A RHETORICAL READING OF GOMER'S IDENTITY AND CHARACTERIZATION IN HOSEA CHAPTER 1:2-2:20.

By

Benard Kairu Maina

This Dissertation is a Partial Fulfillment of Requirement for Award of Master Degree in Theology from St. Paul's University.

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Supervised by

Prof. D.C. Chemorion

&

Dr. Z.A. Muga

August 2019

DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution.

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Word Count: 21, 728

We confirm that the work reported in this dissertation proposal was done by the student under our supervision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Nancy, our children Victor and Victoria, and my parents Humphrey and Jacinta. The unwavering support from my brothers and sisters is appreciated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gracious is God's guidance and mercies. I acknowledge Saint Paul's University Faculty of Theology lecturers who taught me when pursuing Bachelor of Divinity (BD) and Master of Theology (MTH) with special recognition to my supervisors Prof. D.C. Chemorion and Dr. Z.A. Muga, The Rt. Revd. Timothy R. Mbuthia bishop ACK. Diocese of Mt. Kenya South who gave me permission to study through Ven. Canon Joseph N. Kirabi and his successor Ven. Dr. Leonard N. Mbito Vicar ACK. Githunguri Parish where I served during this study. My fellow evangelists and MTH class of 2017 encouraged, inspired and motivated me.

ABSTRACT

The rare preaching from the Book of Hosea indicates the general perception in the scholarly world that the Book of Hosea is a problematic text with marriage narrative documented in (Hos 1-3) portraying Hosea's wife, Gomer as a harlot. This expresses the failure of Israel's obedience to the will of God which renders to unfaithfulness. Hosea married Gomer who the narrator describes as a wife of harlotry. She bore three children with Hosea that God uses to send Israel's message of judgment predicaments. Regardless of varying interpretations and common understanding, the marriage between Hosea and Gomer represents the relationship between God and Israel, a reality that attracts attention and criticism. An in-depth research on the Book of Hosea unearths the understanding of his message, linked to his marriage life of betrayal and mistrust. The cycles of repentance, redemption, and restoration in Hosea's prophecy reflects the societal life experiences of daily coexistence and interrelationships. This research explores the question on why God commanded His prophet to marry a harlot because prophets were expected to be people of moral uprightness and beyond questionable life standards. Their families were to serve as models and measuring yards beyond reproach. The aim is to understand the message of (Hos 1:2-2:20) through a rhetorical method. The working hypothesis is that Gomer was unfaithful. The research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one gives the preliminaries of the background to this research. Chapter two gives the literature review. Chapter three outlines the methodology. Chapter four articulates the exegesis. Chapter five is the presentation of data analysis and conclusions of this research.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCE.:	Before Common Era
c.:	Latin word *'circa'*-around
f:	Following verse
ff:	Following verses
G14:	Grid 14
Heb:	Hebrew
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
KJV:	King James Version
LXX:	Septuagint
NBS:	Netherlands Bible Society
NEB:	New English Bible
NIV:	New International Version
NRSV:	New Revised Standard Version
RSV:	Revised Standard Version
SCM:	Student Christian Movement
TaNaKh:	Hebrew Bible (*Torah, Nabiim, Ketubim*)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This study seeks to provide a rhetorical reflection on Gomer's identity and characterization from (Hos 1:2-2:20). The assumption of a contemporary understanding is that the harlot of (Hos 1:2[1]) describes Gomer as a real harlot. This chapter provides the research preliminaries including the background to the problem, problem statement, objectives, research questions, justification, and study scope.

1.2 Background to the Problem

The Old Testament contains the Book of Hosea as the first of the Minor Prophets of the 8th century commanded by God to go and take a wife of harlotry and get children of harlotry (Hos 1:2). He marries Gomer daughter of Diblaim, "forming his prophetic call as the country becomes a harlot by abandoning Yahweh" (Reiss M, 2018:1-5). In (Hos 1:2) the Hebrew term זנים[2]-(*zenunim*) is expressed in plural from the root זנה[3]-(*zonah*). Hosea got his first born, God named the child יזרעאל[4]-(*Jezreel*) saying I shall punish the House of Jehu for the bloodshed at Jezreel and put an end the sovereignty of the House of Israel (Hos 1:4). Hosea got the second born, God named her לא־רחמה[5]-(*Lo-Ruhamah*) saying I shall have no more pity for the House of Israel (Hos 1:6). Hosea got the third born, God named לא־עם[6]-(*Lo-Ammi*) saying you are not my people and I do not exist for you (Hos 1:9). These names signify hidden messages of the predicaments to Israelites.

The reality of Hosea's marriage is criticized by Lipshitz (1988), Ezra (1974), Maimonides (1935), and Reiss (2018) arguing that the marital union between God's prophet and a harlot deserves exploration. They claim that (Hos 1:2-2:20) is visionary and none reality based arguing that it is scandalous and so should be regarded as psychological occurrence or disorder. This genre is a prose of a marriage narrative. Scholars claim that the Aramaic Targum Jonathan rejects this marriage story claiming that a Midrash changed the image of a harlot into a wife who

[1]All biblical quotations are from RSV unless otherwise

[2]זנים Noun common plural absolute-'harlotry' as used in Hosea1:2 and equivalent

[3]זנה Noun common plural absolute-'to be a harlot'

[4]יזרעאל Proper noun without gender, number or state as homonym-'Jezreel'

[5]לא־רחמה Proper noun without gender, number or state-'no pity'

[6]לא־עם Proper noun common masculine singular contract suffix 1st person-'not my people'

looks disreputable, her house untidy, and beds not made, as a result of inability to envision what Hosea envisioned. Hosea points at treaties and covenants made with foreign nations, specifically Assyria which leads to foreign alliances and the pressures they exerted on Israel's core religious and social values of swearing, lying, killings, stealing, and committing harlotry. The "promiscuous wife imagery alludes to political conspiracies and social injustices of the ruling class internal affairs, external policy to seek security through foreign alliances and unfaithfulness to Yahweh through idolatrous cultic practices" (Hong, 2006:33-78).

Hutton (2004) argues that Hosea's prophecy does not distinguish between religious and secular concerns, matters of worshiping the correct God and worshiping God correctly. Hong (2006) refutes it arguing that Hosea expresses the troubled relationship between Yahweh and Israel that ended with Yahweh's eventual reconciliation with the faithless Israel. The rebellious and promiscuous wife imagery alludes to political conspiracies and social injustices of the ruling class in internal affairs and their external policy that sought security through foreign alliances and infidelity to Yahweh through idolatrous cultic practices. The social, political and religious infidelity signifies Israel's broken relationship with Yahweh and despite Israel's ungrateful response Yahweh's love prevents Him from giving up Israel's redemption.

The Book of Hosea is "abandoned by preachers for its strange prophetic command as Hosea marries a harlot" (Yee, 199:197-200). Von Rad (1965) argues that preachers use it selectively although his message addresses societal unfaithfulness. He articulates the unfaithfulness of Hosea's time with human life's facets namely spirituality, morals, social, financial, judicial, governance, and public affairs. Comay & Brownrigg (1993) concurs with Von Rad (1956) that Hosea reveals little personal background although his prophecy offers glimpses of his troubled life whereas his name means salvation in reference to his position as Israel's beacon of hope for the repentant turning to God in obedience.

Yee (1994) interprets the Book of Hosea arguing that Hosea expresses the image of Israel's faithlessness. The wife of harlotry is his condemnation of Israel's heterodox cult, he attacks veneration of *Baal* and cultic practices incompatible with the worship of Yahweh, and the socio-political changes brought about by Israelite's transition from tribal alliance to the state, the extraordinary religious experiences of being freed from state oppression to enter into an intense personal relationship with the saving deity, and prohibitions against alien gods. There has been no extent of detailed rhetorical criticism on (Hos 1:2-2:20) like this research intends and the already done commentaries and research provides the necessary background and reference

information. The contribution of this study is its clear and specific focus on the documented passage in (Hos 1:2-2:20) to explore the identity and characterization Gomer who paints the image of Israel in the light of Sinai covenant. Hosea recounts his sour marriage resulting from Gomer's unfaithfulness of leaving him and chasing other lovers. This narrative portrays Gomer as a wife cum harlot making Hosea tormented rather enjoying.

Previous studies on the Book of Hosea have covered good ground on its interpretation but also left-out important considerations. A few examples are worth mentioning here. Yee (1994) interprets Hosea leaving out the harlotry addressed in (Hos 1:2-2:20) but mentions the faithlessness of Israel before swiftly turning to political leadership styles and systems. Sandy (2002) interprets Hosea as plough shares and pruning knifes. Hong (2006) interprets Hosea's illness and healing in socio-economic context.

Rhetorical approach is the analysis of the "art of persuasion in speech and composition concerned with stylistic matters and the design of a text with an aim of exploring the functions of a text within a communicative act and how that function is fulfilled" (Renz, 2002:1-2). This research focuses on exploring the identity and characterization of Gomer using rhetorical approach to reread (Hos 1:2-2:20) in the light of Hosea's critique of the Israel's oppressive and debilitating mode of production intrinsic to the national cult.

In (Hos 1:1) is a self-declaration as Douglas (1990) argues that the recipient of the oracles from God that are recorded under the name of Prophet Hosea was Hosea himself in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and Jeroboam II of Israel c.767-686BCE his date differs with Beeby (1989) and Comay & Brownrigg (1993).He adds that Hosea wrote for Israel prior to Samarian destruction (722BCE) although editorial work happened in Judah after Samarian fall but before Babylonian invasions (605-586BCE). McCathy & O.Carm (1990) supposes Hosea dates (750-732BCE). Hosea was active in the 3rd quarter of 8th century in the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746BCE) till the eminent fall of northern kingdom. He prophesied "in prosperity, comparative stability to instability, toppling dynasties, social unrest, warfare, vacillating leadership and subjugation, humiliation , final disaster when the Canaanite religion of nature myths stressed on fertility not morality" (Beeby, 1989:1-2).

The historical context in which the Book of Hosea arises from consists of the social turmoil of the 8th century prophets dealing with the "economic abuses & depletion resources and social inequalities between the rich and the poor after the death Jeroboam II and there were heavy tributes paid to Assyria, exploitation of the peasants by the rich to pay debts, fraud and cheating"

(Yee, 1994:200). The cultic turmoil involved the worship of Yahweh being infected with Canaanite religion of *El*, *Baal*, and *Asherah*, there were "fertility rituals involving temple harlotry whereby the Israelite religious beliefs got influenced by other religions that had the Canaanite religious heritage" (Yee, 1994:200-3). Hosea condemns these cultic rites that had been acceptable. The political turmoil involved political turbulent period after peaceful rule of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-17:41) that was followed by "violent assassination of kings, court corruption, encroachments of the western by Assyrian's King Tiglath-Pileser III and southern by Syro-Ephramite war (735-733BCE) resulting into unpredictable competition of international power for political arena" (Yee, 1994:200-3).

Since "reading is an art and a skill with many parts" (Jasper, 2009:12), the reader's role is to interpret the message by giving life to the dry text and supplying the emotions, tone and volume and hence the reading should be "carried out carefully and deliberately to understand the textual communication between the author and the recipients" (Chemorion, 2011:74). The reader contextualizes and applies the text to its relevant field. The importance of this research is to explore the identity and characterization of Gomer drawn from (Hos 1:2-2:20) using a rhetorical approach to understand the function of Gomer in Hosea's marriage.

1.3 Problem Statement

From the background above and the literature review the gap identified is lack of agreement in the interpretation of (Hos1:2-2:20) as clearly seen. The scriptures provide answers to all the situations through proper interpretations, unfortunately (Hos 1:2-2:20) yields to interpretations characterized with controversies claiming that the text is metaphorical, historical or an allusion causing confusions. There are many cases of domestic and marital issues in the society and although the moral ethical living demands faithfulness as addressed by Hosea when Israel made advances to Assyria through bribes, the cases of unfaithfulness have become rampant. This research applies rhetorical approach to explore a proper interpretation of (Hos 1:2-2:20) for the identity and characterization of Gomer as an attempt to answer the question whether Hosea married a harlot.

1.4 Objectives

1. To survey the main issues captured in the recent literature on the Book of Hosea.
2. To do an exegesis of (Hos 1:2-2:20) using rhetorical approach.
3. To examine the theological significance of Gomer in (Hos 1:2-2:20).

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the main issues captured in the recent scholarship on the Book of Hosea?
2. What does the exegesis of (Hos 1:2-2:20) in a rhetorical approach reveal?
3. What is the theological significance of Hosea's marriage?

1.6 Justification

The passage in (Hos 1:2-2:20) documents Hosea's marriage with unfaithful woman traditionally understood as a harlot that expresses the bitterness of unfaithfulness and although the moral and ethical living demands faithfulness as addressed by Hosea, the bribing and unfaithfulness cases are increasing daily. Scriptural interpretation may fail to offer answers to this problem if the approach applied aims at providing historical development, or unevenness of interpretations, and interpretative descriptions. Rhetorical criticism can offer answers through the "quest to understand the devices, strategies, and structures employed to persuade reader" (Gorman, 2009:14). Despite the bible having a variety of passages that can be used to address this issue, this research applies rhetorical criticism to (Hos 1:2-2:20) as an exploration to offers insights through its theological implications to assist in answering the question of unfaithfulness through its powerful theme in the marriage metaphor to add knowledge as reference for scholarship that stimulates more research. This research arises out of the "criticism in interpretative practices" (Lundin, R. 1997:3-4) to deal with the "principles of interpretation as science and art because the bible is a divine book with the primacy of authorial intention for testing the validity of various suggested interpretations" (Kaiser, W. C. & Silva, M. 1994:15-6, 33).

1.7 Study Scope

This exegetical study focuses on (Hos 1:2-2:20) without rendering the rest of the book insignificant but relevant for the topics it addresses. Using rhetorical criticism it applies the tools of biblical study namely Bible Works and Versions, commentaries, concordances, lexicons, dictionaries, and journals that apply the tenets and adherence of exegetical framework, structure, and guidelines of rhetorical approach.

1.8 Ethical Requirements

The researcher ensures that there is acknowledgement and citations of all the information and ideas borrowed from other sources. The researcher ensures that this research benefits St. Pauls' University and the society through proper use of the library and other facilities provided. The

researcher observes human respect for rights, being honest, and free from bias, neutral and objective. Confidentiality is upheld through St. Paul's University ethical and style guide.

1.9 Definition of Operational Terms

This section focuses on the four main terms that operational in this research namely characterization, identity, harlotry, and rhetorical approach.

Characterization is "the mental or moral qualities distinctive to an individual, the strengths and originality in a person's nature, or the descriptive and distinctive character" (Stevenson, & Waite, 2011:238).It is "the way of representation in films, plays or books to appear real and natural or describing something by stating its main qualities that are typical of it" (McIntosh, 2013:243). It is the "literal or dramatic portrayal of characters" (Williams, 1967:90) According to McIntosh (2013) characterization is the combination of qualities in a person that making the person different from others.

Identity refers to "the fact of being who a person or a thing is through characteristics determinant" (Stevenson, & Waite, 2011:707).Identity refers to "who a person is, or the qualities of a person or a group which makes them different with others" (McIntosh, 2013:771).

Harlotry is a derivative that denotes "promiscuity in women" (Stevenson, & Waite, 2011:651). It "generally applies to women who are of profligate life and who has given themselves to such for a gain or as a form of religious service" (Hasting, 1898:304). In (Hos 1:2) harlotry is expressed as זנים referring to perverse behaviour, disloyal and disobedient to the master and to mean committing harlotry. A harlot is a "symbol of idolatry" (Hasting, 1898:304). In the cultic system, harlotry refers to lack of religious devotion to the worshipped deity. Harlotry was "known from Israel's early days with prohibitions (Gen.38:15; Lev. 19-21), the worst form was the religious sanctions which the prophets addressed as national apostasy (Is. 1:21; Jer. 13:27; Ezek. 16:16; Hos 1:2)" (Douglas, 1962:1048).

Rhetorical approach is "using the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing or that which relates to and is concerned with expressions of terms with intentions to persuade or impress the readers or hearers" (Stevenson, & Waite, 2011:1234). The modern usage refers to "the assumption that only one answer is possible compelling the hearer to make it mentally which impresses more that the speaker's statement" (Burchfiel, 2004:675).Rhetorical criticism is a "quest to understand the devices, strategies and structures employed in texts to persuade and to affect the readers as well as the overall goals or effect of those rhetorical elements" (Gorman,

2009:14). Soulen & Soulen (2001) claims that rhetorical criticism was adopted in 1968 by Muilenburg to denote methodological approach on scriptures employed to fashion the literary unit of prose or poetry. Wilt (2003) argues that rhetoric is the faculty that observes the available means of persuasion furnishing the spoken words. Rhetoric discerns the devices formulated and ordered to a unified whole and lays them bare in the content, structure, and style of the composition in order to discover the writer's intent and meaning notably by Longman (1987) that the authorial intentions are the interpretative anchor.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the preliminaries of this research including the background and expressing how this research attempts to reclaim Hosea's prophetic voice since during Hosea's time, prophetic proclamation was a special way of God speaking to humanity. Hosea was a prophet from the northern kingdom. He married a woman that God describes as a harlot and bore with her three children. The next chapter articulates the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is literature review articulating the survey of scholarship on the Book of Hosea, different interpretative perspectives on the Book of Hosea, the themes in (Hos1:2-2:20), Hosea's rhetorical persuasiveness, and chapter conclusion.

2.2 Survey of Recent Scholarship on the Book of Hosea

The recent scholarship on Hosea by Yee's (1994)claims that the text Hosea is an imagery argues that Hosea's message is "Israel's faithlessness portrayed in apostasy and subordination of women, hitting on political elites that oppressed the poor, Israel's image of faithlessness as a promiscuous wife is Hosea's condemnation of Israel's heterodox cult" (Yee, 1994:200-3). Hosea attacks the veneration of *Baal* and cultic practices that were regarded as compatible with the worship of Yahweh and tolerated. Hosea promotes the Yahweh-alone movement instrumental in later development of Israelite monotheism. He suggests rereading the sexual imagery embedded in Hosea in the light of his critique of Israel's oppressive and debilitating mode of production intrinsic to the national cult.

As history, Hutton (2004) claims that Hosea deals with treaties and covenants made with foreign nation and specifically with Assyria which lead to foreign alliances and the pressures such alliances exerted on Israel's core religious and social values. There was swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and harlotry which the 8th century prophets used to mean idol worship. One cannot distinguish between religious and secular concerns, matters of worshiping the correct God and worshiping God correctly. When Israel reached the Promised Land, their appetite for larger and fuller crops, ever-increasing wealth and security, led them to various forms of religious syncretism, worshiping the god *Baal* and other related deities of Canaan alongside Yahweh" (Hutton, 2004:22-9). Hosea is obsessed with the issue of religious apostasy, of worshiping the right God, caring about worshiping Yahweh alone. Hosea's oracles communicate hope in the divine grace as God is bound by divine commitment to justice and willingness to forge a relationship based on the illogical nature of love and compassion. God will be called Husband in a relationship marked by love, tenderness, and mutual faithfulness.

The message of Hosea is embedded in his troubled relationship that Hong (2006) argues it was the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, Yahweh eventually reconciles with the faithless Israel. The promiscuous wife imagery alludes to political conspiracies, social injustices of the

ruling class, internal affairs, external policy, foreign alliances and unfaithfulness to Yahweh through idolatrous cultic practices. This socio-political and religious unfaithfulness signifies Israel's broken relationship with Yahweh. Despite Israel's ungrateful response, "Yahweh's love prevents Him from giving up Israel's redemption" (Hong, 2006:134-7).

Hosea's portrayal of the Old Testament harlotry is not a new concept but that which existed during Joshua's time when he sent spies to the Promised Land in (Jos 2:1-24; 6:22-25) recounting Rahab's story and describing her as זנה-(z*onah*-Jos 2:1). Rahab "was a landlady or an inn-keeper not a harlot because this Hebrew word also means a landlady or an inn-keeper" (Frendo 2013:1-3). Chitando & Klagba (2013) claims that Hosea elucidates how domestic violence affects women in the context of HIV/AIDS and adds God's faithfulness never changes, although His methodology may change. Reiss (2018:1-5) argues that Hosea describes a form of idolatry which was predominant in Assyrian influences to Israel causing political problems, temple cults, and idolatry. Hosea mixes unreality with reality while burdened with impossible missions, suffering immeasurably from his task. Hosea's case resembles mental health as symptoms of schizophrenia or moral verdict concerning certain forms of unacceptable and unintelligible behavior culturally bound. The most important to understand is whether Hosea's visions were legitimate from God, cultural aberration, or schizophrenic.

2.3 Different Interpretative Perspectives for the Book of Hosea

To arrive at an interpretation of a scripture, the interpreter use different perspectives putting in mind the argument by Menezes (2003) that prophets were not writers but heralds and oral proclaimers of God's message treasured and handed down from the older generations to the younger ones until it was acknowledged as the Word of God interpreted by faith communities. Hong (2006), Kidner (1981), Smith (1996), Yee (1994), and Wolff (1974) agree that the passage on Hosea's marriage and family attracts criticism while on the other side Calvin (1986), and Wilt (2003) claim that there are different views raised about the text of Hosea showing diverse understanding from the readers' reference point and the study tools applied in its interpretation. Some of the interpretative issues raised about (Hos 1:2-2:20) are outlined below.

Hosea's "theme is built around the marriage in (Hos 1:2-2:20) focusing on Sinai covenant as marriage between Israel and God" (Carlson, 1984: G14). Hutton (2004) argues that Hosea addresses situations during the prosperous days of Jeroboam II in the 8th century with temporary power decline of Assyrians making Israel, Judah and western Asian states to flex their muscles

and venture search for wealth, international business, political expansion, and power. Hosea prophesied in a context of a growing division between the wealthy and the poor, addressing the northern kingdom rulers and leaders. Hosea prophesied a few years before Assyria getting into its feet but Israel was declining. Harlotry is the image employed by Hosea that portrays people's apostasy of running after other gods. Smith (1996) interprets Hosea arguing that it symbolizes the land and people's apostasy from God who passed a definite sentence of the land's desolation and the people's exile which is not a final doom but discipline to make Israel focus on the ultimate return promise of the nation's youth, renewed betrothal to Yahweh and restoration of nature.

The idea of Gomer's harlotry according to Yee (1994) is a marital relationship that teaches about the depth of Yahweh's covenantal love, expressed in Hosea as a husband taking enormous efforts to restore His unfaithful wife and children. Yahweh has such generous love for Israel and its corrupt leadership. Yee (1994) discusses the feminist's interpretative problems that women have regarding gender-specific images for Yahweh's covenant, Yahweh portrayed as an all-forgiving husband and Israel as the sinful promiscuous wife. The Book of Hosea has ideological and social links among women subordination, shame and sin, such imagery destabilizes masculinity norms. It depicts the conflict between the faithful divine husband and his sinful wife Israel but not the clash between prophet and male aristocracy.

The idea of Gomer's fall according to Snaith (1956) precedes the declaration of Israel's restoration. Hosea introduces the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib (701BCE) and the restoration promises before the sentence of doom and threats of exile. Hosea's historical oracles condemn Israel's sins of apostasy and waywardness. Snaith (1956) deduces that Hosea accuses Israel for making advances to bribe Assyria for help, Israel and Judah builds palaces and fortified cities and puts their trust in them rather in God. Hosea records penalty and retribution that Israel pays for double mindedness. Hosea expresses Israel's inescapable sins from the days of Gibeah, war overtakes them and the Lord comes against the lawless ones and punishes them for the wicked deeds of the ancient horror of Gibeah and the bull worship of Bethel as He deals with sin and human waywardness.

Reiss (2018) uses psychoanalytical theory to study Hosea arguing that he was schizophrenic and his language can be viewed as symptomatic of a personality that requires analysis. He adds that Hosea's schizophrenia involves loose associations and disturbances of language and thoughts including hallucinations and delusion of opulence of sexual and religious nature. Hosea appears

to have disturbed images of self and others, and consequently act on the bases of these images with actions that tend to be symbolic or metaphoric hence he may be rendered ineffective as his thinking operates within ideas and concepts without connections or a completely insufficient connection with the main idea, resulting into a confused, weird, incorrect, or an abrupt action. He may have lost his former selves and taken on new identity, or believed he was someone else and attempted to assume the name and characteristic of that other person. In his evaluations, Reiss (2018) argues that Hosea was besieged with delusions of being Moses or having become like God. His self-image arises from his delusions and develops his divine message believing that like God, he has the power to change a harlot into a faithful wife. Hosea's grasp of reality had disintegrated like schizophrenics. These are false allegations. Hosea was a prophet with a divine message from the Lord for the Israelites.

Hutton (2004) argues that Hosea was obsessed with religious apostasy of worshiping Yahweh alone, his harlotry image symbolizes apostasy and faithlessness. Israel hired foreign alliances as lovers hence the image of harlotry. These foreign alliances exerted pressures on Israel's core religious and social values that caused social evils and harlotry without distinctions of worshiping the correct God and worshiping God correctly. Hosea reacts against the oppressive mode of production embodied in the 8th century Israel involving intensive agribusiness producing grain, wine, and oil for export by the elite class, volatile political situation with reckless foreign policies, kingship, and priesthood, and monolatry with veneration of *Baal* having legitimated elite's interests. One cannot isolate Israelite cult from state interests and licentious fertility cults of *Baal* that infected pure Yahwism. God freed Israel from Egyptian oppressions to worship Him alone in a self-sustaining tribal fellowship. The "worship of fertility goddesses and the perverse sexual practices of their cult informs Hosea's marriage and symbolization of women as evil" (Yee, 1994:108-9). Hosea condemns this fertility cult by depicting it as harlotry which was a form of a system of religious devotion directed to towards *Baal*.

Hosea's marriage narrative portrays Gomer as a harlot to express Israel's failure to recognize God's will. Paruch (2012) resolves that Hosea marries Gomer who God describes as a wife of harlotry that bears two sons and a daughter- (Hos 1:2-9) that God uses to send Israel's message of predicaments. To clarify, a harlot is a "promiscuous woman", a prostitute is "typically a woman who engages in sexual activity for payment", a landlady is a "woman who keeps lodgings", and a whore is a "derogatory term for someone who works as a prostitute" (Stevenson & Waite, 2011:651; 801; 1153; 1649). This research uses rhetorical criticism to explore the

identity and characterization of Gomer in (Hos 1:2-2:20) through an exegetical study exploring Gomer's as זנים from the root-word זנה which for Snaith (1956) addresses individual and personal identity, faithfulness, and daily covenantal demands.

2.4.0 Themes in (Hos 1:2-2:20)

The three major themes in (Hos 1:2-2:20) are covenant, marriage, and harlotry. This research has given some focus on each of them specifically.

2.4.1 Covenant

The word covenant ברית-את[7]-(*berith*), found in (Hos 2:18; Gen 17:19) is the idea at the epitome of Hosea's message. According to Brown (1906) ברית has three perspectives namely as a covenant between men, or between God and man or the covenant phrases. For Hosea the term covenant refers to a "divine constitution or ordinance with signs or pledges that the Lord made with Israel at Sinai (Horeb) with a covenant sacrifice that became a divine promise with its renewal (Hos 2:18-20)" (Brown, 1906:136-7). According to Botterweck & Ringgren (1975) covenant implies the notion of obligation, liability, or commitment from bond, covenant is synonymous to law, commandment and commitment confirmed by oath (Gen 21:22; Duet 29:9). Fahlbucsh (1999) and Rowley (1951) claim that a covenant is a formal agreement between God and Israel to worship God alone for His saving acts that are celebrated in covenant renewal. Githuku (2012) adopts covenantal elements of commitment, oath, agreement, swearing for compliance and incorporates the idea of the ritual of covenant making which involves "verbal statements for the undertaking, sacrifice, witness, and a shared meal" (Githuku, 2012:131-2). The researcher takes the covenant to mean an agreement between two parties that binds them together, deserving fulfillment.

2.4.2 Marriage

Hosea married Gomer. Hasting (2000) clarifies that marriage is a love union of one man and one woman for a whole life communion as an exploratory relationship for spouses to discover, delight, and cleave to each other as ordained by God since creation, "allowing men and women to leave parents and join in exclusive, monogamous union to carryout creator's will (Gen 2:18) until the death of one partner dissolves the union" (Reid, 1995:204-5). Lossky (2002) and

[7]ברית-(*berith*) Noun common feminine singular-'covenant'

McIntosh (2013) argue that God joins with humanity in fervent, patient, strong, and elective divine covenant like marriage which is a legally accepted relationship between two people who live together after an official ceremony. Marriage is an agreement of a union between a male adult and a female adult to live together and take care of each other fully from the first time they unite as expect in (Hos 1:2-2:20) between Hosea and Gomer.

2.4.3 Harlotry

Harlotry takes the center stage of (Hos 1:2-2:20) describing Hosea's wife as זנים which Green (2008) translates into harlotry while Clines (1998) prefers prostitution although both refers to religious unfaithfulness. The expression in (Hos 2:4-6) portrays an image of a wife and children of harlotry to demonstrate Israel's disobedience and disloyalty to Yahweh's covenant. While זנה-(*zonah*) is "the state of being a harlot, זנים-(*zenunim*) refers to committing harlotry and to a person of perverse behaviours, disloyal and disobedient to the master" (Brown, 1906:275-6).

2.5 Hosea's Rhetorical Persuasiveness

Rhetoric is "the faculty that observes available means of persuasion that furnishes spoken words depending on the personal character of the speakers that puts audience into certain frames of mind through the words of the speech itself" (Wilt 2003:186-227) by appealing to their emotions and basic values. The rhetorical devices employed by the narrator to achieve it in the Book of Hosea are "symbolism, repetition, figuration, and analogy" (Yee, 1994:209-210). Hong (2006) argues that the narrator applies kaleidoscopic images to deliver Yahweh's message effectively through unmatched use of effective, expressive and diversified images, similes derived from animals and natural world that depicts Yahweh's dual aspects of judgment and deliverance. There is also use of pun or wordplays for one or two rhetorical goals to connect two or more distinctive ideas while repetition of words infuses concentration of thoughts by heightening the feelings, alliteration, and assonance.

As enumerated by Hong (2006), Kidner (1981), Wilt (2003), Wolff (1974), and Yee (1994), (Hos 1:2-2:20) is a metaphor incorporating vivid descriptions like harlot, husband, wife, son, Israel, figures of speech-harlotry, death, punishment. There is use of biography, narration (Hos 1:1), autography- recounting own experiences, foreshadowing- 'I will', flashback (Hos 1:4) dialogue (Hos 1:2), monologue and soliloquy (Hos 2:2-17), similes, imagery, allegories, and synonymous parallelism. Brown (1906) establishes that the narrator uses sarcasm of names, Hosea means salvation while Gomer denotes proximity or plowshare, described as a harlot (Hos

1:1-3). Von Rad (1965) denotes that Hosea uses sayings as messenger formula, combining short saying into larger units establishing components part borrowed from non-religious literary categories as his way of speaking (Hos 2:1). The narrator uses oracles to express divine messages (Hos 1:4- יהוה[8]ויאמר[9]-'and the Lord said'), imageries of vivid descriptive words like her breasts, strip her naked, wilderness, patched land, kings, Judah, Israel, wife, harlot, and children of harlotry. There is use of narrative and prose in story-telling (Hos 1:1ff) and periodization (Hos 1:1). The use of personal meditation, internal conversation or two-way conversation incorporates repetitions to create emphasis. Hosea uses forecasting (shall or will Hos 2:7), futuristic language dominates (Hos 2:5-23) intermingled with flashbacks- 'it was', 'then than now. He uses similes and comparative expressions- 'as or like'- (Hos 2:3), commands and instructions-'Go' (Hos 1:2), and personification-'the land commits'- (Hos 1:2).

It is observed that as Wilt (2003) argues, an image can lead to another topically-related one into larger pictures in the listener's mind that add impact, beauty, evocative power, and certain mood to the text manifested rendering the message more attractive, compelling and memorable and enabling authors to speak partially and suggestively about understanding, explaining, or describing the wonderful nature of God dealing with creation. He claims that images encourage readers to mentally conceive and emotively experience situation vividly through imagination.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that the Book of Hosea is understood and interpreted as a message about Israel's religious and political situations addressing the prevailing unfaithfulness. As observed from the literature review the interpretation and study on the Book of Hosea has not used a perspective that gives it a deeper thought of Hosea's marriage with Gomer who is depicted as a harlot to express unfaithfulness. This is the gap where this research fits using rhetorical criticism to study Gomer's identity and characterization to address the question of unfaithfulness as exploited in the theme of marriage in (Hos 1:2-2:20). After enumerating literature review the researcher advances this study by articulating the anticipated research methodology.

[8] יהוה Proper noun no gender no number no state-"Yahweh, Jehovah, Lord'.

[9] ויאמר Verb qal waw consecutive imperfect 3rd person masculine singular homonym-'to say, said'

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is an articulation of the methods this research applies in the attempt to interpret (Hos 1:2-2:20) as exegetical study done in a rhetorical approach.

3.2 Research Design

This is a purely library research which is qualitative and that uses data collected through library research and observations which "does not produce numerical data but words" (Mugenda, O. M. & Mugenda, A. G. 2003:155). The primary data used in this research is the biblical text of (Hos 1:2-2:20) and the secondary data comes from the bible commentaries and journals on the Book of Hosea. This text is a narrative and like most common genres in the bible it is "an account of specific-time events and participants whose stories are recorded with a beginning, a middle, and an end, presenting things directly with its key elements as scene, point of view, dialogue, and rhetorical devices of repetition, inclusion, and chiasm" (Kaiser, & Silva, 1994:69-75).

3.3The Exegetical Process

Defining exegesis, Gorman (2009), Carson (1996), and Chemorion (2011) agree that it is a process by which one seeks to understand the biblical meaning. This research is an exegetical study on the narrative of (Hos 1:2-2:20) using rhetorical approach following Gorman's (2009) paradigm. Trible (1994) backs Longman's (1987) claim that authorial intention is never ignored, assumed, underrated, over-looked, or overemphasized because it provides anchors in the interpretative relativity. Chemorion (2011) and Jonker & Lawrie (2005) argue that when doing biblical texts analysis, remember consistently that the stories were told or written down in ancient times with theological intentions in mind.

Exegesis is a task that aims at revealing the understanding of the intended messages of biblical texts. This "process is carried out carefully and deliberately to understand the textual communication between the author and the recipients" (Chemorion, 2011:74). The exegetical precautions enlisted by Carson (1996) are root fallacy that presupposes the meanings of words, semantic anachronism occurring when late use of words is read back into earlier literature and semantic obsolescence which mirrors image of semantic anachronism. It is erroneous to appeal to unknown or unlikely meanings or carelessly appeal to the background material. Verbal *parallelomania* which is not acceptable was coined by Samuel Sandmel (2012) referring to the desires of biblical scholars to audience parallels of questionable worth. It is fallacious to "link

language, mentality, and false assumptions about technical meanings where by an interpreter assumes that words always have certain technical meanings, there exists the problem of surrounding synonyms and componential analysis of unwarranted semantic disjunctions and restriction or unwarranted restriction of semantic fields, and unwarranted adoptions of expected semantic fields"(Carson, 1996:27-45). There is also the problem of relating to the semantic background of unwarranted neglect of distinguishing peculiarities of corpus and finally unwarranted linking of sense and reference.

The researcher carries out this task seeking "to understand the nature of texts and how they can be interpreted for use as a point of reference in a huge range of possibilities in its fundamental ways of perceiving the world in thinking and understanding" (Jasper, 2009:1-3). The process and concept of biblical authority clearly demonstrates that "once historical and cultural relativism is accepted, it becomes impossible to find scriptural meaning determined by the scripture alone but conditioned by the interpreter's context" (Larkin, 1988:23).The interpretation of scriptures is never static but ever-changing. This work seeks to provide the text of (Hos 1:2-2:20) with a "deep meaning to be understood and actualized by offering a distinction between literally and metaphorical understanding" (Jasper, 2009:8-1). The aim is to look at this biblical writing "differently listening to it on its own terms and measuring critical suspicion to provide and integrate dimensions that produce respected understanding" (Thiselton, 2009:5; 20). In finding the central meaning, Trible (1994) supports Muilenburg (1969) who equates meaning with authorial intentionality as the first center, then the text through its content, interlocking structures, artistic configurations, and finally the reader who gives voice to mute texts. This "approach in biblical interpretation starts with the intentions of the biblical writers or authors, together with the historical context out of which the texts emerged" (Thiselton, 2009:20). To arrive at a successful interpretation, Trible (1994) proposes a careful choice of a tool without the limitations of definitions that invites trouble through diachronic (across the time) and synchronic (within the time) concept, the relationship with form criticism, the aesthetic orientation, and the sociological, historical, and political concerns.

3.4.1 Definition of Rhetorical Criticism

Rhetorical criticism is "the quest to understand the devices, strategies, and structures employed in texts to persuade and affect the reader" (Gorman, 2009:14). Soulen & Soulen (2001) and Trible (1994) argues that rhetoric is an art of persuasive speech that encompass all forms and aspects of human communication from speakers and speeches to audiences and readers. Trible

(1994) adds that rhetoric have five parts namely invention, structure, style, memory, and delivery that produces three types of communications namely judicial, deliberative and demonstrative whose three goals are teaching, touching the feelings and pleasing to hold attention. Other vital textual aspects contributing to successful interpretations affirmed by Chemorion (2011) are the purpose of writing, the original addressees and their social-cultural context for the key ideas and the theological themes evoked.

Mckeon (1941) and Wendland (2003) claim that Aristotle argued that rhetoric is the faculty of observing available means and modes of persuasions furnished by the spoken words through the personal character of the speaker that puts the audience into a certain frame of mind or apparent proof provided by the words of the speech itself. The three ways to achieve persuasion are by "using a form of explicit argument objective of all disclosure, putting the audience into a certain frame of mind through appeals to their emotions and basic values, and recognizing what to say and how to say it to produce the right impression" Wendland (2003:197). The "stylistic devices used to emphasize and embellish biblical argumentations are rhetorical questions, irony, sarcasm, paradox, hyperbole, proverb and oxymoron" (Wendland, 2003:197-9).

Olbricht, (2002) traces rhetorical criticism in the 20th century conference papers on all aspects of rhetoric organized and funded by Anderson Eriksson and Walter Ubelacker. The five parts of rhetoric are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery that focus on analysis, evaluation and presentation. Longman (1987) concurs with Olbricht (2002) that rhetoric uses persuasive techniques and arrangement of a book design to involve the reader's increasingly. Renz (2002:1-2) states that rhetoric techniques are in different genres and formulaic language proposed by Block (1988), Greenberg (1984), and Zimmerli (1978) namely alliteration, rhyme and parallelism. The rehabilitators of rhetoric agree that dialectic provides rhetoric with intellectual tools and claim that rhetorical goals correspond with dialectical stages of resolving different opinions. The consideration of rhetorical criticism as states Hauser (2002) is the use of ambiguity to strengthen the effect and impact of the argument and keeps readers in suspense.

This research points out the stylistic devices in (Hos 1:2-2:20) rhetorically to examine and analyze the findings. Amit (2001) argues that styles have variety of levels depending on the way of writing. A style is an expression of the writer's choice of way of putting things using artistic principles underlying the choice of language. Hosea uses repetition, irony, and dialogue. The interpretative tools, generation, era, variants, and the people reading with contribute to the understanding and interpretation, echoes Soulen & Soulen (2001).

3.4.2 Application of Rhetorical Criticism

In understanding rhetorical criticism, Chemorion (2011) argues that rhetorical criticism examines strategies employed by the author to guide, persuade, or manipulate readers, hence requiring an exegetical tool that analyzes the text in terms of rhetorical strategies used by the author to influence readers. Rhetorical criticism aims at understanding the text through a study of its literary techniques and structure like plotting and narration. This research applies rhetorical criticism to study the book of (Hos 1:2-2:20). Rhetorical criticism looks at the way the text is presented to the reader and how the stylistic devices are intertwined in a way that contributes to the message in the text. A few of the many publications done in rhetorical perspectives are sampled below.

Among interpretations of the Book of Hosea is a metaphorical interpretation by Sandy (2002) as plough shares and pruning knifes. Hong (2006) interprets it as the metaphor of illness and healing in Hosea with significance in the socio-economic context of eighth-century Israel and Judah. Trible's (1994) work on rhetorical criticism deals with context and method by sampling the Book of Jonah. Neusner (1984) addresses it in social perspectives of Israel's historical context. Erickson's (2002) works on a rhetorical argumentation of biblical texts. Renz, (2002:1) focuses on rhetorical function of the Book of Ezekiel.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the interpretation of the marriage narrative documented in (Hos 1:2-2:20) requires special interpretative approach for proper understanding. This chapter has shown that exegesis is a careful historical, literary and theological analysis of texts for scholarly reading that ascertains the sense of texts through the most complete, systematic recording possible and grappling with the reasoning that speaks for or against specific understanding. The researcher uses rhetorical criticism to bring out the persuasive strategies applied by the narrator in (Hos 1:2-2:20) for a detailed hermeneutical interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXEGESIS (HOS 1:2-2:20)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is an exegesis of rhetorical approach to the study of (Hos 1:2-2:20) to explore its background, literary issues, genre, form, rhetorical devices, structure, synthesis, and the rhetorical nature. This passage is given in Hebrew and English. The whole Book of Hosea is important as other biblical passages. The consideration of (Hos 1:2-2:20) is its narrative depicting a conversation between God and Hosea instructing him to go and marry a woman described a harlot.

4.2 Background of Hosea

The Book of Hosea is found in the Old Testament as the 28th book heading the Twelve Minor Prophets and is the longest of the Writings (*Ketubim*). Hosea is the second greatest 8th century prophet who recorded prophesies bearing his name. Comay & Brownrigg (1993) clarifies that Hosea (Heb. *salvation*) was the son of Beeri prophesying in the northern kingdom c.783-43BCE until Samarian fall (721BCE), vigorously denouncing evils of prevailing idol worship and the coming disasters of the Lord's punishment. Douglas (1990), McCathy & O.Carm (1990), and Carlson (1984) trace Hosea from north speaking his oracles when Hebrews had divided themselves after Solomon's time. Beeby (1989) argues that Hosea was active in the 3rd quarter of 8th century commenting that "Hosea attacks the disastrous syncretic mixture, distorting and engulfing faith delivered to Moses assuming Canaanite religion of nature myths that stresses on fertility, not morality" (Beeby, 1989:1-2).

4.3 Literary and Textual Context of Hosea

The Book of Hosea has "disparate themes of Judgment and comfort that suggests different authors" (Douglas, 1990:1205). While the "English Bible translations usually have the Book of Hosea as the 28th book in the Old Testament coming between Daniel and Joel, the Hebrew Bible has it as the 13th book coming between Ezekiel and Joel" (Green, 2008:693-700; Kittel, 1937:893-910). It has fourteen chapters comprising of 197 verses. The Hebrew, English or Deuterocanonical versions vary in the number of verses in each chapter, for example "the Hebrew text of (Hos 1) has nine verses while the English text has eleven verses" (Green, 2008:694; Knight, 1960:48-9). Yee (1994), remarks that Hosea's marriage imitates a passion play that typifies feverish lust of a wife chasing her various lovers. Profound suffering and passion describes the torment her husband experiences from her infidelity. It embodies violent

anger with which the husband lashes out against his wife to punish and bring her senses back and embraces the ardor between the couple as they reconcile and recommit themselves to each other.

According to Marshall (1996) Hosea prophesies to the northern kingdom about the painful rebukes and threats of unheeded appeals arranged in rough chronological order. His grief and drive to protest was Israel's choice of rejecting the Lord who betrothed her because worthless gods never bestowed prosperity but only ruined her land and her people. The editorial activity took place after the fall of Samaria. Hearon (2004) and Menezes (2003) argue that Hosea's language depicts the northern Israel Hebrew dialect in bad shape causing translator's agony of making sense, leading to recourse to the Septuagint, Hosea's text pose complexities and difficulties of presuppositions in increasingly sharp criticism to the commentators. The repetition of the eleven times mention of Judah displaces it source associated with Judah and Israel. Davies (1993) contends that (Hosea 1:2-2:20) is not real account of Hosea's dealings with one or two women but visionary experiences conveying messages of spiritual relationship between God and Israel.

4.4 Date and Authorship of Hosea

In (Hos 1:1), Douglas (1990) argues that it declares the recipient of God's word as Hosea in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and Jeroboam II of Israel c.767-686BCE. He adds that Hosea wrote for Israel prior to destruction of Samaria (722BCE). The editorial work happened in Judah after Samarian fall but before Babylonian invasions (605-586BCE). McCathy & O.Carm (1990) supposes Hosea dates (750-732BCE). Hinson (1992) argues that following the 1st verses of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos and Micah, they all belong to the same period of Israel's history. Hosea's first prophecy of Zechariah's assassination by Shallum (2 King 15:8-10) was fulfilled in (745BCE). Snaith (1956) claims that Hosea's date relates to his contemporaries of 8th Century. Hosea prophesied in the northern kingdom Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. Von Rad (1965) concludes with certainty that Hosea lived and worked during the calamitous last years of the northern kingdom to the capture of Samaria by Assyrians (721BCE).

4.5 Form and Genre of Hosea

Genres are "categories of artistic composition marked by distinctive style, form, or content" (Wilt, 2003:200). Hinson (1992) and Kraft (1971) claim that the prose of (Hos 1:2-2:20) is biographical and autographical as a prose narrative with rich imagery.

4.6 Rhetorical Devices of Hosea

Wilt (2003) claims that one device can lead to another topically-related one as the passage unfolds into larger pictures painted in the listener's mind forming images that add impact, attractive, compelling and memorable to enable authors speak partially and suggestively about understanding, explaining, or describing the wonderful nature of God dealing with His creation. Devices encourage listeners and readers to mentally conceive and emotively experience situation and event supplying vivid pictures or entire scenes through imagination. Hosea uses oracles to express divine messages (Hos 1:4-ויאמר יהוה[10] 'and the Lord said') with vivid description-harlotry (Hos 1:2-4). The narrator uses prose in story-telling (Hos 1:1ff) and periodization-'in the days of' (Hos 1:1) to provide inclusion-opening and closing of periods. The narrator uses forecasting-shall or will (Hos 2:7), futuristic language dominating (Hos 2:5-23) intermingled with flashbacks- ('it was then than now' Hos 1:4; 2:7), comparisons-'as or like' (Hos 2:3), command and instruction-'Go' (Hos 1:2) and personification-'the land commits' (Hos 1:2).

Wolff (1974) enumerates rhetorical devices used by Hosea's narrator namely imagery- harlot, husband, wife, son, and Israel, figures of speech- death, and punishment, biography, narration, autography-recounting own experiences, foreshadowing-'I will'-(Hos 1:7), dialogue (Hos 1:2ff) for conversations and repetitions create emphasis, monologue or soliloquy (Hos 2:2ff) for personal meditations or internal conversations-'I will or shall' (Hos 2:7), similes, allegories, and synonymous parallelism. Others are "symbolism, repetition, and analogy" (Yee, 1994:209-210). Hong (2006), Kidner (1981), Wilt (2003), Wolff (1974), and Yee (1994) agree that (Hos 1:1-3:5) metaphorically pictures Israel. Brown (1906) acknowledges this narrator's use of sarcasm of names- Hosea means salvation while Gomer denotes proximity or plowshare and is described as harlot (Hos 1:1-3). The narrator uses "sayings as messenger formula, combining short saying into larger units establishing component parts borrowed from non-religious categories as a way of speaking (Hos 2:1)" (Von Rad, 1965:133-4).

In (Hos 1:2-2:20) the narrator uses an array of devices to captivate the readers' attention and ensure the intended message is passed through seasoned inter-connection of scenes and characters with a building suspense as the passage develops and flows becoming more interesting.

[10] ויאמר Verb qal waw consecutive imperfect 3rd person masculine singular homonym1 with ו-'and'-'and he said', יהוה Noun proper no gender no number no state-'Yahweh, Jehovah, LORD'

4.7 Literary and Textual Structure of Hosea

According to Smith (1996) the first section of Hosea outlines the end of the reign of Jeroboam II who died c.743BCE. The following years brought revolutionary changes in Israel which account for the altered outlook of the second section, where Hosea breathes urgent and jealous temper rendering his personality distinctive as his text is the most dilapidated in the Old Testament and in parts beyond repair, "Hosea's text is corrupt, the style is broken, and no logical divisions hence contentious authenticity" (Smith, 1996:219-33). Reiss (2018) argues that Hosea can be divided into (Hos 1-3) and (Hos 4-14). Andersen & Freedman (1980), Knight (1960), and McCathy & O.Carm (1990) allege that (Hos 1-3) deals with the marriage imagery. Knight (1960) argues that the book virtually ends at (Hos 3) by showing what Hosea does to his wife as God's revelation of what faithfulness means for Israel. He claims that (Hos 1:1) is superscription composed by editors of Hosea's collection of utterances while (Hos 1:2) is the real beginning. Yee (1994) and Kraft (1971) divides Hosea into three sections each highlighting an image of the covenant between God and Israel anchored in (Hos 2:18). In (Hos 1) is the husband and wife imagery, (Hos 2) is Yahweh's faithless wife Israel, and (Hos 3) is their reunion.

4.8 Structure of (Hos 1:2-2:20)

According to Yee (1994) this story of God's marriage with Israel has prologue (Hos 1:11-2:1) and epilogue (Hos 2:23). The text on (Hos 2:1) provides inclusion of hope in betrayal and violence by reversing the names of *Jezreel's* brother- *Lo-ammi* and sister- *Lo-ruhamah*. Hinson (1992) outlines (Hos 1-3) as Hosea's family with details of personal experiences, God's command and Hosea's relationship with Gomer. God speaks as a husband to Israel, His unfaithful wife (Hos 2:11-16). Andersen & Freedman (1980) outlines four ideas in (Hos 1) namely title, Hosea's wife, birth, and naming of his three children. Mays (1969) argues that (Hos 1:2) runs to (Hos 1:9) containing divine words and human life while Yee (1994) supports that (Hos 1:2-2:20) depicts a marriage of Israel and God structurally, Hosea, Gomer, and their children (Hos 1:1-10), the Wife Israel and her husband (Hos 1:11-2:23), Hosea and Gomer again (Hos 3:1-5). The researcher has technically structured (Hos 1:2-2:20) as:

a. Harlotry (Hos1:2-9)
b. Lawsuit (Hos 2:1-8)
c. Punishment (Hos 2:9-20)

4.9.0 Detailed Exegesis of (Hos 1:2-2:20)

This detailed exegesis is structured into three parts to unearth the identity, character and the theological significance in connection with Yahweh's covenant motifs using rhetorical criticism to understand Hosea's marriage from a perspective that demystifies the theme of faithfulness.

4.9.1 Harlotry (Hos 1:2-9)

Hosea 1:2-9(WTT)	**Hosea 1:2-9 (Translation)**
2 תְּחִלַּתדִּבֶּר־יְהוָה בְּהוֹשֵׁעַ פ וַיֹּאמֶריְהוָה אֶל־הוֹשֵׁעַ לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ אֵשֶׁתזְנוּנִים וְיַלְדֵיזְנוּנִים כִּי־זָנֹהתִּזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ מֵאַחֲרֵייְהוָה: 3 וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־גֹּמֶר בַּת־דִּבְלָיִם וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד־לוֹ בֵּן: 4 וַיֹּאמֶריְהוָה אֵלָיו קְרָא שְׁמוֹיִזְרְעֶאל כִּי־עוֹד מְעַט וּפָקַדְתִּי אֶת־דְּמֵייִזְרְעֶאל עַל־בֵּיתיֵהוּאוְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מַמְלְכוּת בֵּיתיִשְׂרָאֵל: 5 וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּאוְשָׁבַרְתִּי אֶת־קַשֶּׁתיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵמֶק יִזְרְעֶאל: 6 וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶדבַּת וַיֹּאמֶרלוֹ קְרָא שְׁמָהּ לֹארֻחָמָה כִּי לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד אֲרַחֵם אֶת־בֵּיתיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־נָשֹׂא אֶשָּׂא לָהֶם: 7 וְאֶת־בֵּיתיְהוּדָה אֲרַחֵם וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּים בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא אוֹשִׁיעֵם בְּקֶשֶׁתוּבְחֶרֶב וּבְמִלְחָמָה בְּסוּסִים וּבְפָרָשִׁים: 8 וַתִּגְמֹל אֶת־לֹא רֻחָמָה וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן: 9 וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא שְׁמוֹ לֹא עַמִּיכִי אַתֶּם לֹא אֲנִיוְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם: ס	[2]When the Lord first spoke through Hosea He said to Hosea, "Go take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the Lord". [3]Hosea went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, she conceived and bore him a son. [4]The Lord said to him, "Call his name Jezreel" for yet a little while and I will punish the house of Jehu because of the blood of Jezreel and I will put to an end the kingdom of the house of Israel. [5]on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. [6]Gomer conceived again and bore a daughter. The Lord said to him, "Call her name Not-pitied" because I will no more have pity on the house of Israel to forgive them at all. [7]But I will have pity on the house of Judah and I will deliver them by the Lord their God, I will not deliver them by bow nor by sword, nor by war, nor by horses, and nor by horsemen. [8]When she had weaned Not-pitied, she conceived and bore a son. [9]The Lord said, "Call his name Not-my-people for you are not my people and I am not your God," kings of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel.

Anyone reading the Book of Hosea "detects the basic structure and identifies characters" (Trible, 1994:109). The role players are God, Hosea, Gomer, wife, children, Diblaim, *Jezreel*, land, kings, Israel, Judah, Jehu, Joash, Jeroboam, horsemen, *Lo-Ruhamah, Lo-Ammi*, bow, sword, son, daughter, war, days, house, valley, kingdom. The narrator chooses characters and assigns them roles fitting them for a flowing passage running form (Hos 1:2-9) that captivates the reader's attentions with abrupt change of topics. The plot resembles a court room as an opening chapter starting from (Hos 1:1) immediately after the last chapter of Daniel ending at (Dan 12:13).

This narrative contains a historical prose narrative opening with a command. On the stage are the Lord and Hosea, a dialogue with the divine ensures as the Lord speaks to Hosea. This passage is dominated by imagery- harlotry, son, daughter, pity, valley, Israel, children, kingdom, and house. The narrator applies euphemism in literal conversation between Yahweh and Hosea,

personification of land committing harlotry, quotations to indicate the emphasis of the spoken words, and shifts topics momentarily without preparing the reader. Forecasting predicts deliverance and flashbacks justifies the forth coming punishment. In (Hos 1:1) is an inclusion, the scene is not described at all. Suspense is applied in (Hos 1:9; 2:1). The tone fluctuates from a peaceful mood to a commanding harsh tone and vice-versa.

In Hosea 1:2- תהלת[11]-(*tihirath*-'beginning') is the basis of presentation of accounts and sayings. Wolff (1974) argues that Hosea justifies his prophecy from the Lord and historicity with strict prophetic instruction from the יהוה (Lord). The words in Hosea 1:2 דבר־יהוה אשׁר[12](*Debar Yahew asher*) according to Menezes (2003) argues that Hosea's prophecy meets the divine expectation with message formula like (Is 6:8)-את־קל אדני אמר[13]. This forms the first part of the prophecy, "divine command following immediate responses" (Yee, 1994:230-3). It is not clear why the author omits the crucial details of Hosea's courtship and marriage process although according Patterson (1995) the Hebrew culture had clearly outlined marriage process. Knight (1960) claims that 'Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry', could mean marry a harlot who have already borne children, marry in all good faith woman who you will find to be harlot and who has already borne children, or marry woman who will later become unfaithful to you and even bear children by other men.

In (Hos 1:3) the name את־גמר-(*Gomer*) refers to the woman married by Hosea in the fulfillment of the Lord's instruction to marry a promiscuous woman. Although the woman's lineage is given as בת־דבלים[14](*bith Deblaim*)-'daughter of Diblaim'. McCarthy (1990) argues that these names have no reference to Yahweh as Israelite names but indicates unfaithfulness. The author considers unnecessary to outline details of Hosea meeting Gomer, courtship, marriage process, but shifts to her conception in ותהר[15](*wa-tihira*) indicates sexual relationship between Hosea and Gomer. Beeby (1989) argues that (Hos 1:2-2:1) portrays an image of God's imitation in the statements of the great theme while Knight (1960) claims that Deblaim means two cakes of fig.

[11]תהלת Noun common singular feminine construct-'beginning'

[12]Transliterated: 'The Word of the Lord that'

[13] Transliteration: *'qal Adonai amar'*-'thus says the Lord'!

[14]בת Noun common feminine singular construct with object marker homonym1-'daughter',דבלים Noun proper no gender no number no state-Diblaim.

[15]ותהר Verb qal waw consecutive imperfect 3rdperson feminine singular with conjunction ו–'and',-'and she conceived'

This asserts that Gomer's father had connections with the cult of *Baal* and suggests acquiring cheaply like a harlot. The narrator prefers using the names Gomer and Diblaim because as Kraft (1971) argues, Gomer means complete or perfection and Diblaim means lumps of figs or raisins. Using wife of harlotry, Yahweh brands the popular holiness of *Baalism* as common harlotry.

In (Hos 1:6) the name יזרעאל–(*Jezreel*) announces the end of dynasty by the bloody purge of Jehu who in 841BCEtoppled Omri dynasty by murdering Israel's king Joram and Judah's king Ahaziah near Jezreel (2 Kings 9:14-29). *Jezreel* means *El* sows. *El* was a high Canaanite pantheon god, appropriate name chosen for a child born to a Canaanite fertility-rite priestess suggesting that god sows seed of fertility and agricultural prosperity. The narrator choice of the name Jezreel is justified by McCathy (1990) that *Jezreel* was the plain between Galilee, Samaria and Jordan where there was bloodshed during overthrowing of Omri dynasty deserving punishment by the idolatrous Omrids for another selfish murder. In (Hos 1:5) the narrator asserts another meaning of *Jezreel* that expresses break the bow indicating the destruction of Israelites' power, probably by Assyrian invasion (733BCE), fulfillment of curses following covenant breaking (Deut. 28). Smith (1996) argues that this narrative symbolizes Israelites' apostasy.

The dialogue between God and Hosea surrounds Gomer's harlotry. God's actions downplay the weight of unfaithfulness. In (Hos 1:1) the context is set in motion, Hosea gets on stage when national leadership caused fickle spirituality among God's people as some kings led them to idol worship and others restored the worship of One True God repeatedly (2Chr 26-29 or 2 Kings 4-18). The use of vivid language shows emotional intensity packed in imagery, similes, and allusions. There is a promise following judgment in a glimpse of a brighter future and part of the prophecy of judgment and chastening for Israel as the unfaithful wife. Carson (1994) argues that announces judgment in the husband-wife imagery of double-decker sandwich of narrative- hope- Judgment- hope- narrative.

This section has unearthed how Gomer and her children were used to address unfaithfulness. The scenario depicts a situation where by the expectations of Hosea upon her wife were never met. The names given to the children born are a reference to the situation on the ground of how the Israelites behaved and what they had become although the Lord expected them to be loyal to His covenant.

4.9.2 Lawsuit (Hos 2:1-8)

Hosea 2:1-8(WTT)	Hosea 2:1-8 (Translation)
[1] וְהָיָה מִסְפַּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחוֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמַּד וְלֹא יִסָּפֵר וְהָיָה בִּמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר לָהֶם לֹא־עַמִּי אַתֶּם יֵאָמֵר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי׃ [2] וְנִקְבְּצוּ בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יַחְדָּו וְשָׂמוּ לָהֶם רֹאשׁ אֶחָד וְעָלוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ כִּי גָדוֹל יוֹם יִזְרְעֶאל׃ [3] אִמְרוּ לַאֲחֵיכֶם עַמִּי וְלַאֲחוֹתֵיכֶם רֻחָמָה׃ [4] רִיבוּ בְאִמְּכֶם רִיבוּ כִּי־הִיא לֹא אִשְׁתִּי וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אִישָׁהּ וְתָסֵר זְנוּנֶיהָ מִפָּנֶיהָ וְנַאֲפוּפֶיהָ מִבֵּין שָׁדֶיהָ׃ [5] פֶּן־אַפְשִׁיטֶנָּה עֲרֻמָּה וְהִצַּגְתִּיהָ כְּיוֹם הִוָּלְדָהּ וְשַׂמְתִּיהָ כַּמִּדְבָּר וְשַׁתְּתָהָ כְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה וַהֲמִתִּיהָ בַּצָּמָא׃ [6] וְאֶת־בָּנֶיהָ לֹא אֲרַחֵם כִּי־בְנֵי זְנוּנִים הֵמָּה׃ [7] כִּי זָנְתָה אִמָּם הֹבִישָׁה הוֹרָתָם כִּי אָמְרָה אֵלְכָה אַחֲרֵי מְאַהֲבַי נֹתְנֵי לַחְמִי וּמֵימַי צַמְרִי וּפִשְׁתִּי שַׁמְנִי וְשִׁקּוּיָי׃ [8] לָכֵן הִנְנִי שָׂךְ אֶת־דַּרְכֵּךְ בַּסִּירִים וְגָדַרְתִּי אֶת־גְּדֵרָהּ וּנְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ לֹא תִמְצָא׃	[1]Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea which can be neither measured nor numbered and in the place where it was said to them you are not my people it shall be said to them Sons of the living God. [2]The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together and they shall appoint for themselves one head and they shall go up from the land for great shall be the day of Jezreel. [3]Say to your brother My people and to your sister She has obtained pity [4]"Plead with your mother, plead for she is not my wife and I am not her husband that she put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts, [5]lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born and make her like a wilderness and set her like a parched land and slay her with thirst. [6]Upon her children again I will have no pity for they are children of harlotry. [7]and their mother played the harlot she that conceived them has acted shamefully because she said `I will go after my lovers who give me my bread, water, wool, flax, oil and my drink. [8]Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns and I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.

The narrator uses a collection of living characters namely people of Israel, sons, God, Judah, king, brother, sister, mother, wife, husband, children, harlot, lovers, and nonliving namely sand, sea, day, wilderness, bread, water, wool, flax, oil, drink, hedge, way, thorns, and paths. *Jezreel* has qualities of both the living and nonliving characters. The plot resembles a court room. The immediate text before this lawsuit is (Hos 1:2-9) illustrating harlotry that leads to this lawsuit and an outlined verdict of punishment (Hos 2:9-15). The narrator advances the narrative by making emphasis through abrupt change of topic create suspense and use of literary devices like irony in immeasurable versus unnumbered Israelites, comparison using 'like', contrast (Hos 2:1), negation using 'neither…nor', and forecasting future prediction using 'shall'. The parallelism applied in (Hos 2:1) balances the words 'You are not my people' with 'Sons of the Living God', finally figurative language and vivid description like 'sand of the sea', 'people of Judah', and 'day of *Jezreel'*.

In (Hos 2:1) the abrupt change of subject-matter without introductory phrases uses back-and-forth meditations (Hos 2:7). Carson (1994) and Yee (1994) claim that the narrator's abrupt change of tone and content shocks the reader or hearer with the first breach between Hosea and Gomer that shows Israel's rejection by God as hope (Hos 2:1) turns to rebuke (Hos 2:2). In (Hos

2:2-15) is an indictment speech by God. Brown (1990) holds that (Hos 2:1) reverses the names and rounds off the prophecy. The Hebrew word-בן[16] in plural refers to the whole of Israel being addressed not only Hosea's son and daughter while (Hos 2:2-3) addresses Hosea's children.

The text of (Hosea 2:2) opens a rebuke that Carson (1994) and Yee (1994) argue that it resembles lawsuit strive. Hosea's imagery reflects legal disputes taking place at the city gate. In (Hos 2:2-3a) ותסר[17]-(*wa-toser*)-'to turn aside') refers to specific forms of ornament associated with harlots meaning Gomer should remove the signs of her unfaithfulness or be stripped off everything. In (Hos 2:3) implies that Israel will go back to the desert as before although God had fulfilled His promise to make them His own people in their own land. This idea articulates the covenant relationship between God and Israel that Brown (1990) and Carson (1994) asserts that it was promissory to the patriarchs-(Gen 22:17; 32:13) hence an emphasis of renewal and restoration of this relationship, so כארץ[18](*ka-aretz*)-'the land' refers to exodus (Ex 1:10) for the reunion. The play of words 'God sows' indicates new dispensation where Yahweh will grant plenty.

In (Hos 2:4) ונאפיה[19](*wa-napyah*)-'and her adultery') illustrates Gomer's unfaithfulness and her adulterous look on her face. Yee (1994) expresses that this suggests that Gomer was either an actual harlot with signs on her face broadcasting her profession, or a cult harlot adorned with ritual insignia whereas a wife only put on cosmetics and jewelry for attractive looks (Isa 3:18-23; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40). Gomer's artistic efforts target her lovers not her husband hence berated as harlotry. In (Hos 1:9) the broken covenant represented figuratively as divorce in (Hos 2:2) results from Gomer's unfaithfulness. The lovers were the *Baal* expected to bring fertility (Hos 2:8-17) implying husband's dishonour for not providing the wife's material and sexual needs. The husband warns her wife that if she refuses to forfeit her harlotry, he will strip her naked, make her bare like the day of birth, make her like desert, turn her into a parched land, and finally slay her with thirst. This marriage legitimizes punishment of Israel's breach of covenant in the threats of physical violence against the wife. A harlot's punishment of death by stoning (Lev 20:10; Duet 22:22; John 7:53-8:11) gets parallels in (Hos 2:3) 'stripping her naked'.

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[16]בן Noun common masculine plural construct homonym1-'sons, descendants'

[17]ותסר Verb hiphil imperfect 3rd person feminine singular jussive with conjunction ו-'and'-'turn aside'

[18]כארץ Noun common feminine singular construct with preposition כ-'because', 'because the land'

[19]ונאפיה Noun common masculine construct suffix 3rd person singular with conjunction ו-'and'-'and her adultery'

Israel is metaphorically portrayed as a spiritual harlot threatened with punishment just like the unfaithful and corrupt today. The future hope is that Israelite men will be called '*Ammi'* meaning 'My-people' while women will be called '*Ruhamah'* meaning 'My-beloved'. The "reversal of names (Hos 1:8-9) takes place with the fulfillment of the prediction of (Hos 1:11). In (Hos 2:4) the use of ריב[20](*rayib*)-'to strive, contend, raises accusations of the mother as the father (Yahweh) speaks to the children (Israel) in a court accusing and admonishing his wife (Israel)" (Hutton, 2004:22-9; Jamieson, 1990:1205). The words used for Hosea's unfaithful wife addresses Israel's harlotry implying pursuit of other gods. Hosea's wife imagery illustrates the nation's character as harlotry symbolizing apostasy, faithlessness and political alliances with foreign countries. The repetition of the phrases-'I will allure, give, remove, make, abolish, take, answer, sow, pity' clarifies that the Lord will act by divine initiative and outrageous grace of His deep compassion.

The narrative in (Hos 2:2-23) documents what Brown (1990), Carson (1994), Jamieson (1990), Mays (1988), and Yee (1994) argue that it entails Israel on trial and thematically and verbally relates to (Hos 1:2-9) where Hosea accuses his wife of unfaithfulness and follows the legal process from indictment to announcement of punishment. Beeby (1989) adds that (Hos 2:2-23) entails divorce and reconciliation. Smith (1966) argues that (Hos 2:2-5) contains the divine voice awakening the living generation. This is a portrayal of an indictment against Israel that Patterson (1995) claims that the charge for the prevailing rejection is harlotry, a fragrant violation of the covenant of love because at "the heart of the Hebrew concept of marriage is the notion of covenant" (Kaiser, 2005:1548). Kaiser (2005) and Patterson (1995) argue that using the analogy of *Baal* as a husband fertilizing the land (Hos 2:8) signifies the temple harlotry that was practiced with the hope that such actions would induce *Baal* to fertilize the earth. People refused to recognize God as the source of their blessings and failed to express gratitude to God.

Hosea's personal experiences with unfaithful wife enabled him to understand God's heartbreak over His unfaithful people. The catalyst of Hosea's message is his marriage with Gomer, the shock effect of Hosea's marital difficulties would have a telling impact on his community. The names of children born in Hosea's marriage symbolize divine displeasure with Israel. Restoration of Gomer by Hosea from illicit lovers awaited in grief and penitence for the time of restoration to full favour.

[20] ריב Verb qal imperative masculine plural-'to strive, contend'

This section has demonstrated how much God was angered by the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. He sought their repentance that He may have a renewed relationship with them. Nowadays this harlotry can be equated to the surmounting unfaithfulness in the society that contributes to the domestic fights, corruption and embezzlement of public funds and the use of position wrongly to benefit individual at the expense of many people who suffer due to lack of services required that have already paid for through heavy taxes, this provokes God's anger. God wishes that the victims repent or else be punished.

4.9.3 Punishment (Hos 2:9-20)

Hosea 2:9-20(WTT)	**Hosea 2:9-20 (Translation)**
9 וְרָדְפָה אֶת־מְאַהֲבֶיהָ וְלֹא־תַשִּׂיגֵאֹתָם וּבִקְשָׁתַם וְלֹא תִמְצָא וְאָמְרָה אֵלְכָה וְאָשׁוּבָה אֶל־אִישִׁי הָרִאשׁוֹן כִּי־טוֹב לִי אָז מֵעָתָּה: 10 וְהִיא לֹא יָדְעָה כִּי אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי לָהּ הַדָּגָן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְהַיִּצְהָר וְכֶסֶף הִרְבֵּיתִי לָהּ וְזָהָב עָשׂוּ לַבָּעַל: 11 לָכֵן אָשׁוּב וְלָקַחְתִּי דְגָנִי בְּעִתּוֹ וְתִירוֹשִׁי בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ וְהִצַּלְתִּי צַמְרִי וּפִשְׁתִּי לְכַסּוֹת אֶת־עֶרְוָתָהּ: 12 וְעַתָּה אֲגַלֶּה אֶת־נַבְלֻתָהּ לְעֵינֵי מְאַהֲבֶיהָ וְאִישׁ לֹא־יַצִּילֶנָּה מִיָּדִי: 13 וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי כָּל־מְשׂוֹשָׂהּ חַגָּהּ חָדְשָׁהּוְשַׁבַּתָּהּ וְכֹל מוֹעֲדָהּ: 14 וְהַשַּׁמֹּתִי גַּפְנָהּ וּתְאֵנָתָהּ אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָה אֶתְנָה הֵמָּה לִי אֲשֶׁר נָתְנוּ־לִי מְאַהֲבָיו וְשַׂמְתִּים לְיַעַר וַאֲכָלָתַם חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה: 15 וּפָקַדְתִּי עָלֶיהָ אֶת־יְמֵי הַבְּעָלִים אֲשֶׁר תְּקַטֵּיר לָהֶם וַתַּעַד נִזְמָהּ וְחֶלְיָתָהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֵי מְאַהֲבֶיהָ וְאֹתִי שָׁכְחָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה: פ 16 לָכֵן הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מְפַתֶּיהָוְהֹלַכְתִּיהָ הַמִּדְבָּרוְדִבַּרְתִּי עַל־לִבָּהּ: 17 וְנָתַתִּי לָהּ אֶת־כְּרָמֶיהָ מִשָּׁם וְאֶת־עֵמֶק עָכוֹר לְפֶתַח תִּקְוָהוְעָנְתָה שָּׁמָּה כִּימֵי נְעוּרֶיהָוּכְיוֹם עֲלֹתָהּ מֵאֶרֶץ־מִצְרָיִם: ס 18 וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית בַּיּוֹם הַהוּאעִם־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְעִם־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְרֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָהוְקֶשֶׁתוְחֶרֶבוּמִלְחָמָה אֶשְׁבּוֹר מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁכַּבְתִּים לָבֶטַח: 19 וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי בְּצֶדֶקוּבְמִשְׁפָּטוּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים: 20 וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי בֶּאֱמוּנָהוְיָדַעַתְּ אֶת־יְהוָה: ס	**9** She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then she shall say, I will go and return to my first husband because it was better with me then than now. **10**And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, wine, oil, and I lavished upon her silver and gold which they used for Baal. **11**Therefore I will take back my grain in its time and my wine in its season for I will take away my wool and my flax which were to cover her nakedness. **12**Then I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and no one shall rescue her out of my hand. **13**For I will put to an end all her mirth her feasts her new moons, her Sabbaths and all her appointed feasts. **14**For I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees of which she said these are my hire which my lovers have given me. I will make them a forest and the beasts of the field shall devour them. **15**For I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned incense to them and decked herself with her ring and jewelry and went after her lovers and forgot me says the Lord. **16**Therefore behold I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. **17**For there I will give her the vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope and there she shall answer as in the days of her youth as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. **18**And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land and I will make you lie down in safety. **19**And I will betroth you to me forever, I will betroth you to myself in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. **20**I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord.

The researcher has found out that the characters playing role in this scene are lovers, husband, grains, wine, oil, silver, gold, *Baal*, time, season, wool, flax, youth, forest, valley, wilderness,

vineyard, Egypt, door, Sabbath, fig trees, moon, ring, jewelry, and beasts. These characters carry the message of love for property, prestige, money just like it is happening presently. The plot resembles a courtroom as in (Hos 2:1-8) the immediate text that connecting to (Hos 2:21-23). The author applies flashbacks and comparisons of the present life situations before turning to forecasting and future predictions. Vivid images also contribute to this prose like nakedness, feasts, youth, lovers, forest, burn, devour, wilderness, hope, vineyard, new moon, speak tenderly. The author uses negations to create balance, 'shall…but not', and breathes fire in the warnings as the intensity of threats heightens before a future hope is built at the end.

To achieve a smooth flow of this narrative prose, it should be read from (Hos 2:1). Kraft (1971) clarifies this seeks a new courtship since the previous failed. Yahweh's third action brings complete reeducation of the wayward Israel by returning her to the first honeymoon site and wooing her back to Himself (Ex. 19:2; Jer. 2:2-3; Ezek. 20:33-38). The valley of Achor designates trouble but will become a door of hope. Guthrie (1970) argues that this entails chastening and restoration that initiates a lasting reconciliation founded on the Lord's steadfast love. Israel is allured to the wilderness for tender speaking that means speaking to her heart drawing out by fear and in love. In (Hos 2:16) the word **אנכי**[21]('I') emphasizes the divine intervention, the Lord will triumph over *Baal* by making the desert fertile (Is 35:1-2) and giving a husband's wedding gifts not a harlot's hire.

In (Hos 2:14-15) the phrase לכן הנה (*laken hanah*)-'therefore, behold') causes an about-turn in this narrative. Barton & Muddiman (2001) and Carson (1994) argue that in the previous verses God acts in judgment upon His unfaithful people to bring back their senses for return. Using the figure of a lover, God attracts His beloved back by speaking tenderly, giving gifts (Hos 2:14-15, 22) and offering security. The narrator creates an image of Israel and her lover in the desert with no distractions and while there Israel will surely **וידעת**[22](*wa-yadeath*)-'know the Lord'. Yee (1994) calls this the husband's third strategy to control his wife in the most insidious way that captivates readers in the joyous reconciliation of God and Israel. After the wife has been suitably punished and endured various forms of abuse, the husband seduces and woos her with love tokens (Hos 2:14-15). Barton & Muddiman (2001) claims that the wife's pursuit of lovers gets

[21]**אנכי** Pronoun independent 1st person common singular-'I'

[22]**וידעת** Verb qal waw consecutive perfect 2nd person feminine singular with **ו**-'and'-'acknowledge'

thwarted by the husband facilitating return from alienation to repentance for a soulful reunion and after the chastisement comes the wilderness experience to be remarried forever.

In (Hos 2:9) the phrase ורדפה את־מאהביה ולא־תשיג-('shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them') indicates that "Israel was unfaithful to Yahweh and had gone chasing after her lovers-*Baal* expecting to receive grains, wine, oil and other products, not knowing that these comes from Yahweh alone" (Barton & Muddiman 2001:573). The withdrawal of grain, wine and others (Hos2:9) meant putting to an end Israel's religious festivals (Hos 2:11-13) to return to Yahweh for the anticipated hope (Hos 2:7). On the contrary, the words 'she is not my wife' and 'I am not her husband' are not divorce formula since the aim is to regain the wife. The imagery of Yahweh and Israel as husband and wife signifies hope. According to Martin (2005) the term הבעלים[23](*Baal*) appears in the Old Testament in the primary sense meaning master or owner (Ex. 21:30; Jdg. 19:22; Isa. 16:8). A Hebrew husband was regarded as literary owner of his wife, *Baal* was commonly used for husbands (Ex. 21:3; 2 Sam 11:16). Most often it refers to the Semitic deity and deities called *Baal* that Gomer subscribed to in worship. These concurs with Comay's (1993) definition of *Baal* as the chief god of the Canaanites, worshipped as the god of the elements bringing the rain, making the ground fruitful, and the god of war. King Ahab made *Baal*-worship a court religion leading to Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of *Baal* on Mount Carmel. Baal worshippers were later massacred by King Jehu although the influence of *Baal* became frequent strictures by the prophets of Israel and Judah.

Smith (1996) claims that the definite sentence of desolation on the land and the exile on the people is not final doom but discipline with the ultimate promise of the return of the nation's youth, their renewed betrothal to Yahweh and the restoration of nature. The text of (Hos 2:1-3) introduces a promise of restoration before the sentence of doom is detailed or any ethical conditions of restoration are stated. The text of (Hos 2:4-23) pictures restoration of Israel, Hosea predicts the fall by war on the classic battle ground of Jezreel through an internal revolt against Zechariah the son of Jeroboam. Hosea realizes the threatened exile from a nearer standpoint. In (Hos 2:18-20) the words וכרתי להמ ברית בים-('And I will cut for you a covenant on that day') expresses "renewal of covenant vows inaugurating a period of peace, harmony, and bounteous fertility, signifying new covenant order as Yahweh/Hosea acknowledges the children as his own

[23]הבעלים Noun proper no gender no number no state homonym1 with ה-'the' plural suffix-'owner, Lord, Baal, heathen god'

and renames them, Jezreel now symbolizes the sowing of his mother back into the land, God will have pity on His daughter She-Is-Not-Pitied, and will declared to Not-My-People you are my people and will joyously respond, 'My God'" (Yee, 1994:226). Man will "fulfill the original purpose of being subject to God realized fully in the millennial times as the agreement will be renewed on different footing of righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, mercies, and faithfulness, and maintained forever through God's grace" (Jamieson, 1990:1210-1).

This section has demonstrated how Israel's unfaithfulness made the Lord unhappy and unless repentance punishment is due. It is the Lord's will that there be restoration of His people but having become adamant He forges for new ways to win them back. There waits punishment for the unfaithful and corrupt which can only be reverted by true and genuine repentance. All sins must be repented and if not so punishment awaits.

4.10 Synthesis of Hosea 1:2-2:20

This exegesis has demonstrated that reading "Hosea is like looking into kaleidoscopic images tumbling to the next within little or no boundary or transition, the myriad analogues of Hosea's figures and similes has analytical and evocative power that uses rich symbols" (Hearon, 2004:97). Gomer was a cult worshipper involved in pagan worship equated to Israelites' worship of *Baalim*. In (Hos 1:3) the first child is Hosea's own but (Hos 1:6-9) does not show the father or fathers although the names suggest that Hosea disowned these children. As Kidner (1981) claims (Hos 1:9-2:1) is a lift in the cloud containing three disastrous oracles utterly reversed through the promise of family reunion, restoration (Hos 1:11), explanation (Hos 2:2), and God's grace (Hos 2:1). Salvation from the Lord's love never gives-up the way Hosea is possessed by hope that surmounts difficulties.

The researcher has demonstrated one central religion as Hutton (2004) articulates that Hosea shows deep indebtedness to one central religious tradition underlying the Deuteronomic theology. Israel's critical problem was its religious unfaithfulness to Yahweh. Israel developed fascinations for *Baal*, the Canaanite god of fertility and their greed for larger and fuller crop, increasing wealth and security, led them to various forms of religious syncretism, worshipping the *Baal* and pagan deities of the Canaanites rather Yahweh alone. The Israelites replaced Yahweh with *Baal* taking *Baal* as their owner, master, and lord. Muga (2014) argues that according to the Jewish context, women addressed their husbands as *Baal* which means lord to signify possession, ruling over, taking possession of a betrothed, or marrying. The Canaanite fertility cult figured prominently which Hosea addresses as the harlotry of the Israelites through

the religious syncretic influences of debased beliefs and practices. In agreement with Bird (1989), Hearon (2004) argues that Hosea's identification of Israelites cults with harlotry was polemical, symbolic, and innovative. The paradigm of cultic harlotry makes facile and simplistic equation of female cultic personages and deities, and sexuality in the Canaanite religion.

The term זנונים-(*zenunim*) is justified since its root word זנה-(*zonah*) means "to be a harlot, used metaphorically for a land given to harlotry (Lev 19:29), and figuratively as an improper relationship with foreign nations (Jer. 3:1; Ez. 16:28) and other deities involving real action (Ex. 34:15-16; Deut. 31:16)" (Brown, 1906:275-6). The term זנונים-(*zenunim*) means a "lewd woman (Ezek. 16:15) with moral defection (Is 1:21), the plural form in (Hos 1:2) has sexual, international, and religious references and in (Hos 8:3-5) means to "reject or repel for being angry with" (Brown, 1906:276). The Hebrew verb זנה and its plural abstract noun, זנונים used by Hosea refers to sexual promiscuity. Promiscuity for Hosea figures Israel's political-economy dynamics which infiltrated into the religious institutions and practices. Hosea's image refers to the institutional dynamics of the 8th century with criticisms against idols, bull icons, priests, and sanctuaries as an attack upon the whole complex ritual activities legitimated and collaborated with political-economic structures and powers. Read through the lens of modern marriage customs and morality, the principal valence of the promiscuity is understood as harlotry.

A sexually promiscuous Israelite woman was abhorrent. In the Canaanite religious terms, "*Baal* was the lord of land, women, military, judicial, socio-political economic powers, and privileges" (Hearon, 2004:112). Bird (1989) argues that אתנה[24]-(*etnah*-Hos 2:14) links promiscuity polemically with harlotry to castigate greed. During Hosea's time, wife's guilt of sexual promiscuity was confronted by beating, confinement, public stripping, humiliation, divorce, exile, injury, deprivation of food and water, induced illness, or death. The names of Hosea's children figure the dialectic between judgment and salvation. Jezreel (Hos 1:4) is Hosea's first born and punch-line that pictures healing and restoration (Hos 2:4). The literal sense of *Jezreel* is that God sows or inseminates to evoke double entendre of God's sowing destruction. Literal figures in Hosea (salvific and judgment) provides sweeping critique of Israel's systemic integration.

This exegesis has demonstrated that Hosea exploits the interconnections among themes of ownership, marriage, female sexuality, & procreation to articulate critique of ruling elites to

[24]אתנה Noun common feminine singular absolute-'the wages of a harlot'

promote covenantal monolatry. The woman of (Hos 1) identified as Gomer is the same woman in (Hos 3) whose adulteress does not signify a woman of deprived moral character but a woman who took part in the Canaanite fertility rites as a typical representation of Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh.

4.11.1 Understanding Metaphors

Metaphors are words or phrases that imaginatively describe somebody or something to show how two things have the same qualities making descriptions more powerful. They are expressions found in literature describing a person or an object by referring to something with similar characteristics to that person or object. As idioms, metaphors represent particular things. Metaphoric speaking means not having real existence but representing truth about situations or subjects. Diada (2018), McIntosh (2013), Stevenson & Waite (2011), and Wehmeier (2000) describe metaphors as figures of speech where words or phrases are applied on something not literally applicable but just symbolic and are ordinarily applied to something not necessarily paired as members of figurative language family including similes and personification to communicate hidden message. Metaphors are rhetorical devices that "make implied comparisons between things which are not literally alike" (Foreman, 1967:316). Longman (1987) and Neusner (1984) argues that they can take genealogical, political, supernatural, taxonomical, hierarchical, ontological, or epistemological character depending on varying systems hence Israel metaphors served as vehicles for social thoughts of Judaic systems..

The narrative in (Hos1:2-2:20) documents a marriage metaphor between Hosea and Gomer. Lipshitz (1988), Ezra (1974), Maimonides (1935), and Reiss (2018) refute that while the act is metaphoric, an actual human does not become a metaphor, Hosea must have seen visions in the dream of the night. Foreman (1967), McIntosh (2013), and Wehmeier (2000) claim that (Hos 1:2-2:20) is a metaphor using figures of speech זנונים-(harlotry), יזרעאל-(*Jezreel*). This research borrows Renz (2002:2) rhetorical analysis of unit, situation, disposition, techniques, effectiveness, and logic of analysis. Units form series of situations and narrative scenes in texts grouped together to form an integrated whole, situations made the text arise from social reality crises of the audience constrains, disposition categorizes texts depending on the presupposed actions, while techniques look at the rhetoric devices. Muilenburg (1969) repudiates that rhetoric devices and procedures carry the argument forward strategically and effectively by surveying and evaluating the impact of the entire unit working together while logic of analysis revisits

interpretation of individual features to understand the whole by drawing observations for logical conclusions.

4.11.2 Metaphorical Interpretation

Metaphors are rhetorical devices using figures of speech. Longman (1978) argues that metaphors display the slippage between sign and referent. Sandy (2002) claims that the development of the idea on metaphors started by Aristotle' argument that language is classified into logic, rhetoric and poetic; rhetoric is the domain for metaphor as a picturesque that expresses ideas in visual images to increase concept memorability and wording that bonds the speaker or the author and the hearer or the reader conveying abstract ideas elegantly and expressing thoughts and feelings by persuading the best reasoning and affecting the thinking or speaking to express and influence perception.

Wilt (2002) argues that metaphors are applied as significant symbols, images or figures in literary and verbal lore of cultures as building blocks of literary imagination to communicate stronger than its denotations as linguistic features like euphemism. Metaphors stimulate cognitive and emotive capacity of visual imagination from the audience. Metaphors and similes form pre-eminent images of scriptures that establish analogy, likeness, or correspondence between two entities, events, or experiences. To interpret or translate them, determine how the topic and the image are related, correspondent, or alike analogically.

Sandy (2002) argues that metaphors determine the conceptualization of things for convenience, meaningfulness, correct description or precision which comprise of and attract more elements. Metaphors begin with something nonfigurative, make it figurative by describing it to something beyond the scope of its normal meaning and remain meaningless if the reader has no means of discovering their accepted referents because their original cultural usage contribute immensely to their meaning. Metaphors speak truth although their surface words speak untruth, in texts they require correct interpretation for the intended messages. Metaphors are used for things understood inadequately and difficult to describe like abstract concepts because the more abstract concepts are the more valuable metaphors help conceptualize the abstraction but do not eliminate ambiguity but provide ways to think and converse about difficult things since ambiguity is unavoidable in all languages. Metaphors engage speakers and hearers into dialogue like two machines talking to each other and through points of intersection penetrate each other's world

enhancing comprehension and outsider's ability to identify and understand metaphors by bridging language and cultural barriers.

God communicates in metaphors which give additional force, life, intensifies feelings, and creates emphasis. The "biblical metaphors set forth truth with great vigour and meaning indicating emphasis by calling and attracting attentions that direct and fix the special truth being conveyed (Ex. 3:17; Num. 10:31)" (Sandy, 2002:66-71). Poetic genre has high concentration of metaphoric language (Job 4:8; Ps 7:11-13). Metaphors are lifeblood of the prophecy communicating in images memorable and shocking to recall Israel's history, God's presence and character, the future and heart messages (Mal 2:3). They resonate hearer's imagination evoking responses which become the reality itself, if the hearers ignore the 'it is as if' of the metaphor, the referent and the metaphor matches in meaning rather overlapping slightly (Isa 1:5-6; Mic. 4:3; Joel 3:9-10). Prophets had no better way to communicate than through graphic metaphors for emotive, memorable and persuasive engagement with hearers in dialogues transforming their thinking by moving from everyday life commonplace to moral issues with vast consequences.

4.12 Hosea's Message

The literal interpretation by Davies (1993) argues that "the command to marry a harlot was a divine ploy to soften Hosea's harsh message of Judgment, after the birth of His three children he was commanded to divorce his wife, his reluctance teaches that God has no intentions of abandoning His people" (Davies, 1993:79). Taking Gomer and bearing children are symbols preaching against the sinful Israel as God speaks to Hosea about His love for the wayward people of the modern times. Reiss (2018) and Snaith (1956) agree that through Hosea's message God repudiates His covenant with Israel because of their consistent violations of commands. Israel will be overrun by other nations and ultimately dispersed from their land since repentance was an option of remote possibility but after exile God may grant Israel mercy and restoration to their former glorious position.

Hosea portrays the love of God for His people, His reaction to their unfaithfulness of *Baal* worship. Israel "lacks proper knowledge of God and the essence of priestly services parallel to *Torah,* they lost professional loyalty to Yahweh hence apparent split between religion and politics" (Von Rad, 1965:113-4). Hosea pictures God's struggle with His stubborn people whose future goal corresponds to the beginning as the message of salvation. Hosea expects people to cultivate and use their knowledge to maintain certitude in God's saving action and justice. The use of wife's spiritual journey back to her husband and the Israelites' physical journey back to

their homeland from exile, carries the message of the movement from barrenness to fertility as waste land ravaged and laid waste participates cosmically in the bounty flowing from the re-betrothal of husband and wife. Hosea manifests the wonderful results of this sowing by depicting the wife breaking forth as a lush flourishing land. The relevance of Hosea's message include the teachings about the covenant adherent in marriage, land, and to the kings, the importance of kinship and faithfulness family and love relationships, leadership and kingship roles and duties to the society, the use of symbolism that adds aesthetic, memory, and understanding.

Hosea's message is carried in the marriage metaphor for Gomer's identity and characterization. Hosea's wife Gomer and Israel were unfaithful to the covenant. Gomer's participation in cultic fertility worship was unacceptable and punishable like Israel's *Baal* worship. Gomer represents Israel, Hosea represents God, and their children symbolizes Israel's oncoming calamity. The theological significance of (Hos1:2-2:20) is faithfulness and covenant adherent. It is God's will to reconcile with the repentant.

4.13 Conclusion

The exegesis in this chapter has demonstrated that Hosea's marriage addresses Israel's unfaithfulness to God by breaking His covenant with them. Israel was to be pure, holy, set apart for God, to worship Yahweh alone but Israel indulged in worshipping the Canaanite gods and goddesses. Spiritual harlotry involved *Baalism* and paganism and it was punishable. The message today from Hosea marriage is God's judgment upon the guilty whom He loves and unless repentance from unfaithfulness and corruption God will abandon His services to them. Hosea uses metaphors to communicate his message by creating impressions in the listeners and readers mind for an understanding and personal judgment like presently needed.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative summary of the research findings, the recommendations draw from the findings and final conclusions. The chapter is organized in a way that first articulate the findings on identity and characterization of Gomer, then the theological issues that arise from this study and the final conclusions.

5.2.0 Findings

The section discusses what the researcher has found out in this research as an attempt to understand the identity and characterization of Gomer as portrayed in (Hos 1:2-2:20).

5.2.2 Identity

Identity refers to the qualities of a person making him/her different with others through characteristics determinant. Comay & Brownrigg (1993) and Brown (1906) identifies Hosea as an 8th century prophet prophesying in the northern kingdom, and whose name means salvation. In (Hos 1:1) declares Hosea Son of Beeri as the recipient of the Lord's message, Hosea forms a family name for Joshua; Beeri means my well for Esau's father-in-law" (Davies, 1993:79).

In identifying *Jezreel*, Kraft (1971) argues that *Jezreel* means *El* sows, an original name for a high Canaanite pantheon god appropriate for a child born of Canaanite fertility-rite priestess, suggesting that god sows seed, fertility, and agricultural prosperity. *Jezreel* historically announces dynastic end by Jehu's bloody purge (841BCE) toppling Omri dynasty by murdering Israel's King Joram and Judah's King Ahaziah near *Jezreel* Valley (2 Kings 9:14-29). God punished the evil dynasty (752BCE) when Jehu's dynasty was ended by the murder of Jeroboam's son Zechariah at the hand of usurper Shallum (2 Kings 15:10). McCathy (1990) argues that *Jezreel* was the plain between Galilee, Samaria and Jordan where there was bloodshed during the overthrowing of Omri dynasty deserving punishment by idolatrous Omrids' selfish murders. In (Hos 1:5)-*Jezreel* means to break the bow indicating the destruction of Israel's power by Assyrian invasion (733BCE) as fulfillment of curses from covenant breaking (Deut. 28).

Identifying Hosea's second born child, Knight (1960) argues that Hosea doubted if this was his own child naming her *Lo-Ruhamah* as God's attitude to His people. God pitied Israel at Sinai

and rescued her from Egyptian slavery through Moses (Ex. 33:19). In love, God bound Himself to an everlasting covenant but Israel forfeited the right to God's pity and the unique relationship with Him. Identifying Hosea's third child, Knight (1960) argues that with *Lo-Ammi,* Hosea expresses total doubt that this was his sired child showing that Israel did not learn the lesson from *Lo-Ruhamah* to be Yahweh's own special people (Ex. 3:7; 5:1; 7:16). Yahweh knew Israel as *My-people*, now reversed by Hosea as *Not-my-People* to express devastations of their election, God's care, and entry into the Promised Land. God rejected Israel's disloyalty as sinful instrument remaining true to Himself and His covenant. Knight (1960) adds that in (Ex. 3:14) God gave His name אהיה[25](*ehyeh*)-I-will-be) repeated in (Hos 1:4, 7, 9). Threats uttered by Hosea are climactic in intensity as God takes away Israel's king (His presence), His love, and His self because the "original awe accorded to Him got lost and the loss of reference for God does not encourage people to detest sin" (Githuku, 2012:132).

Gomer's identity contributes to the understanding of Hosea's message. Brown (1906) reveals that גמר-(*Gomer*) means complete or perfection and it denotes proximity or plowshare while זננים-(*zenunim*) denotes committing harlotry or being promiscuous. Some English Bible "translations prefer whoredom for harlotry" (Snaith, 1956:53). Since "Gomer and Diblaim are not Israelite names, they indicate unfaithfulness although ותהר indicates Hosea and Gomer's love and sexual relationship" (McCathy, 1990:256). Gomer's genealogy is identified for the acceptance of the prophet and his oracles. Von Rad (1965) argues that Hosea's own life is symbolic to the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. The idea of marriage between deities and earthly partners was familiar to Hosea from Canaanite nature religion like *Baal's* marriage to the earth. The study demonstrates that Gomer represents Israel.

5.2.3 Characterization

Characterization is the way of representation in plays or books to appear real and natural or the literal or dramatic portrayal of characters which combines the qualities in a person that makes the person different from others. In (Hos 1:3) the phrase ויקח[26]וילך[27]-'So he went and took' indicates Hosea's obedience. Von Rad (1965) claims that Hosea was the northern kingdom writing prophet of the 8th Century against the Canaanite fertility cult, peculiar political and

[25]אהיה Verb qal imperfect 1st person common singular-'become'

[26]ויקח Verb consecutive imperfect third person masculine singular with ו-'and',-'and he took'

[27]וילך Verb qal waw consecutive imperfect 3rd person masculine singular apocopated with ו-'and',-'to lead, bring'

governmental system which existed and demanded for the prophet's intervention in public affairs. Hosea's divine word receives glow and fervor in the intensity of a characteristic of this prophet whose preaching is rooted in the saving history which Israel forsook like the faithless wife running after her lovers. Hosea depicts the subverted relationship of Israel to Yahweh under the image of his own marriage. Comay & Brownrigg (1993) argues that Hosea fiercely attacks Canaanite practices which crept into high places, the local shrines on hilltops and under sacred trees. He was caustic about golden calves introduced into sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan by the breakaway northern kingdom of Israel. He attacks priests for failing to set example to the people.

Kelly (1995) argues that Hosea's children symbolize completeness and finality of the breach, an inevitable nation's rejection of God while the essential covenant term was 'I will be your God and you will be my people' (Jer. 7:23). The characteristic of Israel's unfaithfulness demonstrates their unwillingness to follow the Lord's command and refusal to recognize Him as their God. *Jezreel, Unloved,* and *Not-my-People* symbolize the nation's progressive deterioration ending in an ultimate self-destruction. *Jezreel* is characteristic of the destruction of the dynasty of Jehu, king of Israel, in the valley of *Jezreel*, the place where Jehu had originally seized the throne (Hos 1:4). *Lo-Ammi* is characteristic of Israel's rejection by God for their sins (Hos 1:9). *Lo-Ruhamah* is characteristic of God's decision not to have mercy on Israel but exit them for their sins.

Gomer is the main character in (Hos 1:2-2:20) characterized as זנים-(*zenunim*) from the root word (זנה)-*zonah*. Gomer's character is entrenched in understanding אשת זנים-(Hos 1:2) translated into a woman of harlotry. The term זנים renders disobedience and disloyalty to the covenant call. Brown (1906) argues that זנים means being or acting as a harlot, used metaphorically for the land's harlotry or improper intercourse with foreign nations. It also means having intercourse with other deities involving actual harlotry. Hosea expresses this characteristic of Israel as obsessed by fascination with the Canaanite god *Baal* as though it was sexual addictions. The harlotry metaphor employed by Hosea expresses the characteristic of Israel's religious apostasy of running after other gods. Von Rad (1965) argues that this double metaphor symbolizes Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh in the characteristic signs of Israel's unfaithfulness through the unnamed harlot that Hosea would purchase, seize away, hold in solitary confinement, and cut off from all human sexual contact with any man.

Comay & Brownrigg (1993) alludes that the woman married by Hosea is characteristic of how a faithless wife Israel had become to God. Gomer is characterized as a loose woman that bore

Hosea three children that were given names with characteristics of bitter rejection. Hosea divorced her but continued to love her and finally forgave and took her back symbolizing reunion between God and Israel. The woman of (Hos 1) identified as Gomer is the same in (Hos 3) whose harlotry does not signify a woman of particularly deprived moral character but one who took part in the Canaanite fertility rites as typical representation of Israel. The bitter experience of the prophet's marriage life of unhappy love with unfaithful wife teaches about God's love for His people. Hosea proclaims that true fertility does not come from the marriage of *Baal* with the earth but the rain bringing God (1 Kings 18:1, 41-45). Gomer's harlotry was characteristic of the popular holiness of *Baalism* which was acquired cheaply like a harlot.

5.3.0 Theology

Theology is the idea behind "the relationship between the divine and the human" (Anderson, 1999:3; Eichrodt, 1967:15) or the "study of biblical themes on their own terms" (Dyrness, 1979:16). Theology brings together the minds of diverse statements the Old Testament makes about God, who wishes to be known not as a manifold God but as the one Yahweh. The theology of (Hos 1:2-2:20) applies this reference as "the history of religion under the Old Covenant whereby the Old Testament is the revelation of God" (Ollenburger, 1992:15).

5.3.1 Theological Significance of (Hos 1:2-2:20)

The primary task of this exegesis "elucidates Hosea's tropes in the context of his time" (Hearon, 2004:113), as he "bringing out the covenant theme (Hos 2:18) and revisits the Sinai covenant through his marriage metaphor" (Carlson 1984:G14). Marriages are built on relationships that culminate in covenantal commitments to whole life togetherness. The study of the marriage in (Hos 1:2-2:20) reveals the theology of a "covenant demanding faithfulness like at Sinai. Worshipping other gods is punishable. Genuine love and care restores the offender through repentance, reconciliation brings reunion, restoration, and renewal, while hope focuses at a better future" (Yee, 1994:197-9). Other theologies are "Judgment, salvation, divine economy, and eschatological relationship, God's continual and passionate loyalty" (Childs, 1979:381-2). The theology of "sin and unfaithfulness reveals that both attract punishment, suffering, and enslavement" (Hinson, 1992:168-70).

Hosea understood God's ways with Israel out of sufferings with his unfaithful wife. God's punishment is through the conquest of enemies and enslavement by oppressors. Childs (1979) relates judgment and salvation of (Hos 1:2-2:20) within *heilsgeschichtliche* schema. Israel was

punished in exile before the restoration as God's new people. Judgment and salvation inextricably joins the purpose of God for His people in an eschatological relationship that holds them together in one divine plan. Hosea's message of hope arises from his personal marriage experiences and his theology of judgment bears witness to God's continual and passionate loyalty to His people in the face of Israel's fragrant and persistent disloyalty. Hosea declares Yahweh's will for Israel regarding the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai for a divine election figured in the covenant relationship.

5.3.2 Theology of Harlotry Used as Idolatry

The term זנים defines Hosea's wife. It is translated into harlotry which was at the epitome of God's instruction to Hosea to go and marry a woman that was not upright sexually-אשׁת זנים (*eseth zenunim*), and get such children (Hos 1:2). The different equivalent words used by different bible versions are harlotry (TaNaKh, RSV), whoredom (KJV, NRSV), unfaithful, adultery (NIV, NBS), and wanton (NEB). In the contemporary understanding "fornication and prostitution are synonymous to harlotry" (McIntosh, 2013:609; 712; 1231), all these terms used for זנים-(*zenunim*) underscore promiscuity. Clines (1998) alludes that זנים-(*zenunim*) can refer to prostitution, fornication, or religious infidelity (2 Kings 9:22; Ezek. 23:11-29; Hos 2:4-6). In (Hos 2:4-5) Israel's disobedience is equated to harlotry, an idea borrowed for the harlotry addressed in (Hos 1:2-2:20).

The Kikuyu Bible translates אשׁת זנים-(*eseth zenunim*) into *mutumia wa maraya*.[28]This weakens the seriousness of harlotry in (Hos 1:2). The topic changes completely since *mutumia*[29] is a married woman, *maraya*[30] takes the place of the husband. The Kikuyu word *maraya* refers to women sexual workers which undermines the translation of (Hos 1:2). By using *mutumia wa maraya* it means that Hosea was to go and snatch away someone's wife. This translation shifts promiscuity from the wife to the husband making Gomer innocent. According to Githuku (2012) *kwagana* is the most appropriate Kikuyu word for sexual misconduct as זנה. *Umaraya* is a concept not originally known to *Agikuyu* but a farfetched meaning for זנה borrowed from Swahili '*malaya'* with similar meaning. *Mutumia mwaganu* would have been more appropriate

[28]*Mutumia wa maraya* is the Kikuyu phrase for 'wife of harlotry'
[29] *Mutumia* is the Kikuyu word for wife
[30] *Maraya* is the Kikuyu word for harlotry

for זנים אשת as used in (Hos 1:2-6) to portray harlotry demonstrating the disobedience and disloyalty of Israel to Yahweh's covenant.

There are other ways זנים-(*zenunim*) is used. Clines (1998) argues that it expresses exposure of nakedness of young women (Ezek. 23:29; Nu 2:7) as punishment of committed sins of hatred. In (Gen 38:24) it expresses incest of father-in-law sleeping with a daughter, bearing child with her and although he first condemned her as a greater sinner, he later acknowledged that he was worse than her. Wolff (1974) rejects the idea that זנים אשת-(*eseth zenunim)* can be interpreted as a woman of whoredom to mean a soliciting prostitute, or a young woman given to prostitution, and neither a woman inclined to adultery. He refutes it arguing that the children of both sexes are expressed as possessing their mother's character, 'children of harlotry'-(זנים וילד[31]). The term refers not to literal harlotry but symbolic religious apostasy. The term זנים means a promiscuous wife symbolizing the land's guilty of harlotry in departing from the Lord. Subsequent reference to "harlotry indicates Israel's unfaithfulness, symbolizing Israel's broken relationship with Yahweh" (House, 1990:124-5). Carson (1994), and House (1990) claim that Hosea married according to God's instruction (Hos 1:2), a woman of improper sexual intercourse with straight forward words saying marry a harlot, or marry someone who comes from where harlotry is normal, or marry someone who will turn out to be a harlot. Falwell (1982) prefers the use of harlotry and introduces the term infidelity for spiritual infidelity of Israel that needed national repentance.

While Fohrer (1973) prefers un-chastity, fornication, or unfaithfulness for זנים, Davidson (1850) deviates by suggesting that it should be understood to mean whoredom applied to idolatry from feminine root verb זנה–(*zonah)* in (Ezek. 16:34) means committing or playing harlotry which was spiritual infidelity or idolatry. The term זנים is "used for harlotry (Gen 38:24) sexual case, (Nu 3:4) international case (2 Kings 9:22, Ezek. 23:11-29; Hos 2:4-6) religious cases" (Brown, 1906:276). Tregelles (1953) concurs that the root word זנה used in (Gen 38:24; Hos 1:2) refers to a promiscuous wife and bastard children, figuratively representing idolatry while (2 Kings 9:22; Isa 23:17; Nu 3:4) refers to commerce with foreign nations. This figurative use refers to idol worship (Jer. 3:2-9; Ezek. 23:27) expressing infidelity to God like complaining and seditious people (Nu 14:33). Yee (1994), Andersen (1990), Freedman (1992), and Trible (1994) interpret זנים as promiscuous woman or a harlot to identify Gomer as an ordinary harlot or cult harlot

[31] וילד Noun common masculine plural construct with ו-'and', 'and children'

involved in Canaanite fertility cult as her harlotry provides an effective metaphor to incarnate the elite's covenantal infidelity like a harlot. Hosea shrewdly exploits interconnections among ownership, marriage, female sexuality and procreation to articulate his critique of the ruling elite to promote covenant monolatry.

5.3.3 Covenant Theology

The covenant idea forms the key biblical motifs. Snaith (1956) claims that the Hebrew ברית-(*berith*-covenant) is equivalent to the Latin word *Testamentum* which is binding. God made a covenant with Israel at Sinai (Ezek. 34:10). In the Priestly Tradition the covenant between Yahweh and Israel is strongly emphasized while Deuteronomy applies election whereby Yahweh choses Israel because of their fathers, His promises, and His gracious love for them (Deut. 4:34;7:7-8;9:5). Hosea applied the marriage metaphor since the "Old Testament marriage covenants were arranged by fathers or the oldest male kin to benefit families and ensure children are brought up in ways that credits the whole group as a norm" (Freedman, 1992:563-4; Matthews, 1988:14-24). Hosea's marriage metaphor stands for the covenant between God and Israel to describe their relationship. Kraft (1971) claims that Hosea's prophecy reveals profound concerns on covenant history for God's people. The lack of faithfulness, covenant loyalty, and God's actual intimate knowledge leads to national imminent destruction.

The covenant idea provides the perspective within which exodus from Egypt and Sinai sojourns are viewed. The covenant at Sinai portrays tradition-(Ex. 19-24), subsumed under the Abrahamic covenant. The Sinai covenant tradition is at home with the north Israel. Anderson (1999) alludes that Abrahamic covenant was a promissory covenant guaranteeing the Promised Land and posterity whereas Sinai covenant was an obligatory covenant whereby Yahweh gave commands after delivering the Israelites from Egypt. The covenant is inseparable from law since keeping the covenant meant observing God's statutes and ordinances in the Promised Land. Eichrodt (1961) claims that the importance of the Sinai covenant was to bind the Israelites to God and establishment firm knowledge. The basis of man's relationship with God is embodied in a covenant demonstrated in the covenant-union between Yahweh and Israel, a relationship of grace founded on primal act in history, maintained on definite conditions and protected by powerful divine Guardian. Hosea highlights the covenant between God and Israel-(Hos 1) whereby Yahweh's faithless wife is Israel and her worship of illicit gods is harlotry punishable by death. Gods' reconciliation with Israel is the model of Hosea's reunion with Gomer.

Sproul (2015), Von Rad (1965), and Yee (1994) agree that despite threats of destruction and fall, Hosea was a beacon of hope whose central theme is the covenant that God made with Israel after redeeming them from Egypt. Hosea's marriage is a prophetic proclamation characteristic of Hosea's passionate indignation at Israel's disloyalty and the approaching punishment being imprecise, fresh saving activity and fresh start. Yahweh's partner in "the marriage is not some goddess but Israel, legal categories of covenantal thought replace mythico-cultic fertility concepts rooted in sacral marriage" (Von Rad, 1965:113,117). Wolff (1974) claims that Yahweh who acts in present and future begun His covenantal history with Israel during her youth with exodus from Egypt (Hos 2:17), covenant (Hos 1:9), and the giving of the divine law (Hos 2:21f). For Von Rad (1965) and Yee (1994), Hosea describes Israel's submersion in Canaanite nature religion as harlotry to express indissolubility of Yahweh's covenant and abhorrence of fertility rites and sacred harlotry of *Baal* cult involving festival of a marriage imitating *Baal* and Anat where men had ritual sex with cultic harlots to ensure fertility in the land. Knight (1960) adds that Sidonians worshipped the goddess of fertility and consort of *El* and *Baal* (Hos 3:4) for 'bread, water, wool, flax, oil, and drink' (Hos 2:5).

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that it should be understood that through Gomer and her children, God expresses what it feels to have unfaithful partner. The figures that Hosea employs should be understood as the declaration of Yahweh's will for Israel. Israel was like God's Bride for the covenant He made with them at Sinai. The Sinai Covenant was God's gift to the sinful Israel, a vehicle of sheer grace on Yahweh's part. Through divine mercy, a rich deep beautiful relationship was Yahweh's will as in (Gen 24:27) חסד-(*hesedh*) or in (Gen 43:14) רחמים-(*rahamim*). Men and women make covenant in holy wedlock to love and cherish each other until death. Wives promise to love and obey husbands while husbands promise to love and be dutiful to their wives, understood this way, Yahweh "requires loyalty, love, grace, and condescending mercy of giving all that husbands promise their wives but Israel's unfaithfulness entails covenant disloyalty expressed in disobedience to God's spoken Word at Sinai and lack of devotion to His cult" (Knight, 1960:20-2). Israel's problem was unfaithfulness to Yahweh and the development of *Baalism* of the Canaanite fertility god. There is clarity that the themes of land ownership, marriage and procreation converge in the birth of Hosea and Gomer's first child. As a wife belongs to her husband alone, Israel solely belongs to Yahweh as the land He impregnates or seeds. A promiscuous wife sabotages her husband's seed by being plowed and seeded by other lovers.

The term זנים-(*zenunim*) in (Hos 1:2:2:20) should be understood as an expression of disloyalty addressing the surmounting unfaithfulness among the Israelites. In (Hos 1:2) the term זנים interpreted as harlotry for religious unfaithfulness pictures the covenant relationship between God and Israel indicating Israel's disobedience and disloyalty to God's covenant. Their apostasy involved worshipping pagan gods, *Baal* linked to the Canaanites worship of the spiritualized natural powers. Physical union of men and women for procreative purposes was integrated by the Canaanites into their cult. Knight (1960) argues that as a mighty vital bull, the veritable procreative force sought to revive nature's life at the end of the year cycle by encouraging sacred harlotry of men and women at innumerable Astarte shrines. This harlotry was active in the precincts of Jerusalem Temple, a century after Hosea's death (2 Kings 23:6-7) although forbidden (Deut. 23:17-18) despite its overwhelming powerful attraction.

The Book of Hosea should be used often to address the issues of unfaithfulness just like Hosea did to address Israel's unfaithfulness to God and breaking of covenant for a pure nation, holy and set apart. Rather worshipping Yahweh alone, Israel worshipped the Canaanite gods and goddesses. Hosea's message applies to Christendom whereby spiritual harlotry includes paganism, ritualism, formalism and self-centeredness. Nowadays the church harlotry includes taking possessions bestowed upon God to pursue worldly ambitions and pleasures. God's judgment is upon the guilty people and unless repentance in dust and ashes of harlotry, there only awaits abandonment. Hosea's theology is rooted in the heart of God's relationship with Israel requiring faithfulness and covenant keeping. The Lord never wavered in His covenant loyalty to Israel whereas Israel had a history of covenant breaking and worship of other gods repeatedly (Hos 2:7). Israel's idolatry is equated to harlotry and violation of the covenant terms. This concept of idolatry as harlotry symbolizes the imagery of the unfaithfulness of Hosea's wife. Hosea calls Israel to repentance and covenant renewal. The long-suffering and patient character of God to His covenant promise highlights the climactic summons on Israel's unfaithfulness ultimately overshadowed by God's faithfulness.

This research has revealed that the most heinous and damnable sin is unfaithfulness such as Israel's relationship with God through their violation of the covenant by committing spiritual harlotry of worshipping other gods which nowadays existing inform of animalism, brutality, and corruption. Unfaithfulness leads to the unutterable darkness of pollution that mere surface repentance to escape God's punishment is not acceptable. The penalties of apostasy are irrevocable as laws of purity. Morgan (1960) exclaims that no man can know the measure and

the cost of restoration of unfaithful lover. Through *Baalism*, people become doomed, punishment becomes swift and sinners quickly swept away. In heaping up retribution, punishment will come with pain as hidden troubles come to birth. No substitute for the living God known through experiences of trusting Him daily and relying on Him continually. Hosea clarifies that in repentance, iniquities are removed and God receives people graciously. Through sin offering, sins no longer remain between man and God. When people truly repent, guilt is no longer between them and God as a barrier. God's aspect of dealing with men is seen in strict and stern justice versus His everlasting love and mercy.

5.5 Final Conclusions

Hosea sees the dangers of the cultic *Baal* worship that fed upon the human natural lusts as a form of magic, not religion. Yahweh alone brings life, not *Baal*. Yahweh brought up Israel out of Egypt to continue with His cosmic significance (Hos 2:18-23). Hosea emphasizes that Yahweh alone withholds or gives the fruits from the earth. Similar to Hosea's use of metaphor, Africans use metaphors to create impression upon the listeners and the readers for deeper understanding and personal judgment. The identity and characterization of Gomer as זנים-(*zenunim*) portrays Israel's unfaithfulness. The naming of Hosea's three children יזראעל-(*Jezreel*), לא־רחמה-(*Lo-Ruhamah*), and לא־עם-(*Lo-Ammi*) predicts Israel's eventualities from their covenant breaking. The term זנים-(*zenunim*) refers to the unfaithfulness expressed by Israel to God through idolatry and oppression of the poor.

Gomer was not a harlot per excellence but a *Baal* worshipper that expresses religious syncretism that defiles the cult in the temple where men and women were brought to practice things Yahwism rejects with horror. The religious love is the redemption expressed in Hosea's image as an avenging husband and a redeeming lover or Yahweh's suffering servant (Is. 53:7-12). Israel's aberration was furthered by their failure to arrive at any satisfactory adjustment between the national powers consolidated in the state and the will of God with absolute demands. Israel sort new and stronger forms of political life hence coming into conflict with the social foundations of Yahweh's covenant. Hosea's story is a case of *redemption via negativa*. Salvation is entrenched in Hosea's name הֹשֵׁע-(*Hoshea*) meaning salvation. The root word יהֹשֵׁע-(*Yehoshua*) is a verb that means to deliver. God is the redeemer and Israel is the redeemed. Hosea spoke of the coming salvation.

Gomer represents Israel in the covenant strand. Hosea's tragic marriage to his promiscuous wife and the birth of their three children parallels Yahweh's tumultuous union with Israel. Hosea presents Israel's worship of illicit gods as harlotry punishable by death. God's eventual reconciliation with Israel provides a model of Hosea's reunion with Gomer (Hos 3:1ff). The passage of (Hos 1:2-2:20) reveals the evils Israelites committed by breaking God's covenant. Hosea represents God in this symbolic marriage as a covenant between God and Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19-24). Hosea uses a marriage metaphor for the relationship between God and Israel with a powerful message from his call to marry a harlot that transformed his whole life, his wife and children symbolize Israel. Gomer is depicted as a harlot or Hosea's promiscuous wife, Hosea is analogous to God who expected total submission. The idolatry of the Israelites is what the narrator equates to Gomer's harlotry. Hosea's metaphor for the covenant between Yahweh and Israel provides an understanding of the divine-human relationship. It engages the reader in a compelling story about God's love, forgiveness, and compassion, in spite of Israel's sinfulness. Hosea propagates sole worship of Yahweh against worship of other gods. Using the marriage metaphor to convey this monotheistic message rhetorically was daring, revolutionary and persuasive. The marriage metaphor is serviceable because it also addresses fertility, and social concerns.

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