difficult and complicated today than it was a half century ago." One of the difficulties he pointed out was in investigating "the literary types used

by the prophet," for example "the taunt songs." With the assumption that "the prophet borrowed rhetorical forms from other realms of life, imitated them and used them in new functions," he then argued that Amos made use of a prophetical dirge (Am 5:1-3) to express something new in the content and in contradiction to the form's original use (Fohrer 1961:356).

However, when arguing against it, it is thought that the newness of the prophet's message is still within the forms of existing tradition (cf Dell 1995:51) and does not contradict it. In the context of Amos 5:1-17, the song of mourning laments the irrevocable fall of Israel. Rhetorically, Dell (cf 1995:57) insists that the choice of the form is dramatic in that its effect on Amos' hearers would have been one of shock; but it also reveals the prophet's own grief at what his words foretell. The form seems to intensify the message of disaster of the nation because the content is totally unexpected. Therefore, a dirge or a lament can be an effective rhetorical device employed by the prophet where the audience is summoned to listen to their own death's elegy while still alive.

4.5.4 Word Play

Amos also uses a short *word play* as can be seen in Amos 5:5a. It can be seen in the using of "ג" and "ל" in a phrase: הגלגל גלה יגלה. The playing of the word is very noticable because the sequence גל is repeated four times, and each word begins or ends with ה. It creates sounds like "*hagilgāl gālōh yigleh*" that builds alliteration between the place, the verb, and the infinitive absolute, where the infinitive absolute strengthens the verbal idea to describe how certain the idea is (cf Smith 1989:163). Such a word play is closely related to other device (particularly in poetic techniques) such as irony and allusion. It can be seen in that indirectly Gilgal, the most important city in Israel (as Israel's first campsite in the Promise Land [Jos 4:19-5:12] having symbolized the nation's possession of the land for a long time), will be destroyed and its inhabitants will be exiled. It is ironically directed against the popular belief among the Israelites who hold fast to

the idea that, of all places, at least Gilgal will always be spared the humiliation of exile (see Chisholm 1990:17).

In a grammatical sense, this literary device is unusual, because the names of the places are construed with verbs in the feminine form, but here it appears with verbs in the masculine form. In this connection, referring to Wolff's discussion (1977:238-9), Soggin (1987:85) argues that this word play should be seen in the fact that the text is meant to refer to the populations. He, however, added that it seems more logical to think of the general tendency to replace the forms of the feminine imperfect with those of the more active masculine. As it indicates a definite future punishment for those sites, the use of this alliteration seems to introduce the concept of exile in Israel as a consequence of not seeking YHWH (see the study of the word גלה in its connection with exile-theology in Gowan 1975:204-207). Here, Amos, when he uses such a paronomasia, uses an effective way to remind his audience of the fate that is awaiting them in the near future.

In the same verse (Am 5:5b), the prophet also uses another play of words, especially in the next phrase: ובית־אל יהיה לאון. If the previous discussion concentrates on a play upon the sounds and the places, here the play is upon the meaning of the name. It is interesting that the name of Bethel is taken as a starting-point for punishment. In Israel's history Bethel became the chief sanctuary of the northern kingdom as well as the royal sanctuary where Amaziah was the official priest (Am 7:13). However, divine judgment will befall on the city, as can be seen in such a play of words, the last part of the city's name is altered from אל to און. A possible meaning of און is something that relates to "wickedness" (BDB:19) or an expression for the powers of evil (cf Hammershaimb 1970:79). Considered as morally negative, the word is being linked with "Beth-aven" or "the house of idolatry."

There is yet another possibility of defining the word און as "nought, vanity or misery." In this case, the meaning of the word may imply that "Bethel" will be turned to און ("nulify"), or ironically, "nothing" (Chisholm 1980:90) because this word has to be translated in the sense of to "be annihiliated" or "be destroyed"

(De Waard & Smalley 1979:102). These various meanings of the word, as a result, make the meaning of the word broad and flowing, because it may mean "grievous trouble, religious perversion, and (or) sometimes idolatry" (Mays 1969:89). However, in preference of the latter meaning, a different explanation suggests that one should read אל; ("not") rather than אלה ("god"), so that "*Beth-el*" is understood as "*Beth-al*" ("house of nothingness") and this clarifies that such a place will become nothing, more than just being nullified (see Paul 1990:164). Amos, again, utters a doom oracle against the second sanctuary of the people.

4.5.5 Hymnic Tradition

Amos definitely uses *a hymnic tradition* as can be seen in the centre of the unit (Am 5:8-9). Albeit considered as an intrusive element—being added to the flow of thought in section C-C′ (5:7, 10-13) —and not originally from the prophet, Amos 5:8-9 has to be thought of as an integral part of the the unit, because one should consider the author's style of writing (cf McComiskey 1987145). There must be a sense of freedom on the side of the author, to add or not to add materials (in this case, hymnic element), for the sake of style and even spontaneity. Moreover, this element may be easily identified through its use of the form of the verbs and the refrain, as Mays suggests that "Amos 5:8f, along with 4:13 and 9:5f, use predicative paticiples and refrain in the sytyle of the hymn-form" (1969:83). The "hymn" or "doxology" is closely related to the hymnic Psalter and, in the prophetic books, such as Amos, the prophet used this genre drawn form Israel's practice, both to express the power and the majesty of God (cf Bramer 1999:55). Most probably, in relation with this, the prophet employs standard liturgical genres such as this hymn—classified as prophetic liturgies—reflecting the cultic setting in which the prophetic literature was performed and perhaps produced (see Sweeney 2005:42).

As seen in the refrain of the hymn, יהוה שמו ("YHWH is his name"), the focus of it is on YHWH himself. Amos' description about YHWH may also be called "an old Yahwistic hymn" which means that "its words may have been made to fit the

lament melody (the mixed meter of the context offers little clue) or else represented a surprise shift in tune as well as topic" (Stuart 1987:347; compared to "An Old Hymn" in Watts 1954:215-16). This hymn, thus, is not merely proposing a theology about YHWH but it is also technically strategic in terms of influencing the audience who hear the message of the prophet. It is believed that this form may have been used by Amos as a rhetorical technique "to relieve the intensity of feeling among [the prophet's hearers]. Discourse is more impressive when there is an occassional relief from the strain of deep thought and attention" (Bramer 1999:56).

4.5.6 Woe Formula

A "*woe formula*" or oracle, presented in the using of the word הוי (*hôy*) is used by Amos to accuse the people for perverting justice. It occurs in Amos 5:16 in the form of duplet particles הו־הו which is actually the shortened form of the term הוי. It later occurs in other passages as well as Amos 5:18 and 6:1, 4. One may clearly identify this form by looking at the elements that construct the oracle, as Bramer (1999:56) indicates that "the particle הוי usually followed by a series of participles detailing addressee, the transgression and the judgment." In general, such a word may be translated as "*Ah!*" which refers to "the grief-cry of those who mourn (cf. 1 Ki 13:30; Jr 22:18; 34:5)" (Mays 1969:98) or "an imitation of the cry of the mourners" (Hammershaimb 1970:86). As an oracle, it is believed that the term may be categorized as a curse (cf Westermann 1991:191-98) or as a particular type of judgment prophecy.

Theoretically the woe oracle commonly appears in the prophetic literature as a means to criticize specific actions and attitudes of the people and to announce punishment against them (see Sweeney 2005:40). It is clearly seen that such an oracle centres on one thing: the divine outrage against sinful behaviour. As seen in its context, their sins are primarily related to social misconduct. In this sense, Gerstenberger (1962:252-253) suggests that the woe oracles has, as its background, "the popular ethics, in other words, the adequately known and

commonly accepted order of social affair." The end result of this misbehaviour is quite predictable, there will be national mourning, as can be seen in the repetition of מספר ("wailling") and other related words like אבל ("mourning") and נהי ("mourning song"). The outcome of the woe oracle delivered by the prophet is rhetorically assured, "to heighten its threatening and terrifying effect" (Paul 1990:181).

4.5.7 Sapiental/Wisdom Tradition

It is believed that Amos also takes up *sapiental* or *wisdom traditions* and uses them in delivering his message. Wolff (1973:80-85) convincingly argues that clan wisdom has influenced the preaching (writing) of Amos, for example, in the form of woe cries (6:1, 3-6; 5:18-20, and perhaps 5:7, 10), the exhortation speeches or *mahnrede* (4:4-5; 5:4-6, 14-15) and themes ("justice and righteousness," "the concern of the poor" and "the condemnation of extravagant lifestyles"). Building on Terrein's work (1962:108-15), which had linked the graded numerical sequence (3/4) of the OAN, the didactic question of Amos 3:3-8, and certain vocabulary (e.g., "the right" in Am 3:10) to wisdom, Wolff is also convinced that there was an identification of Amos' intellectual and spiritual background with wisdom (cf Carroll R 2002:17-18). This is critically examined by Crenshaw (1967:42-52) who argues that Amos did not heavily depend on wisdom tradition. However, the link between the book of Amos and the wisdom tradition is still a possibility since one cannot deny the characteristic of wisdom which can be detected as early as Amos 5:1, the opening call of attention, שמעו ("Hear!").

This summons, "to hear," also occurs in other wisdom texts (in a form of lamentation, Lm 1:18). It is likewise characteristic of both the sapiental call to attention and wisdom's two-part summons usually introducing an instruction (cf Wolff 1970:235). In 5:4-5, there is an indication that the prophet employs this wisdom characteristic, as Paul (1990:162) suggests, "the imperative (v. 4) followed (or preceded) by a negative prohibitive (v. 5) is typical of sapiental literature, for example, Proverbs 4:5-6; 9:8; 19:18; 20:13, 22; 24:21; 30:7-8." In

section C-C′ (5:7, 10-13), wisdom characteristic also appears in the themes of משפט ("justice"), צדקה ("righteousness"), מוכיח ("one who reproves"),דבר תמים ("one who tells the truth"), הדלים ("the poor"), and המשכיל ("the prudent man"). Such themes abundantly appear in old sapiental materials (Pr 1:3; 2:9; 13:5; 16:33; 21:3; 22:22; 28:8, 18; 29:26), and may confirm that Amos stands close to the "sapiental tradition" (Wolff 1970:245-6). For the prophet, utilizing sapiental forms in his speech is not incidental, but it seems to be calculated because his intention is to get the attention of and giving instruction to his audience.

4.5.8 Imageries

Additionally, the prophet also utilizes *imageries* in presenting some theological concepts. In Amos 5:6, particularly in the phrase כן־יצלח כאש בית יוסף ("lest he burst forth like a fire against the house of Joseph"), the prophet uses the imagery of fire. In the OT, God reveals himself as a "consuming fire" (Ex 19:16; Dt 4:24; 5:20-23 [23-36]) who sometimes brings his judgment in the form of his very self, a holy fire in whose presence sinful people cannot stand. In the book of Amos, the imagery also occurs in the context of the judgment of YHWH, to bring destruction to the nations and those who are against him, as Smith (1989:164) infers, "Fire itself was the instrument of God in the oracles against foreign nations in Amos 1-2, but here [in. 5:6] God himself is pictured as a devouring fire that destroys everything (cf. 7:4-6)."

Another use of imagery is found in Amos 5:7, where the word לענה (literally meaning "woodworm," an aromatic herb noted for its bitter taste [King 1988:124]) in the phrase ההפכים ללענה משפט וצדקה לארץ ("the ones who turn justice into a bitter thing and cast righteousness to the ground") can also mean deadly poison which symbolizes the people who have so perverted justice (cf Finley 1990:230). The last imagery used in the unit (5:1-17) is light (v. 9), המבליג שד על־עז ("the one flashing destruction on the stronghold"). Here, again, the

prophet uses an imagery to announce the judgment of God, that is, he will bring destruction, and therefore the nation should lament.

In Amos 5:24, ויגל כמים משפט וצדקה כנחל איתן ("let justice flow like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing water") the prophet also uses the imagery in a positive way. Although the word מים ("water") may literally describe an ordinary stream (נחל or "*wadi*") which water-flow depends on the rainfall in the rainy season, in Amos' mind, it must be seen as "a riverbed that never dries up" (Wolff 1977:264). When an adjective איתן ("strong" or "mighty") is linked to נחל, it expresses a flow that is steady, permanent or, simply, ever-flowing (BDB:450). Accordingly, the intensification in the description, from "like water" to "like ever-flowing water," is to make a clear distinction between the watercourses which only carry water during the rainy season, and those that carry it all through the year (see Soggin 1988:97).

Through this imagery, there is an intention to emphasize that justice and righteousness cannot stop and start like a wilderness *wadi* that flows with water only during the rainy seasons and otherwise is just a dry stream bed, but they must instead continue night and day, all year, like נחל איתן (lit., "strong stream") that never goes dry (cf Stuart 1987:355). The movement from the negative to the positive in this imagery literarily may also be called "a hyperbole" (Super 1973: 67-80; cf Finley 1990:113), in the sense that the author wants to emphasize something by developing the concept greater than before. In other words, through such a literary device, the prophet wants to say that "God wants righteousness and justice to flow unabated and endlessly like a mighty river," as Smith (1989:187) writes.

4.5.9 Sevenfold Pattern

Finally, Amos uses *a sevenfold pattern* in this unit. In the sense of its literary structure, the unit is composed of seven sections, as De Waard (1977:170-7) divides it in a chiastic form:

(1) lamentation over fallen Israel (5:1-3),
(2) call to repentance (5:4-6a),
(3) warning and condemnation (5:6b-7),
(4) hymn of YHWH's power (5:8-9),
(3′) warning and condemnation (5:10-13),
(2′) call to repentance (5:14-15), and
(1′) coming lamentation (5:16-17).

Dorsey (1999:281) argues that the arrangement of this unit is rhetorically effective in a way that all of these seven sections centre on the exclamation of YHWH's awesome power: "he is almighty and he is not to be ignored!" B-B′ section (5:4-6a, 14-15), which consists of a pair of calls to repentance, also features a series of seven (plus one) imperatival verbs: דרשו ("seek!" occurred thrice), היו ("live!" occurred twice), שנאו ("hate!"), אהבו ("love") and הצינו ("maintain!"), as Dorsey has observed ([1992:313], however, mentioning seven imperatives he misses the plus one [the last imperative, "maintain!"]).

It indicates that a repentance, such as to seek God (good), to renounce evil and to maintain justice, is a serious matter in YHWH's sight, because it is his complete and definite divine will for them. The climax of the unit, a hymn of praise (Am 5:8-9), is again formed with a sevenfold pattern. Amos here lists seven verbs (combination of participles, a perfect and imperfects): עשה ("making of"), הפך ("turning"), חשך ("darkens"), קרא ("calling"), שפך ("pours out"), בלג("flashing") and בוא ("brings"). The emphasis of this pattern is to give a description of the series of activities of YHWH (cf Limburg 1987:219). In other words, it is an emphasis of his majesty in creation and destruction, in the awesome cosmic power of YHWH which will be unleashed against some kind of human powers.

Amos 5:24 can also be included in this discussion. This verse also has a composition with a sevenfold structure. It is noticable from the previous verses (Am 5:21-23) that the prophet lists seven things that the Lord does not like: הג ("religious feast"), עצרת ("assembly"), עלה ("burnt-offering"), מנחה ("grain-offering"), שלם ("peace offering"), שיר ("song"), and זמרה נבל ("melody of harp"). At the end of this list, interestingly, comes the climax indicating what the Lord does desire: "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an

ever-flowing stream" (cf Limburg 1987:220). Holding to the general meaning of this sevenfold structure, symbolizing completeness (cf Weiss 1967:418-19) or even totality (cf Paul 1990:36), one may see that Amos here has something to say and points out YHWH and his will.

In both positive and negative ways, the prophet clearly explains that the God of Israel is seriously dealing with the present situation and condition of his people. He is the sovereign God who demands his people to believe in and to act according to divine values, justice and righteousness. In his sight, repentance from both religious and social sins is more important than doing religious rites with abundant sacrifices which are superficial. This is in accordance with proper cultic worship as can be seen in Psalms 51:19, "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (RSV). Jensen (2006:85) pinpoints that although the Israelites projected an outward show of righteousness where actually none exists, they are very hypocritical and detestable. It implies that in the perspective of the prophet, no vertical dimension is possible without the horizontal dimension.

4.5.10 Epideictic Rhetoric

In this rhetorical unit (Am 5:1-17), particularly in the passage analyzed above (Am 5:7-15, 24), Amos' message may be categorized as *epideictic rhetoric*. Epideictic rhetoric means "any discourse, oral or written, that does not aim at specific action or decision but seek to enhance knowledge, understanding, or belief, often through praise and blame, whether of persons, things or values" (Kennedy 2001:44). Since the centre of the unit is Amos 5:8-9, namely the doxology part (יהוה שמו, "YHWH is his name"), the primary focus of Amos is not on the people of Israel and their immense sins but on YHWH himself, who he is and what he does. The given texts here clearly seek to reinforce certain beliefs about YHWH and, inseparably, his divine virtues. Stuart (1987:347-8) argued that "the prophet reminds his audience that YHWH can be a changer and a

destroyer as well as a comforter" and he demands his people to live in accordance with his two essential virtues, justice (משפט) and righteousness (צדקה).

4.5.11 Judicial Rhetoric

Besides, this unit can be thought of as *a judicial rhetoric* as well. Such a rhetorical genre can be understood as a means suited to defending or condemning specific actions and it can be used for anyone wishing to accuse or justify himself or someone else (cf Kennedy 2001:43-50). Based on this, Amos' message seems to fit this conception, particularly to condemn what the ruling elites in Israel did in terms of oppressing their fellow citizens. In the unit analyzed (particularly, Am 5:1-17), the people also perverted justice (7, 10-11) in the place where justice must exist and be established in the gate. Through such condemnations, YHWH, as the supreme judge, reproves the perverting of justice done by them particularly through this woe oracle, and "the one who reproves is the one who strives to see justice done," Jensen says (2006:83).

Finally, the unit contains a specific rhetorical genre, *deliberative speech*. If this speech concentrates on an assessment of actions that would be expedient or beneficial for future performance (see Black 1989:254), the prophet surely intends the audience to take some future actions. The use of repetitive imperatives such as "seek YHWH and live," which is paralleled with to "seek good (טוב) and avoid evil (רע)" or to "love good and hate evil" (Am 5:4-6, 14-15) seems to be the emphasis of the speech. On the other hand, he also demands them to "establish justice (משפט) and righteousness (צדקה)' (Am 5:7, 15). Through this deliberative rhetoric, YHWH seems to expect that the people of Israel will experience what is best for their lives, albeit there is no indication that they will take their instructions seriously, to repent from their sins and to turn to YHWH instead, in the future. The fact is that they will finally experience doom when they are defeated and exiled by the Assyrians.

4.6 REVIEW OF ANALYSIS

Amos' intention in delivering his message in the unit (Am 5:1-17) is to make his audience realize that the sinful acts they have committed, particularly in perverting justice, may lead to the presence of the real judge, YHWH himself. It means that any wrongdoing has its own consequence. Differing from other oracles, for example Oracles against the Nations (OAN), which starts with a messenger formula, the unit begins with the words of Amos himself (Am 5:1) and the name of YHWH just appears later on (Am 5:3). The audience may not notice that it will finally point to YHWH because the speech continues from the situation of the audience, a lament of "the virgin of Israel" over the defeat of their army or nation (Am 5:2-4) and the exile as well (Am 5:5-6).

This is a result of the misconducts of the people in wrongly applying justice in the community (Am 5:7, 10-13). The flow then reaches the climax in the form of a hymn (a doxology) focused on the deeds and person of YHWH (Am 5:8-9). The flow of thought in the prophet's speech then goes back in the reverse direction. In a rhetorical sense, the placement of the hymn in the centre of the unit is not accidental because, as Jeremias (1998:91) rightly notes, it effectively contrasts Israel's acts with those of YHWH. Thus, as far as the people of Israel are concerned, it provides a powerful negative portrait of themselves.

To arrange the flow of his speech, the prophet creatively uses a major literary device, the chiastic form, in order to effectively touch the heart and mind of the audience, with the direction from the bottom (the audience), going up to the peak (YHWH), and finally down to the bottom again (the audience). Finley (1990:222) affirms that a chiastic structure focuses attention on the centre, drawing the reader (the audience as well) into a key idea and then gradually move them away from it by retracing the same path. This chiastic structure has a strong effect on the hearers because it starts with them and ends up with them as can be seen in the following sequence: lamentation—punishment—sins—(God)—sins—punishment —lamentation.

Besides, the prophet forces his audience to ponder on YHWH as seen in this flow: "what the LORD says"—"who the LORD is"—"what the LORD says." In addition, the use of repetition of the main words or concepts, such as "seek!" (דרש) and "live" (היה) or "justice" (משפט), similar words such as "lament" (קינה or "wailing" [מספד], and "weeping" [אבל]), and contrasting the ideas of "life" and "death" as well, in such a chiastic structure. Such a structure would have a deep effect on the hearers, because it is arranged in a concentric form that serves as a marker of unity and cohesion, and that, as a figure of repetition, also serves as focusing or highlighting devices (cf Möller 2003:66; Widbin 1996:177-192).

Interestingly, the prophet does not only use such a main literary device, but he also uses some other literary devices. To mention some of them, the prophet employs inclusion and progression, woe oracle, dirge or lament, wordplay, hymn, wisdom technique, imageries, and the sevenfold structure. Thinking rhetorically, one may ask why Amos uses them simultaneously in one single shoot, or what is his intention in applying so many literary devices in one occasion? It is not easy to find a proper answer to this question. Wolff (1977:231) recognizes that although the utterances, in their own literary styles (in the whole unit [Am 5:1-17]), are curiously linked one to another on one hand, it is difficult to understand their mutual relationship on the other hand. Albeit such difficulty, there must be one or another common reason for Amos to have used them. As Finley (1990:221) states, "he prefers a more subtle approach by which he draws the listener into the message." It is also important to add here that the use of such a variety of literary styles seems to emphasize certain truths presented. The literary styles purposefully serve the importance of the content of the message. Thus, in order to effectively convince his audiences about the reality they are facing, the prophet Amos thus utilizes extensive literary devices in his message.

As a whole, Amos' speech in this unit (Am 5:1-17) has a triad of possible genres: epideictic, judicial, and deliberative. The use of such genres implies different kinds of associations (between the speaker and the audience). The unit indicates a relationship between the Creator and the creature. The doxological part (Am 5:8-9) in the centre of the speech uses the language of praise and honour that functions

as a call to realize YHWH as the Creator. Additionally, the imperative שמעו ("listen!") that appeared at the beginning (Am 5:1) of the unit implies that the previous has absolute authority over the later. The prophet seems to put his audience in the place of the creature that must hear (respond to) what the Creator wants to say (cf VanGemeren 1990[b]:98-99). It also refers to a correlation between the judge and the accused. YHWH, the supreme judge, affirms that the people are guilty for perverting justice using the language of the courtroom (see also the use of this language in other Old Testament texts by Bovati [1994]).

Finally, it expresses a relationship between the performer and the spectator. Here, through the prophet's speech, YHWH presents himself as an orator who persuade the people to perform something important, repentance (see Dorsey 1999:281) in the sense of returning to YHWH wholeheartedly, stop sinning immediately and do justice accordingly. Through this relational description used by Amos, it is clear that the purpose of the use of such genres is to build up an effective communication between the messenger and the audience, and through this interaction it is expected that there will be a transformation of attitude and conduct, especially on the part of the audience.

CHAPTER FIVE

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS 8:4-8

5.1 RHETORICAL UNIT

Similar to the previous texts analyzed (Am 2:6-8; 5:7-15, 24), Amos 8:4-8 is not an independent unit in itself but it is a sub-sub-unit. It can be seen in the division below (following Smith's structure [1989:246-247]):

UNIT	SUB-UNIT	SUB-SUB-UNIT
Wailing, Not Forgiveness at the End (Amos 8:1-14)	No forgiveness in a vision of summer fruit (8:1-3)	
	The end will bring wailing but no word from God (8:4-14)	Abusive economics actions bring end to the poor (8:4-6)
		Social injustices will bring God's mournful day in the end (8:7-10)
		There will be no new word from God, only death (8:11-14)

However, it is important to clarify in the beginning that the rhetorical unit analyzed will not include Amos 8:9-10 because it is part of the punishment section of Amos 8:7-10. Since the following discussion will not focus on the punishment, this section will not be discussed in this section. Above structure shows that Amos 8:4-8 is part of the larger unit of 8:1-14 and the sub-unit of 8:4-14. Stuart (1987:383-384) points out that prophetic judgment oracles do not normally exist apart from an indictment, God rarely announces punishment for covenant breaking without providing some sort of evidence or reminder of how the covenant has been broken.

While scholars disagree on the division of the book, it is difficult to decide to which unit a passage belongs. On the one hand, a plain reading of the last section (Am 8:4-9:15) shows that Amos 8:4-14 may be seen as part of a larger unit. From the perspective of structural markers, this passage (Am 8:4-14), in parallel with Amos 7:1-8:3, is an independent unit introducing the next part of the prophet's speech (cf Möller 2003:102). It is important to note here that 8:4 has a significant function in this regard. The main reason is that this verse begins a major unit in Amos (cf Stuart 1987:367-370) by using the conventional signal: שמעו + direct object containing "this" (זאת) + vocative identifying the addressees. Along with this, the genre shifts from vision report in 8:1-3 to prophetic discourse. It also shifts from addressing Israel in the third person to second person. All of this signal the beginning of a new unit for the audience (see Dorsey 1992:321).

In addition, the sub-unit of Amos 8:4-14 may be considered as independent because it focuses on a theme called "judgment speech" that consists of both indictment and judgment. It can be clearly seen in the way the prophet sets the opinion that the punishment (Am 8:7-14) exists as a result of covenant breaking and mistreating other fellow humans who are poor and weak (Am. 8:4-6). Chisholm (1990:101) agrees with this and insists that this judgment is addressed to those who were guilty of socioeconomic dishonesty and oppression. Thus, if the unit is viewed on the basis of its structural markers and its theme, it seems to be correct to consider Amos 8:4-14 as a complete rhetorical sub-unit consisting of an indictment and a judgment.

On the other hand, the possibility exists that the texts may be included as part of a much larger unit, Amos 8:4-9:15 because it characterizes a certain literary device. Limburg (1987:215) believes that Amos 8:4-9:15 contains seven divine speech formulas: six נאם formulas (8:9, 11; 9:7, 8, 12, 13) and one אמר formula (9:15). Using a similar analysis, Dorsey (1999:284) argues that there are at least three recurring phrases used by the prophet in unbroken succession throughout the unit, for example, the combination of ביום ההוא ("in that day" 8:3, 9, and 13), which may function as anticipatory to the book's final unit, and הנה ימים באים ("See, days are coming" 9:11-13), the periodic repetition of first-person declaration of

divine future actions, "I will . . ., " as many as twenty four times, and the נאם יהיה/אדני ("declaration of [Sovereign] YHWH/Sovereign") formula (Am 8:9, 11; 9:7, 8, 12, 13). Taking into consideration these literary styles, it would also be correct to say that the unit has a larger range than was proposed earlier.

Despite such differences, it is important to give attention to the context of the sub-unit (Am 8:4-14). Considering the series of five visions (Am 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1; 9:1), the prophet seems to insert different elements among them, such as a dialogue and a series of oracles. This can be seen clearly in the insertion of the conflict between Amos and Amaziah (Am 7:10-17) and the judgment oracles against Israel (Am 8:4-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14). Based on such insertions, or put another way "the interruption of the visions cycle", it is believed that such oracles were inserted by the school or disciples of Amos. Wolff (1977:325) says, "The parallelism between the insertions in 7:9, 10-17 and 8:3, 4-14 leads one to think of Amos' school as most likely responsible for both supplements." Against this, Rudolph (as quoted by Paul [1990:256]) critically argues that Amos will indeed be very *Ausdrucksarm* ("poor of expression") if all these were to be deleted. In other words, there is no differentiation between the visions and the oracles. It is more logical to think that both visions and oracles are indeed the product of the literary ingenuity of the prophet himself in alternating and neatly combining the two.

Since the focus of the research is not on the larger unit(s), 8:4-14 or even 8:4-19, however, this study will give particular attention to the smaller sub-sub-unit of Amos 8:4-8. Since its larger sub-unit (Am 8:4-14) mainly contains two pairs of oracle elements, indictment (Am 8:4-6) and punishment (Am 8:7-14), as Wolff (1977:324) recognizes that among the oracles in these visionary scenes, only Amos 8:4-8 contains a complete judgment speech, with a remarkable broad indictment (vv. 4-6) and an announcement of punishment, characterized by its blandness (vv. 7-8). Amos 8:4-8 is not independent, however, it can be treated as "an independent sub-sub unit" within the larger context because it contains a full elaboration of Israel's indictment and punishment (See the structure below):

--Indictment--	(8:4)	שמעו־זאת השאפים אביון ולשבית ענוי־ארץ
	(8:5)	לאמר מתי יעבר החדש ונשבירה שבר והשבת ונפתחה־בר להקטין איפה ולהגדיל שקל
--Indictment--	(8:5)	ולעות מאזני מרמה
	(8:6)	לקנות בכסף דלים ואביון בעבור נעלים ומפל בר נשביר
--Punishment--	(8:7)	נשבע יהוה בגאון יעקב אם־אשכח לנצח כל־מעשיהם
	(8:8)	העל זאת לא־תרגז הארץ ואבל כל־יושב בה ועלתה כאר כלה ונגרשה ונשקה כיאור מצרים

In this regard, it can be remarked that the sub-sub unit of Amos 8:4-8 expresses a single concept of intentionality of a specific group of people in Israel. Accordingly, the sub-sub-unit does not primarily refer to deeds of the guilty, but rather to their plans and their most secret intentions. To this end, the Hebrew text uses a long, uninterrupted chain of infinitives extending to verse 6 that can be hardly imitated in translation. These verses must be understood as forming an inseparable unit, because it has a beginning (v. 4a) and an end (v. 6), with the middle verses framed (vv. 4b-5) introducing a completely new theme into the book of Amos: deceit in commerce, through which the traditional concepts are now interpreted (cf Jeremias 1998:146-7). It is important to add that although Amos 8:4-6 seems to be in parallel with Amos 2:6-8 in terms of the issue addressed, and is sometimes considered as a more elaborate description of the greed and corruption of the former (see Hayes 1988:208), still, the latter has its own significance compared to the previous in terms of the theme addressed, namely cheating in business. Because of this single complete theme, the sub-sub-unit (Am 8:4-8) should be thought of as forming "an independent unit."

Moreover, this sub-sub unit of Amos 8:4-8 can be still treated as "an independent unit" because of the use of an artful literary device, a sevenfold structure. It may be easily seen in a list of seven sins of the addressed group of people of Israel,

especially the merchants who are rich and powerful. Limburg (1987:220) lists the prophet's accusations against them by quoting the things that they say: (1) When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? (2) And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale? (3) to make the ephah small; (4) to make the shekel great; (5) to deal deceitfully with false balances; (6) to buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals; and (7) that we may sell the refuse of the wheat.

As discussed in the previous chapter, when discussing the meaning of this sevenfold structuring, the number of seven may symbolically refer to a concept of completeness, or simply of wholeness. Therefore, the list of these seven actions of injustice committed by this particular group of people can be thought of as a complete inventory of the crimes against the poor and the needy. For the purpose of the study, this list can be rhetorically analyzed independently apart from the second part in Amos 8:7-14.

Further discussion of the sub-sub-unit analyzed, however, will be presented in close relation with its larger contexts, Amos 8:7-8, 10-14, and even as far as Amos 9:1-15. Since Amos 8:4-8 represents a complete thought, namely an elaboration of the abusive economic actions and its consequences, the focus of analysis on the sub-sub-unit of Amos 8:4-8 in this chapter purposively would be considered and analyzed as "an independent rhetorical unit" (in the following discussion, the term "unit" refers to "sub-sub-unit of Amos 8:4-8").

5.2 RHETORICAL SITUATION

The unit (Am 8:4-8) expresses the situation the prophet is facing. It is also a real situation where the oppressed people live and struggle. There is explicit mentioning of religious as well as trading terms in these verses. The terms החדש ("The New Moon") and השבת ("the Sabbath") indicates that indeed the people are at religious festivals. According to several other Hebrew texts (1 Sm 20:5-6; 2 Ki 4:23; and Is 1:13; Ezk 46:3; Hs 2:13), during the New Moon festival (and also during the Sabbath's) no work is done by the Israelites. Stuart (1987:384) argued

that such a festival was a Mosaic covenant holiday (Nm 10:10; 28:11) faithfully celebrated over the years by the Israelites. The stories in these texts show that one is not supposed to perform any activity, such as going somewhere, except to stay at home and to feast during these days. Moreover, the Decalogue prohibits any activity during the Sabbath day (Ex 20:8; Dt 5:14) because it emphasizes the holiness of the seventh day in order to honour YHWH who rested after he finished creating the world (Gn 2:3).

It is important to note that both events are usually assumed as having a Babylonian origin, because the Hebrew word שבת ("Sabbath") is not formed from the word verb שבת ("to rest") but it is derived from the substantive of the Babylonian *šabbatu* which is used as the day of the full moon, that is the fourteenth day of the month when the moon changes (cf Hammershaimb 1970:122-23), or it is a mark of the first day of the moon. This concept was later adopted by the Israelites to be a day of rest and a feast-day. In the context of the book of Amos, particularly in the given texts (Am 8:4-8), Soggin (1987:134) infers that the New Moon and the Sabbath are both pre-exilic festivals of which the observance is formally correct. It was, however, accompanied by prevarication, and this becomes an argument which Amos often pursues in connection with his criticism of the cult (cf. Am 4:4ff; 5:5ff).

The motivation behind this prevarication seems to be economic. It can be proved by the overloaded using of trading terms throughout the passage. The prophet uses some verbs, such as נשבישבירה (Hiphil. imperf. of שביר "to sell"), נפתחה (Qal. imperf. of פתח "to open" which used with בר means "to expose for sale" [BDB:834]), הקטין (Hiphil. inf. cons. of קטין "to make small"), הגדיל (Hiphil. inf. cons. of גדל "to become great"), עות (Piel. inf. const. of עות "to be bent"), and קנת (Qal. inf. const. of קנת "to buy"). These verbs indeed refer to trading activities, where the last four are used in a negative sense. Amos also uses nouns, such as שבר ("grain") and בר ("wheat") that point to trading commodities; and איפה ("the measure"), שפל ("the price"), מאזן ("the scales"), כסף ("the silver"), and נעלים ("the pair of sandals") as trading tools or equipments. In this passage, the prophet

describes what is going on in the public market. Thus, although the central chapters of the book of Amos speak mostly of justice in the gate and in the court system, this passage returns to the marketplace and the world of commerce (cf Gowan 1996:416).

Unfortunately, these are not normal trading activities, because the motive behind such commercial gestures is merely financial profit. What is happening in the community is that an abusive economic action has been undertaken by a certain group of people. The question then is: who are they? The answer may vary from one scholar to another. Those who hesitate to identify these people usually do not mention anything about their identity. In a more specific way, they may refer to the wealthy who make loans of grain to the poor (see Kessler 1989:13-22). They are "a homogenous class of urban elite or the upper class who does not only have power but also have the opportunity to do it ruthlessly" (Mays 1969:142).

Such an argument, however, seems to be oversimplifying because one must consider the complex social setting during Amos' time. Smith (1989:252) maintains that probably this group of people may refer to the persons who have significant economic control to manipulate things to their advantage. On the other hand, most scholars believe that the using of the terms indicate that the prophet Amos clearly speaks to a certain group of people, the merchants, the traders, the businessmen, or those who practice daily business in the marketplace (cf Hammershaimb 1970:122; see also Soggin 1988:135; Finley 1990:300; Paul 1991:257; Jeremias 1998:147). The last view is most likely more appropriate in describing and identifying who this particular group of people is.

Moreover, the practice of selling and marketing are not only in terms of material things but also of human expenses. The price of practicing such a way of doing business is very costly, because it entails human suffering and indignity. Mays (1969:142) emphasizes that the markets of Jeroboam's kingdom traded in human misery. The poor are not only being manipulated when they buy something from the traders (Am 8:4b-5) but also being exploited for the sake of money and profit (Am 8:4, 6).

Accordingly, YHWH never tolerates dishonest ways of selling (Lv 19:35-36; Dt 25:13-15, Ezk 45:10-12; Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:23; Job 31:6). He never accepts the inhuman ways of treating other people, especially human trafficking, because people are protected by God (Dt 24:14-15; Ps 72:12-13; 83:4-5; Is 1:14; 11:4). The situation described in Amos 8:4-6 involves various spheres of life to demonstrate in an exemplary fashion how much greater Israel's sin is than of its neighbours. Jeremias points out that "Amos 8:4-6 grounds the 'end of Israel' with a single, albeit wholly grievous, sin" (1998:147). Such sinful acts as indicated later in the next verses (Am 8:7-8), will be terribly punished in equal weight with their sin. It seems that the prophet considers this issue seriously because of unethical business practices which takes form in commercial cheating and human exploitation.

5.3 RHETORICAL INVENTION

In the midst of this situation, Amos appears and delivers his message. To attract attention he uses a common opening formula of prophetic speech: שמעו־זאת ("Hear this"). This is not the only place where the prophet uses such an opening. In other verses (Am 3:1, 4:1; and 5:1) he also utilizes the same formula. Grammatically, the word שמעו ("Hear!") takes the form of the imperative, which expresses an appeal to the will (categorized as a volitional mood), and it focuses on "the desire or wish for the action to occur" (Ross 2001:149). Here a prompt and proper response from the one who hears is expected in order to know that he/she understood what is being said. Wolff insists that "the first oracle (Am 8:4-6) opens with the simple call of attention" (1977:326). In the same vein, Niehaus (1992:375) broadens the meaning to the extent that such a call frequently occurs in contexts where the translational equivalent "obey" is most appropriate, and the forces at work in these contexts (e.g., Jos 1:18; Jr 12:17) invest the word with the sense of "listen with attention" or "give heed to." Whenever Amos uses this imperative, he seems to be in demand of influencing the audience to respond immediately and accurately to his message.

Again, Amos does not deliver his words alone as an independent individual. As a prophet of YHWH, however, he depends all of his speeches merely on the divine authority. The word שמעו ("Hear!") is always used in a connection with the context of אמר יהוה ("the Lord said") and נאם אדני יהוה ("declaration of the Sovereign YHWH") as seen in its preceding verses (Am 8:2, 3). Although the unit (Am 8:4-8) is different and independent from the previous, still, in the researcher's opinion, there is always a connection between both of them (the text and its context). Noble (1996:623) insists that this formula functions as "attention marker" that it marks out the material to which it is immediately attached as particularly deserving careful attention and perusal. In fact, it shows that the prophet may have deliberately inserted the oracle in between both divine declarations (נאם אדני יהוה, Am 8:3 and 8:11) in order to gain authority on what he is delivering.

Moreover, his oracle seems to be placed in between two visions from YHWH. Andersen and Freedman (1989:686) argue that the material in Amos 8:4-14, sandwiched between the fourth and fifth visions, should have some relations to the visions, and that there should be a rational for the arrangement of various elements. Most of all, such an insertion should be considered as a reinforced indictment. Therefore, the purpose is clear that Amos is trying to convince the audience that his message is from YHWH himself.

In order to appeal to the reason of his audience, the prophet also uses the "cause-effect" approach as it usually occurs in a prophetic oracle, indictment and pronouncement of punishment. In a long and plain list of charges, he exposes the wrongdoings of this group of people (Am 8:4-6). It is started with a general description of oppression of the weak, those who are trampled and crushed (8:4). As in Amos 2:6-9, Amos uses the same terms in identifying those who are oppressed, אביון ("the needy") and ענוים ("the poor") and the same verb in identifying the action of שאף ("to trample") which is then paralleled or paired with שמד ("destroy" [JPS]).

In addition, these people are not only being trampled upon but are also being bought at a minimal cost (Am 8:6). It is expressed by the using of the term נעלים ("a pair of sandals"). Another accusation, or better thought of as a packet of injustice, is that there is a dishonest practice of trading, particularly using crooked weights and measures in business as seen in the succeeding verses (Am 8:5-6). Thus, by elaborating the wrongdoings of the people involved in trading, the prophet proves that they are in moral as well as spiritual decline.

As a consequence, they will be punished by YHWH (8:7-14). It is interesting that the prophet gives even some more elaboration on this punishment. As part of a judgment speech, it contains an announcement (or threat) of punishment (cf Hubbard 1989:102). The extensive using of *waw* (ו) consecutive before the verbs in this section is very unique because it denotes the continuation of actions done in a sequential way, and it usually appears in the form of the imperfect or a future time indicator both in narrative and prophetic texts (see Ross 2001:136-138). The long list of God's actions against the exploiters assumes that the bowl of divine wrath is already full and his patience has reached its limit. The prophet seems to describe the anguish that Israel is to experience on "the judgment day" when YHWH pronounces sentence upon her iniquity (Martin-Achard 1984:60). This is indeed YHWH's response to the audience's position. Therefore, Amos' major concern here is to convince his audience that the cause of the punishment YHWH intends to bring is none other than their social injustices.

5.4 RHETORICAL DISPOSITION

Before discussing the disposition of the unit, it is important to note that the indictment section (Am 8:4-6) is not considered to be a complete one, because one cannot discuss it without including verses 7-8. Considering Hubbard's division of the structure (1989:220), it is argued that the unit may not be limited to verse 6 but it also must include verse 7 (and also 8) in order to form a complete unit. Accordingly, this study takes the account of Amos 8:7 or even up to 8:14, as a

conclusion (or a series of conclusion) of the sub-unit. The structure of the unit is indicated in the following diagram:

[Verse line]	Verse	Strophe	Stanza
שמעו־זאת	a. The prophet announces	A. Introduction	I. Abusive economic actions brings an end to the poor
השאפים אביון	b. Oppressing the people	B. Accusations of abuse	
ולשבית ענוי־ארץ			
לאמר	c. Restless impatience	C. Contents of accusation: Methods of economic abuse	
מתי יעבר החדש ונשבירה שבר			
והשבת ונפתחה־בר			
להקטין איפה ולהגדיל שקל	d. Changing the commercial units		
ולעות מאזני מרמה			
לקנות בכסף דלים	e. Buying people at inferior prices		
ואביון בעבור נעלים			
ומפל בר נשביר			
נשבע יהוה בגטון יעקב			
אם־אשכח לנצח כל־מעשיהם	g. God's oath because of Israel's injustice		
העל זאת לא־תרגז הארץ		D. Consequence of economic abuse	II. God's judgment
ואבל כל־יושב בה	h. The land as sign of God's judgment		
ועלתה כאר כלה ונגרשה ונשקה			
כיאור מצרים			

Observing the above structure, one may see that the structure itself is well arranged by the author. This stanza begins with the prophet appealing to the audience to hear the accusations (A). This can function as an introduction to the rest of verse 4 up to 8. He then continues with the contents of the indictment which contains first accusations of oppressing the needy (B). In the next strophe (C), he listed the methods of abusing honest merchant rules, dishonesty in buying the victims by merchants and finally cheating with the products they sell. This can be considered as the body of the speech which forms an alternating pattern: people (v.4), commerce (5), people (6a) and commerce (6b). As a result (stanza II), in conclusion, the abusers will reap the harvest of what they have sown. Therefore, this structure has three essential elements: introduction, accusation and retribution which equally match with the structure of complete rhetorical elements, such as *exordium*, *narratio*, *probatio* and *peroratio*.

The unit is introduced by the prophet with an *exordium*, as stated in phrase שמעו־זאת ("Hear this!"). Such a phrase may not only function as an opening, or a new beginning, which marks "the abrupt shift in genre from narrative back to

prophetic discourse" (Dorsey 1999:284) but also as a demand to listen what will be said. The word זאת ("this") logically refers to what follows (as also seen in Am 3:1: 4:1; and 5:1), the indictments themselves (see Hammershaimb 1970:121).

Furthermore, such a word may function as the designation for what is to be heard, and it is also found in other several texts in prophetic literatures, such as Micah 3:9 and in the developed call to receive instruction in Hosea 5:1 and Joel 1:12 (cf Wolff 1977:326). It is necessary to note that the absence of the mentioning of the name of YHWH after this phrase causes this judgment oracle to be thought of as a general comprehensive indictment, which according to Paul (1991:256), it must include both the accusation (Am 8:4-6) and later the threat of punishment (8:7-14).

This opening points to the object of the accusation. The prophet makes a statement (*narratio*) that they were השאפים ("the ones trampling"). Accordingly, he addresses a group of Israelites who have taken advantage of others for economic gain (cf Dempsey 2000:20). The observation of the text, however, indicates that when they were doing this there is a tendency among these people for committing crime, because the participle השאפים is derived from a verb that means "to crush" or "to trample upon" (BDB:983), or in a Jewish OT commentary it also meant "to swallow up" (Rosenberg 1991:158).

It is supported by the fact that the objects of this action are human beings, particularly אביון—differing with its parallel עניים ("the oppressed") in Amos 2:6-7—that more closely relates to the concept of "the needy" (see the explanation of the same term in section 3.1 [pp. 64-65] of this chapter). It is also important to note that the word השאפים itself is in the form of active participle which is commonly used to describe "a continuing action" (Bornemann 1998:73). Thus, the prophet seems to emphasize an action which is continuously done by the economic practitioners in terms of exploiting needy people.

In addition, he directs the accusation to the same people who also לשבית ענוי־ארץ ("do away with the poor of the land"). The word לשבית connotes that this is the result of the first action (Am 8:4a), since this is used in a Hiphil infinitive form. In connection to this, here we have a form that needs more attention. Since this verb literarily means "to cause to cease" or "to put an end to" (BDB:991) it may be thought of as an action of killing or exterminating. Nevertheless, it is not the case because, as Stuart writes, "There is no suggestion that the exploiters were trying to kill off the impoverished. The infinitive ל can certainly have such a force, but logic suggests that people would not seek to eliminate their source of income" (1987:384). It describes that "the destruction of the poor is the purpose of the trampling of the needy" (De Waard & Smalley 1979:162) and it is specifically done through forceful and shameless treatment by the merchants upon them as seen in the next verse (Am 8:5). In addition, the infinitive plus *waw* (ו), following a verb, expresses an idea of intention, effort, or being in the act of (as GKC §114f indicated; cf Niehaus 1992:470). The crime or sin exists down deep in the hearts of these people, as deep as their wrong motives in exploiting others who were unfortunate.

With the word לאמר ("to say") introducing the body of the speech (*probatio*) in Amos 8:5, the prophet directly and elaborately describes the crimes of the merchants. He begins the content of his message by explaining the negative attitude of this group of people towards religious things: מתי יעבר החדש . . . והשבת ("when will the New Moon be over . . . and the Sabbath"). As known from Israel's Law and traditions, the Israelites had to observe the Sabbath in conjunction with the New Moon (Ex 23:12; 34:21; 20:8; 2Ki 4:23; Is 1:13f; Hs 2:11). Both days were times for cessation from normal work (see Mays 1969:144).

However, the question raised by these people implies a negative response toward it. They are irritated by the length of the day leaving them in a position where trade is impossible. Those days of "stop-work" surely irritated the business circles who were in a hurry to continue to sell their merchandize (cf Martin-Achard 1984:58-59). It is noticable that while observing religious rituals, their

thoughts were not directed towards YHWH as the focus of worship but rather to themselves because the *leitmotif* is to make money, as stated in the following phrases ונשבירה שבר ("that we may sell grain") and ונפתחה־בר ("that we may market wheat"). The prophet's point here is clear: "the merchants are so greedy that they cannot wait to open shop, thus being incapable of enjoying the respite from business granted by holidays" (Hayes 1988:209).

In a more specific way, the prophet elaborates on the merchants' actual injustices (Am 8:5b). It is more proper to call these "abusive economic actions." First of all, it is spelled out by phrases such as להקטין איפה ("skimping the measure"), ולהגדיל שקל ("and boosting the price"), and ולעות מאזני מרמה ("and cheating with dishonest scales"). It is an action of "falsifying weights and measures the commercial transactions [that] could result in a substantial gain for the seller" (Smith 1989:254). The first phrase indicates that if the seller uses the volume measure איפה, a unit of dry measure about eight gallons (22 litres), the customer will be given less than they have paid for. In this connection, the next phrases (ולהגדיל שקל ולעות מאזני מרמה) explain why this action is absolutely wrong. Rosenberg (1991:159) explains this phrase, "the איפה with which the merchants sell the grain, they make smaller, and the weight with which they weigh the money they receive for it, they make larger." In other words, the economic abuse is clearly expressed in these three descriptions, how sellers were unfairly increasing their profits through dishonest trade in basic foodstuffs at the expense of the non-farming urban populace who would pay almost any price for their food (see Stuart 1987:384).

These dishonest practices, of course, were specifically forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Lv 19:35-36; Dt 25;13-15). The legal materials in the Israelite law warned against having separate sets of weights for buying and selling. It thus says that it is not only a matter of common sense for people to hold to these rules, but it is also a spiritual matter because in dealing with daily business, YHWH requires just weights and measures. The violation against divine law is a rebellion against him, and basically it is an act of stealing other's belonging, as Mays (1969:144) argues, "At root the practice was a breach of the commandments against stealing (Ex

20:15)." As a matter of fact, in the excavations at Tirza, shops were found dating to the eight century BCE which had two sets of weighs, one for buying and one for selling (cf Mays 1969:144). Dishonesty in buying and selling, overall, seems to have been a common problem in the eighth century.

Other prophets, such as Hosea (Hs 12:7), Micah (Mi 6:9-11), and later Ezekiel (Ezk 45:9-15), were also dealing with the same issue. It seems that such practices are not only prohibited by law, but is also attacked by the prophets. They condemned the using of wrong איפה because it was against the principle of justice and truth, and toward this YHWH would take an action of punishment. In addition, it is condemned in the wisdom writings (Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Jb 31:6). Honesty in the marketplace was also a concern of Wisdom instruction (Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:10; 20:23). Thus, the practice of despising false or deceptive scales is criticized for it will result essentially to stealing what belongs to another person. In other words, by perverting scales the business people make themselves deceitful.

Another expression of social injustice occurs in the Israelite community, as seen in Amos 8:6, לקנות בכסף דלים ואביון בעבור נעלים ("buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals") and ומפל בר נשביר ("selling even the sweepings with the wheat"). According to Finley (1990:259), this verse used to be thought of as an insertion, or at least, a rearrangement (as Wolff [1977:322] proposed) of the text, because it interrupts the flow of the contents. The action of selling "the refuse of the wheat" is in direct juxtaposition with the tampering with weights and standards. Arguing against such a view, it is a mistake to bring these clearly related materials closer together by transposing verse 6b into verse 5, as seen in Wolff's proposal, because it shows that these people (the merchants) regarded cereals or wheat and human being equal as stocks for sale (cf Andersen & Freedman 1989:804).

Moreover, such an ancient practice in selling bad merchandise as good stuff is inhuman. Since the poor must have foodstuffs for life survival, they can not avoid buying bad merchandise ("an inferior product," a mixture of chaff and debris

leftover from winnowing [King 1988:114]) from these merchants. They are forced to buy and to consume such inferior products, whether they like it or not. The poor seem to be in an entrapment and they can not find a way out from this situation. This practice is also indirectly related to an active slave trade (see Lv 25:39-43). In order to live, those who can not buy the foodstuffs will be forced to put themselves into slavery. Carrol R (1992:31) writes, "the poor falling into abject dependency on merchants: the inability to pay in the market place results in their being 'bought'—that is, their losing financial independence by being reduced into 'slave-like bondage' to the upper class." Therefore, this arrangement of sequence, rhetorically, may create powerful effect of condemnation because such practices are not only dishonest but also inhumane.

At the end of the unit, the prophet delivers a conclusion (*peroratio*) started with the phrase נשבע יהוה בגאון יעקב ("the Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob") as seen in Amos 8:7. Such a phrase is quite peculiar in the Old Testament, because YHWH "never swears by something or somebody else, but always by himself or by something which is identical with himself" (De Waard & Smalley 1979:165). However, it refers to the divine oath as has already occurred in Amos 6:8 (cf 4:2) that declares the irrevocability of the judgment that follows. Jeremias (1998:148) insists that this oath guarantees that God will continue to be mindful of this sin; that is, the sin will be recalled in full when the perpetrators themselves are punished (cf Is 22:14). Jeremias (1998:149) adds that the using of the terms "the pride of Jacob" creates "a profound irony which means that by his world dominion for the benefit of Israel, dominion which the people of God, by absurdly overestimating their own potential, distort into 'arrogance' and thereby forfeit once and for all." Thus, the sentence may mean that YHWH swears by whom Israel should glorify, that is, in his own name as the opposite of the people's swearing in the name of other deities.

The content of the oath is אם־אשכח לנצח כל־מעשיהם ("I will never forget anything they have done"). It is unusual because this is the only time the expression of לנצח ("not forgetting") is used as a threat where instead of not forgetting divine promise: YHWH says that the people's sins will not be forgotten (cf Is 43:25; see

Gowan 1996:417). In the same vein, Jensen (2006:89) argues that the words express the degree to which his anger has been provoked. In this part, the Lord would not tolerate injustice acts within the covenant community, which was to be a model of justice and honesty, and he solemnly vowed to bring severe judgment upon the land (Am 8:7) (cf Chisholm 1990:102).

Additionally, from a literary perspective, Paul (1991:260) maintains that the prophet may very well be phrasing the oath in an ironic manner where the Lord swears by the very attribute of the people that he has formerly condemned (Am 6:8), that is by the same pride and arrogance that are exhibited in their very words cited in the previous verses. Therefore, rhetorically the oath itself may be thought of as a kind of sarcasm used by the prophet in order to declare that whoever mistreated fellow humans, including YHWH's own people, will be punished.

5.5 RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES

In delivering his message, the prophet Amos uses different kinds of rhetorical techniques. He used these devices in order to persuade his audience. Below discussions will explore the said literary devices in a thorough way.

5.5.1 A Call of Attention

The prophet begins his message with a call of attention. It can be seen in the using of the formula שמעו־זאת ("Hear this!"). As seen in Amos 3:1, 4:1 and 5:1, this formula may be thought of as a solemn command that frequently occurs in contexts where the translational equivalent "obey" is the most appropriate translation. It implies that the word must be understood in the sense of "listen with attention or give heed to" (cf Niehaus 1992:375). Additionally, in order to emphasize the seriousness of this call, Andersen and Freedman (1989:802), indicates that this appeal, which begins as an exhortation or accusation, may have links with the term "woes." The reason behind this is that the context, vocabulary,

and participial constructions of this formula are closely related to the issue of vv. 4-6 and to 2:7 and other statements throughout the book that contain such a term. Therefore, upon hearing such a call of attention, the audience must pay "extra" attention to what the prophet says.

5.5.2 Oath Formula

To support such a solemn charge, as it usually occurs in the prophetic literature, the prophet used an oath formula. Hammershaimb (1970:125) argues that the unit contains the words of the prophet against the rich. In the next verse (v. 7), he has YHWH underline with an oath that the divine will not leave their treatment of the poor unpunished. In the same vein, Gowan (1996:416) insists that this herald's cry was introduced in a particularly solemn way because of its connection with a divine oath (v. 7; cf 4:2; 6:8; for similar uses of the oath, Jr 44:26; 49:12-13).

Such an oath formula, as seen in the sentence לנצח נשבע יהוה בגאון יעקב אם־אשכח כל־מעשיהם, refers to YHWH who has sworn, not by his holiness (Am 4:2) nor by himself (Am 6:8), but by the "pride of Jacob." Thus, there is a close relationship between the divine oath with injustice done to the poor, where He will never forget (literally, "if I ever forget" [see Niehaus 1992:472]) the deeds of his people. The oath itself has its own rhetorical purpose, to show divine cynicism and permanent opposition against Israel because, according to Chisholm (1990:102, "Here, in biting sarcasm, He swore by something just as permanent and unchanging—Israel's arrogant trust in her own strength (cf 6:8b)."

5.5.3 Accusation

In this unit, the prophet uses the language of accusation. Wolff (1977:324) indicates that it contains a remarkably broad indictment, paired with an announcement of punishment, and it is a part of a complete judgment speech. It is also clear that when using the third person language in a participle absolute

השאפים (literally "you who trample"), he pointed straight to the dishonest business people addressed in this charge. De Waard and Smalley (1979:162) infer that "it may be better to indicate who the you refers to by saying 'you merchants.'"

Interestingly, one may observe that the general accusation is not limited to a court setting because, in this section, the accusation is used in one of many settings where ruthless actions were taken against the defenseless (cf Smith 1989:253). Amos here used a general form of judgment pronouncement with a lack of "blood and fire" as it usually occurred in the oracles of the OAN (cf Hubbard 1989:221). In addition, it is not just reproachful language but also disrespectful. If it is related to what the prophet said in Amos 5:8, it is clear that the text mockingly portrays these merchants and traders because in everyday market transactions, they were engaged in deceptive practices (see Pleins 2001:372-73). Rhetorically, it seems that the author intentionally set a situation where the audience will feel guilty for what they have done.

5.5.4 Sevenfold Structure

In order to present the completeness of the economic practitioners' (in this case, the merchants) sins, Amos used seven pairs or seven fold structures in this unit. The structure can be seen as follows:

השאפים אביון	trampling the needy
לשבית ענוי־ארץ	bringing to an end the poor
ונפתחה־בר להקטין איפה	reducing the bushel's size
ולהגדיל שקל	enlarging the shekel weight
ולעות מאזני מרמה	defrauding by deceitful scales
בעבור נעלים	buying the needy for a pair of sandal
ומפל בר נשביר	selling the refuse of wheat

The unit, along with Amos 2:6-8, contains a list of seven sins of the wealthy (cf Dorsey 1999:284). The reason for this conclusion is based on the use of the seven verbs that are found the unit. It is fair enough to say that because of its

completeness of sinful acts, the prophet through Amos 8:4-6 grounds the "end of Israel" with a single, albeit wholly grievous, sin (cf Jeremias 1998:147).

In this relation, it is also proper if one pays attention to the result of these sevenfold sins. After the oath formula, in a sense of crisis (cf Brit 2002:37-38), the prophet continued to declare the totality of the coming disaster by using these sevenfold verbs of divine destruction, such as, trembling (earthquake), invasion (an imagery indicates a coming flood of judgment, in the form of invading nation, such as Assyria [see Niehaus 1992:472]), darkness, mourning, famine, drought, and massacre (Am 8:9-14). According to Limburg, this stylistic device can be called a "seven-plus-climax" sequence and this may mean that Israel is totally accused and the effects of her punishment will also be total (Limburg 1987:220; see also 1988:121).

5.5.5 Chiasm

In a minimum way, the prophet uses a chiastic form to expose the corruption of the business practitioners. The reason to say this is that this is the only chiastic structure that can be identified in the indictment part (Am 8:4-6):

5a	A ונשבירה שבר that we may sell grain	B ונפתחה־בר that we may market wheat
6b	B′ בר wheat	A′ נשביר we sell

The first line (A) focuses on the verb ונשבירה (*wĕnašbîrâ*) which is also in parallel with the same verb (*našbîr*) in the end of this section (A′ in v. 6b). The noun "wheat" (בר or ***bār***) occurred twice in the middle part of the section (B and B′) and creatively links the verbs (A-A′) together. Accordingly, the last line is in a chiastic arrangement with the preceding statements in 5a, where the verbs are first and the objects last, and as Andersen and Freedman (1989:692) indicate that "two of three words are the same as or nearly identical with words in both parts of 5a, showing that it is a resumption and a conclusion (which often is the function of

chiasm)." Through this structure, one may see the author's intention in leading the audience to focus on a certain kind of commodity that can be used as an instrument for doing economic injustice.

5.5.6 A Quotation of the Accused

Another important technique employed by the prophet is the use of a quotation (Am 8:5-6). It is a method of direct citation of the audience's own words: מתי יעבר החדש ונשבירה שבר והשבת ונפתחה־בר ("When will the new moon be over, so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may market?") by the prophet. Surprisingly, these words are turned (presented) back by him to those who have spoken. Accordingly, Amos either heard people saying similar things or puts words in their mouth on the basis of the behavior he has observed (see Smith 1989:253). Whatever the process was, it is clear that the focus of the citation is to address the deceitfulness in the business of trading grain done by the audience. As a result, Wolff (1977:326) calls this method "a citation of the accused" which means that "in their own speech is to be found the proof of their injustice." In other words, it seems that the prophet quoted "the guilty person's own words in the indictment so that they actually condemn themselves" (Simundson 2005:226).

In a literary sense, as Mays (1969:143) infers, "the quotation is a favorite tactic of Amos for bringing to light the deeds of his audience (2:12; 4;1; 5:14; 6:2, 13; 8:14; 9:10); it is a self incriminating testimony to the crime which has provoked YHWH's terrible oath." In the same perspective, Simundson (2005:151) argues that "one of Amos methods for carrying on an argument with adversaries is to quote their own words back at them." Rhetorically, this kind of literary device shows that the prophet knew his audience very well and made them present to the reader and it underscores his message that the people brought about their own condemnation by their own actions (cf Cook 2005:60-61). Thus, by using this tactic, the prophet was probably trying to provide decisive incriminating evidence (see Paul 1991:257) in order to accuse the unethical business of the merchants.

5.5.7 Ethical Reasoning

The prophet also uses ethical reasoning in his message. The exposure of the merchants' unethical business practices is delineated clearly by him. He describes their corrupt employment of weights and measures, for example, making the *ephah* (a dry measure) small (להקטין איפה), and the *shekel* (a weight used to measure the purchase price) large (ולהגדיל שקל). Chisholm (1990:101) explains that "by then altering the scales (e.g., by bending the crossbar) and mixing chaff with the grain, the merchant was able to increase his profit even more." However, these practices will not be left without punishment. He then continues that the Israelites' corrupt and malevolent practices stir up an equally intense action on the part of YHWH.

Consequently, according to Paul (1991:259), "The arrogant quotation of the entrepreneurs receive its due response in the words of the Lord, who swears, 'I will never forget (אם־אשכח לנצח) any of their actions!' (כל־מעשיהם)." The logical consequence behind this ethical reasoning is that the merchants will surely reap what they have sown in the past, especially their unethical business practices. To conclude this, Dempsey (2000:20) pinpoints that "injustice will not go without reprimand; unethical behavior is exposed."

5.5.8 Judicial Rhetoric

Finally, as a whole, the unit can be categorized as judicial rhetoric. Since the main theme of the unit points to the accusation of commercial deception done by greedy merchants, it goes well with the concept of judgment addressed to them. Amos speaks both a prophetic indictment and a pronouncement of punishment (cf Simundson 2005:226) in a more intensive way (see the use of numerous infinitives in the unit) in order to show that YHWH was dealing with the human predicament, that is, human beings as disposable goods for other human beings as a means of increasing wealth (see Jeremias 1998:148). It is supported by the fact that the language used in this indictment (Am 8:4-6) may be considered as the

language of the courtroom, as if the judge in a court of law judges past actions while he is primarily concerned with justice that must prevail. Again, YHWH here is described as the supreme judge who accuses some Israelites, and particularly the deceitful business people, for their unethical practices done in the past and present. The prophet Amos speaks on behalf of the source of all utterances, the very self of YHWH.

5.6 REVIEW OF ANALYSIS

It seems that in this particular unit (Am 8:4-8), the prophet Amos intends to appeal to his audience by exposing the abusive economic actions done by a certain group (or groups) of people and its end results. It is clear that, in terms of its theme and structure, this unit is separated from the previous unit (Am 8:1-3) which deals with the last of the prophet's visions. However, this cannot be separated from the following units (Am 8:7-10; 8:11-14 and, for some, even up to 9:1-15), because it mainly deals with the results of these actions. As a result, in order to present a complete thought, the prophet Amos puts altogether the given unit of indictment and another unit of judgment. In a prophetical literary study, it is known as a complete judgment speech or oracle.

Since the beginning of the unit, the prophet relates the abusive economic actions of the merchants with religious rituals. Although, it may be thought that he was dealing here merely with improper business practices, Chisholm (1990:102) points out that "these greedy merchants impatiently longed for the day to end so that they might resume their dishonest, though highly profitable, practices," their saying מתי יעבר החדש . . . והשבת ("when will the New Moon over . . and the Sabbath") seems to point to another indicator, namely a close relationship between economic and religious matters. Finley (1990:300) argued that this complaint "ties together the two emphases in the book on social injustice and an ineffective religious formalism," and it reveals the fact that they care neither for their religion nor for their fellow Israelites. As a result, the main problem is not merely the economic issue but also the religious, or even, the spiritual one.

The prophet employs certain kinds of literary devices in dealing with this particular sin, that is, religious-economic abuse. First of all, he uses the "Hear this" formula. It is a "direct candour" (Dempsey 2000:20) that is not only delivered to call for attention (cf Limburg 1988:120) from his audience but also to establish the authority of his speech. It seems that he was proposing "the normative presupposition of the indictment" for he is not speaking for himself but on behalf of the covenant law, the very commandment of YHWH, in opposition to the exploiters of the disadvantaged members of society (cf Mays 1967:143). Once the authority has been established, in order to support this solemn charge, he also employed the oath formula. Although this device is not analyzed in the unit, the related following text (v. 7) shows that such a formula has been considered as "a divine solemn vow" in order to bring judgment upon the land. It was YHWH who swore by the "pride of Jacob" showing cynicism and permanent opposition against the abusive economic actions that brings an end to the poor (see Chisholm 1990:102).

He, then, uses a literary device called a sevenfold structure. Aside from its function as indicator of an independent unit, such a structure is used to indicate the completeness of the sins of the Israelites, for instance, trampling the needy, bringing to an end the poor, reducing the bushel's size, enlarging the shekel weight, defrauding by deceitful scales to buy the poor by silver, buying the needy for a pair of sandal, and selling the refuse of wheat. This points to the fact that there was in existence of what Hobbes calls "*Homo Homini Lupus*," a condition where a class of urban elite were persecuting the poor. It may point specifically to the middle class merchants who sold and loaned wheat to the poor for planting in times of famine as it was used to be exercised by a rent capitalism system (see Huffmon 1983:100-103 and Lang 1982:58-59 as exposed by Smith [1989:252]). Therefore, as far as the prophet is concerned, as is illustrated in the sevenfold list of sins, it is appropriate to think that these abusive economic actions are very serious crime in the sight of YHWH.

Against such a practice, and in a minimum way, Amos also uses a chiastic structure to point out the means used by the merchants in their abusive economic

practices. Since one of the functions of chiasm is to direct attention to the central point, or, as Hayes and Holladay (1982:73-74) calls it "the progression of an author's general thought and specific emphasis" the prophet used it for the same purpose, namely "selling the wheat." However, this practice was unusual because it involves an exploited action which ultimately resulted in enslavement (v. 6; compare to slavery of Am 2:6-7). Accordingly, the scenario probably unfolded in the following way: the poor could not pay for grain bought to consume or sow; they ran into debt, piled up due interest payments, and had to sell themselves into bondage to work off their liabilities (cf. Lang 1982:56-57). Moreover, Finley (1990:301) says, "Not only do the merchants use false weights, measures and scales to draw the poor into a relationship of dependence; they even dare to sell that part of the wheat that ought to be thrown away as of no value." Rhetorically speaking, it is a genius of the prophet to attract the attention of the audience to the main issue, the economic injustice through the selling of a commodity such as wheat or grain.

The most important literary device used by Amos is "quoting the enemy's sayings" or "quoting what the accused have said." It is actually the audience's words: "When will the new moon be over, so that we may sell grain; and the Sabbath, so that we may market?" The prophet just quoted it and presented it back to those who have spoken it. The issue here is quite clear that what was in those merchants' mind while attending worship service was not God but only how to gain more financial profit by deceitfully selling their goods. According to Limburg (1988:120), this quotation technically is framed with reference to "selling," indicating the first and the last concerns of those addressed (vv. 5-6). In a more elaborated explanation, Rosenberg (1991:159), based on the interpretation of Rashi, argues that this act of "swallowing up" done by businessmen is an anticipation of the time when the grain will be expensive and sold to the poor with interest because those who store away grain can charge higher prices for it and compel the poor to surrender their fields for lower prices, and as a result they will take their fields. In a rhetorical sense, this sarcastic quotation may function like a boomerang for the merchants who are eager "to open markets so they can begin cheating people" (Finley 1990:301).

Additionally, the purpose of using this method can also be considered as a sign of opposition from the prophet. The reason for saying this is that quoting the enemy's saying is one of the methods of carrying on an argument with adversaries (cf. Simundson 2005:151). The motive of doing it is understandable. Besides convicting his audiences in terms of their own sinful plan, he accuses and condemns them for the damaging results of their action, for debt-slavery (cf Chirichigno 1993:145-185). In this context, Pleins (2001:370) proposes that "the opposition Amos raised was not against the system of debt servitude per se; rather, Amos maintained that the grounds upon which many found themselves sold into slavery were illegitimate because 'they had only incurred debt for some minor necessity of life.'" Amos had the same passion God had for defending the poor and the weak so that he raised his fist against such an abusive economic motif and behavior.

Abusive economic practices done by particular merchants are indeed ethically (as well as theologically) wrong. The reason behind it is that these are closely related to violence. Hostteter (1994:86) argues that this kind of social injustice practice may be considered as violence because some business persons paid no heed to the concerns of the peasant population but exploited them. This is the violence of gain at any cost expressed in this statement: "We will make the *ephah* small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances . . . selling the sweepings of the wheat" (vv. 5, 6). Such is called "trampling on the needy and bringing the poor of the land to ruin" (v. 4). In the same vein, Pleins (2001:368) believes that Amos was acutely aware that such actions, questionable economic interests, dominated Israelite society, displacing ethical values rooted in the Yahwist faith. Thus, any abusive economic practice that manipulated and exploited the poor and the weak was considered unethical for it stands against the law of God and his characteristic fondness of justice and righteousness.

Moreover, there is a sense of ethical indictment in Amos 8:4-6, especially if it is seen in the light of Amos 8:7-8. It is a direct response to the accusation in 8:4-6. Accordingly, God swears and binds himself to judgment because "of their actions." God will not pass over or forgive their sins any longer (8:2); he will

never ever forget how they have brutally mistreated the poor (cf Smith 1989:254). It seems that the weight of the sin of the merchants is "amplified to a virtually unsurpassable degree the solemn divine oath" (Jeremias 1998:148). Paul (1991:259) insisted that "The Israelites' corrupt and malevolent practices evoke an equally vehement reaction on the part of the Deity." In the same vein, Mays (1969:145) argues that "the invocation of curse invoked with what vehemence YHWH reacts to the market of Samaria." On the one hand, whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. On the other hand, YHWH himself is responsible to keep his words that people's sins will not be forgotten. Thus, this oath is spoken of as a threat. The actions which follow are what God swears he will do (cf Smith 1989:255), to punish the sinners for their abusive deeds.

As a consequence, God raised his hands against these people (Am 8:8, 9-14). In the book of Amos, present in all major sections of the book (from 3:3 to 8:3), the indictments of sins are always followed by punishment in a balanced way (cf De Waard & Smalley 1979:161). Uniquely, the actual punishment here is presented in the form of rhetorical question (v.8), assuming an agreement that Israel's behavior must lead to terrible consequences (cf Simudson 2005:228). Besides such catastrophes that will strike the land, as a consequence of rejecting the word of God spoken through the prophet (vv. 11-12), the people will experience the complete cessation of the divine word in Israel (see Kizhakkeyil 2006:99). According to Smith (1989:254) the reasons for such punishment is clear that "because God cares for the poor and the weak, because God has redeemed his people from such slavery, and because this action is contrary to the law of God, the nation is ripe for judgment. Its end is near."

CHAPTER SIX

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

Having analyzed the relevant texts rhetorically, this chapter now tries to construct a theology of social justice from the book of Amos. In contrast with the modern approach, for instance, Barr's proposal in his work *The concept of biblical theology: An Old Testament perspective* (1999), begins with contemporary problems and then looks to the Bible as one of a number of factors to be considered in solving the identified problems (see Bellis 2001:234). This approach is in accordance with the formal and traditional approach of doing a biblical theology—in this case, rhetorical approach—by departing from the interpretation of the biblical text(s) and then inductively arriving at the formulation of the theological conclusion(s). According to Jung (1988:168), such an approach may be called "the revelation-historical method," that is, studying the Old Testament theology on the basis of what the Old Testament (the Hebrew texts) itself witnesses about its contents.

However, before proceeding to the construction stage, it is important to explain briefly the end purpose of the theological method used here. In the introductory chapter of this research, it was said that my research will similarly follow the same line as Brueggemann's approach, particularly in his usage of rhetorics to construct an Old Testament theology. The different voices of the Old Testament may be read as different manners of speech about and by God. Meadowcroft (2006:42) asserts that Brueggemann bundles all of these types of speech into the central metaphor of the courtroom. The different voices of the Old Testament are then read as different voices in a courtroom drama. The gradual disclosure of God

through the rhetoric of scripture occurs partly by means of what is called "counter-testimony" and "unsolicited testimony," his denotation of those parts of scripture that seem at odds with Israel's "core testimony." In my consideration, his method is more appropriate, than the alternative rational method, as a heuristic tool for doing biblical theology (cf Olson 1998:171).

Admittedly Brueggemann's theology is done through a rhetorical process of interpretation, a rhetorical enterprise, because "Old Testament theology is essentially a rhetorical analysis of the actual, concrete utterance of the text to see what Israel says about YHWH and how it is said" (Brueggemann 2002[a]:428). The *leitmotif* behind his approach is clear, "the God of Old Testament theology as such lives in, with, and under rhetorical enterprise of this text, and nowhere else and in no other way" (Brueggemann 1997:66). Therefore, paying attention to the artistic details of the text—as suggested by this approach—is very important because, as Brueggemann says, "this approach focuses not upon the 'cognitive outcome' of the text (though there finally are cognitive outcomes) but upon the artistic process that operates in the text and generated an imagined 'world' within the text" (2002:360).

In dealing with the purpose of constructing a biblical (Old Testament) theology, one should not stop at the analysis of the text but rather go further to the issue of ideology or theology. For one who wants to study the word of God, a question should be raised, "What vested interest is operative in this text?" The answer may be a truth claim offered in good faith, or it might be a theological conviction stated with passion, or it might be a bad faith assertion serving political, economic interests; but, the purpose of the question is "to help one consider the ways in which ideological forces are at work in our best theological claims and in our most faithful interpretation" (cf Brueggemann 2002[b]:362). It means that at the end of all analysis of the text, one should arrive at a central theological theme of the Hebrew Bible, God himself and his passion for human beings. It is a task of determining the theology of a "given text." However, unlike Brueggemann who puts much emphasis on the "utteredness" of the text at the expense of ontology, discussion in this chapter will take a position that is similar to what Bellis asserts

"The text itself points to a God whose power is not dependent on any human utterance or other human form of power" (2001:233).

In this connection, the implication is that the artistry of biblical text (exposed by rhetorical analysis) and theology are closely related. Brueggemann (2002:362) proposes that there are three elements present in it: the force of imagination, the hosting of intertextuality, and the pondering of ideology, of which the first two can be attained from rhetorical analysis. Unfortunately, some do not believe in such a relationship. Brueggemann, in his article "At the mercy of Babylon: A subversive rereading of the empire" (1991:17-19), found it even in the work of Muilenburg, a pioneer in biblical rhetoric, as he says, "neglecting the inevitable political power ("ideological pondering") of all rhetoric." Although some became sceptical about such a relationship and questioned, "Isn't rhetorical analysis so enamoured of style that it neglects theology?" Trible (1994:233-235) asserts and shows in her work (*Rhetorical criticism: Context, method and the book of Jonah*) that both are closely related to each other, and a biblical theology can be constructed properly from rhetorical criticism.

Following the above propositions, my research will thus deal with the issue of theology, and as far as this research is concerned, propose a theology of social justice in the book of Amos. Under the governing question, "whose vested interest is voiced here?" my theological proposal will focus on YHWH, through the prophet Amos, and his passion (interest) for social justice. Although, the words studied came through to the prophet, it is YHWH who spoke through his messenger. His passion was caught by the prophet and then passed it on to the audience (the Israelites) through prophetic speech (in the mode of rhetoric) in the context of social injustice. Brueggemann argues that "in an endless variety of textual utterances, Israel's testimony is to the effect that YHWH's passion for justice, for the well being of the human community, and for the *shalom* of the earth will refuse to come to terms with the power of death, no matter its particular public form or its ideological garb" (1997:710; see also Knierims' [1984:43] emphasis on the dominion of YHWH in justice and righteousness as the "ultimate vantage point" of Old Testament theology).

What is more, the use of the whole method of rhetoric, the analysis of the text and its theology, should finally arrive at the response of the audience. It is based on the very purpose of the use of rhetoric, that is, not only to state competing ideological claims (cf Brueggemann 1997:64), but also to seek intentionally to appeal to its audience in a convincing way. The prophet Amos, through his prophetic rhetoric, purposively seeks to stir the audience's feeling of fear. Thus the impact is on emotion and passion rather than on reason because they can move people to do or act as a response to what has been spoken (see Gitay 1994:222). A good example of this is the significant terminology used in the texts analyzed, "to seek YHWH" (Am 5:1-17). This cry is a compelling factor for salvation or deliverance that YHWH proposed and it should be responded to properly by the audience in the midst of the coming punishment and catastrophe, as Amos announces, "A lion has roared! Who will not fear?" (Am 3:8).

6.1 RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

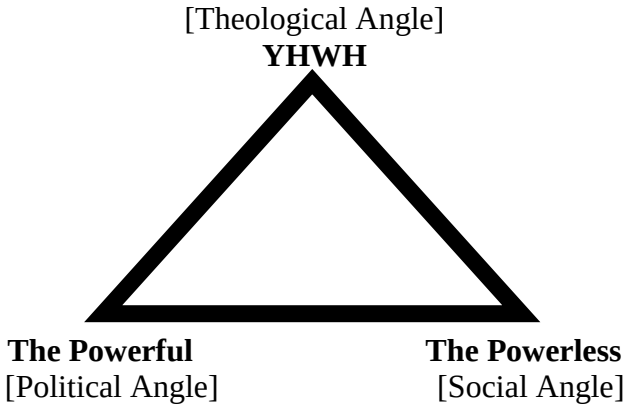
This section specifically deals with aspects of social justice, that is, factors that form a theology of social justice in the book of Amos. As theology is displayed in the developing relationship between God with the world (in general, the nations and the created order), and in particular with the people of God (cf Sailhamer 1995:13-15), the idea of social justice must also be understood in the light of this relationship, especially "the covenanted relationship" between God and his people, and the relationship among his people. Donahue (1977:68-69) asserts that, as it is seen throughout the Old Testament, social justice is overwhelmingly related to the idea of relationship and the life of the community; thus justice in biblical thought concerns "fidelity to the demands of relationship," to God and to the neighbour. In the same vein, Knierim (1984:36; from a canonical perspective, referring to Childs 1978:46-55) insists that the Old Testament, strictly speaking, does not speak about YHWH, but rather it speaks about the relationship between him and the reality of human's life. Brueggemann (1997:735), considering Israel as YHWH's partner, also emphasizes that the burst of YHWH into world history,

as a theological *novum*, is to establish justice as a core focus of YHWH's life in the world and Israel's life with him. Thus, the concept of justice in the context of the YHWH-Israel relationship is determined by the human relationship which honours YHWH.

In the book of Amos, it is noticable that divine-human and human-human relationship stands in the centre of social justice. Conversely, it also must be admitted that such a relationship is described in a more negative sense in Amos. One observes a lot of tension when dealing with this matter in the book, for example, by doing social injustice the people of Israel said "no" to YHWH, and, in reverse, YHWH says "no" to them by announcing the coming judgment (cf Hubbard 1989:108; cf Noble 1997:329-340). According to Cook (2005:61-62), the central message of Amos has two dimensions: God's intimate involvement with the people and the people's unfaithful response to God's care, especially in worshipping with empty gestures and engaging in unjust, oppressive dealings with one another. Therefore, although tension existed in the relationship between YHWH and Israel, the ideal was that the issue of social justice should be viewed in a positive light from a divine-human relational perspective.

In this regard, to narrow down the discussion, this relationship will be viewed from the model I am about to propose: "a triangular relational model of social justice," as can be seen in the following diagram:

A Triangular Relational Model of Social Justice



This triangular model provides a more dynamic inter-relationship ("trialectics") between the angles. As used in a prophecy, the genre of the body of the texts in the book of Amos shows a strong "dialectical" element (cf Houston 1993:186; cf Carroll 1979:16ff). It thus connotes that the concept of social justice in the book of Amos may be thought of in the framework of the covenant relationship between God-his people and among his people, or specifically the triangular relationship between YHWH, the powerful and the powerless.

The above figure suggests that the function of the YHWH's covenant to his people is relational (Walton 1994:20). The covenant relationship between YHWH and his people is described in a triangle which consists different, and yet interrelated, angles. In the theological angle, YHWH may be thought of as the main and only source of social justice. The other angle, the socio-political one, represents the powerful, such as the officials, the judges, the rich and the merchants—who have all the power to control others and are expected to have a sense of solidarity in living together with others, especially the unfortunate. The last one, the social angle, is "the powerless" (following Limburg's term [1988:92] for those who lack power in society), those who are poor, weak and marginalized. The reason for calling this angle "social" is that the powerless must be taken care of as God (and God's people) granted favour on them. The next discussion intends to elaborate each perspective more comprehensively. In the end, the connection between these points of view will be examined.

6.1.1 YHWH: The Theological Angle

According to Kapelrud (1961:37), modern points of view (such as Meihold's and Löhr's) hold that the idea of God seems to have less character in Amos, for they think that God to Amos was identical with only the ethical standards he preached. In contrast, there are ample proofs given by other studies verifying that Amos' preaching has a deep religious background (cf Kapelrud 1961:38; see also Barstad 1984). Rhetorically, the use of repetitive phrases such as "what the LORD says," "who the LORD is," "seek live" and "seek justice" (Am 5:1-17) creates a

concentric form that functions as focusing or highlighting devices. This forces the audience to ponder on YHWH. The concepts about YHWH in the book of Amos will be discussed in the following cases.

6.1.1.1 YHWH is the God of the Universe

As discussed in previous rhetorical analyses, YHWH is prominently pictured as *God of the universe*. Zimmerli (1995:434) indicates that three different hymnic pieces (Am 4:13; 5:8; 9:5-6) speak of YHWH's creative power, describing it participially, and all climaxing in the phrase, "YHWH is his name." In these pieces, YHWH is described as the Almighty (5:8; 9:6; 4:13; 9:5) as well as the Creator, who is sovereign over mountains and the wind and who condescends to communicate with human beings (4:13). It seems that he manifests himself as the sovereign God of the cosmos who is able to overcome a disobedient people (cf Brueggemann 1997:152).

YHWH does not only have all power to give rain, crops, health and peace (4:6-11), but also to maintain order even in such opposites as heaven and earth, blackness and dawn, night and day, sea and land (cf VanGemeren 1990[a]:132). Moreover, his power is not only seen in creation but also in cosmic destruction he made in order to maintain justice. It is proper to say that he is not only "the Lord who ensures the world order, he is equally able to bring about cosmic cataclysm" (Martin-Achard 1984:43; cf Jeremias 1998:91-92). In other words, the same God who is responsible for creation is also active in the world and may intervene to bring destruction if the behaviour of the people requires it (cf Pfeifer 1984:478-479). The omnipotent God therefore is described as the Creator and controller of the universe as well as the destroyer or the one who strikes down the strong.

One may see that a passage such as Amos 5:1-17 indicates a relationship between YHWH, the Creator and the creature. The chiastic form of the said passage indicates that the focus of the speech is mainly on the doxological part (Am 5:8-9). Its position in the center of the speech implies and the use of the langaguage

of praise and honour may function as a call to realize YHWH as the Creator of the universe. The imperative "hear!" affirms that God has absolute authority over the creature. In this case, the creature must hear and obey what the Creator wants to say.

6.1.1.2 YHWH Concerns and Controls the Nations

If so, it implies that *he is concerned about nations and is able to control them*. The seven sayings directed against other nations (in the oracles against the nations [OAN]) seem to tell us that God is concerned about the events on the international scene (Am 1-2) (cf Lang 1983:76; Raabe 2002:666-667). However, He is not only interested in international politics, but also in the national (local) issues in Israel, having particular concern for the powerless individuals. Limburg (1988:91) says that this "bipolar way of speaking about God, describing God's majesty and might in working in the international scene on the one hand and God's care and mercy in dealing with [the] individual (in a nation) on the other hand." One may notice that the mentioning of other nations surrounding Israel (Am 1-2) suggests that Amos holds the notion of "universalism" (cf Rathinam 2002:725-738), the idea that God's concerns are widespread, that he cares about other nations in addition to Israel, as opposed to "particularism" which presents God as solely concerned with Israel (Zucker 1994:119; cf Kapelrud 1961:38-47).

Amos then makes it clear that YHWH is the God of all nations and that Israel is subject to the same "moral responsibility" (Joyce 1994:221). No nation is able to run away from his absolute control over her. This can be seen in divine utterances spoken through the prophet against the nations (see particulalry Amos' OAN in Am 1:3-2;16). Because of their wrongdoings, treating others inhumanly, all nations mentioned cannot escape God's judgment, much more his own people, Judah and Israel. Using a highly rhetorical skill called "rhetorical entrapment," Amos proclaimed divine judgment that will finally reach its climax in Israel. While the other nations are judged by God on the basis of conscience, the people of God (Judah and Israel) are judged on the basis of revelation. The prophetical

utterances delivered reflect a judicial or a forensic sphere. All the nations mentioned in the OAN seemingly were standing in the presence of the Judge, YHWH, and waiting for a verdict. At the end, through such a rhetorical strategy, Amos, as a mouth-piece of YHWH, declared that they are guilty of violating "the law of YHWH" and deserved to be punished for what they have done. Unexpectedly, the judgment upon Israel was even more severe than any other nation that defies God's demand for justice (cf Simundson 2005:149).

6.1.1.3 YHWH is a Warrior God

In this regard, the oracles against the nations (OAN) also have a nuance that YHWH is *the warrior God* (cf Am 1:3-2:16). It thus suggests that the OAN is connected with war oracles. Hayes (1968:81-92) argues for a "warfare" motif as the original *Sitz im Leben* for the Israelite oracle against the foreign nations. However, in Amos, these oracles become a literary mode, a vehicle of divine judgment, which has the central motif of God as the "Divine Warrior" (Christensen 1975:17). Such a theological motif can be seen clearly in the expressions used in the texts (God kills [2:3; 4:10; 9:1], destroys [2:9; 9:8], and sends fire [1:4, 7, 10, 12; 2:2, 5], pestilence [4:10], and famine [8:11]), where the destructive activity of God is emphasized. In this connection, Gowan (1996:345) asserts, "War dominates the thought of the book, and God is directly involved as the main participant in many passages, with twenty-eight different verbs being used to describe the divine role as warrior and destroyer." Through this kind of oracle, the prophet Amos proclaims a theological cause-effect relationship which the people understand and affirm, and it has a rhetorical effect that hammers home the message in a way which cannot be avoided. God has spoken; the nations have committed great sins; they will be held accountable for their inhumanity to man; God will destroy these centres of power and the leaders who do such things (cf Smith 1989:68-69; see also Dempsey 2000:10).

6.1.1.4 YHWH is the God of the Covenant

YHWH is also *the God of the Covenant*. It is debatable about whether Amos has a covenant frame of thinking (motif) or not in delivering his speech. One may notice that there is no such term used throughout the book of Amos. There is no explicit mentioning about the term "covenant" in this book. However, a closer reading of it shows that while speaking to the people of Israel, Amos seems to demand from Israel social justice based on the book of the Covenant (cf Von Rad 1965 [2]:136; for a recent study, see Sprinkle 1994). Albeit he announces the coming judgment to all Israel's neighbours, the prophet actually underscores the universal character of the Covenant (cf Robertson 2004:206). In the same vein, Mays (1969:7) reminds us that although Amos never speaks directly of a covenant between YHWH and Israel, it must have been some form of the covenant tradition which lay behind and gave content to the relation implied in "Israel my People" (cf 2:9-10). Bergren (1974:182-183) also shows that the words Amos used, particularly in his accusations, reveal several parallels with the Mosaic Law. Many of the details in his announcement of judgment correspond to the covenant curse of judgment threats in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 (Stuart 1987:xxxi-xl). Accordingly, such a covenant contains Israel's first call to social justice (see Malchow 1996:32).

In a more detailed discussion, the issue of social justice in the book of Amos is interconnected with Israel's covenantal laws or codes: to begin with, the Code of the Covenant (Ex 20:22-23:33). The "covenant code," or sometimes called "book of the covenant" (Ex 24:7), was "a portion of an independent legal collection or law code before being incorporated into the Bible" (Sprinkle 1994:27). Originating at the time of the tribal confederacy and reflecting the agricultural life of that period, this code is considered as Israel's earliest text on social justice (cf Malchow1996:21). It deals mainly with instructions that provide stability and order for the Israelite community, emphasizing the importance of social justice and holy lifestyle consistent with a nation living in the presence of God and assuring the needy of a minimum legal protection and a minimum of material assistance (cf Hendrickx 1985:30).

Next, is the Deuteronomic Code of law (Dt 15:1-18)). One of the main concerns is the issue of Sabbath, particularly the sabbatical year. This is the time when a release of slaves or borrowed lands at the end of every seven years is granted. In this year, the people of Israel should open their hands to the poor and the needy in the land believing that YHWH would bless all their works. It is based on the *shemittah* law where the people of God must order their economy with full regard for the needs and rights of the poor (cf Cairns 1992:147). The intention of these stipulations is to reach the covenant ideal of equality before God and among them, and it is expressed in the phrase "there will be no poor among you" (Dt 15:4), although the actual life of the people mostly show a quite different quality, "the poor will never cease out of the land" (Dt. 15:11) (see Glass 2000:28). Along with the Sabbath, this code is concerned with several practical things such as giving of tithe (Dt 12:6; cf Cairns 1992;145), sharing one-tenth of the harvest with and caring for the foreigners, orphans and widows (Dt 14:28-29; 24:19-22; cf Millar 1998:153), using right measures in commerce (Dt 25:13-15; see Mayes 1991:331), and practicing fairness and justice in the law court (Dt 24:17; 27:19) especially for the poor, the widows and the aliens (cf Tigay 1996:228).

Last, is the Holiness Code embodied in the book of Leviticus (Lv 17-26). This contains instructions on how to practice social justice in the community. The code emphasizes that real holiness has its social dimension, a social holiness. Accordingly, holiness and pollution systems (i.e., clean and unclean), along with their associated ritual and theology, are to become agents of social transformation in the interests of a wider human freedom (cf Budd 1996:38-39). It practically implies the prohibition of having transactions that would result in taking advantage of the weaker and helpless people (see Hendrickx 1985:34), the care for sojourners (Lv 19:33-34; 24:22; cf Levine 1989:134; Hartley 1992:322), the observance of the Sabbath and Jubilee year, particularly in relation with "the liberty" (see Amit 1992:59 and Weinfield 1995:152-153) of the poor and the slaves (cf Brin 1994:20-89), and the repayment of interest with a loan as well as paying it in advance (Lv 25:35-37), because these loans are essentially charitable (see Wenham 1979:321-322). For example, they enable a poor farmer to buy enough seed corn for the next season (cf Ex 22:24; Dt 23:21).

6.1.1.5 YHWH is the Judge of Israel

YHWH also is *the Judge of Israel*. He is the Supreme Judge who fairly judges not only the covenant people but other nations, too. Accordingly, the people were asked by the prophet to "maintain justice in the gate" (Am 5:14f). The gate, "as the centre for judicial process," must be characterized by "justice." Thus, the word "justice" here must be understood judicially, that is according to the right judicial standards, the right judgment, or right and honest sentences. Kapelrud (1961:66) insists that these right ethical standards are "in conformity with ancient written rules for life within the Covenant with YHWH."

Moreover, the divine role of God as judge is justified by the prophet's use of reason-announcement oracles, which has as its formula "because . . ." (1:11; 2:6; 5:11). Here, it can be seen that the idea of God, as the upholder of justice, is to be deduced instead from the particular reasons for God's action. At this juncture, Amos' intention in delivering his message (for instance in Am 5:1-17) is to make his audience, the Israelites, realize that the sinful acts they have commited, particularly in perverting justice, had lead them to the presence of the real judge, YHWH himself. Therefore, as Gowan (1996:346) writes, "God's primary role in this book is to be the judge and the executioner of those persons who have refused to obey divine standard of justice—to which it is assumed God also adheres."

As the ruler of the universe and the supreme divine judge, YHWH does have the right to intervene in human affairs (Martin-Archard 1984:20). This intervention is well expressed in YHWH's speech or utterance, through the prophetic word formula. The formulas "Thus says YHWH" (כה אמר יהוה) at the beginning and "Says YHWH" (נאם יהוה) at the end of the oracles or divine speeches are frequently used in the book of Amos (1:3ff; 2:1ff; 3:11f; 4:3ff; 5:3ff; 6:8; 7:17; 9:8f). Accordingly, since YHWH is the one who sends the prophet as a messenger, the oracle becomes a divine way of communication presented through an intermediary (Sweeney 2005:36-37). However, although using a mediator, he indeed speaks as the first person speaker, as Wolff (1977:92) says, "When YHWH comes to the fore in the messenger speech, it is consistently as the first person

speaker." It thus means that YHWH is indeed the God who communicates or relates himself to his created people.

6.1.1.6 YHWH is the Personal and the Living God

This concept also connotes that YHWH is a *personal and living God*. He who speaks is the personal God who is alive. It is intentional when Amos calls for "seeking YHWH" putting it in parallel with "seeking life" (Am 5:4-5), because this saying indicates that YHWH is the living God and the source of life, and whoever seeks him will find life. A consequence of people's seeking centres of cults (Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba) for national celebration of blessings—it is done for the reason that these sanctuaries are visible symbols of divine election and protection—is that YHWH offered them two options, life or death. Therefore, the focus is on escape or survival from the coming judgment versus complete destruction (cf Carroll R 1992:227). Auld (1999:64) argues that the phrase "seek me and live (5:4) can be a shorthand for "seek me in order to live." Seeing a synonym between the words בקש (in Dt 30:6) and דרש, Stuart (1987:346) similarly believes that to seek YHWH is what leads to the ability to live. Since this is a matter of survival, the people are expected to give the proper response to this call, and at the same time, acknowledge that YHWH is the living God as well as the source of life.

These qualities of YHWH point to the fact that there is a "personal and living" God who wants to relate himself with his people. This is expressed in a relational description used by Amos (Am 5:1-17), a relationship between the performer and the spectator. Through the prophet's speech, YHWH signifies himself as an orator who convinces his audience, the people of Israel, to act something essential, repentance in the sense that they turn back to YHWH unreservedly, stop sinning immediately and do justice accordingly. Moreover, Amos' use of this description also gives evidence that God stores a strong desire to build up relationship through an effective comunication between him and his audience, and through this interaction, he expects a positive and yet, personal, response from Israel's side,

the change of their attitude and conduct. However, by doing social injustice, the Israelites broke the covenantal relationship between themselves and YHWH.

6.1.1.7 YHWH is the God of (Social) Justice

YHWH is the *God of (social) justice*. According to Gowan (1998:33), the people of Israel must have been taught long before about the character of the God of the exodus, the upholder of social justice. It can be seen from the teaching that, in bringing the Israelites into their land, YHWH had championed Israel, then the weak and needy, against the powerful inhabitants (for example, the Amorites), just as he had against the powerful Egyptian oppressors at the time of Exodus. He is a God who had delivered the poor and the afflicted from Egypt and a God who hears the cry of all who suffer in similar straits of any age (see Sklba 1990:82). In Amos' time, YHWH then continues to champion the weak and needy, but now the oppressors are found among his own people. As a result, his own people must be punished (Am 2:13-16). The catalogue of what YHWH has done for Israel, given now as a basis for condemnation, means that they were expected to learn how to behave from the divine example (cf Jensen 2006:80-81). It thus suggests that YHWH commits to be consistent in his words and deeds to maintain (social) justice in the land, because it is naturally in accordance with his very own character as the God of social justice (cf Simundson 2005:157).

YHWH is consequently concerned with social justice. The prophecy of Amos can be heard as YHWH's response to the cry of the oppressed, for the weak and poor are special objects of YHWH's compassion and concern (see Mays 1969:10). He seems to be very sensitive to the cry of the powerless, the victims of unjust acts. The God of justice is particularly concerned that the poor and vulnerable receive justice from the powerful, whether in business transactions, political acts, or judicial decisions (cf Simundson 2005:155). There is a notion of securing justice on the part of YHWH. It is the will of God that justice is maintained in the land. Conversely, failure on the human side to respond properly may negatively result in the destruction of society. As Ward (1991:203) says, "oppression of the weak

is defiance of the will of God and a violation of the true spirit of the people of God. It is destructive of the fabric of Israelite society, and therefore jeopardizes the nation's integrity and survival."

However, YHWH is not only the God who is concerned but also the God who acts on behalf of the oppressed. YHWH's acts of justice may be seen, on the one hand, in giving reward to the obedient acts of the people. The cause-effect pattern is very clear in some texts of Amos (Am 5:4-6, 14-15). Repentance in obedient faith ("Seek YHWH and good [not evil] if you want to live") is a means of survival for the people in the face of political catastrophe which seemed imminent (cf Soggin 1987:87). Generally, in other prophetic books, the realization of divine social justice depends much on the efforts in maintaining access for every member of the nation to the natural source of all production, the land without at the same time reducing the individual to the status of a tenant, dependent on the governing authority of the moment, or taking from him the liberty to manage his own affairs and enjoy the fruits of his own labours (cf Eichrodt 1961:97). These were done by the people of Israel based in their religious conviction, their firm understanding of the will of God as implying an even handed justice, and the determined attempt to introduce this understanding into the nation's law.

On the other hand, God's justice may also be seen in punishing those who are disobedient to his law or statutes. For instance, God threatens to withhold the produce from the people, and it should be considered as punishment (Am 4:6-11). YHWH is the God who is just and does not act arbitrarily to punish; there is always a good reason. God is an active participant in the execution of justice. According to Simundson (2005:155), the punishment does not come automatically but only because God has acted to make sure that it happens. The reason for this coming misery can clearly be found in the present disregard of God's commandment to love and protect others (see Wolff 1983:19). God fights for the people against their enemies, bringing fire and destruction on those who oppose YHWH (see Simundson 2005:162). The end result of such a divine action of justice is that this punishment will affect the land's fertility in two basic forms: natural calamity and the aftermath of war (see Nogalski 2007:128).

6.1.1.8 YHWH: The Determinative Factor of Social Justice

From the theological angle, YHWH becomes the determinative factor in dealing with social justice. As seen throughout the book of Amos, YHWH is the Creator, the Ruler, the Warrior and the Judge. Based on his own character, words and deeds, YHWH can be thought of as the God of social justice. He gives the absolute standards of justice, and, furthermore, he judges and acts according to this standard. He champions social justice and seriously wants it implemented in the land, as the prophet declares, "Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream!" (5:24). Consequently, this metaphor suggests the moral demand is part of the divine to the nation. Instead of overturning justice and casting down righteousness, the nation is to let them flow in an eternal torrent. Thus, the call for justice is affirmed as immovable and in line with YHWH's holy character (Carroll R 1992:248-249).

6.1.2 The Powerful: The Political Angle

During the time of the eighth century BCE prophets, there was an emergence of the ruling elite, the powerful, in the society of Israel. This socio-political phenomenon was a result of a shift from a tribal to a monarchic society. Such a condition created the commercialization of property by the powerful and made uneven progress (inequality) which prompted strong rural resistance throughout monarchic times (cf Gottwald 1993:136). One should give special attention to the link between power and wealth in advanced agrarian societies and the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the few. This results in what can be called a command, as opposed to demand, economy. The forces of supply and demand are much less important than the arbitrary, self-serving decisions of the elite (see Coote 1981:25-26).

At this juncture, it is important to identify who the powerful in the book of Amos are. In the book of Amos, one can consider the powerful as a certain social class, or governing class, consisting of the kings, the judges, the official prophets, the

rich, and the merchants. They can also be identified with some groups of people, for instance, the priests, the false prophets, and the elders (see VanGemeren 1990[a]:302), or "all titles for person who had roles of authority and power in the social and administrative structure of Judah and Israel" (Mays 1987:148). Coote (1981:25) explains that they are the ruling elite comprising from 1 to 3 percent of the population, and they typically own 50 to 70 percent or more of the land. On the basis of these disproportionate land holdings, they control by far the greater amount of power and wealth in the society, and their positions of power exercise domain over the peasantry (see Glass 2000:31).

6.1.2.1 The Elders and the Leaders in the Community

Motyer (1993:62-62) proposes that the elders and the leaders in the community are respectively the legislative and executive arms of government. One may notice that when Amos notes that "violence and robbery" were stored up in the palaces (Am 3:10), he seems to use these terms to refer to the royal buildings (cf Wright 1990:107). It points out that the powerful are those who are within the monarchy. Different from Gottwald's view (see Dempsey 2000:7) that considers Amos' attack as mostly directed at the upper class, Carroll R (1992:195) argues that "the guilty cannot be defined as the upper classes, but rather those in power within the monarchy. Thus, the one responsible is not simply a *social stratum*, but the *socio-political system* itself." In other words, they are the kings, the judges and official prophets (who give the king the good prophecy he seeks), the officials in the monarchy who supposedly have great power and influence in the society. Miller (2000:532) additionally indicates that these last two groups had access to king and court and thus to wealth and the use of both and influence to increase their personal growth, property, and capacity for luxurious life.

6.1.2.2 The Leaders in the Monarchy

Yet, those who are in the leadership position in the monarchy are also called to administer justice. In the Davidic kingship tradition (1 Sm 17:34-35), it is required for the kings and other officials (the leaders) of the monarchy to take great responsibility to guard and promote justice, because this kind of leadership will determine the health and the wealth of the community (cf "the city" Jr 22:8). They are responsible in giving right decisions as well as maintaining the right prescriptions or orders. Moreover, according to Bright (1965:145), the Davidic monarchy (1 Sm 17:34-35) had the obligation under God in establishing justice in the society, specifically defending the rights of the helpless as demanded in the covenant (Ex 22:20-23). At least, one can see such just quality in the life and reign of his descendant, the king Solomon (1 Ki 3:11, 28; cf 8:59; 10:9). Therefore, the idealism and the requirement of the kingship in Israel can be stated as such: the leadership has great responsibility to guard and promote justice. This leadership determines the health and wealth of the community ("the city" in Jr 22:8).

The point is quite clear that *Rechtsentscheidungen* ("decisions") and *Rechtsbestimmungen* ("prescriptions" or "orders") made by the king or any other administrator of justice should be fair, for example as stated in Exodus 21:31 (Koehler & Baumgater 1985:579). The reason for saying this is because these concepts are derived from God himself, specifically from his character. In addition, this implies that the powerful should have compassion for those who are unfortunate. This expectation is based on social teaching as written in the law and the covenant. Mays (1969:10) argues that the obligation of his people to protect and respect the weak in their helplessness is a theme of every survey of covenant norms preserved in the Old Testament. Therefore, YHWH requires that the strong should come to the aid of his deprived neighbour (Martin-Archard 1984:23).

6.1.2.3 The Wealthy and the Merchants

Another major oppressing group is the wealthy and the merchants. Accordingly, the successes of political expansion and economic stability in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II brought economic prosperity to many in the nation (cf Stuart 1987:283; Cohen 1965:153; Schottroff 1984:28). As a result, there was an emergence of a new class of royal officials who controlled the strategic trade routes. The control over trade routes and lively commerce consequently nourished the rise of the wealthy class, including the merchants, who lived luxurious and comfortable lives. To portray the luxury and extravaganza of the wealthy, as Smith (1989:2) explains, Amos describes that they were living in the new wealth and access to expensive ivories and furniture (Am 3:12, 15; 4:1-3; 6:4-6).

In a more concrete way, these people were living in their summer and winter palaces adorned with costly ivory, sleeping in the gorgeous beds with damask pillows, reclining at their sumptuous feasts, and drinking expensive wine. The unscrupulous behaviour of the men in their political and business affairs (Am 5:10-12; 8;4-6) was significantly motivated by the ambition and greed of their wives or women (symbolized as "the cows of Bashan")—in the background (cf Kleven 1996:215-227). As the fortunate, in terms of material wealth, these groups of people should show how to do justice to those who are unfortunate, for example, not cheating them in doing business with them, but rather giving a fair price (Am 8:5).

6.1.2.4 The Powerful: The Irresponsible Elites of Israel

In Israelite religious conviction, particularly in the Deuteronomic theology, there is a belief that economic or material prosperity ("a land of Israel as a gift of YHWH") is a sign of YHWH's favour towards the people (cf De Vries 1995:192). For the powerful, they consider themselves as having no problem with God. They live as any wealthy or "normal" people have lived, "business and enjoyment as

usual." As the nation experienced economic advancement, there was also an increase in religious activities, building religious physical objects (Bethel and Gilgal) and doing religious rites (Am 4:4-5). Such religious eagerness seems to be the expression of the people's gratitude toward the divine blessing and favour upon them. In fact, unfortunately, these theological conviction and practical worship were done from wrong perceptions, because such a theology ("divine blessings") requires divine justice, and the cult offered at religious shrines is therefore not a product of divine decisions but of human, and therefore it is illegitimate (cf Soggin 1987:71).

However, the emergence of the ruling class (the officials within the monarchy) or the affluent (both the rich and the powerful) does not grant all people in the society experience the same advancement. Instead, they manipulated the administration of justice to their own benefit and to the detriment of those without power, or, they use corrupted justice, at the expense of the poor and powerless, for their own gain (see Simundson 2005:153, 172-173). In a more concrete way, they perverted justice (Am 5:7) by crushing the needy, taking possession of the land of those who had fallen into debts or subjecting them to slavery (2:6), denying justice in the lay courts at the city gates (2:7; 5:10, 12), and profiteering usurious commerce through the cheating use of false weights and fraudulent merchandise in the marketplace (8:5-6). In short, the powerful live their lives without compassion for the oppressed (the poor and the needy). Amos (5:7) uses wordplay in order to underline the social sin of the powerful ("YHWH look for 'justice' but found 'bloodshed.' YHWH sought 'righteousness' but heard a 'cry'). At this point, the powerful perverted justice by murdering the poor instead of giving them justice (Malchow 1996:42).

As a consequence, the powerful (the merchants and the indifference of authorities; see 4f; 6:1ff; 8:4ff) of the Northern kingdom are condemned for having repeatedly violated justice in contempt of the rights of the most deprived; and so it witnesses to the contempt in which it actually holds God himself (Martin-Archard 1984:9). It is announced that a sinful kingdom will be destroyed by YHWH. There is no explicit connection between this assertion and the prior assertion that Israel has

the same status in YHWH's eyes as other nations, so we can only infer what connection may have been intended. It appears to be that, since Israel has the same status before YHWH as all nations, Israel should not expect to be exempted from the ordinary execution of divine justice (Ward 1991:206).

The powerful, from a political perspective, refers to the groups of people who have both political and economic power (influence) to maintain social justice in the land. As seen in the book of Amos, this idealism was never realised. Rather, as Coote (1981:32) argues, "A tiny ruling class, driven by their need for power and wealth, impose an oppressive fragmentation of rentals on the Israelite peasantry, turning titles of income into titles of debts, including debt slavery." It thus shows that, instead of defending the poor and the needy, the main activity of the powerful was to maximize their benefits from their taxed domain over the peasants. The higher social stratum implies authority or power, and it may positively influence the lower ones. However, such a thing may also negatively be distorted into abuse of power. As wealth was accumulated by the powerful (the political and economic ruling classes), they consequently become more powerful and tended to be corrupt. As a consequence, the power of YHWH will fall upon the powerful, who abused the power granted to them. Wolff (1969:103; see also Cook 1996:20) pinpoints that YHWH's dealing with this abuse of power is in the form of "his advent which Israel will experience as a destructive blow."

6.1.3 The Powerless: The Social Angle

The prophet Amos does not intend to trace the origin of "the powerless," or to explain the causes that put them in a hard situation. It seems that they just suddenly appear on the scene of the rhetorical speeches of the prophet. However, in the book of Amos, the concept of "the powerless" occurs in a general and broad sphere. On the one hand, it may refer to several groups of people as indicated by several terms. The most common terms used to identify them are צדקים (the righteous), אביונים (the needy), דלים (the poor) and ענוים (the afflicted) as seen in

Amos 2:6-7 (cf 4:1; 5:11, 12; 8:6). Soggin (1987:20-21) admits that it is not always easy to distinguish on the semantic and sociological level between the "poor," the "humble," and the "oppressed." Thus, one may assume that such a distinction existed and that the terms are not synonymous.

6.1.3.1 The Innocents and the Needy

Finley (1991:127) differentiates the terms in a sense of the effect experienced by the persons in the social structure, for example, צדיק ("innocent" or "guiltless") point to the victimization of the poor by their oppressor, אביון ("needy") refers to people who need money, power and legal recourse in the courts. Lacking these things, they are merely a means for others to get rich (cf Pleins 1987:61-79). While דל ("poor") is a term of comparative need, implying a standard of wealth and abundance against which to compare the lack of wealth, the term ענו ("afflicted") indicates that power is a point of comparison between the rich and the poor, or the powerful trample on the powerless (helpless). Kleven (1996:218) indicates that the import of the initial criticism on the powerful is financial, and wealth is preferred to justice. Smith (1989:84) concludes that these people are severely oppressed, helpless, weak and unable to defend themselves against the rich and the powerful.

6.1.3.2 The Servant Girl/The Maidservant

On the other hand, it may point to other groups of people mentioned in this book. Amos mentions נערה ("servant girl" or "maidservant" [2:7]). This is a general term for a young woman, who is victimized by the powerful (the father and the son) who are in lack of basic moral conduct, degrading this maidservant and depriving her of her right to be treated fairly and properly (Fendler 1973:42-43). Paul (1991:82) emphasizes that this "young woman" belongs to the same category as that of "the poor" and "the afflicted," one more member of defenceless and

exploited human beings in northern Israel. Another oppressed group is the עניים (Am 2:7) translated naturally as "tenant farmers," those who are subject to be abused because of their normal activities as farmers (cf Rosenbaum 1990:56).

6.1.3.3 The Nazirites and the Prophets

Besides these, the prophet mentions religious people such as the Nazirites (2:12), the prophets (2:12) and the prophet Amos himself (7:10-13). They can be grouped under the category of "the oppressed." These religious people supposedly represent God and his will to the people, but who are now corrupted by wine and have become severely dysfunctional. In the case of Amos, he is threatened by both political (the king) and religious (the priest) authorities. He is accused of meddling in the business of state, and warned of the most serious consequences; and forbidden to speak in the name of YHWH (cf Noble 1998:429). The prophet's own experience (Am 7:10-17) at the sanctuary in Bethel, and also his lament (Am 5) as a personal (emotional) involvement with Israel's fate and the rejection of the people of the One who sent him (Am 4:6-12) clearly speak of personal suffering endured by Amos in carrying out his prophetic ministry (Cleary 1978:58-73). Therefore, Amos' defence seems to be silenced by "the last word" of the powerful, a prediction of destruction for the individual who has sought to stand in the way of God's purpose (cf Auld 1999:28).

6.1.3.4 The Peasants and The Oppressed

Although it is difficult to explicitly identify these people, Amos concludes that the powerless are preferentially marginalized and oppressed by the political and economic ruling elite. They are seemingly the main targets to be cheated and exploited by the powerful. In a more specific way, Coote (1981:26) identifies these powerless people as "the peasants," who made up from 60 to 80 percent or more of the typical agrarian society during Amos' time. In contrast, they

transferred the surplus of the cultivation of their land to the ruling elite. Such a surplus flows steadily from countryside to city in payment of rents, taxes, tributes, tithes, interests on debts, fines, and "gifts" to the powerful people. Therefore, almost universally the peasants live on the margin of subsistence (see Coote 1981:26). Soggin (1987:21) then adds that often these people, when they were innocent or at any rate had the right on their side, were completely at the mercy of the powerful and their judgments, even in the law courts (Am 2:7-8; 4:1b; 5:11).

The oppressed in Israel are also being denied their rights in the gates or legal courts (Am 5:10-13) by people wealthier and more powerful than them—people ridiculed by the prophet for their self-indulgent greed and self-serving religiosity (Ward 1991:205). In ancient Israel, indicated as "locus of legal issues" (Hayes 1988:162-3), the gate area is the public place where every person in the society can bring his or her legal case(s) to be heard (cf Klingbeil & Klingbeil 2007:161-162; cf Gowan 1996:390; Paul 1991:170-1; Boecker 1980:21-52). However, the prophet emphasizes that the oppressed cannot find justice in this place, because the administrators of justice (judges or tax collectors) practice corruption, particularly in terms of bribery. Unfairness exists in the legal court because the rich can buy justice to defend their cases (the crimes they have committed), while the poor do not have a chance of fair hearing in the court (Finley 1990:239). Furthermore, Caroll R (1992:232) asserts that the evil at the gate extends beyond the purely legal realm, because it is indeed related to morality, a corrupt public administration. As a result, "hopelessness" exists on the side of the powerless.

6.1.3.5 The Powerless: The Victims of Social Injustice

From a social angle, the powerless are those who are the "victims" of social injustice. Such an injustice is taken by the prophet as the gravest crime of the Israelites. Amos depicts them as a class of people in Israel who lack any share in the wealth of the kingdom of Jeroboam II, who lack the basic necessities of life, and who are suffering as innocent victims (see Schottroff 1984:35). The poor in the Israelite society fell deeper and deeper into debt to rich landowners and were

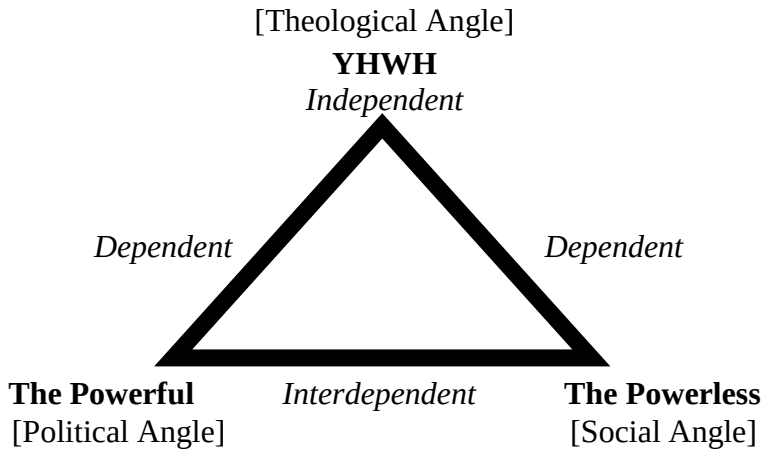
finally forced to sell their property to them, losing all that they had. Moreover, "the actions of Israel's business community are leading to the extermination of the poor" (Limburg 1988:120). They were indeed the victims of the powerful, who heap up wealth and display it gaudily in a lavish "conspicuous consumption" economy (cf Gottwald 1985:356). These less fortunate members of society do not have the money, power, influence, or advocates to protect themselves and ensure that they are treated justly.

It is tempting for the rich and powerful to take advantage of such persons or simply to ignore them, to be indifferent to their suffering, to pretend that they do not exist (Simundson 2005:177). Whereas, the covenant between YHWH and Israel demands compassion directed towards them. The innocent should be acquitted, the needy fed, the poor respected, and the afflicted comforted (Finley 1985:415). The oppressed conclusively have lost their economic, social and legal rights (as mentioned in the covenant), and therefore they severely suffered (as victims) from practices of injustice done by the powerful.

6.1.4 The Dynamics of the Relational Aspects of Social Justice

As mentioned above, these angles (theological, political and social) are interrelated with each each other. This interrelationship can be explained in the following way: YHWH (the theological angle), as the sovereign and just God, is independent of his people. This is a determinative factor where God's activities and relationships with his people are usually described by verbs of communication, destruction and blessing (see Smith 1989:11). Opposed to this, his people, either the powerful or the oppressed, are dependent upon him. However, every member in the community, again, either the powerful or the oppressed, is interdependent with each other. This means that the previous should consider the latter as fellow citizens in such a community. Amos is clear in saying that the ideal conditions in Israelites society are those where responsibility is taken up by all citizens, both men and women, to treat others in justice and righteousness.

In this interdependency, ideally speaking, there must be an implication or assumption of mutual equity and liberty. Such idealism can be seen in the diagram below (modified from Allen's [1992:152] cone-shape structure of relationship and response):



This triangular model is an idealistic model of covenant relationship between the divine and his people, as stated in Leviticus 26:12, "and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be My people" (JPS). This relationship resulted from God's election of Israel. It is a bond that begins with YHWH's love of the Israelites (Dt 7:8). Hanson (1992:366) insists that the qualities Israel was to embody in its community were justice and love, because "Israel was to be a righteous and compassionate people, because God was righteous and compassionate."

This model also suggests that although YHWH is relational in nature, as the theological angle, he is indeed *independent* from his people. It means that He is the absolute God who is most powerful (Am 5:8-9) and not dependent on anything in the universe including human beings. In reverse, his people should remain in dependency on him. The effect of such a condition is that among the people of Israel, both the powerful and the oppressed, there should be a relational interdependence between each other. This implies that there is no tensional relationship between the angles. As long as the covenant is not frustrated, or this ideal state is maintained, social justice will prevail in the land.

The ideal covenant relationship has its realization in historical momentum(s) throughout the history of God's people (nation), Israel. Such a relationship has been developed for ages in several concepts. Although the book of Genesis already told about the relationship between YHWH and human being in general, a specific mentioning of the "nation" (גוי) first occured in the stories of Abraham (Gn 12:2) and his descendants, later called the "people" (עם [Gn 25:8]; cf Ex 3:7). At this early stage, "God was actively involved in, and ultimately responsible for, the creation of the people Israel" (McNutt 1999:41). It began with a promise and was passed down through Abraham's succeeding generations. Other books in the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) then reported the liberation of this created people from the bondage in Egypt and the exodus experience.

Having been liberated from Egypt, the people of Israel were led by YHWH into a closer relationship with him (in feasting and serving יהוה) in the wilderness, as frequently declared in the book of Exodus (5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3). At Mount Sinai, God made a declaration pertaining to the establishment of relations between God and Israel (Lv 25-26) due to the promises made to Abraham and his descendants (Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim & Petersen 1999:151; Rendtorff 2005:438, 443). Moreover, the *shemmitah* or the Sabbatical year (Lv 25:1) announced at this mount is considered an act of equality performed by God-King at the beginning of his reign over Israel, and it may be associated with ceremonies of renewal of the covenanted relationship with Israel (as Weinfeld quoted from Muffs' and Tsevat's, 1995:243-244). Even though the people fail to keep their part—they certainly did in the wilderness period—God promises not to break his covenant (Dt 4:31). Thus, from Israel's ancient history, it is clear that YHWH has created, owned, inaugurated and maintained the covenant relationship with his "people" ("nation"), Israel.

Analyzing from the social, political and ethical perspectives, Gottwald (1979:685, 688, 692) proposes another concept, that of Israel as the "tribes of YHWH" who have a special relationship with God. YHWH here was historically concretized among them in being the primordial power to establish and sustain social equality

in the face of counter-oppression from without and against provincial and non-egalitarian tendencies from within society. At the end of the book of Joshua, the narrative recounts an assembly of the united tribes who make a covenant at Shechem, over which Joshua presides.

However, such a concept is not common in the biblical records. Rather than using the word "tribe," the Scripture uses more explicit terms, for example, "the household of Jacob" (Ex 19:3). The word "household" (בית) here connotes that the Israelites are the "children of Israel (Jacob)." This also relates to the word "clan" (שיבט) as used in Psalms 74:2. On this, Goldingay (2006:173-174) explains that a clan may consist of several "families" (משפחים). A number of clans afterwards will be large enough to be political entities, and form a tribe, or even a nation. In such groups there would always be some who, by reason of misfortune or handicap, are unable to maintain their own support and status in the group (cf Mays 1987:154).

Albeit its terminological differs, the concept of Israel as "the people of God" is quite clear that they have a special kind of relationship with YHWH. Amos seems to have these historic-theological concepts while delivering his rhetorical speeches to the Israelites. He also consistently uses the same terms as above, for example, "Children of Israel" (Am 2:11; 4:5; 9:7), "family" (Am 3:1), "house of Jacob (Israel)" (Am 5:1, 25), and "My people (of Israel)" (Am 9:10, 14) in order to underscore the necessity or importance of such a relationship.

According to Hanson (2001:152-153), Amos' prophetic discourse, presupposing YHWH's covenant with Israel and Israel's commitment to the laws of Mosaic covenant, is closely related to a Yahwistic faith, a belief in a notion of community in which all humans are precious to YHWH and protected by the laws of the covenant. Consequently, as the climax of the book focuses on YHWH and his judgment, it is impossible to discuss the idealism of the covenanted relationship without properly placing YHWH in its centre. Dempster's (1991:187) study on the structure of "YHWH is his name" (elongated divine appellation) proves that the frequent occurrences of the term "YHWH" in the book of Amos (1:2; 1;3-

2;16; 3:1-15; 4:1-13; 5:1-17, 18-27; 6:1-14; 7:1-9:6; 9:7-15) makes the important point to the audience that YHWH and only he has the centre stage. Based on this "divine-centred" covenant relationship, the prophet Amos rhetorically delivered his critical message on the issues of social justice.

The ideal state of social justice thus can be fully realized under one condition: all parties involved in the covenant shows their loyal commitment to it. It is a state where "YHWH is the God of Israel, and Israel is the people of YHWH" (Goldingay 2006:173). YHWH's covenant with Israel includes both what YHWH does as well as Israel's appropriate response. On the one hand, YHWH must act in accordance to his covenant with his people. Covenant relationship (included in it grace and blessing) depends only on the unchangeable character of the One who makes it, because, at Sinai, YHWH declared that Israel is his own possession among all peoples "if you obey my voice and keep my covenant" (Ex 19:5). Seen from Israel's history, YHWH has proven himself as the faithful God of the covenant by showing that his acts of provision in the past bring with it promises to his people for the future. These provisions and promises (YHWH is *their* God) are means by which God initiates and sustains their relationship with him (they are *his* people) (see Hafeman 2007:36). It seems to be proper to say that whatever action God performed, including his dealing with social justice, it must be seen as divine "covenantal gesture(s)."

On the other hand, the people of Israel have to be faithful to YHWH and his covenant. It is to be a life of trust and faith in him who calls. As they are called to a special relationship with God (Ex:19:3-8), Israel is to be God's own people, set apart from other nations for his service just as priests were set apart from other men, and marked as such by a quality of life commensurable with the holiness of their covenant God (Childs 1974:367). Israelites are called to have a deeper fellowship with him. As YHWH declares "I will establish my covenant . . . to be God to you" (Gn 17:7) they should understand it as a call to worship and to serve the One (Absolute) God. The covenant itself implies that the Israelites must show specified loyalty to YHWH as a basic requirement, acknowledging that YHWH was their overlord and sovereign, for being a covenant people of God (See

Martens 1981:78). Moreover, in terms of religious motifs, they should love and obey God wholeheartedly, as written in conjunction with Israel's *Shema* (שמע ישראל), "Hear O Israel: YHWH our God, YHWH is one! You shall love YHWH your God with all your hearts, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Dt 6:4-5; cf 30:19-20). Brueggemann (1997:420) insists that Israel's obligation is to be fully responsive to, complementary to, and in full accord with the character of YHWH, so that the way in which the obligation is understood is commensurate with the way in which YHWH is construed.

The loyal obedience to YHWH is not the only requirement to maintain this covenant relationship, but also to treat other people of God fairly or justly. Israel's covenantal responsibility, according to the prophet Hosea (4:6; 5:3; 6:4; 8:1; 13:4), is closely related to both the terms "steadfast love" (חסד) and "knowledge" (דעת) which was not merely a vertical relationship but was also worked out in a horizontal development of communal living (cf Allen 1992:152). Since the covenant contains a dimension of human-human relationship, therefore YHWH demands that his people must have social concern or compassion to others, especially the poor and the weak such as widows, orphans, and strangers (Dt 10:17-19; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19-21; 26:12-15) (see Patterson 1973:223-334; Fensham 1965:129-139).

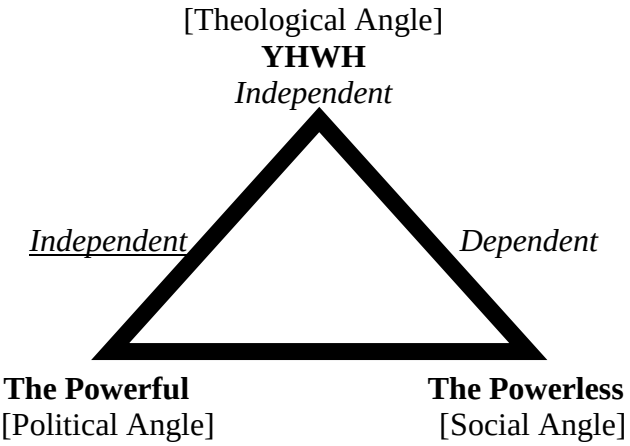
Additionally, the calling of the people of God points out to a kind of ethical monotheism—the concept that there was only one God, who demanded ethical behaviour or moral order of the world (Cf Koch 1985:58). Fundamental to this, YHWH is a God of moral perfection, and he requires moral behaviour of all his people. The election by YHWH carries responsibility to live according to his revealed will as it was regulated in the laws (see McConville 2002:174), and this concern of Israel's relationship with God focuses on the responsibilities of human beings to a deity who is believed to be both creator and redeemer (cf Bailey 1995:80-81; Flanders, Jr, Crapps & Smith 1988:176).

Amos seems to have this concept in mind as well. The prophet assumed that YHWH has a special relationship with his people (the Israelites), as he states,

"You only have I known of all families of the earth" (Am 3:1-2). The word "know" (ידע) used in this text implies that it is a covenant relationship bound by a stipulation), that is, Israel "alone" (רק) is YHWH's particular covenant people (cf Stuart 1987:322). It is also stressed that every participant in the covenant must keep the ברית faithfully, particularly, on the part of the Israelites. Amos calls them to seek "YHWH" and to seek "life" (Am 5:5-6) in order to, again, have a right vertical relationship with YHWH. These two admonitions are not new commands, but rather the summary statements of how to live in relationship to their God, YHWH (cf Cook 2005:57).

What is more, the people of Israel have their horizontal obligation to have concern and to care for the unfortunate (Am 5:7, 24; 6:12). Amos emphasizes that as YHWH has shown his mercy to them, they also should accordingly show merciful acts of justice to the underprivileged. Consequently, it was the responsibility of the elders (the powerful) to maintain the social equilibrium within the community by ensuring that proper relations prevailed among the members of the community. For example, it was their task to defend by means of the law those who were too poor or weak to defend themselves (Newsome 1984:28). There was a direct link between the will of YHWH and right relationship within the community (cf Allen 1992:153). Lastly, it is also suggested that, even within their obligation to have a right relationship with other human beings, they must still be dependent on YHWH.

However, in the book of Amos, the description of the covenant relationship is no longer in its ideal form. One may notice that, firstly, the powerful become unfaithful and rebellious to YHWH. Although they seem to show religious activities (worshipping the deity [Am 4:4f; 5:4-5], and feasting [worshiping God] in the sanctuaries [Am 8:4]), it is indeed superficial, only outward empty rituals. From the outset Amos has criticized God's people, Judah and, particularly, the northern kingdom Israel, for breaking this vertical relationship. The structure then is changed as can be seen in the following:



In reality, the Israelites had violated the sanctity of the house of their God (Am 2:8), and YHWH's servants, both Nazirites and prophets, had been forced into disobedient acts (Am 2:12). They also performed feasts, assemblies, sacrificial offerings, and songs that actually are worthless in YHWH's sight (Am 5:21-25; cf 8:9-10). Amos' (also his contemporaries') well-known attacks on sacrifice and ritual (Am 4:4f; cf Is 1:10ff; Mi 6:6ff; Jr 7:1ff) appears now to be *ad hoc* formulations within an invective and directed to certain religious abuses, although it is not ideologically based on an anti-cultic principle (cf Childs 1985:173). In fact, Amos points out specifically to Bethel sanctuary as the major cause that turns Israel away from YHWH and that must be removed (see Sweeney 2000:191).

As a result, the powerful in Israel become independent from YHWH, as portrayed in the diagram above. Such an independency can be clearly seen in their wilful rebellion toward the covenant. The point is clear: at the heart of covenant breaking is idolatry. When Israel turns away from YHWH, they, of necessity break YHWH's standards. Although they seem to present elaborate rituals as proud exhibitions of piety (Am 4:4-5), they perverted, misunderstood and rejected their own theological conviction. Barstad (1987:127-38) argues that these religious sins are rooted in their worshiping other deities, or it is more proper to say, in their syncretistic attitude, mixing up their traditional belief in YHWH with other foreign beliefs of other deities.

Moreover, the powerful became hypocritical, for on the one side, they are doing religious performances and elaborations, while, on the other side, they are

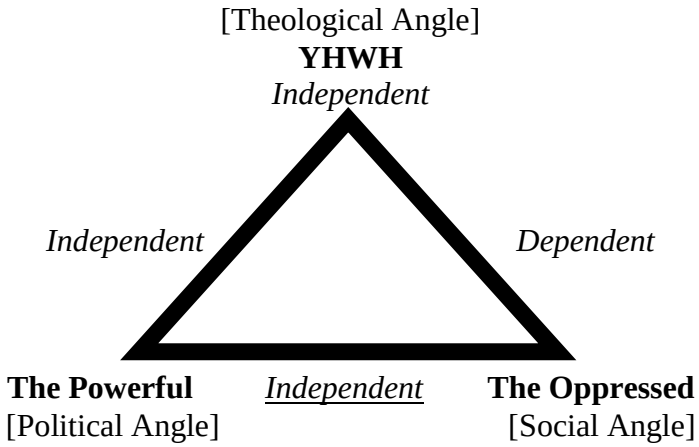
neglecting the very important substance of their faith, believing or trusting YHWH alone, as often cited in שמע ישראל. Such religious hypocrisy makes the people's worship useless because it is conducted without faith (Am 2:7) (cf Mathews 2001:71). They seem to take for granted their special status as God's people. They did not realize that Israel's privilege means not indulgence but special demands, greater responsibility. Amos puts a God-centred emphasis (4:1-13) in contrast to the self-centred abuses of worship and social order which he condemns (Joyce 1994:223-225). Consequently, YHWH rejected them and prepared judgment or punishment for them (Am 3:14; 4:4-5; 5:4-5, 22-24). It is YHWH's absolute big "No!" to such religious misconducts (see Hubbard 1989:108; cf Crenshaw 1975:247).

Secondly, the powerful (political, economic, and religious leaders) of Israel became indifferent to their fellow humans, especially the poor and the weak. In contrast to what is expected of them, they not only left no gleanings for the poor, they also "plundered" what meagre possessions the poor had; giving nothing, taking everything. The present lack of justice is not due to the wickedness of its inhabitants but to that of its leaders ("rulers" in Mi 3:1, 9; and "princess" in Is 3:14). The centre of the accusations is specifically aimed at the problem of injustice by the leaders who practice bribery (Micah accuses the "heads" of judging for bribes. While, Isaiah claims that "everyone loves a bribe"), and did not properly take care of orphans and widows in handling their legal affairs. Stansell (1988:113) describes this situation wherein "Leaders of Jerusalem are corrupt, they take bribes; weaker members of society suffer." In the same vein, VanGemeren (1990[a]:302-303) asserts that the leaders are largely to be blamed for this corruption; they had become self-centred and had corrupted God's righteousness and his just kingdom ideals by their own ideals, by corruption of justice, and by oppressions (cf Jr 23:1-2; 9-11; see 2:8; 10:17-22; 13:18-20).

Mays (1987:151) similarly points out that the central political issue of the crisis was the administration of justice, especially unfair treatment of the marginalized on the legal sphere. In ancient Israel, the law court may be found at the gate of towns (cf Am 5:12, 15) where law cases were judged (Is 29:21; cf Matthews

1996:37). Ironically, justice was distorted by the officials in these sites. On the other hand, the officials who administer justice deprived the right of the poor. The prophet Isaiah (Is 10:1-20) spoke against those who were responsible for maintaining the laws of the country who were doing justice—by either promoting new and oppressive law or of unjust decisions based on existing law—in such a way as to enrich themselves at the expense of the helpless (Oswalt 1986:259).

This is rooted in the empty religiosity of the powerful. It seems that the religious rituals were juxtaposed with the greed and inhumanity of the people. The detachment from YHWH vertically resulted in the disengagement from other human being horizontally. Brueggemann (1978:17) argues that—in the case of prophetic imagination (the prophets of Israel are attached to the ideal prophet, Moses in a Mosaic movement)—one cannot understand the meaning of it unless he or she sees the connection between the *religion of static triumphalism* (vertical aspect) and the *politics of oppression and exploitation* (horizontal aspect). This trajectory may be schematically seen as follows:



Throughout the book, Amos reported Israel's lack of covenant loyalty, showing that her outward display of worship failed to compensate for her lack of compassion and humanity that the Mosaic covenant demanded (cf Finley 1990:114). Moreover, it is not just a lacking of covenant loyalty but also a breaking of the covenant relationship. Amos thus provides a clear definition of covenant breaking. It is committing adultery, doing acts of violence, lying, oppressing others and perverting justice (cf House 1998:363).

In Amos' indictments, the people's (the powerful's) sins are related to the law of YHWH. Although no direct citation is made from it, the elements of these are present, including the care of the poor and the needy, administration of justice, use of just weights in commerce, and above all, the obligation to worship YHWH alone. The primary assumptions of such indictments is that Israel knew right from wrong on the basis of the traditions of their faith, whether transmitted within the cult, the written law, for example "The Book of the Covenant" (Ex 20:21-23:19), or the humanitarian teachings of the clan elders (cf Hubbard 1989:112). Eventually their record of broken covenant promises become so virulent and long-standing that God invoked the curse of the covenant, sending the prophets with their call to repentance and their announcement of the coming judgment.

The negative effect of such a vertical broken relationship is that the oppressed are cornered into a marginal position. There is no ideal structure that existed in the society where the covenant relationship is breached. The powerless are not being taken care of by the powerful according to the covenant law (Dt 10:17-19; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19-21; 26:12-15). The demands to have concern for the oppressed basically is rooted in history. The Israelites (especially the powerful ones) should remember from the past that once they were slaves in Egypt. Only through the mercy and compassion of YHWH were they brought out of that bondage, led through the wilderness, and were given possession of the land of the Amorites (Am 2:10).

In contrast, the Israelites (the powerful) denied such a historical remembrance, forgot YHWH's merciful deeds, and treated their neighbours oppressively. Besides, in reality, there was no access for the oppressed to justice in a formal and legal way. The "gate," where the elders (judges?) met to decide what is right and wrong (Am 5:15) and where Israel's fate will be decided, was corrupted by illegal and unjust practices, such as briberies and similar transgressions. The corruption of the "gate" was the source of evil, its renewal the only hope (Miller 1987:57). As the oppressed suffer social injustice from the powerful, they have lost not only all resources in order to sustain their lives, but also, most importantly, lost their economic, social and legal rights. This means that the weak, foreigners and the

excluded will not have any possibility of survival (see Gerstenberger 2002:240; Mays 1987:151).

The prophet Amos did not explicitly describe the "feelings" of the oppressed, because it is not his intention to do so in his speech. However, as the oppressed experienced great suffering, one may infer that in this situation, the only hope for the oppressed in this preferential angle is in YHWH at the theological angle. Simundson (2005:155) writes, "the weak, vulnerable, oppressed, who see no relief from human sources, can be assured that God will act to help them." This oppressive situation may bring them to a theological reflection of their past saving experience in the history, to the original existence of the people, that is, when they were slaves in Egypt. Moreover, they should remember that the land had come into their possession as the climax and outcome of the history of deliverance (cf Mays 1987:150).

The narrative of Exodus 2:23-24 tells how the children of Israel groaned because of bondage, so they cried out; and their cry rose up to God because of their bondage (see Limburg 1988:122-123). Therefore, God heard their groaning and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He looked upon them and acknowledged them. Amos' prophecy should thus be understood within a larger *Heilgeschichtlicke* framework, the Exodus tradition (cf Childs 1979:409; for Amos' attack on Israel's false concept of exodus, see Hoffmann 1989:181). Hanson (1992:366) insists that "the remembering of the exodus tradition was so important" for the people of Israel (as to the Deuteronomists) because it determines the life and death of the nation (Dt 8:1-20). That YHWH is indeed the upholder of justice and the advocate for the helpless is to be deduced from God's saving action of the oppressed (Am 1:11; 2:6; 5:11; cf Gowan 1998:33).

Breaking the covenant by rebelling against YHWH and performing social injustice to others is not without negative consequence. It could, in some sense, make the Israelites cease to be the people of God (Ex 19:5). It was in the tension between these two affirmations that Israel lived under the Mosaic covenant, and this covenant alone makes their subsequent history understandable. In this regard, Amos also emphasized the "booth of David that is fallen" (Am 9:11-15). The

kingdom of Israel was "failing." This occurred in the loss of the land to the Assyrians and the payment of tribute to Assyria by Jehu, as Amos announced that "injustice will mean exile 'away from his land (Am 7:7), a land that will be 'parcelled out by lot' to aliens (Am 7:17)" (Habel 1995[a]:83).

Beyond doubt, the punishment revealed by YHWH through Amos foretold the fall of Samaria as well as of Judah. The message about the end is therefore exactly the same thing as the message about the inescapable encounter with God. In the tension between the present and the future, the powerful of Israel see too little if they only consider themselves. This implies that the right relationship among men and women is being destroyed because the moral law of God was being ignored, and this destruction was being carried out at the very "grass roots" of Samaria's life (cf Newsome 1984:28). The connection between present behaviour and future destiny takes on a new dimension. Therefore, the encounter with YHWH (the theological angle), the Incomparable Effective, is the fundamental element of the irresistible word (see Wolff 1983:18).

6.1.5 Summary

The theological concept of social justice in the book of Amos cannot be separated from the idea of the covenant, especially the covenant relationship between God and God's people (cf Gottwald 1959:276). It is proposed that such a relationship can be comprehended in a form of "a triangular relational aspects of social justice." This triangular model consists of three different and yet related angles (theological, political and social points of view) representing YHWH, the powerful and the oppressed. The ideal of social justice will exist as long as the structure is maintained that YHWH is independent, being the absolute and determinative factor of social justice, and on the other hand, the people of Israel (both the powerful and the oppressed) remain dependent on YHWH. Meanwhile, as fellow members of the covenant community, the people of Israel, especially the powerful (the economic, political and religious leaders), should act according to their call as "instruments of the covenant" (see Eichrodt 1987:289-452),

particularly in maintaining (social) justice, to have concern for and take care of the underprivileged (Ex 22:21-24; Dt 10:17-19; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19-21; 26:12-15).

It is believed that the theological basis of social justice in the book of Amos is closely related to the issue of the covenant. According to Howie (1959:280), YHWH demands of his people, as part of the covenant, the elementary duties of honesty, integrity, justice, humane treatment of the weak and poor. It follows then that the basic arena for expression of the religion is in the common life. That, of course, is the substance of the covenant concept. The consequence of this covenantal status attached to the Israelites is that when the chosen people of God can not live in justice and truth, they actually break the covenant—especially the Sinaitic Covenant—irrevocably (cf LaSor 1988:60), and at this point, they are in a state of death. Gowan (1998:25-30) once introduces the theology of the prophetic books as "the death and resurrection of Israel," especially when he identifies Amos 5:1-2, 16-17; and 8:1-10 as a funeral song, the lament over the virgin Israel.

On the other hand, the prophetic theology is also a theology of resurrection. God wanted his people to be resurrected or restored spiritually as well as morally, and this condition might result in a renewal of the covenant. He has shown mercy to his people and took sides with them by making himself the advocate of the oppressed and the defender of the poor. At this point, the prophet Amos, as it is written in Amos 3:9-10; 4:1; 8:4-6, was showing the demands of the God of the covenant, and for the first time, "displaying what is to become one of the dominant features of the religion of the writing prophets" (Prēvost 1998:36-37). As a result, YHWH, through his prophet, challenged the people of Israel to seek him in order that they may have life (Am 5:4-5).

As required from the covenant relationship, YHWH keeps his part (his promise) because of his love and because he is God. He then may punish Israel for disobedience, and may even punish the whole generations for their stubborn disbelief. But his covenant remains in force—simply because of his nature. On the other hand, Israel is obligated to keep the covenantal requirements—not to put YHWH in debt to Israel, but because Israel is his people and so should behave

accordingly (Dt 8:1-6). Bergant (2001:81) thus points out that the teaching of social justice in Amos (5:24) underscores one of the most significant aspects of ancient Israelite religion, that is, the connection between one's covenant commitment to God and one's covenant responsibilities towards other covenanted neighbours. YHWH is particularly concerned that "the poor and vulnerable receive justice from the powerful, whether in business transactions, political acts, or judicial decisions" (Simundson 2005:155).

6.2 ESTABLISH JUSTICE IN THE LAND

The prophet Amos undoubtedly functions as "a mouth piece of YHWH" in proclaiming the divine words about Israel's sin of injustice and its judgment (cf Wolff 1983:11; Gottwald 1993:114). As both "a mediator of the covenant" (Van der Woude 1982:38-39) and "a prophet of doom and destruction" (as one of the *Unheilspropheten*)" (Clements 1996:192; see also the concept of "prophecy of disaster" of Koch 1969:210-220; Overholt 1979:532), Amos plays an important role in the divine attempt to establish social justice in the land. The prophet rhetorically speaks about social justice as YHWH called and commanded him to do. The prophet was the primary instrument of YHWH, who introduces the unprecedented *New* into the history of Israel, the future end has come to "my people Israel" (8:4; cf Wolff 1987:20). In the shadow of the economic and political developments of the eight century BCE Israel, Amos also revealed the real structure of poverty in the society: the poor are "at the mercy of the arbitrary expectations and demands of the rich" (Wolff 1977:104). This structure, as Amos speaks, gives the audience an unusual insight into the material conditions of the time, and also gives substance to the prophet's call for justice (cf Pleins 2001:369).

However, theologically, it is not Amos who speaks about social justice but YHWH himself who speaks through his prophet. The prophet is only a mouth-piece of God who does not speak for himself. Therefore, to answer the question mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, "What (whose) vested

interested is operative in this text (the book of Amos)?" It is indeed God who has vested interest in the issue of social justice. In the above triangular model, one can infer that in the theological angle, YHWH himself is the determinative factor of social justice. YHWH is the only figure in the book of Amos who is absolutely responsible to maintain justice in the land. Through the prophecy of Amos—who could never expect the Israelites to understand—God roars to the people about the consequence of abandoning justice (Am 3:8) (see Linville 2000:73). In other words, Amos persuasively directs the audience to the subject of social justice. Berquist (1993:54) insists that the "justice and righteousness" (Am 5:24) Amos prophesied do not refer to the human activity that God prefers, but to God's own activity to purge the community of its failings in order to provide justice and righteousness for all people.

The main charge of Amos' rhetorical speeches, in accordance with YHWH's objective, is to maintain social justice in the land (האדמה). Before discussing it further, it is important to note that although similar to the phrase "establish justice in the gate!" (Am 5:15), this aim (the title of this research) is not quite the same as what is intended with such a phrase. The reason is that to establish social justice in the land has a wider scope than just maintaining it in a locality, the legal court. However, it is universal in its extent for it deals with the surrounding nations (Am 1:3-2:3; 3:9; 6:1, 2; 9:7, 9) of Judah and Israel (see Paul 1971:397-403). Amos portrays God as King of the universe, who has sovereign power over the world (Am 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:6), including the nations mentioned in the passages. Therefore, the whole world becomes YHWH's legal court, because he is indeed "the Judge of all the earth" (Gn 18:25) (cf Niehaus 1992:326). As the real Judge, YHWH is the guardian of justice and righteousness, and, in reality, he is not a God who may be satisfied with sacrifices only, but he also demands justice and righteousness (Kapelrud 1961:48). Therefore, whenever the word "land" is used in this study, it may both refer specifically to the land of Israel, "the subject of the covenant between YHWH and his people or the actual ground on which Israel's bond with אדמה lives as the foundation of its life" (cf Koch 1985:37), and all the earth (nations), in general.

6.2.1 The Context: *Realpolitik* and the Covenant

The maintaining of social justice must take place within the setting of the land. Amos clearly mentions that the nations, particularly the nation of Israel, are the focus of his addressed speeches. A question may be raised and specified to "What was happening in the land?" so that YHWH had to perform his activities in such a locus. First of all, one may notice that there is an existence of the *Realpolitik* (cf VanGemeren 1990[a]:154) in Israel's society, for example, the using of power (in a socio-political sense) based more on practical rather than ideological considerations. Lederach (2005:59-60), from a secular political perspective, explains that this kind of politics is blind to the existence of social spaces, relationships, ideas and processes, and the worst is that it has the abysmal records of destroying rather than building a dynamic justice and peace: public confidence and authentic public engagement. The praxis of such a political model can be related to social, economic and political issues that occurred in Amos' time, as seen in the practical abuse of power and wealth by the powerful.

It is argued that the picture of the relation of the prophets, including Amos, to society as a whole, more specifically, to the state or the ruling power(s) and to the cult, that is, to the social, political, and religious institutions, is quite complex (cf Miller 2000:517). For instance, the socio-economic context of YHWH's activity seems to be contradictory. On the one hand, under Jeroboam II of Israel (in the eighth century BCE) the northern kingdom reached the zenith of its political stability and economic prosperity (cf Cook 2005:46). But, on the other hand, as this condition was no longer maintained, inequality and oppression occurred. Urbanization and surplus farming become acute, and brought a shift in the economic structure. Competition among the farmers who had larger crops and those who had lesser resulted in a loss on the side of the latter. According to Pleins (1999:369), "Amos points out quite clearly that Israel's success story included in its cast of characters a hosts of people victimized by the rise to the top of a few urban dwellers." Thus, such inequality and oppression can be seen as "a grave societal evil" (see Cook 2005:50).

The shift of social structure does not only influence the rich-poor relationship but also the relationship between the leaders and those who are led in the society. As mentioned above (see discussion on "The Powerful: The Political Angle" in this chapter), the powerful are the leaders in economic, political and religious spheres, for instance, the kings, the judges, the official prophets, the rich or the merchants. Those who are in a leadership position in the monarchy are expected to administer justice (cf Matthews 1991:204-216). While those who are business practitioners should implement just or fair economic dealings. Most of all, whoever they are, the people of God are called to show compassion to the poor and weak as stipulated in the covenant.

Unfortunately, the powerful did not live according to such requirements. The existence of the covenant does not have much effect on the powerful. Huffmon (1983:109) reports that there was a change of traditional order in eighth century BCE Israel, because new territory, new population, and new prosperity must have meant an increasing disparity between the urban elite of the administrative and religious centres and the village population. Such increasing development of socio-economic is likely to produce "economic instability" (Glass 2000:34) and social tension within the order in the society. In reality, the powerful elite trampled on "justice" and "righteousness" in the courts and elsewhere (the sanctuaries, the markets and others) (Am 5:7, 24; 6:12; 2:8; 4:4; 5:5-6; 8:4-6), where these important words should triumph (cf Soggin 1987:20). It is unthinkable that the powerful who are responsible to take care of and to defend the poor and the weak did just the opposite. They treated their fellow citizens very badly as seen in the use of a sevenfold structure of "sins" indicated the completeness the sin of this group of people (Am 8:4-6).

What is more, the context of Amos' message on social justice is theological, because, as discussed above, it is related to the issue of the covenant. Hubbard (1989:112) asserts that, for Amos, the demands of the covenant (covenant relationship) were summed up in two words "justice" and "righteousness" (5:7, 24; 6:12). One may notice that the book of Amos includes several classic references to the covenant norms of justice and righteousness. If the covenant

stipulations (in the covenant laws) involve specific behavior, the book of Amos attests to particular misdeeds which have occurred in the religious (Am 2:8; 4:4; 5:21-24), economic (Am 2:6; 5:11; 8:5) and legal spheres (5:15, by implication). Amos seems to indict the northern kingdom for violating God's covenant, but with special attention to social justice issues (see Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim & Petersen 1999:302-303). The people, at this point, had broken the covenant of YHWH and the God of the Covenant had to punish them for it.

Brueggemann (1978:39), in addition, relates such a covenant theology (in Mosaic tradition) with creation theology. The link between the two traditions (theologies) is that both of them are characterized by a concern for universality and order. YHWH, in the covenant tradition, through his prophets, delivered a critique of the present order and a call for a moral and social transformation, as he had shown in Israel's exodus experience. In the same way, creation theology has its social function to establish, legitimate, and advocate order at the cost of transformation (cf Brueggemann 1988:101-121). In another occasion, Brueggemann (1988:101) adds that "creation theology is allied with the king, the royal liturgy, and therefore with reasons of state. The outcome is to coalesce the royal ordering of economic distribution and political power with the goodness and reliability of God's intended order, thereby absolutizing the present order as the very structure God has decreed in and for creation." The powerful in Israel supposedly are to be the agents of universal social transformation as YHWH intended them to be (as modelled in the exodus experience). Middleton (1994:266) thus argues that God's purpose in exodus—to establish the Creator's name in all the earth—was not limited to Israel, but was cosmic in scope. Doing social injustice to other created human being(s) is thus a violation of the intended purpose of creation (creation theology), order and justice.

In this connection, discussion of social justice in the book of Amos should also be placed in a religious context. Amos explicitly mentions religious sites (the sanctuaries) and religious rites including feasts and animal sacrifices (Am 4:4-5; 5:25). As the people of the covenant, the powerful in Israel seem to outwardly and regularly keep their religious duties. One can infer that by doing these they

give an impression that they know the theological as well as practical function of such religious endeavors, to facilitate the covenant relationship between them and YHWH. However, religious sites and rites merely function as a religious symbol or identity. Amos despised their hypocritical attitudes by revealing their dishonesties while worshipping YHWH.

Conclusively, Miller (1987:58) asserts that Amos' critique of this recalcitrant condition of his people centred on, at least, three consecutively sequences, from "complacent theology" (YHWH was always "with them"), to "soporific worship" ("doing all the religious rites joyfully"), and ended in "a callously affluent lifestyle" ("the indolent wives, luxury-loving husbands, and expensive ivory inlaid furniture"). Ironically, at the same time, the people of Israel "know little about right conduct" (Am 3:10). Thus, the context of Amos' rhetorical speech seems to be a complex process in which the basic social institutions of the Israelites society are seen as no longer upholding YHWH's moral (and religious) order (cf Dearman 1988:20). Thus, upon the hearing of the verdict, the people of Israel cannto escape or look for an excuse. All that the prophet had been spoken in his oracle was solely in the context of convincing audience and proving their wrongs.

6.2.2 The Reason: Breaking of the Covenant

All the facts presented in the context of the eight century BCE Israel may lead one to the *raison d'être* of what lies behind YHWH's intention to establish social justice in the land. The basic idea is that justice above all is what YHWH requires of his people (5:24). It is rooted in the experience of Israel's salvation history. Through the history of salvation, God has acquired the land for Israel; but in such a way that he continues to be bound up with the forces of the land itself. Every Israelite peasant who makes a living for himself and his family from his toils with the soil, so acquiring freedom of action, will only retain that freedom as long as he respects the fact that this soil belongs to God, and gives thanks to God

and his salvation history. But this also means respecting his fellow-country-man on the land which God has granted to his particular kindred (see Koch 1985:62).

Israel is admonished to be like YHWH. Amos and other prophets saw the whole people of Israel stamped with a purpose and destiny that demanded the expression of divine nature in its total life (cf Gottwald 1959:276). This shows concretely in the practice of the ancient community justice, a fair distribution of the opportunities in the life within one's own faith group. The weak, foreigners, the excluded are to get their fair share of possibilities of survival. This means that a special covenant relationship with YHWH involves firm obligations. This also means having a strong position over against enemy nations and neighbours, with YHWH's help (cf Gerstenberger 2002:240).

Amos seems to be aware of the wonderful way YHWH has helped Israel to escape from Egypt (Am 2:10; 9:7) and conquer Canaan (Am 2:9). It is absolutely evident to him that Israel's life in this land was to be guided and controlled by certain firm standards of right and wrong (Am 2:6-7; 3:2) as written in the covenant law (see Wright 1990:25-28). However, in reverse, the crux of the problem afflicting the Israelite society of Amos' time is that there was no "justice," and "righteousness" (cf Miller 1987:55). One should note that Israel's predicament was a result of covenant breaking. Accordingly, the prophetic insistence on justice and righteousness was rooted in the covenant traditions of Yahwism and addressed a society that, according to those traditions and standards, was in crisis, although the crisis was hardly self-evident to many within the community of Israel. The prophets (including Amos) perceived the reality differently and so called for a measure of justice in the society that was largely absent (see Miller 2000:520).

Discussion of the triangular model above shows that the elite of Israel (the powerful) become independent of YHWH. It means that they willfully disobeyed YHWH and his will. Disobedience simply indicates that the covenant relationship between God and God's people is halted. It is clear from the analysis of the given texts that the prophet Amos stands against the breaking of the covenant committed by the powerful, perverting the idealism of social justice. Amos, as an exponent of moral law, believes that "justice and righteousness" are the terms which have

meaning only in specific, familiar relationship, and the particular meaning is determined by the particular relationship (see Napier 1962:207), and this implies that to breach this relationship is to break the covenant. The breaking of the covenant becomes an inescapable result for the powerful for particularly violating the special covenant relationship that has been established between God and the people (cf Cook 2005:64).

Amos' speeches (Am 2:6-7; 5:7, 10, 12; 8:5-6) expose the powerful who violated their covenant responsibilities through social injustice perpetrated against their own people (see Bergant 2001:81; Cook 2005:64). The prophet based his criticism on the actions of those who willfully disobeyed YHWH and his law (against YHWH himself and their neighbours). In other words, he emphasized that the response of the people towards YHWH is quite central in this covenant relationship. Those who fear YHWH, who remember what YHWH has done, and who turn to YHWH for help and strength, will find instruction and hope in the midst of life. While those determined to go their own way should know that this God of compassion does not leave the guilty unpunished. It seems that the great and terrible day of YHWH functions as both warning and comfort, depending upon what one has learned from this history (cf Nogalski 2007:136).

The breaking of the covenant in the form of disobeying YHWH and mistreating the oppressed is considered as sin, namely social and religious sin, against YHWH. Amos used the word פשע to describe the present existence of Israel. The meaning of such a term is related to "a sacrilegious rebellion" (Am 4:4f), where people brought a stinking, poisonous cloud to the sanctuary, and so the abomination accumulates there, because this is the place where the whole of Israel is gathered together (cf Koch 1985:62). Koch (1985:62) continues that, as contents of the main charge, the word also belongs to the sector of "constitutional law;" but underlying it is the ontological trinity of God, country and people. Attacking the laws of the land, dispossessing the דלים, means rising against the Almighty and the order he has created through salvation history; and it is this order alone which provides the conditions and possibilities for a successful and harmonious life. The word פשע therefore does not only mean rebellion against the

Almighty. It is at the same time a stupid demolition of the foundation of one's own life (see Koch 1985:62).

The covenant people, conversely, break the covenant by doing injustice to other covenant fellows. The breaking of the covenant may be seen clearly in the acts of the people in their unjust treatment of others. From the reading of the texts of Amos, it is clearly seen that there are several major issues of social justice that the prophet addresses. The people of God, especially the powerful, sell the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes, and suppress the poor and the powerless in many ways (Am 2:6f). Injustice to the poor is taken by the prophet as the gravest social crime of the élite of the Israelites (Lang 1983:114). The powerless sank deeper and deeper into debt to rich landowners and were finally forced to sell their property to them losing all that they had (cf Kizhakkeyill 2006:89). It is believed that the establishment of the covenant creation with all creatures and a recreation in the covenant of Noah required respectful treatment for all human beings. Such crimes are considered as violations against the covenant of YHWH (see Niehaus 1992:340).

The prophet Amos also accuses the powerful ("the wealthy women of Samaria") for oppressing the poor and crushing the needy (Am 4:1). It is clear that these "cows of Bashan" come under special fire from the prophet. Wolff (1987:23) indicates that at the expense of the poor the powerful get enormous luxury and throw raucous feasts (cf Am 5:11; 6:1-7). In the same vein, Chisholm (1990:87) argues that these women maintain their luxurious life style at the expense of the poor. They demand that their husbands satisfy their cravings, thus encouraging them to continue their exploitation of the poor, whose stolen money and land was necessary to support such extravaganza. Amos' contemporary, Isaiah (3:16-24) also deals with a similar group, the women of Jerusalem who love ostentation and luxury and, through an abundance of possession, attempt to enhance themselves. This situation seems to reflect the problem of all humanity (2:11; 3:9) that parades its self-sufficiency across the stage of the world (cf Oswalt 1986:140). Similarly, Micah (2:1-3, 9-10) also criticizes the rich and their luxurious lives. Stansell writes that "Micah's language emphasizes that the overpowering oppression and

ill-treatment of those who lose their house and land; passionately he accuse the state owners of coveting, robbing taking, oppressing, or driving out the women from their homes" (1988:129). Therefore, the underlying sins of the powerful are the sins of pride and ostentation, as well as greed.

They also pervert justice and righteousness (Am 5:7). The motif of perverting justice by the leadership of the nation is "the abuse of justice and power" (Sweeney 2000:235). They are changing sweet justice into bitter injustice. Accordingly, in order to become a right and just society, there must be both "justice" and "righteousness." It means that there must be fairness in the courts and, more broadly, order in the society guided by divine moral principles. However, justice is often overthrown and righteousness is cast to the ground by the powerful. As a result, chaos exists and the judgment of God must follow to set things right again (cf Smith 1995:100). Similar to Amos, the prophet Micah also coarsely speaks to the powerful responsible for legal justice (Mi 3:1-3). He uses imagery of cannibalism to elaborate the violation of the leader's responsibility with respect of justice and their perversion of justice (cf Hagstrom 1988:34). Isaiah (Is 1:17, 21, 23) describes this perversion by using the term "the absence of justice" (see also Jeremiah's poetical critiques on "disoriented heart of the community" in Jr 5:26-31). Thus, the problem of perverting justice (as also seen in Dt 16:18-20; 24:17f) is indeed systemic and the neglect is social, because the outcome of Israel's infidelity to the covenant is a society rapacious exploitation, supported and legitimated by institutional structure (cf Brueggemann 1998:68).

The powerful take the wheat of the poor for debt (Am 5:11). Amos explains that landed property is often cultivated by small tenants liable to tax who are ruthlessly exploited by the landlords so that they can build beautiful houses of hewn stone and plant pleasant vineyards—possibly for letting them out on lease (cf Lang 1983:124). In the threat of judgment, the culprits are once again addressed directly, and the case against them is amplified to include harsh practices of taxation of the peasant share croppers. The parallelism of the clauses describe the greedy crime of charging tenant-farmers too much for the use of land which may

well have been taken away from the rightful owners by fraud (in violation of the letter and spirit of Lv 23:13-38; cf Hubbard 1989:172). Because the powerful have profited by the taxation of the agricultural produce of the poor, interestingly, they will be punished by a curse against their very own plantations (see Paul 1991:173).

They also take bribes from those who could afford to pay so that the poor did not get their right (Am 5:12). Accordingly, Amos' references to "(justice) in the gate" (Am 5:7a, 12b, 15a) concern the hearing of court cases and the administration of civil suits (see Hayes 1988:162). Unfortunately, unfairness exists in the legal court because the rich can buy justice to defend their cases. Soggin (1987:92) argues that these judges have private interests which are manifestly incompatible with the exercise of public function or with the cases that they are hearing. It seems that through the corrupt courts they exploit the poor economically and then use their ill-gotten gain to build extravagant houses and plant vineyards (cf Chisholm 1990:91). This situation is in contrast with the code of the Covenant which explicitly prohibits lending at high interest and giving bribes to judges and authorities (cf Hendrickx 1985:30).

The powerful of Israel trample down and cheat the poor in every possible way (Am 8:4f). Their social sins may be seen in the forms of trampling the needy, bringing to an end the poor, reducing the bushel's size, enlarging the shekel weight, defrauding by deceitful scales, buying the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the refuse of wheat (cf Dorsey 1999:284). Amos' contemporary, the prophet Micah, also has the same concerns about the merchants, the false balances and the practices of deceit (Mi 6:9-13). He particularly accuses the people who run businesses (Mi 6:11) in Jerusalem of doing injustice, especially of using wicked scales, giving small measures, and charging exorbitant prices (cf Smith 1984:53).

Basically, such practices are strongly condemned by the covenant law, especially the law on measure (Dt 25:13-16; cf Lv 19:35-37). This is a commercial practice where the merchant uses a heavier weight for buying than for selling. By doing this, the merchant can easily defraud his customers for his own profit (see Mayes

1991:331). As a result, weak members of society are struck a double blow, getting fewer goods and paying more. Conversely, the administration of justice must conform to the highest moral standards (Dt 16:18-20) and commercial activities must be conducted in accord with rigid ethical principles. The merchant must have only one set of scale for both buying and selling, which is to be in accord with the legally ordained size (cf Craigie 1976:317). The reason underlying this principle is clear that cheating a brother with his wealth for personal benefit is completely unacceptable within the nation of Israel. In fact, Millar (1998:142-143) clarifies that the Deuteronomist has gathered legislation demanding integrity in business.

However, the cruelty practiced in Israel has not only a marked social character but also a religious one. The people of Israel, while treating others unfairly, have indeed turned their back upon YHWH. It seems that they did not realize that keeping their religious practices or cultic feasts, for instance, by bringing sacrifices and honouring YHWH in that way, while, at the same time, they oppress others socially, may negatively affect the God-human relationship. Thus the prophet here addresses the major covenantal crimes of Israel (cf Sklba 1990:79), and such crimes indeed do break the Covenant, as well as undermine the relationship, because the term "covenant" could just as well be substituted for "relationship" and vice versa (cf Jensen 2006:74).

Such religious and social sins also connote the worst of all possible misdemeanors (cf Koch 1985:51). The imitation must have seemed to be pure mockery, as blasphemous as if we were to use a parody of a verse in the Bible in order to criticize religion. Israel's offense against the Lord took two main forms, oppression of the poor and the worship of "other gods" (Eaton 1997:24). Amos is also clear in emphasizing that the injustice shown to the poor is human sin, not God's will. Therefore, bad things happen in the world, people do hurtful things to each other, and this is not God's will but is, rather, defiance of God's intention for humanity (cf Simundson 2005:156). Thus, in short, the concept of sin committed by God's people was a deviation of God's will, a breach in the relationship with the Lord and other fellow citizens.

Amos clearly presents a comprehensive view of Israel's sin (cf Limburg 1988:100). Sin is not defined, but rather is shown by concrete examples. For Amos, sin involved a breaking of relationships, that is, the relationship with God by breaking relationship with other people. Sin could be seen in the way the people of Israel related to God and to one another. In relation to God, the people of Israel saw the Lord as a god to be appeased rather than the Lord to be worshipped and served. Israel appeared not to know the nature of the Lord. Israel's worship divorced ritual fidelity from justice and righteousness. In relation to other people, Israel committed sin by refusing to live according to the just commands of God. God desired justice and righteousness, but people afflicted the righteous, took bribes, and pushed aside the needy in the gate (Am 5:12, cf Bailey 1995:81-82).

It is for the world's sake that YHWH is going to act in the world that is tormented, divided and destroyed by wickedness (cf Koch 1985:72-73). It is seen that where the sin (פשע) of Israel spreads out in wave after wave, YHWH will no longer hold back. He will consequently visit his people with affliction. As frequently said, YHWH will not let the sinners go unpunished. Gowan (1998:32) similarly states that the mistreating of the widow, the orphan, or the alien, those without "clout" to be able to maintain their own rights, is the basis for the single motive clause that speaks of the wrath (judgment) of God. In this regard, Amos sees this visitation as imminent; divine judgment upon Israel is inescapable.

According to Mays (1969:7), the theology of Amos, then, is a function of his message. Amos understood YHWH to have a well-defined character: compassion and zeal. He is not only a compassionate God who showed the Israelites his kindness and graciousness (Ex 20:2; 34:1-7; Am 2:9) but also a zealous God (Ex 20:5; 32:16; 34:14) in the sense that he wanted his people to have no other gods (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7) (see Miller 1987:27). Anything which is against his character will have its definite consequence. Through the older theological traditions of Israel's religion, the prophet spoke to vindicate and disclose the God of the new and unexpected word. While in Hosea's speeches, justice and righteousness were first transferred to the people in the context of the goal of salvation history—the

giving of the land to Israel (Hs 12:5, 7; cf Koch 1985:59), in Amos' words, the salvation-history turns into judgment history (Am 2:21ff). The Israelites, then were still YHWH's people, but YHWH was not Israel's God—not at least in any of the current interpretations put on the possessive by the popular theology in Israel (cf Mays 1969:8).

To sum up, the substance of Amos's critique against the northern kingdom was the absence of justice and righteousness in the land (Miller 2000:533), therefore establishing them seems to be the main intention and priority of YHWH. Through his critique of covenant breaking, Amos helps us to recognize our own involvement in this life which is so often marred by failure. Above all, he opens our eyes to see that in the end, as we have deserved, we shall meet God himself (cf Wolff 1983:21). It also can be seen that God and Amos are the "voice" for the victims of injustice. YHWH is portrayed as a God who does not just verbally condemn the horrendous situation; God will do something about them (cf Dempsey 2000:21), especially the death of the nation. Amos (5:1-3) does not bewail the actual death of a human being but warns the people of their imminent destruction. The prophetical dirge is a mocking of the prophet directed against a foreign power (cf Dell 1995:49-50). Ironically, although the prophet concludes in a statement that the leadership of Israel and Judah is not grieved over "the ruin of Joseph" (Am 6:1-6), the powerful are initially referred to as "at ease" and "secure" (6:1), but they do not look after the security of the state (see Sweeney 2000:245).

6.2.3 The End Results: Judgment and Hope

Under these conditions, the prophet Amos comes to them to accuse and to warn them of impending judgment as the consequence of the people's disobedience (cf Chisholm 1990:18). Scholars (Brueggemann 1965:1-15; Boyle 1971:338-362; Snyder 1982:158-166) have argued that, in accusing and warning his audience, Amos uses the covenant lawsuit pattern, particularly as applied in Amos 3:1-4:13. Accordingly, both Amos and his audience seem to have had knowledge of the law of YHWH, the exodus, the wilderness and the conquest tradition (see Am 2:4-16),

as these were fundamental to the nation's understanding of its past. This also assumes that the people of Israel know and generally accept the law of God. Therefore, as Smith (1989:71) writes, "The covenant idea is implied at some points, but for the most part it seems to remain in the background" (cf Sailhamer 1974:435-451; Snyder 1982:158-166). YHWH's rejection is thus based on the violation of the right behaviour in the Covenant (or the covenant's teaching within the Covenant), the right way of living before God and together with one's neighbours (cf Kapelrud 1961:65).

According to Wolff, "How people treat the poor and the weak always provide the standard for prophetic judgment" (Wolff 1987:23). Mistreatment of the oppressed, theologically seen as Israel's breaking of the covenant, brought Amos to Israel—under divine appointment—in order to bear a strong message of judgment (cf Smith 1995:30). The people's unfaithfulness to God, shown in their lack of knowledge, empty worship, and oppressive treatment of the vulnerable, evokes God's punishing destruction (Cook 2005:64). Amos also reminds the powerful about the accountability of those who have been chosen by God. Divine election cannot be used as an excuse; if anything, the Lord must deal more severely with those whose disobedience is willful rather than out of ignorance (cf Finley 1990:114; McConville 2002:174). Thus, one may see clearly that, through the above triangular model, central to Amos' thinking are the three interconnected points: God's ruler-ship over the universe, God's special relationship with Israel, and God's holding Israel responsible for having broken the covenant (see Zucker 1994:120).

The prophet Amos plays his role as YHWH's representative, along with other prophets of the eighth century BCE, to proclaim YHWH's sentence of death upon Israel. Moreover, in so far as his message made Israel's obduracy still stronger, he actually joined the band of executioners (cf Von Rad 1967:12). Tucker (1987:27-40) argues that the verdict delivered (the prophetic announcement of the future) is linked logically to the accusation against the addresses. Fundamental to the prophetic role in Israel was the utterance of God's word for the future, announcements of punishment with or without reasons and announcements of

salvation. This role is basically rooted in the prophet's explanation of YHWH's role as the inflictor of punishment on Israel, and such divine role will increase until YHWH controls the scene completely. In this regard, the visions and hymns of Amos (7:1-9; 8:1-3; 9:1-4; hymns 4:1-12, 5:1-7; 9:1-4) show how Amos' role changes from a mediator against God's judgment to an instrument of God's judgment (to convince his people of the appropriateness of YHWH's judgment in order to bring them back to repentance) (cf Paas 2002:274; Brueggemann 1997:621ff).

In the book of Amos, the judgment of YHWH is described in several ways. To begin with, divine judgment is described as "the roaring of the lion" (Am 1:2; 3:8). Amos was called to do, or more properly, to channel YHWH's "roaring," which brings drought and desolation (see VanGemeren 1990[a]:131). The nations (Judah and Israel) which are the objects of this judgment stemming from Zion have one common factor, that they are all members of the Davidic empire (under the image of the "booth of David"), but soon will be destroyed (cf Dumbrell 1984:154). Next, in the context of judgment upon the nations (as seen in the OAN unit), including Israel, Amos used a graduated numerical saying (Am 1:3-2:16). The fundamental point is that the future judgment announced by YHWH is inseparably related to the present enumeration of crimes where the acts which in themselves illustrate a violated moral order (see Dearman 1988:18). Finally, God announces the sending of divine judgment that will destroy the people like uncontrollable waters (Am 5:18-24). A statement of the coming of YHWH's justice and righteousness is not an imperative or an exhortation for the Israelites to perform justice, but the activities of YHWH that will result in the destruction of the people (cf Berquist 1993:61).

This divine judgment is concretely to take form as a military invasion by a foreign superpower. In chapter 7 the prophet uses the phrase "The Lord God called for conflict by fire" (Am 7:4 NKJV, similar translations in RSV, JB, NEB and NAB). Accordingly, such a phrase must be properly translated as "YHWH was calling for the making of a complaint, to be followed by sending of fire." Studying the significance of the word "complaint" (ריב) in relation with "judging" (נשפט) as

also found in Jeremiah 25:31 (cf Is 66:16), Limburg (1973:349) asserts that YHWH seems to use fire as a weapon against Israel. This suggests that "fire(s)" may be referred to as "an army carrying out a holy war and thus functioning as YHWH's historical agent for punishing the offending nation (cf Miller's view [1965:259] as quoted by Limburg 1973:348]).

Moreover, in the succeeding texts (Am 7:7-9), the prophet also uses terms such as "a wall of plumb line" (חומת אנך) and "a plumb line" (אנך) to support the idea of judgment through great military strength, meaning the impending Assyrian invasion (see Niehaus 1992:456). A more recent study emphasizes that אנך ("a plumb line"), a *hapax legomenon*, may refer to "pickaxe" or "a weapon" that symbolizes YHWH's "warfare" against his people (cf Clements 1996:24-25). In the interpretation and narrative sequel that is given to the third vision of Amos, it is clear that the prophet envisaged and spelled out "the end" of Israel (cf Achtemeier 1999:166). Thus, Amos seems to provide a clear, or better still, "a concrete" picture of the punishment that Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27-28 threatened (House 1998:363).

Interestingly, divine judgment illustrated in the above discussions is thought of in the context of the day of YHWH (firstly introduced in Amos 5:18-27; cf Smelik 1986:246-247). Amos does not think of seeking YHWH in heaven but the mark of God is his earthly multivolipresence, to us a theological term. In other words, his presence whenever and wherever he wills it, in this case, at the cultic centres of the earth (Koch 1985:71). The prophet also employs a different set of images to portray the unexpected nature of God's judgment with the background of the day of YHWH (cf Newsome 1984:21). In Amos' time, there was a popular belief among the Israelites that the day of YHWH (יום יהוה) is the moment of hope when the people would experience a day of deliverance from their enemies. However, in Amos's speech this day would instead be a day in which Israel would be conquered and exiled by and among its enemies (see Stuart 1987:356). The description seems to be showing God's patience is exhausted and the destruction of the Northern Kingdom is inevitable (7:7-9).

Amos maintains that Jeroboam's kingdom is subject to punishment for crimes of religious and social abuses (Am 2:6-16) (cf Sweeney 2000:214). On this, Amos has a despairing belief that the nation will never turn from its evil ways (Newsome 1984:25), because divine punishment which would devastate the national structures appear inevitable (Am 8:1-2) (Eaton 1997:26). Violation to humanity is a serious matter in the sight of YHWH. Accordingly, the Old Testament divides humanity into two categories: the ones fallen outside God's special relationship with Israel, and the others fallen but marked with the potential for knowing the will of God, a knowledge that sadly cannot preclude disobedience. Thus, with the special relationship (Am 3:2) comes also special judgment (cf Seitz 1998:276). Such a future judgment Amos envisaged for the Israelites in their contemporary situation, although he did not see the event himself. It remained a coming judgment in the day of YHWH (cf Otto 2001:221; Paul 1991:113; see also the concept of *Naherwartung* by Schmidt [1968:95-97]).

One may argue against such "a violent God" by asking how come YHWH will unmercifully punish his own people. In contrast, this is not the real case, because whenever the prophet uses literary devices such as "woe-oracles" and "covenant lawsuit," he meant them as divine efforts in maintaining the order of society (cf Gerstenberger 1962:262) and in establishing his divine council (through the indictment of Israel for breaching of the covenant) (see Huffmon 1959:295). De Roche (1983:572-573) adds that the prophetic ריב oracles ("lawsuit oracle") used were to express that YHWH acts as both the plaintiff and the judge. Whenever YHWH saw Israel has broken the covenant relationship he took it upon himself to take action in the form of threat, a plea, or even a punishment. Although God's action seems to be violent, it is actually the consequence of human violence. God does not simply give people up to violence, but chooses to become involved in violence in order to bring about good results; thereby he may prevent an even greater evil (see Fretheim 2004:374-375). YHWH thus controls the violent effect of sinful human activities and makes possible a non-violent future for God's people.

Is there any hope for God's people? In order to answer this, one should recognize a problem before deciding whether there is hope or not for the Israelites in Amos' rhetorical speeches. On the one hand, many of Amos' interpreters have tended to characterize him as a prophet of doom, with a note that any hint of the possibility of hope for a future for Israel has been explained by them as the work of a later editor/redactor (Wolff 1977; cf Mays 1969). In the same vein, Newsome (1984:21) believes that Amos (7:1-9) has given up hope that Israel will repent, and the judgement of YHWH is now assured. This position seems to imply that the final passages on the unit of Amos 9:1-15 is inauthentic, because it is not rooted in the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet himself.

On the other hand, others believe that Amos was also a prophet of hope. Hasel (1991[b]:118) notes that there are many interpreters (such as: Eichrodt, Zimmerli, Hammershaimb, Watts, Heschel, Reventlow, Clements, Von Rad and others) who have supported the authenticity of the final hope passage in Amos (9:11-15). It is believed that beside divine judgment and punishment, the prophet Amos is also called to deliver the message of hope (cf Smith 1995:30). If one reads Amos 9:7-10, it seems that YHWH will not completely destroy the house of Jacob, because the texts points out that only the sinners of his people will die. Accordingly, because YHWH is a God who keeps his promises, his prophet knew that ultimately he must redeem his people, restore them to the land, and establish the king on the throne. House (1998:363) insists that, although God will punish the covenant breakers, the good news is that renewal lies beyond this devastation. The God who roars will eventually also be the God who heals. However, one should also notice that, in the larger context, the hope extended by Amos for Israel's future restoration is only for a remnant of the nation (Smith 1995:32-33).

Because of these end results, both the "possibilities" of the judgment and of the hope (cf Brueggemann 1997:171), it is understandable that the prophet called his audience to repent and to experience restoration with YHWH. The prophet assumes it is possible for people to change when they are confronted with the different choices, either to seek YHWH and be saved or to seek sanctuaries and perish (Am 5:4-5, 14-15). A choice between what they do and the way of

righteousness. The powerful, still, could use power in concern for the welfare and rights of others. The court could uphold justice, and the cause of the poor could be recognized and met. The social instruments at hand could serve the "love of the good." It would not be a perfect society, but no society escapes the character of the people who shape and control it. However, it may be organized, in the long last its quality would depend on people who knew what was one's limitations and dependence (cf Mays 1987:156). Amos' call to repentance (Am 5:4-6) was therefore expressed not very much as exhortations to get back to a moral code, but as appeals to come back to a relationship with the Lord (see Eaton 1997:25).

Unfortunately, the "chance" to escape divine judgment and wrath was closed for the Israelites, because it was willfully denied by the powerful. In reality, they had chosen their destiny by disobeying YHWH, practicing idolatry and social injustices. In reverse, Amos' use of parenesis (in Am 5:1-15) seems to serve as a warning to the people to adopt his recommended course of action: rejection of the northern sanctuaries and leadership and return to YHWH in Jerusalem, including both the Temple and the House of David. It is thus clear that Amos's condemnation of the abuse of justice and wealth attempts to point to the corruption of both the religious and the political leadership of northern Israel and those in Judah who acquiesce to Israelite rule (cf Sweeney 2000:232).

By committing these religious and social sins the powerful had intentionally blocked God's justice from achieving its ends on earth. Divine intention remained unfulfilled, as the society's leadership oppressed the poor. In this context, justice and righteousness will arrive like dangerous waters as pronounced in Amos 5:24 (see Berquist 1993:61). The fall of Samaria in 722 BCE by the invasion of the mighty army of Assyria proves that Israel's rejection to repent to YHWH surely has resulted to her destruction and exile. Every abusive economic practice that deceives and exploits the powerless is considered serious sin because it stands against YHWH and his characteristic fondness of social justice. Therefore, YHWH's demand for obedience should be taken with utmost seriousness, and disobedience will be dealt with seriously (cf Brueggemann 1997:373).

6.2.4 Summary

YHWH is concerned with the provision of justice and righteousness. Through the rhetorical speeches of his prophet, Amos, God attempts to establish justice (social justice) in the land of Israel. This indeed suggests that justice and righteousness is primarily rooted in YHWH himself, specifically in his will and purpose for the goodness of all of his creations. Justice and righteousness are a special concern and responsibility of God, "who establishes and upholds justice and righteousness" (Hayes 1988:161; cf Paul 1991:192). This implies that human beings actually do not perform justice, because they can only allow it to happen in the society, to set aside a space for justice (cf Berquist 1993:23). Thus, Amos succinctly emphasizes that YHWH has to be the *prima causa* for justice and righteousness to be established in the land.

The context(s) of establishing justice is quite complex. It does not only involve economic and political (social) bearings but also theological (religious) expression. Amos shows that there is an existence of *Realpolitik* in the society. It is the abuse of powers and wealth by the powerful in order to gain more profits, luxuries and influence. It indeed points out the common attitudes of the powerful that are self-centered in nature and these are built upon the misery and suffering of the oppressed, those who are poor and weak. Moreover, such practices are rooted in theological and religious scheme. The thought and practice of social justices is closely related to the covenant, the treaty that YHWH made between himself and his people, and as was purposefully meant by such a concept, "YHWH will be the Israelites' God and the Israelites will be YHWH's people." This implies that God's people, especially the powerful, should maintain their right (covenant) relationship with both YHWH and other fellow citizens, including the oppressed. They must always remember that once they were oppressed and, by the grace and loving kindness of God, they were delivered and became a free nation.

Establishing justice in the land is also correlated to the keeping of the covenant. However, instead of living in the right covenanted relationship with YHWH, the Israelites violated the covenant by disobeying him and mistreating fellow citizens, especially the oppressed. The powerful leaders committed religious as well as

social sin against YHWH and other human beings, showing "hypocritical religiosity and injustice" (Sawyer 1993:124). In relation to the latter, Israel is admonished to be like YHWH. As divine representatives in the land, they should demonstrate divine character (particularly his justice) by performing acts of social justice. However, they did not act accordingly, and in so doing, the core of the problem is the absence of "justice" and "righteousness" in the land. The powerful abused their power and wealth and oppressed the poor and the weak. By doing these they break the covenant. The main intention of YHWH thus is to establish justice, because the covenant was breached by the people.

As a consequence, establishing justice will also mean receiving judgment. The coming of divine judgment caused by the people's breaking of the covenant, particularly by being religiously idolatrous and socially unjust (see Pleins 2001:374) should be anticipated by the breakers of the covenant. Ironically, expecting the coming of the day of YHWH popularly believed to bring hope of more prosperity, the oppressors did not realize that such a day that Amos announced was indeed a judgment day (cf De Vries 1995:187; see also Schart 2007:144-146). This is the day when YHWH will punish all sinners who intentionally violate his covenant. In reality, this is the moment when YHWH uses his agents of destruction, the mighty Assyrian army, to defeat and put Israel into a state of death. However, there is still a chance for the people to have hope in YHWH, because he offers a possibility for them to be restored (cf Brueggemann 1997:257), or this may be seen as "a hope under judgment" (Williamson 2000:291-306). For this very reason YHWH calls them to give the proper response, and that is repentance. In the end, the book of Amos does not explain this issue, whether Israel repents or not, but her history tells clearly that they rejected the opportunity to be saved and restored. As a result, Samaria fell under the Assyrian siege.

6.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Undoubtedly the book of Amos presents the principles of social justice in both theological and practical tones. The prophet Amos uses a term such as "justice" (also "righteousness) in accordance to the broad or general meaning of it. It is used primarily in reference to the attribute of YHWH, who is a supreme and righteous Judge. The term has also practical implications, especially in the two dimensions of the life of God's people, in legal or judicial as well as in social systems. It is related to the process of making a fair judgment or decision in the court. This implies that the administration of justice has to reflect God's justice, because the court was entrusted to maintain order, protect the rights of the innocent and preserve justice (cf Smith 1994:49). Moreover, the term "justice" has a dimension of mystery, especially when it is related to the issue of theodicy. One may not see a clear vision or manifestation of justice when he or she is in trouble or suffering. Therefore, justice and righteousness are not empty terms, nor are they vague concepts. They refer to the concrete and specific actions of persons in relationships when they accord others what is due to them. They are the foundations of society at its best (see Mays 1987:164).

The concept of justice (also social justice) in the book of Amos has its root in the codes of law (Code of the Covenant, Deuteronomic Code of law, and Holiness Code). On Mount Sinai, YHWH made a covenant with the Israelites that he will be Israel's God and Israel will be his people. Based on this, the laws demand that social justice, among many others, must be practiced by the community. Practical rules about sabbath, sacrifices, release, forgiveness, and social responsibilities of leadership in Israel related to the treatment of the poor and the weak are set in accordance to the vision of social justice of YHWH. In addition, the message of social justice is interconnected with the same issue in the prophetic writings, particularly in the writings of Amos' contemporaries, such as Micah and Isaiah. Although these prophets had their post in Judah (Jerusalem), they had similar concerns and passions with Amos in responding to the crisis of social justice which exists in their era.

The book of Amos also uniquely exposes that at times, the people of God, particularly the powerful, use religious activities to cover up their irresponsible attitude and actions toward social issues, an incompatibility with justice which results in social sins and iniquities, and a failure to give dignity to other human beings (cf Rathinam 2002:727). This incompatibility suggests that if its acquisition and possession cost the economic freedom and welfare of others, it is called violence and oppression. If it fostered conspicuous consumption of a level of luxury that is enjoyed in heedless unconcern for the needy, it is wrong. If it is gained by violation of the rules of righteousness which set the values of personal relations above profit, it is iniquitous. If wealth becomes the dominant motivation of those responsible for social-being because they hold power, that is sin (Mays 1987:154). To cover up these wrongs, the powerful become more religiously excited in offering sacrifices and feasting in sanctuaries. Thus, in Amos, a rich and profound message can be understood in two dimensions: God's intimate involvement with the people and people's unfaithful response to God's care. They worship with empty gestures and engage in unjust, oppressive dealings with one another (Cook 2005:62).

It is recognizable that, compared with the rest of the books in the Old Testament, there is a theological significance or emphasis regarding the issue of social justice in the book of Amos. For the prophet Amos, YHWH is not ignorant to the predicament(s) of his people. In response to such a condition, he seems to primarily emphasize the establishment of justice in the land on the side of Israel's deity. The principles and practices of justice written in the covenant laws must be established, because it has been breached in Israel's society. In a theological sense, this deviation means a violation to the covenant, a breaking of the covenant. It means that the covenanted relationship is no longer kept by the Israelites. What is more, justice will disappear when it is disconnected from the past memory of the people, the exodus tradition (see Brueggemann 1997:178). Only the awareness that justice is dependent on the openness of society for the forces from beyond time, or as Scheiker puts it (as quoted by Schroeder [2001:14]) "justice is dependent on society's ongoing and adequate interaction with powers that it does not control," can justice become a possibility and reality.

Justice is a very sensitive condition. It disappears when people ignore God as the giver of life and instead rely on their own wisdom. It is present and can become reality only if people open themselves to this force from beyond time. In such a purpose, YHWH sent Amos as his prophet to announce divine theological intention, to establish justice in the land.

In this regard, my research proposes a theological concept of social justice based on the dynamics of a covenanted relationship between the divine and human beings (his people), and, by implication, between human beings and other human beings. These relationships can be schematically understood in "a triangular relational model of social justice." It is assumed that there are three angles (aspects) interrelated in these relationships, the theological angle (YHWH), the political angle (the powerful) and the social angle (the powerless [the oppressed]). The covenanted relationship requires that YHWH is independent from his creations (human beings or God's people). Meanwhile, in reverse, human beings must be dependent on God. On this, Amos, and other prophets too, are very clear about the concept of *theonomy*, a word that has been used to indicate the theocentricity of the prophet's worldview. This implies that Israel cannot live apart from its centre, because "humanistic autonomy is a manifestation of self-destructive heteronomy" (Terrien 2000:267).

Such a dependency should not be an end of this relationship, but it must be extended to an interdependent relationship among human beings, "a right relationship between all members of the society" (Bovati 1994:19). This means that the oppressed need the powerful and vice versa. On the one hand, the oppressed need the powerful to care and to protect them in order to survive the hardships of life. On the other hand, the powerful need the oppressed to actualize their calls as the responsible receivers of divine covenant and promises. Both the powerful and the oppressed should interdependently meet together and hold fellowship with each other so that the oppressed receive and the powerful give.

This scheme also suggests that YHWH's living rule of Israel was exercised through the charismatic office of the Judge—a figure strangely combining qualities of king, judge, prophet and warlord (Holladay 1987:124). He demands

the powerful to be and to act as his representatives, especially to be responsible for the establishment of social justice in the land. According to the standards of the time, protection from hostility and oppression is also part of justice for the spiritual and political leaders (Gerstenberger 2002:240). In contrast, instead of becoming divine agents of social justice, the powerful turned out to be the practitioners of social injustice. Neglecting the spiritual aspect of their call as Israel's leaders and the bearers of divine social vision and mission, they severely abused the power and wealth given by YHWH and oppressed the poor, the weak and the defenseless. They become independent both from YHWH and the oppressed. In such a state, covenanted relationship was broken. Moreover, the oppressed were in a position of hopelessness. They experienced and suffered social injustice and become victims of it, because they have lost their economic, social and legal rights.

As a response, through the prophet Amos, YHWH takes concrete action. In Amos's rhetorical speeches, YHWH is introduced as the fierce protector of what would now be called "human rights," the firm corollary of the covenant faith in the one God was the brotherhood of all Israelites (Gottwald 1959:288). In the same vein, Gerstenberger (2002:240) indicates that "because hostility and oppression recurred time and time, and threats, defeats, dependent relationships seriously damaged self-confidence and often enough also brought physical misery and death, the just God was obliged to defend and avenge the community in the same way as a tribal and national deity." The God of Amos is the God of the lowly, the victims who were crushed without pity in the economic machinery of Israel (cf Schottroff 1984:40). It is important to emphasize here that YHWH is "the subject of social justice" (Berquist 1993:54-56) who is responsible for maintaining justice as his single intended activity in the book of Amos. Thus, establishing justice is indeed the divine's cause.

The establishment of justice also implies an implementation of divine judgment on the day of YHWH. YHWH will not let religious and social sinners go unpunished, because he is the one who "punishes injustice by intervening in history" (Sawyer 1993:48). Amos clearly announces the punishment of the

breakers of the covenant, the doers of social injustice. This punishment takes form in a military invasion, the coming of the mighty Assyrian army that brought severe destruction to Israel. However, although YHWH offered an opportunity for the people to repent and recover as the prophet called to seek YHWH and the good—it can be considered as "a little hope" offered (Linville 1999:41)—in reality, his people rejected him by consistently rejecting justice and righteousness to be established in the land (cf Brueggemann 1997:197). As a result, the future end of Israel is at hand. The capital city of Israel, Samaria, was besieged and torn down, its people captured or scattered. This was the death of the northern kingdom Israel, as Blenkinsopp (1983:96) firmly asserts, "A society which neglects justice and righteousness does not deserve to survive."

Viewed from the perspective of Bruggemann's theological method, the dynamics of the covenanted relationship (as seen and discussed in a triangular model of social justice above) and the intention to establish justice in the land reflects the "testimonies" of the utterances about social justice. As "a core testimony" (Brueggemann 1997:117-144), YHWH is definitely in the centre of the prophet's message. YHWH, as the theological angle, is the primal subject of a theology of social justice. He has laid a theological foundation of social justice in the covenant of creation and of redemption (see Berthout 2005:99-109). Amos' social messages are the speeches about God (indeed as spoken by God to Israel) and may be considered as a core testimony about God. In the book of Amos, YHWH is not only described as "subjects," for instance, the Creator, the King of the universe, the Warrior, and the Judge but also as "adjectives," such as powerful, sovereign, dangerous and just, as well as "verbs" ("testimony in verbal sentences"): he creates, rules, opposes and judges.

In addition, one cannot discuss such a core testimony without relating it to a discussion of the Israelites. Divine-human relationship must be placed in the context of the Covenant, the covenanted relationship between YHWH and his people. God's exists in a notion of "in-relationship with," a personal relation with his creation. Thus, the scope of a core testimony is widened in YHWH's economy, the maintenance of the order of society. The Israelites, consisting of

both the powerful and the powerless, who have made a covenant with him are called to reflect the nature of YHWH and to act according to his nature (Am 5:15, 24). When the powerful and the powerless of Israel dependently put their trust in God and relate to each other interdependently, the ideal state of social justice is maintained.

However, the utterances also testify that the core testimony must be cross-examined by different realities of YHWH, particularly his *hiddeness*, *ambiguity* or *instability*, and *negativity*. Amos' speeches aim to display a God who is in hiding. He seemingly leaves the powerful politically and economically oppressed the powerless during the acts of social injustices (Am 2:6-8; 5:10-13; 8:4-6). This may raise a question of theodicy ("How long or why?") and a complaint on behalf of the oppressed. YHWH is described as ambiguous or contradictory, because, on the one hand, he commands the Israelites to come to the national cultic sites (Bethel and Gilgal) to sin and transgress (Am 4:4-5). On the other hand, he appeals to them not to seek these sites (to seek YHWH and to repent instead [Am 5:5]). Besides, YHWH's "negativity" can be seen in his coming judgment in the form of destruction of the nation. The Israelites think this would never happen to them. They firmly held a popular belief of "divine favoritism," YHWH would never punish them. It is clear that, in the book of Amos, YHWH is described differently from the core testimony in terms of "his popular nature." This description is called by Brueggemann as "counter testimony" (1997:317-319).

In this research, the tension between "core testimony" and "counter testimony" is very apparent. When the powerful become independent from YHWH and break divine covenant, YHWH appears as "a hostile God" to them. This can be seen in all the accusations spoken by Amos against the powerful and in divine announcements to punish them. According to Brueggemann (1997:317-318), the counter testimony is not intended to obliterate the core testimony. Rather, in the disputatious propensity of Israel, core testimony and counter testimony belong to each other and for each other in an ongoing exchange. The rhetorical speeches of Amos, particularly on the "negative" side of YHWH ("counter testimony"), intentionally aim to complement "core testimony." The escalation of such a

tension is needed so that his audiences, the powerful of Israel, are directed to a point where they may realize their predicaments and return to YHWH in repentance. The tension is needed to reach the main intention of the utterance, to establish social justice in the land.

The prophet's message about establishing social justice in the land is a call for the powerful (also the whole community) to return to their nature as YHWH's partners (Israel, the human persons, the nations and creation; see Brueggemann's "unsolicited testimony" [1997:407-564]). The covenant that YHWH made with his people requires "participation" on the side of the latter. There are covenantal obligations for the Israelites both "to listen and to do justice," because the most characteristic and the most distinctive characteristic in the life and vocation of YHWH's partner is the remarkable equation of love of God with love of neighbor. This research shows that, although there are "threats" (Am 2:13-16; 3:12-15; 4:1-3, 6-13; 5:16-27; 6:6-8; 8:7-9:10; see the concept of *Prophetenspruch* which indicates punishment and "woe oracles" that indicates death in Snyman [1995:47]) from the divine (these may also be considered as "counter testimony"), indeed YHWH's original love for and commitment to Israel prevails. It is proven by calling the wrongdoers of Israel "to seek YHWH and live" (Am 5:5-6) and giving "a little hope" about the escape from the coming judgment in the day of the Lord (Am 9:11-15).

The prophet Amos, as a mediator for YHWH (see Brueggemann's "embodied testimony" [1997:622-649]), has played his role consistently. It is believed that the prophet speaks because he is compelled by an inexplicable force known only as the summons of YHWH. In the case of Amos, he is called to respond to and to evoke crisis, a crisis of social justice. His use of rhetorical devices brings his audiences' imagination to a courtroom drama. As if he is standing in "the divine council" (cf Brueggemann 1997:628; see also Allen 1969:43-45), as a mediator with divine authority given to him (notice the repeated use of the prophetic formula "Thus says YHWH" [Am 1:3, 6, 9, 10, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:12, 5:3, 4, 16; 7:17] in his speeches), and judging the powerful for their sins on behalf of YHWH and the powerless. Referring to the above "trialectics" (YHWH—the powerful—

the powerless in the triangular model of social justice), Amos seems to be in the middle of the relationships carrying the prophetic speeches of judgment and hope.

This study shows that the prophet Amos successfully mediates the theological intention of YHWH, as seen in his utterances, to establish social justice in the land of Israel. Divine justice is established either in the form of defending the powerless from social injustices and never letting the sinful powerful go unpunished. Therefore, Amos' rhetorical speeches are indeed performative speeches, because "the utterances do what they say" (Patrick & Scult [1990] as quoted by Brueggemann [1997:703]).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This research aims to propose a theology of social justice in the book of Amos. To accomplish this purpose, my study employs a rhetorical analysis. The reason for using this analysis is that "all religious system are rhetorical because they strive to communicate truth" (O'Rourke Boyle 2001:662) Using this method, my analysis deals with the literary composition, structural patterns and literary devices of the texts related to the issue of social justice: Amos 2:6-8; 5:1-17; and 8:4-8. In addition, my analysis also deals with the question of how the literary devices used in the passages function as a means of persuasion. The rhetorical analysis used in this research tries to focus on both the literary artistry of the text as well as its persuasive effects on the original audience. In other words, the rhetorical approach used in this study tries to analyze the literary units and to articulate the impact of the literary unit on its audience as well, because "biblical rhetoric reveals that reason is a language of communication and persuasion" (Gitay 2009:55).

Because of the limitations that rhetorical analysis has, this research aims at complementing what is lacking in this approach. Rhetorical analysis is a purely synchronic method. It accepts and examines the biblical texts only as the final form. Conversely, my research tries to complement this identified lack by also addressing the historical aspect of the texts as used in a "common and traditional" rhetorical approach. It is assumed that rhetorical study should also pay attention to the historical contexts, including the author, the original readers, and the historico-political, as well as socio-religious contexts of the text. Therefore, this analysis follows both the synchronic and diachronic approaches. Synchronically, this research deals with the literary or stylistic devices of the texts, or the elements

that formed the texts to be the final texts as presented. Diachronically, it deals with the historical issues of the texts, for example, the historical resources that produced the texts that are analyzed.

Recognizing the limitation of rhetorical analysis to comprehensively deal with the text, this research also involves other forms of complementary analyses for instance, the historical (including the historic-grammatical), literary, and form analyses in its discussions. The main purpose of employing these analyses is that, in my opinion, a rhetorical approach should gain the benefits from other approaches as well, because such an approach cannot stand on its own. This means that this research strives to be consistent with a more complete or comprehensive way of doing exegesis. Thus, as a whole, this research uses a complementary approach in analyzing the given texts.

In order to construct a theology of social justice, this research is intentionally and yet critically modelled after the approach of Walter Brueggemann (particularly his work, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, dispute, advocacy* [1997]) with his pluralistic approach. This approach means that one should consider a pluralism of faith affirmations and articulations of YHWH in the text itself; a pluralism of method, that has displaced the long-standing hegemony of historical critical approaches, and a pluralism of interpretive community. In dealing with this, Brueggemann focuses on the processes, procedures and interactionist potential. This is expressed in his use of "a courtroom trial" metaphor or imagery which focuses on the processive, interactionist modes of assertion and counter assertion to find the truth. It was found that his method leads one to the concept of presenting the utterance of the theological claim—as a *testimony*—embodied in the biblical text itself. Out of this form comes a verdict, an affirmed rendering of reality and an accepted version of truth (as a *dispute*), and of promoting a rendering of truth and a version of reality against other renderings and versions (as an *advocacy*).

However, Brueggemann's method is indeed not free from pitfalls. His emphasis on the "utteredness" of the text at the expense of ontology might result on a dependency on Israel's testimony as generated in the text. Accordingly, it is

somewhat misleading, because the texts or the speeches are only the means to reveal God, and not the reverse. It is proper to think that the text itself should point to a God whose power is not dependent on any human utterance or human form of power. Moreover, his method seems to be non-historical, especially when he stresses the unavailability of historical data behind the text. His method thus abandoned the history and the possibility of knowing anything about the world behind (or even) around the text analyzed. To complement the deficiencies of his method, this research intends to focus both on the function of the texts in order to signify what or who the signifier is (God himself and his intentions) and the historical issues of the text.

When considering the diachronic aspect, this research finds that there exists some difficulties in deciding who the real original author of the book is, a person (or a group) that produced the ideology revealed in the texts analyzed. The existence of "third-person language" (Am 7:10-17), often thought of as "the other author," indicates another author of the book besides Amos. Against the view that argues that the book was composed gradually in several stages coming from different sources, this research holds to the possibility that the original author was the prophet Amos himself (see Pfeifer's concept of *Selbstverstänis* [1984:479]). The reason in maintaining this view is that it is probable that the author of the book used different styles of writing and compositions for his rhetorical purpose. It seems to be impossible to think that different sources or authors coming from different times can produce a single and unified literary outcome. Moreover, the use of a rhetorical strategy in reaching a single rhetorical purpose, to persuade the audience, requires a single mindset from an author, in this case, the prophet Amos himself.

Amos was originally known as both a sheep-breeder, one who owned cattle, and sycamore trees. Amos originated from Tekoa, in the southern kingdom of Judah and seemed to have been economically self-reliant and had a high status in society rather than being an ordinary shepherd or a worker of sycamores. However, he was called to prophesy as was usually practiced by the professional prophets. Although confessing that he was not a prophet and not the son of the prophet (Am

7:14), he indeed was a prophet sanctioned by YHWH. He may not have been a prophet at the time when God gave him the commission to prophesy to Israel, but, on the basis of his call, he later became one. Thus, he was a layman under divine order to perform the function of a prophet, to announce judgment or salvation. Similar to the speeches of other eight century BCE prophets, Amos' speech dealt with the same basic theme and shared some central assumptions: God expects justice and righteousness, in history and in human society, and, moreover, God is about to act to execute his will (cf Tucker 1987:170).

Amos went northwards to prophesy in the context of the kingdom of Israel in its political and economic zenith, particularly during the reign of Jeroboam II (King 1983:3-15). Politically, Israel was stable and at this stage was busy expanding her territory as her enemy, the Syrian kingdom of Damascus became weaker, and the southern kingdom of Judah became an ally. Meanwhile, the economy of Israel had reached its peak, because the control over trade routes was in Israel's hands. This resulted in growing profits through international trade. As expected, such stability and prosperity were interpreted as signs of YHWH's favour. This fact was supported by what is called the "religious awakening," where religious shrines were enthusiastically constructed, animal sacrifices were abundantly offered, and religious feasts were routinely celebrated.

Unfortunately, although they outwardly practiced these religious activities, inwardly, the Israelites did not observe the religious demands in a correct relationship with YHWH and with their neighbours. Worshipping the deity in Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba was identified by the prophet as an empty and sinful religion because they neglected the horizontal (social) dimension of their belief. Political, economic and religious successes were not consistently followed by social accomplishment, the advancement of the good and the welfare of the whole population. Prosperity was experienced only by a few people in Israel, particularly the ruling elites (the king, the religious and judicial officials, the rich and the merchants). This situation created a sharp contrast between the luxury of the rich and the misery of the poor. The rich exploited the poor in terms of appropriating their property and enslaving them for debts they could not pay.

They also used their resources to bribe judges and other officials in order to obtain unjust judgments against the poor and strip them of their property and other rights. As a matter of fact, they were practicing social injustices by means of oppressing and abusing the poor and the weak.

Against this backdrop, Amos delivered his message of social justice to the people of Israel. Albeit considered as a paradigmatic social justice prophet, Amos was also a master of rhetoric who used language and imagery brilliantly to persuade his Israelite audience to love God and their neighbour (cf Sharp 2009:34). On the other hand, as an angry prophet, he condemned the people of Israel for their misplaced worship practices and social injustices. In condemning these, Amos used a rhetorical strategy that is designed to draw in a crowd, not drive the people away (cf Matthews & Moyer 1997:137). He intensely and creatively used his impressive rhetorical skills as a means of persuading his hard-hearted audience (see Cook 2005:61). In general, the book of Amos itself is organized rhetorically to present an argument for the overthrow of the sanctuary at Beth El and serves as exhortation to seek YHWH. Specifically, the rhetorical strategy of the prophet in his indictment of Israel (as well other nations, in the case of OAN) is clear. He aims to to condemn transgressions and thereby "to win over his Israelites audience to obedience to God" (Sweeney 2005:184-185).

Accordingly, great communication skills are required if one hopes to transform the way people think and act. As an effective communicator, Amos tried to persuade his audience to accept the principles he outlined to them before they applied them (Am 1-2). He also used logic (Am 3:1-8), sarcasm (Am 4:4-5), and repetition (Am 4:6-11) to make his points. In response, it was expected that the audience would listen to those who weep for them rather than yell at them (5:1-17), to those who intercede on their behalf (7:1-6), and those who balance the bad news with the good (9:11-15) (cf Smith 1994:65). Sharp (2009:34) additionally argues that Amos used irony found in Israel's ancient traditions to compel his audience not to take God's favour for granted. He also employed ambiguity to force his audience to think more deeply about the life of faith. The way he utilized doxologies is intended to bring them to a new place of encounter with the

Creator. In other words, the messenger must seek the best means to persuade some, as Smith (1994:65) pinpoints, "The unpopularity of a message does not excuse the messenger from speaking, but it will test the messenger's character and speaking ability."

In order to convincingly persuade his audience to end "the practices of social injustices," Amos seems to pull out all the literary (rhetorical) and theological stops available to play this negative theme at full volume (Hubbard 1989:108). This implies that the prophet had freedom in his techniques to employ all possibilities in an attempt to create something new; but at the same time he also demonstrated the bounds within which he was working (see Dell 1995:61). Theoretically, as Gitay (1994:227) proposes, the prophetic speech is a religious discourse that responds to political and social situations as a proclamation of God's judgment or reward. The speaker seeks to affect the audience's behaviour, hence the prophetic speech employs numerous means of appeal, which reveal prophetic oratory as rich, elaborate as any discourse. Thus, the prophetic rhetoric is considered as an argumentative art of appeal that avoids abstractions and rhetorical statements in favour of lively, concrete and colourful examples. The rhetorical genres and techniques Amos employed are primarily threats and invectives. Through his words, these styles are most fully developed.

To expose Amos' rhetoric on social justice, this research utilizes the basic rhetorical steps proposed by Kennedy (1984:33-38) and combines them with Black's (1965), Kessler's (1974:22-36), and Wuellner's (1987:448-63) proposals. This combination uses the following method: it begins with establishing the rhetorical *unit*, rhetorical *situation*, *invention* (*inventio*), *disposition* (*dispotitio*), and ends up with identifying the rhetorical *techniques*. It is important to note here that, within each unit, there is a certain structure which has three essential elements: introduction, accusation and retribution. Moreover, this can be elaborated in complete rhetorical elements: introduction [*exordium*], statement [*narratio*], body of the speech [*probatio*], and conclusion [*peroratio*]). From the rhetorical analyses of Amos' texts related to the issue of social justice (Am 2:6-8; 15:1-17; 8:4-8), it was found that YHWH, throughout the prophet's rhetorical

speeches in these units, opposed the practices of social injustice; specifically social oppressions of the poor and the weak (Am 2:6-8), perversion of the ideal principles of justice and right religious practices (Am 5:1-17), and economic exploitation, as well as manipulation of the unfortunate by a certain group of people (Am 8:4-6).

Amos used every possible rhetoric device available in order to appeal to his audience in each unit analyzed. In the first unit (2:6-8), the notion of opposition from YHWH occurred in the use of a "war oracle" towards the nations (OAN) accused for their common immorality. The prophet specifically employed "rhetorical entrapment" (as seen in OAN [Am 1:3-2:16]) in order to corner the Israelites so that they could not escape from divine accusation (cf Partlow 2007:23-32). They form the climax of the series of oracles. In this regard, the formula N+1 is also used to expose the totality of Israel's transgressions. While, in the second unit (5:1-17), Amos used the "chiastic form" to direct the audience starting from their sins, then turning toward God, and lastly ended with them again. Other literary devices were intentionally applied to draw the listener to the core of the prophetic message. For example, he used inclusion and progression, woe oracle, dirge or lament, wordplay, hymn, wisdom techniques, imagery and a sevenfold structure. Finally, in the last unit analyzed (8:4-8), Amos made use of the "Hear this" formula to call attention and establish authority for his speech. A sevenfold structure, again, was utilized to indicate the comprehensiveness of Israel's sins. Use of the chiastic form was made to direct attention to the central point, the means used in abusive economic practice. The most important literary device found in this unit is "quoting what the accused have said." The purpose of using this tactic is to carry out an argument with the adversaries by using their own words against them.

In a rhetorical sense, one should consider Amos' use of such literary devices as law court imagery. Such a judicial imagery significantly occurs both in the analysis of the second and third unit of this research. Amos' messages can be categorized (based on Kennedy's proposal [2001:43-50]) as, first, *epideictic rhetoric*. This means any oral or written discourse that seeks to enhance

knowledge, understanding or belief, often does it through praise and blame, whether of persons, things or values (for example, in the doxology, "YHWH is his name" [5:8-9]). Second, it can be categorized as *judicial rhetoric*. This can be understood as a means suited to defending or condemning specific actions and to accusing (justifying) someone (as seen in the condemnations, "Israel's perverting justice" [5:7, 10-11], and "The Merchants' abusing the poor and the weak economically" [8:4-6]). Third, it can be described as *deliberative rhetoric*. Such a speech genre intends to concentrate on an assessment of actions. The audience was urged to respond in a more concrete way, to take a certain action in the future ("Seek YHWH and live" 5:4-6, 14-15). The point is clear that the use of these different kinds of rhetoric implies different kinds of associations, especially between the speaker and the audience. Thus, these rhetorical genres suggest the relational substance between those people who are involved in this judicial imagery.

Amos utilized rhetorical strategies in order to serve his, or more properly YHWH's, theological intention. This research assumes that the main objective of the prophet's message was to establish justice in the land of Israel. Based on the exilic and Deuteronomic traditions, which emphasize the importance of the Covenant, the prophet championed the ideal of social justice, a social hero or a champion of the oppressed, indignant at injustice, proclaiming new ideals of equality and freedom (cf Wright 1990:107). He became a mediator of justice between YHWH and his people, specifically as an agent of social justice to mediate the divine will and to call on God's people to show a positive response to that will. The theological idea of social justice in the book of Amos is in line with the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures (*Tanakh*), especially the codes of law (in Israel's Torah) as well as the writings of eighth century BCE prophets (Amos' contemporaries). In these pieces, the issue of social justice is primarily based on the idea of YHWH, the advocate of justice, who is concerned with the abusive conduct of the powerful and the fate of the powerless (see Gowan 1998:33).

This research finds that the theological concept of social justice is closely related to the covenanted relationship between YHWH and his people. To make such a

concept more understandable, "a triangular relational model of social justice" is proposed. The triangle consists of YHWH, the powerful and the powerless. It is assumed that the ideal of social justice will exist if the three angles are properly interrelated to each under all conditions. YHWH, from a theological angle, was described with the metaphors of governance, Judge and King, Warrior and Father (cf Brueggemann 1997:233-266). He is independent from both the political (the powerful) and social (the powerless) ones. On the other hand, both the powerful (political) and powerless (social) angle in the triad should be dependent on God (the theological one). They share the same status, both being God's creation and redeemed people (see Berthout 2005:99-109). They owe their very lives to YHWH, the source of all life, as well as justice, for they had all been delivered from the slavery and bondage of Egypt.

As a result of this ideal divine-human (independent-dependent) relationship, it is expected that both the powerful and the powerless (the unfortunate) should be interdependent with each other. The weak needed the powerful to care and to protect them in order to survive the hardships of life, while the powerful needed the weak to actualize their calls as the responsible receivers of the divine covenant and promises. It is assumed that there is no freedom without the politics of justice and compassion, and there is no politics of justice and compassion without faith in the freedom given by God (cf Brueggemann 1978:18). Thus, this balanced trajectory would have established an ideal condition of social justice.

However, in the book of Amos, the condition was far from this ideal. Considering it as a "breaking of the covenant," the people of Israel, particularly and predominantly the powerful, did not live in accordance with the ideals of the covenanted relationship. They broke the covenant by religiously (spiritually) disobeying YHWH ("profaning him") and mistreating their neighbours ("abusing the weak socially"). Disobedience toward YHWH reflects the independency of the powerful from the divine. At the same time, mistreatment toward the weak also reflects their independency from the powerless. They are not only wrong but sinful, because being independent connotes not only spiritual rebellion against God but also immoral abuse toward the weak, as Reddit (2008:244) asserts, "For

Amos, the issue is morality, not legality. He holds God's people to a higher standard than mere legality." It is important to note that once the powerful became independent of the powerless, the powerless were in the position of being marginalized and hopeless, because they have lost all their social, economic and legal rights.

In response to this predicament, that is, the brokenness of the covenant relationship, YHWH remains responsible for establishing justice in the land of Israel. The theological intention, as well as the key, to security in the land was the maintenance of justice and righteousness, a responsibility that fell first and foremost upon the powerful (see Miller 2000:539). In order to realize it, through the rhetorical speeches of the prophet Amos, YHWH announced both judgment and hope. In the context of judgment, he proposed threats and punishments against the powerful for profaning him and abusing other humans. Nogalski (2007:136) stresses that "When the people worship gods who do not control the world, consequences ensue. When people treat the poor as commodities, consequences ensue." Focusing on the issue of social justice, YHWH additionally is in the position of punishing the powerful and defending the oppressed (marginalized). The God of Amos is the subject of social justice, because he protects those who are victims of social injustices and never lets those who religiously and socially sin go unpunished.

It is clear that, against the disobedience to the divine instructions, stands the authority of God over the state and the responsibility of king and leaders (along with the rich and the merchants, or simply, of the powerful) to bring every Israelite to obey the word and will of the Lord (cf Miller 2000:533). It might be inferred here that there was a certain "hierarchy" of power. Dempsey (2000:21) puts it right when he says, "Certain humans and nonhumans are oppressed by those who are more powerful than they, and the powerful are then punished by an even more powerful God. . . . God is portrayed as a male involved in power play for the sake of justice." Therefore, YHWH states opposition to cultic actions executed without justice and concluded with a threat to exile the people beyond Damascus (Am 5:18-27) (cf Sweeney 2000:238). Within this frame of thinking,

stands the notion of the "Day of YHWH" understood as the day of divine judgment.

In the context of the previous, there was "a little hope" offered (cf Van der Woude 1982:33; Lang 1983:74-75). YHWH gives opportunity for the people who transgressed the covenanted relationship to repent and recover. This seems to be a hope toward restoration of the fortune of God's people (Andrew 2000:343). Although the prophet's oracles emphasized judgment against the northern kingdom, they also include calls to seek YHWH (Am 5:4, 6) indicating the prophet's ultimate intention (see Sweeney 2005:184). This offer was basically rooted in the intended plan of YHWH to save his people, as Preuss (1991:171) proposes, "The concept of Divine justice involves YHWH's historical acts of salvation, acts that he extends to his people, to individual person, and even to this world." It is suggested that righteousness and justice—how one relates to God and human beings—are the hallmarks by which humanity in general, and God's people in particular, shall be evaluated. The prophet Amos, along with other eighth century BCE prophets, challenged God's people in times of crises in order to elicit a change in their behaviour (cf Nogalski 2007:136). Unfortunately one learns from Israel's history that the people of God did not choose "YHWH and live" but they chose their own way of death instead.

According to Amos there are several basic aspects that the notion of social justice can be understood (cf Mays 1987:147): first, social justice is a theological term. Its priority is rooted in their knowledge of Israel's God, who is himself just and requires justice from his people. Second, social justice is a moral value. It frequently appears in synonymous relation with "righteousness." Righteousness is a quality of intention and act, a characteristic of persons. Third, social justice could be done. It was possible to act justly in the courts and in the economy. Limburg (1988:107-108) also added three dimensions to the prophetic notion of doing social justice: first, social justice is a dynamic notion (like a surging, churning and cleansing stream). It is more like an onrushing torrent than a balanced scale. Second, social justice is the expected response of God's people to what God has done for them. Third and finally, to do social justice means to act

as an advocate for the powerless. There can be no doubt that if a prophet had not believed these crucial things, his criticism of his contemporaries and the judgment his announced upon them would not have made any sense. Amos' condemning words of those who enjoy what money can provide without regard for the vulnerable, and his constant reminder of God's loving concern speak eloquently and urgently to these concerns (cf Cook 2005:67).

Relating this research to Brueggemann's theological method, Amos' utterances contain a number of "testimonies." YHWH and his covenantal relationship with his people are considered central to the prophet's message of social justice. The triangular relational aspects of social justice shows that YHWH, as the theological angle, is the determinative factor in maintaining social justice among his people, the powerful (the political angle) and the powerless (the social angle) in Israel. This ideal covenant relationship means that YHWH is independent from his people, while his people (the powerful and the powerless) are dependent on him and interdependent among them. The result of this idealism is the establishment of social justice in the land. These angles and their relationship thus explain "a core testimony" of the prophet's utterances.

However, descriptions about YHWH (the Creator, the King, the Warrior and the Judge) are not only seen in a "positive" way but also in a "negative" one. At times God seems to be hidden, ambiguous or instable, or even negative. In fact, the oppressed might question his presence in times of crisis, a crisis of social justice. They also might be confused with the "command" of the divine, to seek YHWH and to sin in the centres of national cults. For the powerful, the angry God and his accusations against them are totally different from their popular belief in "divine favouritism." These different realities of YHWH cross-examine the core testimony of Amos' utterances. In Brueggemann's view, this is considered as "a counter-testimony" of Amos' utterances.

There is a tension between the core testimony and the counter-testimony in this research. Although they seem to be contradictory, however, both testimonies are complementary to each other. The counter testimony is needed to reach the main intention of the utterances, to maintain justice in the land. Because of the

breaking of the covenant, YHWH should come to final actions, to defend the powerless and to punish the evildoers, the powerful in Israel. This "negativity' is also intentionally pronounced in order to call the powerful to repent ("to seek YHWH") and to give "a hope" of deliverance from the coming judgment in the day of the Lord (cf Paas 2002:274). The *leitmotif* of establishing justice is that Israel will be, once again, YHWH's partner ("unsolicited testimony"). The prophet Amos seems to play his "social function" (Smith 1994:50-53) consistently as a mediator ("embodied testimony"), mediating between YHWH and his people.

The prophet's message to walk in the path of justice and righteousness and to care for the poor and the weak has everlasting meaning and value (see Carrol R 2001:87-91). Even after more than twenty centuries since the prophet Amos preached social justice, that social justice has not come about in any society all over the world (cf Watts 1991:205). Many of the injustices mentioned in the book of Amos not only occurred in the past but also continue to occur today. As seen in our society now, the rich continue to exploit and oppress the poor and the weak. The upper class people look for all possible luxuries of life while millions of people still live in abject poverty. A glance at today's society tells us that the prophetic words of Amos are more relevant today than ever before (see Kizhakkeyil 2006:103-104). In the same vein, Dempsey (2000:21) argues that, read in the context of this present age, the ancient texts clearly point out that the human community still uses power abusively, and it is still in need of much healing and transformation.

Nash (1993:270-271) expansively proposes that the morality of the book of Amos is grounded in a re-imagining of God as the advocate who intervenes on behalf of the powerless and the oppressed within contemporary human society (for example, survivors of all forms of abuse and violence; hungry children; people with AIDS; all who are objectified as "other" on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation) and throughout the world (for example, Muslim women raped and impregnated by Serbian soldiers, the starving people in Somalia and Sudan, or the Palestinian refugees). Such a vision is made possible by, again and again, reclaiming the exodus and the covenant as foundational sacred stories

that generate theological thoughts to inspire and motivate public policy makers in promoting and doing social justice in worldwide societies today. It can, thus, be concluded that "the matter is how one relates the worship of YHWH to how one lives out one's life with justice and mercy for all, especially the poor and the most vulnerable members of society" (cf Hutton 2004:16).

At last, the issue of social justice was not only crucial for the Israelites in their socio-political setting thousands of years ago but also for twenty-first century people. In the same way, at present, it is one of the crucial issues for two third countries like Indonesia. Since 1997, this country has experienced economic devastation which later triggered multi-dimensional crises. Consequently, according to Jacquand (1999:389-401), since the population of the poor sharply increased by 37.5 million and rose to 18.2% of the total population, the situation could beyond relief if this was not carefully controlled. One of the main reasons for this was the abuse of power by the ruling authority. The elements of governmental offices were very flaccid in implementing law enforcement and the constitution. They did not function as was hoped, and sad to say, they were the ones who championed the practices of corruption, collusion and nepotism. Instead of putting efforts into bringing welfare to the majority of the people, the government gave more opportunity and protection to the conglomerates to expand their kingdoms of businesses so that through monopolies and abusing cheap labor, they became wealthier than ever.

As a consequence, distribution of wealth and resources was disproportionate and a large social gap became more pronounced in society—the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. Suwito (*Global Future* 2001:9) describes the critical situation like this, "Today, power struggles among political elites, bloody ethnic and religious conflicts, rising separatism, chronic corruption, and poor law and order continue to plague the country . . . the government is powerless to solve one of its crucial concerns: coming to the aid of the poor who number 50-100 million. Many of them, especially the children find themselves succumbing to the worst nightmare." The problems are getting worse especially when related to the negative impact of globalization. It has resulted in new forms of exploitation,

dependence, and the impoverishment of a larger number of people. Most of the people are now facing a social, economic and political situation that is becoming increasingly explosive. Consequently, the majority of the people in the regions are now experiencing, as Harahap (2001:61) indicates, "the unequal distribution of wealth, inter-religious tensions and violence, cultural and environmental destruction and political instability."

In this regard, as the theme of social justice was very crucial to the people of God in the past, so it is also very crucial to the people of Indonesia in the present. This critical issue must be raised and a solution found for the future of the people, especially for those who are poor, alienated and victimized, depends on the effort to establish social justice in the society. It is hypothesized that achieving social justice is the key to change and to bringing prosperity to the society in this particular country. Moore (*Global Future* 2001:1) believes that social transformation is one of the world's crucial and urgent needs today, remembering that the majority of its people (especially those who are in developing countries) are living in poverty, injustice and suffering.

This research expectedly can be used as a foundation for doing theology and practice of social justice in the future, especially in places where poverty, injustice and suffering exist such as in Indonesia. As God intended to establish social justice in Israel and other neighbouring nations in the past, he also intends to establish it in Indonesia today. In this regard, Christian churches, as the people of God, in Indonesia are responsible in carrying out the message of social justice to their own contex. They can be an instrument in the hands of God to manifest divine (social) justice to other peoples. There are, at least, two things that they can do, firstly, to clearly hear again and to faithfuly obey the message of social justice spoken by YHWH through the book of Amos. It means that such a message should be persuasively preached, taught and studied both in the pulpit and in the classrooms, and secondly, as its consequence, they should live what they heard and understand for themselves, for their Christian community, and for their fellow citizens. This should be done until justice is established in this nation.

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