PROPHETIC RHETORIC: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTERPRETATION OF AMOS 9

BY

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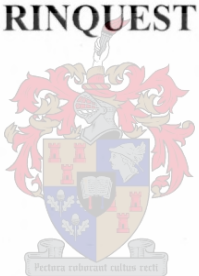

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

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ABSTRACT

The issue of the identification of the audience/s of the final chapter (chapter 9) in the book of Amos is currently moot. That is, there currently are as many opinions as there are scholars who have in some form or the other made some inference as to the identification of the audience. The same is true for the preceding chapters in the book.

The reasons for the divergence in opinions as to the identification of the audience varies from the methods chosen for engaging the text to reasons that are not always easy to identify. Yet the opinions are often freely shared in the monographs, commentaries, dissertations and scholarly journal articles. This dissertation aims to follow an approach that is more interpretatively accountable and responsible in dealing with the identification of the audience/s of Amos and in particular chapter 9. This goal is best achieved by interacting with the scholars as they have recorded their findings in the various scholarly publications while engaging the text with a suitable method.

The method chosen by this study for achieving the intended purpose is the multidimensional approach of Vernon Robbins, termed socio-rhetorical criticism. This approach aids in the study of the text by uncovering the various "textures" of the text. These textures are identified by Robbins as innertexture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture. As socio-rhetorical criticism does not overtly take into account the influence of the reader in the production of the meaning of the text and how this influences interpretative results, it would be necessary to investigate how to incorporate the influence of reader-response methodology to make the results more responsible and accountable.

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The majority of scholarly opinion sees at least three possible audiences identifiable within the book of Amos. These audiences are identified as eighth, seventh and sixth century in setting. Yet the reasons for such identification is often not clear and greatly debated. Differences in opinion have often resulted in religious questions being raised regarding the authority and intention of the text should these various audience identifications be accurate.

This study seeks to understand and identify the main influences that determines the conclusions on various audience identification and present an approach that would be more suitable to answer the question more clearly. The particular influence that this study demonstrates is the reinvention of texts by identifying the layers of reinterpretation contained in the text by identifying its implied audience/s. It is this identification that allows the text to be applied to current readers as they identify with the process of reinvention and ethically accountable interpretation.

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OPSOMMING

Daar bestaan op die oomblik geen finale beslissing aangaande die identiteit van die toehoorders van die finale hoofstuk van die boek van Amos nie. Met ander woorde, daar is op die oomblik so veel opinies as wat daar kenners is wie op een of ander manier gevolgtrekkings aangaande die identiteit van die toehoorders van die boek gemaak het.

Redes aangaande die verskillende opinies om die identiteit van toehoorders vas te stel wissel van die metodes gekies om die teks te bestudeer tot redes wat nie al te maklik is om te identifiseer nie. Maar gevolgtrekkings word openbaarlik in monografieë, kommentare, proefskrifte en akademiese artikels aangaande die boek gepubliseer. Hierdie proefskrif stel as doel om 'n metode van studie te volg wat meer verantwoordelik en verantwoordbaar is ten opsigte van die identifikasie van die lesers van die boek Amos en in besonder aangaande hoofstuk 9. Hierdie doel sal ten beste bereik word deur saam met die kenners te debateer soos hulle opinies vasgelê is in publikasies en terwyl die teks bestudeer word.

Die metode wat hierdie studie gaan gebruik, is die multidimensionele benadering van Vernon Robbins, sosio-retoriese kritiek. Hierdie metode benader die teks deur die verskillende teksture van die teks te ontbloot. Hierdie teksture is deur Robbins verduidelik as intertekstuur, intratekstuur, sosiale en kulturele tekstuur, ideologiese tekstuur en teologiese tekstuur. Omdat sosiale-retoriese kritiek nie duidelik die invloed van die leser in ag neem wanneer dit die produksie van die bedoeling van die teks betrek, sal dit vir hierdie studie nodig wees om hierdie invloed deur leser-respons

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kritiek te benader. Die doel hiermee sal wees om die resultate van die studie meer eties verantwoordbaar en verantwoordelik te maak.

Die meeste kenners bevestig ten minste drie toehoorders in die boek van Amos. Hierdie toehoorders word geïdentifiseer in agtergrond as agste, sewende en sesde eeu. Maar soos alreeds gestel, die redes vir hierdie identifikasie is altyd nie duidelik nie. Verskille in opinies het soms daartoe gely dat teologiese vrae aangaande die outoriteit en doel van die teks gevra is sou die identifikasie van verskillende toehoorders waar wees.

Hierdie studie stel ten doel om die verskillende aspekte wat die gevolgtrekkinge beïnvloed aangaande die identifikasie van toehoorders te identifiseer en 'n benadering te volg wat meer geskik is om die vraag beter te kan beantwoord. Hierdie studie demonstreer dus dat die interpretasie van die teks deur die verskillende lesers bepaal kan word deur die teks te bestudeer vanuit die oogpunt van die verskillende interpretasie binne die teks. Dit is hierdie identifikasie wat die toepassing van die teks moontlik maak vir huidige lesers soos hulle identifiseer met die proses van die herinterpretasie en etiese verantwoordelike interpretasie van die teks.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
BAR	Biblical Archaeological Review
BCE	Before the Common Era
BibRev	Bible Review
BS	Bibliotheca Sacra
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
DBI	Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation
EvQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ExpTim	Expository Times
Int	Interpretation
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JITC	Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTsuppl.	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament supplementary series
JTSA	Journal of Theology for South Africa
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

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NT	Novum Testamentum
OTE	Old Testament Essays
RB	Revue Biblique
R&E	Review and Expositor
R&T	Religion and Theology
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLdiss.	Society of Biblical Literature dissertation series
SCM	Studies in the Christian Movement
SWBJT	Southwestern Baptist Journal of Theology
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Before the advent of New Criticism in the 1940's,"meaning was assumed to lie in the author's intention, which was formulated in terms of the social, political, cultural, and ideological matrix of the author" (Tate 1991:xvi). If any reader of the Biblical text sought to discover the meaning of the text, that reader needed to "dig" into the many layers of the text until the bedrock of meaning was discovered. Such meaning was normally associated with the meaning intended by the author for the first audience of the text. The historical-critical method and related historically driven methods were the archaeological text shovel developed in this regard.

The historical-critical method and all its associated methods (Form criticism, Redaction criticism, etc.) led many scholars to believe they had now discovered "unmistakable, objective truth" (Deist 1993:50). In addition to this scholars also realised that although they could discover what the text said to the ancient world, they could not clearly hear what it was saying to their present world. In addition to this, the method assumed the social location of the discovered meaning as primarily the only audience for the text. Even though Redaction criticism highlighted that subsequent editors reworked texts for new situations, the new social locations of the reworked texts were not intensively postulated. The advent of New Criticism saw the realisation that the text itself was also a bearer of meaning. Scholars soon began speaking about "textual autonomy" which resulted in a flurry of

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text-centred interpretative theories being developed such as Narrative analysis, Structuralist analysis and Rhetorical analysis. Attention was thus directed toward the text, as an entity of meaning in its own right which was not necessarily to be associated with authorial intent.

This focus on the text led to a wide-ranging awareness of the numerous aspects involved in literary study and in particular to the language as used within the text, a study generally called Pragmatics. It was from the study of Pragmatics that scholars became aware that not only can a text be seen to be a bearer of meaning, but that a reader can influence the meaning of a text as the reader approaches the text with presuppositions (Lategan 1992:625). Indeed, Lategan (1997:117) further pointed out that this discovery is "perhaps the most important factor when considering future developments in the field of hermeneutics."

There is currently a focus on the way in which present readers impact upon the meaning of a text. Yet a gap exists, in that not much has been done to speak of the social location of the implied audience and how reader-centred methods may assist in filling in this gap.

1.2 Problem

The question of the composition of the final chapter (chapter 9) of the book of Amos is moot as one encounters the various approaches in attempts to deal with this question. Opinions range from seeing the entire chapter as the product of the eighth century Amos (Birch 1997, Hammershaimb 1970) and his immediate audience, to seeing it in part as the

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product (in whole or in part) of the 'disciples' of Amos (Cripps 1969) or even as a multi-layered composition which is the literary product of post exilic redactors (Andersen & Freedman 1989, Wolff 1977). Hasel (1991:17ff) is correct in asserting, in his survey of Amos studies, that the variety of opinions are to a large part attributable to the application of certain methodologies or struggles between methods (*Methodenstreit*) on the part of the exegete. As it seems unlikely at this time to be able to offer a definitive answer as to the nature of the composition of the final chapter of Amos, especially in view of the lack of text critical evidence, it is necessary to take the approach to a different level of enquiry.

The question thus is: "How is it possible to identify the implied audience/s of Amos chapter nine ?"

Biblical scholarship has also come to the realisation that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to speak of discovering the meaning of a text. Traditionally, the discovery of authorial intent within any given text was seen as the key for unlocking the meaning of a text as well as a heuristic key for identifying audience. This audience was usually seen as the audience that the author had in mind. Bringing into question the attempt to absolutise the idea of the meaning of a text or the discovery of authorial intent is not to deny that behind every text stands an author, but rather that the intent and message of the initial author has been buried in a text which itself has gone through a long transmission process and redactional history. The Biblical text, in its final form, is thus a multi-layered text of different attempts at determining meaning and or attempts at communicating perceived meaning.

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1.3 Aim and Objectives

The problem question proceeds and leads to the following issues:

a) Since there is currently no finality as to the issue of the nature of the composition of the final chapter of Amos and,

b) Since the conclusion of the interpreter in an attempt to postulate a theory of composition is in part a product of the methodology chosen and,

c) Since the vast majority of current critical scholarship in this regard seems to have reached a consensus in at least affirming a multi-layered final text of Amos 9;

This study will work from the point of multi-layered compositional consensus of Amos chapter nine and seek to answer the question of identifying the Implied audience/s presupposed in the chapter. Many approaches seem to take the audience for granted. They attempt to identify redactor and presuppose an audience, whereas we will now consider identifying the audience and the redactor as a function of the interpretative exercise.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

As already alluded, there is a lack of uniformity within Reader response criticism concerning the determination of the locus (audience) of textual meaning and as a result a variety of approaches have been suggested[1]. This study will attempt to show that this question of the meaning of a text is largely controlled by the Biblical text itself. The nature of the text will

1. Conradie E (et al) 1995:163 sees reader-response criticism as a blanket term for all those approaches in which the role of the reader is taken seriously. Clines (1990) lists five approaches p.32-51 which he classifies as reading strategies.

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be shown to be a text that is fundamentally rhetorical in nature. In other words, by showing the Biblical text (and in particular the Old Testament Prophetic text of Amos, for the purpose of this study) to be a text fashioned rhetorically, this would presuppose that the text had been initially written to convey some message (meaning) to its initial readers or invoke a particular response.

Therefore, any reading of the text, whether it be casual or formal (that is employing some reading methodology or not) reading cannot be done ignorant of the text's prompting to guide the reader in discovering meaning in a particular context/s. This meaning is not to be equated with authorial intent, but rather suggests the study of a text using the best of rhetorical studies to determine how the text makes meanings possible in view of particular audiences.

This study thus proposes an "interface" between the interpretative methodologies, which focuses on the role of the reader (Reader response criticism) and which focuses on the text itself (Socio-Rhetorical criticism). In relation to the final chapter of the book of Amos (that is chapter 9) this study therefore seeks to demonstrate that the current impasse in reading the passage can be brought to a new level of inquiry.

The new level of inquiry essentially entails the dual aspect of bridging the methodological gap as well as the substantive gap in identifying audience. Socio-rhetoric has already been shown as a multidimensional method capable of aiding such audience identification when skilfully employed by an interpreter (see Robbins 1991). The study will demonstrate how the textures proposed to be present in the biblical text are exposed using the method called

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socio-rhetorical criticism. But as interpreters (including Robbins in his socio-rhetorical criticism) do not consciously employ the insights of reader-response criticism, the method is more susceptible for reading bias. Socio-rhetoric will therefore need a reader interface. In this way the determination of possibilities of meaning, as it impacts upon the endeavours of this study, will be shown to be less relativistic than is proposed in some applications of Reader-response criticism, which sees the reader to be the sole determinant of meaning independent of the text. It is this notion that bypasses the implied audience. However, by first engaging the text to uncover implied audiences, the present audience is able to encounter implied audiences.

For the purpose of this study, the "interface" will be proposed between socio-rhetorical criticism and the general insights of Reader-response criticism for identifying the implied audience/s of Amos 9.

It will be demonstrated in the second chapter of this study that Amos 9 provides the reader with satisfactory opportunities to expose the various textures of the specific text and with the potential for more clearly identifying the implied audience/es.

1.5 Methodology

This study will of necessity be both a theoretical and practical investigation in the area of a specific hermeneutic of the text of Amos 9. But theoretical results always need testing exegetically. In the light of the current nature of prophetic studies as well as the current impasse in determining the nature of Amos 9, this study will of necessity entail a theoretical (search for improved method) as well as practical (application of method) aspect. Gitay

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(2001:107-127) has recently very ably demonstrated the need for a methodological refinement when approaching prophetic studies. In surveying some of the methods used historically for understanding the book of Isaiah and the age old question of the multiple contexts suggested for the book, he concludes that the time has come for "methodological clarification" (Gitay 2001:123). He does not believe that such refined method will magically lead to clear answers, but rather that this will provide a clearer framework of understanding.

The two methods for interface in this study, on their own accord pose their own theoretical as well as practical challenges for this study. On the one hand, socio-rhetorical criticism is essentially a multi-faceted method which combines the best of historical (particularly sociological) and literary (particularly rhetorical) methodologies. This study would suggest that Socio-rhetorical criticism currently presents the scholar with the best multidimensional approach for studying prophetic texts. In addition to this, this study will therefore have to demonstrate the method as a good methodological synthesis of the developing rhetorical endeavours for studying prophetic texts. On the other hand, Reader Response criticism is difficult to describe as a method as it currently seems to shrug off any attempt at a uniform description. There is also currently no uniform consensus regarding reader methodologies.

This study proposes that the very aspect which in the present debate is causing this fluidity, that is the question of the 'meaning' of a text, is the area that if properly handled with regard to Biblical texts, provides the interpreter with fresh impetus to discover further possibilities in exegetical endeavours.

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The study will thus place both methods within their historical development and map their development in terms of their best contributions in furthering exegesis of prophetic texts as well as furthering endeavours to locate implied audiences. The study proposes that current hermeneutical ideas necessitate the bringing together of the two methods in an interface, which makes multidimensional interpretation possible and helps to produce accountable exegetical goals.

1.6 Overview of the study

The study has five chapters, which will now be summarised.

Chapter 1

This part of the study introduces the theoretical framework for the investigation. This is done following the format of problem statement, hypothesis and methodology. It will also provide a brief background and historical overview as to the rise of interest in focusing attention on the role of the reader in the interpretation of the Bible. Only the most important historical developments in the general discipline of hermeneutics will be surveyed in terms of how it has impacted the hermeneutics for identifying implied audience. This survey will attempt to illustrate how Biblical hermeneutics has not only been influenced by developments in philosophy and historical studies of ancient texts, but also inescapably any interpretation of the Bible. The strategies of Socio-Rhetorical criticism and Reader response criticism will be set in its historical setting showing how they present Biblical hermeneutics with both the prospects and challenges of the hermeneutical objective of answering the question of identifying implied audience. This part of the study will of necessity be a

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theoretical survey as the setting up of an interpretative strategy is being envisaged. It will also include the personal motivation and bias of the researcher.

Chapter 2

As this study will be focussing on a particular part of Old Testament prophetic literature, namely the book of Amos, it would be necessary to survey the best literature currently available on the book to investigate how, if so, they have answered the question of identification of implied audience. The type of material surveyed will be commentaries, journal articles, general books as well as dissertations.

Chapter 3

The third chapter will focus on the use and value of Rhetorical criticism in the study of the Old Testament prophetic texts. The Rhetorical critical method will be studied in terms of its definition as an interpretative strategy and what it seeks to accomplish. It will be shown that the method has gone through an historical flux, due to the influence of Reader Response criticism, which has in part been met by the method developing into Socio-Rhetorical criticism. It will be demonstrated that the methodology actually presupposes some involvement of the reader in the interpretation, or put another way, in the determination of the meaning of the text. The study will essentially survey and evaluate the most important rhetorical critical contributions to the study of the Bible and present the Socio- Rhetorical strategy as the synthesis of the method until now paving the way forward to the best rhetorical hermeneutic of the Bible. It will be shown that not only does the method help in

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answering the question of how the meaning of a text is determined, but how it helps to identify implied audience/s.

Further to the expressed goals of sensitivity to the role a reader invariably plays in interpreting texts, the study will also focus on Reader response criticism as an interpretative strategy for reading the Old Testament prophetic texts. This section will, firstly, have to plot the actual role a reader of the Old Testament has in the determination of the "meaning" of a text.

This will include a brief examination of the reading process as highlighted by various Biblical and non-Biblical scholars. The second goal that will need to be accomplished is to show how it is possible to avoid the risk of totally relativizing meaning which will make the identification of implied audience impossible, and at the same time totally objectivising a perceived meaning, which will be in imposition on the text. This is where the idea of an "interface" between hermeneutical strategies will be suggested as the way forward in keeping with the expressed multidimensional goal of interpretation.

Chapter 4

The fourth part of the study will show how an interface of Socio-Rhetorical criticism and Reader response criticism insights are necessary when contemplating textual meaning and plotting social location of audience in Amos 9. A reading priority will thus be suggested. The basis of the interface will essentially be the need for an ethic in interpretation as has been suggested by Patte (1995). This chapter will also take a selective overview of the entire book of Amos employing the textures of Socio-rhetorical criticism and seek to plot how the

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book presupposes implied audience as well as identifying the social location of the audience. The presuppositions of the various sources surveyed in chapter 2 will be included and contrasted.

This part of the study will be the exegetical testing ground for the hypothesis where an interface of the above mentioned methodologies will be applied to the final chapter of Amos in order to identify the social location of the implied audience/s.

Chapter 5

This chapter will summarise the findings of the study and provide confirmation of the audiences of Amos as a product of the exegetical exercise.

The conclusion will provide an overall summary of the study as well suggest a few possibilities for future studies of a similar nature.

The bibliographic record of works consulted and employed for this study will follow the conclusion.

1.7 Personal motivation and bias of the study

It is the work of Fowler (1991:26) that summarily points out that some Reader response theorists have postulated that it is not the text, but the reader in front of the text that determines the meaning of the text, which has provided the initial spark for this research. This notion has major consequences for any hermeneutical endeavour on the Biblical text

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for all methodologies which have up to now focused on the "world-before-the-text" and the "world-of-the-text" presuppose that meaning is to be found when these methodologies are employed. The role of the reader in the afore-mentioned hermeneutical strategies have to a large extent been that of "discovering the meaning of the text within the text, " thus newer hermeneutical models present a critical challenge in being able to identify meaning, audience or even author.

On the other hand there are theorists[1] who wish to see some role of the reader in determining the meaning of a text, but that such production is to be controlled either by the text or by some other factor such as an "interpretative community." Stanley Fish (1980:98) sees textual meaning to be inescapable when readers bring some prestructural understanding to the text. Fish (1980) coined the term "interpretative community" in reference to the entity that guides interpretation.

It is the attempt to answer this new question that the issue of compositional, redactional and audience identity for the book can be taken to a whole new level.

The emphasis was now shifting away from the text toward the reader of the text and to the development of Reader response Theory. The "autonomy of the reader" was now being stressed as the essential determinant in the meaning of a text. This discovery not only spelt

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1. Tate,W.R. 1991 Biblical Interpretation : An integrated approach calls for a "conversation" between the hermeneutical approaches of the "three worlds". L.C.Jonker 1996 in "Exclusivity and Variety" does a typological study towards the integration of exegetical methods in Old Testament study in a non-exclusive way.

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the death of authorial intended meaning, but also a shift away from the text as a bearer of meaning. All such notions of meaning associated with interpretative endeavour were seen to be meaning imposed upon the text by a reader.

From its inception, to its present status, reader response criticism has (intentionally or unintentionally) avoided attempts at methodological uniformity with the result that many reading possibilities can and have been demonstrated.

Yet, the question of the determination of the meaning of a text has not yet been settled nor the possibilities of seeking to socially locate meanings within the text or suggested by the text. In some contemporary works (Punt 1997, 1999 and West 1997, 1999) the plethora of reading strategies in Africa have been analysed. Punt (1999:1–11), for example, demonstrates how culture influences interpretation in Africa, while West (1997: 99-115) has mapped some African resources for interpreting and suggesting that Africa is on the virge of making a new, independent contribution. For Jonker (2001:79) such endeavours need to be guided by the "drawing of a hermeneutical map of the process of biblical interpretation" as he suggests a communal approach for reading the Bible in Africa.

This study suggests that the time has now arrived for socially locating such meanings. If this is not done, then Biblical exegesis will become an entirely subjective exercise (not to suggest that the exercise can be entirely objective) and the need for focusing on the " world-behind-the-text" and the "world-of-the-text" will become obsolete. Now this notion is not entirely true for all forms of Reader response strategies, especially attempts that have been made in

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relation to the interpretation of the Bible, but this remains a danger of which the interpreter needs to be reminded. This level of engagement with the Biblical text further emphasises the need for an acute awareness on the part of the interpreter of the ethics of interpretation.

Patte (1995: 40 ff), Punt (1997:140) and Craffert (1998: 71 – 76) have strongly emphasised the need for ethically accountable readings, as no reading could ever be considered free from any bias and at best "eradicate individualistic and exclusivistic tendencies" (Jonker 2001:83). The reader needs to therefore, attempt the avoidance of being an "Ideologue" (Dever 2001:28) which essentially entails the espousing of an ideology uncritically examined. Yet Dever (2001:264) also states the tension very clearly when he says, "The fact that literary texts may possess a diversity of legitimate meanings for the sensitive reader does not mean that there is no single, original, preferable meaning, or that one implied meaning is as good as another." Interpretation has therefore reached a stage where the interpreter of necessity has to not only identify the exegetical method used, but also reveal his/her interpretative point of departure.

An added reason for the need for this level of study stems from the fact that the determination of textual meaning has for a long time been the determining factor in applying the results of interpretation to the real world. Christian History has been driven by the results of hermeneutical insights and the same continues to be true for modern interpretative exercises. As many mistakes have been made in the past due to poor hermeneutics, the need to develop a good hermeneutic in order to effect satisfactory interpretative results continues to remain high on the Christian agenda.

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It is this arena that should not be forgotten as most interpreters of the Biblical text are either interpreting from a faith agenda or are even influenced by this agenda. This influence happens either consciously or sub-consciously. It is rare that a reader of the Biblical text interprets free from any faith presuppositions or other faith driven reasons.

The Faith and Order paper 182 (1998) of the World Council of Churches is an excellent case in point. The Paper is essentially a draft proposal for an instrument for an Ecumenical reflection on hermeneutics. One of the conclusions of the paper makes the point plain:

> " The Church should not be imprisoned by holding to inadequate answers from the past, nor should it silence the Word of God by endlessly putting off a clear recognition of the way this Word continues to impart meaning and orientation for human life." (1998:42)

The interpretation of the Bible plays an important part in the Christian faith. It in fact is the only source available to modern Christianity whereby faith and practice can be gauged, especially within the Protestant tradition. It is also the only extant source that forms the bridge between present expressions of Faith and the ancient world that bore the circumstances and individuals ultimately giving birth to the Faith. As the passing of time and centuries began to put more distance between these people and events as opposed to the modern world, so the Faith began to evolve, ultimately developing into forms that became very different from what seemed to be the core expression and reality of the ancient Faith.

It was the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation that sought to bring the essentials of the Faith back to what it was supposed to be in reaction to the prevailing understanding which

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seemed to have gone astray from the ideal. One of the battle cries of the Protestant Reformation, *sola scriptura,* was a means of attempting to enforce the necessary change. This cry essentially highlights the fact that the Bible did and continues to play an important role in the development of the Protestant tradition. But it was not just the Bible that facilitated and brought about the change, the use and interpretation of the Bible by the hands of the individuals was essentially the instrument of reformation.

This principle of the use and interpretation of the Bible continues to remain true. It would, therefore, not be a far-fetched idea to see the discipline of hermeneutics as a fundamental discipline within the Christian faith. Taken a step further, it would mean that everything within Protestant Christianity has its basis not just in the Bible, but essentially in its interpretation. Most Protestant denominations would see the Bible as the final source and authority for all matters of faith and doctrine thereby reaffirming the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*. This is especially true for Protestant Evangelicals who have characterised themselves as *the people of the book* thereby ascribing all their faith issues to be essentially and solely derived from Scripture. With this affirmation comes, therefore the absolute necessity of adequate, or what most of the proponents of Evangelical Protestant theology would call for, the correct interpretation of the Bible. Unfortunately, this need for adequate interpretation often expresses itself in an exclusivistic interpretative manner.

Biblical scholarship has developed much with regard to attempts at understanding the message of the Bible. It would seem that Biblical scholarship has always taken its cue

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methodologically from what was happening generally in the scholarly world whether it has been in the area of historiography or literary studies.

The present challenge facing Biblical scholarship is to apply more recent developments in the attempts at interpreting the Bible and in particular those methods that focuses on the role of the reader in the interpretation of the Biblical text. These methods are somewhat new to the Protestant Evangelical tradition and have been met with a fair amount of scepticism, to some degree with apprehension (Thomas 1999), therefore others have sought to give scholarly thought to the underlying philosophical presuppositions (Carson and Woodbridge 1983, Carson 1986, 1999; Erickson 1993; McCartney and Clayton 1994; Kaiser and Silva 1994), a few would tend to reject these new methods out of hand, while most tend to remain uninformed with very little concern to the quiet revolution facing Biblical hermeneutics.

The need to focus on these hermeneutical issues is of importance because there are many developments in the discipline of hermeneutics that not only challenges the traditional notions of authority in the interpretation of the Biblical text, but also for raising awareness of developments that impact upon interpretative results.

The challenge is thus to investigate these newer methodologies and to "provide a matrix" (Berry 1993:9) or an adequate framework whereby to apply these newest instruments in the interpretation of the text especially when such endeavours seeks to achieve particular results.

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All interpretative endeavours are based upon some hermeneutical approach which have been adopted consciously or sub-consciously by the interpreter. The final product is, therefore, only as good as the hermeneutic through which the Biblical text was filtered.

Hermeneutics has proven itself to be a discipline that does not remain rigid. There have always been further developments that have brought to the interpreter the awareness that there is always more to the text than what initially meets the eye. It would be true to say that the discipline is presently in a flux and will remain in flux. The only possible goal is to attempt at reaching a better and clearer understanding especially when it comes to hermeneutics.

Many newer critical methods of interpretation (e.g. Deconstruction and Reader-response criticism) provide not only a greater resolution to the overall interpretative picture as yet another filter to be placed on the text and through which it must be read in addition to the methodologies which focus on the "world-behind-the-text" and the "world-of-the-text", but have also brought new challenges to the very discipline of hermeneutics.

Various suggestions (Tate 1991 and Jonker 1996) have already been made to integrate the various hermeneutical approaches into so-called "multi-dimensional" hermeneutical strategies as this study will demonstrate, yet clarity still needs to be provided as to how exactly the link between methodologies (if ever they are to be linked) are to be made.

This study will attempt to show how it can become possible for approaches focusing on the "world-behind-the-text", the "world-of-the-text" and the "world-before-the-text " to interact

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in order to assimilate both the insights and challenges of modern hermeneutical insights and still produce the desired results.

In looking at the South African real world one becomes acutely aware of the need for the relevance of this need for satisfactory plotting of interpretative strategy. For example, South Africa was declared to be a Christian country by the previous National Party government. Many of the policies of this government, in particular the policy of Apartheid, was practised and propagated as a result of a particular interpretation of the Bible (Craffert 1998: 65-79). This undoubtedly has had a lasting effect on all churches within this context as each Christian tradition had to respond to the results of Apartheid policy in the only way they could, that is by another interpretation of the Bible. The responses were varied, ranging from collaboration to challenge and even apathy. This became evident through the many submissions made by various Christian denominations by a special submission process to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Many of these denominations confessed their inadequate dealings with the discriminatory policies of Apartheid and other resulting issues in social justice illustrating the inadequate hermeneutics that characterised the period.

Even the faith community of the current researcher, the Baptist Union of South Africa also made a submission even though it claimed that it did challenge the status quo through various letters resulting from their Assembly resolutions. Yet a hermeneutical guilt continues to remain within many faith communities stemming directly from its chosen hermeneutical paradigm. This paradigm continues to remain and still pervades denominational decision making and social action policies.

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In this way, this study hopes that the Protestant Christian tradition will be able to learn from its hermeneutical mistakes of the past that still affects its present day interpretations by reflecting upon the Biblical texts within its varied social locations alluded to in the text and thus be able to enter into the new challenges of the modern (post-modern?) world.

This study will demonstrate that that the engagement of texts with sensitivity to the implied audiences, who reinterpreted the text, actually brought about a "reinvention" of the text. Any significance by current audiences in application via ethically accountable interpretation has to engage the text via the application of the implied audiences.

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CHAPTER 2

2. SURVEY OF AMOS LITERATURE

This chapter will deal with some of the main literature that has been recently published relating to the book of Amos. Various categories of literature will be examined in the following four groups: Commentaries, survey and study books, journal articles and specific dissertations. Other surveys[1] are available, but this survey with its specific selection of literature is engaged with a few specific purposes in mind:

1) To identify the exegetical grid of the writer
2) As a result of the chosen exegetical grid to evaluate the chosen method as a means for having explained the nature of the prophetic rhetoric (or aspects of rhetoric) of the book of Amos
3) To see if the writer identifies the audience/s of the prophetic speeches
4) And finally to focus on their understanding of all of the above criteria as it applies to chapter 9 of the book of Amos.

These criteria for surveying Amos literature are important not only to place the later exegesis of this study into historical perspective but also a methodological perspective for seeing the prophetic rhetoric of Amos as a means to identify the audience of the speeches, especially the audience/s of chapter 9. As a result, the survey will tabulate the results of the survey to discuss perceived patterns within the results and propose filling in the gaps with a way forward for using prophetic rhetoric to identify audiences.

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1. Pigott (1995) surveys general introductions, books and commentaries for their value to the scholar in terms of what she terms their "unique or beneficial aspects" as well as their technical level. Hasel (1991) surveys works published between 1960 and 1990 which is more bibliographical in nature as do the commentaries of Stuart (1987) and Paul (1991). The latter works incorporate exegetical discussion with the listed works.

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The amount of available material on the book of Amos is large, thus this research will use works not only important for historical in scholarly research, but also as being representative of the interpretative ideas for the period in which they were produced.

2.1. Introduction

The identity of the prophet Amos is only available to the modern reader via the canonical text of the Hebrew Scriptures, which has been handed down over the centuries. More about whom or what he was cannot much be known apart from that which has been revealed in the book attributed to him. The same could ultimately be said about his message, originally delivered orally in 8th century BCE Palestine, subsequently transmitted orally and then through a redactional process, put into written form[1].

We are fortunate to have this message preserved for us in the Scriptures two and a half millennia later. But the chief question that is to be framed, especially in the light of the research of this study is: "To whom did the prophet Amos direct his message specifically?" or "Who was the audience to which he delivered his message?" "Was there one or more audiences?" "Who is the audience or audiences of chapter 9?" We begin the search by surveying the literature and the expressed opinions.

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1. There is a large degree of scholarly consensus on this redactional transmission process for the book of Amos as well as other prophetic books. As will be seen by the survey, a variety of reasons are given to either accept or reject this notion. Scholarly consensus does however weigh in favour of seeing the book of Amos as the final product of a redaction history.

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2.2 A Survey of Amos commentaries

It is the chief function of commentaries to assist the modern reader in exploring the possible applications of the texts ancient message. Commentaries are designed to "fuse the horizons"[1] of the text and the readers of the text in order for the modern reader to make sense of the ancient. In other words, the scholar responsible for writing the commentary seeks to give the reader of the commentary insight into the world of the text, its personalities and message by employing some critical method of study and explanation. This is, of course, assuming that the commentator proceeds from the presupposition that meaning of the text is in part a function of the original or subsequent settings of the text.

Commentaries are, therefore essentially not neutral, but are the findings of critical research into the many dimensions of the specific Biblical text in order to cast further light or understanding about the text. The work of commentators and the need for more commentators will not come to an end. Biblical texts, like all other texts have always shown themselves to be beyond definitive explanation by any single or collective effort in interpretation and understanding. The history of interpretation of any given Biblical passage or book has always shown itself to build on existing knowledge. Commentaries essentially work in the same manner. It is therefore possible for the unfolding history of interpretation of a Biblical text to essentially follow one of two parallel paths.

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1. This phrase, popularised by Gadamer (1975), and employed by subsequent scholars interested in interpretative theory (e.g. Thiselton 1992: 333), illustrates how the past and present aspects of a text are brought together in the process of understanding.

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Either the interpretative exercise follows the path of continued efforts of understanding within the framework of a specific strategy of interpretation or a newer method is attempted or suggested.

Ultimately, the purpose remains the same, to illumine the mind of the reader into understanding the message of the text better or to have meaning unfold in new ways within the mind of the reader while engaged in the reading experience.

The survey of commentaries thus form an invaluable part in the ongoing quest of studying the Biblical text as it provides the benefit of groundwork that aids the researcher the luxury of simply building upon the existing knowledge. The following survey will demonstrate the above formulations to be true. The results will be used in dialogue both here and as this researcher later examines some of these passages in exegesis.

Works are listed using the following criteria and to be substantiated at the end of the chapter:

1) Works are listed in the order of commentaries / books first, in order of date of publication (earliest to latest) as these represent an historical continuum of various methodological insights on the book of Amos.
2) Dissertations (only two) are listed next as they represent turning points in method at important junctures in the development of method and more clearly attempt to explain chosen methods.
3) Journal articles are sited last as they represent more current, tentative and sometimes

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experimental ideas with a strong propensity for dealing with current methodological concerns.

2.2.1 James L Mays (1969)

The commentary by Mays follows a combination of a form-critical and traditio-historical analysis. The questions raised by these methods, for Mays, will become important for deciding the nature of Amos' theology as well as his conclusions on the nature of the composition of the final chapter.

Amos 9:1-4 is seen as the fifth vision of Amos with verses containing hymnic fragments, which were inserted later (Mays 1969:13). Yet it is the antecedent of the "them" in verse 4 that becomes the first clue to a presupposed audience. It would seem from a literal reading of verses 1-4 that this refers to the people experiencing and being part of some cultic activity at a shrine (temple?) which is probably the shrine at Bethel. The reason for this is that the Book associates Amos with this sanctuary in chapter 7: 10ff. The occasion is probably an autumn festival. The "them" could thus only be the congregation present at the festival. All that is said of the hymnic sections, that is verses 5-6 is that they are later additions, but nothing about possible audience is mentioned (Mays 1969:154) even though he hinted that the hymnic sections possibly indicates a post-exilic liturgical use of the book (Mays 1969:14). The particularistic theology of verses 7-8 is dealt a few blows by the prophet with the "sinful kingdom" of verse 8 being a reference then to the congregation at the sanctuary who are subjects of Jeroboam's kingdom, that is Israel. Verse 8b is seen as the editorial

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insertion of a Judean redactor using the hindsight of sixth century understanding and experience of a corrected particularistic theology. Another indication of audience occurs in verse 12 with the singling out of Edom, which would only make sense historically as being after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE with resentment of Edom being at an all time high. The same is true for verse 12, that is referring to a period after 586 BCE. The setting for verses 12-15 would only make sense with exilic conditions in mind. Thus at least two audiences are directly presupposed in chapter 9 by Mays, the primary audience being Amos' contemporaries in the eighth century and sixth century post-Jerusalem destruction audience (Mays 1969: 160-168).

2.2.2 Richard S.Cripps (1969)

The analysis by this work lives up to the full title of the commentary, a "critical" and "exegetical" commentary on the book of Amos. The methodology is an attempt at employing a variety of insights from various disciplines. These disciplines include textual, literary and historical criticism with insights from archaeology and comparisons with prophetic and didactic literatures from the Ancient Near East.

There is a very clear historical critical agenda of exegesis, thus a lot of detail is spent focussing on the precise historical setting of the prophecy. The historical methodology is employed in order to "recapture the foundation meaning"(1969:xxxvii). The possibility of later interpretations by later readers captured within the text is briefly alluded to but the dominant focus is on the historical and social setting and how it impacted the moral and religious life of the original listeners. Attention is also paid to the poetic structure of the various passages and how these would have been articulated orally as the book gives

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indications of having been spoken (1969:65). Cripps does not ascribe to the essential unity of the book in its present form. Even though he does concede that the message could have come from the memory of one, the possibility of a disciple amanuensis is proposed (1969:65). The possibility of three audiences is proposed, namely the exiles in Babylon, a message spoken by a contemporary of Haggai and Zechariah (post-exilic audience c. 520 BCE) or to those discouraged during the Seleucid age (1969:77).

2.2.3 E. Hammershaimb (1970)

This brief commentary on the book of Amos is interestingly detailed in interpreting particular aspects of certain verses. The introduction emphasises that the exegetical method comes with the acceptance of the reliability of the Masoretic text of the book. The speeches are all seen to have emanated from Amos (1970:12). The book is considered a unity and notions of the promises as later editorial additions are ultimately rejected.

The method of exegesis follows an analysis of words and grammar within the historical setting of the message. Many of the Hebrew words are studied by process of comparative philology with Ugaritic words. Brief comments are also made concerning poetic structure and similarities of the message with other non-Biblical prophetic texts, in particular from Egyptian prophetic origin.

2.2.4 Hans W.Wolff (German edition 1969, English edition 1977)

The commentary by Wolff is a magisterial example of an historical-critical treatment of the Book of Amos. The introduction explains the critical thinking behind the commentary in

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more than reasonable detail. The point of departure exegetically for this commentary is virtually the same as that of Shalom Paul's (1991) commentary, where Paul's could be seen as an expansion on the historical exegetical foundation laid by Wolff. The hand of a Deuteronomic redactor is assumed throughout the exegetical process (1977:89) as the main influence which shaped the overall message who continued in the tradition of what Wolff (1977:108) identifies as the "Old School of Amos". The final chapter (particularly 9: 11-15) are seen as a post-exilic addition in keeping with the generally accepted origin for salvation prophecies (Wolff 1977:113). The literary strategy of the commentary is conducted with less attention to structural detail other than to deal with entire periscopes and to identify the different types of speech units. Excellent explanations and details are recorded with regard to philological aspects.

2.2.5 J. Alberto Soggin (1987)

This particular commentary by Soggin was originally published in Italian as it arose out of his years of lecture notes and teaching of an introductory course on the book of Amos. Soggin describes his methodological approach in the introduction as philological-critical (1987:ix). This method essentially falls within the historical critical tradition.

The work takes seriously the concept of an historical Amos as having performed a public ministry between 760 – 750 BCE and includes an extensive description of the historical milieu of the prophet (1987:4ff). This does not however mean that Soggin argues for authorship by the prophet. In fact, he suggests on numerous occasions that the book clearly shows the hand of a redactor who was familiar with the prophet (e.g. 1987:6). His

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arguments for a redactor centres around the usage of third person references and the *quinay* character of the majority of the book's compositions. He suggests that this is the unequivocal sign of a redactional process (1987:15).

Nevertheless, he goes further to suggest that at least three early strata can be detected which forms the basis for the literary composition of the book. These strata are firstly, the words of Amos and his disciples, secondly autobiographical sections and thirdly, early texts from the school of Amos (1987:17). The redactor/s of the book write from a deuteronomistic perspective and adapted for re-reading within the exilic context. The hymnic sections are important indications for a final post-exilic edition.

2.2.6 John H. Hayes (1988)

This commentary precedes study by surveying (what the author terms) the three main phases of the interpretation of the prophet Amos. He suggests that any attempt at exposition should be aware of what has gone before but should also seek to be inclusive with the present interpreter using all available sources (Hayes 1988:38). Employing traditional historical critical method as a basic framework the influences of the history of religions and sociological approaches mentioned in his survey become evident even though he does not always agree with some of their conclusions. The influence of rhetorical criticism are also evident in his proposal for dividing the book into seven rhetorical units and uses the Aristotelian rubric of *ethos* in order to discuss the ethical dimension of persuasion in these units (Hayes 1988:201).

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Hayes argues for the overall integrity of the literature in that he does not ascribe many additions to the hand of scribes or later redactors (1988:39). The larger portions of the book are attributed to Amos (Hayes 1988:223), especially the speeches which he argues are autobiographical and narrative in form (Hayes 1988:201).

The question of the literary integrity of the final chapter of Amos is also defended and concludes that this integrity should not be challenged on the basis of whether one prophet can predict both disaster and hope. Rather, on practical terms, the message needs to be evaluated in terms of its consistency with the prophets overall message within the rhetorical and historical horizons of that message (Hayes 1988:220). He, therefore, concludes that Amos was not arguing for a total destruction of the people (Hayes 1988:221). The primary audience of the book is thus the eighth century audience implied in the book.

2.2.7 James Limburg (1988)

The goal of the *Interpretation* series of commentaries is clearly expressed in the general editorial introduction as presenting " the integrated result of historical and theological works with the biblical text" (Limburg 1988:v). The commentaries clearly presuppose three dimensions when working with the text, namely: the dimensions of text, interpretation of the scholar and the various audiences.

Commentary is presented on passages *en block* in the form of expository essays where the scholar gleans from contemporary scholarly research in order to present "an interpretation which deals with both the meaning and significance of the biblical text" (Limburg 1988:vi). The expository essays are presented using various thematic rubrics centred around the major theological themes in the biblical book.

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Limburg (1988:79) summarily identifies the dual theme of justice and righteousness as the central message of the book of Amos. He divides the book of Amos into seven structural parts assigning to each part a particular theme. The insights of historical criticism for dividing the various sections are effectively employed without necessarily repeating the scholarly debate on these constructs. Limburg (1988:81) essentially ascribes the words recorded in the book to the 8th century prophet Amos, but sees the final form to be the product of an editor. This editor is identified as being located in Judah shortly after the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE. This identification is accomplished on the basis of the editorial textual evidence of chapter 1:1 and chapter 7: 17 as well as the use of the hymnic fragments (4:13; 5:8-9 ; 9:5-6) which represents the supplementation of the original words of Amos for new audiences (Limburg 1988:81).

The commentary, thus presupposes a audience subsequent to the original audience of the prophet Amos, yet Limburg clearly states that "for us to hear the prophetic voice we first need to hear it in the 8th century" (1988:84) which he more specifically dates as the message being preached after 760 BCE. Any contemporary audience thus has to first engage the original audience, understand the message for the editor's audience and then draw significance to the present time frame. The commentary does not spend a lot of time on dealing with the issue of the eschatology of the final chapter. The final chapter is seen as the conclusion of the section beginning in chapter 8:11 which is structured according to a ring pattern (Limburg 1988:125). Yet, the commentary does not suggest that 9:11 – 15 are a later than 8th century addition.

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2.2.8 Philip King (1988)

The commentary by King is not a commentary in the traditional sense of the word with a focus on the literary, philological and historical background. His is an archaeological commentary, which attempts to illumine the text from the perspective of the material culture from the time periods alluded to in the text. With reference to chapter 9, as an illustration of commentary employing archaeological insights, King highlights the following: The altar of 9:1 he associates with an incense altar (the text says that the prophet saw the Lord, maybe through the mists of incense smoke). This would presuppose a pre-exilic audience. The metaphor of the sieve in 9:9 would probably confirm this, as this would refer to pre-exilic activities.

Even though King associates the material culture reflected in Amos as being clearly eighth century, he does not indicate any of these alluding to other audiences[1]. He does presuppose that the book has gone through an editorial process. Each editorial process would of necessity involve a different audience, but this is not obvious from the perspective of the material in the text that would become associated with the material culture of the archaeological discipline.

2.2.9 Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman (1989)

The Anchor Bible series is generally known for its interdisciplinary approach to exegesis of

1. In a personal conversation with King [July 1999] by this researcher, King suggested that this is not the primary task of archaeology but rather the "literary archaeologist"

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Biblical books using historical criticism as a point of departure. The expressed purpose is to focus on both the text and the context of the book of Amos (1989:3). The various aids to historical criticism are employed to very good effect. Insights from studies in Ancient Near Eastern literature, archaeology and ancient historical sources are used. The traditional Masoretic text is preferred with specific concerns for the overall literary structure and form demonstrated (1989:3).

The book is seen as the essential product of the prophet Amos with the clear possibility of editorial work being done by at least one editor who was close to the prophet. The possibility of post-exilic editorial work is played down (1989:5). The various devices employed in text (verbal, structural and thematic) are studied as they are said to contribute to the structure of the whole (1989:17).

2.2.10 Shalom Paul (1991)

Commentaries in the Hermenia series are par excellence examples of historical exegesis in practice. The method as employed in this commentary employs a full range of philological and historical tools, text critical insights, methods of History of Tradition and History of Religion. These are used in order to "lay bare the ancient meaning of a Biblical work or pericope" (1991:3). This does not mean that the text's literary artistry is ignored. On the contrary "Amos was heir to many variegated literary influences and poetic conventions and formulae, which he employed with creative sophistication to propound and expound his divinely given message." (Paul 1991:4)

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The text is seen as a unity with so-called Deuteronomic interpolations and redactions seen to be inconclusive. Therefore, even the eschatological promises, normally seen as interpolations, are rather argued to be part of the literary genre of Amos' prophetic judgement (1991:5).

Paul includes a large amount of insights into the meaning of individual words throughout the entire book by relating them to Akkadian words.

2.2.11 Bruce Birch (1997)

This particular commentary is written in popular devotional-study style. The overall aim is to make a contribution to the devotion of the laity. Birch is also known for his writing in Old Testament Ethics and this particular agenda is kept in focus in the unfolding application of the exegetical endeavours. The expressed aim is to "discuss patterns of speech, concepts of God, and issues of judgement and hope in the life of the people first seen in the prophets" (1997:i). Birch considers the primary audience of the message of importance for understanding the message of the prophet. It is from this that the message could be gauged in terms of possible relevance to present readers. He says it "becomes important to consider his message carefully in the context of ancient Israel while at the same time reflecting on the enduring message of Amos to our own time and place"(Birch 1997:165).

As a result of this stated purpose and hint at method, Birch proceeds by setting the prophet Amos within his historical setting within the eighth century BCE He proposes that the message was originally spoken in Samaria and in particular at the sanctuary at Bethel (ch.7).

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Birch ultimately views the book as the product of a process of editorial reworking, but believes that the intended message of Amos has been kept in tact (1997:176).

Close attention is also paid to the way in which the message is structured. Even though he does not use the regular conventions of Rhetorical criticism, the sentiments of his focus on the language of communication has the thrust of rhetoric (Birch 1997:181).

The approach of this commentary in the exegesis of the book of Amos could be described as twofold, namely an historical approach employing the basic insights of rhetorical criticism.

2.2.12 Jorg Jeremias (English translation 1995)

This work employs what could be described as a historical-literary approach (even though he would probably describe it as historical critical). This means the writer engages the book of Amos on at least two broad levels. The first is to set the book within its implied historical background. On a second level he critically engages the literary form and composition of the book employing what seems to be a form critical analysis with sensitivity to the redaction history of the text. As a result of this writer's study, the book of Amos is seen as a retrospective message that has been reconstructed into its current form over centuries (1995:3). Each reworking of the message resulted in more than just a reprint of the former, but is seen as a precipitation of its perceived influence. This precipitation was not employed out of historical interest, but done "on the basis of its meaning for an ever new and changing present" (Jeremias 1995:5). Even though this reworking probably developed over a period

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of time, Jeremias suggests at least three clear redactional reworkings. As a result of this formulation and perspective of the book of Amos, Jeremias (1995: 5-6) suggests a number of discernible audiences for the reworked messages contained therein. The first and primary audience is the hearers of the eighth century kingdom of Jeroboam II. The oracles against nations and visions (Ch. 1-2, 7-9:1-6) are seen as the passages reflecting this audience. A second discernible audience is the upper class of Samaria with passages like chapter.3: 9 – 4:3,6 indicating their identity. A third identifiable audience is the post-exilic community (cf. Ch.: 7-10) with the hand of the redactors discernible in passages like chapter 9: 11–15 which might also represent a later post-exilic audience at the time of the formulation of the scroll of the twelve.

It is the identification of the third audience that is of particular interest to this study. Jeremias suggests that the second reworking is identifiable through the hymnic dictions contained in the book. He suggests that Amos 4:6-13, one of the hymn sections is modelled after the worship liturgy held during the exilic services of penance (Jeremias 1998: 7-10). The hymns are then seen as representing the end of the second reworking. In the same vein he suggests that the third reworking was the post-exilic attempt to reconcile Amos's harsh message with the old traditions of salvation and thereby establish an element of security.

This study will rather be suggesting that the hymnic elements are key elements in identifying the implied audience and that they are probably an exilic phenomenon, but that the hymn of Amos 9 is a post-exilic phenomenon.

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2.2.13 Gary V. Smith (1998)

Even though this work does not use the term "a multi-dimensional" approach in the brief explanation of methodology in its preface, it would indeed be a suitable title. The writer states that in commentary, he seeks to take seriously the following aspects as it relates to the book of Amos:

Important textual and philological questions, background studies of the speech forms and literary traditions, the rhetorical markers that govern the overall structure of passages and paragraphs, exegetical issues of interpretation and theological themes of the units (Smith 1998:preface).

Smith takes seriously the message of Amos as a discourse that was designed to persuade its original hearers.

Smith is sceptical of the various reasons postulated for seeing the book as having gone through an elaborate redactional process. Rather, the hand of a single writer is suggested (offered tenuously and not rejected out of hand), who was faithful to the message that the prophet Amos preached. The only audience therefore presupposed is the eighth century BCE Northern Kingdom and the sub-audiences of the same century suggested by the text (1998:26).

2.3 Survey of Amos monographs

Books dealing with the elements stated in the reason for this survey have been chosen for

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this section and here dealt with separately from the commentaries as they follow a different format.

2.3.1 Robert B. Coote (1981)

Coote's book studies the composition and theology of the book of Amos. He proposes a three stage process of recomposition, where each recomposition represents an interpretation of the original prophetic utterance of Amos on the basis of an early form of midrash (1981:119). Neither Amos nor the interpretative recomposition got lost in the final edition, but are somehow seen as intertwined in the fabric of the text (1981:4). The three stages represent the following periods respectively, the eighth century BCE prior to 722, the seventh century some time between Hezekiah and Josiah and in Coote's final analysis of a brief survey for reasons determining the composition of the book, he concludes that the final stage is near to the end of or even shortly after the end of the Babylonian exile during the sixth century (1981:3).

2.3.2 Gerhard Hasel (1991)

Published in 1991, the work done by Hasel seeks to survey the best of the critical work done with regard to the book of Amos and then concluding with a perspective on the work having debated with the works surveyed. Hasel (1991:10) suggests that the modern, critical study of the book of Amos can be viewed as part of two major phases. The first phase, he suggests begin with Wellhausen in the early 1900's who suggested that the book consists of Amos' words as well as the later additions of editors. This phase he sees as being driven by an historical agenda with the objective of uncovering the ipsissima verba of the prophet.

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The second phase he suggests began in the 1930's with the rise of Form criticism and the traditio-historical method.

Hasel is correct in his survey to see the last hundred years of Amos studies as a battle of methods (1991:12).

Hasel contemplates the possibility for combining synchronic with diachronic study of the book but is quick to point out that currently no master paradigm has yet been developed to demonstrate this possibility (1991:25). From the time of his writing, Hasel suggests that Amos studies were beginning to see a paradigm change not only in the study of prophecy, but also particularly in Amos studies (1991:27).

Regarding some of the more hotly debated issues in the book, Hasel suggests that it is the newer methods for study (e.g. literary, rhetorical, stylistic and structural studies that will take us onto the cutting edge of Amos studies) (1991:88). He also correctly suggests that there is clearly a need to begin to integrate methods in the study of Amos to take the attempt at answering some of the critical issues in Amos in a contemporary and creative fashion (1991:99).

2.3.3 Mark D. Carroll (1992)

The purpose of this publication is to ultimately present an alternative to Latin American liberation theologies. This purpose is attempted by reflecting theologically upon the complex cultural realities of Latin America and a response to these are provided via the

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fruits of textual methods for interpretation of the book of Amos[1] (1992:9).

The interpretative endeavours of this work does not focus on the historical background or historical reconstruction of Amos as these concerns are not seen as able to help apply the prophetic concerns to modern reality (1992:48). The study commences with the world before the text, using "web[s] of significance" (1992:91) in the text (i.e. what was lived then) as metaphors for the way people live now (1992:59). This approach is a significant departure from the endeavours of what has guided the functioning of commentaries. Carroll further explains this approach by stating that "...to read a text involves both the textual method and the textual situatedness of the reader" (1992:20).

2.4 Survey of dissertations based on Amos

2.4.1 J.L.R. Wood (1993)

This doctoral dissertation borrows ideas from the performing arts to examine the book of Amos from the perspective of seeing the prophet as essentially a performing poet. The same

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1. This approach is a narrower more exclusive approach, and one example of what is termed cultural interpretation by similar works (e.g F.F. Segovia 1995). In the work edited by Sergovia (1995), cultural interpretation is seen as a multidimensional project that takes seriously the interpretation and the social location of the interpreter. The text becomes both the medium and means for brining together what it terms as the three different and competing paradigms for interpretation. These paradigms are the traditional historical concerns of the text, the literary critical concerns (reader-response methods are also seen as literary methods) and cultural issues (which includes socio-economic, ideological, sociological, etc issues) relevant to the reader's context (1995:7).

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is deemed true for all the 'writing' prophets who she sees as speakers who were able to reach their audience through a combination of words, music and song (1993: 15 –23). The book of Amos is therefore seen as containing the original prophetic utterances with various additions that were added by his commentators for polemic reasons (1993: 201-210). But in this regard she comments on the relationship between the original words and the work of these commentators by stating that " the original version is presently in tact and is supplemented with information and ideas that make it useful to a people of a different historical era...[the] reviser tells us what it originally meant and meant at a later stage (1993:109). She divides the book into seven poems (being the words of Amos even though she does not argue that these are the ipsissima verba of the prophet), which are to be seen as "blended into the original" (1993: 228-9) words and the running commentary of the compiling commentator.

It is because of the close connection she suggests between the polemical setting of the original speech and the setting of the commentator, and due to her focus on understanding these speeches as dramatic speech acts, that she does not of this necessity suggest the identification of the audience envisioned by the commentator.

2.4.2 Petrus Strijdom (1996)

This study focuses upon the theme of social justice in the book of Amos by means of a sociological analysis. The writer is driven by the fact that the book of Amos has provided inspiration for many that have sought to tackle issues of social justice in their specific context. Ultimately Strijdom has the South African context with its history of social injustice

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in mind (Strijdom 1996:14). Methodologically, the writer commences with a narrowly define stylistic (rhetorical) method for connecting the different pericope's of the book sensitive to issues of social justice (Strijdom 1996: 4-15). These rhetorical insights are then used to challenge current readers, in particular himself as an initial reader by employing some insights from reader-response criticism.

As the study does not present itself as seeking to present a new method for interpreting the book of Amos, the actual method is not clearly delineated other than termed as being an "interdisciplinary South African approach" (Strijdom 1996:14). Yet, method is clearly present, especially as he seeks to link the rhetorical with the reader in the process of reading. This work probably represents the ripples of a new wave of where rhetorical studies are going which will be investigated further in a later part of this study.

2.5 Survey of related journal articles on Amos

Journals usually represent the arena to express and explore current thoughts, insight and research in an area of study. The amount of articles that have been published in the last twenty years, especially relating to the book of Amos, is illustrative of this principle. It would be impossible and unnecessary to attempt a survey of all these articles given the confines and focus of this study. Yet, any preliminary survey will quickly illustrate how these journal articles on Amos have usually been initiated due to factors such as the introduction of newer methods of interpretation or ideas relating to a further understanding of the work. The articles surveyed here are ones thus chosen in terms of their potential for proposing the audiences of Amos and particularly the audience of chapter 9.

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2.5.1 Dalene Heyns (1990)

The main focus of this article is a literary basis for understanding the socio-historical setting of Amos 7: 10-17. The question is posed as to the reason a prophet from the southern kingdom of Judah would be preaching in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (1990:303-4). Heyns points out that that it was in actual fact a number of factors (geographic, economic, social, political and religious) that influenced the prophet to preach in the north (1990: 308-13). The audience of this pericope is thus seen as the "throne in Samaria" (Heyns 1990:314) and the upper class of people associated with the throne, as their policies would have affected Amos's home town of Tekoa.

It is clear from this article that it is possible to identify an audience by interfacing the concerns of both historical and literary methods of study. The audience of the chosen pericope is identified and could well be seen as the primary audience for other sections of the book.

2.5.2 Yehoshua Gitay (1980)

In this article the passage Amos 3: 1- 15 is examined by means of a rhetorical analysis. Since the pericope is presented in the book of Amos as a prophetic utterance, some or other audience has to be assumed. Gitay (1980: 293) points out that this is true whether the message was originally spoken or written down. Using the method of classical rhetoric, the nature of the discourse and its relationship to its audience is examined. This audience is identified as the social elite of the northern kingdom (1980:297).

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Gitay illustrates here (and as will be seen in this study later when his contribution to understanding prophetic rhetoric is further examined) that the notion of audience is indemic to attempting to understand the nature of a rhetorical address. It is when historical concerns is combined with literary concerns (in this case the rhetorical features of the literature) that it becomes possible to understand the rhetorical situation. Even though Gitay demonstrates an acute awareness that portions of this pericope are seen as later additions due to the findings of source criticism, he deals with the pericope mainly as an initial address to the primary audience alluded to in the text. He does not deal with the audience/s of the redactional additions, but one at this stage would only imagine that he would suggest that these subsequent audiences would be those with similar concerns as those expressed by Amos without identifying their rhetorical situation.

2.5.3 M Daniel Carroll (1999)

This article presents a literary (which could easily be suggested as being a cultural reading in terms of what is described in the article and explained in the work of Segovia 1995) reading from the book of Amos keeping in mind the concerns for the post-war situation in Guatemala. The article commences in almost classical cultural interpretation style by first of all sketching and reflecting upon the current conditions within Guatemala. A link is presented with Amos 9: 11-15 and is found using the rubric of Brueggemann, namely that of imagination (1999:53). Carroll sees this use of imagination as a creative way of using texts (in this case the prophetic) in order to deal with contexts (in this case Guatemala) (1999:54). Even though scholars have focussed on this passage as an addition (and therefore non-authentic) partly because of the shift in tone from destruction to hope,

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Carroll rather suggests that the setting is reminiscent of war and the memory of war (1999:55). In other words, using the rubric of imagination he shifts focus on the passage away from concerns about authenticity, literary and historical concerns, but rather focussing on the present audience, views the text as offering the possibility of hope. In the estimation of this researcher, this is his way of saying that even though a later editor might have been involved and added to the text, it is not inconceivable that that Amos initially had aspects of hope present in his message. The initial or subsequent audience/s are not dealt with, rather the audience in front of the text of Amos.

2.5.4 James R. Linville (2000)

The issue of the identity of audience to the book is presented as the chief question for examining the book of Amos, in particular the nine rhetorical questions and the pericope Amos 3:3-8 (2000:56). The study seeks to break with the primary concerns for the use of a method, whether diachronic or structural, but rather by focussing on the prophetic literature a final product of a guild of post monarchic, educated literary figures "who brought all their linguistic and literary skills to bear on their texts" (2000:60). Like some of the previously mentioned interpreters, Linville sees this guild of poets to have found some sense of identification with the ancient prophets, but adds their "experience of communicating with God" (2000:61) and their need to make sense of their present situation as contributing factors of interest. It is on this level that the text is seen to have the ability to guide the reader, that the book of Amos exhibits rhetorical features that elicits response from the audience (Linville 2000: 62). Linville, then continues to demonstrate how the rhetorical features of the book brings about a "conditioning level"

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(2000:68) between the audience of the text and the reader. This conditioning level is as it were, the way in which the rhetorical address sets up the audience and reader to respond in a particular manner.

This article represents a creative manner in which a current audience could interact with a text which was originally presented orally, reworked in a subsequent generation literarily and now intersecting with a modern reader emotionally (or conditionally, as explained by Linville). This is none other than the basic tenet on which reader-response criticism operates, but we should be quick to notice that even though Linville has stated that his concerns for the text are not driven by traditional interpretative ideas, he has in fact used a method. At best this writer would describe it as an interface between rhetorical criticism and psychological criticism.

2.6 Tabular Summary

Having thus surveyed this sampling of representative works dealing with the book of Amos, we shall now proceed to tabulate the results in terms of the expressed reason for this survey in order to comment on perceived trends and to suggest the way forward. The rest of the study will proceed from these suggestions.

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	EXEGETICAL CONCERNS			M/D ?	AUDIENCE SENSITIVITY		
	Historical	Literary	Reader		Only 8th Cent.	Multiple audiences	Present audience?
COMMENTARIES							
James L. Mays	*	*		*	*	*	
Richard S. Cripps	*	*		*	*	*	
E. Hammershaimb	*			#	*		
Hans. W. Wolff	*	*		*	*	*	
J. Alberto Soggin	*	*		*		*	
John. H. Hayes	*	*		*	*		
James Limburg	*		*	*		*	*
Phillip King	*			*	*		
Anderson & Freedman	*	*		*	*	*	
Shalom Paul	*	*		*	*	*	
Jorg Jeremias	*	*		*	*	*	
Gary V. Smith	*	*		*	*		
RELATED BOOKS							
Coote	*			*	*	*	
Carroll		*	*	*			*
Gerhard Hasel	*	*		*	*	*	*
DISSERTATIONS							
Strijdom	*	*	*	*	*	#	*
Wood	*	*		*	*	*	
JOURNAL ARTICLES							
Yehoshua Gitay	*	*		*	*	*	
Dalene Heyns	*			*	*		
Carroll		*	*	*	*	#	*
Linville		*	*	*	#	*	*

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Key to the table

Exegetical concerns – whether the interpreter reflects these issues.

M/D ? = is the method of interpretation clearly defined

* = yes / clearly illustrated

\# = no / not clearly illustrated

blank = does not touch on this issue

2.7 Summary comment and overview of methodologies

A clear development can be seen in the works as far as a movement from the historical to the interpretative issues involving the reader when studying the biblical text.

The majority of the above-mentioned commentators have to some degree dealt with what Robbins (1997) refers to as the inner texture, social and cultural texture and, to a lesser degree, ideological texture of Amos.

What this specific focus has achieved, is to show the following:

1) The historical agenda of exegesis plays a vital and fundamental role in Biblical exegesis.
2) Historical issues and literary methods are seen as aids in the historical agenda of texts.
3) The employment of historical methods opens up the text to a better understanding of primary meanings.
4) Audiences are always presupposed as being intimately involved in the various rubrics of a text, especially the primary audience inferred in a text. The text often contains clues, whether implicit or explicit, as to their identity.

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5) Not many commentaries (inclusive of all works casting light on a text) exist that attempts to open up the world of the text or less the world before the text.
6) Multidimensional methods lends itself more to opening up perspectives on audience related issues in and outside of texts.
7) Journal articles essentially by their very nature have tended to explore the relationship between text audience and current audience.

The marrying of more methods or insights gained from newer methods are now ready to be employed in the Exegesis of the book of Amos. Hasel (1991:25 & 99) has also demonstrated in his survey that past works on Amos have failed to produce a "single master paradigm" that combines synchronic and historical criticism. For example he demonstrates that various works are not able to adequately suggest a definitive Sitz im Leben for the hymnic doxologies in the book, especially in the hotly debated final chapter of the book of Amos. For Hasel the main problem in the final chapter is not so much a possible post-exilic final composition and addition of the salvation pericope, but rather the issue of the chapters eschatology (Hasel 1991:109). He postulates that Amos was the first prophetic teacher of eschatology, but not a popular eschatology but one characterised by doom and hope (Hasel 1991:120). It seems that for Hasel the problem is one of theology rather than methodology, in spite of what he has called for having surveyed the various methodologies.

The trend that can be clearly seen here is that over the years commentators have begun to realise the potential of studying the Biblical text with a greater variety of tools. As further aspects of the various dimensions (Robbins 1996a &1996b uses the word "textures") of the

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text has been investigated, so a greater variety of tools have been employed to understand the text. Some of these have resulted in studies that are highly specialised (e.g.textual criticism) so that Biblical criticism has become to a large degree an exercise for the professional scholar.

Others (e.g. West 1991; 1997; 1999) have done well in demonstrating that biblical criticism is also a "popular" (i.e. ordinary reader) exercise that has some significant contributions to make in the interpretation of the Bible. More scholars are beginning to integrate some of these methods and insights making biblical interpretation on many levels (though not always exclusively) a multidimensional discipline. This study will demonstrate this trend specifically with developments in the Rhetorical study of the Bible in the next chapter while also highlighting and proposing further developments. Yet others (Childs 1979, 1999 and Birch et al 1999) are concerned with engaging the text from a position of the faith community of the church. This brings yet another, often heated academic, debate concerning the Biblical text[1].

This researcher will at this time also wish to highlight that the text in this study is being engaged interpretatively from a position of faith. Yet this is a dimension that some methods do acknowledge, for example the "Sacred Texture" rubric of Robbins (1996:120) in Socio-rhetorical criticism. The same tensions and issues can be partially seen in the exegetical

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1. Scholars like Longman (1998) and Dever (2001) have engaged in this type of polemic even though for different reasons and from different camps (Longman as a 'conservative' theologian and Dever as a 'maximilist' even though Dever does not like this term) archaeologist. Longman (1998:24), for example refers to Clines's approach to the aspect of meaning in interpretation as 'cynical... even pitiful'.

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endeavours of the various commentators in terms of how they deal with the theological thrust of Amos 9. The varieties of interpretations are in part a product of methods employed, but also because of the interests the interpreter brings to the text. This can be seen when results of interpretation are summarised.

2.8 Summary of exegesis on Amos 9

The following is a preliminary summary of investigating Amos 9 by comparing the exegesis of three commentaries, namely the commentaries by Shalom Paul, Philip King and James Mays. As excellent examples of works that employ historical methods, they best illustrate a way to understand the primary audience of the final chapter of Amos.

The purpose of this exercise is two-fold. Firstly, to discover whether these commentators presuppose a primary or consequent audiences to this text and then secondly, to interface their ideas with the "textures" of this text as proposed by Vernon Robbins' Socio-rhetorical exegesis.

It is now generally well known that historical-critical analysis of the so-called "promise oracles" in Amos 9 have rendered them spurious, that is, they are later additions to the text. This presupposes a later editor who probably performed this *Nachinterpretation* (as suggested by H.W.Wolff 1977) in view of an exilic or even post-exilic audience of the text. This is enough to convince Brevard Childs (1979:398) that the text of Amos is indeed multi-layered and we could add that each layer possibly identified not only reflects a new editor but also possibly a new audience.

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The question is thus: " Can the audiences of Amos 9 be identified ?" This question will thus be attempted to be answered initially here and later in more detail in exegesis.

We will now notice how the conclusions by Paul (1991) follow a similar route to that of Mays (1969). The primary setting of verses 1-4 is seen as a cultic activity at a sanctuary. Paul spends more time, however, speculating about the antecedents of the second person commands suggesting that this could be the prophet, the heavenly host or the Lord himself. The plural suffixes of verses 1-4 are a definite reference to the congregation gathered in the sanctuary. Paul (1991:344ff.) does not see any syntactical or contextual reference to a remnant in verses 5-10 as some suggest and therefore an interpolation. The same is concluded with regard to the reference to Edom. From the basis of linguistic and ideological grounds verses 11-15 could, however, be seen as the product of an exilic or post-exilic redactor/theologian with a Judean point of view. This would make the prophecy for people who have survived the retribution of exile or even for the future rulers of the Davidic dynasty. The use of agricultural imagery to speak of restoration would probably indicate a post-exilic audience.

Paul (1991: 344) would therefore see 9:1-4 to be the oldest kernel of the passage presupposing an eighth century audience, 9:11-15 as a post-exilic audience, and the rest of the chapter as the product of Amos' disciples 760-730 BCE.

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2.9 The way forward for this study

It has now become clearer that the traditional methods for studying the book of Amos have not been most helpful in assisting us to identify the audiences of Amos chapter 9. It is the newer critical methods of interpretation, illustrated in some of the journal articles and dissertations surveyed above that have begun to point the way forward. Since they have shown an acute sensitivity to issues relating to audiences, including the modern audience, they are bringing about an awareness of the need to expand the historical horizons on the text to meet the horizon of understanding with the context of the reader.

It is clearly a multidimensional approach that is best suited for such an endeavour. In other words, in order to understand and identify the audience of Amos 9, one would first have to understand the primary audience of the initial parts of the book. It is the historical situatedness of the initial audience, which becomes the initial indicators of the historical awareness of the subsequent audience. It is also the rhetorical structure of the text that becomes indicative of the rhetorical situation. It is in the same vein that any contemporary audience could find a pathway into the ancient text.

The challenge is therefore essentially two-fold. Firstly, to present a methodology that is able to synthesise the best of previous methods for analysing the book of Amos. And secondly, to approach the final chapter of Amos with this methodology to more clearly socially locate the audience in light of all relevant issues within and outside the text. This study proposes that this is possible when employing socio-rhetorical criticism alongside the insights of

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reader-response criticism and particularly when employed with the expressed purpose of socially locating the implied audience by seeking such clues in the text.

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CHAPTER 3

3. PROPHETIC RHETORIC AND SOCIO-RHETORIC: Strategies employed by authors

3.1 Introduction

The introduction of Rhetoric into the area of Biblical studies has resulted in a new creativity when approaching the Biblical text. It would at present almost seem unimaginable to attempt a serious study of the Biblical text without employing the insights of Rhetoric. This becomes very clear as one begins to survey (see chapter 2) the Old Testament prophets especially the prophet Amos.

The results of the introduction of this newer approach in the study of the Biblical text have resulted in a renewed interest in not only the ancient study of Rhetoric, but also in various permutations of the method. The application of rhetorical criticism to the text of Amos becomes illustrative of this reality and reflects an ongoing attempt at seeking to unveil the nature of the prophet's rhetoric for his audience.

It is the purpose of this chapter to ultimately propose the need for a multidimensional rhetorical strategy for reading the prophetic rhetoric of Amos as clues for socially locating its audience. This will be done in the light of the perceived movement toward this concept in previous attempts at analysing prophetic rhetoric. Therefore this chapter will not comprehensively focus on the history and development of rhetoric, but rather work towards the actual strategy while interacting with these various attempts of reading texts rhetorically.

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The focus will thus be more on the contribution made thus far by rhetorical criticism in the study of prophetic rhetoric and on the need for further development. Following from this, to formulate the rhetorical method to be applied to a specific text within the prophetic corpus, namely Amos chapter 9 as it is this chapter that will best illustrate the missing dimensions of prophetic rhetoric. The missing dimension being the social location of the audience of the prophetic discourse.

It is therefore, of necessity that aspects such as definition, purpose and strategy of the Rhetorical interests be considered as it is on this level that development within the understanding of prophetic rhetoric becomes clearer. The resultant rhetorical strategy will then be applied to the text of Amos 9 in a later chapter to illustrate the identification of audience.

3.2 The reinvention and redefining of rhetorical criticism: Toward multidimensionality

A brief survey of present studies dealing with Rhetorical criticism of the Bible will show the present status of flux (Black 1978:132) in the methodology arising from the variety of rhetorical approaches and shifts in attempting uniform definition[1].

It was the Greeks who are credited for inventing the study of rhetoric in the 5th century

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1. Lategan (1992:626) suggests that this is possibly advantageous for the methodology

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BCE (Gitay 1981:35) in what we call its "classical" days with Aristotle, Homer, Cicero and Quintillian until the emergence of the present designation of "Neo-classic Rhetoric" (Kennedy 1980:120). This arose out of the ancient Greeks concern to analyse the communication that occurs between people (Murphy 1983:3) and various formal settings, for example, law courts. This very basic aspect of rhetoric is vitally important for understanding prophetic rhetoric, as the Hebrew prophets were primarily preachers and or poets (Smith 1992 and Wood 1993)[1]. Early Greek literature displays a profound "rhetorical consciousness" in the opinion of Murphy (1983:3) unlike anything to be found in the literature of other ancient civilisations.

From the early developments of rhetoric, especially as used by the Sophists, the concern of Rhetoric centred more on use rather than on defining the nature of Rhetoric. Plato's primary interest in Rhetoric, while in battle with the Sophists on the same subject, was with the definition of its nature and it remained for his famous pupil, Aristotle, to more comprehensively deal with the endeavour of formalising the study of the discipline. It is this area of rhetorical study, often termed Aristotelian rhetoric, which has made the initial and greatest impact upon the study of prophetic rhetoric.

The reason scholar's have shown concern for definition rather than the development of rhetoric as a method of exegesis is that in definition the purpose of the method becomes

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1. Smith (1992) argues convincingly to analyse the Old Testament prophets along the lines of seeing the prophetic message as a spoken piece of communication, which was transmitted, to a particular audience. Wood (1993) sees the prophet essentially as a performing poet who reached audiences by combining words, music and song. This she sees as being akin with Greek poetic dialogue.

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clear. Traditionally the main purpose for analysing rhetorical addresses have been to show the main purpose to be rhetorical with the expressed purpose of persuasion. This becomes clearer as the various nuances of the method are explored later in this chapter. But as can be seen the idea of audience is implicit.

For now it would be necessary to briefly explore the important contribution that the early Greek philosophers brought to the discipline as early attempts to analyse prophetic speech which has usually centred around their insights.

Aristotle defined Rhetoric as " the faculty of seeing in any situation the available means of persuasion" (Murphy 1983:23). Thus, for the rhetorical discourse to be successful in the endeavour of persuasion, Aristotle saw the necessity for "artistic proofs" to be constructed that would facilitate the rhetorical end of persuasion. These proofs he defined as ethical proofs (*ethos*) which pledges the speaker's good character in order to establish credibility, the psychological proof (*pathos*) which brings the audience into a state of feeling favourable to the acceptance of the speaker's arguments and logical proofs (*logos*) referring to the arguments which make the case or appear to make it (Murphy 1983:23). Aristotlian rhetoric has been seen as the touchstone for many subsequent rhetorical strategies, particularly when applying it to Old Testament prophetic literature.

Aristotle saw rhetoric to be a study of the persuasiveness of speech and literature, whereas present definitions include a descriptive element (Dozeman 1992:712) to language or the discovery of purpose (Kennedy 1980:120).

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Even though it is possible for rhetoric to methodologically take various courses (various classical Greek traditions, Toulmin's, Geissner's, Burke's, Perelman's, etc), when it comes to the rhetorical study of the Old Testament, the basic rhetorical study of Aristotle is fundamentally important as will be seen in the contributions already made to the rhetorical study of the prophetic texts. This is not to suggest that other rhetorical strategies are less important or even useless in the study the Old Testament from a rhetorical perspective, but rather that rhetorical study of prophetic literature, which is the ultimate purpose of this study, can successfully and necessarily be done employing not only the insights of Aristotelian rhetoric, but also other variations and developments often based on the Aristotelian method.

3.2.1 Classical rhetoric in relation to prophetic rhetoric

As already has been alluded to, the attempt at a definition of rhetoric is by no means an easy task. Part of the reason for this probably is that there never really existed a uniform system for classical rhetoric (Botha 1991:167). Botha (1991:167-8) points out four of the many definitions of rhetoric, which could be regarded as representative thereof in its classic period, namely: rhetoric as creator of persuasion (Corax and Tisias, Gorgias and Plato), rhetoric as discovering the means of persuasion in reference to any subject (Aristotle), rhetoric as the ability to speak well with regard to public affairs (Hermagoras) and rhetoric as the science of speaking well or adequately (Quintillian).

Yet even in these is the Aristotelian rhetoric's basic principle of persuasion clearly seen to be evident.

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Modern study in rhetoric tends to focus more on the auditor or reader also being involved in the process of interpretation of the rhetorical discourse as well as its creation (Botha 1991:171) of meanings. Thus the need for expansions upon and from the classical method to newer and what this study proposes, a multidimensional rhetorical strategy which essentially builds on the foundation already laid. Yet, the notion of socially locating the implied audience remains implicit.

This foundation for application, as far as analysis of prophetic rhetoric is concerned, is Aristotelian rhetoric and its fascination for the rhetorical purpose of persuasion.

Modern study in rhetoric, building upon Aristotelian rhetoric, has seen the development of the so-called "New Rhetoric". By definition, New Rhetoric is a theory of argumentation and may be further defined beyond the primary focus of persuasion as " the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented for its assent" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:4).

The implications of this New rhetoric is that rhetoric is no longer merely a study of the persuasiveness of public speaking as defined classically, but using the framework of "argumentation" within a rhetorical framework, the soundness of an argument is equated with its effectiveness upon the audience on which it is intended or even possibly to a wider audience[1]. In addition to this, New rhetoric demonstrates the importance of understanding

1. It is for this reason that some argue that rhetorical criticism is more correctly a reader-centred approach . For example, Gitay (1993:136) talks about the texts mutual relationship between the author/s and the audience. Conradie et al (1995: 144-6) classifies rhetorical analysis as a reader-centred approach.

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the rhetorical situation when studying the persuasive force of an argumentation by pointing out that rhetoric is an inherent quality in human communication whether spoken or written (Botha 1991:172).

It was James Muilenberg's presidential address to the Society of Biblical literature that was the watershed event for rhetorical criticism of the Old Testament. In his essay, "Form Criticism and beyond" (Muilenberg 1969:9-22), he defined rhetorical criticism as a study in stylistics of Hebrew literary composition as a supplement to form criticism.

Not all studies in rhetorical criticism are in agreement with Muilenberg's thesis[1] as Botha (1991:174) for example is correct in asserting that rhetoric reduced to a study in stylistics is a misconception as to what rhetoric should be about.

It is this brief excursus that already shows the development from Aristotle, but to something not unlike that which Aristotle envisioned when analysing speech. The next level is to ask about the relationship between the purpose already unfolded in rhetorical analysis and how this relates to the message of the Hebrew prophets.

3.2.2 The purpose of rhetoric as it relates to prophetic rhetoric.

In its classical days, rhetoric was seen to be an "art" rather than a "science".

1. Jackson (1974:70-99) shows how some of Muilenberg's students attempted to make rhetorical criticism an autonomous exegetical tool and not just a study in stylistics supplementary to Form criticism.

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Botha (1991:169) points out that when classical speakers referred to the purpose of rhetoric, they were referring to the purpose of the rhetor.

It would most definitely be unfair to reduce rhetoric in its purpose to be only an attempt at discovering the persuasiveness of a text. Persuasiveness is not the only *pathos* that a text could display or attempt to impart. It would however be the purpose of rhetorical criticism, in general, to uncover the *pathos* of the text under discussion if it exists.

It may at first seem over clinical, but a necessary distinction needs to be made between rhetoric and rhetorical criticism. Even though up to now this study has used the two as synonyms, the following distinction would be necessary. Rhetoric could be seen as "the delivery of a discourse which has a view of bringing its audience to the same views" where as rhetorical criticism "is the criticism of rhetorical discourses" (Black 1978:10). Not all critics will be in agreement with the above distinction, but as has been stated before, it is the purpose of this study to propose a methodological means of analysing (criticism) a specific type of rhetoric within a specific corpus of literature (Old Testament prophecy) which is inherently rhetorical.

The definition of rhetorical criticism by Gitay (McKenzie 1993:136) is very informative in this regard when he states that "rhetorical criticism is a literary method which enables the critic to systematically study the discourses strategy and techniques of effective communication." Gitay (1980: 293-309) has successfully demonstrated this as it relates to the prophetic rhetoric of Amos. He demonstrated that this approach is true for both written

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and oral messages (Gitay 1980:293) and how the address has in mind an audience with the

speech setting conditions with the audience (Gitay 1980:294). The identification of the specific audience (rhetorical situation) comes about by employing the rhetorical method and inferring to whom the message would be most striking (Gitay 1980:297). This particular aspect will be investigated further at a later stage in this chapter.

3.3 The search for the nature of Hebrew rhetoric

Though rhetorical study experienced its "golden era" with the Greeks, it would be worthy to note that they were neither the inventors nor first users of rhetorical discourse.

The Hebrew prophets were rhetors in their own right and the "writing prophets", as recorded in the Hebrew Bible, stand as a monument to their own and later redactors rhetorical-literary achievements.

Rhetoric in the Old Testament is, however, "preconceptual"[1] and thus, for him, there is no established critical tradition within the Old Testament being primarily rhetoric. Yet this does not mean that rhetorical critical study of the Old Testament is anachronistic for "rhetoric is an inherent function of language use" (Patrick & Scult 1990:13) and every speaker uses it to some degree (Aichele et al 1995:159). It is when we begin to think of such addresses as delivered to audiences that the nature of Hebrew prophetic rhetoric takes on the form it was

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1. This being in the words of Kennedy (1980:120)

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intended to be understood. Thus rhetoric in the Old Testament should be seen as "early" and rudimentary, rather than "classic", yet even this notion does not mean that the application of present paradigms of rhetoric are not applicable to the Old Testament.

Muilenberg's suggestion as to the nature of rhetorical criticism has become inadequate as a point of departure in developing a comprehensive rhetorical strategy or saying something substantial about the implied audience. Yet this in no way should detract from the contribution made by him in focussing our attention on the fact that there are many stylistic as well as structural features within literary units in the Old Testament which were employed with some rhetorical purpose.

It also needs to be pointed out that his main reason for focussing on stylistics was to respond to the way in which Form criticism was taking the study of the text away from its situation or context.

Later studies have seemed to be aware of this especially as they have sought to broaden the vision for use of rhetorical analysis throughout the Old Testament.

In a study by Lundbom (1975), the basic rhetorical critical agenda of Muilenberg was re-emphasised. Lundbom's (1975:1-2) basic proposal is that the identification of literary units is of fundamental importance in rhetorical study as previously proposed by Muilenberg. Acknowledging that the exact determination of a literary unit is difficult and suggesting that earlier forms of literary criticism and its related methods have not been able to adequately

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define literary units of passages (Lundbom 1975:3-16) it is suggested by Lundbom (1975:17) that the two generally known rhetorical features (inclusio and chiasmus) be seen as the important controlling factors in this regard. The results of this seems clearly evident from ensuing studies of Dahood on the book of Psalms and Freedman on the books of Job and Hosea (Lundbom 1975:16).

Even though Lundbom's basic rhetorical strategy is to a large extent a re-affirmation of the Muilenburg agenda, his study has moved beyond as was the intention implied by Muilenberg's initial address. This move beyond is endeavoured by firstly, taking up an eclectic stance towards previous methods employed and the subsequent results of their application and secondly, to identify the function of rhetorical figures (Lundbom 1975:18-19). By *function* Lundbom (1975:19) means studying the phenomenon as being more than just a description of the results of application. In his study on the speeches of Jeremiah, Lundbom (1975:19) also investigates another dimension as proposed by the New Rhetoric, namely that of argumentation.

For Lundbom (1975), the study that he endeavours is thus a study in ancient Hebrew rhetoric as essentially uncovering elements within the text which serves rhetorical functions. He too does not have the implied audience in view.

It is the work done by Gitay (1981 and 1993) that has unapologetically refocused our rhetorical eyes to the importance of stylistic study when applying rhetorical criticism to the prophetic literature of the Old Testament.

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Gitay (1993:139-140) considers stylistic study as critical to the study of rhetorical address:

- The prophets were poets and prose narrators adapting style skilfully to their audiences' perception. Changes in style does not necessarily point to a different author, but rather to a new rhetorical situation;
- Even unparalleled lines within a usually parallel lined prophetic text can have a rhetorical function and cannot be a mistake. The switch from one style to another could be rhetorically functional and not as a result of two different authors;
- Mixture of styles, breaking of literary patterns and employment of long asymmetrical verses calls attention to crucial questions of the nature of prophetic speech.

Gitay clearly not only engages the text for discovering its persuasive rhetoric, but always has the implied audience in view even though they are not socially located.

From a consideration of the implications of what the afore-mentioned scholars have shown, it would seem that Hebrew rhetoric in texts have certain literary features which enhances the communication of a message. Yet, as will be seen, such a definition would not be adequate for often those things which initially are ignored textually could be shown to be literary features which act according to some rhetorical purpose.

The next question should thus be "Whose rhetoric is present in the text" Are certain literary features the fossil remains of Ancient Hebrew rhetoric of which we do not have the original textbook in rhetoric, or are they maybe nothing else but the rhetoric of the scholar being

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projected into the text and being perceived as something which is inherent to the text. For these reasons the relationship between rhetorical features and implied audience need to be considered, as well as the reader influence upon a text in order to clearly account for any perceived meaning as significant for the implied audience.

These are important questions, as they become fundamental when seeking to understand prophetic rhetoric as it relates to its social location. We ultimately do not know, but the answer is probably somewhere between these extreme questions. A text undoubtedly contains some rhetorical agenda by the original rhetor, which we can only discover by taking educated guesses at mapping and placing in a socially location, and these guesses are attempted by employing present insights in rhetorical criticism to the text.

What is thus needed is to propose a rhetorical critical strategy that takes into account all the important contributions thus far in the study of texts of the Old Testament and, for the purpose of this study, of prophetic texts within their social locations.

3.4 Rhetorical criticism of the Old Testament – prospects for understanding prophetic rhetoric

Lawrie (1995:147) and Guerin (1979:271) point out that the Old Testament could be seen as a text in which "all is rhetoric". James Muilenberg's essay (Best 1984:18) suggested that rhetorical criticism is applicable to all of Israel's scriptures!

The rhetoric of the Old Testament is multi-layered[1] and, as shown earlier, the literary

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1.For example Clements (Clines 1990:203-220) has shown that not only did prophets use editors, but that editors used prophets, a thesis shared also by Dearman (1990: 403 – 421).

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aspects of the Old Testament are co-ordinated with a rhetorical function (McKnight 1988:253). This rhetorical function can only be unlocked using the key of rhetorical study. This does, however open up many doors as the corridors of the Bible's rhetoric are long and winding with many doors.

Rhetorical criticism of the Old Testament is thus an invaluable tool for its literary study and all that is needed is for an expanded methodological basis to be set up (Powell 1990:14-15), one which includes the possibility of locating the text socially.

As the above discussion has shown, definition and purpose of the methodology of rhetorical criticism are directly related and it is from considering these issues that discussion in methodology develops. Yet in attempting to delineate a newer methodology one has to consider the previous methods and how they in the history of development lead on to the formulation of present (or what have tended to be called "modern") methodologies.

This study sees these developments as opportunities leading to a more comprehensive way to analyse prophetic rhetoric. They are thus here summarised for the sole purpose of extracting the aspects of value for prophetic rhetoric and to gauge their interest in socially locating audience.

3.4.1 James Muilenberg

Muilenberg was concerned about the way in which particular Biblical texts were being severed from their historical contexts by form criticism (Freeman 1992:713) and how

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general *Gattungen* coloured the unique character of individual *Gattung*. He thus proposed that rhetorical criticism become a supplement to form criticism because "form and content are inextricably related" (Muilenberg 1969: 2 & House 1990:31).

As far as Muilenberg was concerned, rhetorical criticism had to do with attempting to understand the nature of Hebrew literary composition by the study of literary devices.

His methodology could be summed up by two concerns, namely the defining of the limits of a literary unit and the recognition of the structure of the composition in order to discern the configuration of its component parts (House 1990:34-39). The social location of the audience is not considered or discussed.

3.4.2 Yehoshua Gitay

The particular rhetorical strategy employed by Gitay (1981) was a departure from the Muilenberg agenda of rhetoric as the " art of composition" (Trible 1994:40) because rhetorical criticism "should not be confined to [a study of] style" (Gitay 1981:72). He sought to employ Aristotelian rhetoric, or what he called the "classical framework" (1981:36) while doing a study on Second Isaiah yet allowing the "Biblical text to be the controlling factor" (Gitay 1981:36).

Even though this strategy by Gitay seems to be a rhetorical methodology which is a narrow literary approach, it is however a pragmatic rhetorical approach. Gitay (1981:24) sees the necessity for study of the historical, sociological and religious context of the discourse studied and even "explores mutual relationships among author (speaker), his address and his audience."

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This results in a broader study of the intricacies of the communication process when rhetorical speech is being employed[1]. Gitay, however, does not expand on this because he does not want to see rhetorical criticism becoming merely audience criticism (McKenzie 1993:136). This is unfortunate, as this opens up the possibilities for socially locating the implied audience, which could potentially enhance the understanding for mode of persuasion in his rhetorical agenda. This is a principle he demonstrated with the prophecy of Amos (Gitay 1980:297)

3.4.3 Dale Patrick and Alan Scult

This study attempts to move on from where Muilenberg left off but does not take up the challenge of seeing rhetorical criticism as being a supplement to form criticism but rather as an interpretative strategy in its own right. They believe that it is through a text's rhetoric that a modern interpreter can recapture the possibilities for encounter that the particular text offers (1990:19).

Because, for them (1990:43), the Bible is primary rhetoric all aspects of the text's literary nature need to be studied to determine how the text manages a persuasive relationship with the reader.

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1. Gitay (1981:36ff) suggested a five part rubric serving as the main agenda for his rhetorical strategy, namely:
   a) Invention or discover (*inventio*) - which discerns the arguments supporting the case as one of three possible modes: *logos, pathos* or *ethos*
   b) Organization or arrangement (*dispositio*) - which studies the effects and orderly arrangement of the parts of the discourse into some pattern which achieves the goal of the discourse
   c) Style or expression (*elocutio*) - which looks at the choice of words, phrases and clauses, tropes and figures of the discourse
   d) Memory (*memoria*)- what the rhetor does to aid in the delivery
   e) Delivery or action (*pronuntio* or *actio*) - which is the actual speech delivered

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This type of reader would ideally have to be one who holds to the same world view of the text in order for the rhetoric of persuasion to have maximum effect. This results in their rhetorical study leading on to reader response/ rhetorical study (Patrick & Scult 1990:12).

This study does not focus on the application of particular rhetorical critical techniques, but rather, in determining according to a set of five criteria its suitability as "the best text" (Patrick & Scult 1990:81ff) for persuasion. Location of implied audience is also not considered.

3.4.4 Phyllis Trible

Whereas Muilenberg saw rhetorical criticism as an extrinsic method which would reveal the texture of the author's thought, Trible (1994:44ff) sees it as being one of more possibilities for doing rhetorical criticism which could invoke general or specific study. In delineating a rhetorical critical methodology, Trible (1994:101-106) gives a very detailed version, along the same lines as Wuellner (1987:449-50), focusing primarily on the textual features which guide in determining meaning within the text than on the "world-behind-the-text."

Trible (1994:94ff) in the delineation of her own rhetorical strategy for investigating the book of Jonah, confers that synchronic study (which rhetorical study in her opinion essentially is) does allow for diachronic reflection (which essentially is what historical criticism and its related methods are). Therefore, Trible (1994:94) does not hesitate to employ insights from textual criticism as she begins her study.

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The art of rhetorical analysis is given practical guidelines by Trible (1994:101-105)[1] when a basic ten step procedure is suggested.

By relating a procedure for attempting rhetorical criticism, Trible has not sought to restrict the methodology to one single and narrow means, but rather to provide clear enough guidelines amid the plethora of rhetorical strategies. She does not pay attention to socially locating implied audience even though she clearly views the text as the product of a redaction history.

3.4.5 Vernon K. Robbins

The particular method of doing Biblical study (and for Robbins in particular it is New Testament study) developed and championed by Robbins is what has become known as socio-rhetorical criticism. This methodology essentially seeks to take up the challenge of drawing together the various challenges (for example structuralist, rhetorical, ideological,

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1. Tribles method can be summarised as follows:
   a) Reading the text several times over in the original Hebrew and various English translations with literary questions in mind;
   b) Researching what other scholars using various methods have concluded about the text;
   c) Do a background study on the text (eg. Form criticism);
   d) Get acquainted with rhetorical terms and how they are used in the text;
   e) Attend closely to features like: literary boundaries; repetition of words; phrases and sentences; types of discourse; design and structure; plot development; character portrayals; syntax and particles;
   f) Show structure of the text by using the text's own words;
   g) Translation of the Hebrew trying to maintain the same number of words;
   h) Devise a series of markers to indicate prominent features of the text, especially repetition;
   i) Describe and interpret the structural diagram;
   j) Correlate discoveries.

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sociological, etc) that have come to face interpreters of the Bible especially so with the emergence of the New Hermeneutic.

Even though each of these methodologies, prior to socio-rhetorical criticism, could and can still be employed individually to the study of a text like the Bible, they seemed to leave the interpreter on a single track running parallel to the others and rarely, if ever, intersecting with the other.

In the words of Robbins (1984:6) the challenge is that " interpreter needs to use disciplines that reach beyond the confines of traditional forms of New Testament criticism to explicate the intermingling of social, religious and literary traditions and convention."

It was thus that he introduced the term "Socio-rhetorical" which he explained as follows (Robbins 1984:6) :

> " Rhetoric refers to the art of persuasion. Rhetorical interpretation, therefore, is concerned with strategies that changes attitudes and induce action. While much rhetorical analysis concentrates on overt techniques of persuasion, socio-rhetorical analysis emphasises the wide range of strategies, both overt and covert, that constitute persuasive communication."

This methodology was developed under the influence of Burke where the text is analysed as a strategic statement in a situation characterised by "webs of significance" containing an intermingling of social, cultural, religious, and literary traditions and conventions in the Mediterranean world (Robbins 1984:6).

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In the methodology four forms[1] play a significant role. In defining what is meant by the term "form", Robbins (1984:7) finds some affinity and common ground with the form critical term *Gattungen*, but adds that it refers more to "its rhetorical dimensions that change and induce actions." There could be little doubt that this is indeed what Muilenberg envisioned. Some forms can induce some expectancy and desires within the reader while others are employed as a strategy of communication that draws the reader in to become an "active participant in the process, anticipates sequences, gaining familiarity through repetition, and identifying with certain people and causes" (Robbins 1984:7).

By taking into account these considerations, the method seeks to bridge the gap between the traditional exegetical methods and the more recent literary and structural approaches (Robbins 1984:13). The actual socio-rhetorical strategy could thus be summarised in as far as it has potential for greater understanding of prophetic rhetoric, but also to be aware of gaps in application as no method can guarantee a particular meaning, only possibilities of meaning.

In the study of the text all formal structures or outlines should be noted that arises through use of repetitive forms. The repetitive forms should be explained and analysed in relation to

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1. These forms he delineates as follows (Robbins 1984:7-10) :
   a) Progressive form: This could be either a logical progression where the argument is presented step by step or a qualitative progression where one quality leads on to the other.
   b) Repetitive form: This refers to the restatement of the same thing in different ways.
   c) Conventional form: Categorical expectancy that is anterior to the reading of the text.
   d) Minor form: The smaller details within the text that are employed to fill in the gaps.

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other repetitive forms within the wider text and to the conventional repetitive forms in prophetic and didactic literature of the Mediterranean world. Progressive forms are then to be analysed in relation to conventional forms in Biblical, Jewish and Greek literature. This is done in order to explore the intermingling of literary patterns from these different worlds for it has to be acknowledged that the "entire literary product is the result of the compositional activity of the author" (Robbins 1984:13). The final step is then to provide a summary of the rhetorical argument (Robbins 1984:12ff).

This strategy in socio-rhetorical criticism represents an earlier attempt at a social and cultural interpretation by exploring the inner literary and rhetorical corridors of a text. A few years later Robbins (1994) provided a more comprehensive explanation of the socio-rhetorical method. In the introduction of his later published guide to socio-rhetorical criticism, Robbins (1994:1) provides an expanded and clearer definition to the methodology:

> " Socio-rhetorical criticism is an approach to literature that focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live. The approach invites detailed attention to the text itself. In addition, it moves interactively into the world of the people who wrote the texts and into our present world."

As this definition implies, the approach seeks to acknowledge the value of approaches implied within the term, that is rhetorical and sociological, in terms of their own application

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to texts, but then also to bring them together into a more systematic method of analysis.

The method approaches the text as if it were a "thickly textured tapestry" (Robbins 1994:2) which consists of various patterns and images which could be called "textures" and when studied separately reveal a clearer picture and enhances understanding of the text.

Robbins (1994:3), therefore suggests five different ways to study these multiple textures within texts. These five textures could be methodologically summarised as follows:

1) Inner texture

This involves a study of the text's language by studying features such as repetition and dialogue between people and communities. In so doing it is suggested that intimate knowledge could be gained of words, their patterns, structures, voices, devices and modes in the text for they aid in the understanding of the context for possible meanings and meaning-effects. Robbins (1994:6) suggests that there are six types of inner textures within a given text, namely: (a) repetitive; (b) progressive; (c) narrational; (d) opening-middle- closing; (e) argumentative; and (f) sensory-aesthetic.

These inner textures are essentially an expansion on the idea of "forms" within the earlier method of socio- rhetoric.

2) Intertexture

This particular aspect refers to how the text represents, refers to, and uses certain phenomena that occur within the world outside of the text, which is being interpreted (Robbins 1994:40). These phenomena could be anything from physical

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objects, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions, and systems. It thus becomes the main priority of this aspect within the methodology to describe the exact nature of the text's usage or reuse of these phenomena or what Robbins (1994:40) terms as the "process of configuration and reconfiguration."

3) Social and Cultural texture

It is here that the interpreter employs the insights from sociological and anthropological theory in order to explore the text's "social and cultural nature *as* [sic] a text" (Robbins 1994:71). In so doing it becomes possible to ascertain whether the text is passing any religious value judgements on social and cultural phenomena. It thus also becomes necessary for the interpreter to become acutely aware of social and cultural differences and of similarities with the text, the world within which the text was produced and the world of the interpreter. By exploring these social and cultural aspects with reference to the text, it thus becomes possible for the interpreter to adopt or encourage certain social and cultural orientations instead of others as "texts with a substantive religious texture contain specific ways of talking about the world" (Robbins 1994:72).

4) Ideological texture

Under this rubric the text is seen as a result of a writer's ideological framework. Ideological analysis is thus "simply an agreement by various people that they will dialogue and disagree with one another with a text as a guest in the conversation" (Robbins 1994:95). This dialogue is first of all between the writer of the text and reader, then secondly involving the interpretation of other parties, and thirdly the

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involvement of the actual text. The individual interpreter should also be constantly aware of the ideological framework and system, which will always be present of self and others of the system. Ideological self-examination is necessary for the interpreter, for only then can meaningful ideological discussion take place between the text and the interpreter. The self-examination becomes possible when the interpreter employs the insights gained through social and cultural texture.

5) Sacred texture

This particular agenda has as its goal to examine the text in order to discover the religious voice of the text. Categories are provided that could guide the interpreter in a programmatic way to search for the divine commentary of the text. These categories include Deity, where the nature, action and revelation of God are presented; Holy Person, where one or more persons are shown to have a special relation to God; Spirit. Being, where other supernatural (that is other than human) beings are present and represented as either on the side or against in the struggle between good and evil; Divine History, where the natural historical process is seen as being directed by divine purpose toward particular results; Human Redemption, where through rituals, events and practices human beings receive benefit from divine sources; Human Commitment, where human beings have to find appropriate responses to divine actions; Religious Community, where the individual is seen as part of a group that have a similar commitment to the divine; and finally Ethics where the responsibility of human beings to both think and act in appropriate ways under different circumstances. Sacred texture should not ultimately be seen as an agenda in

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isolation, but rather in partnership with all the other afore-mentioned textures.

Socio-rhetorical criticism is thus truly a multi-dimensional strategy of exegesis that uses the text as its starting base and final base. Even though it is in a sense different to the traditional methods of exegesis Robbins (McKnight 1994:164) contends that " socio-rhetorical criticism practices interdisciplinary exegesis that reinvents the traditional steps and redraws the traditional boundaries of interpretation."

Having thus summarised what socio-rhetorical criticism essentially seeks to propose in an attempt at studying a text from a newer perspective, a word of caution needs to be sounded. Socio-rhetoric is still in development even so that Gowler (1994:1) points out that it should not be reduced to yet another methodology "in the sense that it becomes an interpretative matrix imposed upon Biblical texts like a strait-jacket." For Gowler (1994:35) the purpose is dialogue between ancient narratives and interpreters which socio-rhetorical analysis fosters.

3.5 *Where is rhetorical criticism taking us ?* [1]

We have to acknowledge the value of scholars showing us how a passage has come to be

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1. This is the title of an essay published by Wilhelm Wuellner (1987:448-463) and responded to in same title fashion by Amador (1997) mapping trends in rhetorical criticism since Wuellner's article appeared. Amador (1997) clearly traces a movement in rhetorical criticism that moves from historical concerns, then to incorporate literary concerns and finally reader-centered concerns when engaging the text.

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what it is today, but what is more important is that through rhetorical study of the text , they have highlighted how the text as a multi-layered entity, attempts to persuade or to invoke some action within the reader.

The study of rhetoric has developed through various stages of transition and this chapter has sought to highlight particular stages in its development as it impacted and still could impact in contributing to the study of the Old Testament. In working through the history of the development of rhetorical criticism, Wuellner (1987:453) has suggested that the method " has brought us to a crossroad where we must choose between two competing versions of rhetorical criticism: the one in which rhetorical criticism is identical with literary criticism, the other in which rhetorical criticism is identical with practical criticism." According to Wuellner (1987:454) the one road will lead to "the proliferation of exegetical method" and the other to the "promoting of antitheoretical arguments" even though both will endeavour to practice rhetoric. The typical examples of rhetoric on these different roads according to Wuellner (1987:454), are those of Muilenberg and that of Robbins.

Thus Wuellner (1987:454-460) adopts the classical rhetorical strategy of Kennedy. Not only does he include the concerns of Muilenberg and Robbins, but more comprehensively deals with the insights gleaned from modern studies in rhetoric.

This study essentially agrees with sentiments of Wuellner, yet disagrees that the study of stylistics leaves the exegete in "the ghetto of...estheticizing" (Wuellner 1987:462). On the contrary, it is an essential part of the rhetorical study even though rhetoric should not be

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reduced to a mere study in stylistics as the Muilenberg agenda possibly was threatening to become. Wuellner's (1987:462) conclusion that new rhetoric serves as a means of approaching all literature as social discourse is vitally important. Rhetorical study of texts should thus not be attempted ignorant of the situation (social location) that gave rise to the creation of the text or in which it was propagated as all rhetorical discourses (especially those belonging to the prophetic corpus of Old Testament literature) were not born out of a vacuum, but in view of a specific context or what is generally called the "rhetorical situation."

3.6 Rhetorical criticism of Old Testament Prophetic discourse – A summary

Thus far, this study has shown that in the development of the rhetorical critical method of interpretation of the Biblical text, various approaches could be taken. Various literary genres are recognisable within the Biblical text as a whole and each needs to be taken seriously in the interpretative process.

In the same way it is possible to apply varying rhetorical strategies when interpreting the Biblical text and the particular strategy chosen will normally reflect the interpreter's own convictions about rhetoric or the type of rhetorical strategy the interpreter deems appropriate for the interpretation of a particular text.

The same would be true for this study. This study wishes to firstly acknowledge that variety exists in the types of rhetorical critical strategies available to the interpreter. Secondly, that

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some forms of rhetorical criticism are more appropriate to be applied to specific parts of the Biblical text. And thirdly, that the strategy chosen for this study will be a rhetorical hybrid felt to be appropriate in the rhetorical critical study of Old Testament prophetic discourses with the view of interfacing the findings with audience analysis (that is establishing the social location of the discourse).

This study is acutely aware of the distinct differences between the rhetorical critical and audience analysis as per definition. The study also contends that it is possible to find a relationship between the two in the area of the study of the rhetorical situation of the text, or as Gitay (McKenzie 1993:146) calls it: "...one of the three dimensions of literary discourse."

All prophetic discourse was not born out of a vacuum, but came about as a result of some historical situation. The attempt at understanding the discourse is therefore enriched by an understanding of the discourse within its original setting where this setting is rendered obvious in the text or not. Historical critical study and methods of interpretation related to it are useful in this regard. As Patrick and Scult (1990:25) put it, " An interpretative approach which meets the 'best text' criterion must identify and analyse the text in a way which simultaneously renders a satisfactory account of its timelessness, and at the same time explains the function it had in its original *Sitz im Leben*."

Therefore with all this considered, this study chooses as the fundamental definition for rhetorical critical study as generally defined by Gitay (1993:136), a "pragmatic analysis that

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seeks to reveal the mutual relationship of the author(s), text and audience." This study further agrees with Gitay that a systematic study of early Hebrew rhetoric should centre upon rhetoric as "the art of persuasion" (1993:136). Now even though this rhetoric is defined by Gitay not to be the same as Muilenberg's "stylistic-formalist" awareness (1993:136), this study is convinced that stylistic considerations cannot be ignored in rhetorical critical study of prophetic discourses. These are rhetorical devices used in the text. As Sternberg (1985:475) points out, it is by means of rhetorical devices (amongst other things) that the Bible "shapes our response to character and event."

As a result of focussing upon the role of rhetoric as "persuasion", Gitay's rhetoric could be described as Aristotelian rhetoric due to Aristotle's own definition of the method. This use of rhetoric by Gitay (1981) is illustrated well in where he focuses upon the rhetoric of persuasion, the rhetorical situation and the literary issues involved in the text. As explained earlier, after dividing the chapters into rhetorical units, each unit is analysed according to invention (which is essentially identifying the rational, emotional and ethical appeals), organisation (which studies the arrangement of the discourse) and then finally the style (which is the use of stylistic devices with the function of appealing to the audience and attracting their attention).

This study will essentially adopt the same format in its own rhetorical analysis, but as indicated will also import the methods associated with historical criticism and social-scientific criticism when considering the issue of the rhetorical situation. This is best illustrated in Robbins' socio-rhetorical criticism.

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Trible (1994:94) in the delineation of her own rhetorical strategy for investigating the book of Jonah, confers that synchronic study (which rhetorical study in her evaluation essentially is) does allow for diachronic reflection (which is essentially what historical criticism and its related methods are). Trible (1994:94), however, also includes textual criticism as another essential element. This study believes that this consideration helps to meet the challenge of finding "the best text" upon which the rhetorical analysis will be done in sensitivity to Patrick and Scult (1990 :89) Trible (1994:101-105) gives the art of rhetorical analysis when a basic ten-step procedure, as we saw earlier, is suggested. These steps will be used to provide the broad framework for the rhetorical critical part of the study.

Within rhetorical analysis structural considerations[1] are of importance for they essentially provide the order of the argument and the establishment of a "persuasive relationship" (Gitay 1993:141).

The socio-rhetorical criticism of Robbins does use a form of structural analysis to arrive at a literary picture of the text in order to plot the rhetorical argument of a text. This study will for this reason and for the approach's ability to lead the rhetor to uncover the multiple

1. Van Der Lugt (1995) has also extensively and successfully employed the use of structural analysis within rhetorical criticism especially in the study of poetic sections of the Old Testament.

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layers of the text, use socio-rhetoric as the primary workhorse within the analysis to be done later. It is clear from Robbin's use of the term "textures" that he views the text to be a multi-layered composition that requires a multi-dimensional strategy to uncover. This strategy has been delineated earlier, but does not clearly make the reader a conscious contributor to influencing the meaning of the text or exposing the biases of the reader.

For now the relationship that this study believes there should exist between the various characteristics of rhetorical criticism and reader-orientated studies will be investigated, firstly by investigating the methodological nature of reader-response criticism in the next section of this chapter, and secondly in terms of an "interface" for a further multidimensional reading. Employing the insights of socio-rhetoric will bring these two dimensions (of text and reader) together by bringing the reader to find significance when engaging the rhetorical situation of the text. Once again this concept having been demonstrated in a small way by Gitay (1980) using Aristotelian rhetoric.

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3.7. IDENTIFYING READERS (IMPLIED AUDIENCES) IN PROPHETIC TEXTS

3.7.1 Introduction

Before the introduction of reader-centred methods of study in Biblical studies, the historical and literary methods operated with a basic assumption, among others, that the text has some meaning bound or inherent within the text. This meaning could be unlocked, at least in greater part, by the application of the historical and or literary method. The reader or interpreter was seen as an inactive entity as far as the meaning of the text was concerned. It was through the application of a method that the inherent meaning was unlocked like a treasure hunter following a map leading to the final discovery of the booty. The accuracy of the discovered meaning, which was also generally associated with the intended meaning of the author, depended upon the interpreter or readers ability in applying the method.

Conradie (et al 1995:163), however points out that "the reader plays a vital role in the process of interpretation." In other words, interpreters are not blank slates or empty receptacles into which the meaning of a text flows. It is, however, not just the active role in the act of interpretation that makes meaning which would include the methodology employed as a contributing factor to the nature of the meaning, but also the sub-conscious influences that the reader might not consider. These sub-conscious elements could include the following pertinent information about the interpreter: gender, culture, ideology, theology, psychology and social positioning. As Fowler (1992:52) infers about reader-response criticism, it is not only 'what' that determines meaning (that is the text), but also 'who' determines the meaning (that is the reader). It is the purpose of this section of the study to investigate the role the interpreter or reader plays with regard to the question of the

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so-called meaning of a text. This is done as a first level in order to establish a reader – role perspective of the current researcher[1]. The second level of the investigation would then be to establish how reader-response ideas become helpful in further informing a current reader about the identity of the implied reader of the text. Reader-response critics at present assume the readers active role in the production of meaning of a text as a given.

This section of the study will also seek to investigate the extent to which reader-response ideas can be integrated with rhetorical ideas to further shed light on levels of audience identification[2]. In Biblical interpretation the notion of meaning as being contained within the Biblical text has traditionally been the very basis from which interpretation was to begin. In fact it was the very reason for doing the act of exegesis. Even though this presupposition was not always clearly stated, it was evident when reading the results of interpretative investigations in books, commentaries and journal articles which employs historic and literary based methods. It would not be the purpose of this study to debate the aspect of authorial intent versus the role of the reader in the production of the meaning of a text, but to see how the text can be analysed to expose audience. The debate will, however, be entered on the level of examining the role of the reader in establishing the meaning of a text as a by-product for exposing the levels of activity in the text for exposing audience.

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1. Edgar McKnight (1993:197) points out that "reader-response criticism is not a conceptually unified criticism". There is in fact only reader perspectives and reading ideas and the methods essentially help a reader to read with awareness and self consciousness (Fowler 1992:81). Reader-response criticism, therefore not only makes us aware of the first audience (the implied reader) or the present reader, but potentially other implied readers in and of the text.
2. The socio-rhetorical method of Robbins has been illustrated as a method that can be used to locate the implied audience of a text (Robbins 1991), but an interface with reader-response insights to enhance identification of implied and subsequent audiences has not until now been attempted.

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With regard to the latter aspect, the basic issues that will be investigated will be firstly, to look at the development of the reader-centred methods by looking at the contributions made by some of the more significant scholars. Secondly, the nature of the reading process as employed within reader-response criticism will be defined with particular reference to its role alongside interpretation of texts. Thirdly, the specific issue of the so-called meaning of the text will be investigated as to whether there is any inherent meanings in a text and the role of the reader plays in using these to identify audience. Fourthly, the topic of method of reader criticism for identifying audience will be hypothesised.

3.7.2 The development of reader-response criticism

As far as the development of reader-orientated theory goes, it is now well known that the theory emerged out of a basic rejection of New Criticism's focus on the text itself as a lone bearer of meaning. Berry (1993:105) does not foresee reader-orientated study in any way dominating biblical criticism probably because of the perception of general rejection amongst reader-orientated critics that meaning is not to be found in the text. This view is probably overstated as the history of interpretation[1] has shown that Biblical studies could not shrug off new developments in interpretative theory. Given that interpretative results cannot be

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1. Jane Tompkins (1980: ix – xxvi) argues this point as she surveys the methods of Fish, Holland, Iser, Culler and Bleich. She argues that a text cannot be understood apart from its results (i.e. the effects it exercises over a reader) and that "meaning is a consequence of being in a particular situation in the world" (1980:xxv). The meaning then only has meaning in relation to a world that offers that meaning the ability to be expressed or perceived. The audience (the "world" of Tompkins' earlier quote) can then be inferred in locating the meaning that it finds significant.

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separated from interpretative method[1], it would in reality be short sighted to ignore newer developments. The new insights not only help to refine understanding (i.e. the meaning of a text), but also help to keep it true and accountable[2].

In reader-response method, the reader is seen to be the primary locus of meanings that are produced during the reading process (Berry 1993:106). Now even should an interpreter vehemently deny this notion the very existence of the vast variety of interpreters and their interpretative results cry out in testimony to the contrary. It is, therefore absolutely necessary for every interpreter to at least be aware of the newer insights. This is arguably one of the more valuable contributions to interpretation by reader-response criticism. It is therefore the responsibility of readers of a text to plot their reading understanding or strategies and thus illustrate their own sensitivities to the text. The criticism of reading will always bear different results for as Davis (1986:348) points out, "Reader-Response criticism

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1. A number of works and opinions could be cited here, but for now we will mention the following important contributions. Adam (1995:52) points out that particular methods could exclude the "voices" (interpretations) of other methods. Vogels (1993: 52-53) indicates that reading is always a subjective experience guided by strategy of interpretation employed. Barton (1998:108) describes this as the most urgent project in hermeneutics as it would avoid manipulative interpretations, an opinion shared by Dyck (1996:145). Fowl (1998:7) asserts that interpretation is always shaped by the convictions of interpreter as well as method employed. He, therefore, argues for the "best interpretative habits" to be employed which directly impacts upon the use of methods (Fowl 1998:9).

2. Reader-response cannot be law unto itself and interpreters need to be ethically responsible for their interpretations. This will not only help to prevent flagrant misinterpretation (Combrink :120-1), but also assist in the improving of interpretations. Some scholars, (Fowl 1998:1); (Zehr 1986:23-28) and (Birch *et al* 1999:17), argue for the interpretation of the Bible to be theological, by which they essentially mean the adoption and adaptation of a plethora of methods to best interpret the Bible as Scripture and the product of a faith community.

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is an ongoing movement that will doubtless contribute much more to our understanding of the reader's effect, or response, in the reading activity."

Yet, as the following brief survey will show (and being fully aware that these theorists' insights entail more than what the summary wishes to illustrate) even so-called reader-response critics cannot totally avoid some meaning to be found within the text or some meaning guided by it. This phenomenon will become the basis, in part, for the proposal of an interface between various methods of interpretation and especially methods focussing on the role of the reader in order to avoid the trap of seeing that which is not inherently in the text, but also to bring about an awareness of the texts potential in exposing the implied reader. The works of these contributors have been consulted with three concerns in mind. Firstly to come to an appreciation of their specific contributions in the reader-response debates, secondly to discover how they deal with the issue of the meaning of a text and thirdly how they potentially help to identify audience.

3.7.3 Jonathan Culler

The type of reading strategy employed by Culler could be described as "the reader in the text" approach (Powell 1990:16). Culler (1975:5) correctly suggests that the reader does not come to the text as a blank slate but has preconceptions assisting in the appreciation of the literary work. The text is seen to have a latent structure and meaning which becomes apparent when the work is read. Any perceived meaning is as a result of the reader's literary competence and appreciation of the structure of the work. Even though Culler's method could be described in traditional structuralist terms, he ultimately rejects any notion of a role

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for interpretation within criticism (Culler 1981:5). His position does become more accommodating when accepting deconstruction as being in the realm of criticism, in the opinion of Newton (1990:67). It is thus through semiotic study that a "work enables" some conditions for interpretation, but not necessarily the interpretation (Culler 1981:48). Understanding of a work, however depends on the mastering of a system on which the work is modelled, for example the convention of poetry (Culler 1975:6).

The reader and the author of a literary work are seen by Culler to be in a communicative relationship where the structure of the literary work becomes the way to give the reader the necessary competence to appreciate that which is being communicated. Thus semiotics becomes important as a tool of reading. Various effects (another word he uses for meaning) becomes possible through the application of various structural conventions to which the task of interpretation takes on a secondary role. Culler (1975:8) becomes more interested in formulating a theory that accounts for various possibilities in interpretation. This does not, however, mean that any reading or meaning is to be accepted, but rather that meanings need to be accounted for. At the same time it is suggested that there is not necessarily a single correct reading, but more in so far as the literary competence of the reader allows. Meaning is derived through the process of allowing the literary work to reflect back on the interpreter and show how the work sometimes resists complete understanding. Culler does not despair in the variety of interpretations the various interpreters arrive at when reading the same text, these for him are in fact the real meanings for such readers.

One of the problems with this approach is that the distinction between content and structure of a work is separated too much. Structure is the vehicle by which content is made known and passed onto the reader for interpretation. At times Culler seems to be structuralist and at other times not.

His study on synchronics has done much to show how structure, especially in poetry, affords similar even though not always the same meaning. He should have seen that structure is also a rhetorical tool that could be used with great effect.

As can be seen from the above discussion, the question of meaning is unavoidable even though variant semantic alternatives were sought. The existence of a text with some perceived structure necessitates the question of meaning, whether singular or multiple meanings Seldon and Widdowson (1993:64) are maybe correct when they assert that Culler has moved away from a purist structuralist position and rather to questions of literary competence of readers. Even though Culler does not investigate the different level of competence that readers might posses, this is the one area that provides us a clue that a text, especially one which is rhetorically structured, would have to assume that its readers would be affected by its rhetorical strategies employed. If one were to be able to identify the rhetorical strategies of a text and understand the type of effects they would have on an audience, then it would be possible to hypothesise the type of audience envisaged.

3.7.4 Wolfgang Iser

Iser is seen by many to be the champion of the notion of the "implied reader". Iser

concentrates to a large degree on the actual reading process when a reader engages with a text . He contends that all literary texts have a certain amount of "indeterminacy" (Iser 1989:7). By this he means that after a reader has gone through the various options of determinacy (meaning), the reader is left with "nothing but his own perspectives offered him by the text" (Iser 1989:7). This has resulted in a strategy now well known to scholars, that of the "wandering view-point" (Holub 1984:89-92). It is the reader's responsibility to fill in the "gaps of indeterminacy" (Iser 1989:7) found within every text. Iser's model is thus a "dialogical model" which sees reading as a "feedback process between text and reader" when determining meaning (Cornis-Pope 1992:36,37).

In the Iser model, the text is seen to offer the reader various prospects in terms of "patterns and schematised views" to awake responses within the reader (Iser 1980:51). In other words, the text is afforded the power of suggesting to the reader how the reading process is to proceed. The chief focus does not become the textual product, but rather the various effects of the text (Seldon and Widdowson 1993:55).

Meaning is thus the product of a dialectical relationship between the text and reader whereby the text invites the reader to fill in "gaps" as various expectations are either met or revised during the reading process. The reader is not given carte blanche in determining meaning, rather the text is seen as making impositions upon the reader because of the gaps. Variety in meaning is as a result of the various experiences brought to the text by a reader and those brought by consequent readers.

When employing the Iser schematic, a first reading will invariably result in a number of gaps, but these will quickly diminish as familiarity with the text grows possibly to the point where

gaps become insignificant. This is, however, not always the case as a text could present different gaps to different readers depending on their levels of competence to read the text or to find significance from engaging with the text.

Isers method of reading almost forces the reader to the point where the reader has to approach the text within the framework of aesthetics (Newton 1990:140). The danger once again that the beauty in the eye of the beholder becomes insignificant for another beholder. Or to use the terms used by Iser, the "implied reader" will become an unrealistic reader not finding the text communicative according to its own inherent structures in any way. It is these inherent structures and gaps of the text that if socio-rhetorically located, could potentially identify its implied audience.

The determination of meaning in the Iser agenda does not become a nebulous exercise because the reality of reading and reading again brings about a growth in meaning for the reader. Further possibilities in meaning will ultimately depend on the reader's willingness to allow for further, deeper reading encounters. These prospective encounters are not that which interest us right now, but rather the retrospective gaps that are literary clues, or rhetorical markers which could have been significant for a particular audience. It was not Iser's concern to focus on their possibilities for audience identification, but the idea of these gaps do become helpful in developing the schematic of this current study.

3.7.5 Stanley Fish

Fish provided a well-defined example of reader-orientated criticism in a strategy he initially adopted called "affective stylistics" (Berry 1993:106). This essentially is a strategy for

interpretation in which the role of the reader is conscientised. Fish was able to effectively show that a text actually has a strategy to make readers aware of their responses (Fish 1980:2&21). He diverges from the objectives of rhetoric, however, which would be the blanket term one would be tempted to associate with the strategy. He rather focuses more on the reader than stylistics and contends that any experience of the reader is a textual strategy itself and that interpretative communities give rise to theory with their own unique application (Berry 1993:107). This avoidance of any associations with rhetoric is, in the opinion of this study, unrealistic for a lot of what is spoken of in affective stylistics smacks of rhetoric. We do need to recognise that the Fish agenda for reading texts changed over a period to a milder expression of the reading strategy.

The main focus of affective stylistics was on effects of a text on a reader rather than meanings of the text for the reader. This raises the question of the relationship between a text's meaning and effect, whatever that effect might be. It is not so easy to separate the effect of the text from its meanings for affective stylistics entailed the text's ability to challenge the expectation of the reader.

In addition to this, the notion also partly assumed that a given text would have the same effect on any reader, which in reality effectively does not always happen. Fish was in actual fact assuming his own reading to be the norm for other readers. This is partly acknowledged by Fish in his later work, as we shall now see.

Fish's approach changed over time in that he sought to avoid the tendency toward total subjectivity in reading and determining meaning by placing more emphasis on the

interpretative community and their role in guiding the communities "shared practices of reading" (Cornis-Pope 1992:179). This community Fish saw as those not only sharing a particular method of reading but also resultant interpretations as a result of shared reading method. This change has probably come about due to the accusations that the text becomes subservient to the reader (Newton 1990:151) when applying a pure reading using Fish's notion of the affective response.

Never the less, meaning of the text is the resultant product of the community's collective reading of the text. A reading is only significant in as far as the community agrees on a collective strategy (Davis 1986:408). There is also the danger that a community's collective choice in reading could result in a collective deviant reading and thus no guarantee of the best reading. It would therefore be necessary for the community not only to be guided by its needs when approaching a text of collective significance, but also to be sensitive to the opportunities afforded by the text to guide responses. In this regard sensitivity to the rhetoric of the text could greatly enhance the reading experience of the community.

3.7.6 Umberto Eco

Eco refocuses the attention of the reader towards the text's discourse, rhetoric and ideology which is usually missed in a first reading (Cornis-Pope 1992:22). Thus, Eco's method could be described as a constant rereading of a text in order gain maximum from the reading experience. Eco (1979:5) draws attention to the actual reading process and highlights that a reader, in order to understand a text, needs to decode it (which is similar to the goals of semiotics). In the reading process, the reader needs to follow the textual signals such as

metaphor and narrative structure along which to take his "inferential walks", that is, possible discovered meanings (Eco 1979:214).The work of Eco is a reader-orientated approach that clearly takes the rhetorical features of the text into significance for reading and understanding. It is this type of thinking and interaction between text and reader that could greatly enhance possibilities for identification of audience.

3.8 Summary and prospects of general reader theories

Having taken this brief excursus of some of the more dominant influences in the development of reader-response theory it has become clear that as much as what the independent role of the reader has been emphasised, the independence is not absolute. The very encounter with a text necessitates some sensitivity to the text as at least a part vestige and partner in meaning.

We also have to acknowledge a large variety and influences in reader-orientated theories, but it is clear that these theories only focus on the role of the current and not necessarily the previous readers. The only previous reader usually considered is the implied reader, which is largely unavoidable as this is a phenomenological product of the text. It is when a reader becomes sensitive to the texts rhetorical features which potentially could produce various effects upon the reader, that the doors are opened for identifying previous readers. This goal is traditionally the task for reception theorists, like Jauss. It is also clear from the above approaches that none have been concerned for audience identification probably given that there are some major differences between reception theory and reader-response theory (Newton 1990:141). Yet many of the methodologies of reading are the same as those who

are interested in the audiences of a text (Newton 1990:142 – 153). It all boils done to the goal of the theorist. That is, should the theorist be concerned only with the current reader, then they would employ the insights to account for the reading results, but should the theorist be interested in the previous readers, the same methods textual and reading indicators could be employed. It is this regard that the critic needs to show sensitivity for both the reading process and the aspect of meaning associated with texts.

3.8.1 The task of modern reading of ancient Biblical texts

When studied, the reading process is discovered to be quite complicated (Holub 1984:89). It involves a complex psycho-analytical process beginning with the ability to perceive a text as text, to make some sort of cognitive sense out of the signs marked out until the final point of some measure of understanding is reached. The reading process is often coloured by factors and reader-response critics have attempted to make the reader aware of them (Conradie et al 1995:164-5). This has also been seen in the earlier analysis of the various reader critic's strategies.

Reader-response criticism for some critics, however, needs to focus more on the interaction between text and reader (Walhout 1992:137-142). Nothing much has been said up till now on the context of the reader nor on the context of the implied reader of the text. It would therefore later become necessary in this study to look at the relationship between reader-response and reception theory or what is sometimes called audience analysis.

Vorster (House 1990a:395) wants to see reading as an act of text production and thus the production of meaning[1]. The result of these approaches is that a text does not become a closed entity of which the meaning is buried in the text or in antiquity, but that meaning is continually being formed with each new reading of the text.

Invariably the reader does contribute to meaning when a text is being read, yet it cannot ignore that which comes about by "a process of decoding a communicated message and presupposes shared codes between sender and reader" (Suleiman 1980:8) which is at least a meaning or possible meanings[2]. Even though a total theory of reading is not possible (Freund 1987:157) and especially one which accounts for all possibilities of meaning, the process of reading could be described as one of "anticipation, frustration, retrospection and reconstruction" (Powell 1990:18). In other words, the reading process becomes a conscious exercise of the reader being aware of presuppositions brought to the reading process and the possibilities the text presents for the reader to alter or enforce those presuppositions. The reader of necessity will have to go through a process of self-discovery to become aware of the personal factors influencing meaning. In addition to that, the reader also needs to exercise sensitivity in relation to the opportunities the text represents toward new experiences or challenges. This invariably brings us directly to the question of meaning in relation to its location.

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1. Croatto (1987) and Patte (1995) are in agreement with this statement, yet Patte (1995:2) does call for a certain level of accountability in interpretation .
2. The issue of the meaning of a text amongst the various reader-response critics is a heavily debated matter. The extent to which a reader is responsible for meaning and the texts role in effecting meaning is also an issue of much debate. Yet most Biblical scholars, do allow for the text to have the ability (rhetorical or otherwise to guide or influence meaning (for example Childs 1997:19, Bergen 1987:335 who equates this with authorial intent, Longman 1987: 38-39, Meyer 1991: 3-11, Slater 1998:107-122, Dyck 1996:145 Adam 1995: 73 as well as Kaiser & Silva 1994:34).

3.8.2 Is "meaning", inside the ancient text or in the mind of the reader ?

Recent literary theory has highlighted precisely how difficult it is to discover the intent of the author in a text. As mentioned earlier in this study, one of the major hurdles in the application of reader-response criticism of the Bible is the determination of "meaning", that is whether it is something to be found behind the text, in the text or outside of the text.

In general, reader-response critics have rejected the notion of meaning being inherent within the text (Berry 1993:105), but not resulting necessarily in a complete subjectivity in interpretation. Biblical scholars tend to be uncomfortable with the notion that a reader of a text completely determines the meaning in the extreme sense (House 1990a:396).

For Crosman (1980:151) meaning equals translation. By this he wishes to convey that readers make meaning as authors make meaning. On the other hand Thiselton (1992:32) contends that texts can transform readers as much as what readers can transform texts. Additional synonyms that have been proposed in this regard are what some critics refer to as "significance"[1] or as "making sense"[2]. Yet ultimately an author cannot be accused of doing nothing (Culler 1980:50-52) for a text implies an author wishing to communicate something. As Deist (1980:53) states

> "any speaker [or writer] speaks with the aim of being understood, accordingly he goes for maximum clarity. To achieve this, he is careful in his choice of words,

1.This is the reader's absorption of meaning into his own experience (Aichele 1995:40).
2.McKnight (1985:12) refers to this concept as "discovered meaning."

his constructions, his choice of stereotyped expressions, his choice of suitable literary form, and so forth."

The critic should be careful not to force the text to say what they want it to say (Clines 1990:30-1)[1]. When a critic seeks to "make sense" of a text, then it implies "discovering the sense that must somehow be there" (Goldingay 1995:46).

Thus two extremes need to be avoided. The first being the extreme of total objectivity, that it is possible to discover *the meaning* of a text. The second is that of total subjectivity, that it is impossible to discover any meaning within a text and that it is fully determined by the reader. Patte (1995:9 & 28) calls for a critical reading of a text as that which is the production of meaning by the reader, but that its legitimacy as an interpretation needs to be established by verifying that they are truly based upon textual evidence and account for a semantic coherence of the given text. This is what makes the interpretation, according to him, ethically responsible. This means that a reader may approach a text with concerns, for it is the interaction with the text that helps to expose potential meanings (Blount 1995:177).

It has to be acknowledged that no single reader-response strategy can capture the dynamics of the reading process. In addition to this, it has to be acknowledged that language is inherently polysemic.

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1. Combrink (1988:18) says:" It does become possible that the Bible can be (mis)used to substantiate a specific preconceived idea, instead of formulating an argument in the light of the message of the Bible "

The result of this is that various reading strategies like Formalism, Structuralism, Feminism, Materialism and Deconstruction (Clines 1990:32-51) can be employed and invariably produce different results. What still lacks uniformity in reader-response methodology is not only concerning the locus of meaning, but also an attempt to draw all the positive elements of the various strategies of reading into a reader-response synthesis which will bring the method into hermeneutics of the Bible and potentially highlight the audiences implied. This currently, still is accomplished using socio-historical methods almost exclusively. It is only then that meaning and varieties of meanings could be methodically accounted for in terms of their significance for the implied audiences as historical and literary methods have failed to do up till now.

Even though Elizabeth Freund (1987:89) reduces all of these above mentioned reading strategies to mere "narratives of reading", as has been clearly demonstrated within the afore going sections, the text itself does give evidence of how the reading process should to some degree be engaged . The text does present a rhetoric that seeks to influence the reader and it is in all the perceived promptings of the text that accountability is to be found as far as the potential meanings and the delimitation of such meanings are concerned. Therefore, an interface between methodologies resulting in a multidimensional interpretation is of vital importance as it provides insights in guiding the reader toward discovering and creating meanings – meanings not only significant to the current reader, but also of the implied reader and different level of implied readers especially in texts that have gone through a redactional history.

Reading the Bible is arguably different to reading any other text for we have to realise that it is a religious text and a text that a religious community sought to preserve for later generations. As McKnight (1988:167) states "the Bible assumes the sacred and makes no attempt to accommodate readers who do not share this assumption." Yet the biblical text is also a text like any other which does necessitate the exploration of methods to unfold its varied aspects.

Reading the Bible can thus range in variety from what could be considered "devotional" (Fischer 1981) to what are more critical readings (Clines 1990:32-51). Yet even the more critical readings need not lead to the sort of hermeneutical skepticism (not to be confused with the "hermeneutic of suspicion ") often demonstrated in reader-response criticism which relativizes meaning. At the same time this study does not wish to suggest that when textual meanings are discovered that it is the author's intent in writing the text that has been discovered, but rather that one possible and textually legitimised meaning has been discovered. As Bosman (1992:30) points out "...both the author and reader take part in the production of textual meaning and no single one is able to control meaning", and yet the integrity of the text should be maintained by being sensitive to the constraints the text imposes on the reader. The balance thus needs to be found and can in an "interface" between the methods of interpretation or what others have termed multi-dimensional[1] methods of

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1. A number of examples of such multi-dimensional methods exist. For example, Tate (1997) considers initially the contribution of the so-called three worlds (the world behind, with in and in front of the text) engaged in the interpretation of the text. He argues that Biblical texts have at least two levels of meaning, an original and contemporary, and that interpretative meaning comes by mutual engagement between text and author (Tate 1997:158-9). The interpreter needs to be aware that interpretative aims dictate methods and in

interpretation. Jonker (1993: 111) does also caution us that simply integrating methods do not automatically lead to a method that is multidimensional, as being truly multidimensional would have to entail taking the presuppositions of each method seriously. On a purely practical level this would be difficult, if not almost impossible to develop a comprehensive multidimensional method. Yet, it would be better to rather argue that the exegete, depending on specific goals in exegesis, would only be able to take the best of different methodologies and interface them on the level of closest similarity and taking serious the main aspects of each methodology.

When interfacing socio-rhetoric with reader-response ideas, exegetes would first have to recognise their identity as readers who by virtue of their interaction with texts are going to produce meanings. The baggage the reader brings to the text will always affect such meanings.

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continued....turn the methods chosen will determine in part the types of questions asked and answered (Tate 1997: 230).
For Tate the interpretative process should therefore be a dialogical process between the aspects of the text and the aspects of the reader. Another level of multidimensional interpretation is the so-called Theological interpretation of Scripture as illustrated by Birch et al (1999) and Fowl (1998), to mention two examples. Fowl does not comprehensively explain the method but describes it as "inclusive of all other methods of interpretation" (1998:30). Birch *et al* (1999) also does not explain the paradigm, but describes the method as "studying with several sets of creative, interpretative tensions" (1999:17). Theological interpretation is thus, in its use by the afore-mentioned critics, a multi-dimensional strategy which is consciously engaged by the interpreter depending on the nature of the text engaged without necessarily a particular explanation of the matrix employed. Jonker (1993) clearly maps how Biblical exegesis has developed as a quest for a multidimensional exegetical approach. He demonstrates how that the interpretative exercise is not only overwhelmed by a large variety of methods, but how that exegetes are still able to make exclusivistic claims in interpretation. Amidst this tension, Jonker (inspired in part by the work of Daniel Patte) then develops a grid that exegetes need to be aware of in order to manage the variety of methods to evaluate exegetical claims. This study has already acknowledged the important contribution be Robbins (1996) in developing Socio-rhetorical criticism, a clearly multi-dimensional approach investigated in chapter 3 of this study.

On a second level then, the insights of reader-response criticism will assist the reader in identifying the ways in which the reader's presuppositions are affecting the results. And on a third level, as the reader employs the various aspects of the different exegetical methods there will be a constant dialogue between the text and the reader. A number of scholars have successfully illustrated this principle of dialogue with regards to the Biblical text. This study will now briefly illustrate how a number of Biblical scholars have successfully begun to map the reading opportunities sensitive to the text (particularly the Old Testament) and its structures.

3.9 Robert Alter

The teaching experience of Alter in the areas of Hebrew language and comparative literature has to a large degree influenced Alter in seeing the Biblical text as literary art and a means of propagating meanings (Alter 1992:60). Alter does remain agnostic (his own term) about being able to clearly identify the authors of a Biblical text which he describes as like trying to unscramble an omelette (1992:162-3). He therefore takes only the time to essentially examine the final form of the text and its literary conventions.

This he clearly illustrated in two parallel works with the expressed goal to aid intelligent reading of the Bible. In approaching Biblical narrative, he focussed on the conventions of story telling, of how the plot unfolds using scene descriptions, narration techniques, characterisation and repetition (Alter 1981:24-113). He uses many of the same conventions when approaching Biblical poetry, but uses the ubiquitous phenomenon of parallelism,

in particular semantic parallelism, as a starting point for analysis. He does this "to get some handle on the system in order to understand what kinds of meaning, what representations of human and divine reality are made possible by this particular poetic vehicle" (Alter 1985:4). He clearly illustrates how the Biblical poets have used different poetic conventions to produce different kind of meanings (Alter 1985:62-69).

Alter does well in terms of helping a current reader in deriving meaning from the Biblical text by being acutely sensitive to various literary conventions employed by its authors. It is clear that Alter works on the assumption that meaning comes about by an interaction between the text and the reader, yet he does not venture into the identification of implied readers/audiences as he illustrates the difficulty in accomplishing this by purely using his insights. This probably because he has restricted his reading to particular poetic conventions within the text without showing an overt sensitivity to the way they might impact the reader.

The present researcher does not see this to be weakness in what Alter has highlighted, as he could have simply chosen to restrict his reading in the manner chosen. The goal of such identification is possible to hypothesise should one be able to locate a textual feature historically and link it to the implied reader. This becomes possible within a multidimensional matrix as seen earlier.

3.10 Meir Sternberg

Sternberg seeks to combine the best of what Alter has contributed when studying Biblical narrative (Sternberg 1987:23) with his own concept that biblical narrative is best seen as prose fiction. The interpretation of a text is seen as a "communication [which] presupposes a speaker who resorts to certain linguistic and structural tools in order to produce certain effects on the addressee; the discourse accordingly supplies a network of clues to the speaker's attention" (Sternberg 1987:9). It is the interpreter's task to be aware of these clues in seeking to make sense of the biblical text. This is not to say that the author's intent is to be confused with the sense of the reader, but rather that meaning is attained via a close working of text and context (Sternberg 1987:11). The reader should also read with the awareness that the biblical narration is functionally regulated by ideological, historiographic and aesthetic principles (Sternberg 1987:41). There is a clear rhetorical agenda in Sternberg's analysis of biblical narratives as well as an influence of Wolfgang Iser in the reader being made aware of "gaps" in the reading process (Sternberg 1987:186-229).

The Sternberg agenda for reading the biblical text shows a clear agenda similar to that of Alter for making the reader aware of textual conventions for finding meaning in the interpretative process. It is the task of the current reader to be aware of these conventions which essentially are the product of the author or redactors. Osborne (1991:39) affirms this task when he says "stories do things to an audience by leaving questions and ambiguities for their audience to answer or to resolve." Once again, this is not to suggest that a text has a

determinate meaning, but that as audiences contribute to meaning their contributions are to be subject to the text (Osborne 1991:50).

Sternberg, also is more concerned about helping the current reader to interpret the text and interact significantly with the structures and narrative conventions of the text. He does not provide a mechanism for considering the impact a text's structure would have on its implied audience, probably because this was not part of his agenda. Granted the fact that Sternberg has further developed this concept in subsequent years, this study has chosen to concentrate on his earlier contribution.

3.11 Shimon Bar-Efrat

Shimon Bar-Efrat examines the artistic shape of biblical narratives by observing the formal and structural aspects in the text. He seeks to expose the foundations on which the meanings and influence of the narrative will become clear so that the ensuing interpretation will rest upon firm ground (Bar-Efrat 1989: 10-11)[1]. His approach is multidimensional, not necessarily of method, but in terms of examining the variety of aspects the text employs to bring significance to the reading process. Some of the aspects he examines are narration and modes of narration, the shaping of characters, the structure of the plot, time and space and details of style. He argues that the text is so well structured along these aspectual lines that the "reader's involvement is carefully directed and controlled even in those passages where

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1. This work was originally published in Hebrew (1979) with the first English translation published in 1984.

the narrator hides behind the events or the characters" (Bar-Efrat 1989:38). He too calls upon the reader to be active in paying attention to the biblical narratives in as many details as possible (Bar-Efrat 1989:45-47). The various aspects which shapes the narrative are seen as the author's way of controlling understanding of the character and the character's actions (Bar-Efrat 1989: 80). Bar-Efrat nowhere suggests that meanings associated with narratives are exhaustive, but rather seeks to provide a reader an awareness of the conventions used by the authors of biblical narratives to shape understanding.

Even though Bar-Efrat also does not suggest ways of historically locating implied readers, the implied reader is essentially constructed when meeting the expectations of the text. There are currently a variety of ways scholars assist the current reader to significantly find meaning reading a text, but not necessarily in how to socially locate the implied reader or readers. The step is a difficult one to take, but one that needs to be hypothesised as new areas of interest are highlighted and opened. We would agree with Davies (1996: 89) that "reading prophetic texts is a struggle when one tries to make sense of all the data contained in the Bible on the prophets." He does however, insist that various models for understanding (which will incorporate methods of interpretation) at best will give approximations of prophecy (Davies 1996:91). The ultimate responsibility, to make of the text what can be made, rests firmly with the reader (Maqouet 1996:13). It is the reader that has to decide, amidst the plethora ideas of how to engage a text, what results are sought and what subsequent strategy should best be chosen to accomplish this goal.

3.12 Prospects for locating Implied readers /Audiences

Much of the prospects for being able to hypothesise the nature or social location of a text's audience depends on the clues such a text would offer for such an endeavour. Robbins (1991:305) asserts that the very interpretation of a text gives insight into its setting. Yet this is not enough to fully know the setting. For this reason Robbins has demonstrated that via Socio-Rhetorical criticism an interpreter can indirectly and hypothetically take into account the range of ideas shared by the interpreter, the text and the social location of the text to sketch the social location (1991:305-332).

Invariable the interpreter would have to operate with a number of assumptions[1], but as we have seen earlier, this is an inherent part of the reading process and should be available for scrutiny by other critics in order to refine the results of the inquiry. But as one interprets with an awareness that the text is essentially the product of some author/ redactors interaction with a social location/ audience, then reading with this sensitivity should allow the interpreter to use all methods that could identify such social locations. This has indeed been the goal of social-scientific methods in Biblical criticism (Elliott 1993:9). The reading strategy will have to be multidimensional with the text being

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1. Robbins (1991:308) lists his Socio-rhetorical assumptions for locating a social location as follows:
   a) Language is constitutive of social locations
   b) Language signifies social locations
   c) Statements in a document are intratextual functions that presuppose extra-textual systems of social interactions
   d) Some of the major issues of socio-rhetorical criticism concern the relation of information to patterns of activity in various arenas of the social system presupposed by the intratextual phenomena. For example, what is the relation of the information and functions in the social arena of beliefs and ideologies to information and functions in other social arenas, such as culture, technology, and population structure

engaged to lay bare the audience presupposed by the various rhetorical conventions employed. This has traditionally been seen in the idea of the rhetorical situation as the first cause for a rhetorical address. The rhetorical situation was traditionally seen to be possibly located via historical criticism. Yet it is when interfacing these concepts, that a greater variety of social locations can be identified especially if the text has a clear redactional history. Hester (1992: 27-28) clearly demonstrates this concept in employing socio-rhetoric on the Biblical text. He asserts that "a given rhetorical unit brings different interpretative responses depending on the audience interacting with it, that is, depending upon a whole set of historical and sociological, as well as literary factors" (Hester 1992:27).

All of the Old Testament documents are the product of a particular historical situation, or as redaction criticism has shown, subsequent rhetorical situations. As the Old Testament text has undergone a long redactional history with each redaction coming about as a result of a new historical situation, this has resulted in a fresh reworking of the text. The tracing of all subsequent rhetorical situations to the initial one is very difficult and has resulted in a variety of redactional histories for any given text being proposed.

Lawrie (1995:147) confers that rhetorical criticism takes the situation of speaker- audience seriously, but where there is uncertainty as to the identity of the particular speaker or as to the identity of the specific audience, then theorists resort to using such distinctions as "implied speaker" or the "implied audience."

Any attempt at tracing the full redactional history of a given text with the view of identifying all new rhetorical situations will over-complicate the rhetorical critical study of that text and inevitably thrust the critic into a forest of data in which it would be very difficult to see the wood for the trees. The critic should thus, in order to simplify matters, search for the original rhetorical situation alluded to and if this is not possible then revert to the "methodological fiction proposed by the critics" (Lawrie 1995:147). This methodological fiction being the hypothesised constructs within the text postulated as the implied author, implied reader or implied audience.

Botha's (1991:189) initial working definition of the rhetorical situation of a text is useful as it highlights the overlap with the concept of social location when he says

> "as a working definition we may say that historical situation is a concept with a very broad field of references, encompassing the events, objects, persons, abstractions and relations (social, political, personal, cultural, ideological, ecological, or whatever) which constituted a situation which existed in the past in time and space and which could have been or was in actual fact experienced by human beings."

Stamps (Porter 1993:194) points out that in practice there is little that separates "the situation in rhetorical criticism from the situation in historical criticism." To this we therefore add that there is nothing in practice that separates the rhetorical situation to social location.

It thus becomes clear that rhetorical criticism, which takes seriously the rhetorical situation, cannot ignore the need of employing some insights from historical criticism or any method that could help locate the audience of a text.

Kennedy (1984:34) did distinguish between the rhetorical and historical situations by pointing to the rhetorical dimension of the text which is taken seriously in rhetorical study and not so much in historical study, but this would be splitting hairs. Wuellner (1987:456) in response, clarified the difference as follows :

> "the rhetorical situation differs both from the historical understanding of a given author and reader and from the generic situation or conventions of the *Sitz im Leben* of forms or genres in one point: the rhetorical critic looks foremost for the premises of a text as appeal or argument. "

But here we would also need to add that Wuellner is more concerned about the immediate context of the text than in the search for the initial rhetorical situation as well as subsequent situations (Stamps 1993:196).

The concern of Wuellner for the present context of reading the text is significant in terms of the highlighting primary goals in rhetorical study. Yet this study, even though it is concerned about pursuing significance of an ancient rhetorical text for identifying initial or subsequent social contexts, sees a study of the text in its initial rhetorical context as a vital starting point for highlighting subsequent contexts.

Stamps (1993:197) helpfully points out that Schüssler Fiorenza also shows concern for the rhetorical situation, but uses insights from reader-response criticism in order to distinguish three aspects of the rhetorical situation : 1) the historical argumentative situation 2) the

implied or inscribed rhetorical situation, and 3) the contemporary interests of the present situation. Stamps (1993:199) speaks about the "entextualization of the rhetorical situation" by which he suggests that "the rhetorical situation exists as a textual or literary presentation within the text or discourse as a whole."

The entextualised rhetorical situation is not the historical situation that gave rise to the text, but rather the situation created by the text and embedded in it contributing to the rhetorical effect of that text. For the goals and purpose of this study, this textual clue to a social setting is vitally important and we have shown that it is therefore necessary to find the critical

method so that the social context of the text can be highlighted.

Since Wuellner (1987), the celebrated phrase now is "a text must reveal its context". Robbins (1993:444) has suggested an approach which he calls "socio-rhetorical criticism" which explores the arenas of texture in a text - in particular the social, cultural and ideological textures. This form of rhetoric wishes to analyse the strategically stylised answers that a text wishes to convey within the context of a specific form of social reality and social subjectivity. The aim is thus to analyse a text multidimensionally in the forms of the rhetoric it employs from within its cultural domains.

Thus, as rhetorical situation is an important consideration for the study of an Old Testament text, rhetorical criticism which employs the insights of social analysis (like social-scientific criticism) and a variety of other insights is fundamentally important. Socio-rhetorical criticism is thus the marriage between approaches. But since socio-rhetorical criticism

does not overtly pay attention to the interpreter's contribution to the meaning of the text, it needs to be employed with a reader-response consciousness. Dean (1998:79) does suggest that this becomes possible when the interpreter is challenged by the text "to imagine, on the basis of textual evidence, the social arrangements that may have been obtained in a text's compositional context, as well as the impact a text may have had on those arrangements." This is the strategy, involving the imagination inspired by the text to expose context, that this study will employ to specifically locate the social context/ audience of Amos 9.

CHAPTER 4

4. Identifying the implied audience of Amos and chapter 9: A socio-rhetorical analysis

4.1 Introduction

It is now generally well known that historical-critical analysis of the so-called "promise oracles" in Amos 9 have rendered them spurious, that is, they are later additions to the text. The earlier survey of Amos literature (chapter 2) has illustrated that this seems the consensus position among many commentators. This position essentially presupposes a later editor/s who probably performed this *Nachinterpretation* (as suggested by H.W.Wolff 1977) in view of an exilic or even post-exilic audience of the text. This calibre of evidence seems enough to convince Childs (1979:398) that the text of Amos is indeed multi-layered and indicative of a multi-layered authorial final product. It should be added that each layer possibly identified not only reflects a new editor, but also a new audience.

The question in this chapter is thus: "How may the implied audiences of Amos 9 be identified?" This question is currently best answered here by employing the exegetical strategy adopted and adapted for this study, namely socio-rhetorical criticism. As also demonstrated by this study, it is no longer possible to ignore the involvement of the reader in the exegetical process as the reader's involvement with text influences reading results. Reading or interpreting thus essentially requires an interface of methods. Here, socio-rhetoric and the involvement of this reader's contribution to the production of meaning will be delineated using the text of Amos 9. The rubrics of exposing the layers of the text, as

suggested by Socio-rhetoric will be used in the overall framework of the exegetical exercise.

It would, however, first of all be expedient to map the territory for consideration by looking at the overall structure of the final chapter of Amos as well as its composition in relation to the entire book.

4.2 The Innertexture of the book of Amos

Bramer (1999:160-174) clearly illustrates that literary forms and subject matter has been the two essential factors in influencing suggested structures for the book of Amos. The two most prominent amongst these essential factors is the oracles against the nations and visions (Bramer 1999: 161). Bramer thus demonstrates a variety of structures as suggested by a number of scholarly works he has surveyed. Each structure is critiqued in terms of its contribution to suggest, according to Bramer (1999:168), its validity as the structure intended by Amos. All these suggested structures fail, according to Bramer (1999:171). Bramer (1999: 171-174), thus suggests a five-fold division of the book using the different terms for God as structural markers. This structure, in the opinion of this researcher is as valid as another structure surveyed, as it too could be critiqued using the same standards set by the surveyor.

What we therefore suggest, is that it is possible to illustrate a number of possible structures for the book based upon a variety of criteria and structural markers. It is extremely difficult to suggest that a given structure is *the* originally intended structure by the prophet Amos or

the prophecy's redactors. At best, it would be the structure of the final redactor, but thus composed for his audience. The exegete is free to adopt or suggest any structure based upon the structural markers chosen or made expedient by the exegetical method chosen. But it is a completely different endeavour to suggest a particular structure as the original structure of the author or redactor. To achieve or attempt to achieve such a notion of the "original" structure would amongst other things depend on a clear and reliable tradition of the structure handed down alongside or within the text of the book. This once again would be extremely difficult to achieve as it is now well known that this type of endeavour is largely dependent upon a validation by the best results of an historical critical endeavour.

It would rather be better to suggest a structure from a particular perspective and thereby suggest the chosen structure as a means to highlight a particular aspect of the text. Should the exegete as a goal seek to suggest a structure that reflects the intended structure of the author or redactor, then structural markers that are conducive to such an endeavour needs to be suggested. It is when this particular goal is highlighted that the method chosen needs to correspond with the possibility to produce the result. Stated another way, it becomes possible to suggest a number of valid structures when one recognises the choices made by the exegete. Robbins (1991:305) states the concept in this way, "interpreting the text gives insight into setting...yet not enough to know setting." The suggested structure would thus at best be an hypothesis which needs interpretative accountability.

This study would therefore now suggest its own structural and setting hypotheses for the final form of the book of Amos.

Given the state of current interpretative theory relating to identification of author and implied audience of a text (as explained earlier in this study), a structure which highlights the multi-layered nature of a text as well as its essential rhetorical nature reflecting the implied audience becomes the best means to identify audience. Such a structure would be very much reliant upon rhetorical and a range of rhetorically related aspects as it is the recognition of such aspects which gives insight into the setting of a text[1]. The proposed structure is as follows:

1: 1	Superscription
1: 2	Theophanic Oracle
1: 3 – 2 : 3	Oracles against Foreign Nations
2: 4 – 16	Oracle against Judah and Israel
3: 1 – 15	Oracle of Judgement against Israel
4: 1 – 13	Further Oracle of Judgement over Israel
5: 1 – 6:14	Lament and Judgement over Israel
7: 1 – 9:10	Visions of Punishment over Israel
9:11 – 15	Promise of Restoration

1. Robbins (Neyrey 1999:305) demonstrates how socio-rhetoric highlights the aspects in language that provides the best hypothesis for identifying audience or as he describes it as "social location".

Sensitivity to the rhetorical nature of the book of Amos (i.e. identifying aspects of language and prophetic texts as originally spoken discourses) and the related Socio-Rhetorical features that would assist in identifying audience (social location), would help to suggest the following broad structure for the book based upon the speech units: A much more detailed structure for the book can be suggested, yet this particular macro-structure is employed to focus primarily on the aspect of the book of Amos as a spoken prophecy to an audience as well as demonstrating that the final chapter in its final form forms part of the structure. An overall structure as demonstrated above, of its own accord becomes a means of postulating the audience of the book. In fact, it becomes possible to postulate at least two audiences.

Firstly, the structure might suggest that the eighth century prophet Amos spoke this message to his eighth century audience of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and worshippers at Bethel. And secondly, the structure might suggest an exilic audience to the deuteronomistic redactors of the book is in view especially as one would analyse the superscription of the book. But since scholarly consensus point to the final form of the book being reached post-exilicly, the question thus remains in identifying the evidence within the text that demonstrates this. Childs (1979:408-410) in debating canonically with Wolff's historical critical exegesis, suggests that the following features are the editorial indicators: the editorial commentary, hymnic doxologies and eschatological expansions. This researcher is in full agreement with this idea and would wish to note at this stage that all three of these features play a significant role in the final chapter of the book.

Indeed some would feel uncomfortable with this type of conclusion and would continue to argue for the overall structural integrity of the book as a product of eighth century Amos[1], but this study will not be debating this issue on these levels as conclusions clearly depend upon the presuppositions and method chosen by the scholar.

Further than that it would be extremely difficult to argue any more detailed discussion on the identification of audience based upon structure alone as this goes beyond the endeavours of this study. This a point made also by Nogalski (1993b:74).

4.3 The Intertexture of Amos

Robbins (1996:40) states that "A [*sic*] major goal of intertextual analysis is to ascertain the nature and result of processes of configuration and reconfiguration of phenomena in the world outside the text." When dealing with intertextual aspects in Biblical texts, and here in particular the text of Amos, there are a number of textual intertextures to be considered. These would include genres within the book and the book within the context of the canon of the Old Testament. Here we will have in view the Hebrew canon, which will place the book within the book of the Twelve. This in turn will highlight other canons, in as far as they might differ from the Hebrew canon.

1. Garret (1984:275-6) argues for a chiastic structure within the book, which clearly ties all judgements with hints of salvation in the final chapter, as does Stuart (1985:397) as well as Firth (1996:373) who argues for both linguistic and theological consistency within the book.

In dealing with the broader issue of intertextual relationships between the book of the Twelve, we will acknowledge the seminal works by Nogalski (1993b), Sweeney (2000) and Jones (1995).

Jones (1995:3) points out that the Masoretic Tradition is consistent in its treatment of the book of the Twelve as a single book as well as in the order of the books. Amos is placed third in the Masoretic Text (MT) tradition, preceded by Joel and followed by Obadiah.

This tradition is ancient and has been attested by the Qumran and Wadi Murabba'at scroll findings (Jones 1995:4). Nogalski (1993b: 26-29) indicates that it is certain catchwords within the books of Joel, Amos and Obadiah that have resulted in their order within the canon, namely the judgement theme at the end of Joel to the beginning of Amos and the salvation theme at the end of Amos to the beginning of Obadiah. Schneider (1979: 236-241) suggests that the historical context for this order probably came to be in the period mid-exile to about the time of the restoration of Nehemiah.

Sweeney (2000:16-17) is more detailed in attempting to identify the redactors of the book of the Twelve, describing them in the following terms: theologically – Deuteronomists who emphasised the theme of judgement in cultic language, gender-male, class – with connections to the upper and wealthy class, politically – not part of the leadership, but attempting to show the shortcomings of Judah's leaders. These redactors were then, pro-Jerusalem returning exiles (Sweeney 2000:20).

The Septuagint follows an order (i.e. Hosea, Amos, Micah, etc.) for the book of the Twelve which is different to the Masoretic text which is driven by a different organising principle (Sweeney 2000:59). In the Septuagint the organising principle is probably more chronological. Jones (1995:7) postulates that the Masoretic Text and Septuagint differences in the order of the minor prophets illustrate a first century BCE fluidity in canons of the twelve and could suggest differing histories of reconstruction. He does agree with Nogalski and Schneider that the MT tradition is older than the LXX tradition, but cautions against doing this conclusively (Jones 1995: 202).

The intertexture of Amos in the MT tradition, therefore helps us in seeing what type of redactors were responsible for the final form of Amos, as its placement serves as a *terminus ad quem* for the final composition. The audience they had in mind would invariably be a reflection of the redactors.

Terblanche (1997:313) has demonstrated how intertextuality of the book of book of Amos, even as a reader-orientated exercise, "sheds new light on the manner in which prophetic books received their current form." The suggestion is that the linguistic similarities between Amos 9:11-15 and the remainder of the book is intertextually generated (Terblanche 1997:313). The following intertextual links are made:

Amos 9:11..... to..... 8:13; 2:16 and 8:3 (Introductory formulae's of judgement)

Amos 9:11a the verb אָקִים (Hifil)....to...2 Samuel 7:17 (Nathan's promise to David)

Amos 9:11a the verb אָקִים (Hifil)...to...Amos 5:1-3 (An indication of the collapse of the kingdom)

Amos 9:13-15 הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים ...to...Amos 8:11

Amos 9:14...to...Amos 5:11

Amos 9:14 עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל ...to...Amos 3:2

Amos 9:15...reverses...Amos 4:11 (Terblanche 1997:314-318)

By establishing these relationships, Terblanche has shown that the doom oracles can be intricately connected with the final form of the book. This would indeed help the post-exilic audience to understand the full implications of the judgement after the fact of the experience and the prophecy.

Having considered the intertexture of Amos within the canon of the Minor prophets and some of the linguistic intertextures within the book, we now turn our attention to the larger genre intertextures. For the purpose of this dicscussion we turn to the structure outlined earlier or the book. And we will deal with the larger sections, first individually and then collectively to represent the book as final product to a particular audience.

The Superscription (Amos 1:1) and Theophanic oracle (Amos 1:2) are according to Nogalski (1993b: 82) multi-layered. By this he means that they reflect some of the

redactional stages of the book. On this level Nogalski (1993b: 83) would propose a cultic, Jerusalemite setting for the book, because of the Zion origin of the theophany and the hymnic style of Amos 1:2. He does point out that Wolff is in agreement with the cultic notion, but suggests a Bethel sanctuary location (Nogalski 1993b:83).

We now move to the next major section in the book, namely the oracle of judgement concerning the nations.

4.3.1 AMOS 1:3 - 2:3

This particular passage within the book of Amos is referred to as Amos's oracles against the nations. The phenomenon of oracles against the nations is not unique to this particular prophetic book (cf.Is. 13-23; Zeph. 2; Ob. 1-6) or possibly to the literature of Israel yet presents us with an interesting specimen of Old Testament rhetoric. It also serves a further consideration for the intertexture between the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Barton (1980:3) sees the oracles as a genre of possibly the earliest type to be used among prophetic books and later established as a regular feature.

Scholars are divided on the issue of determining, with some measure of certainty, the exact limits of the pericope in terms of its beginning and its end. Some see verses 1 and 2 as being distinct from verses 3 (a position we have chosen for this analysis and illustrated above) and following while others differ from this clinical attempt at severing the pericope. Hayes (1995:154), however, suggests that verse 2 should be seen as the introduction to the oracle for it has for him a close association with the phrase "For three...for four." From this we could

suggest that verse 1 is the "heading"/"title" of the pericope (and also of the book), verse 2 to be the "introduction" and verse 3 to be the beginning of the actual pericope. Stuart (1987:280) suggests that it is difficult to grammatically separate 1:1 from 1:3 - 2:18. The ending of the pericope is generally seen to be chapter 2 verse 16, because from here on the phrase "For three...for four" with its ensuing explanations cease to occur. Also, what follows immediately after this is clearly another speech that begins with the formula "Thus says the Lord."

The rhetorical situation is reasonably difficult to identify but could be postulated as follows: It would invariably have been preached initially to pre-exilic Israel within the market place or in some other situation where there was a fair representation of the people and possibly visitors or traders from the surrounding nations. We do need to point out that the oracle was chiefly meant for the nation of Israel as it becomes clear that the oracles served as a rhetorical strategy of entrapment at the end of the section.

Hasel (1991:64) describes the attempt at identifying structure within the pericope as being "tricky business." One will find that scholars will differ on exactly what the structure entails, but Martin-Achard (1984:15) provides us with a useful guide in identifying the important structural elements:

i) An introductory formula ,"Thus says the Lord."

ii) A general declaration virtually identical in each case.

"For three transgressions and for four..."

iii) A verdict pronounced by Yahweh.

iv) Some ending with the concluding formula "says the Lord Yahweh"

Of particular interest in this pericope is the often repeated phrase לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ which is a "most vexing problem" in translation (Ceresko 1994:485). A translation is offered by Ceresko (1994:486) which suggests a double meaning to be seen in the phrase. The first meaning parallels what precedes and the other parallels what follows. The first meaning takes the לֹא as the negative particle and the אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ as the hiphil of שׁוּב. He also suggests that the suffix נּוּ looks back to the geographic names. The second, simultaneous reading, forming a parallelism[1] with what follows and the suffix *-nw*, has an anticipatory sense, referring forward to the "fire", in other words the punishment by God.

This attempt at translating this phrase is only one of many possibilities (one this paper prefers) and which in addition to this Barton (1980:16ff) has outlined Wolff's possible interpretations and showing preference for a translation reading "I will not reverse my decree."

A study could also be made of the rhetorical effect of other literary phenomena within this pericope such as the use of hyperbole (1:3), the use of metaphor or of the use of the n:n+1 parallelism and its unbalanced meter (Stuart 1987:301).

Ultimately as Hayes (1995:153) points out "all oracles contain various stylistic features which give each a slightly unique character... [the] entire section is well structured."

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1. Ceresko has taken his ideas from the term "Janus Parallelism" which brings out the idea of a forward and backward looking.

Thus concerning the phrase "For three... for four", which Hayes (1995:156) suggests refers to the fact that an innumerable amount has occurred or that it has repeatedly occurred, probably shows the "universal nature " of the prophet's language as it alludes to wisdom literature (Geyer 1986:131). Wittenberg (1991:7) has reminded us that scribes would have been familiar with the tenets of wisdom literature and they would have reflected the interests of the ruling class. The type of wisdom traditions in Amos would then presuppose this upper class of people.

Much has also been said about the geographic order of the oracles. Steinman (1992:686) finds no particular order being attempted other than the prophet slowly zooming in on the nation of Israel. Stuart (1987:291) sees geographic order so that the "points of the compass are touched in polar order" and Israel being centered on while Steinman (1992:687), finding this suggestion inadequate, rather sees an alternation between nations bordering Israel and those bordering Judah with the progressive move toward Israel itself.

What could ultimately be said about all these structural and stylistic features is that "the prophets intention is to startle his hearers by suddenly turning on them after lulling them into a false sense of their own security by denouncing their neighbours " which they would have applauded (Barton 1980:36). Here Geyer (1986:135) agrees by asserting that the "sole purpose of the oracles in Amos is to lead to attack on Israel."

It is this sort of rhetorical sensitivity which guides the reader into not only the world of the text and what is behind it, but also into the feelings which the reader ought to be feeling and the kind of response needed.

By simply following on from the rhetorical strategy employed thus far of this particular pericope a variety of possible reading strategies which could be employed like those of Formalism and Structuralism. It would be the result of these reading strategies which would be the gateway for the reader's attempt at understanding the pericope which we suggest for now is the initial shock the reader experiences and then the continual battery of assault as the sins of the nations are written on the wall and denounced in the most harshest manner.

The challenge thus facing the modern rhetor/preacher is to find a way of approaching his/her audience as the prophet did. The modern rhetor, we should point out is also the reader who is "before-the-text" and should choose reading strategies in order to attempt to enter the "world-of-the-text" in order to present the "world-behind-the-text" to the "world-before-the-text."

Thus in order to investigate this text employing some of the insights of Reader-response criticism to further uncover the audiences identity, we would have to note some of the following:

The first verse of the pericope serves to introduce the reader to the speaker or original rhetor and also to provide some biographical information. A chronological code is provided to direct the reader's attention to a specific time frame and significant event to begin to paint the setting

upon the imagination of the reader. The language of the opening address is metaphorical and wishes to present a strong picture of the Lord ready to herald a strong message.

The language code of Amos 1:3 is an all too familiar prophetic introduction, which immediately seeks to capture the attention of the reader. Language code continues with a repeated poetic phrase of denunciation and each time a neighboring region of Israel is mentioned with the particular offence committed. The reader soon becomes aware that a pattern is emerging of denunciations being made upon Israel's neighbors but slowly progressing toward a climax which comes at the end of the pericope, the denunciation of Israel for her sins. It thus becomes apparent that the reason for the entire speech is to ultimately target Israel.

The repetition of the phrase לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ builds up a pattern in the reading process which causes the reader to anticipate a further extension to the gallery of sins and brings about the realization that they are probably too many to mention. The repetition of the phrase "I will not revoke the punishment" is sure to strike a measure of fear in the reader realizing the seriousness of the offences. For the initial audience a warning of impending judgement before the fact, and a warning of possible judgement for the post-exilic audience after the fact.

4.3.2 Amos 2:4 – 6:14

In this section we will combine four sections of the broader outline (2:4 –16; 3:1-15; 4:1-13 and 5:1 – 6:14) as they all carry the similar theme of judgement. It has been clearly shown

that Amos 1:3-2:3 has a clear climactic pattern, where the rhetoric was honing in on Judah and Israel. The very next section (Amos 2: 4-26) then represents Judah and then finally Israel as also the enemy of God (Stuart 1987:285). The theme of judgement, clearly intended for Israel is introduced in 2:4-16 and then elaborated until 6:14 when a new genre of visions is introduced. If the oracles concerning the foreign nations illustrated the perversity of these nations, then 2:4-16 now illustrates the perversity of Israel.

The features (linguistic and thematic) are the same for 1:3 –2:3 as for 2:4-16 in order to show continuity with the aforementioned sins and establish Israel as the ultimate subject of judgement. The pericope 2:4-16 is thus also transitional as it leads into the explanation of the nature of the judgement to follow.

The actual elaboration of the judgement in 3:1-15 is a finely honed rhetorical unit. Most scholars see this section to "contain the actual words of Amos" (Freedman 1992:208), a point well made and confirmed by Gitay (1980:293). He states "The spoken nature of prophetic discourse should be taken into consideration by critics, because the literary genre determines the literary function and establishes the relationship between the text and its audience" (Gitay 1980:293). The features forming the unit are the following: the theme of election, a number of rhetorical questions (verses 3-8), the prophetic formulae נְאֻם־יְהוָה occuring in 3: 10; 11 and 15 which realtes to God speaking in verse 8 as well the instances confirmed in chpaters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Indeed, it is not just the instances of the Lord

speaking, but the ver occurrence of the divine name that serves as an intertexture for the entire book. Dempster (1991:170ff) has shown that the occurences of the divine name in the book of Amos is not haphazard by the redactor, but rather "an attempt to create literary unity with the names" (1991: 184). For Dempster (1991:184) this includes all occurences of the tetragrammaton with modifying forms (e.g. אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת and אֲדֹנָי). Affirming that the names indicate editorial activity, Dempster (1991: 185) then states that this activity may be seen as a way of unifying the book. The intertexture of divine names thus also serves a means of holding the various genres and sections of the book together and a means of navigating between them. Indeed, within the judgement pericopes the occurrence of the divine names serve as a means to confirm that the message comes from God and is only being delivered through the prophet.

The section Amos 4:1-13 is a further oracle spoken by Yahweh addressed to Israel to confirm judgement. The passage also introduces further motivations for Yahweh's cause of action. The dimensions of social injustice and cultic abuse are introduced using striking metaphors (the woman of Samaria described as 'cows of Bashan in 4:1-3) and a "biting sarcasm" (Mays 1969:73) concerning the nature of their cultic worship (4:4-5). The section 4:4-13 may essentially be seen as unity or be subdivided into three or four smaller units (Stuart 1987:336). Yet the content of 4:6-13 is clearly that of placing the prophesied judgement into historical perspective. Four intertextual themes are introduced within the pericope. A minor theme of the historical judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.11), then a

first major intertextual theme of covenant style curses (v. 6-9), a second major intertexture of the Exodus from Egypt (v.10) and a third major intertextual genre of hymn (v.13).

We designate three of the intertextures as major because they operate within the overall structure of the book in a recurring manner.

The first major intertextual theme would invariably have brought Israel to face their covenant nature as a people before God. This section is reminiscent of a treaty form (Mays 1969:80) "as a way of thinking about the covenant with Yahweh, the curses acquired theological gravity and meaning." The second major theme of the exodus from Egypt "is the most frequently mentioned event in the Old Testament" (Hoffman 1989:170) and is mentioned three times in the book of Amos (2:10-11; 3:1 and 9:7). In chapter four, the actual exodus is not mentioned but the oracle judgement clearly takes the audience back to the pre-exodus setting.

The exodus motif and its use will be discussed further in the analysis of chapter 9, but suffice to say, that the mentioning of these intertextures here serve the purpose of moving the audience through the book.

The section 5:1-6:14 is the final nail in the coffin of judgement. The section 5:1-17 is a unit which brings the characteristic feature of a funerary lament (Stuart 1987:344). The mourning song (קִינָה) is a well attested literary intertexture within the prophetic literature

of the Hebrew Bible (cf. Ezek 19:1-14; Jer 9:16-23; Isa 14:4-21, etc) (Stuart 1987:344). The dirge song thus serves the purpose of illustrating the inevibility of the judgement. As stated by Smith (1998:205) "Amos 5:1-17 laments the results of the judgement announced in 3:1-4:13."

The important intertexture of hymn occurs within this passage (5:8-9) and functions in a similar manner to the hymn in 4:13 (Smith 1998:209). Once again, this important intertexture will be considered further when we encounter the third occurance of a hymn in the final chapter. The next section (5:18-27) takes the dirge to another level with the introduction of the the exclamatory particle הוֹי. Mays (1969:103) says "Here the woe-cry simply introduces the saying to identify its addressees and to characterize thir deepest plight." A theological reworking of the theme of the Day of the Lord is also introduced which seems to bring about a reversal of its popular expectations and assumptions.Issues of social justice are related to various cultic expressions of worship and rendered valueless in the light of the social abuses and misdirected forms of worship. The final section of Amos 6:1-14 forms the final conclusion of the direct implications of judgement The lament theme (הוֹי) is continued in 6:1 and placed within a clear social setting of a complete disregard for the gravity of the judgement. The denouncing of the מִרְזַח clearly shows their oppulence. King (1988a:138-9 & 1998b) points out that the מִרְזַח took on aparticular form within its social setting, with the occurrence in Amos suggesting some type of funeral cult, especially in the broader context of 6:9-10. It is this broader context that confirms the horros of what is to come in graphic, war type detail.

The next major section of 7:1 – 9:10 introduces a new type of genre, namely that of visions. Stuart (1987:368) identifies four "vision-dialogues" in this section, namely 7:1-3; 7:4-6; 7:7-9 and 8:1-3 each introduced by the formula כֹּה הֶרְאַנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה. The pericope 7:10-17 is a prose interlude introducing the debate between Amos and Amaziah.

Heyns (1997:27-9) sees this prose intrusion together with the third vision to a turning point of the prophecy for it comes as a means to convince the prophet of the need for the coming judgement of God. This idea does help to place in to perspective the element of hope alongside the notion of judgement. The theme helps to combine this larger section of Amos, thematically with the final chapter. It might also suggest that the visions initially formed a whole with the vision of chapter 9 (Noble 1998:423). The visions do, however, provide a graphic reality to the judgement prophesied. The overall structure of the section illustrates a well integrated whole (Noble 1998:435).

The final section of 9:11-15 is where there is seemingly an out of character theme of hope being introduced. It is the hymn of 9:6 that provides the ultimate connecting intertexture. The focus will later be highlighted when we investigate the final chapter of the book.

It is therefore clear that the book of Amos is a finely tuned intertextual masterpiece drawing all the elements of the prophecy into a final redactional unity.

4.4 The Social and cultural texture of Amos

The social and cultural texture of a text, according to Robbins (1996a:71), takes the interpreter into the social and cultural "location" of text by the employment of sociological and anthropological theory.

This cultural location is similar to the idea of the rhetorical situation, as discussed earlier in this study, but in socio-rhetorical criticism is more focussed on the text as representation of cultural ideas. The two concepts are not mutually exclusive but according to Stamps (1992:195) "roughly corresponds to Sitz im Leben in Form criticism." Stamps (1992: 199) has also added that the "rhetorical situation exists as a textual or literary presentation within the text or discourse as a whole." The rhetorical situation is isolated by being sensitive to the various narratological opportunities within the text that the reader needs to be sensitive to and recognise as the rhetorical effect of the text designed to impact the reader.

The superscription of the book of Amos 1:1, clearly locates the public prophetic ministry of the prophet. There is general agreement amongst commentators that this coincides with the reign of Jeroboam II (786 –746 B.C.E.), the king of Israel, and Uzziah (783 – 742 B.C.E.), the king of Judah (ABD 1992:205). King (1988:21, 38) dates the earthquake mentioned to the middle of the eighth century B.C.E. It is therefore clear that the initial audience of the prophecy is the eighth century Israelites. It is extremely difficult to date the message any more accurately (Mowvley 1991:5). It is also very clear from the internal evidence of the book, that the message or part of the message was preached at the shrine at Bethel. And since there is archaeological evidence for the destruction of Bethel around 722 BCE

(Mowvley 1991:6) (cf. the destruction of the sanctuary described in chapter 9), this helps to narrow down the time of the message even more clearly. Mowvley (1991: 6-7) describes the setting well:

> "The prevailing view about the background to Amos is that he was at work in a time of comparative peace and prosperity. This based on the belief that, when Assyria was more concerned with domestic affairs, Israel was free to develop her own economy without interference. During the eighth century, therefore, the rich became richer and the poor peasants poorer. The message of Amos is then interpreted as an attack on the wealthy for their greed, their lack of concern and for their elaborate worship, which became more important to them than God himself. Much of this tends to be based on a circular argument. We discover the social background to Amos by interpreting his words and then interpret his words against that background."

It is therefore clear that the initial audience of the Amos prophecy would have been an eighth century audience. For a variety of reasons (literary and theological, as outlined in chapter two of this study) scholars[1] have argued that the book in its final form is the product of a post-exilic redactor. The next level of investigation should then be with regard

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1. Besides the summary of the scholarly opinions outlined earlier in this study, Doorly (1989:5- 17) provides a summary of the main opinions in this regard, essentially placing final redaction in the post-exilic period on the basis of the salvation oracles being the final level of redaction. It is essentially the pessimistic tone of the book (Brown 1982: 8) that contributes to this type of conclusion. It is not that we wish to trivialise the arguments, but rather to affirm the idea that the Biblical text has in view an immediate and universal audience and that the text provides clues to these audiences (Stamps 1992:195).

to discovering this later audience via the rhetoric which "entextualizes" this audience (Stamps 1992: 199). The success at this exercise also depends in part to demonstrating the connectedness between the various rhetorical units within the book. The rubric of intertexture has demonstrated this adequately. The goal here will now be to show the connection of the book in all sections on the basis of two social and cultural textures. These connections being the Exodus theme and the hymn fragments.

Hoffman (1989: 170) has affirmed the Exodus from Egypt as the most frequently mentioned event in the Old Testament. The Exodus tradition seems to be repeated at various crucial occasions within the history of Israel. Hoffman (1989:170) states the issue of identifying the audience of the exodus narrative traditions very plainly when he attempts to diachronically illustrate when the ideas of exodus prevailed. The three explicit exodus passages in Amos (2:10-11; 3:1 and 9:7), according to Hoffman (1989:178) relates to similar historical situations in the present experience of the implied audience of Amos. This situation Hoffman (1989:181) sees as the total destruction of Samaria in 721 BCE. This social situation will fit in well with the first two occasions when the exodus theme is mentioned, but not the third, as there is a clear theological diversion to the meaning of the event in chapter 9. This is best discussed when we deal with the sacred texture of the book..

Yet we are able to state that the idea will reflect a later, post exilic, theological development of the theme. Suffice to say that the salvation oracle would adequately serve as a means of viewing a return from exile as yet another Exodus.

The insertion of hymnic fragments (4:13; 5:8-9 and 9:5-6) are also examples of the "supplementation of words for new audiences" (Limburg 1988:81) and an example of the final redaction of the book (Tucker 1978:33-36). Limburg (1988: 81ff) also sees editing of the book to have taken place after the fall of Samaria in722 BCE.

The issue thus relates to what the insertion of the hymn fragments accomplishes to highlight the identification of the audience.

There are two important aspects to be acknowledged in this regard. The first relates to viewing the hymns as one of five major categories of material (Stuart 1987:286) in the book serving as literary inclusios as we have highlighted under the rubric of the intertexture of Amos. The second aspect would relate to the significance of the use of hymns (Hymn fragment) by the redactor. In this regard, the study of form criticism has demonstrated that the setting of the hymns in Amos as the annual fall festival (McCormisky 1987:153). Bramer (1999:58) suggests that the hymnic fragments reflect the style of the Psalter because of the subject of praise (here Paul 1992: 4 is in agreement) and the use of active participles. Jeremias (1995: 6) relates the hymn of Amos 4:6-13 with the exilic services of penance (cf. 1 Kings 8:30ff). The inclusion of hymns within the redaction process becomes, therefore, a clear indication that socially and culturally the message of Amos had in view a "pious" (Gottwald 1985:356) and probably cultic setting (Doorly 1989: 42-3). Doorly (1989:44) thus suggests that the book was designed to be read at a public service as

preserved by a seventh century scribe in Jerusalem. The redactors would have to be familiar with the psaltic traditions with the redactional usage included for those who would have found cultic significance. If the audience were then middle to upper class Judeans, we could add that they were clearly religious. And Amos stood on the periphery of these groups as can be gauged from his encounter with Amaziah in chapter 7 (Ramirez 1996:123).

4.5 **The Ideological texture of Amos**

The main objective within the ideological analysis of texts, employing the socio-rhetoric of Robbins (1996b), is engaging the agreements and disagreements between people (Robbins 1996b: 95). Robbins (1996b: 96) suggests that one is only able to adequately engage the ideology of other peoples interpretations when one is aware of ones own ideological presuppositions[1].

There can be no doubt that that the message of Amos is polemical. The prophetic formula "Thus says the Lord" (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה) is an introduction to the very nature of the polemic, a challenge to the status quo and a call to follow a new way. The view of Amos as a prophet

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1. In this regard this study has sought to do the same, but identifying the underlying ideological presuppositions of the researcher (see Chaper 1, 1.7 Personal motivation and bias of the study) as well as the dialogue with the insights of Dever (2001). The role of the church in society is often described as being prophetic and Combrink (1998: 289-307) has demonstarted how socio-rhetorical criticism, when applied to the ecclesiatical rhetoric used in South Africa can both classify and bring to accountability the ideologies present in these rhetorical addresses.

of judgement will largely contribute to this polemical understanding. Patrick (1999:121) confirms this when he states " Prophecy [of judgement] does not introduce new norms and values, but holds the audience accountable to its own."

A number of ideological textures can be analysed in the prophecy of Amos. The very first is introduced in the superscript of Amos.

4.5.1 The ideology of location

The superscript (1:1) informs us that Amos was from the southern kingdom of Judah and prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel. More specifically, Amos came from the village of Tekoa in the southern kingdom and preached in the northern kingdom, of which we know clearly one location for his preaching, namely Bethel. Strijdom (1996: 274ff) has shown the strategic importance of Tekoa's locality in terms of security, access and agriculture. He than suggests that there is a clear biblical tradition of Tekoa being socially and politically a place of dissent and states, in conclusion, "one cannot escape the conclusion that the are of Tekoa has played an important role throughout all these centuries as a place of non-conformation to what was perceived as injustice and untruth" (Strijdom 1998:272).

Tekoa as a place was therefore significant to a greater degree than what we are able to gain from a cursory mentioning in the superscript. Amos was then not only representative of a

tradition of dissent, but also of a tradition of preservation of the interests of the social and economic interests of the south. The mentioning of non-Israelite places, especially in the context of the oracles concerning the foreign nations (1:3 – 2:3) where the capitals or leading cities are strategically mentioned, serve as a way of placing Israel under the same fate of judgement (Stuart 1987:291).

4.5.2 The ideology of locations of worship

The theophanic oracle (1:2) brings about a theological dimension to the earthquake in 1:1 (Freedman and Welch 1994:189) and voices divine displeasure against the north. The earthquake is therefore powerfully interpreted as the Lord roaring from Zion in Jerusalem. This would serve to affirm Jerusalem as the main centre of worship as opposed to alternative places like Bethel and Gilgal (cf. 4:4 also 7:10,17) as well as other locations in Samaria. The vision of 9:1 could thus be seen as the conclusion of the theophanic destruction of the places of worship in the northern kingdom. The main reason for such destruction being the apostasy of idolatry (2:8; 5:26 and 8:14). It is the prophet Amos's encounter with Amaziah, the chief priest of the sanctuary at Bethel, which provides us with further insight into the ideological interplay with regard to the ideology of places of worship.

Ward (1991: 203) characterises the sanctuary at Bethel as a royal sanctuary. Stuart 1987:369) calls it the main and official sanctuary of the north. The encounter of Amos with Amaziah follows the vision of the prophet with a clear culmination in judgement against

the sanctuaries of Israel in 7:9. Amaziah thus turns to Jeroboam, king of Israel and accuses Amos of "conspiracy" (Amos 7:10 NRSV) (קָשַׁר). Ward (1991: 204) adds that this would have been seen as "tantamount to political conspiracy" or as Stuart (1987:369) has suggested, a programme for promoting revolt. The ensuing interplay of words between Amaziah and Amos in verses 12 –14 reflects the nature and role of what Amaziah believed the role of prophecy to be. Amos, in his infamous response in verse 14, denies any notion of being a professional prophet (Martin-Achard 1984:57; Mowvley 1991:81; Smith1998: 322; Stuart 1987: 376;)

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמַצְיָה אֶל־עָמוֹס חֹזֶה לֵךְ בְּרַח־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה
וֶאֱכָל־שָׁם לֶחֶם וְשָׁם תִּנָּבֵא׃
וּבֵית־אֵל לֹא־תוֹסִיף עוֹד לְהִנָּבֵא כִּי מִקְדַּשׁ־מֶלֶךְ הוּא
וּבֵית מַמְלָכָה הוּא׃ ס
וַיַּעַן עָמוֹס וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֲמַצְיָה ***לֹא־נָבִיא אָנֹכִי וְלֹא***
בֶן־נָבִיא אָנֹכִי כִּי־בוֹקֵר אָנֹכִי וּבוֹלֵס שִׁקְמִים׃
וַיִּקָּחֵנִי יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרֵי הַצֹּאן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה לֵךְ
הִנָּבֵא אֶל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Translation of highlighted text

I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son (NRSV)

The reply of Amos is thus a greater ideology of what it meant for Amos to be a prophet. The one committing conspiracy is thus not Amos, but Amaziah who is conspiring against God (Smith 1998:325). Martin-Achard (1984: 57) makes this point also clearly when he

states that "This episode at Bethel remains a model of its kind. It describes the power that is created when politics and religion make common cause and he who is the witness of the God of the Bible."

4.6 The sacred texture of Amos

This particular rubric has as its goal to programmatically examine the text in order to discover the religious voice of the text (Robbins 1996b: 120). Robbins (1996b: 120ff) suggests that investigation focuses on various aspects within the text to reveal its theological identities which would include the mention of deity, holy persons, spirit being, divine history, human effort (both individually and corporately) and ethics.

Robbins (1996b: 120) does suggest that this can be done for both religious and non-religious texts. When dealing with the book of Amos we recognise that the text to be religious in nature and goal. This is how it, indeed came to preserves by the community at the hand of the redactor/s and by later communities of faith. Childs (1979:410) states this principle clearly " The editors [of Amos] arranged the material by the use of editorial commentary, hymnic doxology, and eschatological expansions to confront the hearer with the eternal God, the creator and Redeemer of Israel, who was a living and active force both in the past, present, and future. The book is consistently theocentric in perspective."

4.6.1 The nature of God in Amos

The main theme about God in the book of Amos is sovereignty. Stuart (1987:289) says, "Amos portrays Yahweh as sovereign not only over (northern) Israel, but over all the nations of the earth, over all the creation, and over all the individuals, including specifically Amos himself." The various terms used to describe God, consistently portrays the idea of a sovereign Lord. These terms include the divine name (יְהוָה), general designation (אֱלֹהִים) as well as combinations especially with the militaristic designation of the Lord of Hosts (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת). Dempster (1991: 170-189) has shown that direct naming of God occurs a total of eighty six times in the book of Amos employing at least ten different designations. The names of God in the book of Amos serve the purpose of affirming the origin of the message of Amos as being from God as well as affirming the nature of theophanic judgement (Dempster 1991:187).

In the book of Amos the influence and rule of Yahweh also takes on universal proportion (Doorly 1989:70). This concept is a natural corollary of the doctrine of Yahweh's sovereignty. This universal nature of Yahweh's sovereignty is clearly demonstrated in the oracles concerning the foreign nations (1:3 – 2:3). Not only does he judge the nations (including his own nation), but controls their past and future (Johnson 1995: 24). The extent of this sovereignty over the nations is very vividly described in Exodus like language in 9:8. Johnson (1995:24) adds, "Amos also knew that Yahweh was the Lord of all of nature." This principle is demonstrated in the passages of the book that speaks of Yahweh's interaction and employment of nature, for example as being the cause of earthquakes (8:8

and 9:5), the one who sends natural calamity like drought (4:7-10) and celebrated as the creator (9:2-4) (Johnson 1995: 24-5).

The message about God in the book of Amos is also that Yahweh is a God of judgement. Amos did not only condemn wrong actions, he pronounced judgement over those involved in wrongdoing (Ward 1991:203). Indeed Amos has often been celebrated as a prophet with a deep concern for social justice inspired by four main texts in the book (4:1; 5:10-13; 6:1 and 8:4-6) (Ward 1991: 204-5). The concept of social justice is also often seen as the central message of the book (Escobar 1995:169). This aspect gives the book a clear ethical dimension. The picture of God in judgement is further given force by the militaristic title יְהוָה הַצְּבָאוֹת . According to Demster (1991:178) this title brings in focus the power of God's judgement which would have been accompanied by shock and even solemnity.

4.6.2 The nature of people in Amos

Most of the people being addressed are portrayed in a negative light within the prophecy of Amos, since they fail to uphold justice, and therefore will be judged. Only Amos stands out as the messenger of Yahweh, faithful to the task of being prophet. Indeed, in his encounter with Amaziah (7:14ff), Amos shows that his authority comes directly from Yahweh and was therefore only subject to that authority (Mays 1969:3).

The people Amos addressed can be generally classified into two groups, based upon the internal evidence of the book. These were the victims of injustice and the perpetrators of injustice (Doorly 1989: 23-25). The victims are not clearly identifiable, only mentioned in passing, since they are the ones who are need of protection. Amos' message is indirectly a message of comfort for their benefit, but more directly deals with the perpetrators. The perpetrators of injustice are essentially the "elite of Samaria" (Doorly 1989:24). Doorly (1989:24) summarises the group as follows: " They became rich at the expense of others. They have clustered themselves around the monarchy but are not members of the royal court. These are people of power and privilege."

They are thus middle to upper class people who have attained their status at the expense of others. They are challenged in "three public spheres of life: the administration of justice in the court, the confident affluent life of the upper classes, and the worship of God in the sanctuaries" (Mays 1969:11). Amos' words of judgement are there to provide an ethical accountability for their actions, but since they are hard of hearing, the words come as the sentencing following the pronouncement of judgement. Indeed they are no better than the nations. As recipients of covenant, they should have known better, but do not. "Amos portrays Yahweh as offended both by the exploitation and by the 'conspicuous consumption' " says Stuart (1987:291).

Indeed it would be these who would be the recipients of Yahweh's judgement and would be carried off into exile. It is a scribe living in seventh century Jerusalem believing that, the message had to heard again, probably for similar reasons, " carefully and lovingly placed

them into Deuteronomic structure which would have the effect of convincing the hearts and souls of Yahweh's people to turn once again to Yahweh for his salvation" (Doorly 1989:42).

4.7 Summary and conclusion of the socio-rhetoric of Amos

Thus far, this study has examined the book of Amos employing the different textures provided by socio-rhetorical criticism, namely inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture. These rubrics have provided a multi-faceted interpretative tool for uncovering clues in the text for identifying the audience of Amos. The earlier methodological discussion (chapter 3) has also brought awareness that the interpreter does not come to the text unbiased, but that these also influence the way in which we perceive exegetical results. The objective has thus been a multidimensional analysis to uncover the identity of the audience/s of the book of Amos. The final goal is to do the same analysis for the final chapter of Amos. It was necessary to first do the analysis for the entire book, as the final chapter forms an integral part of the whole book, as it is a reflection of the final redaction. The redactor of the final chapter would thus have shaped the entire book to allow the final chapter to be a consistent conclusion for the prophecy of Amos.

The inner texture of Amos has revealed that the book is a highly stylised literary work. The book employs different genre like oracles, visions, dirge and hymns together with narrational sections to bring the entire message into a final, whole message. The redactional process has not only captured and maintained the idea of the original setting of the message

in the eighth century, but also the motivation for the later editorial activity, a similar situation in post-exilic Jerusalem.

The intertextual examination of the book has revealed both an internal and external connectedness to the book. The internal intertexture has demonstrated a conscious joining of pericopes on the basis of vocabulary, ideas and genre (specifically the hymn fragments) which reflects a setting much later than the eighth century. This is confirmed by the external intertexture of viewing the book in the context of the MT and LXX traditions of the book of the Twelve. Here the audience in mind being the returning exiles who are being challenged by the pro-Jerusalem redactor.

The social and cultural texture of the prophecy has highlighted the clues in the text, which provides further clues (literary artefacts), for understanding the social setting. This level of the investigation has particularly highlighted the literary feature of the hymn fragments as well as the Exodus theme that reflects a later theological reworking only possible after exile.

The ideological texture has highlighted a clear southern bias against the Northern Kingdom that is essentially religious in nature, but with clear political overtones. The Northern Kingdom is seen as apostate in its ways on religious, social and theological levels. This is done in defence of Jerusalem as the political and religious centre of the kingdom. This is clearly consistent with the theological reflection that occurs during the exilic period and

that is developed post-exilicly. Jerusalem always the centre and focus of political (revival of the Davidic dynasty) and religious life (the location of the temple).

The sacred texture analysis has chiefly focussed upon the nature of God and the nature of people under God in the book of Amos. The understanding of God as universally sovereign is an advanced and complex doctrine clearly defended and initiated in the book. God is the God of all nations, a concept that would have been better understood after the theological reflection of the period of the exile. The connectedness between social and religious accountability is also a theme that the pre-exilic people did not clearly understand, despite many warnings in this regard by Amos. But as this is a universal problem and not bound to a particular time, it would have been necessary to highlight this theme again post-exilicly, less it happen again.

These results are the most important which now needs to be carried into the final chapter of the book of Amos. Many aspects of connectedness have already been highlighted within the general socio-rhetorical analysis of the book. Yet all aspects find their focus ideally and uniquely (i.e. regarding the salvation oracle) in the final chapter.

The analysis will be executed employing the rubrics of socio-rhetorical criticism with an awareness of the insights of reader response criticism for further highlighting the identity of the audience/e of the prophecy.

4.8 The Innertexture of Amos 9

Previous attempts at delineating the structure of Amos 9, and indeed the entire book have tended to focus on either the literary forms or kind of subject matter discernible in the passage (Bramer 1999:160). The result is that a number of plausible structures could be suggested as seen with the books overall structure. Invariably the structure identified will in part be the product of the interpretative framework adopted by the interpreter. Yet it is possible to present a reasonably uniform agreed structure as most scholars who have focussed upon the final chapter of Amos have arranged their discussions along a structural framework. The following is therefore a general structure integrated from a variety of such opinions including the opinions of the current researcher:

9: 1 - 4	Vision of Amos (the fifth vision)
9: 5 – 6	An old Yahwistic hymn
9: 7 – 8	Prose section promising a remnant
9: 9 – 10	An extended prose narrative
9: 11 – 15	An oracle of blessing

This structure will now be further explained and used in the socio-rhetorical analysis to socially locate the audience.

The first level on which to divide the passage is by focussing on the themes covered in the pericope. The first four verses of chapter nine in form and style are clearly a vision section. It is in fact the fifth and final vision section in the book. It is possible to delineate an overall

structure for the book around these vision sections[1] but here the final vision becomes an important means to separate the pericope from the preceding chapter which is a judgement oracle.

The vision pericope is also different and distinguishable in that it employs the first person singular mode of reporting the events of the vision. The content of the first four verses is also different from the preceding and following sections in that it focuses on the destruction of the sanctuary and the worshippers.

רָאִיתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי נִצָּב עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיֹּאמֶר הַךְ הַכַּפְתּוֹר
וְיִרְעֲשׁוּ הַסִּפִּים וּבְצַעֵם בְּרֹאשׁ כֻּלָּם וְאַחֲרִיתָם בַּ
חֶרֶב אֶהֱרֹג לֹא־יָנוּס לָהֶם נָס וְלֹא־יִמָּלֵט לָהֶם פָּלִיט:
[2] אִם־יַחְתְּרוּ בִשְׁאוֹל מִשָּׁם יָדִי תִקָּחֵם וְאִם־יַעֲלוּ הַ
שָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידֵם:
[3] וְאִם־יֵחָבְאוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל מִשָּׁם אֲחַפֵּשׂ וּלְקַחְתִּים
וְאִם־יִסָּתְרוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינַי בְּקַרְקַע הַיָּם מִשָּׁם אֲצַוֶּה
אֶת־הַנָּחָשׁ וּנְשָׁכָם:
[4] וְאִם־יֵלְכוּ בַשְּׁבִי לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם מִשָּׁם אֲצַוֶּה אֶת־הַחֶרֶב
וְהָרָגָתַם וְשַׂמְתִּי עֵינִי עֲלֵיהֶם לְרָעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה:

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1. Bramer (1999: 161) points out how A. Weisner suggests a two-fold structure for the book consisting of a "Book of Visions" and a "Book of Words". He demonstrates how Weisner suggests that the visions occurred before the prophet Amos's call to be a prophet and finally composed as a literary entity at the time of the earthquake.

Translation of verse 1 – 4

I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, (I prefer the translation "upon the altar")
And he said: Strike the capitals until the thresholds shake,
and shatter them on the heads of all the people;
and those who are left I will kill with the sword;
not one of them shall flee away,
not one of them shall escape.
Though they dig into Sheol,
from there shall my hand take them;
though they climb up to heaven,
from there I will bring them down.
Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel,
from there I will reach out and take them;
and though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea,
there I will command the sea-serpent, and it shall bite them.
And though they go into captivity in front of their enemies,
there I will command the sword, and it shall kill them;
and I will fix my eyes on them for harm and not for good. (NRSV)

The difficulty in clearly identifying the object of the intended destruction (i.e. is it the capital and thresholds or the people) is probably best resolved by suggesting that since the

pericope is framed in a way that suggests a total destruction, that both sanctuary and worshippers be seen as the object. It therefore becomes clear that the vision pericope in terms of vocabulary and style alludes to being the actual words of the prophet Amos spoken to the eighth century BCE gatherers at the shrine at Bethel. This does not however clearly identify the implied audience, as it would have been possible that a later redactor could easily have framed the vision statement for an exilic community. There is, however, not much in the actual pericope that alludes to this as having occurred. One would need to move beyond the vision pericope to the overall composition of the chapter and postulate the setting for the chapter's final form in order to achieve greater clarity on audience identity.

The final vision pericope is also an event of theophanic significance tying together the entire book as it seems to close down the movement of God in the theophany of Ch. 1:2 as one roaring (יִשְׁאַג), with only the threat of action, to that of shaking (יִרְעַשׁ) with definite notions of action. The distant rumbling of an approaching deity is now realised by his actual presence ready to mete judgement.

Another striking rhetorical feature of the vision pericope is the repetition of the particle אִם in verses 2, 3 and 4. The particle is used as a connecting word to show the futility of various attempts to escape the judgement of God. The repetition brings to mind a progression of concerted attempts of escape, all announced as being futile especially since they are preceded by the repetition of אִם in verse 1. The prefixed waw (ו) conjunctions to the repeated אִם adds to the idea of the progressive attempts for options of considered

escape deemed fruitless. Commentators generally do not consider the possibility that Amos might be employing language that remind the worshippers at the sanctuary of the possibility of them having been present at the sanctuary at the time of the earthquake and now having to live through the prophet's mind pictures of God's judgement coming to the sanctuary as another earthquake. If this be the case, then it would indeed have been graphic in its very nature to an audience in the eighth century BCE.

The conclusions by Paul (1991: 274) and Mays (1969:153) concerning the setting of the vision pericope follow similar thoughts. They see the primary setting of verses 1-4 as a cultic activity at a sanctuary. Paul (1991: 276) spends more time, however, speculating about the antecedents of the second person commands suggesting that this could be the prophet, the heavenly host or the Lord himself. The plural suffixes of verses 1-4 are seen as definite reference to the congregation gathered in the sanctuary. Paul (1991: 279) does not see any syntactical or contextual reference to a remnant in verses 5-10 as some suggest and therefore the later verses are seen as an interpolation.

Verses 5 and 6 are generally seen as a Yahwistic hymn or hymn fragment (Mays 1969:152) inserted into the text of Amos. This hymn fragment becomes another important literary clue in identifying the possible implied audience of the text. Considering the intertexture of the hymn will be more conducive to considering who would insert such a fragment in this passage. Yet, thematically the passage itself is also reminiscent of the idea of an earthquake,

thus it could have been used to reaffirm the earthquake as God's chosen means of judging the sanctuary. As Wolff (1975:338) has stated, "The hymnic piece (9:5-6), as a judgement doxology, refers to the vision of Yahweh to the destruction of the sanctuary at Bethel by Josiah."

5 וַאדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת הַנּוֹגֵעַ בָּאָרֶץ וַתָּמוֹג וְאָבְלוּ
יֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ וְעָלְתָה כַיְאֹר כֻּלָּהּ וְשָׁקְעָה כִּיאֹר מִצְרָיִם
6 הַבּוֹנֶה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעֲלוֹתָיו וַאֲגֻדָּתוֹ עַל־אֶרֶץ
הַקֹּרֵא לְמֵי־הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֵם עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ

Translation of verse 5 –6

The Lord, God of hosts,
he who touches the earth and it melts,
And all who live in it mourn,
And all of it rises like the Nile of Egypt;
Who builds his upper chambers in the heavens,
And founds his vault upon the earth;
who calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out upon the surface of the earth—
the LORD is his name. (NRSV)

It is also significant that now for the first time in the chapter, the Lord (אדני) is clearly identified as Yahweh, their Covenant making Lord (יהוה). The usage of אדני is arranged in a stair-like pattern forming an inclusio between the first verse, where it is the subject of

judgement, to its climax of revelation in the hymnic section. It is here that we will argue that the usage of the divine identity in a hymnic refrain is the work of a priestly writer / scribe living in exile. It would be unlikely that a priestly writer would pen these words or even associate them with Amos's speeches during the pre-exilic period which could be attested from the attitude of Amaziah in Amos 7. It is essentially exilic theological reflection that causes the memory to be jogged and associations to be made between events and remembered prophecies. This is also seen in Deutero- Isaiah and other writings from the exilic period. The implied audience of this section (verses 1 – 6) would then have to be an exilic audience.

The pericope (9:7-8) is a prose section in which the exodus theme is used to establish Yahweh's sovereignty over all the nations as was done in the oracles in 1:2-2:3.

7 הֲלוֹא כִבְנֵי כֻשִׁיִּים אַתֶּם לִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם־יְהוָה
הֲלוֹא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלֵיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּפְלִשְׁתִּים מִכַּפְתּוֹר
וַאֲרָם מִקִּיר׃
8 הִנֵּה עֵינֵי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה בַּמַּמְלָכָה הַחַטָּאָה וְהִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֹתָהּ
מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה אֶפֶס כִּי לֹא הַשְׁמֵיד אַשְׁמִיד אֶת־בֵּית יַעֲקֹב
נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃

Translation of verses 7 – 8

Are you not like the Ethiopians to me,

O people of Israel? says the LORD.

Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt,

and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?

The eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom,

and I will destroy it from the face of the earth

—except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,

says the LORD. (NRSV)

The use of the two rhetorical questions introduced by the particle הֲלוֹא forms a parallelism (Wolff 1975:345) with the formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה (oracle of Yahweh) thematically binding verse 7 and 8 together. The rhetorical questions are designed to "refute an implied objection by the audience" (Smith 1998:353 also Dell 1995:59). Amos's use of the exodus theme knocks the popular idea that since this event is constitutive of the nation, it will ensure them of divine protection (Hoffman1989:71). The general idea is that for them there is no escape. The experience of exile would have historically underlined this reality. It does not matter that the Assyrians are not mentioned here, they are just the convenient means in the hands of Yahweh to bring about the punishment. The nation had now "no special favour with God" (Smith 1994:47)

Jeremias (1995:6-9), however, sees 9:7-10 as post-exilic by identifying the hymn with the exilic service of penance of which Amos 4:6-13 and 1Kings 8:30ff are examples.

Verses 9-10 is an extended prose narrative to confirm the nature of the punishment after the reality of punishment (verse 7-8) had been established.

9 כִּי־הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה וַהֲנִעוֹתִי בְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֶת־בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר יִנּוֹעַ בַּכְּבָרָה וְלֹא־יִפּוֹל צְרוֹר אָרֶץ׃
10 בַּחֶרֶב יָמוּתוּ כֹּל חַטָּאֵי עַמִּי הָאֹמְרִים לֹא־תַגִּישׁ וְתַקְדִּים
בַּעֲדֵינוּ הָרָעָה

Translation of verses 9 – 10

For lo, I will command,
and shake the house of Israel among all the nations
as one shakes with a sieve,
but no pebble shall fall to the ground.
All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword,
who say, "Evil shall not overtake or meet us." (NRSV)

The particle כִּי providing the clue as to the idea of a motivation. The question of the nature of the degree of punishment is an important point to consider and will be dealt with under the later rubric of ideological texture.

Verses 11 – 15, in Jeremias's schema, are seen as the final redaction[1] activity to help the book fit with Joel and Obadiah. Jeremias's point is that the final written form of the chapter comes into finality post-exilicly, which would presuppose another audience. Yet in identifying the hymn with an exilic penence service would indicate the probability of the hymn being used by at least a group of people during the exile and associating it with the judgement prophecies of Amos, amongst other remembered prophecies of a similar nature. An audience deep into the exilic period would be very difficult to postulate under these circumstances. We could then preliminarily conclude that the final chapter could presuppose at least three audiences (pre-exilic, exilic and post –exilic).

From the basis of a linguistic and ideological grounds verses 11-15 should, however, be seen as the product of an exilic or post-exilic redactor/theologian with a Judean point of view.

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1. The final redaction activity which brought into being the "Scroll of the Twelve" is a complex and interesting area of research highlighting an attempt at seeking to establish the circumstances and redactors who brought together the minor prophets in the form it finally came to in the Hebrew Bible. In this regard the work by House (1990), Jones (1995) and Nogalski & Sweeney (2000) are important. House (1990:72) argues that it is the theme "punishment" that brings these works together in order to defend the covenant in a post-exilic setting. Jones (1995: 176-190) uses textual criticism to essentially postulate that the final chapter of Amos in its current form needs to be investigated alongside the formation of the Minor Prophets in the Septuagint tradition, which thus will reflect a broad period of editing. Jones's attempts are interesting yet very complex because as he begins to consider the various Septuagint traditions, the picture of settings for each redaction becomes more blurred than clearer. The work by Nogalski & Sweeney (2000), however presents us with a creative approach which is essentially a multi-dimensional approach to the problem. They use four matrices (theological, gender, class and political) to identify the redactors rational in the formation of the scroll of the twelve as not showing much unity (Nogalski & Sweeney 2000:17-63), therefore making the attempt to identify a specific audience very difficult. Schneider (1979: 236 – 241) demonstrated, however, that Hoseah, Amos and Micah formed the core of the collection of the book of the Twelve during the period of mid-exile to restoration during the time of Nehemiah.

11 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים אֶת־סֻכַּת דָּוִיד הַנֹּפֶלֶת וְגָדַרְתִּי
אֶת־פִּרְצֵיהֶן וַהֲרִסֹתָיו אָקִים וּבְנִיתִיהָ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:
12 לְמַעַן יִירְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׁאֵרִית אֱדוֹם וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא
שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה זֹאת: פ
13 הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְנִגַּשׁ חוֹרֵשׁ בַּקֹּצֵר וְדֹרֵךְ
עֲנָבִים בְּמֹשֵׁךְ הַזָּרַע וְהִטִּיפוּ הֶהָרִים עָסִיס
וְכָל־הַ גְּבָעוֹת תִּתְמוֹגַגְנָה:
14 וְשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־שְׁבוּת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבָנוּ עָרִים נְשַׁמּוֹת
וְיָשָׁבוּ וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים וְשָׁתוּ אֶת־יֵינָם וְעָשׂוּ גַּנּוֹת וְאָכְלוּ
אֶת־פְּרִיהֶם:
15 וּנְטַעְתִּים עַל־אַדְמָתָם וְלֹא יִנָּתְשׁוּ עוֹד מֵעַל אַדְמָתָם אֲשֶׁר
נָתַתִּי לָהֶם אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Translation of verses 11 –15

On that day I will raise up

the booth of David that is fallen,

and repair its breaches,

and raise up its ruins,

and rebuild it as in the days of old;

in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom

and all the nations who are called by my name,

says the LORD who does this.

The time is surely coming, says the LORD,

when the one who plows shall overtake the one who reaps,

and the treader of grapes the one who sows the seed;

the mountains shall drip sweet wine,

and all the hills shall flow with it.

I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.
I will plant them upon their land,
and they shall never again be plucked up
out of the land that I have given them,
says the LORD your God. (NRSV)

Reading this passage from a Judean perspective would make the prophecy for an audience who have survived the retribution of exile or even for the future rulers of the Davidic dynasty. The use of agricultural imagery to speak of restoration could probably indicate a post-exilic audience during the restoration of Nehemiah.

The main theme of the oracle is restoration and blessing. This theme has been the main contributing factor to viewing the pericope as later inclusion as it clearly lessens the impact of the message of judgement earlier in the book as well as expressed in the first sections of the final chapter. For now we will focus on the literary features of the passage and establish the literary relationship within the pericope.

Wolff (1975:351) subdivides the pericope into two units (9:11-12 and 9:13-15) with each marked off by introductory and concluding formulas. The phrase בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים being

the introductory formula of the first section and the phrase הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים being the introductory formula of the second pericope. The relationship between the lines of the first unit is easily seen to be connected by the particle לְמַעַן . The second pericope presents us with a synonymous parallelism (Wolff 1975:351), employing the first person speech pattern to build the constituent cola of the pericope. This artistry is seen as the work of a single author (Wolff 1975:352) living in the sixth century in Jerusalem (Doorly 1989:61).

Regarding the audience of the chapter, we could therefore see 9:1-4 to be the oldest kernel of the passage presupposing an eighth century audience, 9:11-15 as a post-exilic audience, and the rest of the chapter as a transition and possibly the product of Amos' disciples 760-730 BCE on the basis of Inner textual evidence.

Thus in summary of this brief exercise and not forgetting the theoretical basis of the earlier part of this study, we have seen the following:

Firstly, that by definition, via socio-rhetorical criticism we seek to gain some insights into the text's attempts at guiding the reader by means of certain textual features toward discovering audience sensitive textual meaning.

Secondly, that contrary to the notion often found within reader-response criticism that it is the reader and not the text that determines textual meaning, reader-response criticism cannot totally avoid the text's prompting in guiding the reader toward some significant meaning.

Thirdly, that reader-response criticism's attempts at finding meaning when reading a text therefore needs to take cognizance of the insights gained from methods like rhetorical criticism by interfacing with it, in other words, using the two methods together as dialogue partners in the interpretative exercise.

4.9 The Intertexture of Amos 9

The introduction of the theophanic vision in 9:1 has a clear connection in theme with the opening oracle in 1:2. These serve as an inclusio for a abroad framework for reading the prophecy.

This study has also demonstrated a number of other intertextual connections between chapter 9 and other sections of the prophecy (cf. page 120 of this study) as suggested by Tereblanche (1997). For now we will focus more narrowly on the intertexture of Amos 9 in its immediate and extra-Amos context.

A phonetic intertexture occurs between the words הַכַּפְתֹּור (the capitals of the pillars) and מִכַּפְתֹּור (from Caphtor/ Crete) in verse 7. This word has been chosen to form a catchword association (Paul 1991:274) in the rest of the chapter. The use of the word, however, is to show the extent of the force of destruction. In Paul's (1991:274-5) view this is a merism to introduce the expression, 'from top to bottom'. It is significant to note that in this final vision, Yahweh does not provide a vision, but acts within the vision. He does not cause to

see, but is seen. His close proximity to the altar (הַמִּזְבֵּחַ) is not for the purpose of mercy, but judgement. His presence is possibly actually upon the altar (cf. Ex. 33:21), either to perform a sacrifice as he ascends the steps of the altar or upon the mercy seat (cf. Is. 6:1).

The next level of intertexture occurs in considering the language of 9:2-4. These verses are reminiscent of Psalm 139:7-8 as well as a section in the Amarna letters (264:1). This type of allusion has the power of allowing ideas that would have been popularly celebrated, especially in the psalm-like language, to reinforce the central thrust of the intention. Here the text portrays the meaning of no possible escape from judgement.

Another intertexture worth noting in this final chapter of the prophecy, one present in the earlier sections of the book, is the four appearances of the formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה (9: 7,8,12,13). In the first two instances they introduce an argument, in the third instance it ends a unit and in the fourth occurance serves to accentuate a statement (Nogalski 1993b:98). In all instances they form an intertextual link with 8:11 which would now confirm the arrival of the day of judgement.

4.10 The social and cultural texture of Amos 9

The tradition history of Amos 9, and in particular 9:11-15, has shown that the prophecy reflects a later historical setting than the eighth century setting reflected earlier in the book

(Wolff 1975:352). This study has earlier shown that the book of Amos reflects in its rhetoric at least three different settings due to the redaction work of at least three authors (Doorly 1989:65ff). It is when we engage the text of Amos 9 employing the rubric of social and cultural texture, that we highlight the audience in a more prominent way. For a long time this endeavor has been the domain of social-scientific criticism of the biblical text. Indeed Gottwald (1985: 1993) has demonstrated how social science theory (especially employing Marxist social analysis) is able to operate as a hermeneutical category for analysing the text to reflect its social setting. According to Gottwald (1993:15), " an abundance of prophetic texts presuppose social conflict." This is true for the prophecy of Amos. It would thus be necessary to highlight the three social settings/ audiences in the prophecy a reflected in chapter 9.

4.10.1 The eighth century setting/audience of Amos 9

The superscript of the book places the prophecies of Amos at a very precise point in time "...in the days of King Uzziah of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1b NRSV). One could hardly be more precise than this, which would place the prophecy around the time 767 – 753 BCE as the timeframe calls for an overlap of reign for the two kings (Finley 1990:106). The period of two years before the earthquake brings the prophecy to a precise dating of 755-750 BCE (Hayes 1988:16-27, Finley 1990:107, Soggin 1987:3).

It seems that the earthquake mentioned could probably be the same as the one identified to have caused extensive damage as traced in the archaeological record of many cities. King (1988b:38) has identified the extent of damage this earthquake caused to Hazor as identified in stratum VI, dating to the time of Jeroboam II. This earthquake is afforded a theophanic

dimension in Amos 1:2 and is probably used to describe the vision of Yahweh's judgement over the shrine at Bethel (9:1), the worshippers present invariably also remembering the extent of the earthquake.

The eighth century in Israel is, however, remembered more for its relative peace and prosperity. Since the Assyrians, the dominant power of the time, had to deal with their own domestic problems, this afforded Jeroboam the opportunity for some degree of expansion (Finley 1990:107). The same seems to have applied to the broader political arena with regard to Israel's neighbors, Finley (1990:1090 summarizes the situation well:

> These political events in Amos's day weakened Aramean power. In the wake of Assyrian ineffectiveness and of war by the Arameans among themselves, a capable ruler like Jeroboam II was able to reassert Israelite control. Peace with Judah led to a great prosperity and unhindered commerce along the major trade routes through the two countries.

Undoubtedly, for these reasons Amos found it easy to commute to the Northern Kingdom to deliver his message of doom. This situation of political stability led to a situation of complacency that began to rear its head in ugly manifestations of various social injustices.

Stuart (1987:283) correctly asserts that this situation led to the establishment of a leisured upper class who were allowed to persist in a lifestyle of excess (2:8; 4:1; 6:1-6). It is to this continually emerging upper class (emerging due to their exploitation of the poor) that the message of judgement is addressed. The response of Amaziah (chapter 7) becomes

representative of their response. The message of Amos 9:1-4 would then have been directed to them and undoubtedly not met in a favorable light.

4.10.2 The seventh century setting/audience of Amos 9

The discovery of the law book in the temple, about a hundred years after the prophecy of Amos, is a pivotal event as it is the period of the initiation of large scale religious reforms (Doorly 1989:36). Josiah is the champion of these large-scale religious reforms. This is a period when Amos's predictions would have been seen to be true as the Assyrians invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE. By the time of Josiah, the Assyrians were once again weakening and almost completely relaxed upon the kingdom of Judah. This is also a period for a revival of religious endeavor, thus the reforms of Josiah. The discrediting of the Bethel shrine then played a crucial role for any endeavors for religious reform.

The reformation movement of Josiah, however came to an abrupt halt with his death at the hand of Pharoah Neco. Doorly (1989: 41) says in this regard, "In one day, the hope and optimism of seventh century Judah was drained, and Jerusalem shortly thereafter became a vassal of Egypt."

Doorly (1989:42) postulates that it was this pivotal event that caused a seventh century scribe to reformulate the message of Amos. The hymnic fragment (9:5-6) becomes a pivotal literary feature achieving this goal. It is also clear from this description, that the period of reform under Josiah would have been favorable for the emergence of an upper class. Indeed the scribe, himself could have been part of that upper class. The expression of destruction initially

sounded by the eighth century prophet, with no possibility of hope, for this scribe would have sounded appropriate for Samaria, but not so for Jerusalem. The complete destruction of Jerusalem would not have sounded favorable, therefore the need for some aspect of encouragement or future hope. In the seventh century reflection, the same level of destruction as anticipated for Samaria in the eighth century would not have been the same.

4.10.3 The sixth century setting/audience of Amos 9

The destruction of Jerusalem around 586 BCE would made the prophecies of judgement of Amos and other prophets of judgement a reality far greater than ever anticipated. Indeed, the destruction of Jerusalem was the culmination of a series of Babylonian deportations that began around 598 BCE and continued after the destruction of the city (Doorly 1989:56). For the Southern Kingdom of Judah, it was a repetition of a history that they knew for the Northern Kingdom all too well.

An event of cataclysmic proportions as that of the exile would have forced a theological reflection on the part of the custodians of the written editions of the prophecy. The popular reflection of the people is reflected more in their psalm-like laments (Psalm 137:1). These popular cries result in a canonical reshaping of past traditions. Childs (1979:405) says, " The final and perhaps most significant sign of canonical shaping of the book of Amos for use as scripture appears in ch.9." This is a shaping, not just for the present community of faith, but would have been a crisis shaping for an exiled community, who only in post-exilic days would fully comprehend the full implications of the preserved traditions of judgement prophecy, in

particular that of Amos. Both Wolff (1977; 352-3) and Mays (1969:13) sees this as an actualization only made possible by the catalyst of the exilic experience. This would have been particularly true in describing the work by the deuteronomists of the exilic period (Mays 1969:14).

The universal nature of the judgement traditions of Amos (especially the oracles against the nations) is understood post-exilicly as a text that the questions prophetically and in speech delivers critical commentary not only on the nations, but also on the very people belonging to God. As much as what the readers (or audience) would have be appalled by the transgressions of the nations, so also the need to realize their own guilt. As much as what the nations stand on the virge of being judged, so also the people of God were not necessarily exempted from judgement.

The final contextual significance for the post-exilic period we will leave to the present readers, as this is determined every time a new reader encounters the text and is beyond the purpose of the present study. The exilic traditions of the Old Testament and especially post-exilic traditions (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) makes it clear that the people carried off into exile by the Babylonians were what we could characterise as the middle to upper class of people. Many of them would have been among the returning exiles. It is for their benefit that that the prophecy is finally compiled in the remnant terminology of Amos 9:7-8.

The final blessing oracle would introduce for them a reflection of the golden period in their history, the Davidic dynasty (cf. Amos 9:11). Doorly (1989:61) summarises this audience well when he states, " This final audience is again the elite (the elite of Judah or their descendants) but now this society consists of the weak and oppressed. The first had become the last."

4.11 The ideological texture of Amos 9

We have come to understand in an earlier part of this chapter, that the ideological texture of Amos highlights a southern verses northern kingdom perspective on politics and religion. Amos is less a social than what he is a religious reformer. For this reason to understand the dynamics of the ideological texture in Amos 9, it was necessary to first see this ideology in the entire book. Since we have been able to confirm the three audiences of Amos 9 as being eighth, seventh and sixth century, it would be useful to reflect on the ideology of the redactors of these periods as well.

The eighth century ideology of the book regarding religion is quite clear. Amos, as a southern prophet contests the validity of the shrine at Bethel. He therefore engages in prophetic denunciation of this shrine and is challenged by the priest Amaziah. Amaziah interprets the pophecy as a political challenge on the monarchy of Jeroboam II. According to Wolff (1977: 101-103) this is a diatribe of the seventh century school of Amos prophets. Jeremias (1995: 150ff) on the other hand, acknowledges later redactional activity, but sees this as redaction of a prophecy, which did occur in the eighth century. Carrol (2000:25ff)

has demonstrated that there is a consistently clear religious polemic against the popular religion of Amos's day by the prophet Amos which finds its focus in the prophecy at the shrine at Bethel. This polemic against religious expression comes about by implication to be a polemic also against the social setting. It is clear in the book overall, that it was the social conditions that led to the religious critique. The theophanic vision of chapter 9 is therefore the culmination and affirmation of the validity of Amos's prophecy.

By inference, it then would have to be concluded that the latter redactors in both the seventh and sixth centuries would have been inspired by a similar ideological (religious) presupposition of their day. The work of the sixth century redactor brings, however, a further ideological consideration, for the latter part of Amos's prophecy (9:7-8) brings about a new concept of remnant as well as an idea of hope (9:11-15).

The ideological tension thus created is the nature of the judgement. Up until the final chapter of Amos, the judgement oracles have presented an idea of total destruction. The question of some level of mitigation in the final chapter is generally seen as a late editorial insertion. Even Brueggemann (1997:257) says in this regard, "This poetic assurance surely refers to some recovery of land after displacement, whenever it is dated." The apparent inconsistency regarding the judgement, even though strongly debated in the commentaries, comes a clear ideological clue to the setting for such an inclusion of hope. Indeed it has also contributed to the reading of the text in particular modern day situations of a similar setting. Carroll (1999: 54ff) has termed this "living between the lines" when reading Amos 9:11-15.

The chief issue for considering this ideological texture lies in whether it is possible to end a prophecy of judgement with a blessing (in other words whether this would be a consistent approach in the book of Amos) and then to consider the circumstances for such an inclusion.

Indeed, on the first account, the issue is moot, in that the argument could go either way. The issue stems from the famous Wellhausen comment "Rosen und Lavendel statt Blut und Eisen" (quoted by Nel 1984:84). Nel (1984: 84) adds "the question is not whether a proclamation of salvation is possible – but whether these pronouncements can be explained as coming from Amos." Considering all the arguments for and aginst Amos as being the author of the salvation oracle, Nel (1984:93-4) concludes that the author was a southern based redactor, very well familiar with the prophecy of Amos who sought to bring a southern perspective of a merciful God as opposed to the experience by the Northern Kingdom of a vengeful God. Even though Nel has attempted to draw a sharp distinction between the Sitz im Leben and Sitz in Rede of the passage, he has not recognised that the nature of Amos's prophecy of judgement in the earlier chapters could have been a case of "rhetorical overkill" (Noble 1997:332). Noble (1997:335) that the retractibility of the judgement was for those guilty of the injustices and that the hope was for the rest of the nation. It did not have in view total extermination (Thompson 1992:74).

O' Kennedy (1997: 92ff) has also demonstrated that earlier sections in the prophecy of Amos, particularly Amos 7:1-6, shows that God may bring about a postponement of judgement. O'Kennedy (1997:103) states that this postponement occurred to show that "

God's compassion and mercy now overcame his justice and judgement." Firth (1996:378ff) confirms this thesis by focussing more on the theological progression of judgement as a political engagement. For Firth, the destruction is not so much the destruction of Jerusalem that is in view, but the fallen Davidic dynasty (1996:379). Firth notes the progression via the 'problematic suffixes' (Nogalski 1993:412) of 9:11, a clear shift from the family of David, to David the individual and then the united kingdom (1996:379).

Be this as it may, the text presents us with many opportunities for identifying the work of the pro-Jerusalem redactor, affirming the hope of restoration for the post-exilic community who would have been in dire need for such encouragement.

4.12 The sacred texture of Amos 9

The book of Amos (as sacred Scripture) has clear religious overtones. The book is not about the person Amos as it is about the one on whose behalf Amos is speaking, Yahweh. As we discovered earlier, the text of Amos and the actions of Yahweh are inextricably connected. As Koch (1982:70) succinctly stated, "Anyone who wants to understand Amos must investigate his interpretation of Yahweh."

The rubric of sacred texture involves references to the divine as well as holy persons in the text. It has been demonstrated in the sacred texture of the book of Amos that the picture of Yahweh is one of a warrior God on a quest of judgement. This idea of God as warrior needs, however, to be seen in the context of covenant and God's concern for their faithfulness to the covenant (Longman 1995: 48-9). Botterweck and Ringgren (1986:516)

have suggested that in the etymology of יהוה, the name probably has its roots in the verb היה in the Hiphil form. This might suggest that Yahweh is the one who causes things (like judgement) to happen. The use of the divine name in the book of Amos as well as the final chapter, thus has the effect of showing God's presence in all situations via his actions (Patrick1981:120).

When, therefore, considering the nature of God in the final chapter of the book of Amos, the picture of God would have a measure of consistency with the entire book. This would be expected for a book over which a final redactor would have had editorial synthesis.
The picture of God in Amos encountered thus far is one who is universally sovereign and as a result requires certain actions (justice and righteousness). The audiences of the prophecy, especially in the eighth century, are guilty however of social injustice due to their misunderstanding of this fundamentally important nature of God. The sacred texture of the text thus highlights the aspect of ethics. Or stated another way, considering the ethical dimensions of the text of Amos, gives us access to not only the understanding of required human actions, but how these are dictated by Yahweh. As Robbins (1996b: 129) states the principle, "Ethics concerns the responsibility of humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. When addressed in the context of the religious commitment, the special ways of thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God."

It is the canonical nature of the book of Amos, especially the canonical inclusion of the salvation passage into the final chapter that broadens the ethical dimension to find its basis in the understanding of God added by all the textual understandings aided by socio-rhetoric. In this regard the comments by Childs (1979:409) is telling in reflecting on the theological and hermeneutical implications of the final canonical product:

> The particularity of Amos' prophecy against Israel was left largely untouched by the canonical editors in order that his attack on the Israel of his age could provide a normative criticism of the distorted religion for the subsequent community of faith. The burden of his preaching was to make clear that Israel's manner of life reflected a basic misunderstanding of divine election, worship, justice, covenant, and promise.

The final chapter of Amos brings about another dimension of the nature of Yahweh through the aspect of salvation. This would suggest that God is not a just a God of judgement, but one who also mitigates in response to prayers of repentance. The God reflected in the final chapter of Amos is clearly a southern kingdom understanding, as was shown earlier. The question raised here is one of understanding the nature of this salvation and whether it is incompatible with the aspect of God's sovereignty. On this issue, the scholars are clearly divided as those who see the ideas as incompatible will see the message of salvation as entirely a later gloss, whereas those who do not would have no problem in attributing the idea to eighth century Amos. We have shown earlier that either argument could be presented fairly, but for us the idea is more with showing the accountability of the conclusion of the scholarly consensus of seeing it as the final product of the later post-exilic

redactor. There are some interesting dimensions of the nature of God stressed in the final chapter.

The aspects of Yahweh's sovereignty is both confirmed and stressed with the opening vision of chapter 9. The picture is clearly consistent with what we already encountered earlier in the book, Yahweh the warrior. This sovereignty cannot be escaped no matter where the guilty may hide. There is deeper progression of the idea of levels of escape from verse 2 to verse 4. These levels are all introduced by אִם clauses in the respective verses, which brings a rythmic element to bear upon the passage. The idea of the verses are, however clear, there is nowhere conceivable where escape from Yahweh is possible. This emphasises a universal aspect to his sovereignty.

The exodus theme of verse 7 is also quoted as a non-unique event for the people with Yahweh described as the universal author of exoduses. This type of theological reflection hints at a post-exilic theological maturity, of no longer seeing Yahweh as being taken captive by the gods of Babylon, but rather of Yahweh being the one ultimately responsible for exoduses and exiles.

4.13 Summary and conclusion of the socio-rhetoric of Amos 9

We have followed the pattern of the book for exegesis of Amos chapter 9, which is by viewing the final chapter as a product of the prior chapters. This was, however done recognising that the final chapter reflects the same redactional activity of the prior chapters. The patterns for audience identification where thus not radically different and according to expectation.

We conclude this section of the study by affirming the goal at the beginning of the exegesis. The interpretation of the text gives us insight into the text, its structures, rhetorical strategies and intended audiences (Robbins 1991:305). This exegesis was done with the intent of presenting an accountable reflection on inferring the levels of audience involved.

The final audience of the book, as inferred from the redactional activity of the final chapter was identified as pro-Jerusalemite returning exiles (Sweeney 2000:20), who were influenced by the same desires as Nehemiah. This group's theology is identifiable by studying their editorial work within the book of the Twelve as well as by identifying its development within individual books, like Amos. Their cultic connection is also identifiable in considering the use of the hymnic fragments within the book. The fragment is consistent with the post-exilic theological atmosphere (Jeremias 1995:6-9).

The various textures of the book of Amos thus presents a consistent picture of the three levels of audiences. Firstly, a clear eighth century setting during the time of Jeroboam II (786-746 BCE) with many textual clues relating to this audience (Strijdom 1996:274ff).

There is also secondly, an underlying bias reminiscent of the seventh century deuteronomistic style reforms, and thirdly a sixth century well-developed post-exilic theological reflection of the sovereignty of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 5

5. The Audiences of Amos 9: A summary

5.1 Introduction

The exegetical exercise of the previous chapter has dealt with what Robbins (1993b) refer to as the inner texture, the intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture aspects of Amos.

What this specific focus has achieved, is to show the following:

1) The historical agenda of exegesis plays a vital and fundamental role in Biblical exegesis as it highlights the social setting of audience.
2) Historical related and literary methods are seen as aids to the historical agenda.
3) The employment of historical methods opens up the text to primary meanings.
4) Audiences are always presupposed as being intimately involved in the various rubrics of a text. The text often contains clues, whether implicit or explicit, as to their identity.
5) Not many commentaries exist that attempts to open up the world of the text in order to focus upon the implied audience.

The redactional layers in the final chapter of the book of Amos have been shown to presuppose three audiences. These audiences are namely, the original eighth century hearers of the prophetic message in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (especially the worshippers at the royal shrine in Bethel), the exilic redactors (or scribes) in the period of the exile (the so-called "school of Amos") and the seventh century, pro-Jerusalemite scribe of the immediate post-exilic period.

This chapter will seek to cast more light upon the circumstances that these audiences faced and upon the effect of the prophecy of Amos upon them.

5.2 The eighth century audience of Amos.

The prophetic figure Amos was a southern prophet, who went to the Northern Kingdom of Israel to deliver his message of doom. According to Fohrer (1973: 243), "he led an independent, thoroughly 'middle class' existence until he felt himself snatched from it by the personal call of Yahweh." Amos probably began his ministry in the capital, Samaria, and later made his way to the sanctuary at Bethel (Fohrer 1973:245). The content of the book assists us in making inferences regarding the social conditions of the time. It is this content that highlights the period as one of social injustice, from the perspective of the lower classes. As Ward (1991: 205) clearly states "What we learn from Amos's oracles is that the poor and powerless people in Israel were being cheated, exploited, and denied justice in the courts by people wealthier and more powerful than they – people ridiculed by the prophet for their self-indulgent greed and self-serving religiosity."

De Waard and Smalley (1979:10) have suggested that there are various social relationships in the prophecy which is implied by the language of address and the implied tones. The social fabric of the eighth century era was thus clearly stratified between the wealthy and the poor, with a middle class conscious of the situation and bent on doing something about it. The middle class champions of the message of reform were the eighth century prophets and the preservers of their spoken tradition.

The social condition was also part and parcel of the political and religious condition of the period (Stuart 1987:283). It was under the rulership of Jeroboam II that the period was maintained in its current nature, especially since the other world powers (Egypt, Assyria and Babylon) seem to be relatively weak (Stuart 1987: 283) or having their attention focussed upon domestic matters or elsewhere. Jeroboam could thus enjoy a virtually unappeased expansionist policy (Mays 1969: 2). Mays (1969:20) also states, in the light of archaeological data, that "the older homogeneous economic structure of Israel gave way to sharp distinctions of wealth and privilege."

The nature of the eighth century audience of the book is thus clear. They are the rich, upper class people of the Northern Kingdom who through their greed were exploiting the poor. They were undoubtedly part of the leadership structures and if not, clearly benefiting from those who held to power. Amaziah, for example, was a member of this upper class (Herrmann 1981: 251). This is a social class that is visible throughout the biblical text. In fact Gottwald (1993:6) has suggested that "the social class visible in biblical societies may be phrased in such a way as to take account of Israel's history in all periods, within which we can identify shifts in the class configurations that were integral to changing economic, political, and ideological developments." Indeed, they benefited from the state power through the various mechanisms of organized society whether social, political (Gottwald 1993:6) or religious, as in the ancient world all these factors were virtually inseparably intertwined. Gottwald (1993:10) then goes on to illustrate how this reality was true for the time period of Jeroboam's reign as recorded in 1 Kings 11-12 and in the subsequent rule of other Israelite kings.

Gottwald (1993:16) finally illustrates how the prophetic texts reflect this social stratification between rich and poor and how they are hinted at within the redactional activity of books like Isaiah, Amos and Micah.

The eighth century audience thus become a paradigm audience within the book of Amos as they share the similarities of context and social position with later audiences who find the sympathy of the books redactors.

5.3 The seventh century audience of Amos 9

As much as what the initial audience for Amos's prophecy may be identified as eighth century, we have already noted that there clear indications in the book of subsequent audiences. Logic would inform us that the initial message preached in the eighth century would not have met with any level of enthusiasm by those to whom it was initially preached. This is clearly seen in the reaction of Amaziah as the priest of the shrine at Bethel. Preaching destruction at a time of national prosperity (at least prosperous for the upper classes) would have indeed been a message out of character according to the expectations of the audience. Gowan (1998:29) says in this regard, "Evidently the idea was too new for an Israelite or Judean to be able to correlate it in any way with the accepted traditions." As the northern kingdom eventually fell, the message of Amos, as shocking as it was, was preserved and made its way down to the southern kingdom of Judah (Gowan 1998: 36).

It is also clear that the message of the prophet Amos was preached, and the book does not clearly illustrate that he was responsible for the preservation in written form. We

have shown earlier, a position with scholarly consensus, that the prophetic books were preserved by later redactors, people who might have been contemporary with the prophet, but in many instances, probably living in a later period. The preservation activity would be chiefly motivated by two factors. Firstly, the fulfilment of any predictive elements present in the message and secondly, a social setting and experience of conditions similar to those addressed by the text of an earlier period.

The editing of the book of Amos, which might even include a significant degree of writing down an oral tradition of the message, would have taken place after the fall of Samaria (Limburg 1988:81).

The most significant textual clue as to the setting and time of the editing has come about, according to this study, by paying attention to the function of the hymn fragments within the book of Amos, especially as there is also a fragment in the final chapter. This fragment, as well as the vocabulary of the passage gives the passage a cultic feel and setting (Gottwald 1985:356 and Doorly 1989:42) possibly at the time of the annual fall festival (McCorminsky 1987:153). It is therefore possible that the setting was at a time of religious reform. Socially, this was a time of vassalage under Egypt (Doorly 1989:41).

The actual time setting is thus different – the next century, but there is a similarity in conditions. The rich are those who have been affected the most by the fall of Samaria and receiving their just desserts according to the prophecy of judgement. In exile the classes are less distinct as the two groups are invariably mixed (Herrmann 1981: 251).

In exile they become the new poor, who appeal to the prophecy for justice and see themselves in need for some kind of salvation. It is the crisis of exile that assists their theological reflection to incorporate a salvation theology into the experience of judgement. The prophetic guilds, however, are essentially responsible for preserving the message (Ramirez 1996:115). Even in exile the opportunity soon arose for a class distinction to be established as many soon became comfortable in exile (Kaiser 1998:414).

5.4 The sixth century audience.

The sixth century redactor represents the final level of editing for the Amos 9 as well as the entire book. The period of exile presented the people with an array of problems, not just socially but also religiously (Albertz 1994:376). It is this period that results in the acceptance of the message of judgement of the prophets (Albertz 1994:379-380). Albertz (1994:380) summarizes the situation well when he says that

> The struggle for the recognition of the prophets of judgement as the word of God which now pointed the way for the whole community went in two directions: on the one hand as the work of convincing people by the written and spoken word in the everyday life of society, and on the other hand by launching writings of the prophets of judgement into worship.

This type of situation proved favorable ground for the germination of a hope theology as the end of judgement. But this theology of hope had to go hand in hand with a broader understanding of the nature of Yahweh. The setting of the sixth century brings about a further reversal of roles in the audiences of the prophecy. Doorly (1989:61),

once again, summarises this audience well when he states, " This final audience is again the elite (the elite of Judah or their descendants) but now this society consists of the weak and oppressed. The first had become the last."

It is this crisis of faith as well as experience that contributes to the reflection of salvation beyond exile. Exile serves as a catalyst for this type of theological reflection. For this reason, the final salvation pericope in Amos (9:11-15), is framed for a people experiencing exile (Gowan 1986:23). Even though Dearman (1992: 187) questions whether the verses 11-12 are actually exilic, he agrees that verse 13-15 clearly are illustrative of the exilic period. Blenkinsopp (1984:92) is also in general agreement with the section as an exilic reflection of hope, later committed to writing within the Second Temple period.

The post-exilic period also saw a split between the upper class people on an ethical and religious level (Albertz 1994:497). The period resulted in a "conflict of interests between its public duty to see to the welfare of the whole community and its private economic interests" (Albertz 1994:497). This phenomenon thus results in a pattern being repeated and known so well from the privies centuries – the development of a pious poor and unrighteous wealthy class. The message of Amos thus has a universal appeal in addressing this various yet similar situations.

The identification of these audiences and insight into their setting has thus been demonstrated as a product of socio-rhetorical criticism. Much of what has been illustrated, in terms of exegetical results have been demonstrated by many other

methods, particularly those employed with historical sensitivity. This exercise however has been done with a conscious awareness of the presuppositions that have influenced the use of methods as well as the results.

This is ultimately the goal of multidimensional exegesis, to demonstrate the results of exegesis so that they may be evaluated and re-evaluated. The demonstration of sensitivity to the audiences of a text is also therefore a product of the process of interpretation by the current reader and in turn a product of interacting with the various levels of implied readers identified. Implied readers are thus identifiable in the identifying the different layers of interpretation and reinterpretation within the textures of the text.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this final section is threefold. Firstly, there will be an overall summary of the study. Secondly, there will be a conclusion based upon the summary of what has been achieved through the study. Thirdly, there will be a discussion of some prospects for taking this type of study further.

6.2 Summary of the study

The composition of the final chapter in the book of Amos remains a vexed question. This study has also shown that scholars have generally found it difficult to conceive that a prophet whose overwhelming message of doom could conclude with a message of hope. Both literary and stylistic arguments have been identified to demonstrate that the hope motif is a later exilic as well as post-exilic reworking of the prophecy. As a result modern commentators have failed to reach consensus on the setting of the book and especially the setting (with special attention to the implied audience/s) of the expanded prophecy.

This study has shown that by employing a multidimensional matrix for analyzing prophetic rhetoric which interfaces a refined socio-rhetorical and reader-response methodology, that these settings can be unveiled. The text of Amos and especially the final chapter illustrated a multi-layered biblical text of meanings and audiences that have been synthesized into a final unit with the potential of drawing current readers into new meanings that are products of the text.

As we draw the study to a close, we will firstly summarize the exegetical path that has been followed up until now.

The introductory chapter explained the historical hermeneutical developments that have led to the current impasse in understanding Amos 9. This was done delineating the problem and proposing the hypothesis. Particular attention was also paid to the changing role and understanding of the meaning of the text in the interpretative endeavor as it is at this level that most significant strides have been made. These strides bring the present reader into sharper focus as the one who influences the production of meaning and providing bias to results of exegetical study.

A survey of Amos literature demonstrated the array of methodological approaches that have been used to study the book of Amos and how these have contributed to the adequate identification of implied audiences.

A critical evaluation of the changing state of rhetorical criticism was studied. This was done on two connected levels. On the one level the method was critiqued as far as it has the potential to delineate prophetic rhetoric, and on the other level was investigated according to the results it has already produced in the study of Amos especially chapter 9. The chapter showed that socio-rhetorical criticism represents a synthesis of multidimensional rhetorical endeavors with gaps that need to be filled in to analyze prophetic rhetoric with the audience of the rhetoric being brought into focus. The gaps of socio-rhetorical criticism can be filled by understanding the contribution that reader-

response criticism has made to understand texts and for understanding the audiences of rhetorical addresses. The potential for understanding the different levels of audiences of the prophetic address of Amos was also examined. The ethics of interpretation was also highlighted for the function of reader-response insights to be maintained with the correct balance. There was thus set in place the awareness for a multidimensional interface between socio-rhetoric and reader-response criticism as a precursor to the analysis of the prophetic rhetoric of Amos.

In the exegetical section the book of Amos as well as final chapter (Amos 9) was analyzed with awareness of the history of the interpretation of Amos especially in the light of many examples that have been employed in studying the earlier chapters of the book. This was done in both general and specific terms. The goal of the exercise was to focus upon the prophetic rhetoric and the identification of the audiences of the rhetorical address of the book and how these culminate in the final chapter. The identification of the various audiences was thus demonstrated with a clearer ethical awareness of the results. The expressed goal of the study, as stated at the offset of this study was to investigate and identify the audience of the book of Amos and in particular the implied audience/s of the final chapter (9). It has been demonstrated that the success of this goal is dependent on a number of interdependent factors. These factors include setting up an adequate interpretative framework (since the task of interpretation is never done outside of a framework) which would have to be methodologically multidimensional. The nature of the multidimensional interpretative framework would be an interface between the world behind, the world of and the world in front of the text. The grid that was hypothesised, set up and then applied was socio-rhetorical criticism (which clearly

highlights within its interpretative rubrics the world behind and world of the text) interfaced with insights from reader-response criticism (which highlights a concern for the world infront of the text). It was demonstrated that both these interfaced methods already has the potential to answer the questions of audience analysis, but had to be employed by commencing the study with audience identity concerns.

The study also illustrated that many studies in the book of Amos had not been primarily concerned with audience identification, but that many were actually identifying the audience/s as a by-product of other primary concerns. Even here, a survey showed that there are no consistent and interpretatively accountable conclusions in the identification of implied audiences in the book of Amos. Many of the audience identity issues are dependent upon methodological and ideological presuppositions on the part of the interpreter. Since many of these conclusions of audience identity are moot with regard to the book of Amos and since there is currently no scientifically objective means of establishing this goal, this study set the task of bringing conclusions to interpretative accountability. This was achieved by establishing the interpretative agenda and then applying it to the text of Amos.

6.3 Conclusion of the study

The study started from the basis of scholarly consensus for understanding the redactional history of the book of Amos and how this is reflected in the final chapter. By means of the interpretative grid the analysis was performed to reflect the validity of this consensus.

Current rhetorical critical interpretative theory has highlighted that a text entextualises the rhetorical situation of its implied audience/s. This idea has formed a foundational principle for engaging the text of Amos exegetically.

The book of Amos, and redactional layers in the final chapter, has been shown to presuppose three audiences. These audiences are namely, the original eighth century hearers of the prophetic message in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (especially the worshippers at the royal shrine in Bethel), the exilic redactors (or scribes) in the period of the exile (the so-called "school of Amos") and the seventh century, pro-Jerusalemite scribe of the immediate post-exilic period. This has been done not-with-standing the fact that some scholars would remain sceptical about this conclusion, if not for methodological, then for theological reasons. The value of incorporating reader-response ideas in the study has assisted in demonstrating that it is valid for this study to argue the findings *a priori*.

Socio-rhetorical criticism, in its own respect is a multidimensional engagement of the text, but was shown to need to be conscientised about reader-response ideas especially for identifying implied audiences. This is not to say that the method on its own is not able to achieve similar results, but rather that the ethical accountability of interpretation is better served when adding reader insights. This goal has been motivated by the ethics of interpretation as given lucidity by Patte (1995:28) when he states that the establishing or legitimising of interpretation is verified in that they are truly based upon textual evidence and account for a semantic coherence of a given text. This accountability is to both the academy and those affected by the work (Patte 1995:42).

This study has thus, attempted to be true to both the academy of scholars and the evangelical community of the church, who often are not part of the scholarly community. To the scholarly community this study has contributed in retracing the exegetical steps followed for identifying the implied audiences of Amos, and applying socio-rhetoric in such a way as to bring whatever their conclusions to interpretative accountability. To the evangelical church community, this study has engaged the text of Amos in a way that would normally be suspected of being inappropriate or "liberal", but with the goal of demonstrating an approach that is possible by maintaining a religious conviction of Scriptural authority and inspiration.

In this way the text of the prophet Amos continues to live and provide current and future audiences the opportunity to engage the issues of the day as they are identified in the text. The text thus forms a bridge between the ancient and modern world, and for the community of faith remain the timeless Word of God. This is precisely the type of "Hopeful Imagination" that Brueggemann (1986) has in mind as he seeks to engage the prophetic texts to speak with the scholarly community and to the community of faith. He says,

> The reception of new world from God is also under way in our time. It takes such concrete form as land reform whereby peasants receive again their birthright. It is apparent in the staggering, frightening emergence of the new communities, which we experience as revolutionary, with dreams of justice and equity. Those dangerous emergences are paralleled by dreams of justice and mercy in our culture that dare to affirm that old structures may be transformed to be vehicles for the new gifts of God. Thus we are at

> the risky point of receiving from God what we thought God would not give, namely a new way to be human in the world. (Brueggemann 1986:6)

6.4 Prospects for this study

We will now suggest possibilities for taking the study further and especially for dealing with the prophetic rhetoric of Amos in relation to the other prophets of the book of the Twelve.

These prospects we would list as follows:

The role of socio-rhetoric as a strategy for further studying audiences of texts could be investigated with a view of giving further substance to identifying such audiences. This could include remodeling this as well as other exegetical strategies as audience orientated methods.

A socio-rhetorical analysis of the book of the Twelve, though a daunting task, could produce fascinating results for confirming the exegetical results of this study as well as other redaction activities buried in the literary structures. This would especially be true for a comparative study between the Septuagint and Hebrew Bible list for the book of the Twelve. The final redaction and canonization of these texts via a socio-rhetorical strategy could be very meaningful in seeking to answer questions about the implied audiences of the final redaction.

Various other interfaces of methods could be investigated and employed in order to engage the text for audience analysis that might even result in further textures of texts being added to the five-fold rubric already established by Robbins.

Other individual prophetic books may also be investigated in this manner to confirm or change ideas on the redactional activity and provide an interpretative accountability in audience identification in their study. The same would be true for comparing the prophets of the book of the Twelve along the similarity of themes identifiable between the books.

Finally, the results of this study may inspire a re-evaluation of the researcher's ideology as well as altered perspective of the setting of the message of Amos.

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