

Mikhail Bakhtin's 'Logic of Form' and the 'Logic of the Exodus' in the Book of Amos¹

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The book of Amos is renowned for its powerful social criticism: condemnation of practices most generally described as oppression of the poor. The core of the book is dated by the scholarly consensus to the 8th century BCE.² Such dating would make it the earliest prophetic text dealing with social issues. At the same time, there is a tendency to look at this text from the perspective of the covenant traditions. Commentators who adhere to the view that the covenant was an early notion, either explicitly declare, like Harper, “that Amos knew written documents, such as the decalogues and the Book of the Covenant, is certain,”³ or at least implicitly assume such knowledge.⁴ Those who do not support such view tend to treat the passages referring to the exodus⁵ as a later (Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic) interpolation, but also link it with the covenant.⁶ John Hayes is a notable exception. He accepts the whole book (except 1:1 and 7:10-17) as genuine to Amos.⁷ According to him, the book of Amos does not provide any evidence of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel being perceived in terms of covenant theology at that time.⁸ The prophet's ethical message was proclaimed based on Israelite customary law, certainly not detached from religion,⁹ but strongly linked with the land. In the reference to the exodus in 2:9-10 he highlights the motif of the land received by Israel as a “consequence of divine favour.” Thus, the people of Israel are not free to deal with the land however they wished, and it is exactly the abuses connected with possession, usage and distribution of the land that are condemned in 2:6-8.¹⁰

My point of departure in this paper is the observation that social criticism in the so called oracle against Israel (vv. 6-10 in Amos 2:6-16) is embedded in the references to the exodus (Amos 2:9-10 or 3:1-2). Neither the covenant, nor the laws are explicitly mentioned in

either of those passages.¹¹ Therefore, I am temporarily suspending the issue of the covenant and propose to link the social criticism directly with those references to the exodus.

The separation of the exodus and covenant traditions proposed here would provoke a fervent protest among some scholars. It seems that almost all scholars supporting the view of the antiquity of the covenant tradition assume at least a stage of independent development of those two traditions.¹² However, many argue that the two traditions merged at a very early stage of Israel's history (pre-monarchic or early monarchic period). It is true e.g. for the supporters of the so called treaty theory. They see the attempts of separating the exodus tradition from the Sinai covenant tradition as “based upon a rejection of and, at the same time, a failure to understand both the biblical traditions themselves and the ANE patterns of thought.”¹³ In the view of those scholars, prophetic texts are centred around the ideas of gratitude and obligation (“the inseparable link between the receipt of past benefits and the consequent obligations binding upon the recipients”),¹⁴ typical of the Late Bronze age treaties and the covenant texts alike. It was the exodus tradition, recalled as the “historical prologues,”¹⁵ that served in this function both in the oldest covenantal traditions and in prophetic texts.¹⁶ Prophets (especially the so called “rural prophets”), are seen as custodians of the old covenant traditions, opposing the reformulations of those traditions by the monarchic bureaucracy.¹⁷

There are, however, scholars who, for various reasons, separate the two traditions. On the one hand, Walther Eichrodt takes it as a given that the eighth century prophets and their contemporaries were familiar with the concept of a covenant between God and Israel. However, the prophets, “these reforming spirits,”¹⁸ consciously avoided recalling this tradition. This is because it was precisely “the weakness inherent in it which made it a potential danger to religious life”¹⁹ that they targeted in their criticism. This weakness is identified by Eichrodt as its legal character, due to which the covenant tradition “was liable to become the seedbed of a parasitic ‘*Do ut des*’ religion,”²⁰ expressing itself in the “dead externalism in religious practice and mechanical routine in religious thought,” accompanied by a “reckoning on Yahweh's automatic performance in return.”²¹ Instead, the prophets recalled the motifs of election and the deliverance from Egypt in order to elucidate the “personal note in the relationship to Yahweh” and to invoke the response of “honesty, of love, of surrender.”²²

More recently, the Mexican liberation theologian José Porfirio Miranda also separated the covenantal tradition of Sinai, dated by him to the 7th century BCE, from the older “libertarian and Exodic”²³ tradition associated with Kadesh.²⁴ He severely criticises the tendency among biblical scholars to link the social criticism in the eighth century prophetic texts with the covenantal theology²⁵ and argues that the original elevation of the law to the theological sphere (which he describes as its “primigenial theologisation”)²⁶ links it with justice demonstrated by God in his intervention in the exodus. Thus, the true relation between the prophets and the Pentateuch results from such understanding of the law which draws it directly from the exodus as the experience of God's justice.²⁷

Finally, Ernest W. Nicholson argues that the exodus tradition initially functioned independently from the covenant tradition, which he dates to the late monarchic period.²⁸ I shall return to his proposition in the concluding section of the present paper.

I suggest that the social criticism in Amos should be seen from the perspective of the exodus tradition. I focus especially on the social criticism and the references to the exodus in the oracle against Israel (Amos 2:6-16), however other passages are considered as appropriate. Bakhtin's theory of aesthetic act is instrumental in providing such a reading.

Bakhtin's 'Logic of Form'

Natal'ia Bonetskaia, one of the leading Russian Bakhtin scholars, in one of her papers proposes that “the essential purpose of Bakhtin's principal works is to describe the various stages in a logic of form.”²⁹ She includes most of Bakhtin's works in her discussion, and describes them as “landmarks in the evolution of Bakhtin's outlook,” or “chapters” in his “aesthetics.”³⁰ For the purpose of this paper I limit my enquiry to the first chapter of Bakhtin's philosophy of ‘aesthetic form:’ his early essays, namely “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” and “The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Artistic Creation.”³¹ Like Bonetskaia and Brandist I consider those two works together.³² Following Bonetskaia, I focus on Bakhtin's notion of ‘aesthetic form,’ leaving aside the well known concepts of ‘aesthetic distance’ (‘outsideness,’ *vnenakhodimost'*) or ‘surplus of vision’ (*izbytok videniia*). The notion of ‘consummation’ (*zavershennie*) is briefly commented on in the final section of the paper.

Before focusing on the distinctive understanding of 'aesthetic form' Bakhtin proposes, a few words must be said about the general background of his aesthetic philosophy and its most important categories. Craig Brandist has shown that Bakhtin's understanding of creative work (aesthetic activity) is firmly grounded in the phenomenological notion of intentionality, combined with the neo-Kantian notion of aesthetic activity as the "production of aesthetic object in contemplation,"³³ and Georg Simmel's concern for overcoming the split between life (which Simmel categorises as "open even of being") and culture.³⁴ A brief comment on each of those notions is in order.

According to Franz Brentano and his followers, every mental act is directed at something, i.e. the mind always intends an object, regardless whether or not it exists in the extra-mental reality. In other words, there are no "empty" mental acts; every such act contains an object (intentionally) within itself. Thus, Bakhtin argues that aesthetic activity is the author's intentional act towards the 'aesthetic object'/hero: a mental activity in which the author contemplates the intended object.³⁵ The actual material execution of the work of art (material work, PCMF 306) is seen by Bakhtin as something inferior to the initial intentional 'aesthetic object' (see below).

Further, following the neo-Kantian tradition, Bakhtin takes it as a given that the world of human perception can be described in terms of the three branches constituting a complete system of critical philosophy: cognition, ethics and aesthetic, with their corresponding branches of consciousness.³⁶ Bakhtin's category of author is the embodiment of the aesthetic consciousness. While providing his own definition of aesthetic consciousness, Bakhtin is careful to do it in relation to both ethics and cognition. Each act of aesthetic creativity is preconditioned by activities of cognitive and ethical consciousness: aesthetic objects are produced from the objects of logic and ethics.³⁷ That is, rather than creating a completely new reality, aesthetic activity organises the already existing intentional reality in a new way: "Aesthetic activity creates its own reality in which the reality of cognition and action is positively accepted and transfigured: this is what constitutes the distinctiveness of the aesthetic" (PCMF 278-279). In other words, in aesthetic activity the author transfers the selected "section" of the previously cognised and evaluated reality into the aesthetic plane and creates from it a new reality. The 'content' of a work of art, or rather of the 'aesthetic object,' is de-

defined by Bakhtin as “the reality of cognition and ethical action that enters (as an already identified and evaluated reality) into the aesthetic object” (PCMF 281, see also PCMF 306).

When the reality of cognition and ethical action becomes the ‘content’ of ‘aesthetic object,’ it is removed from the ‘open even of being’ and transferred to the realm of culture.³⁸ This notion is connected with Georg Simmel's ideas, and particularly with his theory of forms, on which Bakhtin's treatment of ‘aesthetic form’ heavily relies.³⁹ According to Simmel, the manifold of life, a “homogenous and undifferentiated process”⁴⁰ is inaccessible to analysis. Form, which for him is an epistemological category,⁴¹ is a condition for the world and its aspects to become possible objects of experience and knowledge. Simmel introduces a dichotomy of ‘content’ and ‘form,’ tied respectively with the ideas of process and structure. The manifold of life, remaining in the state of perpetual process (flux) is perceived as the ‘content’ of experience or knowledge, mediated by ‘form.’⁴² In order to overcome this split between ‘form’ (the realm of culture) and ‘content’ (the realm of life), Simmel proposed an original and complicated link between the two: ‘forms’ are created by the energies of life as its objectifications. Life, “constantly creating, increasing, and intensifying its own potentialities and energies”⁴³ has the capacity to renew itself, but also to transcend itself by producing new entities, which become detached from the flux and rhythm of life, i.e., independent of life. Those independent objectifications of life become what Simmel described as “objective culture.”⁴⁴

Bakhtin's aesthetics is informed by an analogous concern with overcoming the split between life and culture. While the hero is a metaphor for the richness of life (being),⁴⁵ author is the agent of reconciliation between the two spheres. He operates from within “the flow of life” but is equipped with the ability to objectify certain of its aspects - to bring them, through ‘form,’ to the domain of culture.⁴⁶ This is achieved by isolating, or detaching, the selected “section” of the perceived cognitive-ethical reality.⁴⁷

Isolation or detachment relates not to the material, not to the work as a thing, but to its significance, to its contents, which is freed from certain necessary connections with the unity of nature and the unity of the ethical event of being. This detachment from connections does not destroy the fact that the isolated content has been identified and ethically evaluated. (PCMF 306)

Bakhtin describes 'isolation' as the "primary function of form in relation to content" (PCMF 306), the "first step taken by the form-giving consciousness, the first gift bestowed by form upon content, making possible for the first time all the subsequent, purely positive, enriching gifts bestowed by form." (PCMF 315) Thus, 'isolation' is the condition of 'aesthetic form.'

It is important to emphasise that Bakhtin's notion of 'aesthetic form' relates to the intentional 'aesthetic object' (PCMF 265), or 'content' (PCMF 303). Together, 'content' and 'form' constitute what Bakhtin calls 'architectonic form:' "the unification and organisation of cognitive and ethical values" (PCMF 304). Its material realisation does not enter into the 'aesthetic object' but only to its technical realisation ("technical moment of a work of art," PCMF 295).⁴⁸ The role of material in the act of aesthetic creation is important,⁴⁹ but secondary, and the (material) work of art is "implicitly inferior to the activity which produces it," (PCMF 265) that is, to the aesthetic activity of the author's consciousness.⁵⁰ In other words, what really counts in the aesthetic analysis is "the distinctiveness of the aesthetic object as such and the distinctiveness of the purely aesthetic interconnection of its constituents, that is, its architectonics." (PCMF 300-301)

At the same time, 'isolation' is described by Bakhtin as "the first product of [the authorial - ELW] activity, (...) *the author's assumption of control*" (PCMF 308, footnote m; emphasis added). 'Form,' through 'isolation,' is connected with the aesthetic consciousness/author:

Isolation makes possible for the first time positive realisation of artistic form, for what becomes possible is not the cognitive and the ethical relationship in the event, but the free shaping of content; what is freed is the activeness of our feeling⁵¹ of the object, of our feeling of the content, together with all the creative energies of this feeling. Isolation is thus the negative condition of the personal, subjective (...) character of form; it allows the author-creator to become a constitutive moment of form. (PCMF 308, emphasis added)

As Bonetskaia observes, "language would seem to demand that we see "form" as the form of a hero."⁵² For Bakhtin, however, it is the "creative personality of the author" that is the "constitutive moment in artistic form." (PCMF 286-7 note i, and PCMF 308).⁵³ Thus, even though 'form' and author are not one, the former belongs to the sphere of the latter, it is attributed to the author's aesthetic activity.⁵⁴ More precisely, 'form' is identified by Bakhtin as the expression of "a value-related activity that penetrates content and transforms it"

(PCMF 305), an expression of the new axiological relation the author adopts toward reality (“the world of cognition and action” (PCMF 281), as the author's “creative relationship,” determining the object (AH 222).⁵⁵

Thus, the act of aesthetic creation is a new ordering of reality, achieved by imposing ‘form’ on this reality. The giving of ‘form’ (“free shaping of content,” PCMF 308) and aesthetic activity as such, commence with ‘isolation,’ detachment of a certain “section” from the sphere of being, or the cognitive-ethical reality. That, which has thus been ‘isolated,’ becomes the ‘content’ of ‘aesthetic object’ (PCMF 306-7). At the same time, ‘form’ is a deeply subjective category - it is indissolubly connected with the author, as the expression of his creative relationship toward the ‘content.’

I would like to stress that in my reading I creatively extend, rather than straightforwardly apply Bakhtin's categories. Bakhtin's aesthetics is open to such extension. While the general systematic aesthetics he postulates in PCMF is oriented toward works of art as the fullest realisations of the aesthetic (he focused mainly on verbal art, i.e., literature) other, less obviously aesthetic manifestations of the aesthetic vision cannot be ignored by it. Bakhtin's theory is intentionally general and open to the non-obvious, peripheral manifestations of the aesthetic. He put it even more strongly: the ability to explain the “hybrid and impure forms of the aesthetic” is “a touchstone for the productiveness of any aesthetic theory.” (PCMF 272)⁵⁶ Such intended broadness, and the generality of Bakhtin's aesthetic theory, are decisive for its relevance as a methodology and open up space for extension in the direction suggested in this paper.

Moreover, the concept of creation through separation is well based in the biblical context: it resonates with the creation story in the first chapter of the book of Genesis.⁵⁷ The first products of God's creative activity are presented there as something unordered, chaotic. Casuto describes the situation as follows:

Just as the potter, when he wishes to fashion a beautiful vessel, takes first of all a lump of clay, and places it upon his wheel in order to mould it according to his wish, so the Creator first prepared for Himself the raw material of the universe with a view to giving it afterwards order and life. (...) The whole material was undifferentiated, unorganised, confused and lifeless agglomeration.⁵⁸

It is only by ordering this “raw material of the universe” that the foundations of creation were laid, before all the living creatures were introduced into the world.⁵⁹ The idea of “ordering that is the result of divine intent,”⁶⁰ recognised by Sarna as “the quintessential point of the narrative,”⁶¹ is introduced in a series of acts of separation, either described explicitly by the root בָּדַל (Gen 1, vv. 4, 6-7, 14), or implied in the content of the story (Gen 1:9). Thus, God's creative actions in the Genesis narrative have two stages. In the first one, the un-ordered, chaotic primordial reality is created. In the second one, order is introduced in a series of acts of separation.

In the present paper it is suggested that the exodus, as referred to in the book of Amos, can be seen as a manifestation of the aesthetic, in which God acts as the author and Israel plays the role of a hero/‘aesthetic object’. It is important to emphasise again that in this paper the exodus is not perceived as a manifestation of *artistic* creation. Rather, the shape which the exodus tradition takes in this text is conceptualised in terms of Bakhtin's general systematic aesthetics, as a case of an extra-artistic manifestation of the aesthetic. That is, what I shall be looking at in what remains of this paper is the layer of ideas, conceptualisations. Thus, I apply a certain degree of abstraction allowed for by Bakhtin's theory. Moreover, rather than simply following Bakhtin's categories, I treat them as a door through which the text can be entered in order that new senses could be explored. Having established the basic methodological vocabulary, I now turn to the reading of Amos 2:9-10 and 3:1-2.

Election and ‘Isolation’

Let me begin by pointing out that in Bakhtin's aesthetics the aesthetic act is a ‘form’-bestowing activity of the author, in relation to which the ‘aesthetic object’/hero is completely passive.⁶² Adopting yet another perspective on ‘form’ Bakhtin writes: “Form is the result of the interaction between hero and author, the hero, however, is passive in this interaction: he is not someone who *expresses*, but someone who *is expressed*.” (AH 84)

Accordingly, in 2:9-10 (and also in 3:1-2) Israel, like the hero in Bakhtin's aesthetics, is depicted as a passive recipient of God's gifts, “not as a subject but as an object of Yahweh's actions.”⁶³ The style of this passage is dominated by emphatic first-person pronouns and

verbs,⁶⁴ by which the subjectivity and activity of God, the author, are emphasised.⁶⁵ “All secondary causes and agencies are kept out of view.”⁶⁶

Further, just as Bakhtin's aesthetic act does not assume an emergence of an utterly new object but rather a transformation of something already existing, so in Amos the emergence of Israel⁶⁷ in the exodus is achieved through transformation of an already existing **משפחה**, “family,” or “clan”⁶⁸ (Amos 3:1-2). This transformation came about through a series of acts in which Israel's separation from the surrounding geographical and cultural context was achieved.

I have pointed out above that for Bakhtin separation is the constitutive moment of ‘form’ - the *sine qua non* of aesthetic act. In Amos 3:2a God declares: “You only have I known from all the families of the earth.” Wolff and Jeremias both recognise the meaning of separation in this passage. Jeremias notes that the uniqueness of Israel's experience of God is emphasised in a two fold way: through the word **רק** (only, alone) and through reference to Israel's difference from other nations.⁶⁹ In Wolff's words, God refers here to the relationship he established “with “you only,” expressly not “all the clans;”⁷⁰ “out of” (**מן**) has here that same sense of sharply privative separation which it has elsewhere when it stands in parallelism with the negative particle. The preposition designates the movement by which Israel alone was plucked out from the nations of the world.”⁷¹ Further, Wolff's explication of the verb **ידעתי**, describing the nature of this relationship, underscores the theme of separation: “I have lovingly chosen you from among all the clans of the earth;” “In contrast to the other peoples of the earth, I have taken you alone into my personal confidence, and I am knowledgeable concerning you,” for “it is exclusively you whom I have selected for a great task, by making known to you my will.”⁷²

Thus, the main theme of this passage is Israel's twofold separation of Israel from the context of other families of the earth. It is emphasised both through the separative words **רק**

and **יָדַע**, and on the deeper semantic level: in the meaning of the word **יָדַע**, signifying there an establishment of a unique, intimate relationship of confiding and knowledge. Paraphrasing in Bakhtinian terms, in Amos 3:1-2 God separates, (in Wolff's commentary – “sets apart”),⁷³ or ‘isolates’ Israel from “all the families of the earth.”⁷⁴ This act of selection, setting apart from the surrounding “context” is constitutive of any aesthetic act, a first step in the direction of imposition of ‘form.’ This (s)election,⁷⁵ or, in Bakhtin's terms, ‘isolation,’ is endowed with sustaining power, attributed by him to ‘aesthetic form.’⁷⁶ its consequences spread further than its immediate effect. Similarly, Wolff comments on the form of the verb **יָדַעְתִּי** in this passage as follows: “The perfect verb denotes not merely some act of the past, but one whose force effectively continues into the present.”⁷⁷ This, however, is just the first stage of God's authorial activity towards Israel. I now turn to the oracle against Israel.

Israel's Geographical ‘Form’

It has long been noted that the exodic events are in 2:9-10 presented in an a-chronological order: v. 9 refers to God's destruction of the Amorites, while it is only in v. 10 that the exodus itself, the wilderness period and settlement in the land are recalled. This a-chronological order has given rise to some controversy. Some commentators suggest an amendment: reversing the order of the verses,⁷⁸ while others⁷⁹ argue that v. 10 is a later addition. Among those who accept this sequence as an intended literary effect, Andersen and Freedman suggest that such reversed chronology was a common narrative practice in the Ancient Near East. In this case, the verbs resonate with the same roots used in Amos 9:7-8 to convey the message that Israel will be destroyed just as the Amorites were - for defiling the Lord's land.⁸⁰ However, Linville observes that the text neither condemns the Amorites, nor indicates that they deserved their fate.⁸¹ At the same time, Paul notes that in the present arrangement of the verses references to the Amorites form an *inclusio*.⁸² Finally, Hayes suggests that destruction of the Amorites is referred to as first of the events because it made possible the actual possession of the land.⁸³ Similarly, Mays observes that the non-chronological order has its own logic: “it emphasises that Israel's existence in the land of the Amorites is the result of Yahweh's work. Because this is uppermost in Amos' mind the conquest is listed first, and then emphasised again at the end of v. 10 as the goal of the acts of Yahweh.”⁸⁴

I would like to suggest another interpretation. Verse 10 is focused on the physical relocation: God removed Israel from the land of Egypt (העליתי) and led (ואילך) the people through the wilderness (10a).⁸⁵ The purpose of this move was for Israel to possess (לרשת) the land of the Amorites (10b). If we follow the logic of the text and Bakhtin's principle of aesthetic separation, both “bringing up” Israel⁸⁶ from the land of Egypt and leading it through the wilderness can be seen as stages in the process of its physical, geographical separation from the surrounding nations.⁸⁷ This process was completed by its settlement in the land which has *already* been prepared by God, who had emptied it of the previous inhabitants (v. 9). In this way, ideal geographical ‘isolation’ of Israel was achieved and the land became the geographic aspect of Israel's ‘form.’

Thus, I suggest that v. 9 gives witness to a radical interpretation of God's involvement in the conquest of Canaan: Israel's involvement in obtaining the land is a purely passive, receptive one (let us emphasise again that no human agents are recalled in this context), while God takes both full credit and full responsibility for destroying the previous inhabitants, before Israel was even brought up from Egypt. Linville observes that God's behaviour in v. 9 can be compared to that of the nations accused of war atrocities in the preceding oracles (Amos 1:3-2:3). He provocatively asks whether they are judged for their “usurping of the divine prerogative to eradicate populations.”⁸⁸ This legitimate observation directs our attention to another important issue and another type of isolation of Israel.

Israel's Moral 'Form'

In the so called oracles against the nations (OAN), Amos 1:3-2:3,⁸⁹ there is an expression of a moral demand which is expected of other nations. This demand, however, is connected only with what Michael Walzer describes as a “minimal code,” connected with what happens on the geo-political borders. By contrast, from the people of Israel the “substantive social morality,” connected with conduct within the community, is required.⁹⁰ Focusing on the more subtle issues of moral conduct was made possible by the fact that God himself freed the people of Israel from the necessity of assuring the territory, the issue which remains the major preoccupation for the other nations.⁹¹

Moreover, apart from freeing Israel from this preoccupation, God freed it from the guilt connected with acquiring the land at the expense of another community. As Mays observes, in v. 9 the focus is not on the acquisition of the land (referred to separately in v. 10b), but rather to “the incredible power of Yahweh in the destruction of its inhabitants.”⁹² As I have pointed out, according to our text Israel did not participate in this act and thus its hands were clean. In this way, Israel's ‘form’ as a separate and completely ethically-oriented nation was established and asserted.

By bestowing upon Israel its completely separate geographic ‘form,’ God additionally differentiated it from other nations by bestowing upon it higher standards of moral demand. In Wolff's words, “the exclusive favour shown Israel by Yahweh, which sets it apart from all the other peoples, was meant to determine its conduct.”⁹³ The exodus, which prepared the conditions for such (high) ethical requirements, also provided the pattern for social conduct.

The pre-exodic Israel reminds us of Bakhtin's unconsummated being, i.e. being not yet subjected to aesthetic treatment:

Being as present-on-hand being, as fully expressed, fully uttered being, is given to my pure self-activity in an atmosphere of need and emptiness which is in principle incapable of being made replete from that being itself with its own resources. (AH 136)

Before the events referred to in verse 10, Israel was in a similar state of complete neediness: immersed in the foreign context (Egypt), landless and, if we assume that the tradition underlying Amos 2:9-10 is convergent with that recorded in the book of Exodus, oppressed. Moreover, the way in which the Amorites are described (“gargantuan terms,”)⁹⁴ emphasises both the powerfulness of God and the powerlessness of Israel.⁹⁵ In other words, the pre-exodic Israel was ‘form’-less, which in terms of Bakhtin's aesthetics means that, in the aesthetic sense, it did not exist.⁹⁶ In the exodus God engaged his power on behalf of the powerless people and in a series of isolating acts, effectively created Israel as a separate, “ethical” nation, dwelling in its own land.⁹⁷ At the same time, he established a model to be followed in the social life: the pattern of behaviour in which power is used for the advantage of the powerless.⁹⁸ This pattern is on the one hand another aspect of ‘isolation’ from the surrounding nations and on the other hand, the defining principle upon which the community was founded.

In short, in the creative act of the exodus, God gave Israel the land as one aspect of its 'form' and by doing so, founded the basis for the social moral law - the second aspect of the community's unique 'form.' From this perspective let us now look at the social criticism in Amos.

Social Criticism and the 'Logic of the Exodus'

The poetic images and some obscurities of the language in Amos 2:6-8 make it difficult to establish the exact nature of the condemned transgressions and the identity of the victims. In general, commentators tend to agree that the crimes referred to in Amos 2:6-8 include misuses of such institutions as debt slavery (2:6),⁹⁹ pledges and fining (2:8),¹⁰⁰ as well as "perversion of the course of justice"¹⁰¹ through bribery, violence and general disregard of the poor in courts (2:7a),¹⁰² and sexual abuse of young women (2:7b).¹⁰³ Those charges are repeated (verbatim, or almost verbatim) in other passages of the book (4:1, 5:10-12, 8:4-6). To this list 8:4-6 adds unfair practices in the marketplace: the merchants are accused of falsifying measures (8:5b) and selling low quality produce (8:6b); as Hayes observes, the text shows those practices as particularly harmful for the impoverished people.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, it is generally accepted that all the victims were socially disadvantaged persons, deprived of any social power, "those in need of help and protection."¹⁰⁵ The perpetrators, on the other hand, belonged to the privileged groups,¹⁰⁶ equipped with various aspects of social power, especially economic and juridical. As Jeremias notes, in the oracle against Israel, "the circle of perpetrators is (...) expanded from those who are politically responsible (in the oracles against the nations) to include anyone with any influence at all."¹⁰⁷

Thus, the best way to get into the heart of the social criticism in Amos is to say that various misuses of social power are targeted. Power, rather than being utilised for the benefit of the more vulnerable members of community, is directed against them. This is a direct reversal of the exodic pattern discussed above.¹⁰⁸ Jeremias has made a similar observation,¹⁰⁹ and argued that the events from Israel's past are recalled to show that it "has learned nothing from its history." I hope to demonstrate that the stakes were much higher than "learning."

I have noted above that Bakhtin's notion of 'form' assumes its sustaining power. Coggins observes that, thanks to the rhetorical device of shift from third- to second-person refer-

ence in v. 10, “the hearers or readers of this oracle can no longer suppose that its reference is to someone else, a long way off or a long time ago.”¹⁰ In fact, however, in relation to the hearers or readers of this text, the people for whom God destroyed the Amorites and whom he brought up from Egypt, led in the wilderness and introduced into the land *were* in fact “someone else,” maybe not “a long way off,” but certainly “a long time ago” (I do not refer here to the historicity of those events, only to the virtual reality of the text.) From the point of view of the readers/hearers, those people were “them” (generations earlier) rather than “us” here and now. Thus, the “historical” time is suspended and the recalled events are presented in such a way that they include the present generation. Through that, this present generation is identified as *the* people, *the* nation of Israel created in the constitutive event of the exodus and sustained by its lasting effect.

Moreover, in Bakhtin's aesthetics, ‘form’ is in fact the expression and extension of the author's creative activity:

So long as we simply see or hear something, we do not yet apprehend artistic form; one must make what is seen or heard or pronounced an expression of one's own active, axiological relationship, one must enter as a creator into what is seen, heard, or pronounced. (...) Form ceases to be outside us as a perceived and cognitively ordered material; it becomes an expression of a value-related activity that penetrates content and transforms it. (PCMF 305)

From such a perspective, Israel's ‘form,’ in its dual character, including both the land and the principle of social conduct, is not something static, but rather the expression and extension of God's creative, transformative and lasting relation to Israel.

Moreover, according to Bakhtin, the authorial activity expressed in ‘form’ is crucial for the aesthetic act to retain its aesthetic value:

As soon as I cease being active in form, content - the content calmed and consummated by form - immediately rebels and appears in its pure cognitive-ethical validity, that is, artistic contemplation ceases and is supplanted by purely ethical co-experiencing or by cognitive reasoning, by theoretical agreement or disagreement, by practical approval or disapproval, etc. (PCMF 305)

Similarly, Israel's ‘form’ is the condition of its existence. The text depicts the community at the moment when the ‘form’ has already been disrupted through transgressions of the moral principle and also through the engagement in warfare, possibly in order to satisfy the territor-

ial ambitions.¹¹¹ While in the book of Amos it is God who personally performs the destruction of Israel (e.g. Amos 8:9-10, 9:1-4; even when a human agent is invoked, God is the source of this agency, e.g. 6:14), if we follow the ‘logic of form’ and the ‘logic of the exodus,’ Israel’s dispersion (its being shaken among all the nations “as one shakes with a sieve, but no pebble shall fall to the earth,” Amos 9:9) and exile from the land (Amos 6:7a) can also be seen as a sign of what has already occurred on the deeper plane: Israel has destroyed its own ‘form’ through which it was sustained in existence by its author.¹¹² (Could this be why the dirge¹¹³ is recited in Amos 5:1-2?)

Before I turn to conclusions, let me note that if we follow the reading suggested here, the book of Amos illustrates well the perception of the law as something more than just a means to resolve disputes. Here, the law possesses the ability to help maintain the sense of cosmological order,¹¹⁴ and quite literally holds Israel together. When the law is disregarded, Israel falls apart and the whole natural order is turned upside down.¹¹⁵ An excellent literary example of such perception of the law can be found in Gabriel García Márquez’s novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.¹¹⁶ There, the process of gradual unmaking of the micro-cosmic town Macondo is a result of one family’s persistent breach of the incest taboo. Márquez is conscious of the source of his artistic vision: he describes the culmination of Macondo’s destruction as it being consumed by “a fearful whirling of the biblical hurricane.”¹¹⁷ As exemplified in Márquez’s novel, the incest taboo is in many cultures perceived as the fundamental law regulating the community life. The book of Amos elevates the exodic principle of use of power for the benefit of the powerless to the level of the taboo of fundamental strength.

Conclusions

In the concluding sections of this paper, before returning to the methodological issues, I would like to outline what seem to be the most important advantages of the presented reading.

Firstly, I have demonstrated the central importance of the exodus as the founding (aesthetic) event in the oracle against Israel. Such a reading allows us to understand better the somewhat cryptic reference to the prophets and the nazirites in Amos 2:11-12. Elsewhere¹¹⁸ I demonstrate that in the book of Amos the human and divine understanding and memory of

the event of the exodus and its consequences are conditions of Israel's continuous existence in the land. The role of the prophets and the nazirites is to sustain this memory, through the word (in the case of the prophets), or through the highly symbolic lifestyle (in the case of the nazirites). Thus, they can be seen as divinely appointed (v. 11) guardians of this memory and guardians of Israel's existence: when they are made to stop perform their respective roles (v. 12), this existence is endangered.

Secondly, research into the 'logic of the exodus' in Amos cannot fail to take into account the reference to the exodus in Amos 9:7. In this verse, the readers/hearers are confronted with two rhetorical questions: "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?" Commentators explain that here God announces that Israel is as distant to him as the remote people of Cush (Ethiopia),¹¹⁹ and that the exoduses of other nations, here represented by the particularly hated enemies, was just as much his work as Israel's exodus from Egypt. In this way Israel is equated with those nations.¹²⁰ What we are presented with here is "the relativisation of the idea of election."¹²¹ Israel is for God the same as other nations and "it cannot claim any kind of privileged position."¹²² Paul argues that

The deliverance from Egypt, historically speaking, affords no special assurance or preference for Israel, for it is not unique. It is merely another example of the Lord's universalistic impartiality. (...) Election is not predicated upon exodus. If it is a sign of salvation history, so it is for the others as well. However the exodus, qua exodus, is not a unique event and grants them no special priority or immunity.¹²³

The uniqueness of Israel's relationship with God is linked by Paul with the covenant, to which in his opinion 3:2 alludes. However, because the conditions of the covenant were not fulfilled by Israel, it "is now classed in the same category as all the other nations, without any special benefits."¹²⁴ Andersen and Freedman interpret in a similar way the fact that in the oracle against Israel and in 3:1-2 (which they see as structurally linked with the previous oracle),¹²⁵ Israel is mentioned alongside other nations. For them, this signifies that Israel is identified as "just one of the clans of the region."¹²⁶ The conclusion is that the relationship between God and Israel is not a special one. It is just one of many relationships that God has with many nations.¹²⁷ The Lord is the universal God.¹²⁸

However, if we continue to look at the relationship between God and Israel in Amos through the lens of Bakhtin's categories, a different reading is possible. In the poetics of the Formalists, criticised by Bakhtin, "content is understood as something replaceable from the point of view of form - form is not concerned with the cognitive-ethical validity of content and this validity is completely fortuitous in the aesthetic object." (PCMF 283) Bakhtin argues that in such approach 'content' is something accidental, secondary in relation to 'form.' Any 'content' can "fill" the same 'form.' Or, any 'content' can be taken over by a new 'form' and become a "secondary content," like in the literary works which take up as its 'content' previous artistic works, rather than "the world of cognition" and "the ethical reality of performed action" (pastiche, parody, etc). (PCMF 284) Such approaches are perceived by Bakhtin as an aberration of the true relationship between 'form' and 'content.'

His goal in writing PCMF was to provide a theory in which 'content' and 'form' would be clearly separated but at the same time 'form' would be analysed in its correlation to 'content' (rather than material). Therefore in his aesthetics, 'form,' in spite of its association with the author, is also shown as inseparable from 'content.' The two components of 'aesthetic object,' even though they are not fused, "interpenetrate" (PCMF 283):

It is necessary to understand the aesthetic object synthetically, in its wholeness, to understand form and content in their essential and necessary interrelationship: form as the form of content, and content as the content of form - to understand the distinctiveness and law of their interrelationship. (PCMF 317)

Content is an indispensable constitutive moment in the aesthetic object, and artistic form is correlative to it, outside this correlation, artistic form has no meaning at all. Outside its relationship to content (...) form cannot be aesthetically valid and cannot fulfill its basic functions. (PCMF 281)

Thus, 'form' is at the same time an expression of the author's creative relationship toward the 'content' and remains in tight and unique interrelationship with the 'content;' it does not exist independently of the 'content.'

Aesthetic form is founded and validated from within the other - the author, as the author's creative reaction to the hero and his life. As a reaction, that is, which produces values that are transgredient in principle to the hero and his life and yet are essentially related to the latter. (AH 89-90)

Such notions can allow for a new understanding of v. 9:7. If the exodus in Amos 2:9-10 and 3:1-2 can be seen as the essential 'form'-giving activity performed by God to-

wards Israel, then God as the author cannot simply create new nations by imposing upon them identical forms in parallel acts of exodus. ‘Form’ is tied with the particular ‘content’ and thus ‘content’ is not accidental and cannot be simply replaced; new ‘content’ will not “fill” the same ‘form:’ “the form must be adequate to *him* [hero - ELW], although not in the least as *his* possible self-expression.” (AH 84)

Thus, the real drama and pathos in the book of Amos lie in the fact that the aesthetic act is *not* repeatable, and in the irreplaceability of Israel as ‘content’ of the particular ‘form’ established in the exodus. It is true that the implied answer to the rhetorical questions in 9:7 is “Yes.” However, the *real* answer, from the perspective of the text in which the role of Israel's exodus is so prominent, is “No, sons of Israel are not like the sons of Cush, and they were not brought up from Egypt in exactly same was in which the Philistines were brought up from Caphtor¹²⁹ and the Arameans from Kir.” God could have performed those other exoduses because he does possess sovereignty over those nations as well. However, those acts did not have the same significance as Israel's exodus from Egypt did. Israel is the only one which God knew, ידע, in the sense explained above. Each of those acts is different, just like the ‘content’ and the ‘form’ are different each time (for example, as it has been mentioned, the moral demand towards other nations is of a very different nature: none of those criticized in the book is called to responsibility for their internal affairs).

At the same time, the OAN in 1:3-2:16 have been recognised as serving as the book's introduction,¹³⁰ while the core of the book is dedicated to Israel and its relationship with God. Moreover, it has been observed that the arrangement of the “other nations” in this passage is such that it reflects their geographical arrangement around Israel's borders:

The series is (...) arranged geographically according to the pattern that is, slowly but steadily, closing on Israel. (...) the oracles alternate between nations that border on Israel and those that are neighbouring Judah; and as they alternate they move progressively closer to Israel and Judah's common border.¹³¹

This is a very dramatic technique, whose visual equivalent is frequently utilised in modern day thrillers and action films. Most importantly, it can be argued that in this “script,” both in the OAN and in 9:7, the “other nations” are merely background figures, used for setting the scene on which the drama of the relationship between God and Israel is played.

It is true that many passages (including the funeral dirge recalled above) suggest that this relationship is broken beyond repair. However, one might wonder whether the relationship in which one of the parties puts so much effort into expressing his disappointment and anger is truly terminated: it is a matter of popular psychological knowledge that the only true sign of a ceased relationship is complete disengagement. In the book of Amos, as is well known, the relationship does not cease in spite of Israel's destruction, or rather un-making, un-forming (exile out of the Land, dispersion). God - the author does not give up easily: after the un-making, un-forming, there is the re-making, re-forming of the so-called "epilogue" (9:11-15).¹³²

Thirdly, I would like to return to the issue of the covenant. As Ernest Nicholson observes,¹³³ the covenant debate, initiated in the early 19th century, seems to have run a full circle. It began with the observation that the word **ברית** is absent from the majority of the 8th century prophetic books (with the notable exception of the book of Hosea), which has led scholars such as Julius Wellhausen to argue that the 8th century prophets were not aware of the concept of the covenant between God and Israel, and that the notion of the covenant was a late development in the history of ancient Israel's religion. The controversy between the supporters and opponents of this view continued until the decade after the First World War when a consensus was reached. In the following phase of the debate it was almost universally accepted that the institution of the covenant between God and the tribes of Israel formed the basis of the nation's organisation as a tribal confederation from its very beginning. This view received further support in the form of results of comparative research: on the basis of formal similarities it was concluded that the Sinai covenant was a product of the same ideological matrix as the Late Bronze age political treaties.¹³⁴ However, starting from the late 1960s this consensus has again been questioned by scholars who argue that the notion of the covenant between God and Israel was a product of theological reflection of later ages and as such could not have been known to the 8th century prophets.

Nicholson himself regards the conceptualisation of the relationship between God and Israel in terms of a covenant as a theological innovation which "emerged at some point in the late monarchical period, in the time of Hosea or not long before."¹³⁵ Subsequently, it was expanded and reworked by the Deuteronomic writers from the late pre-exilic period on into the

sixth century.¹³⁶ In Nicholson's investigation, the evidence from Hosea (Hosea 6:7 and 8:1) is of crucial importance and he does not rule out a possibility that it was Hosea who first coined the notion of the covenant between God and Israel.¹³⁷

Most importantly for this paper, Nicholson envisions the concept of the covenant between God and Israel as one which in the 8th century was still in the process of emerging. Moreover, he points to a possibility that the demand of exclusive relationship with God, which later formed the basis of the covenantal bond, can be traced back to those “indisputably ancient traditions of Yahweh's deliverance of Israel's ancestors from Egypt and his victories on behalf of the tribes of Israel against their enemies during the early generations of Israel's emergence in Canaan.”¹³⁸ In the light of those traditions Yahweh is seen as “the God who alone stood at the foundations and beginnings of Israel.”¹³⁹ To sum up, Nicholson allows for the possibility that the notion of the covenant as a special and unique relationship between God and Israel grew from the exodus tradition, and links it with the activity of the 8th century prophets.¹⁴⁰

The reading provided in this paper supports Nicholson's thesis. It shows that in the book of Amos the relationship between God and Israel is depicted as a unique and special one, founded on the exodus as an act of kindness initiated by God and connected with obligations. In other words, my research shows that the book of Amos conveys ideas close to those usually associated with the **ברית**, without actually using the word. In the future research, it will be important to investigate whether a similar method applied to the exodus references in other 8th century prophetic texts would yield similar interpretational results.

I hope to have demonstrated that the notion of ‘form’ defined in Bakhtin's early works on aesthetics can prove to be a very helpful interpretational tool. However, a word of caution is in order. It is easy to notice that Bakhtin's aesthetics is subordinate to the ideas of wholeness, of overcoming dispersions, etc, rather to that of beauty. While this feature seems to confirm its appropriateness for dealing with the biblical prophetic texts, it is nevertheless important to enquire into the underlying reasons of such characteristics.

It is through ‘form’ that the ‘content’ (hero) of a work of art is consummated. The state of unconsummatedness is not described by Bakhtin as something positive. Rather, this

is a state of constant need, something that a human subject seeks to be salvaged from: “In the dimension of time (...) I find my own dispersed directedness, my unrealised desire and striving - the *membra disiecta* of my potential wholeness.” (AH 123) It is ‘consummation,’ removal from the open unitary even of being brought about by imposition of ‘form,’ that renders the ‘content’ calmed (PCMF 305), united and whole (PCMF 281). Ruth Coates even indicated some religious salvational values ascribed by Bakhtin to the category of ‘consummation.’¹⁴¹

On the other hand, however, Bakhtin and Simmel alike struggled with what was at that time a mainstream philosophical problem: how can life be rendered passive, given ‘form,’ ‘consummated’? Simmel “had an acute sense of the deadening aspect of form”¹⁴² and understood death as the moment when ‘form’ is given to life.¹⁴³ Bakhtin, who reformulated those questions to: how the “properly human principle of the hero might be given form?”,¹⁴⁴ associated ‘form’ with violence:

This passivity of the hero in relation to form (...) is not something given from the outset, but it is imposed as a task and must be achieved, actively achieved. That is, it must be fought for and won by conquest within the work of art by both the author and the beholder, neither of whom invariably comes out of the struggle as a winner. (AH 85)

On a similar note, it is in deeply negative terms that Bakhtin, in one of his lectures contemporary with the discussed essays, referred to the problem of aesthetisation of the world:

Content is not this or that particular something, but rather is an angle of vision, according to which everything in art can be extended or continued in purely cognitive or purely aesthetic terms. Content is the possible (infinite) prosaic context that, however, is always *paralysed* by form; the passivity of all that which comes to know, of all that which takes action. And the problem of aesthetics consists precisely in explaining how it is possible to *paralyse* the world like that.¹⁴⁵ (emphasis added)

As Bonetskaia points out, the section in AH in which Bakhtin offers a catalogue of artistic forms moving from confession to lyricism, to the classical and romantic character, type, lives of saints, is arranged by Bakhtin to reflect “the hero's increasing resistance to the author's consummating activity. Life indeed resists attempts to fetter it with form.”¹⁴⁶

If we follow Bakhtin down that path, we might arrive at the conclusions that Israel as the ‘content’ was legitimately rebelling against the oppressive, suffocating and paralysing ‘form’ (its land and the moral principle). Such a conclusion no doubt would be welcomed by some as refreshing and would certainly open a whole new set of question. Others, however, could reject a reading of this kind as too far removed from the spirit of both the biblical text, and ultimately, from that of Bakhtin's works. Let me conclude by arguing that in order to be able to work with Bakhtin's categories, and particularly with the early ones, we cannot afford to treat them as a ready interpretational machinery. While it would certainly be too hasty to reject the method just because of its entanglement in philosophical disputes and because of the unresolved tension between certain categories, informed choices, based on familiarity with Bakhtin's philosophical background and context, are necessary.

1. This paper is based on two chapters of my doctoral thesis entitled “The Book of Amos and the Ethical-Aesthetical Philosophy of M. M. Bakhtin” (in preparation), supervised by Dr. Adrian Curtis at the University of Manchester. The original research proposal was prepared with the help of Prof. Izabela Jaruzelska, University of Warsaw. At the initial stages of this project I benefited greatly from the readings and discussions at the “Amos and Hosea” seminar lead by Dr. Meira Polliack at the University of Tel Aviv in the academic year 2004-2005. While working on the Bakhtinian part of the project, I received kind help from Prof. Caryl Emerson, Princeton University and Profs. David Shepherd and Craig Brandist, Bakhtin Centre, University of Sheffield, for which I am very grateful.

2. The historical-critical school has traced the oldest layers of the text back to Amos and/or his immediate disciples. Thus Mays, Wolff, who recognises three eighth century strata, and Jeremias, who does not argue for any of the fragments to come directly from Amos but attributes them to the subsequent groups of “tradents.” James Luther Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969), 12-13. Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos. A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos.* (Hermeneia; trans. by W. Janzen, S. D. Mc Bride, Jr., and C. A. Muenchow; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 107-11. Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commenary* (OTL; trans. by D. W. Stott; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 5-6. This material was later supplemented by subsequent generations of editors, until the exilic (Mays, *Amos*, 13-14), or post-exilic period (Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 111-113, and Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 7-9 recognise three such later layers). On the other hand, Hayes argues that Amos could have actually written the book. John H. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet. His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abindgdon Press, 1988), 39. Paul argues for the integrity of the book as a literary whole and indicates the prophet Amos as its “rightful author.” Shalom M. Paul, *Amos. A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 6. Similarly, Andersen and Freedman argue that the text accessible to us now comes from Amos, either from his own hand, or from a disciple. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos. A New Translation with Introduction and Commenary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 11. It needs to be added that this

relative consensus regarding at least some of the passages has recently been questioned. Already Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 9, suggested that recovering earlier strata of the text (and especially Amos's words) can only be hypothetical. More recently Dines, Coggins and Linville have suggested considering the book as literary whole, and as a product of the Persian or Hellenistic periods, allowing nevertheless for a possibility that it does contain some passages of much greater antiquity. Jennifer M. Dines, "Amos," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (eds. John Barton and John Muddiman; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 582. Richard J. Coggins, *Joel and Amos* (New Century Bible Commentary; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 76-7. James Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 8-9. At the same time, Davies, who argues for "Jerusalem's triumph over Bethel and Judah's over Israel" as "the unifying agenda of the book of Amos" suggests that the core of the book of Amos may contain some oracles original to Amos and possibly even written by him. Those oracles were then collected on a scroll dealing with social issues. Philip R. Davies, "Amos, Man and Book," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past. Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes* (eds. Brad E. Kelle and Megan B. Moore; Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 131.

3. William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1905 (1994)), cxxiii.

4. Mays is cautious when he speaks about "some form of the covenant tradition" laying behind the formulation "Israel my people" or Amos 3:2, but he is certain to place the threats and indictments in the covenantal context. Mays, *Amos*, 7-8 (7), 48-9, 79-81. He argues that the reference to the exodus in Amos 2:9-10 belongs in the tribal cultic setting. *Ibid.*, 50. The material is dated as original to Amos, apart from the detail of the time spent in the wilderness. *Ibid.*, 13. The exodus theme in 2:10, 3:1 and 9:7 is used "as a basis for Yahweh's claim upon and sovereignty over Israel." *Ibid.*, 56. At the same time, he interprets the verb עָרַב in 2a as a direct reference to the covenant. *Ibid.*, 57. Paul, who attributes the whole of the book (with some minor exceptions) to the prophet Amos (Paul, *Amos*, 8), also accepts early dating of the covenant traditions. *Ibid.*, 142, n. 27. This allows him to see the references to the exodus in Amos 2:9-11 against the covenant-*rib* background. The people of Israel are guilty of breaking the covenant law. By breaking this law they have acted against the will of God-their Sovereign and benefactor (2:9-11). *Ibid.*, 87. Also Amos 3:1-2 is seen by him in the context of the vassal treaties. *Ibid.*, 102. Stuart describes the transgressions condemned in Amos 2.6-8 and elsewhere in the book as "forms of unfaithfulness to the covenant" (Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC, 31; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 283) and Amos 2:9-10 has for him "the ring of covenant prologue language" (*Ibid.*, 318). Also Amos 3:1-2 is based on the covenantal bond: his comment on those verses is entitled "Covenantal Accountability." *Ibid.*, 321-2. Andersen and Freedman presuppose the covenant as the background of the message of judgement in the book of Amos (e.g. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 92). The function of the reference to the exodus in 2:9-12 is on the one hand, to provide grounds for God's claims on Israel's love and loyalty and on the other hand, to vindicate God, by proving his "steadfastness in the agreement." *Ibid.*, 325. The same applies for 3:1-2. *Ibid.*, 383.

5. I use a lower case orthography to denote the cluster of traditions including the exodus proper (leaving Egypt), the period of wandering in the wilderness, and settlement in the land, and reserve the upper case orthography for the book of Exodus.

6. Jeremias, who does not openly refer to the covenant tradition in Amos, follows Wolff in separating verse 9, original to the Israel-strophe from verse 10, added in the exilic period. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 39-40. The latter is characterised by him as "a Pentateuch in nuce" (*Ibid.*, 41), which suggests an implied presence of covenantal themes. Similarly, while the election motif in Amos 3:2 is accepted by him as belonging to the "first edition of the book," the reference to the exodus in Amos 3:1b is treated by him as a Deuteronomistic addition. *Ibid.*, 49. Jeremias sees the social criticism as based on the principle of justice, "God's special gift to Israel," abused by Amos's generation. *Ibid.*, 3. Wolff places Amos' social criticism in the context of the Wisdom tradition, however he also indicates the relevant legal regulations. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165-8.

7. He argues that the text was either written by Amos, or by "someone in the audience." Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 39.

8. Ibid., 38.
9. Ibid., 39.
10. Ibid., 115. For a review of other commentaries arguing for the covenantal ideas as the correct background for understanding the book of Amos, see Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos. Basic Issues in Current Interpretations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991), 73-74 (especially note 16).
11. Dines, "Amos", 583. Compare Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 64.
12. For a helpful survey and discussion see Ernest W. Nicholson, *Exodus and Sinai in History and Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 1-52.
13. George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, "Covenant," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David N. Freedman; vol. 1; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1183.
14. Ibid., 1191.
15. Ibid., 1180-81.
16. Ibid., 1192.
17. Ibid., 1190.
18. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (vol. 1; trans. by J. A. Baker; London: SCM Press, 1961), 51.
19. Ibid., 52.
20. Ibid., 52.
21. Ibid., 51.
22. Ibid., 52.
23. José P. Miranda, *Marx and the Bible. A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (trans. by J. Eagleson; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), 138.
24. According to Miranda's reconstruction, the "code of laws" (Exodus 21:1-23:19), even though it eventually became linked with the Sinaitic account, was pre-Deuteronomistic and contained the most ancient material linking the law with Yahweh. He recalls also the scene from Exodus 18:16 (Moses conducting judgement during his father-in-law's visit), to indicate that the idea of "the statutes and instructions of God," serving the purpose of "doing justice between a man and his neighbour" preceded that of the Sinaic covenant. Ibid., 144-145.
25. "Recourse to the theologoumenon of the covenant has for years provided a kind of potpourri into which one could throw everything. (...) And above all this procedure spared the labour of investigating. It was a veil which kept us from looking at the Bible head on and asking the deeper question: What was the original connection between the laws and Yahweh?" Ibid., 142.
26. Ibid., 145.
27. Ibid., 150. "Only a God who is distinguished from the other gods because he does indeed do justice has anything to do with the legislation and the administration of justice." Ibid., 156.
28. Nicholson, *Exodus and Sinai in History and Tradition*, 51-56. The tradition about theophany at Sinai in

Exodus 24.9-11 is dated by him for a pre-exodic period but is not recognised as dealing with covenant.

29. Natal'ia Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form," in *The Context of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics* (ed. David Shepherd; New York: Harwood Academic Press, 1998), 84.

30. *Ibid.*, 84.

31. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," in *Art and Answerability. Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (eds. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1990) and Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art," in *Art and Answerability. Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (eds. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1990). In what follows, first of the essays is quoted as AH, while the second one is quoted as PCMF.

32. Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form", 84 and 87-9. Craig Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 27-52. Hirschkop argues that PCMF was included by Bakhtin in AH as a section entitled "Content, Material and Form." Ken Hirschkop, *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 162.

33. Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 42.

34. *Ibid.*, 18-19 and 41.

35. *Ibid.*, 42.

36. Hermann Cohen (1842-1918), the founder of the Marburg school of neo-Kantian philosophy proposed his own system of critical philosophy, composed of logic (perceived by him as the science of cognition), ethics (whose science is for him jurisprudence, or logic of social justice) and aesthetics (without any corresponding science, but with the "genius" of art as the "rational legislator of art"). Andrea Poma, *The Critical Philosophy of Hermann Cohen* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 136. His influence on Bakhtin is traced in some detail in Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 16-18.

37. On "production" of objects of cognition see *Ibid.*, 42.

38. *Ibid.*, 42.

39. Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form", 84-5. Galin Tihanov, "Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin," in *Materializing Bakhtin: The Bakhtin Circle and Social Theory* (eds. Craig Brandist and Galin Tihanov; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 62-3. For an excellent outline of Simmel's theory of 'forms,' see Guy Oakes, introduction to Georg Simmel, *Essays on Interpretation in Social Science* (trans. and ed. Guy Oakes; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 8-27. Oakes describes the category of 'form' has been as "Simmel's fundamental methodological instrument." *Ibid.*, 8.

40. *Ibid.*, 13.

41. *Ibid.*, 10.

42. The categories, criteria and principles defining any 'form' are immanent to the 'form' and arbitrary toward reality (life), characterised by "the smooth transitions." *Ibid.*, 11-12. In other words, "the categories of form do not reproduce the properties of real life nor can they be deduced or derived from life." *Ibid.*, 13.

43. *Ibid.*, 13.

44. Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 19.

45. Tihanov, "Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin", 63.

46. Bakhtin differs from Simmel in that, as it has been discussed, for Bakhtin life objectified in the aesthetic activity of the author (whether as the more general 'content,' in PCMF, or as a hero, in AH) is not "raw": it has been previously pre-organised into categories of cognition and ethics.

47. The category of 'isolation,' detachment of 'content' from the sphere of "ordinary" cognitive-ethical reality, or life, has been recognised as rooted in Simmel's notion of culture as realm of boundaries. Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 43. Basing on Bakhtin's statement that 'form' is a boundary "that has been wrought aesthetically" (AH 90) (rendered by Tihanov as "that has been given aesthetic treatment," Tihanov, "Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin", 63), Brandist introduces the notion of 'aesthetic boundary.' "Bakhtin argues that from within life, the artist bestows form on the contents of life as a "gift." Life then, as Simmel had argued, transcends itself, it becomes "more than life," it becomes art. The artist bestows form as an aesthetic boundary, and it thus becomes a part of culture. Culture is now treated not as a "spatial whole," but as a realm of boundaries." Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 43. Bakhtin's insistence that culture, and in particular aesthetic culture, always implies a boundary is connected with his notion of 'form' as connected inseparably with 'author,' transcendent of life: "Form, being that which life is incapable of producing itself without altering its own identity, is the boundary separating life and (aesthetic) culture." Tihanov, "Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin", 63.

48. "In the course of his work, the artist must deal with the physical, with the mathematical, with the linguistic, and the aesthetician must deal with physics, mathematics and linguistics. But all these technical work carried out by the artist and studied by aesthetics (without which there would be no work of art) does not enter into the aesthetic object created by artistic contemplation, that is, into aesthetic being as such, into the ultimate goal of creativity: all of this is removed at the moment of artistic apprehension, just as scaffolding is removed when a building is completed." (PCMF 294-5)

49. 'Aesthetically valid form' is indissolubly connected with material (PCMF 265); it is realised in the material (PCMF 303). "While it [material - ELW] does not enter into the aesthetic object in its material, extra-aesthetic determinateness, it is indispensable for the construction of the aesthetic object as a technical element" (PCMF 302).

50. However, Bakhtin rejects the conclusion that the 'aesthetic object' does not exist "prior to the creation of work and independently of it" as "completely absurd," (PCMF 295, footnote j). He is aware of the fact that "verbal activity, or [aesthetic - ELW] activity in general (...) in reality does not go beyond the bounds of the material work" (PCMF 306). He poses as a problem the issue of the way in which such activity of the creative subject, seemingly limited to the material dimension of a work of art, nevertheless "gives form to cognitive-ethical content, a fully consummated form." (PCMF 306). He seeks a solution to this problem in the category of 'isolation,' or 'detachment' mentioned above. "Isolation out of the unity of nature destroys all the material elements of content. The form of materiality becomes possible for the first time on the basis of the natural-scientific conception of unitary nature: outside it, an object could be perceived only animistically and mythologically - as a force and a participant in the event of life. Isolation once again dematerialises: an isolated thing is a *contradictio in adiecto*." (PCMF 307) At the same time, the aesthetic isolation "makes the word, the utterance, and the material in general (the sound of acoustics, etc.) formally creative." (PCMF 308) The question whether or not such solution is satisfactory from the philosophical point of view is an issue exceeding the scope of the present thesis.

51. The notion of "feeling" can be traced back to Hermann Cohen's aesthetics. Cohen develops the concept of a pure feeling as a new aesthetic branch of consciousness, with the ability to produce new - aesthetic - objects from the objects of logic and ethics. The pure feeling possesses a unifying character, due to which it is capable of producing a new object as a new content of consciousness. Consciousness, through pure aesthetic feeling, contemplates nature and man in their unity (rather than, as in the production of objects in logic or in ethics, in the distinction between them). The object of the pure feeling is the "nature of man" (man's body and soul) and "man in nature" (man's body belongs to the general nature; hence, the general nature is part of man's nature). Thus, a new figure (Gestalt) is conferred on these two objects, which - united in this aesthetic objectification - become one new 'aesthetic object' (rather than just a sum of man and nature). The pure feeling is identified by Cohen as love (see further). Poma, *The Critical Philosophy of Hermann Cohen*, 137.

52. Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form", 87.

53. The newness of aesthetic reality comes from the transformation of the reality of cognition and action by the author's "new, axiological relation" (PCMF 279) to it. Thus, newness in aesthetics is connected by Bakhtin with the author and through him, with 'aesthetic form.' Paradoxically, this "secondary newness" is valued by Bakhtin higher than the "primary newness" of cognition and ethics, in which: "everything is new from the outset, and that is why there is no novelty here; here everything is ex origine, and that is why there is no originality here." (PCMF 280).

54. Ibid., 87, see also AH 198. More precisely, the productive, 'form'-giving activity is not reserved only for the author/artist: it is equally a domain of the beholder/contemplator of an aesthetic act (AH 24, 74-5). Ruth Coates links the reader's/beholder's participation in the author's vision with the idea of the author as the sustainer of the creative event. He is "a feature of the work of art, who continues to exert his authority at its recreation in the event of reading or contemplation. As readers, we are said to immerse ourselves in the author's vision, the author actively directing our own vision ("our activity is his activity") until the end of the work." Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 42.

55. This relationship is described by Bakhtin as aesthetic love: "Aesthetic activity proper comes into effect with the moment of creative love for the content (the life) which has been co-experienced, i.e., of that love which brings forth an aesthetic form for the co-experienced life that is transgredient to that life." (AH 86) It is important to bear in mind that there is nothing sentimental in Bakhtin's notion of aesthetic love, described by him as a "proper understanding of the author's position in relation to the hero" (AH 81). Rather, like all his categories, it has first and foremost philosophical roots. Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 44 recognises the influence of Herman Cohen also in Bakhtin's idea that imposition of 'form' is an act of love. Extending his category of 'feeling' as the aesthetic branch of consciousness, Cohen argued that in art even the ugliness (defined by Cohen as the representation of the extreme of man's concreteness and finiteness, of "the low, animal condition of man." Poma, *The Critical Philosophy of Hermann Cohen*, 137) can be embraced and transformed by the *pure feeling of love*: "Love would not be true if it did not also wish to embrace the ugly. Love embraces it, transforms it, makes it one of the stages of the beautiful. Love understands the ugly, filling it with its own power." (Cohen, cited in Ibid., p. 146) This influence was mediated by Matvei Kagan (1998-1937), Bakhtin's colleague and friend educated in Marburg. Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 44. At the same time, Galin Tihanov draws our attention to the other source of "the semantic field of heartfelt giving, of caressing rediscovery, loving bestowing of shape, and a tender appropriation of the hero's otherness by the author." According to him, this kind of language "reactivates the deep ethical layer in Bakhtin's aesthetic." Tihanov, "Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin", 63-4. Finally, while Cohen associated the universal meaning of love with Platonic eros (Poma, *The Critical Philosophy of Hermann Cohen*, 137), Bakhtin bestowed some religious significance on the authorial activity. This theme has been explored by a number of scholars but received the most detailed and broad treatment from the hands of Ruth Coates (the chapter entitled "The Aesthetic Gospel of "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity"" in her book Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author*). In this essay she concluded that Bakhtin's author is the "reflection of the divine Creator" in the Christian theology (Ibid., 40). In a different essay, she discusses the notions of Christ's Incarnation and *kenosis* as other guidelines for Bakhtin's characterisation of the author's attitude toward his aesthetic creation. Ruth Coates, "The First and the Second Adam in Bakhtin's Early Thought," in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith* (eds. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino; Rethinking Theory; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). For a different take on the *kenotic* motif in Bakhtin, see Alan Jacobs, "Bakhtin and the Hermeneutics of Love," in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith* (eds. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino; Rethinking Theory; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

56. Such extra-artistic ("hybrid and impure," PCMF 272) manifestations of aesthetic vision listed by Bakhtin include "the aesthetic contemplation of nature, the aesthetic elements in myth and in world views, and, finally, everything called aestheticism, that is, the illegitimate transfer of aesthetic forms into the domain of ethical action (personal-experiential, political, and social) and into the domain of cognition (the quasi-scientific, aestheticised thought of such philosophers as Nietzsche)." (PCMF 271; compare AH 134) The distinction between pure (artistic) and hybrid manifestations of the aesthetic run for him along the line of the material

realisation: “aesthetic vision outside art is hybrid precisely because here one cannot achieve complete organisation of the material - as, for example, in the contemplation of nature.” (PCMF 302; compare PCFM 272 and AH 188-9)

57. I am grateful to Professor Philip Alexander for drawing my attention to this point.

58. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part I: From Adam to Noah* (trans. by I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 23.

59. *Ibid.*, 24.

60. Nahum Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 6.

61. *Ibid.*, 6.

62. Compare AH 129. The notion of the author's activity in relation to the ‘content’/hero is connected with two other important categories: ‘aesthetic distance’ (the author's ‘outsideness’) and ‘consummation.’ While the former cannot be analysed here, the latter is briefly referred to in the concluding passages of this paper. On the philosophical sources of Bakhtin's notion of ‘outsideness,’ see Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle. Philosophy, Culture, Politics*, 44-48. For the theological inspirations, see e.g. Coates’s works mentioned above, note 55 on page 27. This asymmetry between author (‘form’) and hero (‘content’) is expressed by Bakhtin in strikingly sexist language. The author, as a subject, is identified with masculine activity, while the manifold of life, entering into the ‘aesthetic object’ as its ‘content,’ is described as femininely passive and naive (e.g. AH 136; compare e.g. PCMF 305). Brandist and Tihanov look for the source of Bakhtin's gender stereotyped imagery in the religious significance attributed to the authorial activity (*Ibid.*, 45) and more precisely, in the tradition of Russian theological discourse (Tihanov, “Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin”, 63).

63. Mays, *Amos*, 49.

64. Paul, *Amos*, 87.

65. Mays, *Amos*, 49.

66. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 329.

67. The perception of (the people of) Israel as a collective hero (character) is a noticeable feature of many biblical texts, particularly the exodic narratives. It has found response in biblical scholarship. E.g. Ilana Pardes analyses them in terms of a collective biography. Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel. National Narratives in the Bible* (Contraversions. Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture and Society; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

68. Wolff argues that contrary to 3:1b, which according to him comes from the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic redactor, the election motif in 3:2 belongs to the “original” text of the book. According to this commentator, Amos 9:7 indicates that exodus was rejected as the basis of “the security of election.” Amos 3:2 introduces a different understanding of election, rendered by Wolff as “selection.” Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 176. Jeremiah does not argue for the covenantal source of this verb but emphasises that its meaning is richer than that of the technical term **בָּחַר**, “elect” (50). **יָדַע** points to God's intimate personal favour. Jeremiah, *The Book of Amos*, 50. The election motif in Amos 3:2 is accepted by him as belonging to the “first edition of the book.” *Ibid.*, 49.

69. *Ibid.*, 50.

70. Wolff translates **משפחות הארמה** as “clans of the earth.” Clan, composed of “houses” (extended families) and being a division of a tribe (compare Josh 7:14-18) was chosen by Amos as “the sort of ethnic grouping

characteristic of the population of the world.” Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 177.

71. Ibid., 176.

72. Ibid., 177. Wolff argues that all positive references to the exodus come from the Deuteronomistic-Deuteronomistic redactor. Basing on Amos 9:7, according to him original to Amos, he argues that the prophet's purpose was to undermine the nation's belief in the exodus tradition with the motif of election as a source of hope for salvation. Having rejected the exodus tradition as a source of the election motif and basis for the sentence in Amos 3:2, he proposes the tradition of the giving of the land and the revelation of Yahweh's will. Ibid., 176-7. Mays, *Amos*, 57 and Paul, *Amos*, 102 interpret the verb עָרַב in Amos 3:2a as a direct reference to the vocabulary of the vassal treaties. Also Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 321-2, and Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 383 argue that Amos 3:1-2 is based on the covenantal bond, however the latter two commentators play out the sexual meaning of the word and argue that the link is mediated by a marital metaphor. Ibid., 381-2.

73. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 177.

74. Andersen and Freedman adopt a radically different perspective. They interpret the fact that the oracle against Israel is a part of series and that in 3.1-2 other nations are mentioned as well as an indication of a universalist message: “Israel is just one of the *mishpahot* of the world.” Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 381. I comment on this in the concluding section of the paper. See page 16.

75. See note 68 on page 28.

76. Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author*, p. 42. Compare AH 119.

77. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 177.

78. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 53-4.

79. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 169. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 39.

80. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 327-8.

81. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 64.

82. Paul, *Amos*, 90. See note 108 on page 33 for his second observation regarding this issue.

83. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 114.

84. Mays, *Amos*, 50.

85. Let us note in passing that here the wilderness period is referred to entirely positively, as an example of God's kindness, and not as punishment. Paul, *Amos*, 91. Similarly, in Amos 5:25 it is idealised as the period of harmonious relationship between God and Israel: in this “golden age” (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 137) Israel did not bring God sacrifices, or offerings (Richard S. Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary of the Book of Amos* (2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1969), 198; Mays, *Amos*, 111; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 264; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 104-5; Paul, *Amos*, 193-4; Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 117), but “something more than sacrifices” (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 137): obedience, justice and righteousness. Wolff, who identifies this verse as Deuteronomistic, links it with the next one (v. 26): the wilderness period was characterised also by absence of worship of foreign deities. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 265. Andersen and Freedman argue that the wilderness period was not characterised by lack of cult, but rather that the cult was accompanied by the practises of justice and righteousness. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 532. Hayes, on the other hand, argues that the particular kinds of sacrifices mentioned in this passage were not offered, while other were. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 175. Coggins proposes to see this verse as reflecting the situation after the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians, when many might have felt that there was now no basis for their religious practice. The text undermines the importance of sacrifices and suggests an alternative model of religiosity.

Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 132-3.

86. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 169.

87. Similarly Paul: "The goal of the exodus and the journey through the wilderness was ultimately "to possess the land of the Amorites." Thus the fourth in the series of God's favours to his people: the gift of the land. All four of these events are inexorably and intrinsically linked together, for the redemption from Egypt was only the first stage in the grand master plan - the bestowal of a permanent settlement." Paul, *Amos*, 91.

88. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 64-5.

89. The oracle against Judah (Amos 2:4-5) is sandwiched between the oracles against foreign nations and the oracle against Israel. Critical scholarship has long recognised its secondary nature (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 97; but see Paul's discussion in Paul, *Amos*, 20-27). On the other hand, as Coggins observes, in canonical terms, it is an integral part of the book of Amos. Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 97. For the purposes of the present reading it is important to observe its distinctive characteristics. On the one hand, it follows the pattern of the oracles against foreign nations (it is comparable in length, the opening formula is faithfully repeated and the closing formula is the same as in the oracles against Tyre and Edom (1:10, 12), also regarded as secondary). On the other hand, there are no references to offences against other states (as in oracles against other nation), or offences against other members of the community (as in the oracle against Israel). Offences are formulated in such way that it suggests their being directed against God (Ibid., 98), but the formulations are very general. For a perceptive discussion of deeper implications of Judah's sin and punishment, see Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 60. Linville observes that "the identity of Judah (...) is wrapped up in the greater nation." Ibid., 60. The limited space of this paper does not allow me for further discussion of this oracle.

90. Michael Walzer, "The Prophet as Social Critic," in *Interpretation and Social Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 79.

91. I am grateful to Doctor Diana Lipton for directing my attention to the possibility of such reading. Jeremias makes a similar point when he argues that the people of Israel, through the particular experience of God who for their sake completely destroyed the mighty Amorites, have "other standards of justice than do other nations." Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 40.

92. Mays, *Amos*, 50.

93. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 177.

94. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 40.

95. Wolff argues that the emphasis on strength and height of the Amorites is meant to underscore the greatness of God's saving act on the one hand, and Israel's ungratefulness on the other hand. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 168. At the same time, Paul recognises the purpose of the description of the Amorites as mighty as emphasises the fact that only God's help enabled the needy Israel to enter the land and annihilate the powerful inhabitants. Paul, *Amos*, 88. While he is correct in recognising that Israel's neediness is emphasised here, I have already discussed that the fact that no human action in annihilating the Amorites is mentioned (see p. 9).

96. "The very existence of the people of Israel was predicated upon their being redeemed from Egypt, from the house of bondage." Ibid., 90.

97. Nahum Sarna observes that "it is a fundamental biblical teaching that the original, divinely ordained order in the physical world has its counterpart in the divinely ordained universal moral order to which the human race is subject." Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, 6). What he means is, of course, creation of the world. While it has been pointed out that the moral standards are different for Israel and for other nations, it seems that in the book of Amos the created order consists of the overlapping spheres: the spatial (geographical) 'form' Israel acquired as a result of the exodus, the principles of the moral order also connected with the exodus, and the order of the natural world (God is depicted as the creator in the hymn

fragments 4:13, 5:8-9, 9:5-6). See also p. 15.

98. Similarly Jeremias: Israel's experiences with God, especially the “foundational salvific deed at the exodus” were meant to serve as a standard for the behaviour for the people. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 40 and 49.

99. The most hotly debated issue in this verse is the interpretation of the word **נעלים**, which leads to different interpretations of the whole verse. Most commentators (Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165-6 is an exception) assume that what is criticised is not the institution itself, but its abuse: the debts involved were very small (in this case the word **נעלים** is interpreted as referring to a pair of sandals, symbol of a basic necessity or a thing of a very small value, Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 49; Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 140; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 35-6; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 313; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 316), the judges involved in the procedure have been bribed (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 49; Mays, *Amos*, 45-6; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 316-17), or the practice was connected with seizure of the land of the debtor (here the sandals are treated as part of tradition connected with change of land ownership; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 49-50; Mays, *Amos*, 45; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 316). Paul sees here a charge of sale into debt slavery of an otherwise guiltless person, for the sake of money and a hidden gain (he corrects the disputed word into **נעלם**, something hidden). Paul, *Amos*, 77-79. At the same time, Polley focuses on the dishonesty in judicial court. Max E. Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire. A Socio-Historical Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 135. On the other hand, Cripps finds in this passage two separate accusations: of bribery in the lawsuit and of unjust debt slavery. Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 140. Overall, the impoverished members of the community are being treated as marketable goods. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 110; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 36.

100. The situation in this verse, because of the cultic setting (the altars and the ambiguous “house of their God”), has also been interpreted as depicting a cultic transgression (Hans M. Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos. Studies in the Preaching of Am 2, 7B-8; 4,1-13; 5,1-27; 6, 4-7; 8,14*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 33-36; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 317). However, majority of commentators see here the criticism of misuse of the institutions of pledges and fines, pointing also to the lack of congruence between the worship and the social practice. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 50; Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 142-3 and Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 317 assume that the situation described took place at night and thus the garments were unjustly held, while the wine was either received as a fine, or bought by money received through unjust judgement. Mays, *Amos*, 48 sees both as evidence of corruption of the legal system which, instead of protecting the “weak,” secured the profit of the “strong.” Wolff sees the offence in the disregard protecting the socially disadvantaged persons and in inappropriate use of the fines, which were meant to make destitution of damages, and not sponsor “drinking bouts.” Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 167-8. Similarly Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 37-8, and Paul, *Amos*, 83-7, though the latter interprets the garments as distraints for unpaid debts (Ibid., 83). Hayes writes about the disrespect and disdain for the owners of the pledged garments, who could not afford the pleasure of sacrificial meals. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 113. The acquisition of the wine as a tax, fine, or interest on debts is in the text itself treated as an oppressive act. Its consumption during cultic meals is deeply inappropriate, as “persons would normally utilise and enjoy the products of their own labours.” Ibid., 114. Similarly Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 135.

101. Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 102.

102. The problematic verb **השאפים** in this verse has been taken to mean either “those who pant after” (from the root **שאף**), the crime is then identified as extreme greed (Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 110), or “those who trample upon” (from the rare root **שוף**, Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 133), signifying here violent physical oppression (Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 316). The image is often linked with the next, also quite cryptic formulation **ודרך עניים יטו** and together they are interpreted as mistreatment of the poor in court (Mays, *Amos*, 46; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 166; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 316). Paul and Jeremias separate the two offences and identify them as abusive and full of contempt treatment of the dependent persons (Paul, *Amos*, 80; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 36) and blocking them through bribery from “obtaining the privileges and

prerogatives to which they are naturally entitled” (Paul, *Amos*, 81; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 36; compare Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 317). Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 111 also reads the latter as reference to abuse of juridical process, while Linville suggests that the verse can be read as referring to the corruption of the “humble piety” of the poor righteous, and/or the persecution of them for it. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 61.

103. This is perhaps the most controversial charge, due to the unclear identity of הנערה (“young woman,” see the footnote below) and various connotations attributed to לכו אל. This expression has been interpreted by some commentators as having cultic overtones. This, combined with a cultic interpretation of the accusation of profanation of God's holy name in the same verse (למען חלל את-שם קדש) and the situation described in v. 8 led Barstad to suggest that the offence was connected with participation in a *mrzh* feast (according to him referred to also in Amos 6:4-7, Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos*, 127-142), in which the young woman was a hostess (see below). Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 318 argue that the crime could have been a cult of a female deity. However, majority of commentators attribute to the expression הלך ל either a sexual connotation, or an explicitly sexual meaning (“copulation,” Paul, *Amos*, 81-3; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 37). The crime has been identified by them either as using the services of a prostitute, or sexual abuse of a female slave or simply of a young female. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 317 and Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 37 seem to point to the possibility that rape is implied, while Haynes sees here an infringement of a sexual taboo (father and son having sexual relations with the same woman). Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 112. In this context it has been argued that in Amos any (and especially sexually) immoral or oppressive behaviour is a profanation of God's name (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51; Paul, *Amos*, 83; Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 112; Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 103). Finally, some, combining the two approaches, interpret this verse as a rebuke of illicit worship practice, i.e. sex with a temple prostitute (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51, Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 142; Mays, *Amos*, 46). However, if this was the case, one would expect to see here the proper words for a cultic, or “regular” prostitute (קדשה or זנה), Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 102.

104. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 209. Some commentators, basing mainly on 6:4-6, but also 2:8b, 3:15 and 5:11, and 4:1, add “luxury” to the list of Israel's sins (e.g. Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 140; Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 133-4). It may be noted that those commentators tend to associate luxury with all kinds of moral corruption. E.g. Polley describes the sexual abuse of the “marriageable girl” in 2:7b as “gross sexual immorality” on the part of the “aristocratic father.” All that is discussed by him under the rubric of luxurious “lifestyle of the wealthy.” Ibid., 134. However, as I have pointed out, 2:8b is usually identified as a criticism of misuse of the institutions of pledges and fines. The reference to the summer and winter houses in 3:15 and the great house and the small house in 6:11 need not be a condemnation of the rich, but a merismus, conveying the idea of totality through citing opposite extremes (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 115, see there also for intertextual insights). “Houses of hewn stone” and “pleasant vineyards” (5:11) of which the owners will have no use can well be seen as symbols of futile efforts (Ibid., 127), rather than rebuke of luxurious lifestyle. At the same time, the more or less vivid pictures of self-indulgence (and female dominance) painted by some of the commentators on 4:1 (e.g. Mays, *Amos*, 42; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 332; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 206) are based on nothing more than two words: הביאה ונשתה, which can be translated simply as “Bring and we shall drink” or “Bring that we may drink” (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 117) and most probably on the commentators' standards of gender roles in the society (Judith Sanderson, “Amos,” (eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; *The Women's Bible Commentary*; London: SPCK, 1992), 208-9). It seems that in this verse the reason for the condemnation is first and foremost oppression of the poorer members of the community (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 117). This leaves us with 6:4-6. I have mentioned that it has been identified by Barstad as *mrzh*, a sacred feast, probably part of a funeral ceremony (Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos*, 127-142). If this is true, the criticism would be rather religious than social in character (compare Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 110-113). However, if we reject the latter interpretation, the actions fiercely condemned in this passage, even if connected with considerable expense, are inherently neutral (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 135). In such case, the passage can be also read as a criticism of the attitude of dancing on a volcano and indifference toward the ruin of the community (6:6b): it is inappropriate to enjoy expensive and idle lifestyle in face of national crisis (compare David J.A. Clines, “Metacommentating Amos,”

in David J.A. Clines, *Interested Parties. The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup, 205; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 80, 84). Alternatively, the reason for the condemnation of expensive lifestyle may be that it was perceived as founded on economic abuse of the underprivileged members of the society (Mays, *Amos*, 117), or because it was deemed to show lack of social solidarity (Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 133-4). In either case, the passage provides us with a clearly unsympathetic depiction of the lifestyle of the wealthy group. It is not, however, a relevant material for the present reading.

105. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 172. The victims in this passage are described as צַדִּיק (also in 5:12), אַבְיֹן (the plural form also in 4:1, 5:12, 8:4, 8:6), רְלִים (the plural form in 4:1 and 8:6, singular in 6:10), עֲנִיִּים (also 8:4) and finally, in 2:7b הַנְּעֵרָה. The first one, צַדִּיק, “a righteous one,” is usually interpreted here as “innocent in the legal sense” (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 49; Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 141; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165; Mays, *Amos*, 46; Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 108; Paul, *Amos*, 77; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 316), however Coggins notes that the religious meaning of righteousness may be implied (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 100). Religious overtone is possible also in the identity of אַבְיֹן, “the needy” (Ibid., 100) and עֲנִיִּים “the afflicted,” but also “humble,” “meek” (Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 61) (also in 8:4). The clearest meaning of social disadvantage is connected with the word רְלִים “the poor” (also in 4:1 and 8:6, singular form in 5:10), however the parallelism with the previously discussed words found also in “other religious discourses” (Ibid., 61) may suggest some kind of religious identity attributed to the victim (Ibid., 61). Similarly, Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 310 indicate the parallelism between the pairs of words: צַדִּיק and אַבְיֹן on the one hand, רְלִים and עֲנִיִּים on the other hand. This parallelism suggests complementariness between them: the first pair is rendered by them as “righteous poor,” while the second on as “humble destitute.” Polley quotes Kapelrund to point out that in Amos poverty is equated with righteousness and wealth with sinfulness. Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, 133. Linville puts it more strongly: the discussed passage reveals the ideology that “the unjust have the wrong religion and the people with wrong religion are unjust.” Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 63. The identity of הַנְּעֵרָה has been a subject of a considerable amount of conflicting opinions. Andersen and Freedman are isolated in suggesting that a goddess is meant (Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 318), while Barstad argues that “the girl” was a hostess of a syncretic cult form *mrzh* (Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos*, 33-36, see also 138-142). However, those interpretations have been rejected by majority of commentators. The “maiden,” “girl of marriageable age” (Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165) has been identified by some as a cultic prostitute (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51; Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 142; Mays, *Amos*, 46), or a female slave (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 51; Mays, *Amos*, 46; Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 112). At the same time others argue that such conclusions are not well supported. E.g. Paul argues that “the female referred to in Amos is not a harlot or a slave, but just a “young woman” who belongs to the same category as that of the רְלִים and עֲנִיִּים previously mentioned - just one more member of the defenceless human beings in northern Israel.” Paul, *Amos*, 82-3. Similarly Coggins: “the young woman is to be seen as a victim of oppression, (...) she is, like those referred to earlier in the verse, a defenceless victim” (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 103) and Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 37 suggests that the young woman belonged to the family; her victimisation was at the same time a violation of the principles of cooperative cohabitation.

106. Possibly the royal officials, Izabela Jaruzelska, *Amos and the Officialdom in the Kingdom of Israel: The Socio-Economic Position of the Officials in the Light of the Biblical, the Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, 1998).

107. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 34.

108. Similarly Wolff: “Israel’s “war crimes” are acts committed by the powerful in oppressing the poor among their own people.” Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 165. “Amos contrasts the present violent treatment of the poor in Israel with the historical acts of Yahweh on behalf of the lowly.” Ibid., 168. Paul similarly observes that the “immoral and unethical treatment of those who are unable to defend themselves is juxtaposed here to his

protective treatment throughout their early history when they were unable to defend themselves.” Paul, *Amos*, 87. He is right in stating that the reference to the Amorties in v. 9 contrasts “God’s benevolent actions to Israel in the past, when they were in need, with their present actions toward others who are now in need.” (Ibid., 90-91) referred to in the preceding verses. Jeremias argues that verses 9-12 “intensify the accusation by confronting the behaviour of the Israelite leaders toward those dependent on them with Yahweh’s own intervention for Israel in its helplessness during the land conquest.” Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 38. Compare Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate. The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos* (JSOTSup, 372; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 207-8.

109. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 39.

110. Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 105.

111. Verse 6:13 (“you who rejoice in Lo-debar, who say, ‘have we not by our own strength taken Karnaim for ourselves?’”) can be seen as a rebuke of Israel’s attempts to either acquire (Paul, *Amos*, 219-220), or regain (Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 365; Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 192) additional territories. Most commentators (Mays, *Amos*, 122; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 288; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 119; Paul, *Amos*, 219-220; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 580) recognise a play on words in this passage: לֹא דְבָרַי can signify “nothing,” as well as a geographical location, and the word קַרְנַיִם signifies also “horns,” which in turn symbolise power (Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 156; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 288). Israel is rebuked for its *hubris* (Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 679) and arrogance (Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 107), linked with suppositions that the victories over such powerful place (Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 288-9; Paul, *Amos*, 219; Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 128) were won by its own strength. However, Israel’s victories under Jeroboam amounted to nothing (Ibid., 128); thus the culprits were rejoicing over “merest trivia” (Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 137). The depiction of military defeats in Amos 2:14-16 and 4.10b can be seen as an implied criticism of engagement in warfare. Mays suggests that 2:14-16 envisages a reversed “holy war”: instead of leading Israel against its enemies, God approaches it as the enemy. Mays, *Amos*, 54 (compare Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 44). Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 171-2 sees here a reference to the earthquake, Paul, however, points out that the undefined nature of the enemy increases the “terror and horror within the threat” (Paul, *Amos*, 96). Even though according to Mays, *Amos*, 80; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 339 and Paul, *Amos*, 147-8 4:10b reflects the catalogue of covenantal curses and Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 72 places the sequence of plagues in 4.6-10 outside any particular historical experience, Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 443 link the defeat in 4.10b with Israel’s military campaigns.

112. Jeremias seems to express a similar intuition when he argues that the recalling of the unique experience of God the people of Israel had transforms “the sum of fortuitous individual deeds in vv. 6-8” into “the sin of the people of God as collective.” Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 40. In a similar manner, Wolff points out that transgressions in 3:2 (עֲוֹן) are not singular acts of “deliberate malice,” but rather “reality of the consequent act which issues in concrete results.” Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 177. Thus, “it is not Israel’s deeds as such that bring calamity; this is rather the result of Israel’s turning away from the course prescribed by its election, a turning away that manifests itself in transgression.” Ibid., 177.

113. Paul, *Amos*, 158; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 472-474.

114. Laurence Rosen, *Law as Culture: An Invitation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 170-1 and 175.

115. See Coggins’s comment on Amos 2:13-16. Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 107. The cosmic dimension of vision in the book of Amos is the subject of a recent book: Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*.

116. Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (trans. by G. Rabassa; London: Jonathan Cape, 1970).

117. Ibid., 422.

118. In the paper entitled “Wine and Memory. The Roles of the Prophets and the Nazirites in Amos 2:11-12” presented at the King's College London/SBL Hebrew Bible Graduate Conference in London, on 15.05.2008, and in my doctoral thesis (see note 1).

119. To the connotation of remoteness Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 192 adds, probably in spirit of time rather than in that of the text, the connotation of uncivilisedness and despise because of the colour of the skin. Similarly Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 262-3. Mays, *Amos*, 157 suggests that the humiliating effect came from the role which the Cushites played in their society, i.e. that of slaves. It seems, however, that the connotation of remoteness (being “on the edge of Israel's ordinary experience,” Coggins, *Joel and Amos*, 153) is intended.

120. It has been pointed out that the similarity between Israel and other nations is emphasised by the unusual spelling: the Cushites are called here “Sons of Cush,” which provides a parallel to “Sons of Israel.” Moreover, the spelling of the word “Philistines” is fuller, possibly serving the same purpose. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 347; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 163; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 363; Paul, *Amos*, 282; Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 169.

121. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 164.

122. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 347.

123. Paul, *Amos*, 283.

124. *Ibid.*, 283 n. 16.

125. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 378.

126. *Ibid.*, 379.

127. Mays argues that the exodus, placed in the context of international history, cannot hold “Yahweh the captive of Israel's own existence. (...) Instead it is the act of the world-God who thereby in no way qualifies or limits his sovereign freedom.” Mays, *Amos*, 158. Similarly, Wolff suggests that “by paralleling the exodus from Egypt with the early history of the Philistines and the Arameans, Amos has deprived his audience of a last court of appeal against him.” Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 347. In the chapter of my thesis mentioned above I argue that the exodus can be seen as an efficient argument in Amos' negotiations with God in Amos 7:1-6.

128. This thought is perhaps most strikingly spelled out by Cripps: “In Amos we seem to see already the glimmering of the greater light of the universality of the fatherhood of God and of the proclamation of salvation to the whole world.” Cripps, *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary*, 264.

129. Caphtor has been identified as Crete, Capadocia, or Cyprus. Paul, *Amos*, 283; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 163; Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 169.

130. Möller, *A Prophet in Debate. The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos*, 214.

131. *Ibid.*, 195. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Adrian Curtis, for drawing my attention to this observation.

132. Most commentators, except Paul, *Amos*, 288-290 and Hayes, *Amos the Eighth-Century Prophet*, 223-228 who attribute this passage to Amos, date this passage for the exilic or post-exilic era. I suggest that from the literary point of view this passage is not as incongruent with the book of Amos as a whole as it has long been assumed.

133. Ernest W. Nicholson, *God and His People. Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 3-117.

134. Mendenhall and Herion, “Covenant”, 1194.

135. Nicholson, *God and His People*, 191.
136. Ibid., 191.
137. Ibid., 187.
138. Ibid., 202.
139. Ibid., 202.
140. Ibid., 206.
141. Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author*, 42-48.
142. Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form", 85.
143. Ibid., 85.
144. Ibid., 88
145. Lev Pumpiansky, "Appendix: M. M. Bakhtin's Lectures and Comments of 1924-1925 from the Notebooks of L. V. Pumpiansky. Introduced, edited and annotated by N. I. Nikolaev. Introduced, translated and with additional annotations by Vadim Liapunov," in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith* (eds. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino; Rethinking Theory; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 207.
146. Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form", 89.

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