

VU Research Portal

Beyond Religious Crisis

Mandalika, Lady Paula Reveny

2024

DOI (link to publisher)
[10.5463/thesis.980](https://doi.org/10.5463/thesis.980)

document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

citation for published version (APA)

Mandalika, L. P. R. (2024). *Beyond Religious Crisis: An Intersectional Reading of the Body and Land Imagery in Hosea*. [PhD-Thesis - Research and graduation internal, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam].
<https://doi.org/10.5463/thesis.980>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

E-mail address:
vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

BEYOND RELIGIOUS CRISIS

An Intersectional Reading of the Body and Land Imagery in Hosea

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor of Philosophy aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. J.J.G. Geurts,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit Religie en Theologie
op vrijdag 20 december 2024 om 9.45 uur
in een bijeenkomst van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door

Lady Paula Reveny Mandalika

geboren te Makassar, Indonesië

promotor: prof.dr. J. Dubbink

copromotoren: prof.dr. N.M. Slee
prof.dr. E.G. Singgih

promotiecommissie: prof.dr. P.B.A. Smit
prof.dr. C.A.M. van den Berg
dr. R. Starr
prof.dr. R. Setio
dr. W. van Wieringen

For Penjaga Danau Poso,

Sumba Women's Group Kahembi Kalelang,

Yogyakarta group,

and

Amabelle Arivia

Acknowledgements

In the process of studying, researching, and finalising the manuscript, I have incurred many debts from all those who helped me throughout the journey. Firstly, I thank God for everything. I am very grateful for the privilege of studying that was given and supported financially by LAI. I would like to acknowledge pak Anwar, pak Tensi, and other TO colleagues, mba Lina, pak Sigit, ibu Eri, and other friends. My colleagues from this institution have encouraged my study over the years.

I am thankful and deeply grateful for the invaluable guidance and support of Prof. Dr. Joep Dubbink and Prof. Dr. Nicola Slee, who have been with me from the beginning, providing supervision, critical feedback and questions, offering suggestions which helped me throughout the research project. I am also grateful to Prof. Gerrit Singgih who has given me his thoughtful comments. All their supervision and encouragement have significantly helped me through the completion of this research project.

I am deeply indebted to the communities who have generously shared their context, ideas, and their valuable knowledge with me. I benefitted from dialogue with the APDP Poso, the women's group of Sumba Church Kahembi Kalelang, and the Catholic church in Gamping, Yogyakarta that have significantly enriched my research. Their solidarity, deep insights, and brave advocacy for ecology have been invaluable and I deeply appreciate their role in this research.

In terms of the opportunity for exchange and present my ideas, I am indebted to my dear friends of Oase Intim: pak Zakaria Ngelow, Christin Hutubessy, pak Mojau, late ibu Yuberlian Padele, pak Asyer, ibu Fietje, ka Jean, Ka Lusi, ibu Corrie, ibu Ati and others. They have provided different kinds of forums for the exchange of ideas and solidarity movements related to eco-theology and intercontextual Bible reading. Their friendship, especially during difficult times, have been a source of strength for me. I am also grateful to the Bridging Gaps programme, Contextual Bible Interpretation research group, Intercultural Bible reading a long time ago with prof. Hans de Wit, Cinematography and Ecotheology team together with pak Jaap, pak Sjaak, pak Gede,

pak Asyer, bu Herlina, bu Ana, Ody, Ecotheology community, and also to EATWOT and NICMCR for the opportunity to learn and share ideas.

I also want to thank Helen Pears, who helped in proofread and made the manuscript more readable. The language of the manuscript has improved because of her suggestions and corrections.

I want to acknowledge the kindness of brothers and sisters from the churches in the Netherlands, Gereja Protestan Indonesia di Belanda Imanuel, Gereja Perki Nederland, JP Perki, GKIN and English Reformed Church. Thank you for your amazing friendship and hospitality. Special thanks to the family of om Wesley and tante Wanda, Fuut groups, tante Jo Soenardi, and Poetri Ayoe family who have shared their home and many precious moments in the festive season while I was far away from home and throughout COVID time. Thank you to pak Jilles and family, my dear teachers who showed great interest in my studies since the earliest journey a long time ago in Makassar. Thank you for the warm conversation with your family, your kind friendship, and support.

Thanks a lot to my parents, Hetty and Julius Mandalika, my sister Andrina for juggling many duties so I would be able to study and concentrate. I am deeply grateful for your unwavering support. Lastly, my profound word of thanks is to my daughter, Amabelle Arivia, the joy of my heart. Thank you for your love and support in this journey together.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Description of the Problem	1
1.2 Context of Indonesia	10
1.3 Research Question	15
1.4 Research Method	15
1.5 Outline of the Research Development	15
1.6 The Significance of the Research	18

Chapter 2 Methods and Methodology

2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Understanding Metaphor	20
2.3 Social Scientific Criticism	25
2.4 Intercontextual Reading: Interpretation as A Collective Act	30
2.4.1 The Method of Intercontextual Reading	35
2.4.2 The Contribution of Intercontextual Reading	42
2.5 Ecofeminist Reading	44

Chapter 3 Cognitive and Affective Metaphors in Hosea

3.1 Introduction	48
3.2 Scholarly Discourse on Metaphor of Hosea	49
3.3 The Promiscuity Metaphor in Hosea	52
3.3.1 Conceptual Background of Sexual Promiscuity in Ancient Egypt	53
3.3.2 Conceptual Background of Sexuality in Ancient Mesopotamia	55
3.3.3 Conceptual Background of Sexuality in Ancient Israel	57
3.4 Promiscuity as Social-Economic Crisis	61
3.5 The problematic Imagery	63
3.6 Summary	69

Chapter 4 The Metaphor of Land and Body in Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 in the Social-Political Dynamics of Eighth-Century Israel and Judah

4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 Social-Political Dynamics in the Centralised and Decentralised Period	72
4.2.1 Decentralisation Period	75
4.2.2 Centralisation Period	79
4.2.3 Social-Political Dynamics of Eighth-Century Israel and Judah	84
4.3 Translation and Critical Notes of Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3	86
4.3.1 Translation	87
4.3.2 Textual Discussion	92
4.4 Reading the Family, Land and Body Metaphor	105
4.5 The Hope for Interconnectedness and the Flourishing of Collective Bodies of Nature	115
4.6 A Call to Hear the Earth Mourning and Overcome Crisis	120
4.7 Summary	127

Chapter 5 Intercontextual Community Reading

5.1 Introduction	128
5.2 First Meeting	
5.2.1 Alliance of Lake Poso Guardians (APDP), Tentena, Central Sulawesi	130
5.2.2 Sumba Group, East Nusa Tenggara	141
5.2.3 Yogyakarta group, Central Java	149
5.3 Second Meeting	
5.3.1 The APDP Poso Group Reading of Yogyakarta and Sumba's Report	155
5.3.2 The Sumba Group Reading of the Yogyakarta and APDP Poso's Report	158
5.3.3 The Yogyakarta Group Reading of the APDP Poso and Sumba's Report	162
5.4 The Third Meeting	
5.4.1 APDP Poso Group Reflection on the Whole Process	165
5.4.2 Sumba Group Reflection on the Whole Process	167
5.4.3 Yogyakarta Group Reflection on the Whole Process	170
5.5 Analysis of Community Mapping as the Exploration of the Readers Social Context	170
5.6 Analysis of the Group Dynamic	173
5.7 Analysis of the Interpretation Process	175
5.8 Analysis of the Exchange of Perspectives	177
5.9 Analysis of the Reading of Characters in the Text	179
5.10 Analysis of the Praxeological Effect	179
5.11 Summary	180

Chapter 6 The Womb of Nature: Exploring Relation between Land and Body

6.1 Introduction	185
6.2 Feminist Reading on Hosea	186
6.3 The Problematic Metaphor of Female Imagery and Violence in Hosea	191
6.4 Land Metaphor in Hosea	195
6.5 Deep Connection with Nature	200
6.6 Ecofeminism and The Relationship of Women and Nature	204
6.7 The Importance of Body in Ecofeminist Theology	211
6.8 Symbolic Imagery of Woman's and Land Bodies in Hosea	218
6.9 The Intersection of Gender, Economy, Power Relations, and Ecology: A Holistic Ecofeminist Perspective	226
6.9 Summary	230

Chapter 7 Conclusions

7.1 The Main Topic and Its Importance	232
7.2 The Research Gap and the Main Aim of the Research	234
7.3 Main Results	235
7.3.1 Insights into the Role of Metaphors in Biblical Interpretation	236
7.3.2 Insights from Social Scientific Criticism	240
7.3.3 Insights from Intercontextual Reading	243
7.3.4 The Interconnectedness of All Ecological Bodies	245
7.4 Contributions of the Research	247
7.5 Practical Implications of the Research	248
7.6 Limitations of the Research	249
7.7 Suggestion for the Future Research	250

Bibliography	251
--------------	-----

Figures	258
---------	-----

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the Problem

There is a consensus of interpretation that the ‘marriage’ metaphor in Hosea deals with a religious crisis, specifically the opposition between the worship of YHWH and Ba’al.¹ In this metaphor, the worship of Ba’al is shown symbolically through Gomer, while Hosea represents God, who tries hard to restore the relationship. This perspective remains a dominant paradigm in contemporary Hosea readings. My research aims to show that the metaphors in Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 deal with problems beyond the crisis of the opposition between YHWH and Ba’al. I argue that the metaphor of family, land, and body talks about the social-ecological crisis that brought disintegration. Therefore, social-ecological crisis is part of the religious crisis highlighted in Hosea. This theme also emerged in the intercontextual bible reading by Indonesian communities who are fighting against the lake exploitation and deforestation. Furthermore, I contend that the metaphor highlights a fragmented relationship between the bodies of the land and nature, as well as emphasising hope for interconnectedness and a stronger ecological kinship. Also, there is a need to be critical with respect to the negative portrayal of woman in the text and the destruction of nature that is used to speak about the negative social condition of Israel.

To better understand the research concerns of this thesis, the aim of this opening chapter is to present an introduction to the general interpretations of the ‘marriage’ metaphor in Hosea, with their counter perspectives. I will also describe the context of Indonesia and show the significance of the context in dialogue with the reading

¹ A.de Kuiper, *Kitab Hosea* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2010), 6; Gordon Mc.Conville, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 144; G. I. Davies, *Hosea: New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992).

of scripture. Then, before going on to define the central research question, I will provide a short explanation of the method and the outline of the research development.

As mentioned earlier, Hosea has primarily been seen as depicting a religious crisis in Israel, primarily in terms of the worship of Ba'al through the metaphor of marriage. For example, the scholar David A. Hubbard believes that the 'marriage' metaphor tells the story of God's love for his people, which shows concern over the cult of Ba'al, the instability of the monarchy, and the naivete of foreign policies.² The climax of the prophecy in Hosea is God's response of love to Israel's unfaithfulness. It shows the persistence of God's love to restore the relationship with Israel.³ John Day likewise assumes that the many references to Ba'al in Hosea show that Hosea is one of the prophets, besides Jeremiah, who seem to be particularly concerned about the worship of Ba'al.⁴ In his understanding of Hosea 2, not only did Hosea object to the term 'Lord' (Ba'al) being applied to YHWH but he also opposed the people's tendency to associate YHWH and Ba'al to the point where the essential identity and uniqueness of YHWH was compromised.⁵ Furthermore, he argues that Hosea 5–6 and 13–14 have parallel images. The images are referring to death and resurrection. For Hosea, it is not Ba'al who experiences death and resurrection, but rather Israel who faces death as a consequence of worshipping Ba'al. However, if Israel repents, they may experience a resurrection. He concludes that the imagery of death and resurrection from the Ba'al myth has influenced the Book of Hosea. The land becomes dry and parched when Ba'al descends into the realm of death in the Ugaritic Ba'al myth. The concept of resurrection is metaphorically represented in Hosea 14 by the

² David Allan Hubbard, *Hosea: Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 20.

³ Hubbard, *Hosea*, 57.

⁴ John Day, "Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan," *Journal for The Study of The Old Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 71.

⁵ Day, "Yahweh and the Gods," 73.

manifestation of fertility in nature, similar to the association of Ba'al's resurrection with the fertility of the land in Canaanite mythology.⁶ He argues that YHWH had a prominent position as the primary God in Israel. The other deities would have been worshipped as part of his assembly.⁷ Scott Chalmers also agrees that the worship of Ba'al was a concern to Hosea, but it is not the only concern. In his view, the concern over Ba'al seems concentrated only in one part, especially in Hosea's marriage, and a close examination of Hosea 11–13 shows that Ba'al was not the only deity that was being falsely worshipped but so, for example, was El.⁸ Most of these interpretations relate the discussion on adultery with the religious crisis as emphasising God's love and Hosea as a prophet of love. God's love for Israel is reflected in the prophet's love for his wife.⁹

Moreover, Joshua Moon links Hosea's marriage with the notion of honour and shame. Moon maintains that instead of using an analogy of action in understanding Hosea, an analogy of status should be employed. The focus is not on the action of the wife but on her husband's disgrace status. YHWH instructs Hosea to do something that would bring public shame. Therefore, the disgrace of shame is now attached to Hosea's household and Hosea's marriage reflects YHWH's status of disgrace in being bound to Israel.¹⁰ Moon stated that Gomer is not the focus of concern because the concern lies with YHWH who is being disgraced by his people.¹¹ The public aspect of the punishment in Hos. 2:12 is even an expected treatment for one who has brought disgrace upon her household.¹² However, YHWH willingly embraces the disgrace by persisting in dwelling among his

⁶ Day, "Yahweh and the Gods," 120–121.

⁷ Day, "Yahweh and the Gods," 228.

⁸ Scott Chalmers, *The Struggle of Yahweh and El for Hosea's Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2008), 71–75.

⁹ William J. Doorly, *Prophet of Love: Understanding the Book of Hosea* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 105.

¹⁰ Joshua Moon, "Honor and Shame in Hosea's Marriage," *Journal for The Study of The Old Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2015), 342–343.

¹¹ Moon, *Honor and Shame*, 346.

¹² Moon, *Honor and Shame*, 347.

people who brought the shame into the household.¹³ The use of the honour and shame status to interpret the relationship in Hosea is also discussed by other scholars. Nevertheless, its scope is limited to the examination of the marriage metaphor whereby Hosea and God bear the public shame of being married to a promiscuous wife. The portrayal of Hosea as a representative of God has been highlighted. The depth analysis of Gomer's consequential public shame has been notably absent.

In a slightly different interpretation, Richtsje Abma shows that the marriage metaphor did not deal with the opposition between the worship of YHWH and Ba'al but between two forms of YHWH worship, the genuine and the perverted,¹⁴ where the perverted form links to the term Ba'al.¹⁵ The term Ba'al does not point to a single deity, but it is a broad term for all gods and goddesses whose worship threatens the genuine worship of YHWH.¹⁶ Abma remarks that not all qualities of the vehicle of 'husband' are applicable to YHWH and vice versa because the connection between human marriage and metaphorical marriage should not be exaggerated.¹⁷ Abma argues that the love declared by YHWH is aimed at a response of mutual fidelity and commitment between YHWH and Israel. YHWH wants to restore the partnership with Israel. Therefore, Abma perceives the marriage metaphor as the bond of love. Here, Abma focuses on the covenant's background in reading the metaphor of Hosea. Her emphasis on the intra-biblical idea of covenant makes it possible for her to both admit that there are elements of violence in the text, and assert that the marriage metaphor can be read positively. The presence of violence in the text is not the only interpretative comment that can be made here.¹⁸ However, the depiction of violence deserves more critical notes in

¹³ Moon, *Honor and Shame*, 349–350.

¹⁴ Richtsje Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery* (Amsterdam: Studia Semitica Nederlandica, 1999), 139.

¹⁵ Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 195.

¹⁶ Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 201.

¹⁷ Davies, *Hosea*, 13.

¹⁸ Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 29.

relation to the marriage metaphor. Abma studies diverse marriage imagery across texts such as Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, and Jeremiah 2:1–4:4. In doing so, Abma lists commonly recurring marriage terms associated with the metaphors that are often found within the themes of the marriage metaphor. Abma suggests the intra-biblical notion of the covenant to explain the marriage imagery, drawing from common themes and characteristics in the mentioned texts.

Caitlin Hubler also highlights that the problem raised by Hosea is not idolatrous worship of Ba'al. Instead, it involves an intra-religious debate within Yahwism, focusing on the characters and the extent of religious language from other traditions used in the Yahwism context. She argues that Hosea warns against incorrect worship of YHWH and urges Israel to better appreciate the mutual covenant partnership with YHWH.¹⁹ However, Robert Carroll challenges the tendency to see the prophetic critique as pertaining to a society that had broken the divine covenant made at Sinai. He offers an alternative perspective to see the prophetic critique as a critique of the broken family relationship as the basic relationship.²⁰ Carroll uses the theory of cognitive dissonance to analyse the prophecy that has failed to be fulfilled. He argues there is an indication of a dissonance response in the prophetic tradition.²¹ Moreover, Carroll argues that the concept of prophecy in ancient Israel was neither static nor monolithic. The prophecy was constantly undergoing change, development, reinterpretation, and adaptation in response to the change in society.²² Carroll's observation is one of the analyses that opens up the possibility of researching prophetic texts such as Hosea beyond the covenant idea of the marriage metaphor.

¹⁹ Caitlin Hubler, "No Longer Will You Call Me Ba'al: Hosea's Polemic and The Semantics of Ba'al in 8th Century BCE Israel," *Journal for The Study of The Old Testament* 44 (2020): 621.

²⁰ Robert Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 15–16.

²¹ Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, 126–128.

²² Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed*, 179.

Feminist scholars, such as Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine, are especially critical regarding the negative imagery and violence towards the woman in the text of Hosea. Athalya Brenner criticises the use of female images in the prophecy genre, such as the marriage contract broken by the metaphorical wife. In her view, the woman in this kind of genre is usually described negatively in contrast to positive or neutral male figures.²³ Being aware of the ideological questions that are being left out in the discussion, Carole Fontaine declares that the violent spouse who is willing to use violent approaches in order to restore the relationship and his honour is questionable. The humiliated and silenced Gomer, abused into submission, does not correspond to Fontaine's concept of love. From her perspective, the violence being interpreted as love by ancient authors, audiences, and contemporary interpreters is a striking indication of societies where domestic violence against women and children is common. She criticises how all the pity is focused on the husband and God while the voices of Gomer and the children are ignored.²⁴ Therefore, Fontaine suggests an alternative covenant and lets Gomer speak by modelling Gomer's oracle after Hosea's divorce proceedings.²⁵ Brenner raises a more critical analysis of the presence of sexual aspects in prophetic language, especially in the text of Jeremiah. Through an examination of its characteristics, functions, definition, and underlying factors, she offers a critique of the objectification of female sexuality. She highlights that pornography serves as a means to uphold male domination by suppressing female sexual agency.²⁶ The fantasy is not only an erotic fantasy, but it is a pornographic fantasy that should be criticised.²⁷

²³ Athalya Brenner (ed), *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 28.

²⁴ Carole R. Fontaine, "A Response to Hosea," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 62–64.

²⁵ Fontaine, "A Response to Hosea," 67.

²⁶ Athalya Brenner, "On Prophetic Propaganda and The Politics of Love: The Case of Jeremiah," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 263–265.

²⁷ Brenner, "On Prophetic Propaganda," 274.

Robert Carroll offers his perspective on pornographic representation within the prophetic text. According to his analysis, the use of women as a metaphorical symbol of the community, nation, city, and land in the prophetic text may have little correlation with the representation of women. It is the same with the metaphor of men, which may bear little resemblance to the actual portrayal of men.²⁸ He emphasises that the socio-political ideology in the metaphorical text focuses on community and nation and not on gender.²⁹ However, I would contend that it is critically important to consider the feminist reading, as there are a number of difficulties with the approach of scholars such as Carroll that feminist scholars particularly serve to highlight. In their interpretations of such metaphorical representations, most writers only give attention to the literary function of the imagery. There is a need for sufficient critical engagement with the social issues in Hosea and the affective implication of the metaphor for actual readers.

Other scholars argue that the metaphor is not solely linked to a religious crisis but extends to encompass social injustices. Alice Keefe, for instance, reads the metaphor in light of sexual transgression and social violence. She focuses on symbolic intimacy between the female body, the fertile land, and the sacred meaning of community in Israel.³⁰ In Keefe's opinion, Hosea's metaphor of Israel as an adulterous wife has a function to highlight the socioeconomic, political, and religious crisis in eighth-century Israel.³¹ This theme will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter.

Moreover, Seong-Hyuk Hong studying the social connotations of the illness and healing metaphor in Hosea, argues that it should be considered part of the social

²⁸ Robert P. Carroll, "Desire Under the Terebinths: On Pornographic Representation in the Prophets-A Response," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophet*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 275–307.

²⁹ Carroll, "Desire Under the Terebinths," 289.

³⁰ Alice Keefe, *Woman's Body and The Social Body in Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 13.

³¹ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 198.

critique of the oppressive reality in eighth-century Israel and Judah. In analysing the metaphor of illness and healing, Hong sees the metaphor of promiscuity and marriage as complementary. The promiscuity demonstrates the disintegration of the social bond and mutuality, while the marriage metaphor emphasises the importance of the restoration of the social bond between the ruling elite and the peasant majority.

However, the ‘marriage’ metaphor remains the dominant interpretive tool in most scholarly commentaries on Hosea. Due to the significance and centrality of the marriage metaphor, it is the subject of further discussion in Chapter 4. However, it is worth outlining a few of the key challenges of this metaphor at this point, specifically related to the motivation and focus of this thesis. It needs to be acknowledged that the focus on the ‘marriage’ metaphor in Hosea is limited because the term ‘marriage metaphor’ itself does not fully capture the complexity of the metaphor in the text with its different figures. Hosea also uses mother as imagery, imagery concerning children, and their names as part of the metaphorical language. More importantly, there are land and nature imageries that deserve attention, especially in the context of ecocide. Secondly, in terms of the metaphor itself, I would contend that the body metaphor is not only a model, but it deals with conceptual thoughts. It impacts the actual characteristics of the woman, including the woman’s body, both in the context of the text and in the reader’s context as well. The portrayal and shame of the woman’s body in the text has affective impact on readers. It seems clear that the different strands of analyses of Hosea do relate closely to the understanding of metaphor, and I suggest that the focus only on the marriage metaphor has meant that neither the critical issue of the land nor the ecological perspective has been much discussed, even though the destruction of nature is shown in the text. Therefore, I analyse in Chapter 6 other bodies, like the bodies of nature, that are also present in Hosea.

Along with some scholars, such as Alice Keefe, this research agrees that the metaphor in Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 addresses subjects beyond that of religious crisis and emphasises social injustice. Moreover, I maintain that the metaphor criticises kinship disintegration in society and other ecological bodies. Therefore, I contend that the land and body metaphor in Hosea is a political symbol that is a more constructive interpretive concept and deserves more attention. Consequently, an intersectional analysis of intercontextual reading, cognitive and affective philosophical analysis of metaphor, social scientific criticism, and ecofeminist perspective are needed for the analysis of Hosea. This research employs the cognitive theory of metaphor and explores the affective contribution of metaphor to readers. In order to understand the features of promiscuity in ancient Israel that might contribute to the imagery employed in the metaphor, the research conducts a comparison of the conceptual backgrounds of promiscuity in ancient Israel with those of ancient Egypt, and Mesopotamia. The comparative viewpoint can serve as a helpful technique to investigate ideas of promiscuity or offer what might be seen as an accepted explanation for promiscuity. The research also gives attention to the dynamics of character representation that contribute to or impact the cognitive power and affective effect of metaphors in the text, particularly in the personification of human characters such as the character of God as the husband. Social scientific criticism is employed in this study to examine the social background of decentralised and centralised Israel. Through intercontextual reading, I explore how actual readers in Indonesia understand the metaphor, the effect of the metaphor on the readers, and what can be learned together. A key aspect of this research in examining the cognitive and affective power of the metaphor in the text of Hosea, and the potential of its interpretation from an ecological perspective is bringing this aspect of the metaphor into dialogue with actual communities, which in my own context are those in Indonesia, especially those suffering in times of environmental injustice in Indonesia. The research shows the importance of this analysis where examining the metaphor with communities can shed new light on the meaning of the metaphor.

From an ecofeminist perspective, the land and the body imagery in the text of Hosea highlights the interconnections of the human body and the bodies of nature. The ecofeminist analysis is especially important as a critical response to the negative imagery of land and body in the text.

Through this intersectional analysis, the reading of Hosea reveals an alternative interpretation. The following section thus sets out a brief overview of the Indonesian context in which the intercontextual reading has been conducted.

1.2 Context of Indonesia

In addition to the context of Hosea, it is necessary to discuss the lived realities and social context of readers such as those in Indonesia. In reading the Bible, the culture and experience underlying the text are as essential as the social location and experience of those who read and interpret it. In Stephen Bevans's view, social location can enable different questions to be asked. Therefore, it is vital to acknowledge and embrace the reader's context in terms of a person's or community's social location.³² The context is an essential element in dialogue with the text, especially in the intercontextual hermeneutics that also play a role in the understanding of the meaning of the text. In Indonesia, an archipelago comprising thousands of volcanic islands with multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multifaith realities, the meaning of land and body is contested. Indonesia is located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. This makes Indonesia vulnerable to volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. At the same time, Indonesia has a diverse array of natural resources, including fertile land, tropical forests with a wide variety of flora and fauna, bountiful seas with a vast range of marine species, as well as lakes and rivers with their ecosystems.

However, human invasion has made nature vulnerable and threatened. Leaders worldwide, including the Indonesian government, have heavily depended on the

³² Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 6–7.

extraction of fossil fuels to generate electricity and facilitate transportation. Consequently, a significant conversion of rainforest to palm oil plantations has been undertaken. Palm Oil is converted to biofuel to supply both local and international markets.³³ Nowadays, the global transition towards electric vehicles has increased the global demand for nickel. Therefore, the Indonesian government, in collaboration with foreign international investors, has been actively engaged in industrial development and nickel extraction projects. Driven by the pursuit of maximum economic gain and an unsustainable global lifestyle, corporations have extensively exploit mountains and land in Indonesia while simultaneously contaminating the forest, seas, lakes, and rivers.³⁴

Peasant farmers, indigenous people, fishermen and women, and poor rural communities that oppose environmental degradation and displacement are often depicted as obstacles to economic development and modernisation. Massive and systematic destruction of the land, forests, mountains, rivers, seas, and lakes has led to the extinction of endemic species of animals and plants. The environmental destruction can no longer be considered an environmental crisis but has become ecocide.³⁵ The shift from environmental crisis to ecocide reflects the severity of the

³³ Hans Nicholas Jong, "Palm Oil Deforestation Makes Come Back to Indonesia After Decade Long Slump, Mongabay, February 13th 2024, <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/02/palm-oil-deforestation-makes-comeback-in-indonesia-after-decade-long-slump/>.

³⁴ Rebecca Tan, Dera Menra Sijabat, and Joshua Irwandi, "Clean Cars Hidden Toll: To Meet EV Demand, Industry Turns to Technology Long Deemed Hazardous," Washington Post, May 10th 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2023/ev-nickel-refinery-dangers/>; Hans Nicholas Jong, "Indonesian Gold Mine Expanding in Wrong Direction into Orangutan Habitat," Mongabay, March 11th 2024, <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/03/indonesian-gold-mine-expanding-in-wrong-direction-into-orangutan-habitat/>; Petrus Riski and Taufik Wijaya, "Indonesians Uprooted by Mining Industry Call for A Fairer Future Amid Presidential Vote," Mongabay, March 4th 2024, <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/03/indonesians-uprooted-by-mining-industry-call-for-a-fairer-future-amid-presidential-vote/>

³⁵ "Pope Francis: Destroying the Earth is A Sin and Should be A Crime," Stop Ecocide International, March 10th 2019, <https://www.stopecocide.earth/press-releases-summary/pope-francis-destroying-the-earth-is-a-sin-and-should-be-a-crime>; Sophie Yeo, "Ecocide: Should Killing Nature be A Crime?" BBC, November 6th 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201105-what-is-ecocide>.

environmental situation: many endemic animals and plants have become extinct; the natural ecosystem of water, sea, river, and land has been polluted; and people, along with their cultures, have been destroyed. Ecocide in the local context of Indonesia also affects the global context because the earth is one. The present status of global climate change, as emphasised by several news headlines, serves as a sharp reminder that the existing conditions are not in line with the expected situation. In Central Sulawesi, the large hydropower plants, which were built in the river and Lake Poso to meet the demands of extractive projects by multinational investors, threaten the community and the endemic species of the river and the lake. In Halmahera, the mining companies have exploited the land. This results in land and water pollution. In Sumba, the plantation project has destroyed forests and savannahs, increasing the danger of climate change.

In contrast to the exploitative project, nature has a crucial role in the lives of villagers, deeply woven into their existence on both personal and communal levels. The community has local wisdom that enables harmonious living with nature. The primary concern of the community is not only the negative impact on humans but also the detrimental implications for the environment, which is also the creation of the Divine. Yet, the relationship with nature is changing and conversely others view nature only as a commodity. The lack of concern for environmental degradation is common among people and leaders driven only by maximum profit. Communities and nature suffer because their natural ecosystem is being exploited and any profit goes to the stock portfolio of the global company owner rather than to the local inhabitants.

Another significant contextual issue is the metaphorical body language for nature. This understanding derives primarily from local communities' understanding of land and water as their body. They belong to nature and see themselves as an integrated part of nature. The metaphorical body language for nature serves as a constant reminder of the inherent reliance of human beings on the natural world and its circumstances. This can be illustrated by the example of environmental

activist Mama Aleta Baun, a woman from Mollo, West Timor, Indonesia. Together with other people in Mollo, she fights against marble mining. She describes the earth as a human body: “The stone is our bone, and the water is our blood. The land is our flesh, and the forest is our hair.” She emphasises that losing one of them will make us paralysed.³⁶ Mama Aleta organised 150 women to peacefully weave their traditional fabrics at the site of the mining as a protest.

Not only does the concept of land contain layers of meaning culturally, historically, and religiously in Indonesia, but so does the body itself, particularly with respect to women. First, the concept of a woman’s body in Indonesia is political. In the political history, women’s bodies have tragically been used as media for conquest at different times in history. For instance, in May 1998, many Chinese Indonesian women were raped in a riot. The victims’ voices were then silenced by spreading the news that the rape was a hoax and never happened. As a result, every year, activists hold a campaign and memorial action for the victims since the government has not made any legal progress to punish the perpetrators.³⁷

Both the depiction of a woman’s body and the representation of nature’s body contribute to shaping the perspective of the Indonesian people. The idea of using a woman’s body as an object, a medium of conquest, still exists today in many different places. In this case, the woman’s body is not a site of liberation for the woman herself. There is an inherent social stigma and patriarchal ideology associated with it. Both women and nature are subject to injustice due to the

³⁶ “Mama Aleta: One Woman’s Struggle to Save Indonesia’s Forest from Mining,” Global Greengrants Fund, September 3rd 2019, <https://www.greengrants.org/2014/07/20/mama-aleta-one-womans-struggle-to-save-indonesias-forests-from-mining/>.

³⁷ See Jack Britton, “20 Years Later Victims of Indonesia’s May 1998 Riots are Still Waiting for Justice,” The Diplomat, September 3rd 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/20-years-later-victims-of-indonesias-may-1998-riots-are-still-waiting-for-justice/>; Arzia Tivany Wargadireja, “Hundreds of Women were Raped During the May 98 Riots. Will They Ever See Justice?” September 3rd 2019, https://www.vice.com/en_asia/article/vv5jab/hundreds-of-women-were-raped-during-the-may-98-riots-will-they-ever-see-justice/.

persistence of power dynamics and gender hierarchies. Gender decides different roles, responsibilities towards natural resources, and degrees of political power. Therefore, problem-solving with respect to the multiple layers of the ecological issue also requires problem-solving with respect to injustice towards women.³⁸ Moreover, the language of the metaphorical body is used as an analogy to describe that the human is part of nature. This image has been used as a resistance to the idea that nature is an object. Ecofeminism understands this connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature.

This form of violence against the human body and the body of nature is hidden and portrayed as a positive aspect of economic development and modernisation. Therefore, a wake-up call for solidarity is needed not only for individuals but also for society. Thus, this research examines the importance of understanding biblical texts in relation to the solidarity crisis. The text of Hosea is offered because of the imagery of land and body in Hosea that deserves attention, especially in the context of a socio-economic crisis with a devastating impact on nature. The imagery includes the land, the dry land, the earth, the wilderness, the woman's body, and the bodies of nature, such as animals, birds, and the fish of the sea.

Having outlined some of the crucial factors within the context of the research, we now turn to defining the main research question and setting out, in brief, the methodological approach and thesis content. The chapter then ends by noting the contribution this research intends to make.

³⁸ Rosemarie Tong and Tina Botts, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 243–246.

1.3 Research Question

The main research question is defined as follows: To what extent can the intersectional reading with Indonesian communities, focusing on land and body imagery in Hosea, serve as a reading process which contributes to justice?

1.4 Research Method

In order to address the question, I bring together hermeneutical and grounded theory methodologies to guide the research process. In the hermeneutical method, the text is analysed as a dialogical process between text, context, and readers. Moreover, the dialogical process means that the interpretation is not linear; rather it is a multiple continuous back and forth between text, context, and readers. The research uses a social scientific reading to analyse the social-political context of Israelite society and ecofeminist criticism to investigate the connection between the land and the imagery of the woman's body. Because of the importance of hearing the voices of people on the ground within the interpretation process, this research also explores intercontextual reading with selected Indonesian communities from regions particularly affected by specific environmental concerns, such as Central Java, Central Sulawesi, and Sumba, paying specific attention to the voices of women within them. The communities are selected based on their different regions and their struggles with environmental injustice.

1.5 Outline of the Research Development

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents the methodology and context. The chapter continues with a brief discussion of the definition of metaphor and the different understandings of promiscuity in ancient times as a background concept of the metaphor in Hosea. The translation of the text of Hosea is presented along with the textual analysis. In order to broaden the discussion of the social-political-economic dynamic of Hosea, the text is analysed with social scientific criticism. The chapter also explains the method of intercontextual reading and its recent development as a way to read the specific text and then exchange the results

with different reading groups of people from different contexts in order to learn from each other. Specifically, in the reading of Hosea, the research project engages in dialogue with the emergent issue of environmental injustice in Indonesia. Another crucial analytical approach that this research uses is ecofeminist reading. This approach serves to dismantle the prevailing dualistic and hierarchical interpretations. Furthermore, the use of the womb of nature imagery that is discussed together with erotic concepts in Hosea serves to highlight the significance of the power of interconnectedness.

Chapter 3 draws upon the theories of metaphor and explores the cognitive and affective contribution of the metaphor. In order to analyse the social meaning of the land and the body in the following Chapter 4, the research discusses a number of philosophical theories of metaphor, drawing on scholars such as Sallie McFague, Eva F. Kittay, George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson and addresses the questions of what function metaphor serves and how concepts operate in metaphor. However, I argue that what is also needed is an exploration of how metaphor affects actual readers, and in particular, an exploration of negative metaphors. The cognitive and affective impact of the metaphor is investigated, especially in a religious text where there is tendency to accept the literal representation of God through a male character and to absolutise all the associations of the male character in the text as indeed referring to God. Drawing from a philosophical discussion of how the concepts operate in the metaphor, Chapter 3 investigates the conceptual background of promiscuity in ancient Egypt, ancient Mesopotamia, and ancient Israel.

Chapter 4 investigates the translation issues in Hosea and provides a social-political analysis with respect to eighth-century Israel and Judah. The chapter argues that standard translations do not fully convey the playful words of the poetic Hebrew text. A particular area of focus concerns the negative meaning of the children's names, which have a connection to the land. This chapter also examines the intertextual connections between Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3. Moreover, as noted, the

chapter offers a presentation of the function of the imagery in Hosea through social-political criticism. What kind of social-political reality lies behind the construction of the imagery?

Chapter 5 observes the community reading of the text of Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3. What is the reader's social context? How do they read the text? How do they confront the text? What are their questions? What are their reflections? With whom do they identify themselves? What do they learn from each other? What part of the text challenges them or is relevant to them? This chapter further explores the exchange that takes place within the readers' group, the dialogue with other groups, and in the last meeting, the exchange with my notes of analysis of the text. This chapter addresses the following questions: Do the conversations enrich their horizons of understanding? Moreover, do the discussions help them share their struggles and hopes?

Chapter 6 further analyses the symbolic relation of land and a woman's body in Hosea by using ecofeminist criticism. The chosen texts use many symbols of a woman's body and nature. An ecofeminist perspective allows for a reading that challenges and exposes the negative expression of the bodies, analysing the symbolic violence done to women and nature, which is expressed in the text as well as in the Indonesian context. At the same time, the problematic metaphor of female imagery and violence in Hosea is discussed. The choice of imagery has a significant impact on the way female characters are represented, where their portrayal is linked to a particular behaviour.

The order of this chapter is made with an awareness of the importance of bringing all strands of the research into dialogue and evaluating how these resonate with readers and speak to their own context, as well as engaging with what the readings speak in turn to the theoretical frameworks and scholarly understandings.

Chapter 7 then draws the research together to offer some conclusion in light of the main research question and suggests a number of recommendations.

1.6 The Significance of the Research

This project seeks to contribute an alternative reading of Hosea through its focus on land and nature as portrayed through land and body symbolism that challenges the prevailing dominance of the religious crisis interpretation and understanding of the ‘marriage’ metaphor, which often disregards the impact prevailing interpretations can have on the reality of the experience of women readers. In terms of theological reading, it seeks to contribute substantially to highlighting alternative insights in the interpretation of Hosea. Moreover, in the developing field of intercontextual reading, it offers a specific example of dialogue with reading communities and an illustrative form of the transformative communitarian reading experience that gives voice to communities. In terms of the context, the conversation starts from the margins, where there has not been sufficient attention to the voices of the local community or where the place of women is contested.

Chapter 2

Methods and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain further the methods of the research. As introduced in Chapter 1, the central question this thesis asks is, to what extent can the intersectional reading with Indonesian communities, focusing on land and body imagery in Hosea, serve as a reading process which contributes to justice? This question extends beyond a question about the text in and of itself; it explores its meaning in a current context. The research aims to expand the ongoing biblical discourse on Hosea by combining a number of methods to analyse the land and body metaphor. The research makes a distinction between method and methodology on the understanding that method is a specific, concrete and planned means of investigating the subject of study which offers organised procedure, whereas methodology refers to a larger scale theoretical framework and broad conceptualisation of the principles which shape and underlie the specific research methods.¹

As also introduced in Chapter 1, there is a discussion on the theory of metaphor to understand the way to interpret a metaphor, which has both cognitive and affective contributions. The research in Chapter 3 will analyse the problematic metaphor and its interpretation by using a cognitive theory of metaphor with an awareness of the metaphor's affective contribution. As the cognitive theory of metaphor highlights the significant bearing context has on interpretation of metaphor, the Chapter 4 goes on to introduce social scientific criticism as an analytic tool to help determine the social-political dynamics in decentralised Israel, as well as in the context of eighth-century Israel and Judah.

¹ Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, "Introduction: Research Methods in the Study of Religions," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (New York: Routledge, 2011), 4–5.

Following this, a key component of the examination is an intercontextual reading to understand how different communities read this text and to explore the possibilities offered by the community reading process for transformation in present times, particularly with regard to issues of justice. Chapter 5 thus introduces intercontextual reading, its perspective and rationale, and the process involved in conducting such a reading across several communities in Indonesia. The chapter thus seeks to present the way all these methods serve to broaden the discourse on Hosea, where, the research presents the reinterpretation Hosea's text in dialogue with the communities' reading. Finally, the contribution of ecofeminist reading is discussed in Chapter 6 and how this usefully engages with the themes of body, land, and nature.

2.2 Understanding Metaphor

The understanding of the metaphor in Hosea is closely related to the understanding of the meaning of metaphors, what the function of metaphor is, and whether it should be seen only as a stylistic feature of saying something by comparing it to something else. Moreover, the understanding is also related to whether the metaphor has a cognitive and affective contribution. While Chapter 3 will explore further the cognitive and affective contribution of the metaphor in Hosea, this section will discuss some definitions and theories of metaphor.

Metaphor is generally considered to be a feature of poetic imagination, a rhetorical device. In this view, most people see the metaphor as a stylistic feature of language. The dominant perception is that the reader only needs to know the language because the concept is already there. Metaphor is regarded as the linguistic basis of concept formation, where a concept is created through a word which is transferred from one thing to another. However, is this a sufficient explanation of the power and significance of metaphor?

In the substitutionary theory, a metaphor can be translated as a substitution for a more literal word or phrase without any loss of meaning.² According to the

² Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), 31.

substitution theory, a metaphor focuses on the word that is employed metaphorically within a literal context to convey a message that might have been communicated directly.³ In this approach, comprehending a metaphor is like interpreting a riddle and the reader is captivated by the enjoyment of problem-solving or the pleasure derived from the author's skill in partially concealing and partially revealing the message.⁴ In a similar vein, another metaphor theory emphasises metaphor as a comparison where a corresponding literal comparison can replace the metaphorical statement.⁵ However, Max Black has some objections to the substitution theory and comparison theory. He argues that a metaphorical statement is not a substitute for a formal comparison or any literal statement, but the metaphorical statement has its unique capacities.⁶ Black offers another theory of interaction because he sees a metaphor not as an isolated term or a decorative function. In Black's view, a metaphorical sentence is a frame, while the word used metaphorically is the focus. The frame of the metaphor expands the meaning of the focal word. Moreover, there is a system that will serve as a lens or filter.⁷ Black argues that the metaphor strategically chooses, highlights, omits, and organises features of the main subject by suggesting a statement about it that usually apply to the subsidiary subject.⁸ The extension or shift of meaning with context is expected in the interaction theory of metaphor.⁹ Black's ideas about a metaphorical sentence as a frame might be open to some level of challenge. To understand the meaning of the metaphor based only on the understanding of the sentence frame may not lead to a sufficient awareness of the intention of the metaphor. However, a metaphor does not operate by a comparison of two concepts. Instead, metaphor works through interaction between concepts, adding significance concept and developing a unique alternative meaning. The interaction theory can explain how the metaphor

³ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 32.

⁴ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 33–34.

⁵ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 36.

⁶ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 37.

⁷ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 38–39.

⁸ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 45.

⁹ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 42.

of land and body in Hosea transforms the idea of promiscuity while the transformation of the concept of the land and body itself remains undiscussed. A broader dialogue is needed because a metaphor conveys cognitive significance and affective reception. Therefore, this research uses various analytical tools to explore alternative meanings of the metaphor of land and body.

Eva Kittay offers a modification of Black's thought. Black highlights the system or framework of associated commonplaces which are the widely accepted views about what is generally true in a given culture. Kittay argues for the system or framework of associated semantic fields. She argues that metaphors have meaning and require a semantic account that must be supplemented by pragmatic consideration. Most importantly, she thinks that both the vehicle and the topic belong to the conceptual systems.¹⁰ In Kittay's opinion, the view of language to which metaphor appears as ornament requires a passive conception of the mind.¹¹ She criticises the claim of passivity of mind in the creation of perceptions and concepts. In her opinion, our understanding of metaphor requires an understanding of the mind as active and creatively engaged in forming concepts and unifying the diversity of the given. Unlike most of the received views that meaning in language is context-free, in Kittay's opinion both literal and metaphorical language are context-dependent, although both take different forms.

Kittay suggests a relation theory of meaning in which contextual features are constitutive of meaning.¹² Meaning is not something that can be achieved independently of context. Therefore, readers will usually rely on default assumptions in the absence of any contextual evidence by cancelling or questioning such assumptions. She remarks that when attempts to communicate fail because the interlocutors each proceed from different assumptions, or when the world as normally experienced is altered by social, economic, political, or natural forces, our

¹⁰ Eva Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 34–35.

¹¹ Kittay, *Metaphor*, 4.

¹² Kittay, *Metaphor*, 96–97.

assumptions may be jarred. This context dependence is essential for the interpretation of metaphorical sentences.¹³ She emphasises that by investigating metaphor, we learn that not only does a word have a meaning in the context of a sentence, but a sentence lacks a definitive meaning outside its linguistic and situational context.¹⁴ Therefore, Kittay's argument about the context dependency of the metaphor is essential.

Using Kittay's argument on context dependency, the metaphor of land and body in Hosea will be explored by comparing the concept in different contexts. However, Kittay does not discuss further the interpretative context of the reader that plays a significant role in investigating the meaning of the metaphor even though there is contextual evidence. Kittay considers assumptions to be negative ones that lead to failure in communication. I suggest differing from Kittay that assumptions should not necessarily be considered as negative. Assumptions and the interpretative context of the reader play their role in the process of giving meaning to metaphor. The interpretative context that readers bring when dealing with metaphor is a natural process in the dialogue of interpretation. However, in the process of finding meaning these assumptions need to be challenged through dialogue of interpretation, whether the assumption helps to give insight or hinder it. Therefore, this research offers another tool of analysis to investigate the metaphor's affective contribution.

Another pair of scholars, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, also claim that metaphor is not just a poetic imagination and cannot be viewed as a characteristic of language alone. It is spread widely in our daily thoughts and actions. Our conceptual systems, which are largely metaphorical, play a significant role in defining everyday realities. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.¹⁵ Language exposes the

¹³ Kittay, *Metaphor*, 55.

¹⁴ Kittay, *Metaphor*, 115.

¹⁵ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3–6.

underlying conceptual thoughts that structure our ideas and experiences.¹⁶ Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual structure can be used in the analysis of metaphor in Hosea. The qualification here is the tendency to speak about metaphors as limited to thought and action. In reality, metaphor also plays a role in emotion. Everything is metaphoric and that is why metaphor is essential and in this case the metaphor will not only attract a cognitive investigation but also have an emotional effect. Therefore, an awareness of the affective side of metaphor is needed. Several feminist scholars add their voices in this matter by arguing the effect of the imagery upon women, on which will be returned to in the final section of this chapter 6.

In looking at how these methodological approaches relate to the discourse of Hosea's metaphor, we might summarise as follows. First, considering the analyses that see the metaphor of Hosea as a substitution for something else, most of these analyses have no problem with the use of negative imagery for the woman because they argue that it is not the real meaning of the metaphor. According to them, the metaphor of Hosea represents something else expressed in other words. The analyses that are satisfied with the substitution of the negative imagery do not engage critically with the implication of this complex prophetic language for the reader. To move beyond the limitations of this approach, the research needs to expand the dialogue with the reader to see the potential effect for readers today, especially women. Second, the cognitive theory highlights the cognitive contribution of a metaphor to readers. In the cognitive approach, the form of expression influences the metaphorical meaning. The cognitive approach believes that the meaning of the metaphor can be discovered through its literary and historical context. The difficulty here is that a metaphor is a way to communicate something by using symbols that both have cognitive and affective contributions. Therefore, more than a cognitive approach is needed to understand the meaning of the metaphor. People will not only understand the cognitive contribution of the

¹⁶ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 41.

metaphor but also need to engage with the affective contribution of the metaphor or the implication of the metaphor. This affective side is powerful.

The body and land metaphor in Hosea is a challenging metaphor. Moreover, the images of the destroyed nature and the punished body are problematic. The metaphor is highly significant because it also has an emotional impact on the readers. This emotional impact will not easily be solved only by a cognitive approach or understanding of metaphor. A critical dialogue with awareness of the affective contribution is needed to understand the images better, and the metaphor put in a broader dialogue with actual readers. That is why an intercontextual community group plays an essential role in this analysis. Through the reading with communities, the research analyses how this metaphor affects the readers, how they respond, and what can be learned from it. Thus, both sides of the metaphor, the cognitive and affective contribution, will be used as a framework for the analysis of the land and body metaphor in Hosea. This philosophical discourse on metaphor will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3 Social Scientific Criticism

As the cognitive theory of metaphor maintains that context is a significant influence on metaphorical meaning, the reconstruction of the socio-cultural dynamics of eighth-century Israel and Judah forms one of the backgrounds for understanding land and body promiscuity imagery in this research. The prior understanding of the concept of promiscuity in the context of ancient Israelite society is analysed to critically evaluate the function of the text in its social-political roles. Rather than inquiring about the author of the book, social-scientific criticism delves into the analysis of Israel's social structures and their social organisation dynamic within the specific context in which the Israelites lived.¹⁷ Social scientific criticism recognises and discusses Israel's social origin, social

¹⁷ Naomi Steinberg, "Social-Scientific Criticism: Judges 9 and Issues of Kinship," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 48.

structure, and social class.¹⁸ Questions asked by social scientific criticism would include: what were the social structures in the time of decentralisation? What were the social structures during the time of Hosea? What was the social situation that influenced the change? However, the research is aware that the understanding of the text's function in its social-political context is limited, and it will only partially describe the meaning of the given metaphor.

D. N. Premnath makes a categorisation of scholarly works on social science criticism: socio-cultural, socio-economic, geo-political, and religion-cultural.¹⁹ The socio-cultural analysis focuses on examining the process social identity creation, especially on how individuals perceive their own identity in relation to their belonging to a group.²⁰ The research on the social group has mostly concentrated on the dynamics of family units, the association of extended family, and the social structures of tribes. Scholars like Norman Gottwald and Rainer Albertz are using social-scientific criticism with this focus.²¹ Moreover, the analysis of social relations is also the focus of this socio-cultural group. This present study takes up the focus of this strand of analysis to examine kinship and marriage in Israelite society, the concept of class, including inequalities and structures of the social stratification system.²² The examination of family dynamics has significant relevance within the Israelite society. The concept of the family household includes both the social organisation and residence that serves a social and economic function.²³

¹⁸ Steinberg, "Social-Scientific Criticism," 47–48.

¹⁹ D.N. Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance for Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Handbook of Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Uriah Y. Kim and Ai Yang Seung (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 119.

²⁰ Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance," 119.

²¹ See Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1979); Norman K. Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and The Hebrew Bible*, (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018); Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in The Old Testament Period Vol.1* (London: SCM Press, 1994)

²² Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance," 120.

²³ Steinberg, "Social-Scientific Criticism," 52.

Furthermore, the socio-economic analysis examines economic inequality, as well as the underlying factors and socio-cultural frameworks that shape the process of production and distribution.²⁴ The analysis of the economic dynamic can give insights to the power dynamic and social class in the Biblical text.²⁵ The socio-economic analysis examines in particular the issue of debt slavery. The concentration of wealth and power increased among the privileged elite who had control of the means of production. Therefore, the weight of debt arising from taxes and loans led to the dispossession of small landowners from their means of production. This situation resulted in financial collapse, alienation from the land, and debt slavery.²⁶ In terms of religio-cultural analysis, Yahwism is discussed and Gottwald's scholarly contribution provides valuable insight for understanding the characteristics and role of the early Yahwism throughout the pre-monarchic period. It was a significant period for the formation and organisation of society.²⁷ The sociological approach sees society as a complex web of interconnected systems, including social, economic, cultural, political, and religious. Any alteration in one system will affect other systems.²⁸

As Gottwald's work is a key source in bringing social-scientific criticism into play with biblical understanding, it is worth at this point engaging further with his argument for this methodological tool. Gottwald emphasises the importance of social scientific criticism arguing that a sociological approach is needed to analyse typical patterns of the structure and function of human relationships. Therefore, social scientific criticism can be used to investigate the complex social system of ancient Israel. Ancient Israel's social system signifies the comprehensive system of communal interactions that encompasses various functions, roles, customs, norms, symbols and the distinct processes and networks associated with the subsystem of social organisation such as economic production, political order, and religious

²⁴ Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance," 121.

²⁵ Steinberg, "Social-Scientific Criticism, 53.

²⁶ Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance," 121.

²⁷ Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance," 123.

²⁸ Premnath, "Social Science Criticism and Its Relevance," 125.

organisation.²⁹ Ancient Israel's social system represents a complex social system.³⁰ He argues for the need to examine other aspects of society too, such as situations in cities and villages, various life phases, and power distribution. Moreover, Gottwald criticises the incomplete traditional examination of ancient Israelite politics that only focuses on the structures and the states. Gottwald argues that the analysis of ancient Israelite politics should also include the social context, such as exploring the connection between political institutions and other sources of social power. Moreover, consideration should also be given to the political interest in connection to other ancient near Eastern polities.³¹ The religion of ancient Israel needs to be included too in terms of the ideology of the traditionists that influences the political scenario described in the Hebrew Bible.³² Gottwald proposes three political horizons through which Israelite political experience should be analysed: the decentralised politic of Israel; the centralised politic of Israel which included the establishment of state institutions that had exclusive control over domestic power and operated autonomously over against other states; and the period of loss of statehood.³³ During these periods, there were complex challenging that arose such as the interplay of cultural and religious identities.³⁴ This study utilizes this threefold horizon in looking at the shifts between the decentralised and centralised politic that formed the background to the situations addressed by Hosea.

The primary source material used in the sociological examination of ancient Israel consists of the biblical text and any other data that exists outside of the Bible. Furthermore, the examination of different social systems, structures and developmental trajectories has considerable significance for comparative

²⁹ Norman K. Gottwald, "Sociological Method in The Study of Ancient Israel," in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald and Richard A. Horsley (New York: Orbis Book, 1993), 143.

³⁰ Gottwald, "Sociological Method, 143–144.

³¹ Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY:Westminster John KnoxPress, 2001), 13.

³² Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, 13–14.

³³ Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, 15.

³⁴ Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, 26.

analysis.³⁵ A study of the socio-political aspects of ancient Israel may provide significant insight into the structure of Israelite society. Gottwald argues that comprehending the historical trajectory of Israel and its developing social structure requires knowledge of the ritualistic and ideological process involved in the construction of traditions.³⁶ He believes the social structures were not stagnant, self-contained entities but rather underwent internal development. Therefore, a thorough reassessment of Israel's early tradition will uncover that the seemingly straightforward peasant revolt model was in fact very complicated.³⁷ Thus, Israel's social system as a functioning and evolving entity can also be analysed by comparing it to the different period and subsystems of other systems.³⁸ The sociological objective in the examination of early Israel is to construct a comprehensive inventory of socio-economic and cultural materials to provide a broader range of insights into the social and cultural rebuilding of the early Israelites. The sociological approach is used to analyse the significant social movement towards monarchy, including tension and conflict among the state, empire and tribe. The approach also helps to examine the disintegration of Israelites and their survival.³⁹ The social scientific approach should help to discover several ideas of the function of Hosea's metaphor of body and land and its social significance in the context of eighth-century BCE Israel and Judah.

This approach is constructive in bringing to light the context of ancient Israel at that time, and the metaphor reflects the situation of the time. However, the land and body metaphor requires more analysis. The text also speaks to readers nowadays, and contemporary interpretations also have a responsibility to shape understanding as does being in dialogue with the faith community.

³⁵ Gottwald, "Sociological Method in The Study of Ancient Israel," 144.

³⁶ Gottwald, "Sociological Method in The Study of Ancient Israel," 146.

³⁷ Gottwald, "Sociological Method in The Study of Ancient Israel," 148

³⁸ Gottwald, "Sociological Method in The Study of Ancient Israel," 147.

³⁹ Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, 159.

Thus, if more than social scientific criticism is needed to analyse the land and body metaphor, another mode of interpretation is needed to complement the process. Particularly relevant to the issues at stake is the intercontextual reading and ecofeminist perspective.

2.4 Intercontextual Reading: Interpretation as A Collective Act

An essential tool of analysis used in this research is intercontextual reading. Intercontextual reading uses the same methods as intercultural reading. This research chose to use the term intercontextual reading⁴⁰ because this method of reading is not just limited to the interaction between different cultures and different tribes. Intercontextual reading involves interactions among multiple reading groups from various cultural, tribal, and social-political contexts, including the context of the text itself. Through this approach, the readers engage the text intercontextually.

When engaging in contextual theology in Asia, it is necessary to consider the socio-economic and cultural realities as well as the diversity of religion. These aspects contribute to the construction of the meaning of self, which is grounded in and shaped by the communal experience. Daniel K. Listijabudi embraces the challenge of the plurality of religions as an opportunity. As an Indonesian theologian, he realises the challenge of hybridity in the Indonesian context and has offered a cross-textual reading method to contribute to an Asian multi-faith hermeneutic. Thus, he uses cross-textual reading with two different texts: the Bible and a text from Asian religion.⁴¹ However, he does not conduct this reading with actual communities. The approach of using the Bible and a text from an Asian religion has been developed by several Asian theologians such as Kosuke Koyama, Kwok Pui Lan, and Archie Lee. In their work, they use dialogical imagination,

⁴⁰ Hans de Wit, "Bible and Transformation: The Many Faces of Transformation," in *Bible and Transformation: The Promise of Intercultural Bible Reading*, eds. Hans de Wit and Janet Dyk (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 68.

⁴¹ See Daniel K. Listijabudi's dissertation, *The Mystical Quest as a Path to Peace Building: A Cross-Textual Reading of the Stories of Dewa Ruci and Jacob at the Jabbok as a Contribution to Asian Multi-Faith Hermeneutic* (Doctoral thesis, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2016).

which implies mutuality, active listening, and openness to what the other has to say. Kwok Pui Lan highlights that Asian Christians are heirs to both the biblical story and their own story as Asian people. Asian Christians are concerned to bring the two into dialogue with one another.⁴²

This stand of research gives attention to the socio-economic-political aspects of the text as well as the community as the reader of the text. It pays attention to questions such as, how does our life context influence the reading of the Bible? What do we learn from the exchange with other readers? Is there any change of perspective? In reality, our questions and efforts to construct meaning are influenced by our horizon, history, context, and reality.

A deeper discussion of the complex field of hermeneutics and the place of the reader is outside the scope of this thesis. The aim here is to highlight the way intercontextual reading emphasises exchange, movement, and the interplay of various horizons. The idea of hermeneutic movement can be found in the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, a key scholar within hermeneutics, while the language of perspectives, or horizons, picks up on the work of Hans Gadamer, another key figure in terms of understanding the role of the reader in interpretation.

Schleiermacher's diagram of the hermeneutical circle (Figure 1) shows that a reader always comes back and forth between parts of the text and the whole text. He highlights the never-ending process of interpreting the parts and the whole of the text between the words, sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts. However, Schleiermacher's understanding of interpretation is limited to the author's original meaning.⁴³

⁴² Kwok Pui Lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Nonbiblical World," in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald and Richard Horsley (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 22.

⁴³ Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, "Hermeneutics," in *Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (New York: Routledge, 2011), 276–280.

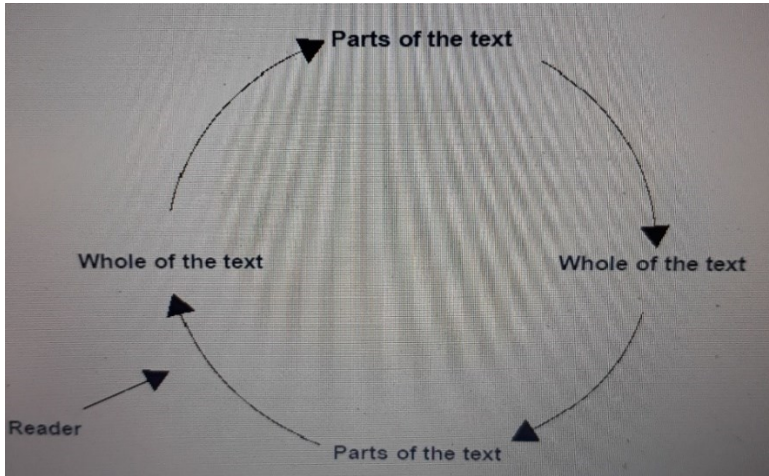


Figure 1: Friedrich Schleiermacher’s Diagram of the Hermeneutic Circle⁴⁴

However, meaning is not a value-free concept or something that can be dictated universally. As discussed by Hans Gadamer, readers approach the text within their historical and cultural horizons, bringing their prejudices. Through dialogue with the text, they gain new perspectives and enrichment.⁴⁵ All readers will experience this process, including academic exegetes. Therefore, it is essential to understand Gadamer’s idea of the fusion of the horizon. He states that someone understands something from a specific point of view on a particular horizon of history as their starting point. Gadamer is referring to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* concept that knowledge affects history.⁴⁶ People’s minds are influenced and constructed within situated and perspectival horizons.⁴⁷ How people understand something and give meaning to something has been built by many layers of their history.⁴⁸ In his work, Gadamer emphasises the crucial importance of recognising and acknowledging prejudices. However, it is essential to clarify that this recognition does not advocate for the unquestioning acceptance of biases. In Gadamer’s point of view,

⁴⁴ Gilhus, “Hermeneutics,” 277.

⁴⁵ Gilhus, “Hermeneutics,” 280.

⁴⁶ Hans G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, transl. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (London: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 282–283.

⁴⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 282.

⁴⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 279 and 283.

engagement with other fusion horizons in a circle of understanding allows the reader to confirm or confront horizons.⁴⁹ Therefore, Gadamer highlights the never-ending movement between readers with their prejudices and dialogue with the text as well as readers with revised prejudices and revised interpretations of the text (Figure 2). The interplay between all these aspects shows the role of readers within their history and context.

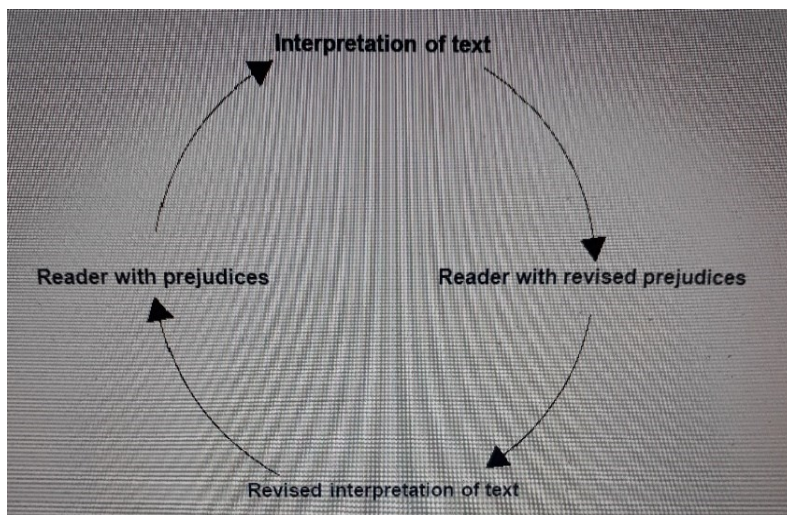


Figure 2: Hans Gadamer's Diagram of the Hermeneutic Circle⁵⁰

Gadamer acknowledges that a text comes from another context, and it is good to understand the context within the text. However, the readers must also engage the text in dialogue with the present context. Therefore, dialogue with others is essential to broadening our perspective and enriching our fusion of horizons. In line with Gadamer's view, intercontextual reading also has benefits and potential outcomes for a better understanding of religious texts and the promotion of dialogue among diverse communities. However, both hermeneutical circle diagrams developed by Gadamer and Schleiermacher have their limitations in integrating the complex realities and interactions among multicultural communities, such as in Asia. In Asia, the fusion of horizons is not limited to the

⁴⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 293–294.

⁵⁰ Gilhus, "Hermeneutics," 277.

text being read but culturally also deals with other religions' texts or the local narrative text. The different cultural-political location of readers is significant. Therefore, the interpretation process cannot be described as a single circular path but rather as involving multiple back and forth approaches. In some cases, different texts are read simultaneously. In this sense, the complexity and multiple layers of crisis and context of the reading groups will enhance the reading of Hosea.

Through intercontextual community reading, the research project was conducted in conversation with the readers as interpretive communities, addressing the questions: How do they approach the text within their horizon of understanding? How do they confront the text? To what extent can the exchange between groups lead to a new understanding of social change? In this research, intercontextual reading facilitates conversation with communities, exploring in more depth each group's differing social contexts as an essential part of the interpretive task.

Intercontextual reading thus provides a chance to expand our horizons of understanding in a mutual dialectical encounter with a reading group of ordinary readers. In considering the reality of the network of communities in Indonesia, the intercontextual approach was selected to potentially open more space for dialogue between the readers themselves. Most Bible study methods are insufficient in allowing readers to address social problems in dialogue with the Bible. While intercontextual reading gives attention to the readers and their interpretation to the text, it is not limited to how ordinary readers deal with the text, but most notably offers an explanation of how it could be used to encourage them to share their struggles. The critical question arising from this is whether the readers are able to learn from each other's perspectives. Can the dialogue enrich scholars' analysis? Can this help churches and other Christian organisations address the challenges of the present context? In this way, intercontextual reading has the opportunity to be a collective act of interpretation to address social struggle.

2.4.1 The Method of Intercontextual Reading

Intercontextual reading is an approach where text interpretation is done collectively across contexts. The method is derived from the intercultural reading of the Bible. In intercultural reading, readers from totally different socio-cultural backgrounds and contexts read the Bible together and enter into conversation with each other.⁵¹ The primary hermeneutical aspect of intercultural reading is the attention it places on the readers.⁵² The main question of the intercultural reading approach relates to the impact of group interpretation on Biblical texts and the reciprocal effect of readers engaging in collaborative interpretation. It explores the dynamic relationship between texts and readers, where texts exert an influence on readers and readers shape the meaning and understanding of texts. The initial intercultural project aims to facilitate and encourage interaction between readers, fostering both dialogue between readers and professional readers in Biblical interpretation.⁵³

The dialogue between groups of readers from a totally different social-cultural-political context is an integral part of the approach. The conversation concerning the text in the intercontextual reading will then lead to an in-depth dialogue about life. In the intercontextual reading, the emphasis is placed on the contribution of the majority of the members of the group who might be termed ordinary readers. In this research, ‘ordinary reader’ does not refer to those who lack theological training or education. As Hans de Wit argues, ordinary readers are people with their unique theology, wisdom, and knowledge.⁵⁴ Jeff Astley and Leslie Francis highlight the significance of the study of what they have called ordinary theology. Astley considers ordinary theology a way of listening to and learning from people’s theology and beliefs. Francis, who studies ordinary readers and readers’ perspectives of the sacred text through the lens of the SIFT (Sensing, Intuition,

⁵¹ Hans de Wit, “Through the Eyes of Another: Objectives and Background,” in *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible*, eds. Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker, Marleen Kool and Daniel Schipani (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2004), 5.

⁵² De Wit, “Through the Eyes of Another,” 5–6.

⁵³ De Wit, “Through the Eyes of Another,” 11.

⁵⁴ De Wit, “Through the Eyes of Another,” 5.

Feeling, Thinking) method, concludes that ordinary readers can unlock significant insight through their reflection and can make essential connections to their own experiences.⁵⁵ Moreover, Hans de Wit also emphasises the significant role of ordinary readers in hermeneutics. Ordinary readers' interpretation of the text is valid. The text has its voice, and any reader interprets it from their respective position. Therefore, the text is meant to be reread to gain new insight. The text sheds new light through the reflection of parallel connections in the situation, experiences, and context of the readers. The text is intended to transition from a historical object to a friend in dialogue. In the dialogue, the reading will be questioned, confronted, or accepted. Engaging in dialogue and interacting with other group's reading prevents the process from becoming insular, where readers only hear echoes of their own voices.⁵⁶

Rather than 'ordinary reader', this research would instead use the term 'reader' to avoid the hierarchy between readers. Every reader has a different kind of knowledge. A scholar's knowledge comes from years of training. The farmers, the fishermen/women, teachers, and other readers have different knowledge and experiences. All these different pieces of knowledge, experiences, and contexts are valuable to be engaged within the intercontextual reading. It is essential to include more readers in the dialogue and the process of giving meaning, so in the approach, the meeting began with the sharing of context by the reading groups where different creative tools can be used to facilitate this sharing.

Even though reading the Bible together as a collective action is not something new in Indonesia, in practice most of the study groups will usually only have one-way communication. The leader will explain everything about the text, and at the end, the leader will propose a few questions on relevance, to which the other readers will respond. The space for ordinary readers to contribute to the interpretation of

⁵⁵ Leslie Francis, "Ordinary Readers and Readers Perspectives on Sacred Text," in *Exploring Ordinary Theology*, ed. Jeff Astley and Leslie Francis (New York: Routledge, 2016), 91–95.

⁵⁶ De Wit, "Through the Eyes of Another," 9–10.

the text needs to be expanded. Therefore, in the intercontextual reading, all readers are welcome to voice their understanding and should be given that space. In terms of Hosea, most of the interpretation of metaphorical language has been done by scholars with different interests with respect to the text. However, just as the message from Hosea addressed various people, it is also necessary to ask how other readers understand the metaphor of body and land because the Bible is meant for them and not only for preachers and teachers.

In order to begin an intercontextual reading as a collective reading, one should pay attention to several points of ethics as set out by John Prior. He emphasises that in the first step of the reading process with the community, trust is very significant.⁵⁷ The personal and group authenticity needs to be embraced. For example, there should be no limitation on method or boundary, but there should be honesty and openness. It is essential to listen and allow other questions to arise within the reading.⁵⁸ He also addresses the power dynamic that exists between a collective of readers and an academic figure. In his view, the participants in the intercontextual reading group who live in rural areas need to set aside any feeling of cultural inferiority. Their voices articulate an understanding not only of the text but their values, faith, and beliefs. At the same time, those who possess higher education need to bracket any arrogant feelings and superiority. They should display the willingness to learn from voices that are usually marginalised in the academic circle.⁵⁹

In intercontextual reading, there are three phases for each group reading, beginning with a preparatory session before all the phases. In this study, participants were selected from co-operating organisations like churches, theological schools, or non-governmental organisations. In the preparatory phase, the researcher explains the

⁵⁷ John M. Prior, "The Ethics of Transformative Reading," in *Bible and Transformation: The Promise of Intercultural Bible Reading*, eds. Hans de Wit and Janet Dyk (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 76.

⁵⁸ Prior, "The Ethics of Transformative Reading," 77.

⁵⁹ Prior, "The Ethics of Transformative Reading," 78.

intercontextual reading approach and discusses the matter of informed consent on the part of the participants. The participants are given time to make a decision, with all having the right to say no. At this stage, participants are also asked if they are willing to read and discuss a particular text together. Once participants agree and consent forms are signed, a small reading group is formed, and a moderator is selected. In the process of reading, I take on the position of researcher, who records and observes the reading and interaction. In the second and third phases, I am the researcher who presents alternative readings and observes their responses. In terms of this research, because of the sensitivity of the land-grabbing issue within Indonesia, the groups do not share their pictures or biographic information. The groups decide the time and place to meet for the first phase.

Before reading the Bible together, the participants share their social, religious, and economic context through community mapping. Community mapping is a creative way to listen to and document the stories of communities that have endured violations of environmental, cultural, social, and economic rights. These communities seldom have the time or place to talk about their experiences. Community mapping is therefore used to process and reclaim community narratives, experiences and knowledges. Through this method, they draw their context of living, the natural ecosystem while sharing their struggle.

Afterwards, they read the chosen text together. I offered the text of Hosea to the groups who agreed to participate in the intercontextual Bible reading. The groups agreed to read the text together and exchange the results of their discussion with other groups. The text of Hosea is chosen based on the following considerations and questions:

- The text offers many different voices, and participants will have the opportunity to interact with the text from their context and experience.
- While narrative text is understood as more approachable for readers, do readers encounter challenges while engaging with Hosea's text, which employs several metaphors?

- Through reading together, the community are encouraged to engage with the text and talk about injustice with each other.

There should be no fixed approach that needs to be used in the reading group, although several guiding questions can be helpful for the process. The questions selected for the first meeting in this research were as follows:

- What aspect is essential in the text? Why?
- With whom in the text do you identify yourself? Why?
- What experiences from your own community context were evoked by the text? Why?
- What do you understand from the text? In your opinion, what is the message from the text?
- What do you think about the text's land and the body imagery?
- Is there any part of the text that touches you or disturbs you? Explain, please!

The results of the first phase from the readings of each group are exchanged with each other. This stage marks a crucial juncture wherein every group gains insight into the text based on the perspective of the other group. Within this space, questions are encouraged, with each group able to inquire about other group's perspectives and be open to questions themselves. What could they learn from other's perspectives? What are the similarities and differences? Then, in the third phase, the groups responded to comments from the other groups, with the possibility that the conversation might lead to further potential transformative understanding and action. In their book *Bible and Transformation*, Hans de Wit, Janet Dyk and other scholars, talk about transformation due to reading the biblical text. De Wit describes the transformative impact of reading the Bible that leads many readers to liberation, healing, salvation, inspiration, hope, and love. The transformation itself has many faces.⁶⁰ Therefore, a small-scale transformation

⁶⁰ De Wit and Dyk (eds), *Bible and Transformation*, 65–66.

should also be appreciated. De Wit also acknowledges that more research should be done on transformation in reading the biblical text.⁶¹ Once the intercontextual readings have progressed through all the phases, the transcripts of the groups are analysed. By using grounded theory, the group's conversations are transcribed, analysed, coded, and compared.

In this research, three groups were selected. The composition of the three groups was different. There were a female group and two mixed groups, all coming from different islands. Each group consisted of nine to ten participants, one of whom was the group's moderator. A group of female participants was chosen because of the need to hear female responses to the negative image of women's bodies and nature in the text. There is a hope that women can talk more freely and openly about these issues if there are no men in the group. Even though the female group is characterised by homogeneity in gender, they have variations in terms of age and social background. The two mixed groups were varied in gender, age, and social background.

One community is from Tentena, Central Sulawesi. It is a mixed group with three women and seven men. The participants of this group are mainly from the Christian Church of Central Sulawesi. This activist group called themselves the APDP: Aliansi Penjaga Danau Poso (Alliance of Lake Poso Guardians). They actively fight to preserve the natural ecosystem of Lake Poso, which is threatened by a dam. The work on the dam is being carried out by PT POSO Energy, owned by the family of the former Indonesia vice president.

The next reading group is from Mburukulu village, Sumba. The female group consists of eight participants. They are members of the Christian Church of Sumba. All of them are farmers who also have other jobs, such as teachers and students, and taking care of full-time home responsibilities. They are survivors of the land-

⁶¹ De Wit and Dyk (eds), *Bible and Transformation*, 67–68.

grabbing operation undertaken by Muria Sumba Manis (Muria Sweet Sumba), a sugar cane company.

The other reading group is from Gamping, a suburb area of Yogyakarta, in the province of central Java. It is a mixed group of eight women and one man. The participants of this group are from the Catholic church in Gamping. Their educational background and occupations vary. Some of them are teachers, while others are entrepreneurs, government officials, and those who have full-time responsibilities within the home. This group raised the issue of Christian-Muslim relations in their social context. Only a few raised concerns over environmental injustice. The participants were asked by the Priest and a Nun, who are responsible for the Gamping Catholic community, to participate in the Bible reading. The participants were alumni of Sekolah Kitab Suci (School of Holy Bible).

Participants of the groups are those who have experienced environmental injustice, and most of them live in rural areas. Considering the ethical and legal framework, the researcher explained to participants the purpose of the project and the importance of intercontextual reading. The steps of the process were also explained: to share their social context, to read the specific text in Hosea, have a conversation within the group, to exchange the results, and to give comments on other group's outcomes. At the beginning of recruitment, the informed consent forms are distributed to the participants who want to be involved. Because of the vulnerability of participants, confidentiality is a key priority. Their real names and specific locations are not mentioned in the thesis, nor can their personal data be accessed by anyone except the supervisors and the researcher.

As outlined above, the groups met three times. At the first meeting, each group shared information about themselves and their social context. Then, they discussed the text together. As the issue of trust might be different for each group, as the researcher observes and records these conversations, there needs to be respect at this stage for the participants' needs and what they are prepared to share and express. The results from this first reading meeting were then exchanged across the

groups. In the second meeting, each group gave their responses to the readings of the other groups, reflecting on their interpretation and then exchanging the results again. There was the possibility for the third meeting to have two sessions. In the first session, the discussion focused on the responses of another group to their reading. At this stage, it becomes clear how the readers in the specific context view the text. As a second session, one part of a social-political reading of the text was offered for discussion, which they were free to accept or reject. This step had no intention of influencing the readers as to the meaning of the metaphor. However, it aimed to offer another meaning from a different approach and engage in a conversation with a broader frame. As an observer, it was essential to be ready and open to listening to the participants' responses, including their criticism. The third session forms another new step in the intercontextual approach with the intention of widening the conversation for the researcher as well as the reading group.

I, as the researcher, recorded all the discussions in audio and message text. The empirical data of all the conversations was subsequently analysed using selective coding and categories. The first and second phases were analysed to see how the group reconstructs meaning within their group and in dialogue with others.

2.4.2 The Contribution of Intercontextual Reading

With respect to the contribution of intercontextual reading, De Wit highlights the importance of intercontextual reading for providing opportunities for enriching the ecumenical relationship between Christians, especially at the grassroots level of the churches.⁶² In the ecumenical reading, people get to know each other's context, similarities are discovered, prejudices adjusted, distance bridged, and the situation of asymmetry is critically addressed. People may also look critically at their context in the process of questioning the churches or methods of the other groups.⁶³ Moreover, the contribution of this type of reading has been expanded to social transformation. The aim of this intercontextual reading is not only about the

⁶² De Wit, "Through the Eyes of Another," 44.

⁶³ De Wit, "Through the Eyes of Another," 32–36.

interaction between groups where people are enabled to see their similarities or differences but holds the hope that the interactions could lead to action to challenge the social-ecological situation.⁶⁴ Therefore, at the beginning of each group's first meeting, forty-five minutes were allocated specifically for sharing about the community's social context and struggle. The community mapping can then be used as a way to document the economic-social-cultural problems of the community. The societal setting of the readers in the present day is also significant for our analysis in this participatory research project.

The intercontextual reading between groups from different contexts who are experiencing environmental injustice may lead to new insights, hope, and new forms of resistance. In the context of Indonesia, where environmental injustice happens in many different parts of the islands, this could be one of the good ways to learn from each other and share solidarity. I suggest that the contribution of intercontextual reading can be promising for an ecumenical relationship between churches. However, given the hybrid context of Indonesia, further questions need to be asked. How does this intercontextual reading include those people who are not Christian? In reality, an effort for social change needs to be pursued together with other people from different faith traditions. This would be an important aspect to consider in other research as to whether it is possible for an intercontextual reading to also include readings from other faith traditions concerning the same theme. The cross-textual reading that Daniel K. Listijabudi has offered could serve as a model for doing this within the community reading. As Listijabudi pursues this individually, developing and expanding this cross-textual approach collectively would be a fruitful avenue of future research in terms of the intercontextual reading method.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Fernando F. Segovia, "Intercultural Bible Reading as Transformation for Liberation," in *Bible and Transformation: The Promise of Intercultural Reading*, eds. Hans de Wit and Janet Dyk (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 19–49.

⁶⁵ Listijabudi, "The Mystical Quest as a Path to Peace Building."

2.5 Ecofeminist Reading

Ecofeminist reading is a critical analysis of the connection between ecology and feminist concerns.⁶⁶ It is an approach that analyses how the natural environment functions in a sustainable way for life and how humanity causes major disruption and the death of plants and animals.⁶⁷ However, there are many positions in ecofeminist theory itself. The ecofeminist reading in its contemporary movement is an intersectional analysis that includes examination of the association between women and nature, resisting domination in the inter-human and human-earth relationship, scrutiny of the patriarchal social structures and worldviews, as well as the critical analysis of the interconnection of the oppression of women and the domination of the natural world.⁶⁸ Rosemary Radford Ruether states that the urgent task of ecofeminists is to convert human consciousness towards the earth so we as humans can understand the web of life and become part of the sustainable web of life rather than act as a destroyer.⁶⁹ She further argues for the need of ecological spirituality on the basis of the integrity of ourselves, the living interdependency of all things and the value of personal communion.⁷⁰

In ecofeminist theory, injustice based on gender, race and class are related to environmental injustice. From one perspective, for example, the connection of the degradation of women with environmental degradation is observed.⁷¹ As women are thought to be life-giving and nurturing, nature will be thought of as fertile and exploitable.⁷² Another ecofeminist perspective argues that the connection of women with nature leads them to have an inferior position, since nature is regarded

⁶⁶ Heather Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 2.

⁶⁷ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 1.

⁶⁸ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 24.

⁶⁹ Ruether, *Gaia & God*, 251.

⁷⁰ Ruether, *Gaia & God*, 252.

⁷¹ Noel Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 23 and 28.

⁷² Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Natures*, 28.

as subject to man's control. Women struggling for freedom challenge the idea of a passive and objectified nature. In the development of the theory, other ecofeminist positions argue for a strong relationship between women and nature due to women's roles in the daily work of agricultural production and the household economy. Therefore, the destruction of nature will have a substantial impact on women. Other arguments state that women are biologically close to nature in their reproduction cycle or that women have greater access to nature and therefore identify themselves with nature.⁷³ There are also collaborations of analysis and movements by scholars, such as Vandana Shiva from India and Maria Mies from Germany who highlight the connection between harmful ecological activities and forced development, a capitalist patriarchal economic system and colonialisation.⁷⁴

Ecofeminism has emerged as a perspective through which many parts of the world may be seen and specific issues can be analysed. Through ecofeminist analysis, appropriate solutions can be identified too. The resources offered by ecofeminist analysis nowadays and in the past are essential in shaping the future and benefiting the present.⁷⁵

Moreover, Eaton highlights two approaches in ecofeminist analysis: the empirical approach and the cultural symbolic approach. The empirical approach relies on the day to day, material experiences of women. This approach analyses the underlying cause of ecological catastrophe, such as deforestation and corporate domination of the public land. The focus is on the correlation between the environmental crisis and government actions, the accessibility of power and the process of decision making, as well as the global economic system, commerce, militarism, development and consumerism within the increasing social inequality and ecological destruction.⁷⁶ The other approach is a cultural-symbolic approach that

⁷³ Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Natures*, 29.

⁷⁴ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 25–26.

⁷⁵ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 27.

⁷⁶ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 28.

highlights the association of women and nature historically. The link between feminising nature and the naturalising of women is central to ecofeminist theory, especially within Euro-western worldviews. The approach focuses on the fundamental symbol that underlies all relationships within human cultures and the link between humans and nature. The cultural symbolic approach focuses on the way that men have domination over both women and nature, and the ways in which this domination over women and nature is seen as acceptable and perceived as normal. The cultural-symbolic approach can be criticised for ignoring the lived realities of women in disempowered circumstances. However, it is possible to integrate both approaches as ecofeminism has the capacity to include many feminist and ecological perspectives⁷⁷ and I endeavoured to draw on both approaches. Moreover, ecofeminist analysis offers an alternative philosophical and social conceptual framework based on the human-nature relationship. Ecofeminism principally encourages heterogeneity and diversity that reflects the earth community. Instead of being trapped in the disagreement on women and nature relationship, the research highlights the significance of reclaiming human connection to nature while criticising the domination and patriarchal ideology that results in exploitation.

An ecofeminist reading brings attention to the aspect of domination and hierarchy, the connection or disconnection of humans and other animals, plants, and nature, as well as also to the topic of evil, sin, and suffering. From an ecofeminist perspective, the suffering and loss of animals, plants, and other elements of nature in the ecosystem is of grave concern in terms of injustice. Finally, in chapter 6, the research delves further into the ecofeminist reading of Hosea and engages with the question of eco-justice that dismantles hierarchies of domination and power.

This chapter has set out the main methodological approach of the thesis. By using different methods, this research embraces a multilayered methodology that

⁷⁷ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 29–30.

interconnects and integrates all the methods. As examining the land and body metaphor is at the heart of the research question, some initial understanding of metaphor was outlined to highlight the importance of choice for community reading and as the framework in which further analysis takes place, as noted above by both the social scientific and ecofeminist analysis. This chapter also detailing, in particular the empirical part of the research in terms of the intercontextual reading group as a hermeneutical method.

An integral part of this research involves how the metaphorical language in Hosea is understood. Therefore, as part of the methodology of the thesis, some considerations need to be made of some of the fundamental ways in which metaphor is seen to work. It is to this that the next section now turns, where the discussion includes the theory of metaphor used in this study and what this means with respect to the research of Hosea. Chapter 3 now turns to an in-depth discussion of the metaphor in Hosea to begin the process of addressing the main research question.

Chapter 3

Cognitive and Affective Metaphor in Hosea

3.1 Introduction

Following on from the introduction of the concept and use of metaphor in Hosea in Chapter 2 of this thesis, this chapter makes deeper analysis, focusing on the metaphor's cognitive and affective dimensions. As already set out, a metaphor was predominantly considered only as poetic imagination or as a stylistic linguistic feature of language, mainly used as a substitute word for the literal meaning.¹ In this understanding, the meaning of metaphor is very limited to prior and literal thought. More recently, however, the discussion on metaphor has evolved, giving rise to philosophical discussion on its cognitive and affective influence.² In Hosea, a book with diverse images, metaphor becomes the vessel for conveying complex concepts and meanings. In taking account of the active role of the mind in the interpretation of a metaphor, this study explores the metaphor of Hosea in the wider context by analysing the interaction of ideas.

In discussing the metaphors in Hosea, an examination of the cognitive power and affective effect of metaphor thus proves beneficial in broadening understanding, particularly in a religious text where there are tendencies to interpret the representation of God literally through a male character. Besides cautioning against reading metaphor as an absolute image, the aim of this chapter, therefore, is to demonstrate that metaphors in Hosea have a conceptual function in which the topic and the model interact dynamically, creating meaning.

The argument in this chapter unfolds in three interconnected parts. Firstly, various examples of metaphors in Hosea are explored, drawing insights from existing

¹ Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 24–25.

² For the developing perceptions in metaphor, see the discussion in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

scholarly proposals. Secondly, the chapter illuminates how these metaphors give rise to new thoughts, especially in terms of the metaphorical use of sexual promiscuity in depicting immense social solidarity and economic crises. Thirdly, the chapter argues that the intensive use of metaphors has a powerful affective effect which can also be dangerous due to the emphasis on the metaphor's negative aspects. For instance, the negative aspect of the metaphor of God as husband is particularly explored, contending that it is essential to interpret the metaphors beyond exegetical analysis and to avoid absolutism when interpreting dominant and hierarchical views of the metaphors.

3.2 Scholarly Discourse on Metaphors of Hosea

Many scholars have engaged in the discussion surrounding the metaphors in Hosea, providing valuable insights into their cognitive dimension. Scholars such as Pierre van Hecke explore the pastoral metaphor in Hosea 4:16 using conceptual blending as a recent cognitive approach to metaphor. Van Hecke argues that a metaphor engages not just two domains but four, with the added domains being background or conceptual knowledge. In Hosea 4:16, he illustrates that “God as the shepherd is a blended space.” The verse conceptualises Israel as a balking cow with stubbornness implicit in the background. The subsequent colon envisions the shepherd tending to the sheep while the sheep are grazing. The concept of cattle driving and pastoralism contributes to the blended space of God as a shepherd. Van Hecke interprets this metaphor as a pastoral irony, contending that God will guide his people back to the right path, similar to the shepherd guiding a wayward cow.³ While his analysis delves into the cognitive and conceptual aspects of the metaphor, he minimally addresses its hermeneutical aspect and its impact on readers.

³ Pierre Van Hecke, “Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor. Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hosea 4:16,” in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Pierre Van Hecke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 225–226.

Another substantial contribution to the study of metaphor analysis in Hosea is by Seong Hyuk-Hong. Using metaphor theory, he analyses the social connotation of illness and the healing metaphor in Hosea. Hyuk-Hong analyses the prior notions of illness and healing, exploring the etymology of these concepts in the broader context of the ancient Near East, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria-Canaan, and Israel, and traditional Korea that are part of agrarian societies. Hyuk-Hong asserts that illness implies disharmony with the transcendental realm, representing a disrupted relationship with God in Israel.⁴ According to Hyuk-Hong, the metaphor of illness and healing highlights the foreign economic system of Israel and Judah. God caused the pus and rotteness, and it is understood as a punishment for the elite male who created an unjust socio-economic system, an oppressive foreign system which was destructive and destroyed the people's relationship with God.⁵ The healing metaphor in turn signifies the removal of the foreign form of monarchy. Hyung-Hong's work contributes an important analysis of the cognitive concepts underlying the illness and healing metaphor in Hosea and its social dimension.

The value of wider context in analysing metaphor can be briefly illustrated in the critique made by Sharon Moughtin-Mumby of the predominant interpretations of widely recognised marriage metaphor in Hosea, which has been the subject of extensive discourse. Moughtin-Mumby argues that the general interpretation of Hosea using the concept of a marriage metaphor is an example of reading with the substitution theory. Moughtin-Mumby particularly criticises the harmonisation of all sexual and marital language in the prophetic texts to marriage metaphors,⁶ a practice which she contends demonstrates the understanding of metaphor as a substitute for literal words without any significant change in meaning.⁷ Moreover,

⁴ Seong Hyuk-Hong, *The Metaphor of Illness and Healing in Hosea* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 77–78.

⁵ Hyuk-Hong, *The Metaphor of Illness and Healing*, 148.

⁶ Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6–7.

⁷ Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 6–7.

Moughtin-Mumby also points out the common background of sacred prostitution that is used repeatedly as the background of marriage metaphor.

She criticises the implications of focusing on metaphorical prostitution, which is often interpreted not as a metaphor but as a metonymy (a word or phrase that is closely associated with or related to the relevant term).⁸ In this case, the application of substitution theory can result in the blurring of the difference between metaphor and metonymy.⁹ Therefore, Moughtin-Mumby also argues for the awareness of the cognitive appreciation of feminist readers to the metaphor in Hosea. Feminist scholars frequently express their disappointment in the lack of enthusiasm on the part of other scholars for the power of the symbolic language used in the discussion of prophetic sexual and marital metaphors.¹⁰ Feminist reading critically approaches the metaphor with a cognitive understanding that focuses on the negative implications of prophetic sexual and marital metaphors for women's experience and for how women are perceived in the present. Therefore, Moughtin-Mumby argues for the wider frame of interpretation on Hosea. Using varied metaphorical language, Moughtin-Mumby argues that in the wider frame, Hosea 4–14 uses the prostitution motif together with the word-play and thereby creates different meanings. For instance, Hosea 5:7 uses the word $\gamma\tau$ to describe an alternative reading that Israel is being consumed by foreigners. Moughtin-Mumby contends that Hosea 4–14 reveals that the destruction confronting Israel serves as restorative rather than hostile function.¹¹ The metaphor extends beyond a reference to historical practice and includes a broad spectrum of associations such as separation, unfaithfulness, and disconnection.¹²

⁸ Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 8–10.

⁹ Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 11.

¹⁰ Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 13 and 15.

¹¹ Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 71–74.

¹² Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 75.

While these studies do not specifically deal with the notion of land promiscuity and tend to focus on the function of the metaphor for the intended audience, they indicate importantly that taking account of wider societal understanding adds new dimensions to the way the metaphor speaks into its context. Thus, in returning to the central metaphor under discussion in this research, that of promiscuity, the following section sets the metaphor within the conceptual understandings of sexual behaviour as far as can be determined in ancient Israel and its near neighbours Egypt and Mesopotamia to expand associations in interpretation.

3.3 The Promiscuity Metaphor in Hosea

The metaphor of promiscuity in Hosea initiates a discourse that encompasses three entities: the woman (Gomer), the children, and the land. The portrayal of Gomer, labelled as אשת זנום, sets a negative tone from the outset, extending its influence to the children and notably the land. This negative description also affects the children and especially the land. This complex, intensive metaphor of promiscuity within Hosea serves to impart a powerful message and impact to the reader.

Hosea 1: 2, for example, states,

When the word of the LORD began to speak through Hosea,
The LORD said to Hosea,
“Go, take for yourself a wife of promiscuity and have children of
promiscuity because the land behaves promiscuously, [turning] away
from the LORD.”

The word זנה is used three times in this verse, denoting a broad spectrum of inappropriate sexual behaviours. The term זנה is widely translated as a prostitute, for instance, whore (NJB), wife of whoredom (NRSV), and perempuan sundal (Indonesian TB). It is usually understood literally as an act of prostitution, and many scholarly interpretations have linked it to cultic prostitution. However, as will be argued in Chapter 4, although the term זנה has been linked to cultic prostitution, there is no firm textual evidence of a syncretistic fertility cult in eighth-century Israel.

In order to understand the cognitive contribution of the promiscuity metaphor, this section explores the concept of promiscuity as a general contextual background, examining the notion of sexual promiscuity in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and then in ancient Israel. The comparison shows parallel ideas beyond the literal meaning of sexual transgression. The comparative perspective shares implicit assumptions about sexual promiscuity. It relates closely to contextual understanding, the meaning that is produced by transference of relational understanding.

3.3.1 Conceptual Background of Sexual Promiscuity in Ancient Egypt

Within ancient Egyptian materials, complaints concerning immoral behaviour are prevalent with sexual accusations being a common theme. The accusations against Paneb, an ancient Egyptian chief workman, are outlined in the salt papyrus 124 by Ammenakht, the son of the former chief workman. These accusations charge Paneb with copulating with a married woman, along with other violations such as theft, bribery, violence and disregard for his superiors. Part of the accusation reads,

‘Paneb copulated with citizeness Tuy, she being the wife of the workman Qenna. He copulated with Hul, who was with Penduau. He copulated with the citizeness Hul, she is with Hesysunebef, so said his son.’

Later, Paneb’s son, Penanugot, made a series of accusations against a group of workmen led by Usherhet, and one of the accusations is that he copulated with three married women.¹³ Notably, accusations against Paneb detail copulation with multiple married women considered a disruption to good order and social relations. Therefore, it was treated as a crime, unrelated to the ritual offences.¹⁴ In the

¹³ Cerny, “BM 10055,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15 (1929): 243–258, cited in C. J. Eyre, “Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984): 93–94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3821579>.

¹⁴ Eyre “Crime and Adultery,” 93 and 98.

instruction of Ankhsheshong from the Ptolemaic period, men were prohibited from copulating with a married woman. If a man copulates with a married woman on her bed, his wife will be copulated with on the ground (many interpretations see death as a consequence). However, the instruction of Ankhsheshong also implies that if a wife is adulterous, the blame should also be directed towards the character or behaviour of the husband.¹⁵ These few examples of ancient Egyptian material show that sexual transgression in the case of adultery is linked to married women and was considered a crime due to the violation of public order. The aim of the authority in intervening was to maintain public order.¹⁶

Another papyrus from ancient Egypt speaks of villagers threatening to take the life of the offending woman who had sexual relations with a married man. In this papyrus, the sexual offence is linked to a married man, but the consequence of death is still for the woman. The writer of the papyrus proposes that the adulterer goes to court to take care of his wife's legal rights. The intervention of the public in relation to the life of the village, as told in the papyrus, is because the offence was considered to be a disruption in social life. Therefore, there was a mutual responsibility involved.¹⁷ The act of sexual misconduct is considered to violate both the legal rights of the partner and the perception of social order.¹⁸ A brief exploration of the conceptual ideas on sexual misconduct in ancient Egyptian literature shows that sexual misconduct is not only linked to a married woman but also a married man, even though the materials demonstrate more accusations of sexual misconduct concerning married women. In the ancient Egyptian concept, it seems that one of the main concerns around sexual misconduct is the legal right of the partner in terms of property and its social implication since it was considered a disruption to the social life and to public order.

¹⁵ Eyre, "Crime and Adultery," 97–98.

¹⁶ Eyre, "Crime and Adultery," 101.

¹⁷ Pnina Galpaz-Feller, "Private Lives and Public Censure: Adultery in Ancient Egypt and Biblical Israel," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67, no. 3 (2004): 157, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4132377>.

¹⁸ Galpaz-Feller, "Private Lives and Public Censure," 157–159.

3.3.2 Conceptual Background of Sexuality in Ancient Mesopotamia

The discourse on sexuality in ancient Mesopotamia usually revolved around sacred prostitution. Despite the absence of proof supporting the existence of sacred prostitution, the interpretation persists with זנה and קדשה commonly understood as cultic prostitutes. However, the theory of sacred prostitution in ancient Mesopotamia has long been questioned. For instance, Westenholz in her article of 1989 stated that sacred prostitution associated with Mesopotamian religions or temples remains unproven.¹⁹ She finds that there are different names for women. Through an analysis of the functions and roles of *qēdēšā*, *qadištu* and *nu-ging*, Westenholz argues that these women are not considered sacred prostitutes in Mesopotamia. Instead, they fulfil multiple roles: for example, *qadištu* engages in activities related to procreation, nurture, and ritual duties,²⁰ while *nu-ging* activities are linked to birth and marriage. These women can have children and take part in women's rites associated with birth. According to Westenholz, the problem is in the epistemological approach of the scholars with particular biases and unproven assertions of the institution of the sacred prostitute.²¹

The prevailing perception of prostitution in the Mesopotamian documents complicates the distinction between sexually available women and promiscuous women. According to Martha Roth, women whose behaviour challenges the limits of social norms are often interpreted as prostitutes, even when there is no indication that their bodies were traded for monetary compensation,²² as in the case of *kar.kid*. An exploration reveals various female imageries related to sexual activity and other activities, suggesting that Mesopotamian culture has a broad view of sexuality, where different terms serve the variety of female sexual practices and other roles.

¹⁹ Joan Goodnick Westenholz, "Tamar, Qēdēšā, Qadištu, and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia," *The Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 3 (1989): 260, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1510077>.

²⁰ Westenholz, "Tamar, Qēdēšā, Qadištu," 254.

²¹ Westenholz, "Tamar, Qēdēšā, Qadištu," 260.

²² Martha R. Roth, "Marriage, Divorce, and the Prostitute in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, eds. Christopher A. Faraone and Laura K. McClure (Wisconsin: The University Wisconsin Press, 2005), 31–32.

Nevertheless, marriage in Mesopotamia was also governed by a marriage contract where the woman assumed a passive object position.²³ Similar to ancient Egypt, in ancient Mesopotamia promiscuity is primarily explained in terms of married women. However, adultery is not attributed to a married man engaging in sexual relations with a prostitute. There is also a strong tendency to blame a woman for adultery, with the problem of a sexual relationship with another man seen as denying the husband exclusive sexual and reproductive access. Some wisdom literature addresses the fear of disruption to marriage because of marrying an unfaithful woman, for instance Proverb 2:16–19. The wisdom literature gives a warning not to marry a *harimutu* because she has many husbands, an *istaritu* because of her duties to the temple, and a *kulmasitu* whose favours are many.

In the ancient Mesopotamian context, if a sexual relationship outside marriage was conducted by a married man, it was considered that there had been no offence against the male lover's wife. However, if the sexual relationship was conducted by a married woman, then there was clearly an offence committed against the woman's husband.²⁴ Moreover, according to the law in ancient Mesopotamia, the man who had sexual intercourse with a married or betrothed woman faced severe punishment.²⁵ Therefore, the major concern against prohibited sexual relationships was not about regulating sexual behaviour or safeguarding. The reason had more to do with the implications of the property devolution when the married women became pregnant and bore children.²⁶ Most of the ancient Mesopotamian documents show that it is the woman who is given responsibility for abstaining from a prohibited sexual relationship. The sexually free agent, especially if that is a woman, is considered undesirable. Promiscuous women in ancient Mesopotamia were seen as a threat because they did not submit to men and could disrupt the

²³ M. Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 2 (1995): 125, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3632512>.

²⁴ Roth, "Marriage, Divorce," 25.

²⁵ Roth, "Marriage, Divorce," 26.

²⁶ Roth, "Marriage, Divorce," 32.

stability of marriages. Moreover, promiscuous women were seen as a threat to the economic integrity of the marriage, inheritance, and the stability of social life.²⁷

3.3.3 Conceptual Background of Sexuality in Ancient Israel

In ancient Israel, the conceptual understanding and worldview are closely linked to *בית אב* or father's house. This term *בית אב* is used in association with nuclear families, extended families, or lineages.²⁸ As a kinship-based agrarian society, the majority of traditions and culture revolve around the kinship network. The preservation of the nuclear family unit is deemed vital. In this patriarchal worldview of ancient Israel, there is a preference for endogamous marriages, with the possibility of exogamous marriage. However, in the genealogical lists, the primary function is not precision in detailing biological relationships; rather, it serves to define social, political, and economic relations often undergoing revisions. Consequently, the genealogies of ancient Israel represent a dynamic blend of genuine and fictitious kinship connections.²⁹

Despite having distinct roles, women within the kinship network in ancient Israel had limited agency. The portrayal of women's lives in the Bible typically aligns them with a father figure, husband figure, children figure, and other male figures. Most of the time, in biblical texts the woman will disappear from the story after she has conceived, given birth to, or raised the child. Women's names are not even recorded if they are irrelevant to the lineage of the patriarch. Gomer, the female figure in Hosea, exemplifies this pattern. She does not talk directly to God. Although she undergoes pregnancy, childbirth, and child-bearing, she is most known for her promiscuity, and from the beginning, the narrator's description of Gomer tends to be negative reinforcing the negative connotation attached to promiscuity in ancient Israel.

²⁷ Roth, "Marriage, Divorce," 34–35.

²⁸ N. P. Lemche, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 249.

²⁹ Paula McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 77.

The negative concept of promiscuity in ancient Israel is related to the transgression of family and kinship bonds. During this period, a married woman's sexuality was considered the property of her husband, closely tied to paternal status. Even before marriage, certain biblical laws demanded that a woman must prove her virginity. For instance, in Deuteronomy 22:13–21, the young bride who could not prove her virginity according to the law was stoned to death. There was no requirement for the groom to prove his virginity and the law only stipulated punishment for the partner who falsely accused the bride, stopping short of the death penalty. The system focusses more on the man's biological heir. The comparison with the groom's punishment does not make any judgement as to the validity or acceptability of the death penalty but tries to provide some illustration of what the law was like for women and men. The woman's sexuality is clearly under the control of the patrilineal line. Stoning as a penalty for those who violated the order of creation or cosmic order was collectively done, signifying a breach against the entire community and social order.³⁰

In relation to the context of genealogies, blood relations ideally defined the family in a kinship group; however, the genealogy was also subject to remodelling outside of such connections.³¹ The kinship starting point in ancient Israel is biological with a collective bond,³² including ideological, social, and economic dimensions. In this small population, most individuals are part of the social bond undertaking specific functions to ensure collective survival. In order to continue the survival of the *Bet-ab* in kinship-bond societies such as ancient Israel, the paternity and the legitimacy of the children need to be clear. Therefore, within this ancient Israel patriarchal worldview, sexual relationships were seen as defining the good social order, while

³⁰ Alice A. Keefe, *Woman's Body and The Social Body in Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 165–166.

³¹ Roland Broer, *The Sacred Economy in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 90–91.

³² Broer, *The Sacred Economy in Ancient Israel*, 91.

sexual activity outside recognised boundaries was considered a violation and threat to the community and social identity.³³

As previously elucidated, some scholars interpret the metaphor of promiscuity in relation to the sacred or cult marriage, an argument to be explored further in Chapter 4. Francis Andersen and David Freedman contend that the term promiscuity is associated with the wrongdoing described in the context of sexuality. According to Andersen and Freedman, the central focus of the story of Hosea is that the woman has breached her marital commitment by engaging in sexual relations with her lovers. In addition, the use of the term “*tnh*” in Hosea 2:14 implies compensation for services, while the association of the lovers with Baal or Baalim indicates their involvement in the fertility cult.³⁴ However, the evidence supporting the existence of cult prostitution remains insufficient. The dualistic idea of Canaan as a fertility religion and Israel as an ethics religion complicates the notion of cult prostitution. M. La Rip also maintains that these arguments need to be more convincing because the paintings and inscriptions do not support the view of Asherah as YHWH’s consort.³⁵ The claim that the inscriptions of the Kuntilet ‘Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qoom provide proof of biblical marriage imagery is unconvincing due to the absence of divine deities in the painting. Moreover, key elements such as faithfulness, unfaithfulness, blessings, and punishment that La Rip considers essential factors in Hosea are absent.³⁶

Generally, the covenant idea read into the metaphor of marriage is used to describe the relationship of God and Israel in Hosea. William L. Moran draws parallels

³³ Keefe, *Woman’s Body*, 170.

³⁴ Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Double Day and Company, 1980), 159.

³⁵ There are also inscriptions that support YHWH and his Asherah. See Blum Erhard, “Kuntilet’Ajrud 4:1 New Reconstructions and Readings,” in *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical, and Geographical Studies Vol.34*, ed. Ada Yardeni (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2021), 10–20.

³⁶ M. La Rip, *Intertribal Hermeneutics in The Context of Myanmar: A Study of Roles and Functions of Jeremianic Female Imagery*. Amsterdam Cahiers Supplement Series 17 (Bergambacht: Uitgeverij 2VM, 2018), 48–50.

between the covenant in ancient Near Eastern Suzerain-vassal treaties and the language of love in Deuteronomy. He views this love language as one that can be commanded and grounded in loyalty, service, and obedience.³⁷ La Rip aligning more with the concept of covenant and human bond marriage, parallels Hittite vassal treaties and Neo-Assyrian loyalty oaths in his interpretation of the marriage metaphor in Hosea and Jeremiah. Like William Moran, he identifies several similarities between the covenant concept of Hittite vassal treaties and Neo-Assyrian oaths: the covenant is made by two parties, the superior suzerain and the inferior vassal; the suzerain is responsible for the vassal's security, and the vassals are responsible for being faithful; lastly, the covenant is conditional (the suzerain will protect the faithful vassals). From this standpoint, La Rip criticises the sexual violence against women, as described in Hosea, and demonstrates that the violence happened possibly due to the prophet's notion of the curse sanctions of the covenant.³⁸ This kind of covenant emphasises a hierarchical relationship between superior and inferior where obedience is required in order to be blessed, or otherwise a curse is the consequence of the covenant's violation. However, the correlations between the covenant idea and human bond of marriage to describe the relationship between Yahweh and Israel seem insufficient in explaining the extensive use of the promiscuity metaphor in Hosea with regard to other family members and the land.

Contrary to the notion that the metaphor in Hosea merely represents the covenant concept of Deuteronomy which aligns it with Near Eastern treaties and the dynamics between two parties, the one superior and the other inferior in terms of marriage, I contend that the concept behind the metaphor and its function in Hosea extends beyond the Deuteronomy covenant idea. The promiscuity metaphor in Hosea encompasses not only the relationship between the husband and wife but

³⁷ William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of The Love of God in Deuteronomy," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1963): 81, 83, and 87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43711394>.

³⁸ La Rip, *Intertribal Hermeneutics*, 52.

also involves the children, the mother, and particularly the land. There exists a need for a more comprehensive framework than the Deuteronomy covenant idea to account for the complexity and extensive utilisation of the promiscuity metaphor in Hosea. Moreover, while many interpretations assume that Hosea's marital imagery is a metaphor for the covenant, the word covenant ברית appears only five times in Hosea; for example, ברית in Hosea 6:7 and Hosea 8:1 describe an interpersonal covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. However, this may not precisely convey the ideas suggested by the similarities drawn between the Deuteronomic covenant and other ancient Near Eastern treaties.

Rather than relying solely on marriage and covenant as the conceptual background for understanding the promiscuity metaphor in Hosea, I propose a more insightful exploration that delves into promiscuity within the context of potential crisis issues as the conceptual background. In accordance with metaphor theory, as stated by Sallie McFague, "The most fruitful metaphors are the ones with sufficiently complex grids to allow for an extension of thought, structural expansion, and suggestion beyond immediate linkages."³⁹ The metaphors presented in Hosea are undeniably complex and challenging, offering the possibilities to structure further observations, suggest new linkages, and present concepts and categories.

3.4 Promiscuity as Social-Economic Crisis

So far, the chapter has explored the different conceptual backgrounds of sexuality and promiscuity in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and ancient Israel. The comparison of the conceptual idea of promiscuity in ancient societies shows that the perspective on promiscuity transcends individual sexual relationships to encompass broader social dynamics. Particularly, in ancient Israel, engaging in sexual practice outside the norm was an indicative of crisis and social problems threatening the systems of social life, and economic life.

³⁹ Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 39.

In ancient Egypt, sexual transgressions were perceived as a disruption to public order, mainly concerning the legal rights to a partner's property and ensuing social implications. In ancient Mesopotamia, the dominant perception for women engaging in various sexual practices outside marriage was often labelled as a prostitute, posing a threat to the economic integrity of the marriage, as well as the unity and stability of social life. Therefore, one of the possibilities for understanding the metaphor of promiscuity is through the conceptual background of the social-economic crisis.

In addition to highlighting the metaphor's deep connection to human experience, cognitive theory underscores the interaction between the conceptual ideas expressed in the metaphor through its literal meaning, dependent on the context.⁴⁰ In the process of interpretation, the mind is not merely a passive recipient of interpretation but an active participant in the creation of the concept.⁴¹ For instance, when examining the metaphorical linkage of social-economic conditions as the conceptual ideas of the metaphor promiscuity, the semantic context of promiscuity as social and economic crisis interact with the context background. This is elaborated further in the next Chapter 4.

In discussing the metaphors in Hosea, an examination of the cognitive power and affective effect of metaphor thus proves beneficial in broadening understanding, particularly in a religious text where there are tendencies to interpret the representation of God literally through a male character. There is also a tendency to absolutise all the associations of the male character in the text as indeed referring exclusively to God. In discussing metaphors about God, consideration must be given to the extent to which a particular metaphor of God affects people's lives and behaviour. There is a pressing need for further exploration into the extent to which

⁴⁰ Eva Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.

⁴¹ Kittay, *Metaphor*, 5.

metaphors affect actual readers, particularly in the context of negative metaphors. Understanding a metaphor extends beyond its historical function in the past. Accepting metaphor in Hosea at face value, solely as the message of an angry prophet, falls short. Thus, a hermeneutical strategy that critically considers the affective contribution of the metaphor on the reader in the present is required. There is a need for a comprehensive examination of the extensive use of negative metaphors, questioning whether readers are sufficiently aware not to absolutise a metaphor or if additional steps are required in order to deal with the problematic aspects. In this regard, there are more viable options than downplaying the metaphor's effect for this study. The following section discusses the problematic aspect further.

3.5 The Problematic Imagery

As discussed, metaphors possess the ability to startle and deeply influence the reader's imagination. Hosea's metaphor not only evolves around sexuality but is centred on a woman who engages in promiscuity.

Many interpretations focus on *אשת זנוים* translating it as a wife involved in fornication, adultery, or prostitution. As posited above, an alternative interpretation links promiscuity to the broader social-economic crisis. The aim of this section is not to enter into a more detailed interpretation with this concept in mind, but to continue the discussion of the cognitive and affective contribution of metaphor, specifically in relation to the problematic nature of the connection between the woman and violence. Understanding should not be confined to the historical function of the promiscuity metaphor but should extend to analysing its impact on people's imaginations and lives. The descriptions of whore, adultery, and fornication interact directly with the image of the woman, potentially leading to readers automatically relating the metaphor to the ethical and unclean actions of a real woman in real life. Consequently, the use of the metaphor becomes problematic. The description influences and conversely shapes the female representation and links it to specific negative actions.

The prevalence of negative female metaphors across various parts of the authoritative text of the Bible fosters a tendency to accept them as normative female imagery. The normative female imagery shows how language and theology mutually shape our thought processes. It also implies that the metaphor is rooted in a system that condemns women whose sexuality cannot be controlled. This patriarchal system expects female sexuality to conform to specific rules and sexual purity, while it views men as morally superior. Moreover, the patriarchal perspective disregards instances of sexual violence in the text. What is considered strange sexuality should be analysed carefully. Control of the body and control of sexuality should be analysed in a larger social, economic, and political context as to what happens to the female body in Hosea. It is dangerous to read Hosea's promiscuity metaphor as limited to the female wife's wrongdoing and highlight only the male husband as God who loves and does violence as a punishment for the female partner's disobedience.

In many religious languages, there is a tendency to anchor the understanding of God in a particular image grounded in personal experience. However, danger lurks when a metaphor loses its status as just one among God's imageries, as with, for instance, the well-known image of God as a father. God as a father is portrayed positively in the Bible. As a father, God loves, guides, and gives life. If God is then considered only as a father, all the associations of a father are taken to truly refer to God's nature. Nevertheless, if God is considered only as a father, the associations of a father are erroneously taken to truly refer to God's nature. Indeed, every person and every creature experiences God differently, contributing to a diverse range of encounters in the fatherhood relationship. However, the metaphor, with its affective effect, can often be shocking, as evidenced by the images of a violent father and violent God present in the Bible. Therefore, a metaphor should not be read literally as an absolute image. The metaphor communicates subjective involvement, needs, and evaluations regarding the topic while taking the hearers

along on the metaphorical journey. This critical remark about the treatment of metaphor is also applied to the metaphor in Hosea.

The religious concept of the husband offers a way of imagining God in the likeness of a person and in personal relations. In order to deeply relate to God as a husband, a connection to the husband in real human experience is established. A husband is considered a partner with a special relational bond where love, loyalty, and support are shared. This special relational bonds and its characteristics are used to describe God in Hosea. For instance, the love in reconciliation and forgiveness in Hosea, especially in Hosea 2:16, 21, 22, 25. In that part, Hosea illustrates the process of reconciliation in which God, depicted as a husband, persuades the woman to return and speaks to her heart. God exhibits loyalty and compassion, acting as a husband with forgiveness to embrace the wife in faithfulness.

However, the association of God with the husband extends beyond those positive imageries, encompassing patriarchal and dominant portrayals as well. Hosea's text includes instances where God addresses Hosea directly, while Gomer only hears from Hosea about matters such as the command for marriage, the name of their children, and the impending punishment. This mirrors real life experiences where people deal with the patriarchal and dominant characteristics of husbands, making it impossible to relate deeply to God, especially for those who have encountered abusive traits in real-life relationship. Therefore, a careful examination of what it means to depict God as a husband is needed due to the personal and relational focus that supports a patriarchal model.

I would contend that the metaphor of God as husband threatening the woman with violence and humiliation using the image of nature in Hosea is highly problematic. This imagery can strongly affect readers and can be misused to legitimise male violence against women. As Sallie McFague states, the human image used as a metaphor of God gains divine qualities through interaction with the Divine and

vice versa.⁴² Hence, the divine association of God with the husband should be critically read, avoiding a literal interpretation and acknowledging that it is not the sole metaphor representing God. Religious metaphors, when preserved in tradition and repeated in ritual, risk becoming idols.⁴³ In this case, the husband imagery can be idolised, potentially justifying violence towards women as a punishment from God. In summary, the human images that are chosen as a metaphor for God, such as the husband, acquire divine qualities through their interactive relationship with God. The interaction influences and changes the way of thinking about a husband. Simultaneously, the way of thinking about God is altered. The interaction of God as a husband demonstrates the power of metaphor where a single image can often become too dominant. The acceptance of patriarchal and dominant characteristics as 'proper' may be driven by the Bible's description of God in this way. The use of violence as punishment to correct the wrongdoing described through the husband imagery in Hosea might be deemed acceptable by the reader. However, it should be acknowledged that the ambivalence of the image of God is revealed through divine imagery in the texts.

Moreover, any interpretation of Hosea needs to be critical of the female imagery expressed in the sexual metaphor of $\eta\eta$ and the description of violence to the woman's body. Readers need to be aware of the danger of accepting the image and violence literally and that the female representation in metaphor is problematic because it tends to shape the woman's sexuality as controlled by society. This negative concept was internalised in Hosea's time and continues until today. That is why feminist theologians continue to challenge the biased concept of sexuality that is full of judgement of the 'other'. Within this kind of discourse, Kwok Pui Lan argues that there should be an awareness of another possibility to imagine

⁴² McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 38.

⁴³ McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 38.

women as sexual subjects with their desires that is different from the negative description in Hosea.⁴⁴

I contend that engagement with diverse hermeneutical perspectives provides an opportunity for relearning how to address the negative aspects of extensively used metaphors. For example, Keefe highlights the various semantic ranges of זונה (*zonah*) arguing that it includes religious apostasy and other forms of faithlessness toward Yahweh. Considering alternative connotations, such as treacherous profiteering, allows a different reading of the metaphor.⁴⁵ The sexual metaphor זונה also resonates with the social economic crisis posing a threat to special bonds and solidarity. Within family bonds, the metaphor also includes children and the land, where the land in the Israelite worldview is integral to the strong bond among Israelites, their ancestors, and God. Thus, being more intentionally aware of the diverse range of the meanings and semantic nuances of the metaphor can mitigate the inclination to narrowly associate the promiscuity metaphor with specific negative actions, with the possible consequence of continuing to support various forms of violence, injustice, and gender discrimination.

Another problematic aspect of Hosea involves the connection of the violent metaphor to divine imagery. Interpreting God's threat to the female partner's body raises questions about the necessity of violence. Some scholars consider this violence as a consequence of the violation of the covenant, drawing parallels with Hittite vassal treaties and the Neo-Assyrian loyalty oaths, where curses are invoked for unfaithfulness to the suzerain.

The description of God's punishment in Hosea 2:5–8 portraying God as a husband, who strips the wife naked, exposes her, causes her to die of thirst, hedges her way

⁴⁴ See discussion on "Race, Colonial Desire and Sexual Theology," in Kwok Pui Lan, *Postcolonial Politics and Theology: Unraveling Empire for a Global World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021), 60–61.

⁴⁵ Keefe, *Woman's Body* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 136–137.

with thorns and blocks her path with a wall, raises substantial concerns. These actions aimed at humiliation and control, pose challenges when seen as acts of love. The question arises: Why must God punish and humiliate her to guarantee her loyalty? These violent threats serve two functions: punishing the female partner and at the same time forcing her to return to God, the husband. This text runs the risk of encouraging women to endure abusive relationships, and this should not be the case.

I propose that beyond the notion of covenant, the description of abuse to the female partner is related closely to the worldview of social orders and social bonds in ancient contexts. Within the worldview of ancient Israel, sexuality, reproduction, and the female body are connected directly to maintain the social bond and the survival of kinship. There were social consequences and punishment during the time for sexual practices perceived as threatening communal social order. Therefore, the cognitive and affective aspects of the metaphorical interpretation of Hosea need to be discussed simultaneously. The study of metaphor theory shows that Hosea could not simply be interpreted as romantic love without critically discussing the violence also depicted in the text. There needs to be a courageous space to dialogue with the image of love while criticising the violence expressed in the text.

I suggest that a more helpful alternative reading could see the violence as describing the devastating impact of the ongoing social crisis for Israel's community and the land. The metaphorical nakedness can be interpreted as the community being stripped of its identity, while references to the wilderness, the dry land, and thirst indicate how Israel and the land is no longer a fertile body and will face a problem of the survival and continuity of family.

Finally, as has been discussed above, in dealing with a problematic metaphor such as the one in Hosea, it is imperative to consider an array of images of God found in the Bible. Instead of limiting God to a patriarchal dominant and hierarchical view,

exploring religious texts that offers transformative characteristics about God is essential. The Bible employs various metaphors to describe God making it impossible to confine God to just one. Another divine image in Hosea shows God restoring hope and the kinship bond. Additionally, a responsible approach involves critically examining the background to the concept of violence in the text and responsibly resisting the perpetuation of the violence cycle from the text into the present context. By understanding the cognitive and affective contribution of the metaphor in the hermeneutical strategy, we take the implication of attributing violent images of God seriously.

Finally, the interpretation of the metaphor should extend beyond its historical function, recognising its capacity to influence actual readers' imaginations in current contexts. Reading the metaphor hermeneutically allows readers to give meaning to it and enables the metaphor to shed new light and be heard in a new context. In such a hermeneutical reading, the promiscuity metaphor in Hosea can be interpreted as social-economic crisis, with the image of God seen more fully as the agent of restoration.

3.6 Summary

In conclusion, the need for a broader context to analyse the metaphor of Hosea cannot be overstated. The scholarly discussions on the promiscuity metaphors of Hosea, focusing on the cognitive aspect, have paid little attention to a broader spectrum of associations of the promiscuity metaphor. This research shows how notions of promiscuity need to be analysed in the broader context of the ancient Near East such as ancient Egypt, ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Israel. The analyses of cognitive power and affective effect of the metaphor thus prove beneficial in broadening the understanding of the metaphor, giving rise to new thoughts. By examining the concept of promiscuity in ancient societies, it becomes clear that the understanding of promiscuity goes beyond individual sexual relations and instead includes wider social-political dynamics. Promiscuity signifies a crisis and societal problem that poses a threat of social life disintegration.

Moreover, the affective contribution, especially the problematic connection between women and violence in the text of Hosea, should also be discussed. The understanding of the negative aspect of the violence metaphor in Hosea should extend beyond historical function and female wrongdoing. This is a crucial step in understanding the depth and complexity of the text. Engaging with diverse hermeneutical perspectives provides an opportunity for relearning how to address the negative aspects of extensively used problematic metaphors.

The intensive use of metaphors has a significant affective effect which can also pose challenges due to the metaphors' negative aspects. It is crucial to interpret beyond exegetical analysis and refrain from absolutism. The problematic metaphors such as those implying threat and violence to the woman's body, should also be addressed. I propose that beyond the notion of covenant, the depiction of abuse to the female partner is linked to the worldview of social hierarchies and social connections. The analysis reveals that interpreting Hosea as romantic love is insufficient without critically analysing the violence portrayed in the text. I suggest a more helpful alternative reading that views the violence in the text as describing the severe impact of the ongoing social crisis. This proposed alternative reading is a key to unlocking deeper layers of meaning in the text. Analysing this issue further is important. Therefore, the following chapter will study the metaphor of land and body in the context of the ongoing social, economic and political dynamic of eighth century Israel and Judah.

Chapter 4

The Metaphor of Land and Body in Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 in the Social-Political Dynamics of Eighth-Century Israel and Judah

4.1 Introduction

Moving on from a discourse of cognitive and affective power in the metaphor, this chapter focuses on Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 in the context of the social-political dynamics of eighth-century Israel and Judah. I will demonstrate the social-economic dynamic at work in the decentralisation and centralisation of Israel to reconstruct the socio-economic situation and changes in the eighth-century B.C.E as the context within which Hosea operated in the latter half of the eighth-century B.C.E. As one of the possible ways to explore the function of the metaphor of land and body in Hosea, social scientific criticism is used in this analysis. The social scientific criticism reconstructs the social system of ancient Israel, which signifies the whole complex of communal interactions, customs, norms and symbols.

The first section delves into the intricate web of social structures and circumstances that shaped Israel. Understanding this dynamic is crucial as the social structures and circumstances serve as foundational elements influencing the overarching theme of the chapter. To analyse these aspects, the social scientific criticism employs two main axes of investigation concerning early Israelite society:¹

1. The first axis examines Israel's internal composition and structure across various organisational levels and its subsystems. The composition shows various social units within Israelite society.
2. The second analysis focuses on Israel's social system as an operational and developing system, emphasising a comparative approach to

¹ Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 228.

illuminate unique characteristics and shared patterns across other social systems and the previous social system. This comparative lens enriches our understanding of the nuances and broader implications of Israel's social dynamics.² The comparison with other social systems offers valuable insights into the interconnectedness of diverse concepts, socio-economic structures, kinship, and the distribution of power over an extended period of time.³ The variations demonstrate the systemic change of the Israelite structure as a critical factor that modifies society as a whole.⁴

Having detailed the contextual situation in which Hosea receives his prophecies, the chapter proposes a reading of the key metaphors under discussion in this thesis that takes account in its analysis of the social scientific criticism set out above and the cognitive aspects presented in Chapter 3. The reading is preceded by a translation of the passage under consideration that highlights some of the textual points and selections made for the reading that follows.

4.2 Social-Political Dynamics in the Centralised and Decentralised Period

The reconstruction of Israel's social structures and social circumstances in the early period before the establishment of the monarchy usually begins with the discourse of Israel's origin. There are several models in the discourse of the reconstruction of early Israel: the conquest model, the immigration model, and the revolt model.⁵ Generally, the conquest model is the oldest and best known, although the biblical texts show conflicting accounts about the occupation itself. Previously, archaeologists and historians mainly relied on the Hebrew Bible to understand the questions surrounding the settlers in terms of identity and their

² Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 229–230.

³ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 229.

⁴ Marvin L. Chaney, "Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy," in *Social Scientific Criticism of the Hebrew Bible and Its Social World: The Israelite Monarchy*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 54.

⁵ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 191–228.

geographical and socio-economic origins. Texts like Joshua support this notion of conquest.⁶

The conquest model argues for the complete displacement of people, allowing Israel to eliminate the previous inhabitants and establish its unique culture and religion. The conquest happened within one generation and culminated with Israel dividing the captured territories into homelands for the twelve tribes. The conquest model assumes that all the tribes of Israel joined together to conquer the people in Canaan, destroy and occupy the land.⁷ Several archaeological findings have identified certain ancient cities like Hazor, Lachish, Eglon and Debir that had been extensively destroyed.⁸ The evidence of destruction supported the conquest theory to some extent. However, more contradictory evidence questions this model, as none of the destruction layers found can be definitively attributed to the Israelites who were led by Joshua.⁹

Another perspective is the immigration model, which suggests that Israel did not destroy the Canaanite cities. Early Israel was instead seen as a movement of semi-nomadic people who entered Canaan from different directions at different times, who intermarried and entered into treaty relationships with the Canaanites.¹⁰ The text in Genesis 38, for instance, shares how Judah lived in harmony and intermarried with Canaanites. There is evidence of a migration of Israelites from Negeb to the highlands of Judah, in addition to the prevailing editorial idea of crossing the Jordan at Jericho-Gilgal. Additionally, there are references of Israelites colonising the Transjordan area by migrating eastward across the Jordan after their settlement in the western highlands. Egyptian texts from the early thirteenth century already refer to the tribe of Asher as residents of Galilee.¹¹ However, the immigration model lacks convincing archaeological

⁶ Paula McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 46 and 53.

⁷ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 192–193.

⁸ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 194–195.

⁹ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 54.

¹⁰ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 205–206.

¹¹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 206.

evidence, particularly regarding any movements of people from the Transjordan westward into Palestine.¹²

The revolt model presents a different perspective. It proposes that the Israelites were not outsiders to Canaan, but native Canaanites who revolted against their rulers and allied with desert invaders.¹³ Moreover, the revolt model examines the relationship between the religious beliefs of Yahwism and the economic and political conditions in Canaan. It indicates that the social and political situation in Canaan was appropriate for the emergence of Yahwism, and Yahwism should be seen as a unique development that specifically addressed the living situations of the marginalised in Canaan.¹⁴ The marginalised in Canaan society revolted against those who exploited them. George Mendenhall first introduced this concept with a model of peasant revolt. Among the scholars who expanded on this concept is Norman K. Gottwald. He reinterpreted the revolt model, emphasising its economic and social aspects over the ideological ones, differing significantly from Mendenhall's approach.¹⁵ Both Mendenhall and Gottwald argue that early Israelite society consisted mostly of people from the Canaanite population who revolted and migrated to the highlands. Both of them indicate that a group of infiltrators from outside collaborated with the local Canaanites.¹⁶

Gottwald offers analysis of the systemic changes, such as shifts in social dynamics and economic structures, that affected the society. One of Gottwald's main proposals is that early Israel was not the result of an invasion of infiltrating people. Instead, it was a social revolutionary peasant movement within Canaan. In this model, the peasants revolted from within the hierarchical structure of Canaan life for an egalitarian way of life with Yahwism as the common bond.¹⁷ Therefore, the early Israelites then became free agrarians with

¹² McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 54.

¹³ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 210.

¹⁴ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 211.

¹⁵ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 55–56.

¹⁶ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 55.

¹⁷ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, xxiii.

modes of production for family and communal self-sufficiency with the Yahwistic religion played a pivotal role in fostering communal politics and economic life at both the individual and tribal levels to replace the hierarchical and oppressive system. Gottwald once argued that egalitarianism is the element in all relations among Israelite social structures.¹⁸ Rainer Albertz presents a different social-political perspective. He argues that the establishment of the kingdom and ensuing social changes in Israel catalysed the movement of Yahwism. According to Albertz, Yahwism emerged as a form of liberation from hierarchical oppression and supported the tribal efforts to achieve political freedom.¹⁹

4.2.1 Decentralisation Period

In his description of early Israel, Gottwald notes various units other than the tribe. According to Gottwald, prior to centralisation, early Israel's social structures and organisational units can be defined as follows: The social structures of שבט, משפחה, בת אב (*beth-ab, mishpahah, shevet*) each had their social functions. For instance, the שבט (*shevet*) was a key subdivision within Israel's units, functioning as a socio-political, military, and territorial unit; the שבט holds substantial geographical implications. Furthermore, each שבט was uniquely named, symbolically reflecting its ancestral origin. The שבט were represented as bodies of descendants, the sons of Jacob. In these tribes, commitment to mutual help was evident in various aspects of life, from agricultural assistance to defence strategies among the different segments.²⁰ The משפחה (*mishpahah*) represents a smaller subdivision within Israel's social system, beneath the שבט. It was an active vital unit in the early Israelite social structure. The משפחה consisted of the inhabitants of a small town or in some instances, several group in the same town. The משפחה had a social function for protecting the solidarity of its members and also had a military function. It

¹⁸ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 56.

¹⁹ Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in The Old Testament Period Vol.1* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 105.

²⁰ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 245–253.

operated to preserve the integrity of each member family by extending mutual help to keep or recover land, rescue members from debt slavery, or to avenge murders.²¹ The משפחה played a multifaceted role; it imposed quotas for taxes and conscription, imposed its judicial authority, redeemed inheritances or portions of land, activated periodical land distribution, and imposed the obligation of blood vengeance.²² The משפחה lived together in the same neighbourhood. In larger settlements, there was more than one משפחה.²³ Gottwald refuses to use the term ‘clan’ for משפחה. He suggests the term ‘protective association’ as a broader framework that structurally organised the social unit of אב בת into large enough groups with strong mutual aid.²⁴ In his analysis, Gottwald argues that משפחה is neither an exogamous unit (marrying outside the group) nor a unilineal descent group (tracing ancestry through one line); instead, it is a protective association with a shared interest. Gottwald’s arguments concerning משפחה are related to the ‘revolt’ concept mentioned above where the Israel settlement in Canaan revolted against their ruler for an egalitarian way of life with Yahwism as the common bond. S. Bendor agrees with Gottwald that משפחה was not probably exogamous. However, on the basis of the redeemer in Ruth 4, the laws of levirate marriage in Deuteronomy 25:5–10, the redemption in Leviticus 25 and the story of Zelophehad’s daughters in Numbers 36:11, Bendor argues that משפחה was a kinship unit rather than only a protective association.²⁵ I concur with Bendor’s view of משפחה as a kinship unit, noting that potential exogamous connections do not alter its lineage status. Lastly, the אב בת was the basic unit of Israel’s social system, the nuclear unit. It was the extended family, consisting of two or more nuclear families and comprised up to five generations living at any one time.²⁶ The relationship between משפחה and אב בת is dynamic. The אב בת was both patrilineal and

²¹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 267.

²² S. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Simon, 1996), 118.

²³ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 257–270.

²⁴ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 315–316.

²⁵ Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 84–86.

²⁶ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 285.

patrilocal, signifying a dual connection to social organisation and residency. As the primary socio-economic unit in the Israelite social system and reflecting the predominantly agricultural economy, the *בֵּית אָב* played a pivotal role in producing the basic means of subsistence, such as grains, fruits, the cultivation of wine and olive oil, and the management of sheep and goats, which provided milk, wool, and leather for its members. The grazing fields were designated for public use and were not inherited by any specific family, as these lands were meant solely for communal grazing. The vineyard held an important part in connection to the family, playing a crucial role in the creation of a unit within the *בֵּית אָב*. The acts of building a house, planting a vineyard, and taking a wife were intertwined as components of the process of being involved in the new formation for *בֵּית אָב*.²⁷ The land as an area for sown fields was the inheritance of *בֵּית אָב*. However, it was a shared land, held communally and annually allocated by lot for cultivating use by a family/individual.²⁸ It was a self-sufficient system for the members. They depended on each other for survival, and any surplus was used mainly for storage against famines. If there was a problem of *בֵּית אָב* self-sufficiency, the *משפחה* offered relief without charging interest. The *בֵּית אָב* was economically autonomous which means that they did not have to give their production to higher authorities. In early Israelite society, there was a shared and reciprocal exchange of economic needs.²⁹ The land, essential to the kinship group, serves as the foundation for the nuclear unit of *בֵּית אָב*, which is tasked with protecting, cultivating, and developing the inheritance. It holds the responsibility for daily existence and ensuring the future seeds. Additionally, the *בֵּית אָב* redeems portions of land from strangers and kinsmen who have sold the land portion themselves, while also allocating resources and dividing the

²⁷ Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 137–138.

²⁸ Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 139–140.

²⁹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 292.

obligations of משפחה among its units.³⁰ Therefore, land is important, and there is a communal type of land ownership that distributes land among families.³¹

Agriculture was the dominant economic activity typically providing sufficient production to support the population. In this tribal society, decisions were made based on majority agreement, without a centralised authority. The land tenure system is a communal land system with the belief that the land belongs to God. Contrary to this general view, Bendor argues that the system does not apply to all fields. There are also different kinds of ownership among families regarding vineyards and fields. Even though there was a shared grazing pasture, there were differences such as flocks being the property of the nuclear unit, while the vineyard and fields belonged to the unit that inherited or planted them.³²

As mentioned above, Gottwald formerly argued that this segmented social system is egalitarian. N. P. Lemche questions whether a social system could be egalitarian under all conditions. The system in practice could not be completely egalitarian. Thus, it would be more appropriate to speak about societies which are dominated by an egalitarian ideology.³³ Therefore, Lemche argues that the decentralised Israel, with its emphasis on the protective association of אב and the egalitarian responsibilities within the kinship group, can be viewed as a society guided by an egalitarian ideology. This perspective aligns with the earlier discussion of social structures, highlighting the interconnectedness of Lemche's analysis.

In recent years, Gottwald has revised his terminology and proposed the term 'communitarian mode of production'.³⁴ In the communitarian mode of production, the primary productive units were the multifamily households

³⁰ Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 118.

³¹ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 70–74.

³² Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 202.

³³ N. P. Lemche, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 223.

³⁴ Norman K. Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and the Hebrew Bible* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018), 7–8.

linked in kinship group and in the tribe. The fruits of the collective labour were enjoyed by the members of the household. Gottwald refers to a communitarian mode of production because of the tribute-free alliances among free producers formed in the intertribal system, which assisted each other in agrarian labour and in solidarity of granting aid to one another when any are in need. The communitarian mode of production was thus characterised by kinship bonds and mutual help. The balance was a particular kind of equality among households, which meant that through the system, they enjoyed a more socially and ideologically satisfying life.³⁵

4.2.2 Centralisation Period

The socio-political changes that took place as Israel moved from a decentralised to centralised society led to tensions in social relationships. In the time of centralisation, the land tenure system was changed to one of privatisation. With the emergence of the monarchy, Israel entered to the native tributary mode of production. The tribute mode is a mode of production that generated wealth and power through production process that focused on land and operated under a precapitalist system. The path to accumulate wealth and power was to gain authority over agricultural and pastoral products and transform them into valuable commodities through trade and land acquisition. The centralised system extracted agricultural surpluses via taxes, giving rise to a landholding and merchant group who benefited from the indebtedness of peasants and extensive international trade, as well as warfare and the invasion of surrounding lands.³⁶

Most of the previous studies suggest that the emergent rise of the Israelite monarchy was stimulated because of the Philistines. The Philistine threat took the form of advanced military-political organisation to take more aggressive action to control Israelite settlements in the hill country. The Philistines'

³⁵ Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and the Hebrew Bible*, 9.

³⁶ Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and the Hebrew Bible*, 5.

purpose was to control the hill country because it was an economic and demographic base of value for extracting agricultural surpluses.³⁷ There was a need for the leadership to respond to the challenge of the Philistine threat. However, Israel had complex and contradictory responses to the rise of the state. Gottwald suggests that the perceived agrarian threats may have driven them to support centralisation. Some farmers, though, were concerned that they would become subordinate peasants under the control of the Philistines who would benefit from the situation. As a result, their support for Saul's kingship was not uniform or enthusiastic.³⁸

However, Rainer Albertz proposes that centralisation was also built up from within Israel. At the beginning of the centralised system, those who had an influence on tribal decisions were interested in maintaining their rights and in losing as little as possible the freedom in their society. Therefore, in the Saul era, the Israelites created a form of centralisation. This early centralisation was still compatible with their previous tribal organisational unit and religious tradition. Saul was chosen as a king and the people were ready to put the tribal society under him. However, it is with certain limits, because his permanent power base was restricted to his family resources.³⁹ When Saul was king, he financed the staff at his disposal only through voluntary offering and not taxation.

The form of authority was changed when David became the king. David systematically bolstered military power, incorporating not only kinsfolk and tribal members but also renegades from various backgrounds.⁴⁰ He then imposed the system of central authority and he was able to gain lands and

³⁷ Chaney, "Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy," 67.

³⁸ Norman K. Gottwald, "The Participation of Free Agrarians in the Introduction of Monarch to Ancient Israel: An Application of H. Landsberge's Framework for the Analysis of Peasant Movement," in *Social Scientific Criticism of the Hebrew Bible and Its Social World: The Israelite Monarchy*, Semeia 37, ed. Norman K. Gottwald (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 88 and 90.

³⁹ Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:109–110.

⁴⁰ Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:110.

became economically independent. In contrast to Saul, David was able to create his power base, which was independent of the previous tribal organisational structure. The Israelites began to adapt to the political, economic, and military power created by David.⁴¹ The rise of military power under David and the resulting centralisation gave rise to the changes in the system from land tenure to privatisation.

David tried to maintain large numbers of officials and military personnel who expected to be paid for their service, and their payment was made through land grants. There was also a collection of taxes, rents, and services. The surplus was obtained from the producers by state taxation, as well as by elites who charged high interest on loans and enforced rental fees. Additionally, foreign powers demanded tribute and compensation which were imposed on Israel's producers in the form of increased taxes.⁴² The elite enjoyed ownership of the lands and used economic surpluses to pay for luxury lifestyles and military material.⁴³ The stories in the Bible also speak of economic inequalities. The message in many prophetic traditions and the law focuses on concern for the poor in Exodus 20:1-17; 21-23, Deuteronomy 15:11, for example.⁴⁴ David imposed this form of central authority. Under David, Israel became a large-scale territorial state. The trade made rapid economic growth possible.

In centralised Israel, the creation of large estates had forced aside the egalitarian ideal of the period. Large landowners, officials, the military, and merchants had set themselves above the traditional small farmers, whose only aim was to be self-sufficient.⁴⁵ The farmers experienced tougher economic conditions such as increased taxation, loss of land, and changes in agricultural practices. They became less capable of coping with the risks of agricultural production out of their own resources. The economic production with market orientated surplus

⁴¹ Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:110.

⁴² Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and the Hebrew Bible*, 9.

⁴³ Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 244.

⁴⁴ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 159.

⁴⁵ Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:159.

production created unequal concentrations of wealth and power that contributed to the existence of significant structural divisions in society.⁴⁶ The surplus was not enjoyed by the producers. However, it was extracted from the producers by state taxation, by elites who charged interest on debt, and by foreign powers whose demand for tribute caused the Israelite producers to be subject to higher taxes.⁴⁷ It then became economically burdensome for the peasants to bear the weight of taxes and forced labour. The pressure forced them to turn to loans to survive. In the crisis, if farmers could not repay back a loan, they had to pledge to the lender the next harvest of their field or sell members of their family or themselves into slavery for debt. The period of being in slavery for debt caused small farmers to abandon the ownership of their property, and some of them even worked as landless labourers to preserve their rights to freedom. The social solidarity had been shattered.⁴⁸ The transition to landless labour affected the farmers' lives. Their labour primarily served the interests of the centralised kingdom and the privileged class, rather than benefiting themselves. The fruits of their efforts would finally be seized once again by the king and the elite.⁴⁹

Phillipe Guillaume disagrees with the idea that land privatisation was due to centralisation. He argues that the change from the communal tenure of land to privatisation was mainly because of land scarcity. In his opinion, the three factors that determine land regimes are risk spreading, production efficiency, and land availability. Stable political conditions tend to reduce land availability through the effects of a rising demography resulting from natural growth and because the arrival of settlers from abroad. As a consequence of the combined effects of better tax collection and better policing, tax pressure increases while risk declines, leading to more privatisation.⁵⁰ Guillaume argues that biblical

⁴⁶ Norman K. Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 112, no.1, (1993): 3.

⁴⁷ Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and The Hebrew Bible*, 9.

⁴⁸ Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:160–161.

⁴⁹ McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 155.

⁵⁰ Philippe Guillaume, *Land, Credit and Crisis: Agrarian Finance in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012), 36–37.

farmers were not passive victims, whether through social, natural, economic, or political factors.⁵¹ He considers that the Naboth story (1 Kings 21) cannot be taken as evidence of a monarchic system of land privatisation.

However, the Naboth story is not the only narrative in the Bible that could be an example in the discussion of the changes of the tenure land system to privatisation. Other texts also portray the social crisis and describe scenarios that differ from Guillaume's analysis. Moreover, historical analysis may not always provide a complete picture, raising the question of whose perspective, that of the elite's or the farmers', is being represented and considered. However, the decentralised system, which was characterised by kinship bonds and mutual help, began to disintegrate and an oppressive socio-economic system emerged in its place. The change was caused by changes in leadership, external pressure, and economic shift. The change reflects the play of power and social class.

The military successes arose from a reorganisation of the army. The central royal military and civil administration led to the formation of an official apparatus that increasingly deprived the traditional tribal decision-makers of their power. These changes gave rise to a new social status that was no longer indebted to membership of a family or clan, rather solely to the king. The socio-economic change was especially indicated in the activity of state building. The ambitious building plans in Solomon's time were carried out through by state enforced labour, where many settlements were fortified, new cities were founded and some village settlements were abandoned. David placed foreign prisoners of war into forced labour; Solomon, however, forced labour upon the Israelites. Solomon brought the Israelites under direct control of the central government. This burden of forced labour later led to the revolt of Jeroboam and the division of the Northern Kingdom.

Solomon also introduced a broader political, economic, and cultural strategy. There were diplomatic exchanges between the kingdoms of the Near East. The

⁵¹ Guillaume, *Land, Credit and Crisis*, 57.

long-distance state trading that brought building materials, horses, chariots, and unknown luxury goods to Israel was also connected to the broader political and cultural openness. These changes showed a different lifestyle and values for the upper class that were totally different from the values of the small farmers. While the farmers had to bear the burden of taxes and forced labour, the officials were rewarded with gifts of land. The centralised system legitimated power and the accumulation of wealth. The accumulation of power and wealth was an essential factor contributing to increasingly marked splits in Israelite society from the eighth-century onwards until it developed into a permanent social crisis.⁵² Yahwism that previously had been the symbol of liberation from oppression was then used as the mechanism of state power domination over other people through expansion, and over Israelite society through forced labour.⁵³

The legitimation of the accumulated wealth and power is articulated in different parts of the Bible. The elite leaders could claim that the accumulated wealth and power were the result of improved production, freedom from foreign pressure, and the blessing from God. However, there are counter perspectives to this claim that would argue that their rulers provided an illusion of social harmony, while in reality there were injustices and wars of expansion that were damaging to the general populace, all claiming it in the name of God.⁵⁴ The text of Hosea, a prophet from the Northern Kingdom, critically articulates opposition to the development of centralisation that shattered communal bonds and solidarity.

4.2.3 Social-Political Dynamics of Eighth-Century Israel and Judah

In Israel and Judah of the eighth-century B.C.E, there was intensity in the socio-economic dynamics. In the period of national restoration, especially during the reign of Jeroboam II and Uzziah, there were some national expansions. In the first period of eighth-century Israel, Jeroboam II set the territorial border of the

⁵² Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:112.

⁵³ Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1:122.

⁵⁴ Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and the Hebrew Bible*, 12–13.

Northern Kingdom from the edge of Hamath (now in Syria) to the Sea of Arabah (2 Kings 14:25). Uzziah firmly dominated the trade route between Arabia and Egypt. He built a tower in the desert, encouraging settlements and agricultural enterprise.

This period witnessed a high degree of prosperity for Judah and Israel, with an increasing involvement of the governing elite in boosting commercial activity and attempting to extract surpluses. Efforts were made to intensify the surplus production toward cash crops such as oil, wine, and wheat for the market. Greater quantities of export commodities such as oil and wine were demanded by the urban elites. A Samarian inscription reveals a growing demand from the state to peasant farmers regarding the required type of production, signalling an intensified shift toward a state centralised administrative system.

In this system, the change in the mode of production to a state centralised administrative system was actively encouraged and manipulated by the rich urban elites, who monitored opportunities to profit from it. Many peasants found themselves reliant on survival loans with interest rates. The foreclosure of small plots owned by peasants led to their consolidation into large estates controlled by the ruling elite, all in pursuit of generating more surpluses.⁵⁵

With the emergence of the Assyrian empire, the Northern Kingdom then lapsed into unrestrained political anarchy following the death of Jeroboam II. During this period, the Neo-Assyrian Empire, under Tiglath-Pileser III, sought to reassert its power and extract tribute from various Syrian states, including Northern Palestine and Israel. Menahem, the leader of Israel, voluntarily submitted to Tiglath-Pileser and offered tribute. Menahem had to pay a heavy tribute of 1000 talents in silver. Therefore, a poll tax was implemented by him

⁵⁵ David Hopkins, "Bare Bones: Putting Flesh on the Economic of Ancient Israel," in *The Origins of Ancient Israel State*, ed. Volkmar Fritz and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 138.

and the required sum was divided among the landowners (2 Kings 15:19-20). As a consequence, anti-Syrian sentiment and opposition to Menahem were generated by the tax. The son of Menahem was later assassinated by Pekah, who joined the anti-Syrian coalition led by Rezin. Attempts were made to draw Ahaz from the kingdom of Judah into the coalition; however, opposition to the request was encountered and dealt with by Ahaz.

The socio-economic disintegration that threatened the kinship bonds was the situation of the book of Hosea. Before examining Hosea's challenge more closely, it is worth summarising the key points presented in this section regarding the social-political context of Israel as it moved from a pre-monarchical (decentralised) structure to a monarchic Israel (centralised). In decentralised Israel the שבט, משפחה, בית אב, played their role autonomously and maintained their livelihood within kinship bonds, solidarity, and mutual aid between them. Even though it was not a completely egalitarian system of society, the different segments in the society did help each other. However, this system changed in the time of centralisation with the rise of state bureaucracy and military forces. A land tenure system was shifted into the patrimonial and prebendal domain. All this led to a social crisis, with only a small percentage of the ruling elite enjoying the profits while the peasant majority suffered. In this context of socio-economic injustice and the threat to the social bonds of Israelite society, the text of Hosea speaks up.

4.3 Translation and Critical Notes of Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3

Before offering a possible reading of the land and body metaphor that takes sufficient account of the socio-economic context and the cognitive aspects outlined in Chapter 3, it is important to also take account of analysis made concerning the text itself. In this section, the full text of the key passages of Hosea under consideration in this study is set out. A translation of the text is offered, accompanied by critical notes, before moving on to an exploration and

analysis of the various and alternative meanings of the text in the following section.

4.3.1 Translation

As a crucial role is played by translations in the role of an interpersonal and intercultural mediator; translating a metaphor is considered a challenging task. As George Lakoff notes, speakers use particular conceptual metaphors, and they will apply epistemic mappings from one domain to another.⁵⁶ Therefore, in the translation of metaphors, translators face a range of choices, negotiating decisions that require a delicate balance between preserving the original meaning and adapting to the cultural context of the target language. In the wide range of possible contextual implications, we need to be careful not to force one definite interpretation of metaphor in the translation so that the reader is not able to explore other possibilities. The following translations from BHS (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia) represent the form of words in English and I also compare BHS to the Indonesian translation. After setting out the text in its full form, a comment is made as to the decisions taken with regard to specific phrases within the translations and the textual analysis discussion.

Hosea 1:1–9

1. The word of the LORD
which came to Hosea, the son of Be'eri
in the days of Uzzah, Jothan, Ahaz,
Hezekiah, the kings of Judah
and in the days of Jereboam,
the son of Joash, the king of Israel.

2. When the word of the LORD began to speak through Hosea,
The LORD said to Hosea,

⁵⁶ George Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortoni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7, 10, 13, 42–43.

“Go, take for yourself a promiscuous wife and have promiscuous children because the land behaves very promiscuously, [turning] away from the LORD.”

3. He went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim;

then she became pregnant

and bore him a son.

4. Then the LORD said to him,

“Give him the name Jezreel

for in a little while

I will seek the house of Jehu because of the blood of Jezreel.

I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

5. It will happen on that day,

that I will break the bow of Israel

in the valley of Jezreel.”

6. Then Gomer became pregnant again and bore a daughter,

and He said to Hosea, “Give her the name Lo-Ruhamah (No Compassion)

for I will no longer show compassion to the house of Israel

but I will certainly forgive them.⁵⁷

7. I will show my compassion to the house of Judah

and I will save them by the LORD, their God.

I will save them not by bow, by sword, by battle, by horses or by horsemen.”

8. After she weaned Lo-Ruhamah,

she became pregnant

and she bore a son.

9. He said,

“Give him the name Lo-Ammi

because you are Lo-Ammi (you are not my people)

and I am not who I am to you.”

⁵⁷ See the discussion below in this chapter.

Hosea 2:1-3

1. It will happen that the number of the people of Israel will be like the sand of the sea
which cannot be measured and cannot be counted.
It will happen in the place where it was said to them, “Lo Ammi,”
it will be said to them, “Children of the Living God.”
2. The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together,
and they will appoint for themselves a leader and they will grow up in their
land; the day of Jezreel will be great.
3. Say to your brothers, “Ami.” Say to your sisters, “Ruhama.”
4. Charge your mother, charge her
for she is not my wife
and I am not her husband.
Let her remove her promiscuity from her face,
her adulteries from her breasts;
5. Otherwise, I will strip her naked
and I will expose her like the day she was born.
I will make her like the wilderness,
I will make her like a dry land
and I will make her die with thirst.
6. I will have no compassion on her children
because they are children of promiscuity.
7. Their mother has behaved promiscuously herself;
the one who conceived them has acted shamefully
for she said: “I will go after my lovers
who give me bread and water, wool and linen, oil and drinks.”
8. Therefore I will fence up your way with thorns, I will wall up her wall
and she will not find her paths.
9. She will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them
she will seek them, but she will not find them.
She will say, “I will go, I will return to my previous husband

because it was better for me then than now.”

10. But she did not know that it was Me who gave to her
the grain, the new wine, the fresh oil;
I multiplied for her silver and gold that they used for Ba'al.
11. Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time
my new wine in its appointed time
I will take away my wool and my linen
to cover her nakedness.
12. And now I will expose her nakedness
in front of her lover's eyes
and no one will set her free from my hand.
13. I will put an end to all her rejoicing,
her festival, her new moon, her sabbath
and all feasting.
14. I will devastate her vines and her fig trees
about which she said,
“They are my wages, given to me by my lovers”
I will make them into a forest;
the animals in the field will consume them.
15. I will hold her accountable for the days of Ba'als
when she made offering to them
and ornamented herself with her rings and jewellery,
she went after her lovers but she forgot Me, says the LORD.
16. Therefore, I will persuade her back,
I will take her to the wilderness
and speak to her heart.
17. From there, I will give her (her) vineyards
and the valley of Achor, a door of hope.
She will respond there as she did in her youth,

- as when she went up free from Egypt.
18. On that day, says the LORD,
you shall call Me, “my husband,”
instead of calling Me, “my Ba’al.”
 19. I will remove the names of the Ba’als from her mouth;
their name will not be mentioned again.
 20. I will make a covenant with them on that day:
with the animals of the field,⁵⁸
with the birds of the sky and creeping things on the ground.
I will remove bow, sword, and battle from the land,
I will make them lie down in safety.⁵⁹
 21. I will make you my wife forever,
I will make you my wife in righteousness, in justice,
in loyalty and in compassion.
 22. I will make you my wife in faithfulness
and you will know the LORD.
 23. On that day, I will respond, says the LORD,
I will respond to the sky;
the sky will respond to the earth.
 24. The earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil.
They will respond to Jezreel⁶⁰
 25. I will sow her myself in the land.
I will have compassion on Lo-Ruhama,
I will say to Lo-Ammi: “You are my people,”
He will say, “My God.”

⁵⁸ Parallel to Genesis 9:8–11.

⁵⁹ Parallel to Ezekiel 34:25.

⁶⁰ It could have a double meaning: God’s sowing and impregnation.

Hosea 4:1–3

1. Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel,
for the Lord has an accusation against the people in the land,
because there is no faithfulness or kindness, no knowledge of God in
the land:
2. cursing, deceiving, murdering, stealing,
committing adultery, breaking out in violence, bloodshed follows
bloodshed,
3. that is why the land will mourn.⁶¹
Everyone who lives in it will be weak.
Even the animals of the field, the birds of the sky,
the fish of the sea will perish.

4.3.2 Textual Discussion

Hosea 1 begins with the word of the Lord that came to Hosea, detailing the patriarchal lineage in relation to the days of the kings of Israel and Judah in verse 1. What is the meaning of the patriarchal lineage? It must be more than just a title. However, it serves as implicit information about the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. This introduction is followed by an instruction to Hosea in verse 2 to take a woman of promiscuity and have children of promiscuity.

The translation of אשת זנונים (*eset zenunim*) has been extensively discussed with many interpretations understanding it as referring to a prostitute, thus portraying Gomer either as a prostitute or a cult prostitute. This female imagery of a prostitute has shaped the majority of the analyses, focusing on the historical prophet's character and centring the narrative of Hosea as a husband angered by his wife's betrayal. However, this androcentric view is criticised by scholars like Yvonne Sherwood, challenging the sympathetic reading of the text with the

⁶¹ It could also mean 'dry out'.

angry husband/God as the parable of divine love.⁶² In response to the common interpretation of Gomer as a cult prostitute, Alice Keefe challenges the theory of cult prostitution and says that it is the result of a biased theological agenda of dualism between the otherness of Canaan and the otherness of women.⁶³ She argues along with other scholars, including Klaas Spronk and Matthijs de Jong, that the thesis concerning the existence of a syncretistic fertility cult in eighth-century Israel does not have firm textual or extratextual evidence.⁶⁴ Matthijs de Jong mentions as well that קדשה in Genesis 38 is a woman who offers her service and it is not directly connected to temple prostitution.⁶⁵ Spronk, aligning with De Jong, agrees that the woman in Genesis 38 is a קדשה who can be interpreted as an unmarried mature woman, as usually found among cult servants, and suggests that this doubt should make us aware of not readily interpreting קדשה and קדש as a whore (hoer en schandknaap).⁶⁶

The term קדשה has been interpreted in relation to sacred prostitution, for instance in Genesis 38:21-22, Samuel 18, 1 Kings 2:27, and Deuteronomy 23:18. Even though the text of Genesis 38 does not mention anything about the site of the cult, Spronk shows the different translations in the Dutch Bible translations for Genesis 38. The word קדשה is translated as ‘heiligdomshoer’ (temple prostitute) only in the Naarden Bible (NB, 2004). In other translations, such as The Revised King James Version (HVS, 2010) and The Bible in Common Language (BGT, 2014), the word קדשה is translated as ‘hoer’ (whore). The New Translation of 1951 (NBG, 51) translates it as ‘deerne’ (weed) and the

⁶² Yvonne Sherwood, “Boxing Gomer: Controlling the Deviant Woman in Hosea 1–2,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 101–125.

⁶³ Alice A. Keefe, *Woman’s Body and The Social Body in Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 11.

⁶⁴ See Matthijs de Jong and Cor Hoogerwerf, NBV21. De vertaalmethode toegelicht [The New Bible Translation 2021. Methodical Notes] (Haarlem/Antwerpen: NBG, 2021), 184–185; and Klaas Spronk, “Temple Prostitutie,” in *Theologie.nl Verdieping en Inspiratie*, <https://www.theologie.nl/artikelen/tempelprostitutie/>, 2022, May 20.

⁶⁵ De Jong, and Hoogerwerf, NBV21. p 184–185

⁶⁶ Spronk, “Temple Prostitutie,”

Willibrord Translation (WV, 1978 and 1995) with ‘publieke vrouw’ (public woman). The New Bible Translation (NBV, 2004) translates it as ‘de vrouw die haar gunsten aanbood’ (the woman who offered her favours).⁶⁷ In Indonesian New Translations (TB, 1974) the word קדשה is translated as ‘perempuan jalang’ (whore) and Bahasa Indonesia Masa Kini (BIMK, 1997) as ‘pelacur’ (prostitute). Both translations in Indonesian do not make any connections to temple prostitution. The connection to the temple is clearly mentioned in Deuteronomy 23:17 where Bahasa Indonesia Masa Kini (BIMK, 1997) renders it as ‘pelacur di kuil-kuil pemujaan’ (the whore in the temples). The Indonesian Terjemahan Baru (TB, 1974) version of Deuteronomy 23:17 translates the word קדשה in its feminine form as ‘pelacur bakti’ (the devoted whore) and קדש in masculine form as ‘semburit bakti’ (the devoted pederast). This word ‘bakti’ in Deuteronomy 23: 17 can be understood in general way as either positive or negative. In other texts such as 1 Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:47, and 2 Kings 23: 7 the term קדש in its masculine plural form can also be understood in connection to temple prostitution.

In Hosea, the term אשת זנונים is not related to sacred prostitution as the usual interpretation for the word קדשה in for instance Genesis 38:21-22, Samuel 18, 1 Kings 2:27, Deuteronomy 23:18. Even though the meaning is different, אשת זנונים has been frequently interpreted as an associative term of sacred prostitution. Especially in Hosea, the term אשת זנונים is interpreted with the same understanding of קדשה in Hosea 4:14. Keefe argues that the dominant dualistic idea that considers Canaan as a fertility religion while Israelite religion is only as a history and ethics religion,⁶⁸ has shaped the interpretation of Hosea.

Moreover, the Akkadian word *qadishtu* has been identified with the Hebrew קדשה as a female prostitute, the one who regularly participates in the sexual

⁶⁷ Spronk, “Temple Prostitution,”

⁶⁸ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 42.

rituals as part of her ritual duties in the fertility cult. In Mesopotamian culture, the location of *qadishtu* woman is on the street, a place where it is clear she does not belong to an organised household. By focusing on Genesis 38, Joan Westenholz argues that it is this street location that defines the woman's social status. She explores Mesopotamian data concerning *qadistu* and argues that evaluation by period and area is still needed because symbols and titles continually undergo change.⁶⁹ Considering the caution from Westenholz, Phyllis Bird and Anna Glenn explore *qadistu* further in different Mesopotamian texts: Old Assyrian, Old Babylonian, and Mari texts. In those texts, the *qadistu* appears to have an established place among the classes of women. She was dedicated to the god by her father, and her inheritance was regulated by Babylonian law. She was defined outside of a family structure. Bird and Glenn therefore argue that *qadistu* was not defined in association with the street; rather *qadistu* was a recognised and valued member of society with a unique place in the social order.⁷⁰ In the dualistic idea of the fertility cult, Gomer was imagined as representing the mother goddess and her lovers as representing the fertility god.⁷¹ Contrary to this idea, אשת זנוג will be translated as a 'wife of promiscuity' in this study. As discussed before, the word אשת זנוג in Hosea is not related to sacred prostitution. This seems to more adequately reflect the derivation of the word אשת from the word אשה meaning woman in combination with the זנוג as an intensive plural of זנה indicating sexual activities outside marriage. It is important to restate that in Hosea, the description of the woman who behaves promiscuously is given only in the instructions from God. In the next verse, there is no description of Gomer except that she was the daughter of Diblaim, and she gave birth to three children.

⁶⁹ Joan G. Westenholz, "Tamar, Qedesa, Qadistu and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia," *The Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 3 (1989): 251–252.

⁷⁰ Phyllis Bird and Anna Glenn, *Harlot or a Holy Woman? A Study of Hebrew Qedesah* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2019), 292, 312, 376.

⁷¹ See also Gale A Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 100–101.

However, based on the description in verse 2, all the following verses in chapter 1 do seem to support the negative connotations in the names of her children. The negative metaphor is already set up right from the beginning through instruction from God, and that seems to be then used generally to develop another negative metaphor about the children.

The opening phrasing of Hosea 1:2 is paralleled in 3:1 and is worth noting here in terms of how this was reflected in the subsequent Indonesian translation of the verses, as given below.

Hosea 1:2

תחלת דבר־יהוה בהושע פ ויאמר יהוה אל־הושע לך קח־לך אשת זנוגם וילד זנוגם כ־זונה תזנה
הארץ מאחר יהוה:

Hosea 3:1

ויאמר יהוה אל עוד לך אהב־אשה אהבת רע ומנאפת כאהבת יהוה את־בני ישראל והם פנם אל־
אלהם ואהב אשש ענבם:

Hosea 3:1 (TB)

Berfirmanlah TUHAN kepadaku:

“Pergilah lagi, cintailah perempuan yang *suka bersundal (like promiscuity)* dan berzinah,

seperti TUHAN juga *mencintai (love)* orang Israel,

sekalipun mereka berpaling kepada allah-allah lain dan *menyukai (like)* kue kismis.”

In these parallel phrases, the same pattern of command begins with a verb לך. In Hosea 1:2, most of the translations are able to keep the wordplay and sound in Hebrew. Nevertheless, when it comes to 3:1, it is difficult for an Indonesian translation to keep the wordplay and sound. It is hard to keep the verb אהב in a negative connotation. Therefore, Indonesian translation uses other words to

express the meaning of *suka bersundal* (like promiscuity) and *menyukai* (like). Interestingly, the word אהב in 3:1 is used with both a positive and negative connotation. It was used to describe God's command to Hosea to love the woman, just as God loves the people of Israel. However, it was also used in a negative way to describe the lover of the woman. Other important parallels come in God's command, where Hosea 1:2 describes how God commands him to take a woman, while in Hosea 3:1, God commands him to love her. Hosea 1:2 also introduces the connection between the land and the woman.

After the command in 1:3, Hosea takes Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and the text then follows with the birth of the children: Jezreel, Lo-Ruhama, and Lo-Ami. All the names of their children have a negative connotation as well. The literal meaning of the name of the first child, Jezreel, is God's sowing; the term in Niphal could also refer to the sexual process of impregnation. In English, the term sowing can also have a sexual connotation. In sexual terms, the connection between the name of Jezreel and the name of a fertile land can be seen. It is possible that a double meaning (God's sowing and impregnation) is intended. This is not the only element to the name Jezreel, as verses 4–5 show.

Hosea 1:4–5

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי קְרֵא שְׁמוֹ יִזְרְעֵאל
 כִּי־עוֹד מְעַט וַיִּקְרָתִי אֶת־דְּמֵי יִזְרְעֵאל
 עַל־בֵּית יְהוּא וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי מִמְּלַכּוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 וְקָהָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַשְׁבַּרְתִּי אֶת־קִשְׁתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּעַמֶּק יִזְרְעֵאל:

In this phrase, there is a play on words and parallel ideas behind the name of Jezreel. Jezreel, known for its fertile land, is a town located in the hilly countryside of the northern territory of Judah (Joshua 15:56; 1 Samuel 25:43). Gerald Morris argues that the wordplay in Hosea is intentional and intrinsic to

its context, serving the purposes of the author.⁷² A wordplay uses coincidental similarities to invent connections between words. It could be playful, carrying deeper meanings at the same time (as humour often does). This playful word should not be ignored because it is not a light-hearted discussion and often contains a very serious theme. The connective wordplay takes the form of a creative etymology, hinting at the meaning of this word. The wordplay on names generally functions as a connective wordplay in this way.⁷³ I agree with Morris that connective wordplay is also the case in Hosea. The double meaning contained in names and other verbs could be intentional and intrinsic to Hosea. Further exploration of wordplay will be important in order to reveal the double meaning implied in the text, as we see from the names of all the children.

According to Morris, the puns associated with Jezreel have a deeper meaning, referring to the sin of Jehu at Jezreel, the place of punishment, and the guilty party simultaneously.⁷⁴ Additionally, there may be a political or economic association of the mention of Jezreel in 1 Kings 21, as the place where Naboth's vineyard was located. Ahab and Jezebel took the land from him, and he was murdered because of the false accusation made by Jezebel. Naboth refused to give up his land because he believed that the land was an inheritance from his ancestors and should be given to the next generation. In 1 Kings 21, the blood of Naboth could possibly have an association with the blood of Jezreel. The text in 1 Kings 21 also describes how those in power grabbed the land. The blood of Jezreel could also relate to the story in 2 Kings 9–10. The literal meaning of the blood of Jezreel uses a verb in connection with the land, especially with regard to the tragic actions of Jehu in Jezreel (2 Kings 10:11). Furthermore, the punishment of Ahab is like the punishment of the house of Jeroboam, son of Nebat and Baasha, son of Ahijah (1 Kings 21:21).

⁷² Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry, and Hosea*, 81–82.

⁷³ Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry, and Hosea*, 85–86.

⁷⁴ Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry, and Hosea*, 88–89.

In the time of Jeroboam II, a social crisis around land consolidation also occurred, indicating that Jezreel is not just an ordinary name; it is a name that has a link to land consolidation and social conflict. Moreover, the name is associated with the sexual act of impregnation, linking it both to the woman and the land.

Hosea 1:6–7

נַמְהַר עוֹד נִמְלֵד בֵּת נִיאֲמַר לוֹ קָרָא אֶשְׁמָה
לֹא רַחֲמָה כִּי לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד אֶרְחַם אֶת־בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־נָשָׂא אִשָּׁא לָהֶם:
וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶרְחַם וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּים בֵּיהֵנָה
אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא אוֹשִׁיעֵם בְּקִשְׁתּוֹ וּבְקִרְבּוֹ וּבְמִלְחָמָה
בְּסוֹסִים וּבְכַרְשִׁים:

Hosea gave their daughter a name: Lo Ruhamah, which literally means ‘no compassion’. Like her brother’s name, this name carries negative connotations and through wordplay implies the impending punishment of Israel, as seen also in the name Jezreel.

It is especially important to engage here with the ongoing discussion between scholars concerning the last part of 1:6b (“but I will certainly forgive them”). Scholars such as Janet Dyk, Lenard de Regt and Brian Hammerlink argue that the end part of verse 6b should be read positively.⁷⁵ Gale Yee also argues the same thing.⁷⁶ Most translations, including Indonesian and English translations, translate it negatively by assuming a positive translation will be incompatible with the previous sentence: “*for I will no longer have pity on the house of*

⁷⁵ Janet Dyk, Lenard J. de Regt, and Bryan Hammerlink, “Deportation or Forgiveness in Hosea 1.6? Verb Valance Patterns and Translations Proposal,” *The Bible Translator* (2015), <https://doi-org.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/10.1177%2F2051677014554389>, (accessed 11 February, 2019).

⁷⁶ Gale A. Yee, *Composition and tradition in The Book of Hosea* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1987), 67.

Israel.” Some scholars think that the clause לֹא כִי in the opening sentence means that all the clauses in 6–7 also relate to the negative opening of the first clause. Besides that, they argue that rejection is expected in the context of the sentence. According to Francis Andersen and David Freedman, this structure is not new in the Hebrew syntax. Other parts of scripture, such as Jeremiah 3:2, Jeremiah 22:10, and Numbers 23:19, use לֹא in the opening clause that covers the following clause.⁷⁷ In my view, it is possible that the last part of 1:6 should be translated positively, given the contrast this would bring to the way the name is presented in verse 4. As with Jezreel, where the literal meaning of the name is positive, Hosea uses it symbolically as an ironic reference, in verse 6, the literal meaning of Gomer’s daughter’s name, Lo-Ruhama, is negative, yet it is possible that it is then symbolically positive in the second clause. That would make this sentence interesting: “*I will forgive them.*” Moreover, in verse 7, רָחַם is used in a very positive way with respect to the house of Judah. So, I consider it possible to follow the translation in a positive way.

It is also important to offer remarks concerning the verbs ‘conceived’ in Hosea 1:3, Hosea 1:6, Hosea 1:8. I would suggest that Gomer in this part symbolically plays a positive role: ‘conceived’, ‘bore’, ‘weaned’. She is giving life. However, this chapter has been explicitly framed from the first verse around the fact that she is a prostitute, and this has an impact on the identity of her children.

Furthermore, the use of לֹא־אֲהִיָּה ‘I am not who I am’ in Hosea 1:9 comes with negation, a contrast to Exodus 3:14 where ‘I am’ is used to introduce God presence. This verse is often related to the subsequent punishment detailed in Hosea 2:4-6. However, my aim here is to see the complex interconnections in the text, and these will be particularly expanded in the section below discussing the land, body, and family metaphors.

⁷⁷ See Douglas Stuart, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hosea* (Texas: Word Books, 1987), 31; Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Double Day and Company, 1980), 189–190.

Hosea 1:9

וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא שְׁמוֹ לֹא עַמִּי כִּי אַתֶּם לֹא עַמִּי וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לְכֶם: ט

In examining Hosea 1:9, the wordplay on the name continues. While most translations capture the meaning of the name לא עמי (Lo Ami) in Hebrew, they fall short of fully expressing the Hebrew wordplay. The name לא עמי (Lo-Ammi) is translated as a name and the meaning of it is given (Not my people). A noteworthy parallel can be found in Hosea 2:4, where a similar pattern of negative language is used: “She is not my wife, and I am not her husband.” This third child’s name also has a negative connotation. Andersen and Freedman argue that it is not a negation of עמי in Deuteronomy 32:21 as לא עם: my non-people. They both debate the relationship between Israel and God. In their perspective, Israel are still the people of God.⁷⁸ Macintosh argues that the name Lo-Ammi is in parallel with the next statement ‘I am not who I am to you’. Therefore, this phrase implies that YHWH will no longer act as the nation’s God.⁷⁹ The intentional play on the word היה (ehyeh) in Exodus 3: 14 appears in negative form in Hosea 1:9. The three names of the children imply negativity. Their names describe the punishment of the kingdom and the people. However, the names are used differently at 2:24–25 by removing לא.

Hosea 2:24–25

והארץ תענה את־הדגון
ואת־התירוש ואת־היצהר
והם יענו את־ישראל:
וזרעתיָה לי בארץ ורחמתי את־לא רחמה
ואמרתי ללא־עמי עמי אתה

⁷⁸ Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198.

⁷⁹ A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 27–28.

Hosea 2:24–25 marks a shift from punitive language to a promise of hope, signifying that the text is not solely concerned with judgement, but looks beyond it. Specifically, the hope is that when the Lord responds to the sky, it triggers a response from the sky to the earth. The earth, in turn, responds to the grain, wines, and fresh oil, and their response corresponds to Jezreel (God’s sowing). In verse 2:25, God says, “I will sow her myself in the land,” indicating God will have compassion on Lo-Ruhama and acknowledge them as His people again, and they will respond, “My God.” The line “I will sow her in the land” is a continuation of the previous name of Jezreel and the wordplay. What does “sow her in the land” mean? Gert Kwakkel uses the agricultural perspective and argues that the metaphor of sowing conveys the concept that YHWH will give His people a place in which they can flourish and prosper. The promise that YHWH will sow is the counterpart of the previous proclamation that He will lead them into the wilderness.⁸⁰ Therefore, ‘Her’ refers to the Israelites who can be imagined as seeds. In the agricultural context, sowed refers to the actions of planting, scattering seeds over the fields. It could mean “I will let the Israelites live all over the land again.” They can grow just like seed in the field.

Hosea 2:1–3 is followed by Hosea 2:4–25 in BHS. The Indonesian translation sees 2:1–3 as the end of chapter 1 and numbers these verses 1:10–12.⁸¹ Hosea 2:1–3 describes positive hope as a counter to Hosea 1:1–9. The positive hope in 2:1 could be read in relation to Exodus 3:14–15 as suggested by Gale A. Yee.⁸² Nevertheless, I propose that the positive hope in 2:1 strongly relates to 1:9. Despite the fact that name of the son is Lo-Ammi, in the future, the people will be called children of the living God. There is hope that the people of Israel and

⁸⁰ Gert Kwakkel, “The Land in the Book of Hosea,” in *Vetus Testamentum Volume 124*, ed. J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten and Cor de Vos (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 176–177.

⁸¹ It is the same with other older translations (Dutch 1951, KJV) and there is much discussion about the division of the paragraphs.

⁸² Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in The Book of Hosea*, 69.

Judah will be gathered together. The positive hope is also highlighted in 2:3 with the names of Ami and Ruhama.

Another interesting verb, seen in 2:2 is וּעֲלֶיךָ מִן־הָאָרֶץ: translated as ‘go up/come up’ from their land. Most translations render this as the people of Judah and Israel occupying their land again, perhaps based on the idea that there will be a restoration and prosperous nation in the land.⁸³ However, C. Vriezen, as discussed by Andrew Macintosh and Gale Yee, proposes that the word וּעֲלֶיךָ מִן־הָאָרֶץ could mean ‘to shoot up’ or ‘to grow up like a plant in the land,’ especially when closely examining Deuteronomy 29:22 and Hosea 2: 25.⁸⁴ I suggest that the translation ‘grow up’ aligns better with the literary style, serving as a metaphor, especially if we see it in relation to the meaning of the name Jezreel: ‘God’s sowing’. Hosea 2 seems to have a parallel with the metaphor in Ezekiel 16:6–7, where God addresses Jerusalem as a young girl, cast into a field from birth, instructing her to ‘live’. God made her grow like a plant in the fields. Thus, the metaphor of growing like a plant in the field is not an isolated idea in Hosea because of the similar image used in Ezekiel, despite the different terminology used for growth. Besides using the metaphor of growing like a plant, Ezekiel also uses body parts to describe the growth process, depicting Israel as a promiscuous woman and an unfaithful wife, a parallel which will be discussed further later.

Another challenging section is Hosea 2:4 where wordplay and poetical patterns are evident. In this part, there is a threat of punishment; the body of a woman is described metaphorically in terms of punishment (Hosea 2:4; 2:5; 2:12) because of her promiscuity and the luxury goods that she received from her lovers in the form of bread and water, wool and linen, oil and drinks. The text states, “Let her remove her promiscuity from her face, and her adulteries from her breasts;

⁸³ Macintosh, *Hosea*, 32.

⁸⁴ See Macintosh, *Hosea*, 32–33; Gale A Yee, *Composition and tradition in The Book of Hosea*, 74.

otherwise, I will strip her naked and I will expose her like the day she was born” (Hosea 2:4–5). There are more parallels between Hosea 2 and Ezekiel 16:35–43 concerning punishment, where in Ezekiel God says that He will strip a woman who commits adultery in front of her lovers, exposing her nakedness and inflicting punishment. Similarly, Hosea 2 describes the punishment of the woman in harsh terms.

In Hosea 2:6 there is a connection between the woman as the land and her children as the seed. Verse 6 reads,

I will have no compassion on her children
Because they are children of promiscuity

In verse 4, God spoke through Hosea addressing his children; then in verse 6 he speaks of the children as the children of promiscuity. It seems that God does not acknowledge those children from a different seed. This part of Hosea 2 also describes social disintegration. Moreover, a correlation exists between the punishment of nakedness (the most sensitive part of her body will be exposed) with the land’s destruction in 2:5–14. The destruction of the land is described as a punishment meted out by the husband to his wife.

Hosea 4: 3

על־כּו תאבל הארץ ואמלל כל־יּושב בה

בחית השדה ובעוף השמים

וגם־דג הים יאספו

Moving to Hosea 4, we see more imagery related to the land. Besides ‘mourn’, the word תאבל could also mean ‘dry out’. Interestingly, both meanings play substantial roles in understanding the verse. The land will dry out, linked to drought and destruction. This destruction closely relates to the acts of cursing, deceiving, murdering, stealing, committing adultery, and bloodshed following bloodshed. The land’s drying out and mourning results from events described in

Hosea 1–2. The connection between land mourning and human actions is often dismissed as a non-scientific perspective. However, the term ‘land mourning’ could be interpreted as an active subject in the covenant lawsuit, a perspective generally assumed in the genre of this book. Nature suffers when truth is lacking as indicated in 4:2, and this truth is also linked to the situation of disintegration in chapters 1–2.

4.4 Reading the Family, Land, and Body Metaphor

Having outlined the social dynamic of Israel in the decentralised and centralised time prior to the eighth-century B.C.E along with addressing the key issues in the meaning of the text as set out in the translations above, this section delves into a more detailed discussion of the family, land, and body metaphor of Hosea 1–2 as the central imagery of the text. In this part, the interpretation of the metaphor will be explored by integrating social scientific criticism and the cognitive and affective aspects in the analysis.

As seen, the patriarchal lineage in Hosea is presented in the context of the days of the Kings of Israel and the King of Judah, followed by an instruction from God to take a woman of promiscuity and have children of fornication. Hosea 1–2 focuses on the relationship between Hosea, Gomer, their children, and the land. As discussed before, many scholars emphasise this chapter as a ‘marriage metaphor’. Yet, what seems evident from the beginning of the chapter is that the relationship in the text is not simply one of marriage, rather it is of family. Alice Keefe argues for this perspective, reframing the metaphor into a family centric one that underscores the centrality of the family in the traditional Israelite structure, addressing the repercussions of economic and social changes. Keefe especially analyses it in a discussion of the woman’s body as a symbol of the social body.⁸⁵ I agree with her position, and I would suggest that since from the beginning the text uses ‘husband’, ‘wife’, ‘mother’, and ‘children’ as the vehicles for the metaphor, this family metaphor in Hosea reflects the socio-

⁸⁵ Keefe, *Woman’s Body*, 190–193.

economic dynamics of Israel. The family as husband, wife, mother, and children illustrates the communal networks of eighth-century Israel. As we have seen previously, the relationship and social structure consist of elements such as *משפחה, שבת, בית אב*, where mutual aid is shared. The relationship among husband, wife, mother, and children referred to kinship bonds, characteristic of a decentralised tribal society, where communal networks thrive in solidarity. In the decentralised society, Israel was governed by a non-centralised authority, allowing the farmers sufficient access to the land and enabling them to produce most of their necessities. This social structure also facilitated mutual aid within kinship groups. Within the religious context of the highland village, the concept of the holy was deeply intertwined with the ongoing existence of the *בית אב* over generations, the connection to their ancestral land, and the development of a shared sense of community and identity through local networks of trade and support. The expansion of commercial agriculture resulted in the breakdown of the interconnected structures that these people relied on to determine the purpose and importance of their lives.⁸⁶ The shift to a centralised society in eighth-century Israel and Judah led to tensions in social relationships. The forced change in the social and economic system substantially impacted the self-sufficient way of the community. The kinship bond and mutual help faced the challenge of disintegration and the rise of an oppressive socio-economic system. In this context, the smallest unit of the family was used as a metaphor to describe the disintegration within the structure of society because of the forced change in their social and economic system.

I contend that the use of the family metaphor expands the understanding of the interpretation of Hosea. Disintegration within the family is represented by the metaphor of promiscuity. The first description of promiscuity is introduced right at the beginning of Hosea 1.

⁸⁶ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 194–195.

“The LORD said to Hosea, ‘Go, take for yourself a wife of promiscuity and have children of promiscuity because the land behaves promiscuously, turning away from the LORD’” (Hosea 1:2).

An important point that should not be overlooked is that the action of promiscuity is also related to the land. The connection between the woman, the children, and the land is implied by the common term זנה. Most of the interpretations emphasise the negative nature of the symbolism based on the instruction in verse 2 and refer the term to the sin of cultic fertility religion. However, the term זנה in the Hebrew Bible also refers to the crisis of socio-economic and political transgression. For instance, in Isaiah 1:21-23, Jerusalem is designated as זנה, not in terms of apostasy but rather relating to injustice, murder, and neglect towards widows and orphans. Keefe also proclaims that the extensive semantic range of זנה is rarely taken into account while interpreting זנה or אשת זנונים in Hosea.⁸⁷ In the intercontextual discussion in Chapter 3, the term promiscuity carries the meaning of betrayal in relation to socio-economic violations. Moreover, the comparison to different ancient social systems regarding the sexual transgression in Chapter 3 also implies that the term promiscuity has a wider social meaning and it is not fixed only to the husband-wife relationship.

Through the metaphor of family disintegration, Hosea expresses concern for social-ecological disintegration. In the metaphor, the vehicle ‘husband’ symbolises God; the vehicle Gomer as a wife symbolises the powerful elite; the children symbolise the people; while the lover symbolises another foreign force and system. Acts of promiscuity refer to the betrayal and disintegration of the communal network, especially the pressing socio-economic dynamics because of agricultural intensification. The previous discourse in metaphor theory and intercontextual reading has emphasised the importance of context in the analysis of meaning-making. Sharon Moughtin-Mumby notices that the traditional

⁸⁷ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 136–137.

approaches to the text of Hosea often interpret the prophetic uses of prostitution in Hosea as the focus of metaphor to imply that Israel has participated in cultic prostitution. Moughtin-Mumby argues that the technique is related to interpreting active metaphors as if the metaphors in Hosea were dead.⁸⁸ However, the metaphors in Hosea are not dead or frozen metaphors. The reading with communities in Indonesia will demonstrate how the metaphors remain alive and connected to the struggle of these communities.⁸⁹ Context is powerful in the dialogue of interpretation. Moreover, by understanding the active role of the mind and heart in contributing cognitive and affective meaning in context, the diverse associations are vital. Therefore, the broader association of promiscuity with family disintegration as social-ecological disintegration is possible. As Moughtin-Mumby argues, the broader the frame, the greater the possibility to create new associations.⁹⁰ I fully agree with Moughtin-Mumby that the interpretation of Hosea needs to consider a broader frame of metaphor.

In interpreting the land as behaving promiscuously, the concept of the promiscuous land in this section can no longer be associated with the temple prostitute. According to Bo H. Lim and Daniel Castelo, Hosea's description of the land as the subject and actor makes sense because of the agrarian outlook of the prophet. Therefore, sin against the land results in the collapse of Israel's most fundamental institution, the family, since they represent the most basic elements of life.⁹¹ As part of a close collective bond within Israelite society, the land is not only a place. In the ancient Israel worldview, the land is an essential part of בית אב. The land has become part of a solidarity bond from one generation to the next generation. Therefore, the land was appreciated, nurtured, and preserved by all communities. The land was also part of the relationship

⁸⁸ Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 37–38.

⁸⁹ See Chapter 5.

⁹⁰ Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 36.

⁹¹ Bo H. Lim, Daniel Castelo, *The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary: Hosea*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 53–54.

between God and the people. Moreover, as an essential factor of ancient Israel in the economic production of *בית אב*, the land was used communally for the cultivation of grain. Cooperation and solidarity are valuable and necessary for the survival and continuity of kinship and the community. In the *בית אב*, the value of land was not emphasised in economic terms for unlimited profit, but it was mostly for communal self-sufficiency. It was part of *בית אב* in socio-cultural relationships. The reciprocal exchange of economic needs strengthened solidarity and kinship bonds with the land and community. However, as detailed in the earlier sections of this chapter, this kinship bond with the land changed with the emergence of the monarchy. During the monarchy, there was a rise in commercial activity, including the consolidation of land, extensive specialization of agriculture for commercial crops in certain regions, and the accumulation of wealth among the few elites, while the majority of peasants experienced hardship.⁹² The promiscuity of the land refers to that crisis. Therefore, the more extensive the promiscuity, as stated in Hosea 1:2, the more intense the disconnection with the land. Land and nature are no longer respected as integral to kinship bonds. As a result, people have become increasingly alienated from their kinship bond with other creatures and nature. The promiscuity means that the land has experienced degradation because it is no longer respected as a subject, an essential part of the kinship family solidarity, and a sacred part of Israel. The more intense the promiscuity, the greater the social-economic crisis that creates disintegration with nature.

Moving on to the next verse, Hosea 1: 3–9 describes how Hosea carried out God's command to take Gomer as a wife, then that Gomer gives life through getting pregnant, giving birth, and weaning. The woman's body giving life has a profound connection with the land and nature that are also giving life. Such symbolic actions are problematic in ecofeminist perspectives, yet I would maintain that they can still be a significant element of the interconnection of

⁹² Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 234.

life. I agree that in the life-giving process, the text does not narrate that the woman was asked for her opinion. This is problematic because it sees woman's body only in the function of reproduction. Therefore, the interpretation that emphasises the woman's body only in the reproduction function without her consent should certainly be suspected. Keeping that critical thinking in mind, the life-giving process through the woman's body in the text does emphasise the continuity of life and kinship bond of community. According to Chaney, production and reproduction come together as two primary functions in agrarian society.⁹³

In the context of social-ecological disintegration, the purpose of production is to accumulate profits or exchange value. However, in the context of decentralisation, maintaining the continuity of descendants was a key factor because the generations play an important part in forming the community's identity. Production and reproduction were seen as part of the continuity of society and life. Therefore, Hosea criticises this pattern of production to accumulate maximum profits and exchange economic values in the centralised monarchy.

All the children metaphorically describe the worsening situation of Israel. The class division between the ruling elite and the people was the social context. The metaphor of children born from promiscuity serves to highlight the distress of the community. Punishment is also the main focus in relation to the symbolism behind the names of the children. Therefore, most scholars focus their attention on the negativity that plays behind the names of the three children. The name Jezreel is seen as a reference to Jehu's violent overthrow of Joram in Jezreel. Avenging the blood of Jezreel would serve as a punishment for Jehu's conquest of the throne. Edward Glenny examines the naming of Jezreel in relation to the promise of avenging Naboth who was killed by Ahab at

⁹³ M.L.Chaney, "Accusing Whom of What? Hosea Rhetoric of Promiscuity," in *Distant Voice Drawing Near: Essays in Honor of Antoinette Clark Wire*, ed. Holly E. Hearon (Collegeville, MN Liturgical Press, 2004), 110.

Jezebel in order to obtain his vineyard. Ahab represented the worship of Ba'al in Israel, and the realisation of Elijah's prophecy of Ahab and his descendants acts as a pattern for the Lord's judgement for Ba'al's followers.⁹⁴ However, Keefe challenges this understanding. She argues that if Hosea's main objective was to only criticise resistance to Ba'al worship, it is odd that Jehu, a prominent opponent of Ba'al, would be included as a symbol of the nation's downfall. Instead, the mention of Jezebel in Hosea's writing indicates that Hosea is equally concerned with the socio-political crisis as he is with the issue of proper worship through the portrayal of family disintegration. Therefore, she contends that to understand Hosea's perspective, one also must take into account the chaos and aggression that characterised the political landscape in that context.⁹⁵ Jezebel's name literally means something positive, 'God's sowing', while the punishment of the kingdom of Israel was described in relation to the name of Jezebel. The curse mentioned in the naming of Jezebel indicates the breakdown of political stability and the devastating military catastrophe that occurred in the years after Jeroboam's death. Within one year after Jeroboam's death, three successive kings fought for the throne, Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem. Then, the same bloody pattern recurred.⁹⁶ As discussed above, the name of Jezebel also has a link to land consolidation and social conflict, especially in relation to the tragic actions of Jehu in Jezebel.

Lo-Ruhamah means 'no-compassion'. This part also implies the image of the punishment of Israel. The child's name, together with the names of other siblings, serves as a sign of the Lord's relationship with Israel. The names of the children symbolise the broken covenant relationship of God with Israel.⁹⁷ Keefe discusses the fundamental beliefs about marriage in Hosea, where it serves as a symbolic representation of the covenant between YHWH and Israel. Moreover,

⁹⁴ W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus*. Septuagint Commentary Series. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 69–70.

⁹⁵ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 23–24.

⁹⁶ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 24–25.

⁹⁷ Glenny, *Hosea*, 70.

the beliefs state that adultery is a metaphor for apostasy and the breaking of that covenant. The covenant described in the book of Deuteronomy envisions Israel as a unified organisation with a strong ideological foundation. The essential bond in the relationship is between a singular Israel and its God. Nevertheless, Keefe proposes an alternative interpretation of the covenant, shown in Joshua 24:24-28, which highlights the crucial notion of solidarity among the people. This social agreement is formed through the exclusive worship of YHWH and observance of God's law.⁹⁸ Moreover, she argues that interpretations often overlook that the concept of the covenant in the earlier period largely referred to the dynamics of social bond and social identity rather than to the Deuteronomic vision. Therefore, the structure of communal identity is assumed as a given rather than a critical issue in Hosea's metaphoric language.⁹⁹ Nor should the understanding of the covenant be limited to two parties, Israel and God. The covenant can also be extended to a broader scope that includes social relationships, communal identity, the production and system of exchange, including the relationship with the land and surrounding nature. In this alternative view of the covenant, the children and nature are essential parts of the covenant. Simultaneously, this alternative perspective on the covenant aligns with the concept of promiscuity as a symbol of social disintegration, as explored in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. However, there is also a promise of a restored relationship and salvation. In the future, God will forgive Israel and show compassion.

The third name of Lo-Ammi means 'not my people', and it still contains a negative connotation. Glenny argues that the term signifies that they are no longer entitled to identify themselves as the people of God. Verse 9 demonstrates that the names have symbolic significant meaning in representing Israel's connection with God. The term Lo-Ammi is considered by Glenny as the strongest message that communicates God's alienation from Israel.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 109.

⁹⁹ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 110–111.

¹⁰⁰ Glenny, *Hosea*, 71.

Furthermore, the use of לֹא־אֶהְיֶה 'I am not who I am' in Hosea 1:9 comes with negation, a contrast to Exodus 3:14 where 'I am' is used to introduce God's presence.

Feminist scholar Carole Fontaine notes that Gomer and her children play no role in most of the discussions.¹⁰¹ All the symbolic names of her children are related to punishment and the negativity has been emphasised either by the gender-biased interpretation or by Hosea himself. According to Fontaine, Gomer and her children have been intentionally set as a metaphor for a bigger male dominance story.¹⁰² While I see this metaphorical angle as a useful perspective, I would maintain that the image of Gomer and her children plays an important role in understanding disintegration within the family that reflects the distress and disintegration within society in eighth-century Israel and Judah.

In relation to the land, Alice Keefe argues that a woman's body as fertile land signifies an integrative symbol for the community, invested in the structure of kinship and the intimate relationship between families and their land.¹⁰³ Several interpretations understand the land as the people.¹⁰⁴ The promiscuity in Hosea can be seen as a metaphor that criticises the socio-economic situation and the disintegration of the communal and ecosystem network. Therefore, the procreative body illustrates the collective bodies of people and nature. The land itself could represent the means of production and Hosea describes the way the elite misused the land for maximum profit by using the sexual term the land 'behaves promiscuously, turning away from YHWH.' Instead of appreciating the intrinsic value of the land and its kinship bond with בֵּית אֵב, the land was used only in its exchange of value for profit.

¹⁰¹ Carole Fontaine, "A Response to Hosea," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 62.

¹⁰² Fontaine, "A Response to Hosea," 63.

¹⁰³ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 216.

¹⁰⁴ See Gale A. Yee, "Hosea", in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: John Knox Press, 1992), 198.

The produce traded among the nations is described in the woman's words, "I will go after my lovers who give me bread and water, wool and linen, oil and drinks." Keefe argues that the promiscuity act with the lovers refers to international commercial relations and the situation of Israel in the economic market. The desire for grain, wine, and oil (Hosea 2:7) symbolises the desire of elite rulers for profit and wealth from their foreign partners.¹⁰⁵ The land that was used to produce basic means for self-sufficiency has now changed to private land where the produce would be traded among the nations. There was no longer a shared exchange of economic needs. This situation concerns the production, and the change of identity where kinship bonds and mutual networks are threatened by fragmentation and dysfunctional leadership in a time of socio-economic injustice. In Hosea's time, small landowners were driven from their patrimonial lands and forced to work for wages. Grain that was needed for survival could not be produced sufficiently for the family anymore; it had to be purchased in the market. Many peasants were thus more dependent for their survival on those who gave them wages. This situation is reflected as an action of betrayal that brings social disintegration, particularly at the expense of the peasants. That is the promiscuity in Hosea alludes to.

The disintegration and destructive impact that results from the situation is emphasised in the judgement of God expressed in terms of the natural realm. As stated before, nature metaphors are used extensively in Hosea, however they are rarely discussed. The interplay of the natural elements and animal metaphors particularly to show the destructive impact of violence towards the woman's body, demonstrates that they are essential in expressing the emotional effect.

¹⁰⁵ Alice Keefe, "The Female Body, The Body Politic and the Land: A Socio-political Reading of Hosea 1–2," in *The Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 93.

Hosea describes the destruction of nature by several striking pictures as seen in the wilderness metaphor and in Hosea 2:14:

I will devastate her vines and her fig trees
about which she said,
“They are my wages, given to me by my lovers”
I will make them into a forest;
The animals in the field will consume them.

The intensity and danger can be found behind the portrayal of catastrophe. Metaphor allows readers to engage and find equivalent expressions to their situation and the nature and animal metaphors tend to be used in Hosea to describe the threat of devastation and grief, although they do not necessarily portray the characteristics of nature and animals. At the end of Hosea 2:14, the imagery is slightly different, where the animals are consuming whatever remains of grapes and figs. Katherine M. Hayes compares this part of Hosea 2:14 to Hosea 2:13 as the parallel between the stripping of Gomer and the stripping of the land. It suggests that the external signs of life in the land will be removed forcefully and the land will no longer be able to support life.¹⁰⁶ As stated in Chapter 3, the reference to the wilderness and the dry land indicate how the land is no longer able to support life and will face problem of the survival and the continuity of family.

4.5 The Hope for Interconnectedness and the Flourishing of Collective Bodies of Nature

The text of Hosea does not end with criticism of the social-ecological disintegration and punishment. Hosea 2 also describes the hope of interconnectedness and the flourishing of collective bodies of nature. Hosea 2:16 begins with a new paragraph that describes restored relationship. The text

¹⁰⁶ Katherine M. Hayes, *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 52–53.

says, God will persuade the woman back and take her to the wilderness and speak to her heart. In Exodus 22:16, the term פתה is used to indicate the act of seducing and rape of a virgin. This phrase פתה, which is translated as persuade in Hosea 2, is used with positive connotations. Some scholars have proposed that these actions of persuasion resemble the manipulative tactics of domestic violence and the exploitative abuses of pornography. However, the canonical intertexts indicate the opposite. For instance, Isaiah 40:2 speaks tenderly to Jerusalem and cries to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid. Isaiah announces salvation oracles. Therefore, according to Lim and Castelo, the prophetic announcement in Hosea and Isaiah indicates that the period of judgement has concluded, and the era of restoration has begun. The wilderness becomes the state and the site of the remarriage between God and the woman. As a city, she experiences a transformation into a wilderness (2:3). Afterwards, she is guided to the wilderness (2:14) and finally she is brought out of the wilderness, specifically referring to Egypt. Lim and Castelo argue that this pattern is consistent with Hosea's message that exile would serve as both judgement and redemption. Hosea uses the notion of wilderness that is often linked with deprivation, death, and covenant rejection, and reinterprets it as a place of love, renewal, and hope.¹⁰⁷

The text of Hosea demonstrates female procreative function and maternity as the process of giving life. Gomer became pregnant, gave birth, and weaned all three children (Hosea 1). In the text, Hosea makes the connection where female fertility and maternity are shown in symbolic relation with nature. This is important as it could then be argued that such correlation shows the embodied connection between nature and the community's body within the Israelite paradigm. This view contradicts the common interpretation of Hosea as a critique of the Canaanite fertility religion. The assumption that the text criticises Canaanite fertility religion is largely based on the belief that the primary Israelite religion, Yahwism, was non-agrarian focusing instead on ethical and

¹⁰⁷ Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 73.

historical aspects.¹⁰⁸ This perspective defines Israelite religion as opposing Canaan's, which is deeply rooted in natural phenomena, natural cycles, and sexuality.¹⁰⁹ However, a biblical text like Hosea clearly shows that Israelite life and religion are embodied within an agricultural worldview, including the natural cycle and fertility. The texts use the cycle of nature for reconciliation and there are words with connotations of sexuality, such as Hosea 2 :23–25a.

23. On that day, I will respond, says the LORD,
I will respond to the sky;
the sky will respond to the earth.
24. The earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil.
They will respond to Jezreel¹¹⁰ (God's sowing).
25. I will sow her myself in the land.

The natural cycle in the ecosystem is shown as a symbol of hope. There is hope that the relationship will be healed through the image of ecological re-interconnectedness. This significant theme should not be overlooked. A reciprocal relationship is recreated where God will respond to the sky, the sky will respond to the earth. Then the earth will respond and flourish with grain, new wine, and fresh oil. Hosea emphasises the importance of re-connection and restored relationship with God and the rest of creation so that all of nature's bodies can flourish. All bodies of nature are active and play significant roles in life. Therefore, their presence and intrinsic value should be appreciated. How can the cycle of nature be understood in the topic domain of a socio-economic system? I contend that the cycle of nature and the reconciliation in Hosea 2 are not limited to a poetic way of expressing that even nature will take part in God's reconciliation. Hosea clearly highlights this visible connection and solidarity of creation in relation to divine reconciliation.

¹⁰⁸ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 67–68.

¹⁰⁹ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 74.

¹¹⁰ It could have a double meaning: God's sowing and impregnation.

Both Keefe and Claudia Camp agree that Hosea 2:20 could refer to a new and universal covenant that will include all living beings in a peaceful coexistence such as in Genesis 9.¹¹¹ Lim and Castelo interpret the restoration in Hosea 2 in dialogue with the story of Noah in Genesis 9. YHWH overcomes the customary parties involved in God's covenant with Israel. Instead, God directly addresses the animals in Hosea 2:20 as part of the covenant: I will make covenant with the animals of the field, with the birds of the sky and creeping things on the ground. The creatures mentioned in Hosea 2:20 correspond to the types of animals mentioned in the creation story in Genesis 1-2 and the flood story in Genesis 9:1-17. In Genesis, the text demonstrates the inseparable ties between creation and redemption, refusing efforts to classify God's covenant with Noah as distinct from the redemptive covenant.¹¹² From the standpoint of an agricultural society such as Israel, the disintegration resulting from the socio-economic crises also directly affects their connection with the land, water, sky, and all creatures. Therefore, Israelites must strive to return to a community characterised by kinship bonds, mutuality, and solidarity, not only with humanity but also with all creation. As noted above, the concept of covenant in Hosea 2:20 presents an alternative covenant that includes solidarity with and salvation for the animals and other creation. Such an inclusive concept of covenant implies that Israel is not a single political identity as a state, but has a communal identity intertwined with the natural world around them.

As we see in 2:10, the grain, the new wine, the fresh oil, silver, and gold were apparently central to the consumption style of the elite. Hosea warns that the institution of the monarchy threatens the communal integrity of Israel. Hosea 2:1-3 metaphorically reflects the ideal situation where the people of Israel and Judah will be gathered together by the common bond as children of the living

¹¹¹ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 107-108.

¹¹² Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 76.

God. This promise of reconciliation is offered before punishment is dealt to the female body.

After giving the negative names to the children in Hosea 1, Hosea 2:1–3 places the names in the context of promise: the people of Israel will become the children of God again; they will be gathered together again. Hosea highlights the disintegration of a collective body, then, the last part of Hosea 2 speaks of hope for reconciliation again. This part of Hosea shows God's forgiveness for the people, underlining hope for the integration of society in Hosea 2:16–25 with particular regard to the children's names and Hosea 2:23–25 moves beyond punishment to bring in themes of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

This is reinforced in the use of nature imagery. God in Hosea is also the God who gives blessings to the grain, wine, and fresh oil; nature and fertility are not a separate realm of Israelite religion. The well-being of humanity is connected to the well-being of nature and human misbehaviour has a direct impact on the degeneration of nature (Hosea 4:2–3a). Hosea clearly highlights this visible connection and solidarity of creation in relation to God.¹¹³ In the midst of the humiliating punishment by God of the woman's body, the metaphor's affective and cognitive effects make it hard to read this part as an offer of reconciliation. However, the hope for change is there in the chain of response of God responding to the sky, the sky responding to the earth, then, the earth will respond with the flourishing of new crops and produce. They will respond to Jezreel until the time that God will sow. The text gives a description of how the relationship is healed through the metaphor of an ecosystem chain.

This textual evidence stands in contrast to the interpretation of Hosea's metaphor of unfaithful Israel in a religious contestation between nature and historical-ethical Yahwism as if Israelite religion was a religion without an

¹¹³ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 76.

agrarian worldview. As a result, the religious issues in Hosea also need to be revisited. The most common interpretation understands Israelite religion as coming from outside of Canaan. As explained before, this interpretation is challenged by Gottwald, who argues that early Israel had its origin within Canaan struggling for an egalitarian way of life with Yahwism as the common bond.¹¹⁴ The polarisation between Israelite religion and the Canaanite religion most often posited tends to deny the intersecting cultural influences. Although Canaanite religion and Israel's religion have distinctive elements, Israel has a shared culture, a similar geographic situation, and a similar ecological base to Canaan. Therefore, it can be argued that the critique in Hosea is not toward fertility religion practices per se because the text shows female procreative function through the female body and the land in which the blessing from God manifests itself through agricultural abundance and continuity of the Israelite social body.¹¹⁵ The female body reflects the continuity and connection of family and land in a collective bond. The reconciliation in Hosea is also shown by the fertility of the land and the abundance of produce. Hosea 2: 25a, "I will sow her for Me in the land," especially reflects both agrarian imagery and sexual imagery. The land will no longer be sown by others, but rather by God. In Hosea, the images of the female body and the land are interconnected, emphasising the participation in giving life so that the collective bodies of nature will flourish. This connection does not glorify the production of female body and the land in terms of economic and maximum profit, as that is what the text is criticising.

4.6 A Call to Hear the Earth Mourning and Overcome Crisis

Moving on to Hosea 4, several scholars understand this chapter as a distinct unit from Hosea 1–3. They believe that chapters 4–14 exhibit a greater amount of continuity compared to the relationship seen between chapters 1–3. Francis Andersen and David Freedman are among the scholars who argue about the

¹¹⁴ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 210.

¹¹⁵ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 219.

distinct division of these chapters. According to them, Hosea 4–14 exhibit a significant difference in genre and tone when compared to Hosea 1–3. Chapters 1–3 are based on the knowledge and teaching by the prophet, while chapters 4–14 are from the prophet’s spoken words and have maintained their original poetic nature. Hosea 1–3, especially 2:4–25, are considered different from the other parts of the book in literary style, construction, and the frequency of the prose.¹¹⁶

Lim and Castelo argue that the reference to the “Word of the Lord” (Hosea 4:1) at the beginning of this new part serves as a reminder of the previous mentions in 1:1 and 1:2. This indicates to the reader that the current section is a continuation of Hosea’s prophecy.¹¹⁷ In a similar manner, the argument presented in Hosea 4:1 poses a significant danger to the land, as mentioned in Hosea 4:3. Additionally, there is also a disputation in Hosea 2:2–3 that has the potential to transfer Gomer into a barren and a parched land, ultimately leading to her death.¹¹⁸ Besides the continuity of Hosea’s prophecy in the reference of “the Word of the Lord”, I contend that there is a connection between family disintegration in chapters 1–3 and the crisis in Hosea 4. The family disintegration of Hosea 1–2 through the image of promiscuity is parallel to the detail of the crisis in Israel. As discussed above, the promiscuity in Hosea is related to social disintegration in the context of violence, land consolidation, the maximum profit of agriculture for commercial crops, and the concentration of wealth for the elite minority. The crisis that is mentioned in Hosea 4:2 includes deceiving, murdering, stealing, adultery, and bloodshed. A disrupted relationship with God is also mentioned in Hosea 4:1. Thus, like Lim and Castelo, I contend that chapter 4 serves as a continuation of chapters 1-3.

From the first-person point of view in Hosea 2, Hosea 4:1 changes to an exclamation from the second person, “Hear the word of the Lord, O people of

¹¹⁶ Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 64.

¹¹⁷ Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 116–117.

¹¹⁸ Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 117.

Israel.” Melissa Loya argues that this kind of literary structure is a form of a covenant lawsuit where the content is presented in the form of a court case.¹¹⁹ The charge begins with a list of moral deficiencies of human communities. Then, further explanation is given about the charge concerning antisocial actions.¹²⁰ This could be a charge in the sense of a judicial battle, as the word in Micah 6:1–8. In Hosea, the charge can be understood in relation to chapters 1 and 2 because this part takes place in the same setting as those chapters. Lim and Castelo contend that as with the mention of Israel’s wrongdoing against the land in Hosea 1:2, the prophetic message in Hosea 4:1 also emphasises Israel’s transgressions. Although the texts do not exhibit all the characteristics of a prophetic lawsuit, they directly challenge Israel by revealing its ethical failures and urging the people to seek repentance. The reference to indictment ריב in 4:1 also alludes to the repeated pleading ריב, in 2:2. It implies that the conflict against the woman in Hosea 2 is continued against Israel in Hosea 4.¹²¹

Hosea 4:1-3 highlights that human violations and misbehaviour have devastating impact on nature. Hosea describes in detail the wrongdoing. All human actions of cursing, deceiving, murdering, stealing, committing adultery, and bloodshed upon bloodshed will bring devastation. It describes social divisions, total disorder, and disrupted relationships. The interconnectedness between human misbehaviour and the devastation of nature is clearly shown. Therefore, the act of unfaithfulness by humans, specifically male leaders, threatens the integration of the family as a collective body. There is no knowledge of God in the land because the people do not act according to God’s command. People lose their bond with other humans and other creatures because of their misbehaviour. They forget where the gifts of the land come

¹¹⁹ Melissa Tubs Loya, “Therefore the Earth Mourns: The Grievance of Earth in Hosea 4:1–3,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 53–62.

¹²⁰ Olugbemiro O. Berekiah, “An Ecocentric Reading of אמת, אסד, and דעת אלהים in Hosea 4.1–6,” *The Bible Translator* 70, no. 3 (2019): 348.

¹²¹ Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 119–120.

from.¹²² The leaders of Israel have forgotten that the grain, wine, and oil did not come from other lovers or other gods; rather they came from God. Hosea highlights the interdependent relationship of all nature elements as one family. The well-being of humanity is intertwined with the well-being of nature. Therefore, Hosea 4 challenges human behaviour and human responsibility for the destruction of nature.

The impact of disintegration in Hosea is not only in the social networks of human relationships but also brings impact to the relationship with the other bodies of nature. The discussion concerning Hosea 4:1-3 is generally understood as a controversy between the inhabitants of the land, the Israelites, and non-Israelites. However, as discussed before with respect to the family metaphor, the text is not particularly about Israelites and non-Israelites; instead, it is about the disintegration of social-ecological relations within the body of Israel. The consequence for nature is the inevitable principle of cause and effect, as clearly expressed in 4:3. The whole ecosystem suffers, species perish, and the land mourns.

I contend that Hosea 4 especially describes the land as actively responding to the crisis and disintegration. The land will mourn and every inhabitant who lives there will be weak. The focus of interpretation of the text of Hosea has traditionally and historically been the human actors. The land is generally interpreted as the people in the land. However, the land in this text can also be interpreted as an active agent who mourns the disintegration and its negative impact. The land and other creatures are in a marginal position because of human violations. Because there is no faithfulness or kindness in the land, the land responds with mourning. It is worth looking more closely at the idea of the

¹²² Wittenberg identifies three dimensions of knowledge of God: forgetting YHWH as the creator in favour of Baal, forgetting where the gifts of the land come from, forgetting the Torah of YHWH. Gunther Wittenberg, "Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change," *Old Testament Essays* 22, no.2, (2009) <https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC85989> (accessed 2 February, 2022)

land mourning. The metaphor of a mourning land is also found in other books such as Amos 1:2, Jeremiah 4:23-28, 12:1-4, Isaiah 1-20, and Joel 1:5-20.

Andersen and Freedman argue that the use of אָמַל in parallel with יָבֵשׁ in another text of Joel 1:10-12a, Amos 1:2 and Jeremiah 12:4 and 23:10 is a strong argument to interpret אָמַל as 'dry out'.¹²³ On the other hand, Katherine M. Hayes discusses this pattern of the land mourning and argues that the mourning in the text discusses the interplay between the earth, YHWH, and the people of Israel. It highlights the connection between the characteristics of the human and non-human world.¹²⁴

The response of the earth in Hosea 4:1-3 is shown by the terms אָמַל and אָבַל. The impression of the declining nature given by the use of אָמַל highlights the subtle meaning of dry in its paired term of אָבַל. Simultaneously, the term אָמַל predominantly occurs with אָבַל in laments or judgement oracles and within the framework of mourning or sorrow. The interplay between the verbs אָבַל, אָמַל, אָסַף, and the noun אָרֶץ results in the formation of overlapping patterns. In this setting, Hayes contends that the physical sensation of diminishment metaphorically includes a psychological meaning that aligns with mourning. The association of dry can be heard in אָבַל when the text depicts a catastrophic drought that causes the land to grow dry while people, animals, birds, and even fish perish. It is emphasised by the connection of אָרֶץ with death. The term אָסַף refers to the agricultural aspect of drought. Typically, crops are collected or gathered after the growing season. The harvest signifies the conclusion of this season and the onset of winter, which is characterised by inactivity and death. Here, Hayes argues that the phrases in Hosea 4:3 refer to the collection of the unusual harvest. The occurrence of drought and grief simultaneously leads to the end of the productive season. When אָבַל is interpreted as mourn, the psychological aspect of אָמַל is intensified. It portrays a sorrow that affects the whole creation.¹²⁵ Therefore, she argues that the images of mourning and

¹²³ Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 340.

¹²⁴ Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 18.

¹²⁵ Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 43–44.

drought integrate within Hosea 4. In Hosea 4:1-3 YHWH, the people of Israel, the land they inhabit are brought together in a concise statement for their interrelationship. Hayes argues that the phrase of mourning and perish in Hosea 4:3 conveys more than just drought and a stripping of the earth. It also conveys a message of the faltering of all creation.¹²⁶

The text of Hosea 4 shows an inter-relationship that also includes all creation. In the text, the response of humans and nature intermingle. Kivatsi Jonathan Kavusa reads this part of the text to show a link between the corruption in Israelite society and the wounds in the earth community. He mainly focuses on lamenting and mourning because both are expressions of trauma. Along with Hayes, he argues that this text could be seen as a reversal of the creation of the cosmos. The mourning of the earth is a reaction to the crimes of Israel.¹²⁷

As a consequence of no knowledge of God and the violations, Israel experienced disaster in society and disaster in nature. The text shows that the Ancient Near East conceptualises the earth as three parts: land, sea, and sky, which together symbolise the whole creation. The three categories of creatures in 4:3 correspond to the three domains of animal life in Genesis 1. The land is referred to Genesis 1:24–25, the skies in Genesis 1:20, and the seas in Genesis 1:21. Additionally, Genesis 1:28 describes the pattern of human dominion over creation. The pattern mentioned here is referenced in Psalm 8:7–8 and Zephaniah 1: 2–3, as YHWH proclaims judgement, stating, “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth, says the Lord. I will sweep away humans and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. I will make the wicked stumble. I will cut off humanity from the face of the earth, says the Lord.”¹²⁸ Moreover, this pattern is also presented in a similar

¹²⁶ Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 55.

¹²⁷ Kivatsi Jonathan Kavusa, “Social Disorder and the Trauma of the Earth Community: Reading Hosea 4:1-3 in Light of Today's Crises,” *Old Testament Essays*, 29, no. 3 (2016): 481-501, http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1010-99192016000300007&lng=en&nrm=iso

¹²⁸ Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 118–119.

context in chapter 2:20, including the wild animals, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground. The whole creation will experience devastation. Every inhabitant will be weak. Moreover, the animals of the field, the bird of the sky, and the fish of the sea will perish.

The reading of Hosea 1–2, and 4:1–3 emphasise that the forces of socio-economics which break the collective bonds and sacrifice nature and other people will not bring prosperity. Instead, they will bring disaster and devastation. This message speaks to the context of chaos in ancient Israelite times. Nevertheless, Hosea 4:1-3 does not set out the ultimate future of Israel. In Hosea 2, the text shows the future of Israel and the land. Lim and Castelo argue that the current message of Hosea teaches that deceit, lust, and violence not only destroy one's knowledge of God, but also pose a danger to undermine God's obligation to care for creation. This message emphasises strongly the current situation where there are significant and rapidly increasing social and economic inequalities, as well as the integration of sexual immorality and violence into the social structure of whole societies. Hosea 4:1-5:7 deals with a situation of inadequate leadership in Israel.¹²⁹

In light of the above, I propose that the kinship bond of body, land, and nature is a significant message that can be drawn from Hosea. Therefore, I highlight the need for a reading that includes the land and other creatures as part of the collective body in Hosea because the imagery in Hosea speaks strongly that the land is part of the collective body and should not be reduced to a value in economic and power terms. The family metaphor signifies the importance of equal relationships, partnerships, interdependent relations, and the hope for reconciliation. The land and other creatures in Hosea 4:1–3 are marginalised because they are the most vulnerable. They experience the most devastating consequences because of human misbehaviour. Attachment to place is important to humans and especially so for other creatures. Hosea clearly

¹²⁹ Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 120.

describes that devastation of land leads to the creatures on land, in the water, and in the air perishing. Hosea clearly describes that the creatures in the water and in the air are perishing. Hosea 4:1–3 does not, however, end as a prophecy of death. Focusing on the word of the Lord in Hosea 4:1: “Hear the Word of the Lord, O people of Israel,” it is a call to hear the earth mourning because of human violations. It is a call for humans to stop the abuse and violence that affects the land, humanity, and other creatures in the land, water, and sky. It is a call to overcome crisis and strive for re-connection.

4.7 Summary

Through textual analysis and social scientific criticism, this chapter demonstrates that the promiscuity in Hosea is not a private matter, but it is related to the socio-economic crisis with direct negative impact on the well-being of nature. The comparison of decentralised and centralised Israel supports the analysis of social-ecological disintegration expressed in the metaphor of promiscuity in Hosea that resulted in family disintegration. I contend that Hosea also voices the concern for nature as part of the collective body. Hosea speaks strongly about the connection to the land and the connection to the other bodies of creation. Therefore, social-ecological disintegration is part of the religious crisis that becomes the concern of Hosea. Moreover, Hosea also speaks of the hope of reconciliation that includes all the creation of God.

Chapter 5

Intercontextual Community Reading

5.1 Introduction

Moving on from the discourse in Chapters 3 and 4 that have laid the basis for examining metaphor that looks beyond mere language substitution to the cognitive, affective, and historical contextual aspects, this chapter brings into focus the intercontextual reading. The chapter explores how the participants relate to the text, how the cognitive, affective, and contextual aspects of the metaphor operate for them, and whether access to all these differing levels of understanding set out in the theoretical discussions find resonance with them and serve to speak afresh into their own Indonesian context.

Simultaneously, the chapter explores the interpretations arising from this form of reading and what new light these shed in turn on the dominant interpretations offered by scholarship that have tended to focus primarily on the marriage metaphor as representing a religious crisis in the face of a threat to Yahwism from the worship of Ba'al, where the marriage metaphor is used to express the unfaithfulness of Israel toward YHWH. Focusing on actual readers from different contexts in Indonesia, this chapter analyses the interaction between groups in the process of the discussion and interpretation of Hosea. First, it introduces each of the groups. Then it addresses their context, delving into social issues and concrete problems within the communities, in line with the approach of contextual theology. Finally, it highlights the interaction in the intercontextual reading and presents and analyses the key points that emerge from the reading.

Diverse individuals facing various challenges in different locations and contexts often bring unique insights. For instance, one group of intercontextual readers in a village faces challenges related to deforestation, while another group in another island deals with issues of exploitation of a lake, and another group reflects on interfaith relations. Consequently, different groups share unique narratives based

on their experience and emphasise significant themes. This research thus argues that the intercontextual reading expands the interpretation of Hosea and adds potential new depths and avenues of meaning for the main metaphors of body and land.

The description and the analysis in this chapter concerns three groups from different islands in Indonesia: Central Sulawesi, Sumba, and Central Java. Two of the groups, from Poso in Central Sulawesi and Sumba, are experiencing environmental injustice. In contrast, the third group, located in Yogyakarta, Central Java, grapples with the issue of intolerance. The composition of the reading groups is as follow: In Poso, Central Sulawesi, seven participants come from the Pusulemba area, two participants from Buyumpondoli and one participant from Sawi Dago. All of the group are activists from the Alliance of Lake Poso Guardians. Comprising two women and eight men, this group, located in Central Sulawesi, includes two radio broadcasters, two *Adat* leaders (cultural leaders) and other members engaged in farming and fishing. Eight participants from Sumba, all women from the Sumba Christian Church, comprise the second group. Hailing from two different villages, these women who are primarily farmers, also juggle roles as teachers, or as self-employed individuals. The third group in Yogyakarta, Central Java, consists of nine participants, eight women and one man, from the same Catholic church. This diverse group includes participants who have full-time responsibilities within the home, two teachers, two who are self-employed, and an employee of a business group.

The members of the groups introduced themselves in the preparatory phase of the group meetings, beginning with a prayer and then continuing with reading the text of Hosea together. In the discussion that follows, I will highlight important themes that emerged within each group and then draw out further themes that surfaced during the interaction with other groups. I will then analyse the discussion in relation to social context, reading method, interaction within the group, interpretational strategy, appropriation strategy, and from several intersectional perspective.

5.2 First Meeting

5.2.1 Aliansi Penjaga Danau Poso (Alliance of Lake Poso Guardians/APDP) in Tentena, Central Sulawesi

The community gathering with the APDP Poso group took place in a bamboo house by Poso Lake, marking the initiation of discussions on pressing social issues through a community mapping exercise. Community mapping is a participatory method to document a community's stories. It is a method that gives attention to analysing violations of economic, social, and cultural rights. The process of community mapping is designed to help communities process their injustice experiences and also to provide spaces for communities who have experienced great loss and violence to create new responses to injustice.¹ The community is asked to work together to create a map of their community that includes houses, the lake, and other important elements in their place. The material also includes information about violations that have happened or are still happening in their community. The participants can create community mapping together while sharing their stories, or they can share the stories after the mapping exercise.

The community mapping process allows the community to become more aware of their context, revealing their problems and the consequences of losing both their natural environment and the right to produce knowledge. Besides documenting the community's stories, this step is significant in the intercontextual Bible reading that addresses critical issues and concerns relevant to the actual readers. A contextual reading invites readers to have a constructive dialogue within the complex social context and hybrid culture, and with a plurality of religions. Therefore, social context, experiences, and community struggles need to be addressed in dialogue with the text. This reading strategy will broaden the reading, transcending a one-

¹ Galuh Wandita and Karen Campbell-Nelson, "Unlearning Impunity: A Guide to Understanding and Action for Women Survivors," *asia-ajar.org*, April 10th 2019, <https://asia-ajar.org/2015/11/unlearning-impunity-a-guide-to-understanding-and-action-for-women-survivors/>

way flow from text to context. Instead, it will involve dynamic engagement in multiple directions, back and forth between the text, the context, and the community's questions and experiences.

Community Mapping

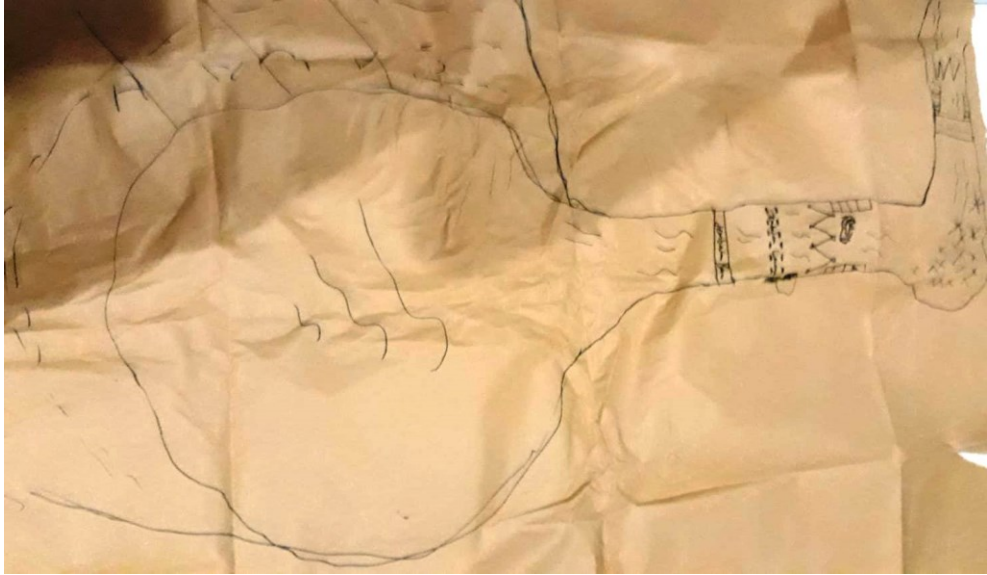


Figure 3: Photograph of Poso's Community Mapping Exercise. Author's own.

During the community mapping session, members of the Poso group vividly depicted and narrated their local context, shedding light on the environmental challenges they faced (see figure 3). The Poso area is rich in natural resources. It is a place where the community strives together to go beyond the trauma of the interreligious communal conflicts that happened in 1998, working to build peace and justice.² The hydroelectric company, PT Poso Energy, commenced operations in Sulewana in 2005. In 2018, the company came up with a new plan to build more turbines in Tentena, the mouth of Lake Poso. The project started with the demolition of the traditional bridge, *Yondo Pamona*, built by Pamona ancestors,

² The year of 1998 is also known as 1998 tragedy where incidents of riots, mass violence, and mass rape, happened in Jakarta and other places in Indonesia at the time of the replacement of the president Suharto after 32 years ruled the country. See also Chapter 1 of this thesis.

sparkling protests from the community. Regrettably, the demolition was supported by the local leaders including the church leaders. The church leader led the prayer for the company's project in the Poso Lake.³ This event reflects the themes of betrayal and social promiscuity. The community lost its symbol of unity in the form of a traditional bridge and got a new iron bridge at the mouth of the lake which did not reflect their history or sense of identity. Therefore, the community felt betrayed by their church leaders, government, and *adat* leaders who support the project of the company that destroys the environment, livelihoods, and culture. The community's response to this event aligns with their reading strategies that give attention to social promiscuity in Hosea. Moreover, their response to this event also aligns with the broader issues they face such as environmental concerns and challenges posed by external forces like companies and government.

In their effort to protect the environment, the locals formed the Alliance of Lake Poso Guardians (APDP). These were fishermen, farmers, and other local people. They started the alliance when they heard that *Yondo Pamona* (Pamona Bridge), a wooden bridge built by their ancestors, would be renovated, and a water park would also be there. At that time, many people thought that it was a good plan, but this view subsequently changed.

Some fishermen who owned *wayamasapi* (a collective traditional sustainable fishing method) came together in Mosintuwu and asked for support to prevent the project because the renovation plan disturbed their livelihood, and the bridge was a symbol of the unity of the Pamona people. Many people were disappointed and sad when the bridge was destroyed. They did *megilu* for seven days when the bridge started to be destroyed amid ongoing protest from the community. In their culture, *megilu* refers to sharing a problem and making a complaint.⁴ In the *megilu* ritual, they made speeches and prayed together to the Creator of life near the location of the old bridge. These locals are mostly Christians who have a deep appreciation of

³ Community mapping, Tentena, March 2020.

⁴ Lian Gogali, "Megilu 7 hari," in mosintuwu.com, accessed November 27th 2019, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2019/11/27/megilu-7-hari/>

their local traditions and culture. They made their protest over seven days, inspired by the stories in the Bible about the seven days' march around Jericho. In addition, their culture reveres the number seven known as *kasawi imba*⁵ which indicates earnest effort and perseverance.⁶ However, now there is a new iron bridge replacing *Yondo Pamona*. Since then, the group has been actively campaigning and has held peaceful protests about the dredging of Lake Poso.

The environmental destruction escalated as the company began dredging the soil of the Poso River and dumping it in a fish breeding area that was later designated as an area intended for the construction of a dam. The project has a detrimental environmental impact since it leads to the destruction of the lake's natural ecosystem. The communities have been opposing the project due to its detrimental impact on the environment. As a result of the project, the water became cloudy, the ecosystem was disturbed, and the fish began to die.⁷ The life cycle of eels, one of the unique aspects of the biodiversity of the lake, that depends on the conditions of the natural environment and the ecosystem of Poso lake, river, estuary, and Tomini bay, is threatened as a result of the building work. The construction of the dam will not only threaten the ecosystem and biodiversity of the lake's habitat, but it will also disturb the migration flow of eels from the ocean to the lake as well as from the lake back to the ocean.

The environmental impact has made the community respond critically through many different means. Small groups are organised to demonstrate resistance consistently from one village to another village through music, cultural exhibitions, film screenings, theatre performances, demonstrations, road blockades, walking marches, engaging in dialogue with council members, negotiation and lobbying the leaders from local, provincial, and national areas, and pursuing legal actions. At particularly desperate moments, three farmers went on hunger strike. They urged the governor to resolve the problem of the rice fields being flooded as a result of

⁵ Lian Gogali, "Megilu 7 hari."

⁶ Lian Gogali, "Megilu 7 hari."

⁷ Community mapping, Tentena, March 2020.

the hydropower project. The community is working together with youth, children, parents, elders, indigenous leaders, religious activists, researchers, and academics.⁸

The community's identity has been formed over many generations by close interaction with the lake. For instance, the farmers are knowledgeable on the natural high and low tides of Poso Lake, enabling them to cultivate rice strategically in harmony with the rhythm of nature. However, their local culture and practice are now being threatened, and they have lost their sustainable farming and fishing practices, such as *mosango*, *monyilo*, and *wayamasapi*.⁹ Since the project began, the houseboats and *wayamasapi* in the area have been destroyed. Some people who own *wayamasapi* have also protested because they had not received compensation as promised. Moreover, the fisherman could not carry out *monyilo* in the shallow parts of the lake anymore because the lake became too deep, and there is now the risk of drowning.¹⁰ The project has pushed away fishermen, farmers, and residents whose livelihoods depend upon the lake.¹¹ Since the hydropower project company regulates the depth of the lake's water, rice fields have been submerged. Many farmers have suffered significant losses due to crop failure. Many buffaloes that used to graze in the land died.¹² The locals are trying

⁸ Lian Gogali, "Poso dan Apa yang Terjadi di Lutzeratz Jerman," in mosintuwu.com, Februari 4th, 2023, accessed March 10th, 2023, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2023/02/04/poso-dan-apa-yang-terjadi-di-lutzeratz-jerman/>

⁹ *Mosango* is the practice of communal fishing in the dry season when the water level of the lake is down. The fishermen use bamboo and rattan baskets to catch a small portion of fish. This practice is usually done with a group of people. In comparison, *monyilo* is a practice of fishing when the seasonal water rises. The fishermen go to the lake with a small boat, petromac light, and a spear to catch fish. *Wayamasapi* is another sustainable local fishing technique that uses a bamboo fence. In the seasonal time of water rising, this bamboo fence will catch a small proportion of eel. The bamboo boathouse and *wayamasapi* are used collectively by families and passed down from generation to generation.

¹⁰ Community mapping, Tentena, March 2020.

¹¹ Community mapping, Tentena, March 2020.

¹² Pian Siruyu, "Sawah-Sawah Tenggelam, Kerbau mati: Nasib Warga Tepi Danau Poso," Mosintuwu.com, October 31, 2020, accessed November 4th, 2020, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2020/10/31/sawah-tenggelam-kerbau-mati-nasib-warga-tepi-danau-poso/>

hard to prevent the completion of the project because they want to protect the environment and maintain their local traditions.¹³

In defiance of all the protests, the company persists in dredging Lake Poso, safeguarding the work with their security personnel. The local government and the church leaders support the company and do not protect the livelihoods of the people or the sustenance of nature.

Aliansi Penjaga Danau Poso (APDP) Community Reading

Following the community mapping exercise, the group delved into a collective reading of Hosea, offering insights into their interpretations and connections to their ongoing struggles. The group read Hosea 1-2 and 4:1-3 in Indonesian TB1 Bible¹⁴ to provide a standardised reading for the different ethnic groups in Central Sulawesi. Two of the participants read the text aloud. In the reading process, the group highlighted a few themes that came up after reading the text together.

Firstly, a participant highlighted the criticism of the priest as one of the important aspects of Hosea's text. PP1¹⁵ said, "The text mentioned criticism of the priest in the final part. Israel was being condemned at the time, and if the people were misled, they were misled by their leader. Thus, the passage specifically mentions that priests were rebuked by God." His comment relates to chapter 4 which he read as a whole. This specific theme of criticism of the priest is related to the experiences in their context as well as to the material in chapters 1 and 2. PP1¹⁶ further explained social promiscuity in their context. He said, "There is a connection between the synod and government. The priests are afraid to challenge

¹³ Community mapping, Tentena, March 2020.

¹⁴ Terjemahan Baru 1 (TB1) refers to the Indonesian Bible formal translation, which has been described as an ecumenical translation, published in 1974.

¹⁵ Poso Participant 1, 64 years old, male, radio broadcaster, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020. He read the text of Hosea 4 as a whole and interpreted it in connection to Hosea 1-2 as well as in connection to their context.

¹⁶ Poso Participant 1, 64 years old, male, radio broadcaster, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

the leaders because they will be moved to an isolated place, and indeed it has happened already. Some of our friends have been displaced from their positions.” In this part, he gave attention to the contemporary context of the interpretation. PP1 highlighted the power relations and structural injustice in the church. The massive and complex destruction of this marginalised ecological community has been invisible. Instead of listening and protecting the community, the church leader chose to be in a relationship with the company for the sake of economic prosperity. PP1 said, “So that’s the social promiscuity which is happening in our community, and they use the pulpit (to promote it).” PP1 read the promiscuity in the text as a social promiscuity involving the church leaders, the company, and the government who are only concerned with profit and the dream of prosperity while disregarding the threat to the community brought by the forces of economic and social change. He used a metaphor of social promiscuity as a strategy to interpret the text and by using the metaphor of social promiscuity, he was able to interpret the text beyond a religious crisis on apostasy, which, as has already been argued in Chapter 4, is too limited. Seeing this religious crisis only in terms of apostasy can mute the political power of the text in a contemporary reading. Therefore, it needs to be expanded to include social-ecological disintegration as religious crisis.

PP1’s attention to the contemporary context sheds new light on the interpretation of promiscuity in the text as a symbol of social promiscuity. He continued by explaining the situation in his context where the church leaders support the company’s project by saying that the project will bring prosperity. Moreover, the leaders do not listen to the cries of the community who fight for their survival and the environment. PP1 went on to explain,

Look, this [the context and the text] is indeed the relationship between priests and people. When this issue began to emerge, our church was very involved. Thus, it was undeniable that they [church synod] supported this company. Even before the issue was too widespread, the close relationship had already been heard; for example, the synod often called to Jakarta, met

with JK¹⁷ there. Then, the whole synod was given a budget to travel to Bali. Finally, they were supporting this project. Therefore, when the Pamona Bridge was going to be destroyed, the district chief, accompanied by the leader of the church synod, called the local leaders and explained that the company was going to demolish the Pamona Bridge, and the company would make something that would bring prosperity to the community and so on. Although, when someone questioned the statement of the head of the synod on this matter, the head of the synod said, “that's enough, this might not be understood today, but later God will give an understanding that this will indeed bring prosperity to the community.”

The claim from the church leader demonstrates his belief in prosperity through the corporation's project. The church leader suggested that the community did not accept the project because they did not understand the benefit of the project for development. He believes that God will make them realise later that the project is needed for development.

On the contrary, the community is highly aware of the immediate impacts of the project. In collaboration with local communities, different researchers, and activists, they learned and analysed the ecosystem of Poso Lake. The APDP community tries to inform the synod that the project is dangerous because it destroys nature and the community's identity. For example, the project involves deforestation, nature exploitation, and the extinction of endemic animals and plants. Furthermore, the project causes the displacement of communities, resulting in the loss of their culture and community identity. However, the church leader's ideology of development focuses on economic growth, excluding all other dimensions of life. Although the leader of the synod may have the belief that the project is needed, it is crucial to hear alternative voices from the community. The APDP community contends that there are alternative ways of life that do not inflict damage on the environment and the community's identity.

¹⁷ Former Indonesian vice president.

Economic development priorities should not be employed to favour a privileged group while disregarding the well-being of other ecological communities. Furthermore, economic growth should not be the only priority for development. A holistic approach that takes into account social-environmental aspects and collective participation is needed.

Building on the critique of the priest, participants then turned their attention to the present-day scenario. PP8¹⁸ added another comment,

Frankly, we, the community, who are being fooled, the majority of us are farmers. Our concern is that one day we cannot work on the location at the edge of the lake anymore as our rice fields. That is our struggle as a society here. And then at the village of Buyumpondoli, both from the government, from the pastors and servants in our congregation, we have been told specifically and directly that they want the community to fully support what the company is doing. Thus, they have said it directly through the pulpit; however it is totally inappropriate to endorse what the company is doing to the whole congregation, yeah that's what happened.

PP8 shared his concern as a farmer in their context who struggles to survive because of the promiscuity of their leaders with the company. He focused here on its application to the contemporary context and shared his sense of the impact of promiscuity on the community. Along with other members of the group, he read the promiscuity action in a wider political application. This reading group focused on the action of promiscuity that betrays trust and creates structural injustice. Therefore, they did not stop at the relationship portrayal between women and men. They explored the promiscuity in Hosea in a broader social relationship in the context of the challenging ecological disaster. Soon after, the rice fields of Buyumpondoli became flooded and remained so to this day. His concern has become a reality. Many farmers were unable to grow their rice fields once again.

¹⁸ Poso Participant 8, 47 years old, male, farmer, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

Another topic worthy of mention is placing hope in God and not others. PP4¹⁹ went on,

So, when I was reading about Hosea yesterday, I remembered about this promiscuity. Therefore, if we relate it to the current context, the result of the promiscuity is to cause division, poverty, ignorance, lying, lying everywhere, and finally people lie to cover up one lie, betrayal, etc. That is what God wants to declare. God gives hope to Hosea's life, thus Hosea does not preach through words but through his life. When his wife is pregnant, then giving birth to a son, his son's name means this [i.e. hope]. Therefore, people could see God's love through the life of Hosea. We could see how God loves us through our life; He gave us a lake. It is amazing to see all the things that we have in Tentena. If we stuck a branch of cassava in the ground, it would grow. Therefore, we need to realise that our hope should be in God, our first husband, and not in the Bukaka company. What can Bukaka company give to us? Instead, they rob us and are causing infidelity everywhere.

PP4 gave an important emphasis on hope in God rather than receiving it from others. She saw the connection between Hosea's experience and the experience of the community. In Hosea, Gomer acts promiscuously and goes after other lovers. God says, "But she did not know that it was Me who gave to her the grain, the new wine, the fresh oil." PP4 emphasised in her context that the hope should be in God as the first husband who shares the need of the people. Her argument helps her to see God's love that calls us to reformulate the concept of economic prosperity. Prosperity cannot be determined by the project that the company brings to the area if those projects have resulted in devastation. God has shared prosperity through living in moderation together with nature. That is what PP4 called hope.

¹⁹ Poso Participant 4, 48 years old, female, radio broadcaster who also has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

As a society dependent on nature, the community coexists with nature. Their interaction with nature forms their knowledge and tradition. God blesses nature and the community, but sadly, the leaders do not see things from this perspective. The leaders pursue the company that they believe will bring prosperity rather than trusting in God. PP4's interpretation that a similar situation can be found in the book of Hosea when Gomer pursues her lover, was significant because she understood that the act of promiscuity is not a singular concern, but that it has a connection with other concerns, such as the economy. She did not give an explanation of the context behind the text, but she was able to capture it clearly from the text in connection with her contemporary context.

Besides that, PP4 highlighted social disintegration as the impact of promiscuity in Hosea's family as well as in their community. Social promiscuity or the betrayal of trust has resulted in division, poverty, and ignorance. Again, her interpretation was crucial because she associated the disintegration metaphor of Hosea's family with the disintegration in her community as a result of promiscuity.

The other important comment is about the symbol of the woman in the text. Interestingly, there was only one person who commented on this. Even so, her interpretation is important. PP13²⁰ said,

The metaphor looks very patriarchal. The metaphor still sees the woman as the one who does the fornication. In our context nowadays, sexual promiscuity can be done either by men or by women. When I heard it, the metaphor looks very patriarchal to describe the wrongdoing, including both the first husband and the second husband. Her sin as described in the text is double, repeated many times. It is not only because she was called a promiscuous woman, but she was also described as engaged in polyandry. That is the implication of the metaphor.

²⁰ Poso Participant 13, 43 years old, female, activist, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

PP13 analysed the text from a feminist perspective. She criticised the portrayal of Gomer in the text as a promiscuous woman and someone who has more than one partner. The text talks about sin using both portrayals of the woman's sexuality. The discourse about sin generally focuses on women's sexuality, as described in the text of Hosea. PP13 criticised the way women's sexuality was talked of as the source of sin. Therefore, PP13 remarked on the text as patriarchal. She pointed out further that the group did not interpret the text in relation to gender, but they focused on the act of promiscuity.

The reading of the text of Hosea with the community showed that the local people read Hosea in relation to the struggle regarding social and economic issues and the exploitative powers of religious leaders and those in power. The participants interpreted Gomer as the leader who behaved promiscuously. As they read Hosea, they criticised the leader and the forced changes in their social-economic realities. The change that the leaders assume will bring grain, wine, and oil as symbols of prosperity threatens their communal survival as well as the survival of nature.

5.2.2. Sumba group, East Nusa Tenggara

The next reading group is a women-only group in Sumba, consisting of nine women. They are struggling with the issue of land grabbing by a sugar cane plantation. Because of the restrictions due to covid 19, the meeting of this group was held online via a WhatsApp group. Due to technical limitations of the internet connection, this online discussion via WhatsApp took longer than expected because people needed to type in their responses, scroll up and down to read them and give responses. This medium affects the conversation flow and limits the space for asking further questions in light of the responses because the conversation has already jumped to different topics. In writing, people usually try to give their opinion in a short note just like a short message.

Community Mapping

The reading group in Sumba started the preparatory phase in the same way as the first group. They began with the community mapping exercise as a way of sharing their location and their social context. One drew the map, and the others explained the context and the map (see figure 4). Using a well-established rationale of opening more job opportunities, the local government gave PT MSM (Muria Sumber Manis) a permit to operate in East Sumba. The company reached out to the residents and explained the project, but the meeting was limited only to selected persons to avoid protests. The rest of the community was not involved in the process or the dialogue with the government and the company. There are eight villages in the district of Pahunga Lodu that are affected by the sugar plantation. Most of the forest in the area is now used as a plantation area. The community in the area was only given what is known as the betel nut money (relational transaction trade) Rp. 2.5 million (equivalent to \$178.5) for the land. For this project, the company constructed a road through the forest and closed the previous community road that leads to the forest.

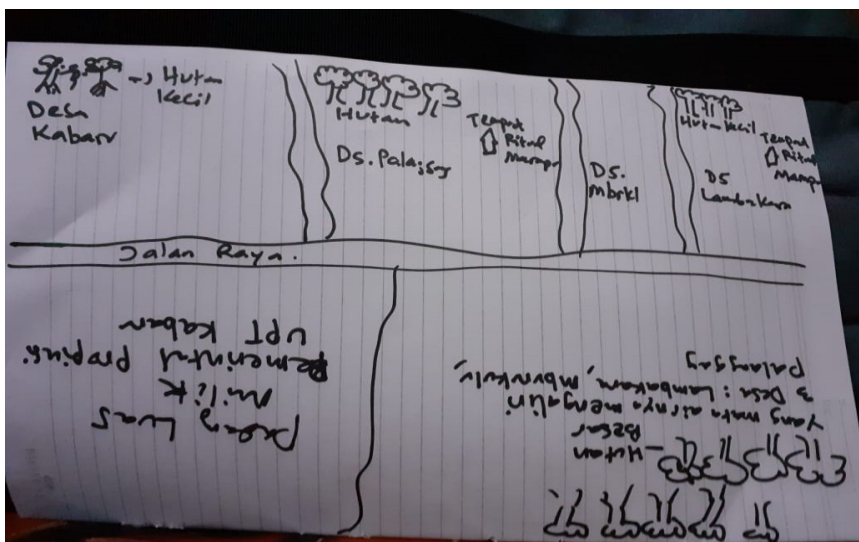


Figure 4: Photograph of Sumba's Community Mapping Exercise. Author's own.

Now, most of the area has been completely deforested. People could not cultivate vegetables in the forest any more or get the herbal medicine such as they had used in the past. The company, PT MSM, also built several big reservoirs by taking and managing the water resources in the area only for company use. There are sixteen reservoirs in four villages. The size of each reservoir is approximately 200x200 m and each reservoir has four wells. The community is struggling with water, and most of their rice fields lack water. They were experiencing drought, even in the rainy season. There were protests by the community to the government and the company in the form of letters of rejection, blockades on the roads to the company's plantation, and demonstrations alongside non-governmental organisations, but there has been no positive response from the government.



Figure 5: One of the Giant Reservoirs of PT MSM. Photograph by SP1.

The local church in the area rejected the company's project due to their concerns about the impact of the project on the forest and the community's survival. However, the project keeps going. The community members experience conflict, disagreement and fragmentation as people divide along different lines of argument. The government supports the company because of the investment while the ecological community that lives in the area is ignored.



Figure 6: Deforestation for the Plantation. Photograph by SP1

Sumba Women's Community Reading

Participants in the Sumba group at the beginning of the discussion mostly raised questions about God's command to marry a promiscuous woman. By questioning the reason for God's instruction to marry a promiscuous woman, the participants were engaging in a discussion on the underlying difficulties inside their group. These questions addressed the intricate interplay of gender relations as well as the possible societal challenges. The participants' interpretations of the biblical text provided insights into broader issues like gender dynamics, social and nature disintegration, and the moral aspects of their community's challenges.

SP7 and SP6 both noted, "The important part is the story of the promiscuity of Hosea's wife."²¹ They raised questions such as, "Why did God ask Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman? Why were Hosea's children called children of promiscuity?" SP7 thinks that "Hosea should not marry Gomer because she is a promiscuous woman, but he [Hosea] follows God's command." The other participant, SP6, said, "God's command needs to be done by Hosea even though it does not make sense from a human perspective." From the discussion, two of the participants claimed that the status of Hosea as a prophet could be affected

²¹ Sumba Participant 6, Female, 29 years old, farmer and self-employed; Sumba Participant 7, Female, 41 years old, farmer and teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

negatively by the status of Gomer as a promiscuous woman. However, it is God's command and Hosea followed the command as stated in the text. The participants who give attention to the text compared Hosea's status as a prophet with the status of the woman. Moreover, they questioned God's command to Hosea as a symbolic action. The status has been their concern, but because it is God's command to marry, Hosea has to do it. However, not so much attention was given to the questions concerning why Hosea's children are called children of promiscuity.

Two of the participants shared that they did not have any social experience related to the text, but others reflected on the relationships around them; SP8 for example said, "For the social experience, perhaps we do not have experience in the family like in the context of the Bible."²² She reflected on her family situation and concluded that she did not have the same situation as in Hosea. The other participant, SP5²³ commented,

Personally I don't have any experience socially like this text, but I see around me the relation between people [as described in the text]. There are couples who stop liking each other, slowly split up and reject one another as they fight in their marriage. Many couples are getting a divorce because they are not satisfied with their marriage. But only a few people can survive like Hosea, someone who can bear the emotional pain because of the affair of their partner. He still tries to restore and redeem the woman who sinned. Actually, a couple could learn from the story of Hosea. The sin was admitted, there was repentance, the emotional pain was embraced.

Both participants here interpreted promiscuity literally in the husband–wife relation, and that was why they said that they did not see that kind of experience within their own family. However, they said that they did find it outside of their family relationship.

²² Sumba Participant 8, female, 25 years old, farmer, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

²³ Sumba Participant 5, female, 23 years old, farmer and self-employed, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

One of them even brought the application to the sexual relationship between men and women. They suggested that the marriage between Hosea and Gomer could teach about the restoration of a broken relationship through repentance. They reflected on the situation in their culture, where many men have more than one wife. SP2²⁴ said, “As far as I know, there are many men who have more than one wife and there are women who become mistresses.” She argued for a gender dimension in their cultural situation. The image of Gomer relates to their cultural realities where men have more than one wife. In their contemporary context, it is the men who act promiscuously rather than the women, as in the text.

In the discussion, they interpreted the image of the woman in the text negatively as a stubborn person, disrespectful to her husband, and a badly-behaved and unfaithful woman. Only SP1²⁵ mentioned that the promiscuous woman should be considered as marginalised because she does not behave according to the expected moral standard. Her voice is an important one because she could see the vulnerable position of promiscuous women in the society of the time, offering the insight that the behaviour of the women is closely related to structural injustice that puts women in a vulnerable position. Most of the group follow the text literally and focus on the moral aspect of Gomer as a woman. They may not be the only group that focuses on the moral aspect of the promiscuous woman. In a patriarchal society, there is a tendency to focus exclusively on the moral aspect regarding the woman and the text itself could be seen to objectify the woman in ways that endorse such a reading.

In the discussion, one participant shared how the image of Hosea teaches that there is fragmentation because of disloyalty in the marriage. SP7²⁶ said, “There is a social experience related to this text: a wife shows disloyalty to her husband or on

²⁴ Sumba Participant 2, female, 35 years old, farmer and teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

²⁵ Sumba Participant 1, female, 44 years old, farmer and pastor, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

²⁶ Sumba Participant 7, female, 41 years old, farmer and teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

the other side a husband disloyalty to his wife. This disloyalty creates disintegration in the family.” The topic of familial disintegration (fragmentation) is an important one discussed within this group. Other participants such as SP5, interpret the disintegration of the family only in terms of the promiscuity between men and women. However, SP7 understood the disintegration as referring not only to the family but also to other creatures. She observed, “The disloyalty brings negative impact on the family and on other creatures.” Her interpretation reveals another significant insight into the ecological aspect. Their understanding of the text informs their views on the relationship between human actions, nature, and morality. Their discussion then developed from a limited male-female relationship to a human-nature relationship.

The negative impact of a promiscuous act is not only on humans but also on other creatures. This perspective is one of the significant insights from this group. Their interpretation of the text influenced their stance on environmental issues and their efforts to address them. For instance, the local church facilitated a peaceful rally by blocking the path of PT MSM’s activities. This group is the local church group actively fighting deforestation and water privatisation. They also collaborate with NGOs like Sabana and Peruati Sumba (Network of Women Theologians in Sumba) to fight for justice for marginalised populations.²⁷ In their reading, they could see the natural elements in the text and connected the issue to the relationship between human actions and their impact on nature. The connection demonstrates the relevance of their biblical readings to real-world challenges and the strategies they employed to navigate them.

Moreover, the application of the text to the destruction of nature in their context was raised by SP1 as well, who said, “I think of the insensitivity of the Israelites to God’s anger which was delivered through nature such as the grasshopper, pest,

²⁷ Rambu Anna Maeri, “Yang Manis Yang melemahkan,” in *Ekoteologi: Refleksi Kontekstual dan Aksi Lintas Iman*, Ed. Lady Paula R. Mandalika, Christima J. Hutubessy, Sirayandris J. Botara and Aprissa Taranau (Makassar: Oase Intim, 2023), 39-40.

drought, failure in plantation, crop failure.” In her environment she saw the disaster as a representation of God’s anger upon human behaviour. She then said, “I think of the injustice in the community of Hosea overall [Hosea 1-2, 4:1-3]. Humans become prey to their fellow humans. Their greediness destroys social relations. Those who have money/wealth are in power.” That animals, birds, and fish will perish taught her that the destruction of nature is a representation of God’s anger and judgement upon human behaviour, such as greediness and misuse of power. In addition, SP2 said, “The greediness destroys the relation between creatures.” In this part, both participants focused on ecology and saw the interplay between economy, greed, the destruction of social relations, and nature. Greedy behaviour became one of the concerns of the group, especially for those of the younger generation. They were criticising the government, which supports the company and does not care about the survival of nature and the community.

From the reading, a participant understood that the land in Hosea 4 was full of sin, and another participant said that the text described the land as a damaged land, and therefore, could not bring blessings anymore. They learned from the text that the land was portrayed as damaged because of human sin. Therefore, they also read the destruction of nature as happening because of God’s anger and as a punishment, as stated in the text. Participant, SP7, stated, “The land is the foundation of life to humans, plants and other creatures. It is God's gift that needs to be well preserved.” Moreover, SP1 said, “The land is from God, given for every creature and not only for humans. The land gives life to humans and all creatures, but at the same time could bring death if humans are not aware of their wrong action to the land.” Both participants highlighted that the land is given by God and that it needs to be preserved as an application of the image of the land in Hosea. This application is related closely to their context where the forest, the spring, and the savannah are now being used for the sugar cane project. The Adat community and several members of the local church community fight together to stop the project that destroys their natural forest and savannah and monopolises the spring.

5.2.3 Yogyakarta Group, Central Java

Transitioning from the experience of the Sumba group, the Yogyakarta reading group shared their struggles in a multireligious environment, particularly focusing on their encounters with intolerance. The Yogyakarta reading group consists of nine participants, eight of them women and one man. The preparatory meeting was held at the nun's convent which is located next to the church. This group did not mention any struggles in environmental justice, but instead they shared the struggle of living in a multireligious environment, especially their experiences of tolerance and intolerance. The community mapping was offered to them but they chose to share the stories directly. They shared about the denial of the right of the community to bury the deceased in the village's public cemetery because of their religion, as well as experiences of discrimination at work and in the neighbourhood. The group shared how the situation nowadays differs from previously when they lived harmoniously despite their religious differences. However, there are still many efforts made for interfaith dialogue. The first meeting of the group was held at one of the multipurpose spaces at the church.

Yogyakarta's Community Reading

Yogyakarta's community reading focused on numerous distinct parts within the text. Employing an intertextual strategy, they highlighted the interconnection between the story in Hosea and several other texts. One participant presented the case of a parallel circumstance between the woman mentioned in the book of Hosea and another passage, John 4:14. In her opinion, both women in the two texts symbolise Israel who has many spouses, but God forgives Israel. Despite the women having many spouses, God continues to love them. Consequently, the concept of giving forgiveness and achieving reconciliation has tremendous significance from the perspective of Yogyakarta group.

In the reading, their first observation concerned the religious issue of worshipping idols. YP4²⁸ said, “If people back then worshipped idols, it is a sin, but today, we also have these things, we have idols right now although maybe not exactly like a real idol. Like today people prefer to have power and money. These are the forms of idolatry today.” YP4 made an association between the idols in Hosea’s time and the contemporary context. In her reading she used the idol as a metaphor to bridge the gap between the text and life nowadays. Her remark is interesting because she makes the connection between power and money in contemporary times with the text; indeed, the concern in Hosea is not only related to religious idolatry but also to the interplay between power and the economy.

Another participant responded that God is jealous when we turn away from him and worship an idol. The punishment will be given as a reminder that God is attentive, and does not like it when we look away from God’s eternal love. YP1²⁹ agreed with the issue of worshipping idols but she highlights God’s love rather than punishment and also made a connection between the Samaritan woman who has had many husbands and the image of Gomer. YP1 said, “I think it is, (if we look back to John), like when Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at the well. The Samaritan woman has also had a lot of husbands. Husband in this context refers to the worship of Ba’al and other idols such as fertility idols, until Jesus himself said: ‘if you drink from me, you won’t need other water.’” Interestingly, YP1 read the text intertextually with the story of a Samaritan woman in John. She made an association between the description of Gomer and the description of the Samaritan woman. Both women were described in the text as women who had many partners/husbands. She highlighted how both women in the text were reminded about their behaviour. Besides themes of God’s love and punishment she could see

²⁸ Yogyakarta Participant 4, female, 41 years old, employee, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

²⁹ Yogyakarta Participant 1, female, 53 years old, has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

the connection between the two texts. She paid attention to the text and used an intertextual strategy to interpret the text.

Moreover, she said, “Therefore, God’s love for Israel is so tremendous just like this story told, how tremendous Hosea’s love for Gomer is. He returned to love his wife even though she committed fornication by becoming [pause for thinking], what do we call it? She is a female cultic prostitute at the temple sex ritual which happened in the house of God for [inaudible 8:38] sacrament, worshipping ritual.” The concept of a temple sex ritual or sacred prostitute has been a much discussed interpretation of Gomer in the book of Hosea. The participant’s perspective has been shaped by the long discourse on sacred prostitution. YP7 interpreted Gomer as a ritual harlot and even mentions the cultural ritual in Kemukus, one of the mountains in central Java. It is a place where some people go to find blessings, prosperity, and good fortune. The activity in Kemukus includes anonymous sex rituals in the cemetery of Prince Samudro. According to research, these ritual practices were legitimised by certain people who benefit economically from them.³⁰ The other participants laughed when she mentioned these practices and explained that in practice, the wife should let the husband do the ritual sex with other women in order to get rich. They were laughing, perhaps because they saw that kind of ritual as a myth or in the context or it could also indicate embarrassment in relation to the topic of sex. However, this comment was not discussed or developed further by the group.

Afterwards the discussion continued about the name Jezreel. The group questioned the meaning of “I will avenge the blood of Jezreel” in chapter 1:4. They discussed the parallel between this verse and the story in 2 Kings 10. Then they concluded that the name of Jezreel is a name for what had happened. As YP7³¹ commented,

³⁰ Marwati, “UGM students make research into sex ritual phenomenon in Mt. Kemukus.” Ugm.ac.id, June 16, 2016, accessed November 30th, 2021, <https://ugm.ac.id/en/newsPdf/11935-ugm.students.make.research.into.sex.ritual.phenomenon.on.mt.kemukus>

³¹ Yogyakarta Participant 7, female, 53 years old, has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

“It means first the name of the valley then the name of the child given to remind them.” Here, the participants interpreted the name of Jezreel and learnt the connection of the name to 2 Kings 10. In the discussion, several participants mentioned God’s forgiveness of Israel’s sin which includes not only idolatry but also the leaders’ and the elites’ sins of bribery, cursing, lying and disloyalty. However, they did not continue this aspect of the discussion.

They discussed God’s forgiveness and Gomer’s repentance. YP2³² said, “Just like Hosea’s wife, Gomer, repents and returns to her husband, and then she must be respected again by her husband. Even until now, she repents and then repeats the same mistake.” The others responded that it is the same as humans nowadays and then continued to discuss forgiveness and restoration in times of conflict. The theme of forgiveness is the central focus of most of the participants in this group.

It is interesting to look more closely at the woman described in the text because her image is often brought up in the group discourse. When asked about the image of the woman in the text, one of them said that Gomer is a lucky woman, and the other two participants confirmed this view. In their perception, despite being stubborn and keeping making mistakes, Hosea forgives Gomer. They mentioned in Hosea 2:13 (Indonesian Terjemahan Baru 1: Sebab itu, sesungguhnya, Aku ini akan membujuk dia, dan membawa dia ke padang gurun, dan berbicara menenangkan hatinya) “Therefore, behold, I will persuade her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her heart.” According to the group, Hosea used self-control in order to improve the atmosphere since he is determined to reconcile with his wife. If he persists in being furious, achieving this aim becomes impossible. Therefore, Gomer was seen to be lucky due to her being granted forgiveness by Hosea. In this group, there was no question or objection at all about the description of Gomer. They considered Gomer a lucky woman rather than an objectified female figure used by God and Hosea. They emphasised forgiveness as the overriding message of this text. Even though Gomer made

³² Yogyakarta Participant 2, female, 44 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

mistakes repeatedly, she was forgiven by Hosea. The group did not specifically discuss gender roles and expectations in the portrayal of Gomer. They focused on the description of Gomer who has lovers in the text and especially on Hosea's forgiveness to Gomer that represents God's forgiveness to Israel. This group also did not notice or discuss the violent punishment of Gomer. However, they saw Gomer as the lucky one only because she is forgiven. This part of the interpretation will be discussed further below. Following the remarks from a woman participant from the Poso group, the interpretation also needs to discuss further the gender portrayal and violent images in the text.

When the group were asked with whom they identify themselves in the text, they all identified with Gomer because as stubborn humans, they keep making mistakes and then repent to God, as she did. One of them emphasised that today, Gomer is not always female or an adult, it could be male, a member of the young generation, or an elderly person. Her interpretation highlighted the gender perspective in interpreting the figure of Gomer. She realised that the figure of Gomer is not always female but could also refer to another gender. This theme of gender perspective will also be discussed further later as well.

One of the participants saw the connection between human sins and the corona virus pandemic but they did not discuss this issue deeply; instead, they discussed humanity's irresponsible acts on the environment. YP6³³ said,

In my opinion, today, humanity does not really care about their environment. Moreover, a lot of things have strayed away from God's guidance. Thus, we ended up with diseases, and from war to environmental exploitation. The earth is getting older; therefore I think there are problems with us, our hygiene is lacking, and many other things that might result in disease from our foods, a lot of waste, and ocean pollution. Therefore, we need to care more about our environment. In a wider context, it is necessary to care more

³³ Yogyakarta Participant 6, Female, 47 years old, has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

about the environment, living more healthily and planting more trees to make our surroundings greener, because our earth is deteriorating. In the last few years, we see a lot of disasters especially flooding, that might be caused by the land's inability to absorb water.

Another participant mentioned a specific part of the text. As YP9³⁴ noted,

Therefore, when we are not taking care of our environment, then disaster is God's way to warn us. It is further explored in verse 13 that says if we are just, we take care of our environment, and then God will comfort us and furthermore on verse 14: There I shall give her back her vineyards and make the Valley of Ahor a gateway of hope. This hope for us means salvation, happiness and is related to what YP6 said before. If we take care of and protect our environment, we will be happy. We will be saved from disasters.

In this part, the participants made a strong application of the text to the contemporary context with a key focus on the ecological aspect. Moreover, they also express that hope is also one of the strongest messages of Hosea.

The other response is related to idolatry and the disaster in Hosea 2:12 as God's punishment, a way to give a warning. YP6 added, "The degradation to the environment can be seen in chapter 4 verse 3. 'This is why the country is in mourning and all its citizens pining away, the wild animals also and birds of the sky, even the fish in the sea will disappear.' This is what we are living with now: the diseases, the suffering and hardship of the people."³⁵ The group interpreted disaster and environmental destruction in relation to human acts and God's punishment. This interpretation has shown another ecological insight.

³⁴ Yogyakarta Participant 9, female, 53 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

³⁵ Yogyakarta Participant 6, female, 47 years old, has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, March 2020.

5.3 The Second Meeting

5.3.1 The APDP Poso Group Reading of Yogyakarta and Sumba's Report

The second meeting of the Poso group was held in person since the social distancing measures were eased for a few months before the covid Delta variant hit and put the country back into lockdown. Several participants from the first meeting did not attend the second meeting.

Most of them could see the similarity between the contexts of Poso and Sumba, where both communities fight for the environment and their place within it. One of the participants shared the similarity relating to disintegration in the community. PP12 shared,³⁶

They [the corporation] have a strategy to divide the community. They are giving the young people jobs, then they use them against the community who do not like the corporation. I saw that the same thing also happens in Sumba, there are strategies to break the unity. In here we have *Sintuwo Moroso*: strong together in unity. Therefore, they try to break our strength by destroying the culture.

PP12 saw how similar the situation of disintegration in Sumba was with Tentena. In Tentena, the disintegration happened in the community between family and church members, especially the church leaders who he thought are being used against the community. However, the difference they saw between the two situations relates to the church's response. Through the report, they learned how the church in Sumba rejected the plantation project of the corporation. Farmers in both contexts, Sumba and Tentena, experienced the same challenge but the church responded differently to the problem. In Sumba, the church stood with the community, while in Poso, the church supported the corporation.

³⁶ Poso Participant 12, male, 66 years old, Adat leader, Intercontextual Bible Reading, June 2021.

Another person commented on the difference and shared how the context plays a role in their interpretation. PP1³⁷ said, “One of the interesting things about Poso and Sumba is the role of the priest. Sumba does not seem to mention the role of their priest. The church refuses the corporation. Thus, it is interesting that the Sumba church is siding with them (the community).” Through the intercontextual reading, this participant saw the important role of the context. Their experiences and social context influenced the way they read Hosea. The specific themes that originated in their experiences of life provided them with lenses to interpret the meaning of the text. It is interesting that the participant made this important comment about the context. He is absolutely right about how the contexts and experiences play a role in the process of making meaning. However, despite the Sumba group and Poso group facing the same struggles, their first readings were different. The Poso group read the promiscuity in relation to economic and political issues, while the Sumba group firstly read it with regard to the sexual relations between men and women [literal reading]. Different again, the Yogyakarta group focused on the sin of promiscuity and forgiveness [spiritually oriented]. My observation is that other factors also played a significant role in the interpretation, such as gender perspective and social analysis.

There are different opinions about Gomer in the discussion. According to the Poso group, Gomer is a representation of the leaders who act promiscuously with the company. The other two groups understood Gomer as a woman who acts promiscuously with respect to her husband and some of them see her as a representation of Israel.

Other differences were mentioned by another participant. According to PP13³⁸ the readings of the other two groups on hope were very vertical, focusing only on their relation to God but not horizontal concerning those around them. Horizontal hope

³⁷ Poso Participant 1, male, 65 years old, Radio Broadcaster, Intercontextual Bible Reading, June 2021.

³⁸ Poso Participant 13, female, 44 years old, activist, Intercontextual Bible Reading, June 2021.

sees people and nature as they are as representatives of God and therefore recipients of hope in their own right. I think her analysis is critical for the way of reading the Bible which focuses on the spiritual relationship to God only and cannot see the connection with those around us: the earth, other humans, nature and the environment. She reminded other groups that the reading should function for liberation and not only concerning spiritual matters and the salvation of the individual.

For instance, PP13 understood the action and concept of *megilu* from the APDP movement that emphasises the relationship between humans and the environment as one of equal status. In the *megilu*, nature also fights in protest against the destruction. Therefore, in the *megilu*, they did not consider nature as an object but involved nature in their movement. She said, “We (the APDP group) understood God not at a distance, but God is involved in the movement, part of the continuous dialogue between humanity and the environment.” As a person who is involved in the women’s movement and APDP, she feels that the energy built by APDP community and the women’s movement are the same. Therefore, when talking about hope, the hope is for these people. The hope begins with the concern for social problems, and with concerns that should be managed and discussed by the community. PP13 added, “the hope that is being built by this movement: this is our right, to exercise ownership and sovereignty. They could read this theme in Hosea as well. This kind of hope results in another movement like the youth movement for the environment or petition action from farmers. All these movements are the result from the processes of managing and discussing common social problems.” In the end, she hoped for a change for the three groups to be involved further in the discussion regarding the church’s response to environmental problems. Her comments challenged the other readers of the Bible to reflect on the way they see the Bible and its relevance for social change. She clearly showed the disagreements between the methods of reading. Her remark is an important one especially in the social context of Indonesia. The churches have a tendency to be busy with rituals, ceremonies, and regulations while ignoring the urgent social-ecological problems

in many different areas of Indonesia. However, from the exchange and the dialogue, the group from Poso that is strong in their contextual reading and seems sociologically oriented could also still learn about hope and forgiveness from the other group.

The exchange of the groups in the second meeting shows how each group started the dialogue and learned from each other. There are differences, but the differences are engaged in dialogue as part of the process of interpretation in the network of communities.

5.3.2 The Sumba Group Reading of the Yogyakarta and APDP Poso's Report

The second meeting of the Sumba group, also conducted online, offered insights into their interpretation of the reports from Yogyakarta and APDP Poso. One of the similarities that they mentioned is the theme of injustice in all the groups. Several participants in the Sumba group directly highlight the similarity of contexts between Poso and Sumba. Both contexts are facing the issue of environmental injustice. Learning from the reading of the Poso group that regarded the promiscuity of the government and capital owners, one of the Sumba's participants, SP1,³⁹ believed that this also applies to Sumba's context, resulting in negative impacts upon the community. SP5⁴⁰ said, "Here, we can see the promiscuity between the ruler, the corporation, and those who gain profit from the corporation against people's rights." Both of them understood the parallel meaning of promiscuity in the context of Poso and Sumba. SP1 commented, "The promiscuity brings a significant detrimental impact to a lot of aspects in life. There is a need to clearly comprehend promiscuity that is not limited to husband-wife relationship. Promiscuity is more toward injustice done by human that can bring bad impacts not only to humanity but also to the world." Promiscuity as an action

³⁹ Sumba Participant 1, female, 44 years old, farmer and pastor, Intercontextual Bible Reading, February 2021

⁴⁰ Sumba Participant 5, female, 24 years old, farmer and self-employed, Intercontextual Bible Reading, February 2021.

then became the focus of the interpretation. Promiscuity is a betrayal of community rights that results in disintegration.

This contextual similarity made them also aware of some differences in their reading. The others also commented on the similarity with the Yogyakarta group concerning God's ambiguity in dealing with Israel. Similarly, the Poso group's meeting provided a contrasting perspective. The Sumba group observed several differences of interpretation, such as the church leaders' response, highlighted by the participants. SP6⁴¹ said, "I want to point out the different support from the church leaders. In Poso, the church leader is very involved in supporting the corporation. However, in Sumba, especially the GKS Kahembi Kalelang, the church is against the corporation." The Sumba participants focused on a different element of the promiscuity. In Sumba, it is the promiscuity between the government, corporation, and others who gain profit. While in Poso, it is the promiscuity between their church leaders, government, corporation, and others. She highlighted the significant role of the Sumba's local church in actively resisting the deforestation and refusing to be involved in such social promiscuity. However, SP1 from Sumba questioned further the promiscuous action in Poso. She wondered,

Is the opinion [to support the corporation] to be considered as the church synod position? There must be pros and cons between the church regarding the activity of the company. If we generalise the opinion of church leaders, then the church is indeed being promiscuous with the corporation. However, if there are lots of people against it, then the church might be prophetically listening to the injustice.

The church does not speak with one voice but consists of many people taking different positions.

⁴¹ Sumba Participant 6, female, 29 years old, farmer and self-employed, Intercontextual Bible Reading, February 2021.

The differences were also found in their interpretation, and they learned from the exchange. One of the differences in the interpretation was about the promiscuity and the gender perspective in reading Hosea. Before the exchange, the group did not consider the patriarchal perspective in the text. They viewed Gomer negatively as a woman. SP1 said, “To acknowledge that the context in Hosea is very patriarchal, therefore the promiscuity is spotlighted on the woman.” She thought, “From a gender perspective, it showed that the biggest ‘sinner’ is a woman. Nevertheless, if we look more broadly, the woman here is a depiction of Israelites’ relation with God, therefore, everyone (man and woman) is a sinner.” Thus, there is a change of perspective from the way they previously saw the image of the woman in the text. The description of Gomer as a promiscuous woman has caught the attention of the Sumba group. Their understanding evolved from an individual woman’s sin to collective sin.

When the researcher asked if there was an interpretation from the Sumba group that needed to be revisited after reading other groups’ reports, SP6 shared that she could see that the image of the woman was very patriarchal but did not offer more detail. Moreover, through the reading exchange SP1 also said that there is a need to comprehend promiscuity beyond husband-wife relations. This is an important aspect of intercontextual reading, demonstrating how the participants learn from each other, and this instance shows particularly well the significant change of perspective of the groups. The Sumba group in their first reading interpreted sexual promiscuity literally as a relation between husband and wife only. However, after the exchange they admitted the need to interpret beyond men and women’s sexual relations.

SP5, aware of the promiscuity beyond husband-wife relations, learned that “the promiscuity turns out to be very profitable for the authority but very detrimental to the locals.” This discussion led them to a new perspective from husband-wife relations to broader promiscuity of the rulers or those in authority in community relationships. The exchange opened the way for learning about social promiscuity

within their contexts, and an awareness that they all struggle with the parallel issues concerning the environment.

From the Yogyakarta group, one of them learned about the theme of hope. SP1 said, “Regarding Gomer who has committed transgression but is still accepted and loved, that is the deepest grace of God that we, as human beings, cannot comprehend with our limited mind.” She refers to the hope of the love of God but also the hope to overcome injustice. She explained further, “In my opinion, the Tentena group has done its best for the environment as their responsibilities to conserve God’s given earth. Continue your fight even it is still weak or being weakened. To the point where you cannot do it further, that will be the moment when God opens everyone’s eyes to see His justice.” The hope for love from God is realised through actions that resist the destruction of God’s creation. Their hope is for God’s justice.

In the end, the groups shared their words of support with the other group. They supported the APDP group’s fight for the environment and local traditions. SP4⁴² shared, “People who shared similar concerns have been speaking out and very involved even when their power is no match for the government’s support of the corporation. However, the movement has to be kept going, thus the influence can grow to fight against regulations that are detrimental to the community.” The support from the other group shows that the reading process has a praxeological effect where communal reading builds solidarity. This aspect also signifies the transformative potential for a communal reading of the Bible. Through the exchange of ideas and experiences, the participating groups foster a sense of solidarity. These communities, initially unfamiliar with each other, now engage in meaningful communication that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. They are able to understand the other’s pain and struggle but also sharing hope

⁴² Sumba Participant 4, female, 27 years old, Vicar, Intercontextual Bible Reading, February 2021.

through words of encouragement and solidarity. This is also the power of this shared reading.

5.3.3 The Yogyakarta Group Reading of the APDP Poso and Sumba's Report

As explained before, the groups exchanged their reading reports. The second phase of the meeting was held online due to the large scale of social distancing during the covid19 pandemic. The meeting was opened by prayer. Then, the group discussed the reading report from the Poso and Sumba groups. The Yogyakarta group noticed some similarities between their interpretation and the Sumba group, particularly in the way of approaching the text. According to the Yogyakarta group, they did not read it directly in connection to their social context, but they discussed the details of the text first. They saw the similarities with the other groups in the discussion of forgiveness from God. YP7⁴³ said, "One more idea is that God always forgives. Whenever people make mistakes, God always forgives them. Tentena describes the social situation. There has been no repentance from humans in this case about environment, with victims still affected." YP1⁴⁴ added, "I think the Yogyakarta group often discusses the topic of love. God loves all human despite Israel's tendency to repeatedly commit the mistake of having an affair with another God. However, God's forgiveness is immense."

Besides the similarities, they also observed differences. One woman said that the Poso group seemed to connect the reading directly to their struggle compared to their group which discussed the text first. YP1⁴⁵ said, "Other groups seem to relate it to their situation, yes directly. Like in Tentena, because they are facing a great struggle, they immediately relate the reading to their situation. We can see Gomer

⁴³ Yogyakarta Participant 7, Female, 52 years old, has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

⁴⁴ Yogyakarta Participant 1, female, 52 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

⁴⁵ Yogyakarta Participant 1, female, 52 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

as the embodiment of all of us, humans, who make mistakes from time to time. Repent, but then humans sin again. The Poso group may also see Gomer as a ruler who has an affair with other rulers. So, they go straight to reality. We, as the Yogyakarta group, try to see what it (the text) means first.” According to her, there was a significant difference in the reading strategy between groups. Yogyakarta group focused on and discussed the text first and later the group discussed the application of the message to their context. While they observed that the Poso group highlighted another interpretation, the Poso group identified Gomer and the promiscuous action as the promiscuity of the leader with other rulers. In Yogyakarta’s view, Gomer represented sinful humans. While in the Poso group, Gomer’s promiscuity represented the ruler’s promiscuity which betrays the relationship within the community. The Yogyakarta participant in this meeting highlighted two different elements. The first one was the different context and the other one was the reading strategy. The direct challenge in context has directed the Poso group to discover for themselves the message relevant to their context, while the Yogyakarta community focused on the detail of the text first. The reference to rulers or leaders behaving in socially promiscuous way with others for power and profit caught the attention of the Yogyakarta group because they had not made such an association with the text. What emerged for them was that the reading strategy in the first meeting was not the only reading strategy that they all experienced. In the process of exchange, they were learning from each other. They were becoming attentive to the details of the text that had been highlighted by the other groups. Their reading was evolving and they were learning new insights.

The other woman added that she was very surprised to read the report from the Tentena group. YP3⁴⁶ said,

In my opinion, the reading of Hosea is very contextual with their social situation in Sumba and Tentena, whereas in Yogyakarta we only take

⁴⁶ Yogyakarta Participant 3, female, 38 years old, entrepreneur, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

general issues instead of specific contexts of social injustice. For Yogyakarta, there are ecological problems. The problem exists but our group does not look in that direction, because we only read Hosea in a more general way. Therefore, I was surprised because actually there are ecological problems, social injustices that also exist in Yogyakarta but we do not pay attention to them. What happened in Hosea showed there was a protection for them. God rebukes those who commit infidelity and have attitudes that cause environmental damage. I learned that from the reports in Tentena and Sumba.

The participant did not elaborate further the problem of ecology and social injustice in Yogyakarta. In the first meeting, the Yogyakarta group only mentioned environmental issues in general where for example YP6 highlighted humanity's irresponsible acts on the environment. The earth has been deteriorating and there are lots of disasters. Through the exchange with other groups, YP3 was concerned about the context of ecological problems and social injustice in her region, but the group did not discuss ecological problems further because they only focused on the hope of forgiveness. Therefore, she learned about this alternative meaning from the other group. Her remark is important because it shows how the interpretation of the text becomes richer. Theologically speaking, it becomes more challenging by the engagement with the other groups' interpretations.

The other difference that they mentioned concerns the identification of Gomer. One of the women, YP1, said, "We identify with Gomer as a human being who sins repeatedly. Meanwhile, the group in Tentena criticised Gomer who they saw as a parable for an untrustful ruler."⁴⁷ She realised that they interpreted the image of Gomer differently. One of them, YP9, also mentioned the culture in Sumba that is still very strong in its social structures, especially regarding the roles of women,

⁴⁷ Yogyakarta Participant 1, female, 53 years old, has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

illustrated in Sumba's different interpretation of the image of Gomer.⁴⁸ This group has learned from the other group about the different contexts and approaches to the text. They also admitted that in their reading group they did not explore in detail the connection to the social-ecological issue that exists particularly in their own context.

Moreover, the Yogyakarta group reflected on the different concept of the image of the woman in the text. Their group saw Gomer as a human being who sinned repeatedly but was then forgiven. In the first meeting they even said that Gomer is a lucky woman, while one participant in Tentena criticised the image of Gomer as a patriarchal description. Regarding the different concepts of women, one of the participants, YP9, highlighted the different struggles of her community. In their context, she saw the need to correct mistakes and repent while the other group was struggling with social injustice.⁴⁹ It seems that only in this regard is there no change of perspective regarding the concept of women after the exchange. They said that they learned to complement each other's perspectives through the discussion even though it is clear in this stage that there was no change of perspective from the group about the image of the woman in light of the other group's interpretation because they understood that each group has a different context.

5.4 The Third Meeting

5.4.1 APDP Poso Group Reflection on the Whole Process

During the last session of intercontextual Bible reading, the APDP Poso group highlighted that in their experience and struggle, they gained insights and

⁴⁸ Yogyakarta Participant 9, female, 53 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

⁴⁹ Yogyakarta Participant 9, female, 53 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

understanding through the interpretation together of the text. PP1⁵⁰ said, “Given our current circumstances amidst such disaster, our interpretation of the text is like that. The same goes for Yogyakarta and for Sumba.” He also added that the groups learned that Sumba is facing similar challenges, like in Poso, but their church supports them. It is a different situation in Poso where the church still supports the project. Therefore, the message from Hosea about social promiscuity is still relevant for them and Sumba, especially after learning together about Hosea’s social context and background. Regarding the reading strategy, they thought that the reading strategy from the Yogyakarta group emphasised more the vertical relation with God, but the Poso and Sumba reading considered the horizontal relation with people and environment in their interpretation of the text amid the ongoing destruction. Besides the other group’s responses, the social scientific analysis was also shared and discussed in the group meeting and what had happened at the Mosintuwu festival in order to enrich the discussion. The researcher shared the lessons learned from the group’s reading, especially about social promiscuity, and asked if there were further comments about the imagery of the woman.

PP13 explained further about the imagery in the text. Previously, in the first meeting, she criticised patriarchal texts like Hosea. However, she also saw that the group did not focus on gender analysis of the text because the group focused on the promiscuity act. She then shared about the women’s conference in which she and other women members in the group took part and the creation of the womb of nature imagery by women there. In her explanation, she highlighted the different imagery that was relevant to them. In the women’s conference and the Mosintuwu festival, the women draw together the symbol of the womb of nature. Through the

⁵⁰ Poso Participant 1, 65 years old, Male, Radio Broadcaster, Intercontextual Bible Reading, November 2022.

imagery, the women's group showed their resilience. They emphasised the community's deep connection and their kinship bond with nature. PP13⁵¹ said,

We believe that women's bodies include the elements of land, water and forest. Primarily, it relates to what is produced and consumed, but it is also about the community identity attached to the land, water, and forest."

At the conference and in the festival, the women recalled and celebrated their connection with the land, water, and forest. Nature's damaged body means a complete loss of community identity. Therefore, the womb of nature imagery emphasises the community's deep relationship with nature. Under the threat of disintegration, the relationship needs to be reimagined and deconstructed. PP13's explanation about the womb of nature imagery that reflects the community identity attached to the land, water, and forest is significant and the imagery is discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.4.2 Sumba Group Reflection on the Whole Process

The Sumba group reflected on the whole process and gave an update on their situation. Particular local church members could see the interpretation of social promiscuity while other churches saw the collaboration with the plantation company as a benefit. For example, the local church of this women's group saw the promiscuity in Hosea as a social promiscuity due to the devastating effects of deforestation and water monopolisation. These factors have placed them in a challenging situation, with their fields experiencing droughts and resulting in unsuccessful harvests. Other churches whose members got jobs at the plantation saw it as beneficial even though they were now also experiencing unfair wages. SP8⁵² said,

The situation experienced by Poso and Sumba is very concerning. As people whose lives depend on water as a source of life, it is very concerning that we

⁵¹ Poso Participant 13, Female, 43 years old, activist, Intercontextual Bible Reading, November 2022.

⁵² Sumba Participant 8, Female, 37 years old, farmer and high school teacher, August 2021.

see the government as if they are silent about the conditions. The government's affair with the corporation has been taken as a normal thing. They feel that nothing has happened to the people who make their living as farmers. Now, when we are planting rice, it has not even been a month since we planted rice; we are already guarding the water whether it is morning, noon, or midnight. As ordinary people and local churches, we hope that one day God will open the way for the problems we are experiencing.

She pointed out the structural injustice of water in relation to the leader's promiscuity. The Sumba participant found new meaning through the exchange of discussion with another group. They learned about the other group's context, but they also broadened their perspective on the metaphor of promiscuity. They understood that the social promiscuity in the text of Hosea happened in their context as well. This conscious transformation in perspective also raised further questions for the Poso group. They challenged the Poso's group interpretation of the church, which is limited to an institution. The Sumba group believed that the presence of critical voices from church members against ecological devastation signifies the existence of a prophetic voice, like in Hosea. The social scientific analysis was also shared and discussed in the group meeting. The researcher shared the lessons learned from the group's reading, especially about the ecological implication of human action and asked if there were further comments about the woman and the land imagery.

The Sumba group emphasised the need for self-criticism. This was a significant observation and it is worth hearing from SP1⁵³ at length on this:

For me, I would want to look at the church side. Actually, from the church's perspective, we should do self-criticism. The church, particularly the GKS,

⁵³ Sumba Participant 1, female, 44 years old, farmer and pastor, Intercontextual Bible Reading, August 2021.

has a weakness in that we do not share one perspective on the problem of environmental destruction. Then, we should be concerned about the environmental harm caused by investments that violate regulations. Local churches like ours do not reject investment. However, if the investment does not guarantee the preservation of the environment, then of course, the impact is felt by more than just the congregation and the local community. It has a broader impact, implying that the church is contributing to environmental damage to the earth. Now, the Tentena group said that the church is in a state of promiscuity, and I may imagine that NGOs or environmentalists are more worried than the church. However, the church that actually understands about the creation of the good universe is paralysed. So, we must have the guts to self-critique since the church is often restricted to verbal things, with fiery sermons but little action, particularly when it comes to the environmental destruction that threatens not just Indonesia but the whole planet. We see here that the church's sensitivity is missing. Maybe they are still discussing the kingdom of heaven that when we die, we shall undoubtedly go to paradise. Regarding the environment, there will be someone else who thinks about it. So, it is thought to be not part of the church in general. Therefore, it is critical to continuously educate the congregation and the community, as carried out by the church and the community, that this universe has been made good by God and that humans should not damage it in various ways. Because when people bring harm in many ways, it will return against humans, and they will undoubtedly suffer.

Looking back at the discussion, SP1 reflected on the church's response to social-ecological problems. The changed perspective from seeing the promiscuity imagery as limited to a woman and man relationship to it speaking of social promiscuity has helped the Sumba group to reflect on their own church response.

The intercontextual reading has also served to overcome the isolation of this local church on the issue of environmental destruction. By learning from the other communities who are facing similar problems, the church learns to keep hope. It is

not only a way to understand the details of the text, but it is also a way of consolation, exchanging support and hope. SP8 said, “Talking to one another feels good, and as believers we may pray for each other and learn about what is going on out there. Like the Poso colleagues who are working toward better changes, there is still room for optimism in terms of thinking and attitude change.” The social promiscuity is not the final word of this group exchange; it is hope. Moreover, a greater sense of solidarity is developed.

5.4.3 Yogyakarta Group Reflection on the Whole Process

The final meeting with the Yogyakarta participants did not go as planned because of the Covid 19 pandemic. The group decided to stop the meeting since Covid 19 had impacted some members.

Having presented the results of all the group meetings, the following section will analyse the reading reports by exploring varieties of codes and thematic categories that emerge from the reading reports. The analysis focuses on the reader’s social context through community mapping, the group dynamics, the interpretation process, the exchange of perspectives, the reading of characters in the text and praxeological effect.

5.5 Analysis of Community Mapping as the Exploration of the Reader Social Context

The intention of beginning the first phase of the Bible reading with an exploration of the social context was primarily threefold: to stimulate conversation among the participants within the group, to bring to the fore the group’s understanding of their own situation with regard to the lived realities of culture, identity, equality, social-ecological issues and interfaith relations; and promote understanding of the situations of the other groups involved in the collective reading process.

The results show that in terms of the survivor groups of Poso and Sumba, the mapping exercise⁵⁴ did serve to open up a conversation about social-ecological injustice and acted to document the perceptions and experiences of injustice that have happened or are still happening in the community. The two groups noted that their regions have a lot of natural resources, which means they have been subjected to projects associated with plantations, hydropower, and the extraction of nickel and gold, despite their efforts to either resist or seek a way forward for conserving their livelihoods. Rather than these projects benefitting their communities and identities, their experience is actually forced displacement from their land.

The research also shows that after exchanging the mapping of the various social contexts with other⁵⁴ groups, the groups came to view other communities from broader perspectives.

The exchange helped them understand the social context and the experiences of the other groups, including the similar experience of injustice faced by the two groups. For instance, the Yogyakarta group learned about the situation in Poso and Sumba and then realised that in their region of Central Java, a similar case of ecological injustice was also happening. Other key areas of learning impacted by the exploration of the social context were in terms of seeing other Christian churches and traditions and entering into a dialogue with communities on different islands. Notably, the exploration of social context also offered heuristic keys and new insight into the reading of the Bible. Right from the beginning of the social context exploration, the conversation confirmed two roles played by religion in the social-ecological problems. In Poso, it was reported that the church leaders support, promote, and even pray for the project that threatens the lives of the local community and nature. The religious leaders use the pulpit to share the message of

⁵⁴ This method has been adapted from the Asia Justice and Rights Manual. Galuh Wandita and Karen Campbell-Nelson, *Unlearning Impunity: A Guide to Understanding and Action for Women Survivors* (Jakarta: Asia Justice and Rights 2015) 68.

support for the project. At the same time, there are people from the faith communities in Poso who fight to protect the lake from dredging by the company. Conversely, the Sumba group spoke of how the local church leaders stand with the local community to reject the project of sugar cane plantations that destroy the forests and monopolise the water resources.

Industrial development and extraction projects such as mines, sugar, and palm oil plantations that destroy the natural ecosystem and threaten the lives of local communities are justified in terms of improving human life. *Adat* communities and poor rural communities who resist the project are portrayed as standing in the way of the necessary modernisation process. As far back as the 1960s, Lynn White argued that religion could be the root of the ecological problem because of its anthropocentric perspective.⁵⁵ What people do to the environment is conditioned by what they believe about human and non-human relations. White's criticism is still relevant today, especially in the context of ecological crisis. Religion can still become a problem in human and non-human relations. The situation in Poso demonstrates something of this tension. As already stated, some religious leaders support the project amid the cry of their local community and the ecological crisis and church leaders in Poso are involved in supporting the project, although many people of faith believe that nature is God's creation to be cared for and the members of the churches in Poso have been protesting projects that brings ecological destruction.

In addition, the students of the Theological Seminary in Tentena have been making documentary movies of eco-theology and sharing them to raise awareness on eco-theology. Religion could play a vital role in the transformation, change, and advocacy for social-ecological justice. In terms of what emerged from the process

⁵⁵ Lynn White, "*The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*," *Science*, New Series 155, no. 3766 (1967), 1205.

in this research, the intercontextual reading could also contribute to social-ecological repentance, transformation, and justice.

5.6 Analysis of the Group-Dynamic

The factor that had the most significant impact on the way the groups operated was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant several meetings had to be moved to an online context, conducted either via WhatsApp or Zoom. Only the Poso group and Yogyakarta group managed one in-person meeting. In the onsite meeting, the conversation flow was natural, including intonation, many verbal cues, and even silence, which could be captured easily.

The benefit of access to online media was that the conversation could still take place, and participants were still able to spontaneously give their opinions and comments in real-time interaction. However, the online environment did influence the group dynamic, and the choice of media, either WhatsApp or Zoom, affected the flow of conversation. The WhatsApp meeting took longer than the online Zoom meeting because the participants needed to type in their comments and read other responses before sending theirs. In contrast with the one onsite meeting, there was also a lack of verbal cues and an absence of intonation.¹ Emoji images were used to describe emotion. The Zoom meeting group was more natural in its interaction as it happened almost like a face-to-face meeting. Despite the limitations of technology tools and the pandemic situation, all the groups still participated, shared their interpretation and dialogued with the other groups.

In the groups themselves, some people actively shared their opinions more often compared to the other participants. In the Sumba group, which is made up of all women, the moderator made sure that each participant had the opportunity to share their opinions. She was an essential factor in the way the group entered into the process; she made sure she called each participant by name. She deliberately assured them that they could speak freely and arranged the conversation flow

notably well. The moderator even understood the participants' hesitation to speak because they were afraid.

The Yogyakarta group had a different group dynamic. The group participants are mostly women and one man. In this group, the women were all active in the discussion. In the mixed group of Poso, there was also a participant who did not offer his opinion, but when he agreed with an opinion he nodded or repeated the same keywords. This mixed group had links as part of one advocacy group. Therefore, they focus on a particular emerging issue. Thus, some people shared their opinions often.

The group's composition could influence the conversation dynamic. Everyone in the women only group took turns sharing their thoughts. Almost everyone in the mixed group shared their opinion, even though some people were more active. While in the group with an unbalanced proportion (one man and eight women), the man was silent most of the time. However, that situation could be different if this one man is the faith leader or theologian. The group perhaps would expect him to talk more.

In the discussion of the other groups' reading, there was tension between the willingness to entertain new positions and the reinforcing of existing ones. In response to the readings, some participants in a group were willing to exchange perspectives and reflect on their own reading in light of the others; for instance, the Sumba group and the Poso group on the act of promiscuity. Some participants acknowledged the issue of relativism with respect to some of the views expressed, but some just accepted relativism as a stance without particular impact on their existing perspective, and this could be analysed as stagnation. This tension can be seen in the Yogyakarta group, for example, where a participant said that she was surprised by the reading of the Poso group and she could learn from it. She even reflects on her own group, who did not read it in connection to ecological problems even though they have that problem in their context. From the exchange, she receives new information and is willing to recheck their reading and interpretation.

However, there is also a stagnant perspective concerning the image of the woman in the text. Another participant understands the relativism of interpretation because of the different context, but at the same time she seems to disregard other interpretations of the woman.

5.7 Analysis of the Interpretation Process

The three groups show different interpretation processes. Through intercontextual reading, the text is reread between the readers to express and unfold new meaning. The multiple rereading serves to reveal the dynamics at work and shed light on alternative meanings. In the process of communal rereading, such a reading reflects both a dynamic and operative process through which Christians have found inspiration and discover new meanings.⁵⁶

In their reading of the Hosea text, it was notable that the Yogyakarta group used the intertextual method, seeing a parallel between the woman in Hosea and the woman in John 4. According to one of the participants, the Samaritan woman also had more than one husband, and she sees the situation as parallel to Gomer. Interestingly, the participant draws a parallel between the words of Jesus in John 4 and God's words in Hosea 1:15. Both statements, according to her, show God's love. She saw the parallel description of the women in the texts and God's forgiveness and love to the women.

The Yogyakarta group also interpreted the meaning of Jezreel's blood by comparing it to the story in 2 Kings 10. The intertextual method helped the group to explore the details of the texts further. Moreover, they showed interest in the historical background information. The group emphasised forgiveness and love as

⁵⁶ Hans de Wit, "Scattered over the Hills", in *The Widow and the Judge: Memory, Resistance, Hope*, ed. Hans de Wit and Edgar Lopez (Elkhart, IN: Institute for Mennonite Studies, 2020) 173–174.

God's character. This theme came up repeatedly. The heuristic keys of this group lie in ethics/morality, spirituality, and characters in the text.

In contrast, the Poso group used the reader response method. They were very aware of their social context and experiences of injustice, and thus, in light of their social context, tended to unlock an alternative meaning of the text beyond a religious crisis, echoing my own discoveries in reading the text intersectionally. Social-ecological justice and liberating practices are relevant topics for the group. The group reading of Hosea is contextual, and in the process of communal rereading, the text expresses and speaks new insight for them.

One of the main themes that emerged for the Poso group was the parallel of promiscuity in the text with promiscuity in their social context. In the Poso context, it is the church and government leaders who engage in social promiscuity and betray their community, while it is Gomer who is promiscuous in the text. Through their imagination, they saw the disintegration in their community in parallel with the disintegration in the metaphor. In reading this text, they realised that the message speaks to them, especially when compared with the words from their church leader that marginalised their resistance to the project. The group focused their attention on the action rather than the figures in the text. However, there is also a critical suspicion. One of the participants did raise the question of the woman's negative image in the metaphor. She directly stated that the metaphor is very patriarchal because it uses the image of the woman to describe promiscuity while in reality, promiscuous behaviour is engaged in by both men and women. Therefore, it can be summarised that the focus of this Poso group is on social-ecological justice, disintegration, liberation, and gender equality.

The Sumba group, which had a similar struggle to the Poso group, used a different reading strategy. They read the text with a focus on the characters of Hosea and Gomer. At first, the main question concerned why God would ask Hosea to marry Gomer. Through the discussion on the character of Hosea, they came to see that Hosea was following God's command and enacting prophecy through his family

life. They interpreted the relationship between Hosea and Gomer as directly indicating the relationship between a man and a woman. They then reflected on the disloyalty, the unfaithful character, and the negative image of the promiscuous woman in their context. However, this group also highlighted meaningful interpretations in connection to nature. They see the land described in the text as damaged land which could no longer bring blessings to other living things. They also note that the land is the gift of God to humans and all creatures, and it needs to be well preserved. They also criticised human greed and actions that destroy nature. It can thus be seen that through the reading, the focus of the Sumba group falls on the woman's unfaithful character and the character of Hosea, who follows God's command. Although nature features in their first interpretation, and they highlighted human responsibility to preserve nature, it is not the same as the Poso group. The text was not seen directly through the lens of their own situation. Their first reading is more about the ethical aspect of the character in the text.

5.8 Analysis of the Exchange of Perspectives

It is clear from the first exchange that the groups notice the differences and similarities in the readings. The Yogyakarta group noticed that the other two groups are entirely different in context, characteristics, and experiences. They acknowledged that the other two groups are living through an experience of social-ecological injustice. In their initial reading, the Yogyakarta group discussed the text first and considered their approach to be almost the same as the Sumba group but saw a difference with the Poso group's approach. Reflecting on this, the Yogyakarta group highlighted the need for other groups to discuss the details of the text first and not directly discuss the application.

On the other hand, the Poso group commented that the other groups' approach in reading the Bible is vertical (so focused on God) and not horizontal, reflecting on reality. The Poso group highlighted the importance of reading the Bible in the awareness of reality, injustice, and the social problems in their place and

acknowledged that the hope for the end of the social-ecological injustice is shared between the groups.

As noticed by the Yogyakarta group, all three groups explain the text using different interpretation methods. The Yogyakarta group use intertextuality, imagination strategy, parallelism, and identification with the characters in the text. The Poso group uses reader response in light of their experiences and parallelism. The Sumba group use a parallelism strategy to understand the text. In the beginning, they see the relationship of Gomer and Hosea as the relationship between God and Israel only. The exchange and the discussion with the other groups helped the Sumba group see the characters of Gomer as a metaphorical expression of the elite Israel who had broken away from the Israelite communal solidarity. The Yogyakarta group realise that they are unaware of their social-ecological problems. They confirm the context difference, but the confirmation does not mean that they change their perspective about the image of the woman in the text, still identifying Gomer as the lucky one because of the forgiveness she received from Hosea. It is not easy for the Yogyakarta group to accept any different/additional portrayal of Gomer other than as the sinful human or sinful Israelite, despite their effort to widen their interpretive perspective in other parts of the reading.

The other important aspect of the exchange is what is seen as the emphasis of the message. The Yogyakarta group emphasise forgiveness from God and hope for forgiveness. On the other hand, the Poso group emphasise disintegration, social justice, and concern for the destruction of nature. For the Sumba group, the stress falls on seeing the relationship between Hosea and Gomer as a personal relationship between a man and woman, as well as representing the relationship between God and Israel. The exchange helps the groups cross the border of geography, cultures, social context and background, and church denomination. It is fascinating that instead of having one meaning as the text's central message, the

groups discover other messages of the text. They also get insight from different perspectives and broaden their interpretation.

5.9 Analysis of the Reading of Characters in the Text

The three reading groups also provided various responses related to the characters in the text that they focused on and identified with. The Yogyakarta group focused on Gomer and Hosea. Most of them identified themselves as Gomer and Hosea as God. As humans who repeatedly sinned like Gomer, they were thankful for God's forgiveness. Through the exchange, they learned other interpretations of Gomer.

The Poso group identified Gomer as the leader who betrayed the trust of the ecological community. The group mainly focused on the act of promiscuity that caused disintegration. The participants in the group identified themselves as the children. Through the exchange, a participant in the group highlighted the patriarchal element in the text and, at the same time, shared another image from their community.

The Sumba group also focused on the character of the woman in the text. Previously, they identified Gomer as a promiscuous woman, but through the exchange, they changed their perspective to identify Gomer as the leader who betrayed the community.

5.10 Analysis of the Praxeological Effect

The analysis of praxeological effects deals with empowerment or solidarity in the communal reading process, as well as the relationship between Bible reading and social transformation. Can biblical reading play a role/function in situations of social-ecological injustice and conflict? It asks whether the participants find a companion in the process of communal reading. The exchange between the reading groups shows that they are learning from each other about another context; and that

they are not alone in the fight for social-ecological justice, sharing words of encouragement and solidarity. When the Sumba group discovers that the Poso group has the same experience of social-ecological injustice, they share their support and solidarity with the Poso group. When the Poso group learns from the exchange that the Sumba local church and *Adat* community support the group's fight for social-ecological justice, it strengthens their commitment to collaborate with the *Adat* community to fight for justice and raise the community's awareness of the advocacy movement and their right to social-ecological justice.

In the second meeting, where the individual groups read the social context and other group interpretations, the Poso and Sumba groups shared their need for education on theology advocacy topics. Following the idea, an online webinar was organised in August 2021 to discuss eco-theology advocacy alongside the topic of intercontextual communal reading. This online webinar invited other communities who are also experiencing social-ecological injustice in the eastern part of Indonesia to learn together, sharing solidarity and support as well as planning for the subsequent actions that resulted from the meeting. Thus, it can be seen that the exchange and learning circle of the initial intercontextual Bible reading have had a ripple effect on other communities.

5.11 Summary

The intercontextual reading method has contributed significant perspectives to the interpretation of Hosea. The intercontextual reading encourages scholars to expand their interpretation of Hosea with the issue of social-ecological disintegration. Two reading groups analysed Hosea in connection to the conflicts surrounding ecological, social, and economic matters, as well as the oppressive influence of religious and political authorities. The group's interpretation of social promiscuity significantly challenges academic readings of the text, which are often focused on religious crises of apostasy.

This concluding section draws together the main results from each of the groups and summarises the key findings from the intercontextual readings. In the first reading, the reading groups focused on the act of promiscuity. Moreover, they identified Gomer as the leader in their community who betrayed the community's trust. While reading Hosea, people publicly criticised the leader and expressed disapproval of the social-ecological disintegration and forced change that affected their reality. Social promiscuity and the betrayal of trust have led to division, poverty, and ignorance. They linked the metaphor of disintegration in Hosea's family to the disintegration in the community due to promiscuity.

The topic of familial disintegration (fragmentation) is an important one discussed within the groups and for one group particularly. The group's interpretation expands from the disintegration of the family because of the promiscuity between men and women to the understanding that the disintegration is referring not only to the family but also to other creatures. Their interpretation reveals another significant insight into the ecological aspect. Their understanding of the text informs their views on the relationship between human actions, nature, and morality. Their discussion then developed from a limited relationship between woman and man to a relationship between humans and nature. The negative impact of a promiscuous act is not only on humans but also on other creatures. This perspective is one of the significant findings from this group. Their understanding of the text impacted their position on environmental issues and their actions to tackle them. They saw ecological aspects in the text and associated the problem in terms of the correlation between human activities and their impact on nature. The links show how their biblical readings are applicable to global issues and the strategies they used to overcome them.

The concept of a temple sex ritual or sacred prostitute was discussed in the Yogyakarta group. The participant's perspective has been shaped by the long discourse on sacred prostitution. Therefore, it is essential to analyse the woman in the text further since her image is often discussed not only in this group but also in many other interpretations. When questioned about the image of the woman in the

text, one person described Gomer as fortunate, and the others agreed with this opinion. Hosea forgives Gomer despite her stubbornness and tendency to make errors. Gomer was seen as a fortunate woman rather than an objectified female figure. The central theme of this text, according to them, was forgiveness. Despite Gomer's repeated mistakes, Hosea forgave her. In the discussion, the group did not expressly address gender norms and expectations in the portrayal of Gomer. However, the groups did not mention or address the severe punishment inflicted on Gomer. Only a few participants criticised the patriarchal perspective of the Hosea text. PP13 from Poso, for instance, analysed the text from a feminist perspective. She criticised the portrayal of Gomer as a promiscuous woman and someone who has more than one partner. The text of Hosea talks about sin by portraying the woman's sexuality. The discussion of sin often centers on women's sexuality, as detailed in Hosea and the participant criticised the way women's sexuality is talked as the source of sin. Therefore, she commented that the text of Hosea was patriarchal.

The reading of the text of Hosea with the Sumba community also showed that the readers at the beginning of the discussion mostly raised questions about God's command to marry a promiscuous woman. The participants discussed the underlying challenges inside their group by questioning the rationale of God's advice to Hosea. The question touched on the complex interaction of gender dynamics and potential social obstacles. The participant's analyses of the Biblical text offered insights into broader concerns such as gender dynamics. Two participants from Sumba suggested that Hosea's reputation as a prophet may be affected by Gomer's reputation as a promiscuous woman. However, Hosea obeyed God's command as described in the Bible. The participant reflected on the situation in their culture, where many men have more than one wife. Currently, males are the ones who engage in promiscuous behaviour more than women, compared to the text. During the conversation, they interpreted Gomer as a stubborn person, disrespectful to her husband and a badly behaved and unfaithful woman. SP1 in the Sumba group was the only one to note that the promiscuous woman is marginalised

due to her failure to behave according to the expected moral norms. She recognised the vulnerable position of promiscuous women in the society of the time.

In the exchange of interpretations, the Yogyakarta group analysed the various perceptions of the female image presented in the text. The group saw Gomer as an individual who committed sin yet received forgiveness. During the first meeting, it was said that Gomer is fortunate, but a participant from Tentena criticised the portrayal of Gomer as a patriarchal perspective. One of the participants from the Yogyakarta group emphasised the many challenges faced by women in her neighbourhood. She saw the need to correct mistakes and repent while the other group was grappling with issues of societal injustice. Only in this aspect, there is a lack of change in perspective on the notion of women. The Yogyakarta group acknowledged that despite engaging in discussions, there was no shift in their perspective regarding the image of the woman. Instead, the Yogyakarta group discussed humanity's irresponsible acts on the environment. They saw God's punishment in Hosea 2:12 as a way of giving a warning.

The other significant contribution from the intercontextual discussion is the sharpening ecological insight. Through the reading exchange, SP1⁵⁷ from Sumba said that there is a need to comprehend promiscuity beyond husband-wife relations. The exchange is an essential aspect of intercontextual reading, demonstrating how the participants learn from each other, and this instance particularly shows the significant change of perspective of the groups. The Sumba group, in their first reading, interpreted sexual promiscuity literally as only concerning a relation between husband and wife. However, after the exchange they admitted the need to interpret beyond men's and women's sexual relations. The Poso group read the promiscuity in relation to social ecological issues, while the Yogyakarta group focused on the sin of promiscuity and forgiveness (spiritually oriented). One of them, YP9, also mentioned the culture in Sumba that is still very strong in its social structures, especially regarding the roles of women, illustrated in the Sumba's

⁵⁷ Sumba Participant 1, female, 44 years old, farmer and pastor, Intercontextual Bible Reading, February 2021.

group different interpretation of the image of Gomer.⁵⁸ This Yogyakarta group has learned from the other group about the different contexts and approaches to the text. They also admitted that in their reading group, they did not explore further in detail the connection to the social-ecological issue that also exists in their own context.

Social-ecological disintegration is not the final interpretation of the groups. Through the discussion, the group also discussed hope and exchanged support with each other. According to PP13⁵⁹ from Poso, however the other two groups' readings on hope were very vertical, focusing only on their relation to God but not horizontal concerning those around them. This was an important contribution that reminded other groups that the reading should function for liberation and not only concerns spiritual matters and the salvation of the individual.

Perhaps one of the most notable results from the intercontextual reading was the sense of support and solidarity shown from each group to the others. This indicates that the reading has a praxeological effect where communal reading builds solidarity. This aspect also signifies the transformative potential for a communal reading of the Bible. Through the exchange of ideas and experiences, the participating groups foster a sense of commonality and unity.

⁵⁸ Yogyakarta Participant 9, female, 53 years old, teacher, Intercontextual Bible Reading, April 2020.

⁵⁹ Poso Participant 13, female, 44 years old, activist, Intercontextual Bible Reading, June 2021.

Chapter 6

The Womb of Nature

Exploring Relations between Land and Body

6.1 Introduction

In an attempt to expand the analysis, this chapter focuses on the symbolic relations between land and body in Hosea. The intercontextual reading in Chapter 5 has shared insight of the social promiscuity and disintegration resulting from the social-economic crisis that negatively impacts the relationship with other bodies of nature. The social scientific criticism approach in Chapter 4 has helped to understand how the use of metaphor in Hosea expresses the opposition to centralisation, which led to shattered kinship bonds and solidarity with both humans and other parts of creation. The analysis also shows the metaphor of hope for a restored relationship. Nevertheless, although the intertwining of nature and the body was made clear in the reading offered, the social scientific method alone is still not sufficient to fully explore the relationship between land and body in light of the many symbols of land and body in Hosea. This is an important issue that needs more attention and the aim of this chapter is to both call into question a dualist perspective on the relationship between the land and body imagery in Hosea and to examine to what extent the direct connection with nature influences the reading, particularly exploring how identity intertwined with nature affects the interpretation of the symbolism of land and woman's body in Hosea.

In terms of the theoretical framework, the chapter specifically engages with ecofeminism as a significant contribution to exploring ideas of gender and ecology and the various intersections that are in play within these areas. As ecofeminism approaches give voice to the lived experience of women and other bodies in nature as well as work with intersectionality, some of the results from the empirical intercontextual reading will be engaged in the discussion. This provides a

framework for serious consideration of the imagery of the womb of nature that arose from the community reading at the centre of the research.

The chapter continues below with a brief introduction to various feminist and ecofeminist perspectives regarding Hosea before examining closely the metaphor of woman and violence and the land metaphor in Hosea. This will demonstrate the significant contribution to interpretation of the text that can be made from ecofeminist and Indonesian intercontextual community readings.

6.2 Feminist Readings on Hosea

Several feminist studies of the female promiscuity metaphor in Hosea have critically dealt with the gender asymmetries in Hosea.¹ For instance, Yvonne Sherwood discusses the stripping of the woman. She engages with H. W. Wolff's opinion which suggests that the stripping of the woman indicates the husband's freedom from the obligations to clothe his wife (a legal obligation in the marriage).² Moreover, in the historical context, stripping is a manifestation of the husband's male power, hinting at the male weakness of her other lover and at female dissatisfaction. Sherwood then compares this view to research in pornography which suggests the rise of pornography as a reaction to the threat of female autonomy in the context of increased influence of the feminist movement.³ Sherwood therefore suggests that the act of stripping in Hosea 1-3 can be interpreted similarly to the way feminists analyse the current situation of pornography, revealing a male rhetoric that raises objections while concealing the

¹ See Yvonne Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Yvonne Sherwood, "Boxing Gomer: Controlling the Deviant Woman in Hosea 1-2," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 101-125; Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Gert Kwakkkel, "Gender Perspectives on Hosea 2:4-25: Contributions from the Netherlands from 1988 until 2003," in *The Present State of Old Testament Studies in the Low Countries*, ed. Klaas Spronk (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

² Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 314.

³ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 314-315.

subtext of female power.⁴ The way the text of Hosea accuses the woman of sexual transgression shows the double standard in the Hebrew Bible. The female is visible in the text, but the male lover is invisible. It is the female body that retains the mark of promiscuity. Therefore, from Sherwood's point of view, the act of stripping emphasises the superior position of the male and the text's double standard that exposes the presence of the man despite its attempts to erase his presence and leave the woman alone on the textual stage.⁵ In her analysis, Sherwood criticises the subject-object (male-female) dichotomy in the text. The double standard thus reveals the woman as the sole representative of promiscuity and the only one found guilty in the text. Simultaneously, it reflects on the accuser and highlights male complicity in the promiscuity.⁶

While Sherwood's analysis exposes the double standard that portrays women as the sole representatives of promiscuity and guilt in the text, Gale A Yee provides further insight into the husband's control over his wife. According to Yee, the husband's control in the text of Hosea is particularly insidious because the implication tends to be ignored after the reader is caught in the hope of reconciliation.⁷ Other feminist studies have aimed to analyse the text of Hosea beyond the sexist dualism perspective. Alice Keefe, for instance, agrees with feminist scholars who criticise the dualism of subject and object, male-female, in the text. However, Keefe observes that they do not take the idea of dualism far enough into other areas such as the dualism of fertility religion and ethical Yahwism. Therefore, Keefe suggests reading Hosea beyond the dualism of fertility religion and ethical Yahwism. Instead of dualism, she highlights the close

⁴ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 315.

⁵ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 315.

⁶ Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet*, 315–316.

⁷ Gale A. Yee, "Hosea", in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. C.A. Newsom and S.H. Ringe (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

connection between the female body, the fertile land, and the sacred significance of the Israelite community.⁸

Dismantling dualism in theological thinking is essential, as seen in the works of these ecofeminist scholars. However, in this chapter, I argue that the critical analysis of the imagery presented in Hosea should be extended to the whole field of ecology and not just applied to humans. Thus, examining the relationship between the woman and nature within a critique of patriarchy in the text of Hosea using ecofeminist analysis is essential.

Numerous valuable feminist readings are particularly critical of the obvious gender dualism in the text of Hosea. However, the analysis now needs to be extended to the various elements in the text that also talk about the deep connection with nature. Ecofeminism offers various analyses of the intersection between feminisms and ecology. It is an empirical approach based on the daily and lived experience of women and other bodies within the ecological community.⁹ Ecofeminism opposes any singular or universal strategy to solve human and ecological problems in light of the diversity of context, insight and knowledge. Therefore, numerous feminist and ecological points of view are represented by ecofeminist thinking.¹⁰ Current ecofeminism is an interdisciplinary analysis and action of transforming the relationship between women and men, between diverse cultures, between humans and the larger ecological communities.¹¹ Currently, ecofeminist theologians are expanding their analyses with new insights that integrate intersectionality with contextual approaches. As a result, the discourse is broadening to encompass various themes, including land grabbing, food, farming, climate change, and

⁸ See Alice A. Keefe, *Woman's Body and The Social Body in Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 13 & 190–197.

⁹ Heather Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 27–28.

¹⁰ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 30.

¹¹ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 35–36.

ecojustice. These themes address structural inequalities and domination by considering the intersection of class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.

In the text of Hosea, the association of woman and nature is introduced at the start of chapter one. For instance, the woman and the land are both depicted as committing promiscuity. From an ecofeminist perspective, the association of women and nature, which is placed in a subordinate position as compared to men and culture, is particularly problematic.¹² A similar hierarchical dualism which primarily associates women and nature with matter has its roots in classical Greek philosophy, according to Elizabeth Johnson. In this perspective, men, on the other hand, are associated with rationality, act, and spirit.¹³ Ecofeminist theologians reject and criticise dualism as such in the theological tradition by first asking why gender dominance is connected to nature domination. Ecofeminists believe that the reconstruction of a better relationship with nature is necessary to achieve ecological justice.¹⁴ Therefore, the question of justice is central to the critique of the connection between gender dominance and the domination of nature.

Along with Elizabeth Johnson, Rosemary Radford Ruether also emphasises the necessity for ecofeminism to reject the assumptions that prioritise and assert the controlling role of the male-identified mind over the female-identified body. They argue that there is a need to dismantle the system of domination in favour of a system of mutual life-giving, which should transform the model of God.¹⁵ Reflecting on the Western Christian context, Ruether proposes such a transformation in relation to a new interpretation of the covenant and urges

¹² Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Ecofeminism: The Challenge to Theology," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Wellbeing of Earth and Humans*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 97.

¹³ Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation in the Christian Tradition," in *Christianity and Ecology*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 16–17.

¹⁴ Celia Deane-Drummond, "Creation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 192.

¹⁵ Ruether, "Ecofeminism: the Challenge to Theology," 103 and 105.

embracing both Gaia and the cosmic God. The idea of Gaia is a reworked concept of the presence of God in the whole community of creation.¹⁶ The term Gaia originates from the work of the two scholars in biology, Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock, who understand earth as a living organism, Gaia. Gaia is characterised by a complex mechanism of interdependencies.¹⁷ Sallie McFague further explores an embodied model of God and highlights interconnectedness through the image of the world as the body of God.¹⁸ Her theology focuses on the religious significance of bodies, in contrast to a dualistic perspective that fears the body.

In learning from the ecofeminist discourse, the interpretation of the text in which Hosea employs many symbolic relationships of land and body needs to be revisited. It will be argued here that a more holistic ecofeminist view is needed in interpreting Hosea. This view should foreground the intersectionality of gender, class, location, habitat, and ecosystem within the planetary framework. As the community reading reflects these intersections, it is important in this chapter to also bring a number of ideas expressed there into dialogue with ecofeminist understandings, especially the contextual understanding of the world as the body of God as encapsulated in the womb of nature metaphor.

The womb of nature metaphor highlights the deep connection with nature that has been forgotten by a forced economic project that exploits nature. This deep connection through the womb of nature is parallel to Hosea's metaphor, which uses the erotic symbols of nature to highlight this interconnectedness. This chapter will delve into the interconnectedness and womb imagery as contributing to an alternative contextual interpretation of Hosea and to the development of ecofeminist theology.

¹⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 227–228; 254–255.

¹⁷ Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 56.

¹⁸ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 20–21.

All the discussion in this chapter seeks to analyse to what extent the deep connection with nature influences the interpretation of the symbolic imagery of land and body in Hosea. How can a holistic intersectional ecofeminist reading contribute to an alternative contextual interpretation of Hosea?

6.3 The Problematic Metaphor of Female Imagery and Violence in Hosea

One of the problematic parts of the symbolic relation of land and body imagery in Hosea is related to violence. The problematic metaphors in Hosea demonstrate that the violence extends beyond sexuality and abuse of the female body to the destruction of nature as punishment for the female. In Hosea 2:5, God shames the female and promises violence to her naked body:

Otherwise, I will strip her naked
and I will expose her like the day she was born.
I will make her like the wilderness,
I will make her like a dry land
and I will make her die with thirst.

In Hosea 2:12:

And now I will expose her nakedness
in front of her lover's eyes
and no one will set her free from my hand.

The metaphor is problematic because Hosea uses the metaphor of dry land and wilderness to describe the violence to the female body, which focuses on humiliation. Repeatedly, God promises to humiliate the woman in the text.

Carole Fontaine argues that Hosea's God of love was a patriarch with very human traits, including a violent need for power and an obsession on maintaining control over his household. The acceptance of this violence as love in interpretation is a revealing remark on society where domestic violence against women and children

is common.¹⁹ Athalya Brenner on the other hand concludes that the texts such as those in Jeremiah and Hosea are pornographic texts and not texts of love. The image of humiliation can also be found in other texts, such as Ezekiel 16 and 23.

Presentations of pornography often include themes of violence, dominance and gender relations.²⁰ Brenner uses four categories of pornography to analyse the text of Jeremiah: features, functions, definition, and causes of pornography. She argues that the poet's psychological and social concerns, along with his political and religious concerns as a male, are reflected in the erotic propaganda.²¹ Brenner highlights the binary representation of gender. The husband is divine, correct, faithful, positive and possesses voice while the woman exhibits human flaws such as corruption, unfaithfulness, negativity, and she is silenced. The dual problem of the text is it can be interpreted either as erotic or as pornography. It also serves either as a realistic metaphor or needs to be read as a historical text from the past requiring modern interpretation.²² Brenner contends that Hosea is a pornographic propaganda and not an erotic text.²³ She argues that the texts use propaganda techniques such as stereotyping, name giving, selection, stereotyped fantasy, promotion, promises, rewards and so forth.²⁴ The woman in the text is objectified and dehumanised through different techniques, including expulsion. Brenner highlights that in this propaganda, the primary objective is to establish a connection with the male god at the expense of degrading and objectifying a naked women.²⁵ Feminist scholars have rightly criticised the violence done to the woman's body in the text. This violence and the humiliation done to the woman should not be

¹⁹ Carole Fontaine, "A Response to Hosea," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 195), 63–64.

²⁰ Athalya Brenner, "On Prophetic Propaganda and the Politics of Love: The Case of Jeremiah," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 195), 259.

²¹ Brenner, "On Prophetic Propaganda," 266.

²² Athalya Brenner, "Pornoprophetic Revisited: Some Additional Reflections," *Journal for The Study of The Old Testament* 21 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 64–65.

²³ Brenner, "Pornoprophetic Revisited," 70–73.

²⁴ Brenner, "Pornoprophetic Revisited," 74–76.

²⁵ Brenner, "Pornoprophetic Revisited," 77.

ignored in the interpretation of Hosea. As argued in Chapter 3, it is dangerous to read Hosea's promiscuity metaphor as limited to the female wife's wrongdoing and highlight only the male husband as God who loves. I agree with Fontaine and Brenner that the metaphor of God as husband threatening the woman with violence and humiliation is problematic. Therefore, I contend that the divine association of God with the husband should be read critically, avoiding a literal interpretation and acknowledging that it is not the sole metaphor representing God. However, this research proposes to expand the association of the promiscuity metaphor in relation to social, economy and ecological disintegration. The violence could be seen as the impact of the ongoing crisis upon Israel's community and the land. By focusing on social, economic, and ecological disintegration, this research is not suggesting that violence against a woman's body is acceptable and should be ignored. There are other factors such as power relations, the economy, and social crisis that play a significant role in the interpretation of the text of Hosea.

The other problematic issue is the close connection between violence against women and violence against nature, as expressed in Hosea 2:5. It could be said that the metaphor relates closely to the real-life experience of women and nature in suffering violence. This perspective has been argued by ecofeminists who criticise the interlocking oppression of nature with the oppression of women. Ecofeminist theologians are concerned that there is a binary between nature and humans and that women have been placed alongside nature. In this binary, women are associated with nature while men are associated with God. A general, biased assumption arises that men have gained the image of God, while both women and land are used as objects and experience oppression. However, claims that women possess a unique connection to nature and are inherently more ethical in terms of environmental responsibility have been appropriately criticised as essentialist. The argument often restricts women into fixed responsibilities, such as the conventional distribution of labor and childbearing. Moreover, the essentialist argument places responsibility for these aspects solely on the female, whereas everyone should be involved in giving, caring, and nurturing life. The concept of women and land as

objects of oppression shows the degradation of women's sexual power and the intrinsic value given to the land.

Mary Grey also criticises the social construction of women. In the division of labor, women's tasks have been the primary support of life, such as preparing food, raising children, and doing household chores. At the same time, nature has been idealized in cultural assumptions as a bountiful mother whose resources can be plundered for human pleasure without restraint.²⁶ This kind of approach has limited women to fixed roles in the society. As highlighted by Heather Eaton, it becomes essentialism with the premise that biological differences between women and men have caused differences in character, capability, ethics, and temperament. She warns that these theories within essentialism often go unquestioned, becoming concepts that have become ingrained and accepted in many cultures.²⁷ In this light, Grey suggests reconceptualising the women/body and nature connection to include both men and women. Instead of the dualism of men and women, it is crucial to rethink the human person, both men and women, with body and mind.²⁸

In Hosea's metaphor of promiscuity, the woman and the land lose their subjectivity. Furthermore, when the woman and the land are identified solely with a domestic function, their contribution of giving and nurturing life can be problematic. In the agrarian society of ancient Israel, women and men are involved in a subsistence production system. Therefore, caring and nurturing life in a mutual responsibility can be useful and crucial to reclaiming the kinship bond and solidarity against the power and economic structures that destroy life.

²⁶ Mary Grey, "Ecofeminism and Christian Theology," *The Furrow* 51 no.9 (Maynooth: The Furrow Press, 2000), 482–483.

²⁷ Heather Eaton, "Ecofeminist Theologies in the Age of Climate Crisis" *Feminist Theology*, 29 (no.3), (2021):212. <https://doi-org.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/09667350211000605>

²⁸ Grey, *Ecofeminism and Christian Theology*, 486-487.

With this in view, as language and metaphor have power, the feminisation of promiscuity in the form of the wife could strongly describe the wrongdoings of elite Israel that destroys the kinship bond and solidarity, including the bond with nature. In an agrarian society worldview, humans and nature are interconnected. The use of the destruction of nature acts as a symbol of the chaos and crisis. This is reflected in the many other nature metaphors used in Hosea, indicating the connection between humans and nature and the way that ancient agrarian Israel experienced and understood the world through the human body and nature around them.

6.4 Land Metaphor in Hosea

The metaphor of land in Hosea goes beyond mere physical description and holds a significant symbolic meaning. In Hosea 2:1, the land is feminised and become a representation of humanity's sin, influenced by the negative imagery associated with women through promiscuity action. This feminised land metaphor is explored further in this section to understand its implications.

In order to understand the metaphor of land, it is first useful to briefly explore the ancient Israel worldview concerning the land. The multifaceted meanings attributed to the land highlight its integral part in the value system. Firstly, the land is an essential component of *בית אב*, forming part of the relationship between God and the people. It is a promised land bestowed by God,²⁹ evident in narratives portraying the land as *נהלה* (*nahalah*) passed down through generations. However, Israel does not assert ownership of the land; instead they regard it as a gift promised to their ancestor, Abraham. It is acknowledged that discussing the land as *נהלה* (*nahalah*) presents challenges. Several stories in the Bible involve the land being occupied through war, although this aspect is outside the scope of this study.

²⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd Edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 45–46.

In Hosea the issue is different. As an inheritance, the land, as נְהִלָּה belonging to God, was given to the ancestors, and was integrated into the community. The land is to be nurtured, appreciated, and preserved across generations,³⁰ rooted in the Yahwistic history that emphasises mutual obligation and interdependence. In this understanding, the land is always linked to the community and its generations, the land is to be used communally and there is little space for individual ownership.

The other perspective about land is related to economic production. As an essential factor in the economic production of בֵּית אֵב, the land is used communally for the cultivation of grain. Cooperation and solidarity are valuable and necessary for the survival and continuity of kinship. In the בֵּית אֵב, the value of land is not emphasised in economic terms for the sake of unlimited profit. It is part of בֵּית אֵב in socio-cultural relationships. The production from the land is for the survival of the community. However, a different perspective on the land challenges the value of land as *nahalāh*. For instance, the story of Ahab and Naboth in 1 Kings 21 depicts an alternative viewpoint regarding land. For King Ahab, the land is commodity; he can take ownership of the land through his power. On the other hand, Naboth rooted in the land and communal agrarian systems of exchange and interdependence, opposed King Ahab's idea. He became the victim of the social political change concerning the land.³¹

Further complexity arises with the feminisation of the land. In Hosea, the land is personified and identified with womankind, reflecting the agricultural worldview, where the process of growing life is deemed important and sacred. Both the land and the womb show procreative power, highly valued in ancient Israel's agricultural perspective. The association of a woman's body in Hosea is evident

³⁰ Lady Paula R. Mandalika, "Makna Tanah dalam Kompetisi," in *Teologi Tanah: Perspektif Kristen terhadap Ketidakadilan Sosio-Ekologis di Indonesia*, ed. Zakaria J. Ngelow and Lady Paula R. Mandalika (Makassar: OASE INTIM, 2015), 242–243.

³¹ Mandalika, "Makna Tanah," 244.

not only in Hosea 1:2 but also in other parts of Hosea, such as Hosea 2: 5, as previously mentioned:

I will make her like the wilderness,
I will make her like a dry land

Hosea 2: 11–12

11. Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time
my new wine in its appointed time
I will take away my wool and my linen
to cover her nakedness.
12. And now I will expose her nakedness
in front of her lover's eyes
and no one will set her free from my hand.

Hosea 2: 25

I will sow her myself in the land.
I will have compassion on Lo-Ruhama,
I will say to Lo-Ammi: "You are my people,"
He will say, "My God."

The identification of the woman's body and the land highlights the fertility inherent in the womb and soil. In ancient Israel's agricultural worldview, procreative power is possessed by a woman's body and the soil, closely linked to the continuity of kinship and family. As seen in the text, the promiscuity metaphor is employed by Hosea to illustrate how this relationship, continuity, and kinship solidarity face threats. The womb is expected to produce the next generation, essential for social identity and kinship. At the same time, the land is also described in relation to the kinship and the fabric of social life in ancient Israel. The image of the woman of promiscuity is put in parallel with the image of the land of promiscuity. In this

worldview, the concern regarding the woman of promiscuity revolves around the children who are alienated from the kinship identity. In terms of a land of promiscuity, the fruits of the land are produced by a foreign system that is also alienated from the kinship economy and no longer contributing to the continuity of the kinship of ancient Israel. Consequently, the fruits of the land no longer serve the purpose of sustaining the kinship identity of ancient Israel and the children will no longer continue the kinship identity.

The land of promiscuity in Hosea shows the change in the meaning and the use of land. It shows clearly that the land supports social structure and economy. The land that used to be a close part of *בית אב* has changed to a commercialised agribusiness land. The production of the land is no longer for the survival of the kinship, but for the profit of the elite. Land of promiscuity describes the broken kinship relationship to *בית אב* and how the land loses its sacred meaning and its agency in creation. The land of promiscuity shows the problem of justice and communal survival without the land. The more extensive the promiscuity, the more the exploitation of the land and its productivity increases. This argument is also supported by how Hosea uses the symbols of land, seed, and sexuality to show the intimate relationship between kinship and the land. The promiscuity means that the land has experienced degradation because it is no longer respected as a subject, an essential part of the kinship and sacred fabric of the life of ancient Israel.

The land, once used for subsistence crops, was increasingly lost to commercial production. The commercial agricultural expansion destroyed the interrelationship in which the community defined its identity and meaning. The commodification of the production and exchange for substantial profit, outside the survival mode, also resulted in cultural disruption.³² The metaphor in Hosea concerning land, seed, and sexuality shows the cosmology of an agrarian community that respects the intrinsic value of the land and the ability of soil to grow life. The analysis of the metaphor

³² Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 194–197.

through cosmology and the conceptual background of the land shows the importance of reading the metaphor of the land in relation to the economic-political realms that places the problem of the land in Judah and Israel as a land grabbing of the elite men at the expense of the rights of the community who live in partnership and close kinship relation with the land. In the metaphor of the land of promiscuity, the idea of integration, solidarity, and kinship through land has been changed to disintegration and alienation.

As has been highlighted already, in an ecofeminist reading, the identification of the woman's body and the land is considered problematic because the dualities that are rehearsed in Hosea are man versus woman aligned with culture versus nature. In relation to violence, the woman has been identified with nature, while the man is indirectly connected with God and associated with rationality, and so forth. The position of Gomer in Hosea for feminist theologians does not offer a promising perspective on the female body.³³ This remark is an important critique. However, in my understanding, even though we should be critical and aware of the problem of an ideology of men and God symbolically located in opposition with nature and woman, there is still some meaning that can be usefully gained from the reading of Hosea. The metaphor of Hosea can be analysed as an intersectional vulnerability. The use of the power of sexuality and fertility as a source of life is important for the continuity of the community, kinship, and culture. At the same time, other gender vulnerabilities in Hosea need to be read critically.

This might be done by using the recent situation of women in Poso, Indonesia. As a community who suffered from conflict³⁴ and were subject to intersectional

³³ Geke van Vliet, "The Story of Hosea and Gomer: A Gender Perspective," in *Building Bridges towards A More Human Society*, ed. Kirsten van Der Ham, Geke van Vliet, Peter-Ben Smit, and Klass Spronk (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2022), 191.

³⁴ The Poso riot sparked in 1998 became a religious conflict between Islam, Christianity. The root of the problem is natural resources. Religion was used to manipulate people into fighting each other and land was easily taken by companies. Therefore, there is always a risk of conflict recurring.

vulnerabilities, the Poso women have also used the womb metaphor and reminded themselves that nature, including the land and water is part of their bodies. The Poso women use the metaphor of a woman's body to reclaim the power of inclusive creation in women's body and nature. It is the woman's agency against imperialism of economic development that explores nature, maps it, and then controls it. This reflection is centred on the feminine principle of creation, constructed on women's experiences intersected with cultures, rituals, and visible knowledge that empowers them. It is their way to position themselves as subject to restoration along with nature's regeneration process. This feminine principle is not limited exclusively to women but applies to the power of creativity in nature and other species.

Unlike the ecofeminist view, which struggles with the identification of woman and nature, the Poso women, rooted in agricultural backgrounds, use the metaphor of their own bodies to reclaim the mutual interdependence and a close relationship with nature. I contend that the Hosea metaphor also has a parallel conceptual idea. Hosea addressed the crisis and disintegration of the kinship bond in Israel's community through the metaphor of the female body and the land. Even though there should still be awareness that the metaphor is not used by the woman herself but by the male, and the metaphor is not specifically talking about the situation of women themselves but about the social crisis that brings disintegration to the kinship bond including their bond with the land and nature. The metaphor also plays a role in reclaiming the importance of integration and the solidarity of community through the image of women and the land.

6.5 Deep Connection with Nature

The deep connection with nature is important for the communities involved in my research, and their experiences are instructive in how such connection with nature and an intersection of gender, social, economy and power relations might lead to a different type of interpretation of the Hosea text and add to a more holistic ecofeminist perspective. Before moving on to the issues of intersection, as

illustrated by the community reading, it is important to set out something about how the communities see their intersection with nature. More particularly, we need to explore their connection with a specific place in the environment. This deep connection with nature is not only of immense significance to the communities involved in my research, but it also forms a vital component of the ecofeminist perspective that underpins this chapter's analysis. Understanding how these communities perceive their intersection with nature can shed light on a different interpretation of the Hosea text and contribute to a more holistic ecofeminist viewpoint. One of the Poso's reading group members, PP14 said,

For Pamona people, Poso Lake is *Sira* (a title for respected ones). We see and understand Poso Lake as part of ourselves.³⁵

His reflection shows the deep connection of communities with Poso Lake. They understand that they belong to nature and see nature as a part of themselves. The Lake and the rice fields on the shore are not just places but are where their culture and traditions grow intertwined with nature.

Furthermore, drawing from the experiences of traditional adat communities in Sumba, we witness a profound connection between these communities and the natural world. For them, nature is not merely a resource but a realm of spiritual significance, reflecting the idea of *hamayang* or worship. This deep-rooted connection underscores the intimate relationship between these communities and their natural surroundings. *Katuada Mananga*, located near the estuary, is the place of prayer for rain, the spring that flows for all creation, and the sea. For this reason,

³⁵ PP14, male, traditional adat leader, Intercontextual Reading Group in Tentena, June 2021; See Pian Siruyu, "Dokumen Warisan Geologi Danau Poso, Jalan Panjang Menuju Taman Bumi," mosintuwu.com, March 2023, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/10/10/dokumen-warisan-geologi-danau-poso-jalan-panjang-menuju-taman-bumi/>; See also Press Release WALHI, "Perusahaan Kalla Group Menenggelmkan Lahan Pertanian Masyarakat Pesisir Danau Poso," walhi.or.id, March 2023, <https://www.walhi.or.id/index.php/perusahaan-kalla-group-menenggelmkan-lahan-pertanian-masyarakat-pesisir-danau-poso>.

the adat communities maintain and safeguard the water springs. *Katuada Padua*, which is located in the middle of rice paddies and fields is another place where they pray for fertility and good growth. Furthermore, another important place for Sumba people is *Katuada Njara Yuara Ahu*, located in the savannah; they pray for good green grass and animals.³⁶

All those places play a significant role in the ecosystem. However, they are all under threat. Currently, the trees in the forest, and the bushes and plants in the savannah are gone because of a sugar cane plantation project. The water spring is controlled by a factory plantation project while the community's rice fields are experiencing drought. Moreover, the Adat communities in Sumba can no longer pray in their places of worship. The deep connection shown by these two communities is different from the growing disconnection of humans in contemporary life. However, this deep connection is now being seriously undermined or even destroyed.

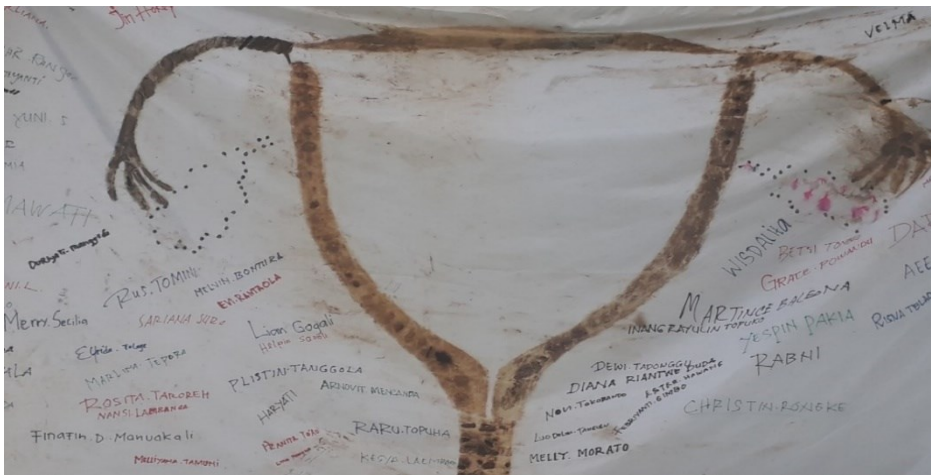


Figure 7: Womb of Nature, Mosintuwu Institute

³⁶ Martha Hebi, “Tuan Rumah yang Dipinggirkan: Umat Maraou Dulu Didiskriminasi Agamanya, Kini Hidupnya Ditekan Proyek Swasembada Gula Jokowi, ” Project Multatuli. 30 November 2021, accessed, 12 November 2022. <https://projectmultatuli.org/tuan-rumah-yang-dipinggirkan-umat-marapu-dulu-didiskriminasi-agamanya-kini-hidupnya-ditekan-proyek-swasembada-gula-jokowi/>

Moreover, the concept of a womb of nature (Fig. 7) emerges as a powerful symbol within the Poso's women's group, symbolizing the depth of their connection with the natural world. This symbolism, created using elements of nature from their environment, serves as a potent expression of resistance against the exploitation and control of nature by corporate interests, often with governmental and religious support. The womb of nature imagery is drawn by the women in the conference by using the soil, leaves, water, and forest products from their villages. The soil from different villages is mixed with water that has travelled a great distance to the village. The picture is then topped with rice from the Bada valley, rattan from the Poso mountain, and various types of wood and bamboo.³⁷ It becomes a symbol of connection and the bond with nature.

The women remember their connection with the land, water and forest as they talk about them at the conference. These memories vividly illustrate the symbiotic relationship between communities and their natural surroundings. The stories of joy, reliance, and sharing with nature underscore the profound significance of these ecological connections within their daily lives. They all have essential local knowledge and experiences concerning the land, water, and forest. They reflect on the context and dynamic history of the land, water, and forest. They also reflect in their imagination on the future to achieve justice in environmental life and sustainable ecosystems. People from the Poso Pesisir region take turns mentioning the fertility and richness of the forest in their area. Ebony wood and cacao plantations are the livelihood of the community. Moreover, in the East Pamona region, women proudly speak about Lake Toju as the center of community tourism and a lake with many fish. Meanwhile, in the Bada Valley region, they share stories about endemic rice variety. Their memories also emphasise how management for life is done together, manually, and organically. In order to survive, they work together with the land and no fertiliser is used. It is easy to produce the harvest

³⁷ Sekretariat Mosintuwu, "Konferensi Perempuan Poso tentang Tanah, Air dan Hutan," Mosintuwu. com, 28 May 2022, accessed August 8th 2022. <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/05/28/konferensi-perempuan-poso-tentang-tanah-air-dan-hutan/>

without fertiliser and the products grown are mostly for their daily life consumption.

Their stories are the stories of joy living in the village with nature. Damar gum from Gintu village is lit after hearing the stories how Damar used to be used as a light. Honey from Didiri village is tasted and cinnamon is smelled by participants in the conference. They are proud to share their memories of nature in their village.³⁸ However, their pride in the land, water and forest nowadays has turned into anxiety since the land has been turned into palm oil plantations by corporations, the lakes have been dredged, and rivers have been polluted, while the forest has been damaged by mining.³⁹ Reclaiming their interconnection with nature is one of their ways to resist the injustice through many advocacy movements against the hierarchical domination of exploitation that has shattered their kinship bonds with nature. Their resistance includes learning their cultural identity, respecting history and symbols as well as strengthening the bonds between community and nature that are threatened by corporations.

6.6 Ecofeminism and The Relationship of Women and Nature

Ecofeminists criticise human domination of nature, particularly the hierarchical, symbolic, and praxis domination that is mirrored in the experience of women. The interconnection of the domination of nature and women is rooted in the hierarchical and dualistic concept of God and nature, where women are placed alongside nature as matter in opposition to God/male with spirit and rationality. Ecofeminists argue that Euro-western cultures developed hierarchical beliefs about the world. It is a worldview of dualistic conceptual structures, with one side having priority over the

³⁸ Sekretariat Mosintuwu, “Konferensi Perempuan Poso tentang Tanah, Air dan Hutan,” Mosintuwu.com, 28 May 2022, accessed, August 8th 2022.
<https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/05/28/konferensi-perempuan-poso-tentang-tanah-air-dan-hutan/>

³⁹ Pian Siruyu, “Konferensi Perempuan Poso: Tanah Masa Depan Kehidupan,” Mosintuwu.com, 2 June 2022, accessed, August 9th 2022.
<https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/06/02/konferensi-perempuan-poso-tanah-masa-depan-kehidupan/>

other.⁴⁰ Hierarchical epistemology has divided mind and body, God and nature, humans and nature, men and women, and thought and emotion. Such a hierarchical dualism is an implicit belief system expressed in religion, philosophy, science and cultural symbols. However, Heather Eaton emphasises that these are beliefs, not truths, and ecofeminists strongly critique this hierarchical, dualistic concept.⁴¹ By expanding the analysis with ecofeminism, the research on Hosea also engages with the intersections of land, nature, gender, economy, agency. The issue of land and body in Hosea is not always a separate issue, but is intersecting with rather than collapsing into a simple dichotomy. Therefore, recognising how intersectionality plays out in the text and in ecofeminist interpretation will help to understand my alternative reading of Hosea in this thesis.

The quest for the origin of domination involves two aspects. The first is to understand the affiliation between women and nature. The other one is to investigate how this is linked to the practice of domination.⁴² In Eaton's analysis, domination has a long and complex history that might not be understood only through an ecofeminist lens or one theory. Eaton also analyses that there has been a long and venerable association between 'female' and nature that does not belong to any one culture or context. However, it has deep roots within human consciousness and spirituality.⁴³ In the Western context, there was a change of view about the earth. Once considered alive, the earth was now dead and void of spirit. The earth then became a mechanistic and passive thing. This shift to a mechanistic worldview is the beginning of the death of nature.⁴⁴

Eaton highlights that the issue becomes increasingly challenging due to the emerging emphasis on economic development within industrial capitalism and

⁴⁰ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 39.

⁴¹ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 39–40.

⁴² Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 41.

⁴³ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 54.

⁴⁴ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 56.

economic globalization, where nature is exploited for all its benefits.⁴⁵ Economic globalisation and capitalism are now pervasive and many contexts struggle with domination as a core phenomenon in human-nature and women-nature relationship. Global environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss underscore the urgency of reevaluating humanity relationship with nature, making ecofeminism more pertinent than ever. Hence, other contexts can also learn to recognise internalised learning and critically examine the patterns of hierarchical domination. While the Western context provides valuable insights, it is important to recognise diverse cultural perspectives on the relationship between human and nature worldwide, including the women and nature relationship. For instance, examining how indigenous cultures in Africa, Asia or the Americas perceive and nurture this connection can broaden our understanding of ecofeminism.

In Indonesia, there has also been a change in the way society views nature. The forests, land and water that were previously considered sacred by adat (a customary law) were cut down, polluted and exploited. Rituals in nature were considered idolatry by Christianity but also because there were many profits from the project on the land, forest, and water. The change from a sacred nature to nature as an object in a hierarchical domination has been challenged by many adat communities in Indonesia. Many adat communities still live in close connection with nature. Moreover, contextual theology in Indonesia also criticises the previous mission approach and develops a more constructive dialogue with adat communities, including learning about their respect of nature. On the other side, it is crucial to keep criticising the hierarchical dominance that probably also exist within the adat community and to avoid romanticising it.

One of Indonesia's ecotheologians, Karel Phil Erari, reflects that when Christianity came to Papua, the strategy of domination and conquest was used in the

⁴⁵ Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*, 57.

missionaries' approach. *Extra Ecclesia Nulla Salus* (there is no salvation outside the church) was used as a missionary strategy dealing with the religious frameworks of local communities.⁴⁶ As a critique of this missionary strategy that destroys communities' relationships with nature, he emphasises salvation as the result of God's grace. Erari focuses on salvation as God's grace as opposed to the earlier missionaries' approach which emphasises that salvation could only occur through the church. As a result human-nature deep relationships deteriorated. His understanding of grace does not mean human disengagement with the problem of environment. It does not allow humans to sit back and let God do the work of salvation. His view of salvation as God's grace should be extended to salvation of all bodies of all creatures. The power of the liberating God works through all ecological communities to bring life for all.

According to Erari, contextual theology in Papua emphasises the transformative impact of the relationship between culture, the land, the sea of Papua, and human beings. The gold mining project on two big mountains in Papua, Ertsberg and Grassberg, has long destroyed the mountains as 'the mother's head' of the Amungme community. A similar destruction process also happens to 'the mother's breast' where two rivers, Minarjeri and Ajkwa, have been polluted by mercury and other chemicals. The metaphor of body language, for instance the mother's head or the mother's breast, is frequently used in the Papua community. Along with the Hebrew bible, numerous languages like English use a similar body language metaphor. The body language metaphor displays intense emotion, memories, knowledge, and the community's relationship to the bodies of nature. Even if some of these metaphors have become so well established that they are hardly seen as metaphors any longer. For instance, in English, the mouth of the river or the head of the mountain are dead metaphors rather than living ones. The conceptual metaphor is grounded in the physical and cultural experience.⁴⁷ Therefore, in order

⁴⁶ Karel Phil Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017), 345.

⁴⁷ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 57.

to create meaning, the body metaphor plays an important role. The gold mining project has destroyed the rivers and their ecosystem.⁴⁸ The 2.9 million hectares mining area has destroyed the entire mountain, valley, river, and forest ecosystems. The glacier in the Carstensz mountains is also disappearing as a direct result of greenhouse emissions. However, the gold mining activities of PT Freeport, which blasted thousands of dynamites over the years on the Carstensz mountain, also contributed to the glacier depletion in the Carstensz area.⁴⁹

Erari reflects on the unique relationship between humans and all species from a Melanesian cultural perspectives. The local wisdom of the Amungme people is *te aro neweak-lak-o*. It means nature is me. Therefore, Amungme people respect nature and call the land *Ninggok*, a respected one. The people respect the top of the mountain as Mama's head. The close relationship between humans and nature is shown through their mythological stories. For instance, Koromo, one of the tribes in Amungme, believes that humans came from a water spring in the forest.⁵⁰ In the other area, Roon Island, the relationship between humans and nature is similarly conceived as interconnected. The people and their ancestors believe that the turtle is one of their ancestors and, therefore, has equal value to humans.⁵¹ The mythologies show the Papua community's deep relationship with aspects of nature such as land, coconut trees, sago, snakehead fish, barracuda fish, white snakes, and the paradise bird. Their stories reflect a strong spiritual and cultural connection.⁵² Based on the deep relationship between humans and nature, Erari reflects on the importance of developing an integral ecological spirituality where the spiritual relationship between all creatures becomes an integral part of the church's mission.⁵³ Erari uses the integral ecological spirituality to confront the excessive consumption and wealth accumulation of global capitalism that bring direct

⁴⁸ Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral*, 347–348.

⁴⁹ Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral*, 161.

⁵⁰ Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral*, 298–299.

⁵¹ Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral*, 309.

⁵² Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral*, 334.

⁵³ Erari, *Spirit Ekologi Integral*, 363.

negative impact to their context. The crucial lesson that can be learned is that the spirituality of the Poso women and Papuan community is directly linked to their local wisdom and beliefs. Erari gives a reminder that the fight against economic empire with excessive consumption and wealth accumulation should start within the community by remembering the connection with nature, reconciling and renewing a better integral relationship.

Erari's critical notes on the awareness of excessive consumption and wealth accumulation of empire is relevant to many different contexts nowadays either in Asia, America, Europe or Africa. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda discusses the denial of many Christians in her context, United States, of the devastating impacts of life depending upon an economic empire. She especially highlights the denial of US citizens who are unwilling to acknowledge how much their way of life depends on the economic benefits empire brings. She said,

We run from acknowledging that the climate change to which our way of living contributes to drive people from their homes and lands. People with economic privilege run from truths like this. We escape into moral oblivion, denial, powerlessness, or privatised morality. Facts and figures alone do not convince people who benefit from empire to see the truth. Yet the stories and lived experience of people who suffer under economic empire's power will. And the church is called to tell this truth.⁵⁴

Moe Lobeda's critical notes can be useful to respond to Erari's demand for the integral ecological spirituality. On the other hand, Erari highlights that the fight against economic empire should start within ourselves by renewing a more integral relationship.

⁵⁴ Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, "Love Your Neighbour as Yourself: A Call to Resist and Transform Economic Empire," in the *Scripture and Resistance*, ed. Jione Havea (Lanham: Fortress Academic, 2019), 126–127.

Integral ecological spirituality and body language metaphor can also be found in the metaphor of the womb of nature and what it suggests for community advocacy. Instead of hierarchical relationships, the womb of nature image shows the interconnection between all aspects of nature and the mutual relationship between humans and other creatures. All creatures have rights and each one of them has their intrinsic value as a creation of God.

Instead of domination, the community praxis through *megilu* and the womb of nature imagery highlights the equal position of all creatures. They resist all domination and systemic violence. The womb of nature imagery emphasises that relationships with different bodies in nature are essential and need to be reimagined and deconstructed by humans. Hierarchy and imbalance in relationship with nature will result in alienation, PP13 highlights,

Community action such as *megilu*⁵⁵ (praying together to the creator of life) is a concept of action that places the relationship of humans and nature as equal. It also emphasises that nature can fight for itself. So, nature is called together within the movement. Nature is not left behind and is not being an object. Nature becomes part of the movement. Nature can act with power. And that is where God is located. God is not in a distant position but God is part of the continuous dialogue process.⁵⁶

According to her, nature is a subject and has an equal position to other subjects such as human subjects. If we understand nature as a subject with subject rights, we are also aware of nature's way to tell humans that the ecosystems are collapsing. Human beings should stop themselves from destroying nature. In this perspective, the equal relationship between humans and all creatures is also demonstrated within the cultural advocacy movement, where humans work in harmony with both

⁵⁵ More explanation of *megilu* can be found in chapter 3.

⁵⁶ PP13, female, 44 years old, activist, in the Intercontextual Bible Reading, June 2021.

nature and God. PP13 is actually raising awareness on human's lack of understanding of nature as the subject and nature's rights.

In the movement aiming to achieve systemic change, the equal relationship between humanity and all creatures is essential. Transformation must be expressed in the collective actions and movements. The transformative movements emphasise the presence of God working among ecological communities to overcome all types of oppression, to establish justice over death and exploitation.

6.7 The Importance of Body in Ecofeminist Theology

In ecofeminist theology, Sallie McFague also highlights the importance of the body. Starting with the context of ecological crisis, especially in her North American context, McFague laments human addiction and the denial of ecological deterioration. She connects the addiction, denial and refusal of humanity to change their conceptions and problematic lifestyle that participate in systemic injustice toward nature and other impacted communities.⁵⁷ Instead of hierarchical relationships, McFague proposes an intimate relationship that changes the individualistic and short-term profit mindset for a long-term consideration of the well-being of the planet.⁵⁸ McFague's approach to this challenge is to use the model of the body to criticise hierarchical and dualistic models of God in Christian tradition, especially in view of the interconnected oppression of women and nature, in line with many other ecofeminist theologians. The notion of the body is an important model, especially because there has been ambivalence in regard to the body in Christianity. The earliest doctrines from the incarnation to the eucharist have focused on embodiment but throughout history, Christian texts and doctrines have been developed to distrust the body and advocate the separation of the body and nature from the spiritual realm. The body, as it relates to its depiction in the text and doctrines, needs to be addressed. The body is not a minor matter but

⁵⁷ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 3–5.

⁵⁸ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 11–12.

fundamental and essential. The bodies of all life-forms need to be loved and honored.⁵⁹ In using a cosmological and collegial perspective, McFague argues that the model of the body means that differences are applauded through advocacy theology with a focus on praxis.⁶⁰

I contend that the model of the body of God suggests that the shape of God's body includes all bodies in diversity, especially the neglected oppressed bodies, which includes the planet, all vulnerable, and suffering bodies. Reflecting on the text of Hosea, the body is not only about human bodies but the text also shows the vulnerable and suffering bodies of animals, land, and other creatures. It is not only humans who suffer because of the domination and forced economic changes in Hosea but the land will also mourn, the animals in the land, the birds in the sky and the fish of the sea will perish. Within the model of the world as God's body, all planetary parts are valuable. The body of God in the Christ paradigm is the cosmic Christ who overturns dualistic hierarchies of rich and poor, righteous and sinner, Jew and Gentile, and the dualistic hierarchies of human over nature.⁶¹

In the metaphor of God's body, creation and salvation are connected. Salvation is the direction of creation, and creation is the place of salvation. Salvation in ecofeminist theology is not something at the end of the eschaton; rather salvation is occurring in place and space. It also means that with ecological consciousness, salvation also broadens to include nature, that is, the planet.⁶² As McFague emphasises, the metaphor suggests that God's ministry is unlimited and is available everywhere in nature. It is mediated through bodies across the entire cosmos.⁶³ The body of God that includes all bodies in diversity is a profound idea and contribution from McFague. In addition to reaffirming God's presence in every

⁵⁹ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 4–16.

⁶⁰ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 68–69.

⁶¹ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 164–165.

⁶² McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 179–180.

⁶³ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 184.

aspect or part of creation, it calls attention to the necessity for the liberation of neglected and oppressed bodies of nature.

The dualism of knowing or dualistic epistemology is discussed further by ecofeminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether. She traces how Christianity has followed Plato's hierarchical and dualistic epistemology, where the soul is an ontological substance separate from the body. In Greek Philosophy, the soul's task is to control the passion that comes from the body. Passion should be controlled, while intellect should be cultivated. This philosophy has again put the body in an inferior position and separated it from the mind, thus, assigning a higher value to what is considered to be masculinist logic, while the erotic feminine principle of creation is considered subordinate. The dualism of soul and body similarly exists in theology and Christianity has tended to visualise the hierarchical relation of soul and body in parallel to men controlling power over women's bodies.⁶⁴

In dealing with the problem, Rosemary Radford Ruether argues for the system of hierarchy and dualism to be dismantled in favour of mutual life-giving. The image of God as a male ruler especially should be transformed into God as an immanent source present in the whole planetary and cosmic community. Ruether contends that it is not only the male gender of God that needs to go; it is also the anthropocentric model of an individual acting on the world.⁶⁵ It is the inferiority of the body that influenced this image of God as a distant ruling God. Such an image of God, centred on a male ruler and separated from creation and women is part of the problem. However, PP13 says God is not distant but part of the continuous dialogical process of interchange between all creatures. The hierarchical relationship that existed for so long in theology and religious doctrine still emphasises a God who is separated from all creation. In the hierarchical relationship, humans are given responsibility as the earth's caretakers. However,

⁶⁴ Ruether, *Ecofeminism: The Challenge to Theology*, 23–24.

⁶⁵ Ruether, *Ecofeminism: The Challenge to Theology*, 105–108.

even with this interpretation, humans still consider themselves superior to nature. Hence, theology should emphasise the mutual relationship within the community of life, where God is an integral part of the interconnected relationship. God is not only immanent but also embodied. The immanence of God is also emphasized by Gerrit Singgih who suggests that attention to God's immanence need not be denounced as pantheism or a return to paganism. God is in nature but not identical to nature. Moreover, he highlights the immanence of a Biblical god as in Psalm 148:3-10, Isaiah 44:23, and Job 36-37 which can be dialogued with God's immanence in the Eastern context.⁶⁶

Examining dualistic thinking, Gebara also discusses the fear of panentheism further, indicating that the fear of panentheism maintains hierarchical relationship between all beings including between the creator and creatures.⁶⁷ Responding to the fear of panentheism, and using an ecofeminist perspective, Gebara stresses that the dimension of otherness and identity should be included in theology as grounded in the interdependent relation. Through the ecofeminist perspective, the sacred dimension of the cosmic body is emphasised. Sallie McFague claims that God is embodied. "Everything that is, is in God, and God is in all things. Yet God is not identical to the universe."⁶⁸ This concept of an embodied God is at the heart of the concept and tradition within communities whose life is intertwined with nature. Thus, the discourse will be expanded below.

In discussing dualism and the hierarchical epistemology in Christianity, ecofeminist theologians like Ruether are aware of the anthropocentric view that only focuses on gender relations. Therefore, they stress the need for ecological consciousness. For instance, discussion on the view of the self in ecofeminist theology should challenge the philosophical construction of the separation of mind

⁶⁶ Emmanuel Gerrit Singgih, "Agama Dan Kerusakan Ekologi: Mempertimbangkan "Tesis White" dalam Konteks Indonesia," in *Gema Teologika Vol 5 no. 2* (Yogyakarta, 2020), 133.

⁶⁷ Ivonne Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 121–122.

⁶⁸ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*, 49–50.

and body, as well as the hierarchy and domination of men over women and especially humans over nature. Humans should view their self not in terms of rule over others or superiority over others but as part of the whole cosmic process where the Earth community has a mutual existence and should celebrate and nurture reciprocal life-giving.⁶⁹

Therefore, with awareness of this interconnection, Elizabeth Johnson also calls for new interpretations in Christian Theology. In her analysis, she urges relinquishing the disrespect for matter, the body, and its sexuality, because the body matters. The deconstruction of the hierarchical relationship into a circle of the community of life is needed.⁷⁰ Johnson also pointed out the problematic association of women and nature. The dualism identifies the connection of women and nature with the principles of matter and bodies, while men are associated with spirit and rationalism. Thus, the world is divided into the male-female and human-non human worlds. Women and nature are not allowed in direct contact with God because of hierarchical and dualistic thinking.⁷¹ Consequently, women and nature are solely seen in an instrumental value.⁷²

However, From the intercontextual reading, I contend that it is crucial to see women and nature in their intrinsic value. The land, water, mountain, forest, lake and the earth are not a place with their instrumental value. They are part of the ecosystem, deeply integrated one to another. Each have their own intrinsic value. They are active and interact dynamically.

⁶⁹ Ruether, *Ecofeminism: The Challenge to Theology*, 28.

⁷⁰ Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation", 14.

⁷¹ Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation", 17

⁷² Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation", 17.

Heather Eaton also emphasises the biospheric processes of the natural world. It highlights that nature is living and dynamic, not mechanistic.⁷³ Earth is the source, point of origin, basis and humans came from and are involved on enormous life projects on earth. Therefore, human vitality is dependent upon the natural world⁷⁴ instead of the other way around. The privilege given to the mind contributes to humanity's perception of itself as a special creation with the authority to rule and control over other creation. The ability to recognise the kinship bonds with other creation has been hindered by the belief of human distinction and human superiority. For instance, human superiority to animals has had huge impact upon animal extinction. Many animals die from habitat loss because of projects and human population, pollution in the water, air, and the land, or killed for food. Therefore, animal rights is one of the subjects that currently require global attention. Respecting other life forms in ecological community is crucial, as the local communities in Poso and Sumba do.

Nature is a sacrament of God that radiates God's glory with its intrinsic value.⁷⁵ The exploitation of the earth that is linked with the subordination of women is also a consequence of thinking of the human-nature relationship in terms of hierarchy and dominance. Johnson stresses again the importance of a holistic worldview in a mutual relationship within the circle of the community of life.⁷⁶

Leonardo Boff in his eco-liberation theology also links marginal bodies of people and the earth. Focusing on cosmogenesis, Boff highlights the sacrament of all things.⁷⁷ Using the eco-liberation of Boff, Jamie Washam further explores the liberating ethic of ecological conversion. In analyzing Boff's eco-liberation in

⁷³ Heather Eaton, "An Earth-Centric Theological Framing for Planetary Solidarity," in *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women's Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice*, ed. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 22–23.

⁷⁴ Eaton, "An Earth-Centric," 24.

⁷⁵ Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation", 15.

⁷⁶ Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation", 18.

⁷⁷ Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 149–150.

dialogue with Baptist theology, Washam concludes that ecological conversion as liberation is regenerative and ongoing rather than a singular act of reconciliation. Therefore, her research highlights ecological conversion as a cyclical practice of transformation that invites participation.⁷⁸ Her research about the regenerative and ongoing acts of eco-liberation and reconciliation highlights the possibility of a longer timeframe. However, the vulnerability of communities is different. The longer time frame for an ongoing liberation becomes problematic for those whose lives are at stake.

Other ecofeminist theologians who focus on eco-liberation do not only stop at the oppression of marginal bodies in general they also investigate the ongoing connection between the domination of women and the exploitation of nature where the victims are all creations. For instance, Ivonne Gebara deeply criticises the intersection of patriarchal oppression, Christian theological discourse and capitalist ideologies that marginalize women and nature.⁷⁹ In the reflection of the human person from an ecofeminist perspective, the notion of a free and autonomous person has been co-opted by colonialism, the capitalist free market, neo-colonialism and religions that promote hierarchy and eliminate poor bodies in order to uphold power.⁸⁰ The concept of salvation should mean that liberation also extends to overcome the dualistic hierarchy of humans over nature. It also means that instead of focusing on anthropocentrism, liberation theology should focus on cosmic liberation. A liberation from interconnected domination is needed.⁸¹ Through these critics ecofeminists refine their theories and make it more inclusive.

Currently, with the diversity of ecofeminist thought and movements, there is a growing awareness of the need for intersectional analysis as a useful deepening of

⁷⁸ Jamie Paige Washam, "Regenerating the Garden of the World," Ph.D Dissertation (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2022), 232.

⁷⁹ Gebara, *Longing for Running Water*, 14 and 54.

⁸⁰ Gebara, *Longing for Running Water*, 77.

⁸¹ Ruether, "Ecofeminism: The Challenge to Theology," 97.

thinking in this field.⁸² Ecofeminism intersects with environmental justice as seen in the movement led by women who fight for their environmental rights, for instance Chipko movement, Poso women, farmer Sumba women group.

Heather Eaton argues that there was a significant void regarding ecological frameworks in previous ecofeminist analyses because of the emphasis more on feminist issues. Therefore, she highlights the need for a planetary framework in which humanity integrates with ecological systems. An earth centric framework means integrating science into the analysis of the ecological systems because a planetary framework requires more than just a focus on rights, justice and the equitable division of resources. A planetary framework would be more adequate to understand the dynamics of the biospheres, and the effects of change are interrelated at different layers within the biosphere and interconnected with economics, politics, and poverty.⁸³ Eaton stresses the importance of current ecofeminist theologians' work beyond the anthropocentric questions to develop a more planetary framework of analysis.

6.8 Symbolic Imagery of Woman's and Land Bodies in Hosea

The dualism of men-women, mind-nature that ecofeminists have departed from can be found in the text of Hosea. Gomer's negative portrayal is compared to how the land is portrayed. This connection has been presented ever since the beginning of Hosea. Both the woman and the land commit promiscuity. Gomer in the text is positioned as material (*chomer*).⁸⁴ She is portrayed as an object that must conceive and give birth in order to fulfill God's command to Hosea. The communication about her marriage and her body never includes her. Gomer is not the one who made the decision, nor was she involved in the conversation about her marriage, the children, and the news of her punishment. Hosea is the one speaking with God.

⁸² Eaton, "Ecofeminist Theologies in the Age of Climate Crisis," 215 and 217.

⁸³ Eaton, "Ecofeminist Theologies in the Age of Climate Crisis", 218.

⁸⁴ In Hebrew חמר means clay, mortar.

The text describes God speaking to the woman only when God takes the initiative to restore the relationship.

Hosea uses again the threat to take back the grain and new wine from the land as well as the wool and linen that cover the female body in Hosea 2:11

2: 11 Therefore I will take back
 My grain in its time
 My new wine in its appointed time
 I will take away my wool and my linen
 To cover her nakedness

The text shows the threat of famine in the land and the woman being stripped naked. In both texts, women's inferior position is next to nature. According to ecofeminist theologians, the dualism of God-nature, man-woman, and the inferior position of women next to nature as seen in the text, is problematic. It is for the same reason that Geke van Vliet, in her article responds that the text of Hosea does not offer a promising view of the female body.⁸⁵ However, I contend that other parts of Hosea are also critical of the domination of nature, for instance, in Hosea 4:1–3, and suggest an interconnection with all creatures' bodies in the ecosystem as mentioned in Hosea 2:23–25a. Hosea highlights this power of connection and sharing. When the power of connection and sharing is respected, all bodies experience life and blessing. In contrast, if disintegration happens and the interconnection is destroyed, death will be experienced in the bodies of all creatures.

Through the intercontextual reading of Hosea with Poso, Sumba and Yogyakarta communities, I contend that Hosea criticises disintegration of all creatures' bodies, the threat of socio-economic injustices to a shared system as emphasised by the

⁸⁵ Geke van Vliet, "The Story of Hosea and Gomer: A Gender Perspective," in *Building Bridges toward a More Human Society*, ed. Kirsten van der Ham, Geke van Vliet, Peter-Ben Smit, Klaas Spronk (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2022), 191.

community's reading. Moreover, the intercontextual reading with the community, highlights important aspects of dysfunctional leadership as well as the interconnectedness of human action and the well-being of nature. Therefore, the forced socio-economic change that sacrifice nature and community's relationship with nature will bring disaster to creatures' life.⁸⁶ PP2 says, "That is promiscuity, they are ashamed of because we know about their promiscuity."⁸⁷ PP4 says further,

So, when I was reading about Hosea yesterday, I remembered about this prostitution. So, if we relate it to the current context, the result of the prostitution is to cause division, poverty, ignorance, lying, lying everywhere, and finally people lie to cover up one lie, betrayal, etc. That's what God wants to declare. We could see how God loves us through our life; He gave us a lake. It's amazing to see all the things that we have in Tentena. If we stuck a branch of cassava in the ground, it would grow. Therefore, we need to realise that our hope should be in God, our first husband, and not in the Bukaka company. What can Bukaka company give to us? Instead they rob us and are causing infidelity everywhere.⁸⁸

This concern is also shared by Sumba participants. SP5 says,

The similarities between Tentena and Sumba is that the community's right was ignored. Here, we can see the promiscuities between the Ruler, corporations, and those who gain profit from corporation against people's rights. And it is severely impacted the community. So, the social promiscuity

⁸⁶ Lady Paula R. Mandalika, "The Land will Mourn and The Fish of the Sea will Perish: Rereading of Hosea in the Context of Environmental Injustices," in *Building Bridges toward a More Human Society*, ed. Kirsten van der Ham, Geke van Vliet, Peter-Ben Smit, Klaas Spronk (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2022), 185–186.

⁸⁷ PP2, 43 years old, female, activist, in Intercontextual Bible Reading, Tentena, March 2020.

⁸⁸ PP4, 48 years old, female, radio broadcaster who also has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Bible Reading, Tentena, March 2020.

turns out to be very profitable for the authority but very detrimental to the locals.⁸⁹

SP5's opinion is significant as it highlights the parallel concept of social promiscuity in Hosea and Sumba context. In her view, power relations play a role in the promiscuity in the text as well as in the dysfunctional leadership in their context.

On the other side, Alice Keefe argues that even though Hosea made an association of woman with nature in linking her procreativity with the land and its powers of fertility, the female imagery in Hosea is not related to a symbolic complex of nature, woman, sex, and sin. According to Keefe, the fertile body is the locus and symbol for life in ancient Israel.⁹⁰ Even though I support one of Keefe's main arguments that the fertile body is the symbol for life in ancient Israel and the text of Hosea, I disagree with her suggestions that the female imagery is not directly referring to women and that the female imagery in Hosea is far removed from the symbolic complex of nature, women, sex and sin. For instance, several readers in the community reading see the woman in the text as a real woman. SP3 identifies the woman in Hosea as a promiscuous woman who is unfaithful to her first husband.⁹¹ Moreover, SP6 says,

There are few experiences related to the text of Hosea. 1. There are women who become mistresses. 2. There are many husbands who are having affairs. 3. There are many congregations which are unfaithful to God and people who are unfaithful to their partner (husband-wife)⁹²

⁸⁹ SP5, 27 years old, female, farmer, Intercontextual Bible Reading, Sumba, April 2020.

⁹⁰ Keefe, *Woman's Body*, 220.

⁹¹ SP3, 23 years old, female, farmer and self employed, Intercontextual Bible Reading, Sumba, April 2020.

⁹² SP6, 31 years old, female, farmer and self employed, Intercontextual Bible Reading, Sumba, April 2020.

The result of the reading community shows there are participants who read the story of Hosea and Gomer not as a metaphor but as real people. The participants could experience the affective influences of the story. Therefore, I contend that the female imagery in the text has a significant influence on contemporary women's thinking. Through intercontextual reading with the community and ecofeminist analysis, the affective contribution of the association of women and nature should be read critically.

The metaphors themselves present ambiguity. I agree with other ecofeminist theologians that the association of women in an inferior position with nature is problematic. The text of Hosea, especially in the punishment part, shows this problematic association of women and nature, where both are placed in an inferior position. Both women and nature will receive punishment. However, the text does not say that all women should be punished. In the text that speaks of punishment, God acts as the male ruler in a hierarchical relationship. Therefore, this kind of dualism should be read critically. However, as we are reminded by Heather Eaton, there was a significant void of the ecological frameworks in the previous analyses of ecofeminists. The emphasis in previous ecofeminist discussions is more on feminist issues or anthropocentric views than ecological issues.⁹³ Thus, this reading of Hosea should not stop at the analysis of dualism in Hosea. It should extend to consider the intersection of ecology, gender, class, and economy in the text.

The intersectional reading of the text of Hosea by ecofeminists is useful to examine the interrelated complex issue of oppression. In reading the metaphor intersectionally, I contend that the metaphor presents bodies as fundamental in life. As discussed above by McFague and as expressed in the the metaphor of the womb of nature by Poso women, actual bodies are crucial. She emphasises the universe or the world as the body of God which highlights God's embodiment and radical

⁹³ Eaton, "Ecofeminist Theologies in the Age of Climate Crisis," 218.

immanence.⁹⁴ McFague contends that each body, regardless the gender, is the body of God. The body of every creatures reflect something of the body of God. The fact that all bodies in the universe share some characteristics suggests a focus in contemplating the glory of divine creation while also encouraging humans to identify compassionately with the fragile, suffering and oppressed bodies within the world.⁹⁵ I observe that the bodies in Hosea also refer to cosmic bodies. In its most profound sense, Hosea highlights the erotic role and creation of the cosmic bodies in the ecosystem. In Hosea 2: 24–25

The earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil
They will respond to Jezreel,

As discussed before, the name ‘Jezreel’ could have a double meaning: God’s sowing and impregnation. The text of Hosea says further, “I will sow her myself in the land”. ‘Her’ could refer to Israel as seeds that God lets live all over the land again. The erotic metaphor in Hosea, first of all, is not about continuous productivity but it is about the connectedness of interrelated bodies in nature’s ecosystem.

All related bodies recover and play their roles equally for the ecosystem to work. Disruption of the natural processes of an ongoing creative process such as human domination within all bodies will lead to disintegration and forced death. The body is erotic in the most profound sense. The term “erotic” here refers not just to sexuality. As discussed by Audre Lorde in her classic essay ‘Uses of the Erotic’, the erotic is about connection. The erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge. It is a resource of power and information which lies deep within ourselves. The erotic is a force to connect and share deeply in a wide range of ways. Most of the time, the erotic has been used against women, as women’s

⁹⁴ McFague, *The Body of God*, 95–97; 133.

⁹⁵ McFague, *The Body of God*, 134–135.

bodies have been objectified and used by men for sexual pleasure.⁹⁶ Lorde and other feminist scholars seek to reclaim the erotic as a source of knowledge and empowerment for women, and the erotic in ecofeminist theology is one of the important ways to articulate the drive to connect all bodies, not only human bodies but most importantly all creatures' bodies. Thus, all bodies in diversity need to be honoured. Nature, land, water, sky, plants, animals, and other creatures' bodies should no longer be neglected, oppressed and suffering.

Similarly, the womb of nature imagery from the women's community also demonstrates the power of interconnection on the ongoing creative process. The community's understanding of the body moves beyond the dichotomy of the female and male body to broader and multiple body identities including ecological bodies within the community's lived realities. The essentialism argument about the problematic woman-nature connection that some Western feminists have an issue with is not relevant to this community. I contend that the problem is when the female body is seen only to represent and carry sexuality and the erotic, as in Gomer, while male desire gets projected onto the female body and the woman is then blamed, rejected or denied. The erotic interconnection of all bodies in the ecosystem as seen in the text of Hosea 2:23-25 is a sign that nature is flourishing and plays its role in the ecosystem.

In the image of the hope of restoration, God is embodied within the creation. The hierarchical and dualistic positions no longer exist because all the bodies are active agents in the process of ecosystem. For instance, the images of the sky and the earth that give their response show the active actions of nature's bodies. The diversity of bodies in the universe is important. The body is not a minor matter, but fundamental and essential. The body, as it relates to its depiction in the text and doctrines, needs to be addressed. Therefore, the text of Hosea highlights many

⁹⁶ Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power," Wordpress.com, accessed February 2022, <https://stilluntitledproject.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/audre-lorde-sister-outsider-the-uses-of-the-erotic-1978.pdf>

different bodies. It is not only the female body but also the land, the earth, the sky, the animals, the plants, and the forest which are included. These bodies are present in the text. The land, the earth, the sky and other creations are not passive. They are part of the creative ecosystem and play an active role through the image of responding in the chain of the ecosystem. The text of Hosea emphasises the importance of this creative ecosystem in Hosea 2:23–24a

23 On that day, I will respond, says the LORD,
I will respond to the sky;
the sky will respond to the earth

24 The earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and the fresh oil.

The whole of the ecosystem is interrelated. Humans, animals, and plants are to share space and bodies. The worth of one body in the mutual kinship relationship does not depend on the body's position as in the hierarchy relationship. Every body has their own intrinsic value and worth. This interrelated process differs from many traditional theologies with their hierarchical relations.

Women's contribution to giving life and nurturing life can be problematic if only women and the land are identified as having a domestic function and bound within the hierarchies of excessive emotionality and irrationality. However, the natural power of the body to give life and the creative process of nature's bodies in the ecosystem should be addressed. Vandana Shiva refers to nature as inherently active, a powerful, productive force in the dialectic of creation, renewal, and the sustenance of all life.⁹⁷ Considering this view, the contribution of giving life, caring for it and nurturing it should not put women in a position to be viewed solely as an object. It should affirm the significant value of life and creation as an important part of the ecosystem.

⁹⁷ Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1988) 44.

In conclusion, I observe that Hosea's text also highlights salvation for the whole ecological community. The hope of salvation in Hosea includes all bodies in the ecosystem. From the narrow focus of salvation on human beings, salvation should be extended to the whole ecology community. Therefore, I contend that the text of Hosea also talks about the restored relationship with all bodies. In the hope of restoration, the embodied God brings salvation to all bodies including nature's.

6.9 The Intersection of Gender, Economy, Power Relations, and Ecology: A Holistic Ecofeminist Perspective

In light of the above, this section outlines the degree to which different experiences, like those of the Poso and Sumba communities, who have had a direct connection with nature and an identity that is intertwined with nature, affects the interpretation of the symbolism of land and the woman's body in Hosea. All nations are experiencing the impact of climate change, even though the impact of devastation is not equal, as highlighted by many ecofeminists in the book *Planetary Solidarity*. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster say,

The devastating effects of climate change are unfathomable, to many who live in the wealthy Western world, who are shielded from the most brutal aspects of its reality. Women and children, the poorest and the most vulnerable people in the world, are the ones who bear the brunt of and are most especially affected by the consequences of climate change. Climate change puts poor women and children at risk and deprives them of the lives they had known.⁹⁸

Climate change affects everyone. Yet, because women make up the majority of the world's poor and tend to be more dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and survival, they are at a higher risk. In the exploited world,

⁹⁸ Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster, "Introduction: Global Women's Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice," in *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women's Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 1.

poor women are often the primary caregivers of their families and hence play an important role in securing household water, food, and fuel. In times of drought, women must walk farther and spend more of their time collecting water. Girls may have to drop out of school to help their mothers with these tasks, continuing a cycle of poverty and gender inequity. Because poor women in the Global South often have very little access to education and hence trustworthy employment and income, they are vulnerable when rural families are forced to migrate due to rising seawater or desertification. Dislocated young girls, moreover, often end up in domestic servitude, or the sex trade.⁹⁹

Therefore, Ji-Sun Kim and Koster emphasise that it is important to highlight the issue on women because theological and ecclesial documents often do not spell out the way climate change affects poor and indigeneous women around the globe. Their point is important because that is the fact in many real life situations. The negative impact of environmental damage is experienced directly by the community. However, communities are not only concerned about the negative impacts on themselves but especially lament the danger and threat of the death of nature. Their close relationship with nature is being destroyed. Based on the struggle in their context, most members of the Poso reading group explain that they do not see Gomer in terms of a gendered understanding because their interpretation focuses more on the action of promiscuity as social promiscuity.

Thus, PP13 highlights the problematic choice of the metaphor. She criticises the choice of the metaphor in Hosea that uses the woman symbol to describe the violations. Her criticism is parallel to other feminists who see the problematic symbolism of the woman for sin in the text of Hosea and in the other prophetic texts. However, PP13 discusses further the relation of human and nature in the women's group.

⁹⁹ Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster, "Introduction," 3.

The centralisation and domination are challenging issues both in the text of Hosea and in the community's experience. For this community, on the margins, their real-life struggle now is experienced by all humanity (irrespective of gender) and nature. The communities at the margins are oppressed along with nature. The Poso women do not identify themselves as having the sole responsibility to provide food and nurture life because they understand it is a familial responsibility. Therefore, the destruction of nature directly impacts the community life, including women, in many different aspects: social, economic and health. The community deals with intersectional oppression such as economy, class domination, ecology and gender. The situations of their context has made them aware of interrelated problems in the text.

Besides the hierarchy and domination in relation to gender, as seen by several ecofeminists, I contend that the text of Hosea criticises interconnected oppressions, especially the intersectional problems of the economy, ecology, and power relation. Therefore, it is important to understand the interconnected oppressions in reading Hosea. The text of Hosea 4:1-3 for instance, shows clearly this interconnected oppression and its impact.

The text shows the complexities of the problem in the time of Israel. The problem is beyond religious crisis of apostasy and shows how human violations bring devastation to life for many different bodies, all previously described as alive in an interactive ecosystem at the end of Hosea 2. However, this interactive dynamic of different bodies is destroyed by human violations and domination. The text also shows that the existence of other bodies, bonds, and solidarity of collective bodies in the ecosystem is destroyed. The system of domination itself, as examined by ecofeminist scholars, is rooted in the patriarchal system to monopolise the economy and power.

From their reading, the group highlights the intersection of classes. There is an elite higher class and a lower community class through different metaphoric symbols. The hierarchy and dominant conception of nature are shown through the punishment. However, the other part of the text of Hosea also offers an alternative relationship between different bodies in nature. The land in the story is described as one of the essential elements of metaphor in Hosea. The land can not be seen only as a stage for the main characters, such as Hosea. The living status of the land is not a question in the text, as shown by the community.

In the growing denial of kinship connection that continues every time land, water, and nature are referred to as places or non-living things, the community and nature voice their concern. The deep conception that nature and land play an active role might not have been the central focus of most of the interpretations of Hosea, but it certainly vocalises many ecological concerns that continue to be silenced by theological discourse. The painful cries of nature might not be audible in societies where the noise of global development and production persists. However, the imagination of the womb of nature by women group can be used as an image to talk back to the text in a mutual setting. The womb of nature emphasising the mutual relation of humans and nature, is used against the hierarchical relation of the narrative of power in the forced economic development. Here, ecofeminism is not only about criticism but it is also about the identification and articulation of resistance and freedom.

Furthermore, the holistic view is also seen in the metaphor that they use to describe the interconnection of community with nature. The image of nature as a womb is used to reclaim the power of inclusive creation that needs to be respected. I would furthermore contend that this reflection can be placed within the ecofeminist principle of creation that is constructed on women's experiences intersected with cultures, rituals, visible knowledge, and feelings that empowers them. It is their way to position themselves as subjects in restoration, along with nature's regeneration process. PP13 says the womb of nature imagery from land, water, and

forest products whose stories are close to the community's lives is a crucial part of the conversation. In the Poso women's conference, the land, water and forest products' presence are equal to other participants'.¹⁰⁰ The women came not to represent their own concern but the concern of nature.

The value of local cultural knowledge, such as the cultural knowledge of Poso women in the womb of nature imagery, is essential to share because they are the primary subjects of land despoilation and theft. The development programmes should explore local values that once lived and still exist today. The forced socio-economic change that ignores local cultural values and the relationship with nature assumes narrowly that the ecological community has no value, but is poor and stupid.

6.9 Summary

The metaphor of Hosea can be analysed as intersectional vulnerabilities. The use of sexuality metaphor is a source for the continuity of the community, kinship, and culture. At the same time, other gender vulnerabilities in Hosea need to be read critically. As a community with intersectional vulnerabilities, the Poso women also use the womb metaphor to remind and reaffirm that they are part of nature's body. If humans destroy nature and the land, they destroy their nature's bodies. The crisis is a sign that humanity has become alienated from their bodies.¹⁰¹ The land, and all the creature bodies with their intrinsic value and worth are not passive because they participate in the creative process as shown by Hosea 2. Further, in this understanding, the ecofeminist principle is not limited exclusively to women but extends to the power of creation in nature and other species. While Hosea uses the imagery of the female body to describe disintegration and the threat to the solidarity kinship of ancient Israel – although at the same time pointing to the

¹⁰⁰ PP13, female, 44 years old, activist, in the Intercontextual Bible Reading, Tentena, November 2022.

¹⁰¹ PP4, female, 50 years old, radio broadcaster who also has full-time responsibilities within the home, Intercontextual Reading of Hosea, November 2022.

power of creation through female body and land imagery as important for the continuity of the kinship and nature ecosystem, the Poso women use the metaphor of the womb of nature positively for resilience, showing too the power creation of all the nature's bodies that need to be respected and celebrated.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

7.1 The Main Topic and Its Importance

The key issue this thesis investigated is the intersectional analysis of metaphors in Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 focusing on land and body imagery in dialogue with different communities in Indonesia. In contrast to the substitution theory of metaphor which understands metaphor as a substitution for literal expression, this research is conducted with the understanding that metaphor has a significant cognitive and affective role. Therefore, exploring the interaction between conceptual ideas in the literary setting and the socio-cultural context is essential to fully understanding and appreciating the metaphor. This research draws upon a theoretical framework that combines elements of intercontextual reading, the role of metaphors of Biblical interpretation, social scientific criticism and ecofeminism. Intersectionality enables a nuanced examination of the multifaceted relationships between the family, land, body metaphor and social-economic dynamics, while ecofeminism provides a lens for the land and body metaphor through which to explore the interconnectedness of ecological bodies. This theoretical foundation guided the analysis of Hosea.

The basic premise of the thesis is that the metaphors used in Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 address socio-economic crises resulting in both societal disintegration and fractured connection with the land and differing bodies of nature. In contrast to the marriage metaphor that remains the dominant interpretive tool in most of the scholarly works on Hosea, this thesis proposes that the promiscuity metaphor of land and body imagery brings significant attention to the critical issue of the disintegration of the social body and the body of nature, brought about by the intensified economic and social-political crises of land grabbing and ecological damage.

The social, economic, and political crises in eighth-century Israel and Judah had significant and detrimental effects on society, particularly in Israel, which was primarily an agricultural culture. The traditional communitarian method of production, which was characterised by strong familial bonds and mutual assistance, saw significant disruptions. The challenging situation in the context of Hosea pertains to the issues of land privatisation, a centralised system that legitimises power and accumulation of wealth, the imposition of taxes, and agricultural intensification for export. The escalation of the circumstances posed a danger to the kinship bond within society and the kinship bond to the land. Furthermore, the intensification challenges have affected the interconnectedness between humanity and the natural environment. The text of Hosea employs the image of the promiscuity act not as a means to condemn personal sexual transgressions but rather to underscore the societal challenges that posed a danger to the cohesion of kinship bonds.

Moreover, the promiscuity metaphor uses the woman's body and imagery of the land in such a way that there is a negative impact on both women and the land. As shown in the research, several readers at the beginning of the conversation in the intercontextual reading process see this as a negative description of the woman in the text and that the portrayal of the woman in the text has affected actual women in society. Therefore, I contend that the promiscuity of the woman in Hosea has an affective impact on the reader and, in the research, I explore ways in which to deal with such negative biblical imagery and metaphor.

The promiscuity metaphors in Hosea play a substantial role in highlighting the shattered kinship bonds and solidarity of Israel's social body, along with a fragmented relationship with the land. However, the other metaphors in Hosea also emphasise the hope of reconciliation with other creature's bodies. The sky, earth, and grain that respond to each other in the ecosystem and God's response to them are used to describe the restoration of better relationships. This intersectional analysis of Hosea has proved valuable in providing fresh insights

into the significance of interconnectedness within kinship bonds and societal solidarity. Consequently, there is a hope of restoring the kinship bonds among different bodies, fostering a reconnection between individuals and the land, and reestablishing a harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world. By using an intercontextual analysis, this research offers a significant contribution to an alternative interpretation of Hosea in dialogue with actual communities. Intercontextual reading is a collective interpretation that involves interaction with different contexts, including the context of the text and the reader from different cultures, tribes, and social-political dynamics. The research gives attention to the social, economic, and political aspects of the text and to the community as the reader of the text. How does our life context influence the reading of the Bible? What do we learn from the exchange with other readers? Is there any change of perspective? In reality our questions, our effort to construct a meaning are influenced by our horizon, history, context, reality and vice versa.

Moreover, I have discussed an essential part of the critical land issue in Hosea using ecofeminist analysis and highlighting the interconnectedness of all bodies within the ecosystem, an aspect that has largely been ignored, particularly in the context of heightened socio-economic change. The participants from Poso use the womb of nature imagery to talk back to the text. Using the womb of nature imagery, the participants emphasise further the interconnectedness and power of connection with all bodies of nature.

7.2 The Research Gap and the Main Aim of the Research

Although some previous research has proposed the analysis of the family metaphor in Hosea instead of the dominant marriage metaphor, only a few studies have discussed the issue of the land from an ecological perspective, even though the destruction of nature is raised clearly in the text. The marriage metaphor as the common interpretative strategy of Hosea is not sufficient to

capture different pictures within the context of the wider metaphors in Hosea. Hosea uses the metaphorical language of the land and the body to highlight the critical issues of disintegration and the hope for the interconnection of all bodies. This research has also argued that most writers tend to focus exclusively on the literary function of the imagery in interpreting such metaphorical representations. However, metaphors possess affective power in addition to their cognitive power. Therefore, a critical analysis of how the woman is portrayed in the text of Hosea is needed because without a critical gender analysis, it is impossible to understand fully the portrayal of women and land in the text. Moreover, the metaphorical language of the interconnection of all nature's bodies has received little attention from researchers on Hosea. Despite the fact that the destruction of nature is a major concern, the concentration on the metaphor of marriage has prevented much discussion on the ecological perspective or on the crucial issue of the land as part of the cosmic body.

Taking this into consideration, the research makes an essential contribution by shedding light on the ecological and social implications of the land and body imagery within the text. The main research findings and their significance are set out in the following section.

7.3 Main Results

In the beginning, the question of the research is 'To what extent can the reading of Indonesian communities, with a focus on land and body imagery in Hosea, be a reading process that contributes to justice?' In the development of the research, the question has been modified to 'To what extent can the intersectional reading with Indonesian communities, focusing on land and body imagery in Hosea, serve as a reading process which contributes to justice?' The revised form of the question gives greater emphasis to the intersectional reading of the reading groups and of my own interpretation.

Addressing this, an intersectional analysis has been employed, in which the reading of Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 is interwoven with examination of the cognitive and affective contribution of metaphor, social scientific criticism, an intercontextual community reading, and an ecofeminist hermeneutic concerning the land and body. The research reveals an alternative interpretation of Hosea that highlights criticism of the disintegration of society and its kinship bonds with nature through family, land, and body imageries. The key areas that have emerged as a result of this research are summarised under the following four different approaches to and insights from the reading.

7.3.1 Insights into the Role of Metaphors in Biblical Interpretation

According to the cognitive theory of metaphor, metaphors have a significant impact on cognitive processes, belief systems, and actions. The concept of metaphor is deeply embedded in the domain of human experience and activities in interpersonal interactions. In the process of understanding a metaphor, the mind is very active, and is not characterized by passive receptivity.

In discussing the metaphors in Hosea, readers are dealing with questions concerning the representation of various characters in the text and how characters in the text have a metaphorical function, representing different aspects of the divine-human-nonhuman relationship. This study has contended that, within the interpretation of Hosea, attention needs to be paid to how the dynamics of such a character representation contribute to or impact the cognitive power and affective effect of metaphors in the text, particularly by the personification of human characters. The analysis is beneficial in broadening understanding, especially in religious texts where the interpretative community has tended to accept the representation of God literally through a male character and to absolutise all the associations of the male character in the text as indeed referring to God. When read in this way, the metaphor also carries an affective effect, which can often be shocking, as in the images of a violent husband and a violent God that are also present elsewhere in the Bible, suggesting a patriarchal

legitimation of human and divine violence against women and children. Hence, a metaphor should not be read literally as an absolute image. At the same time, the hearers are carried along by the imagery.

This critical remark about how to treat metaphor is applied to the metaphor in Hosea. I argue that the intensive use of metaphors has a powerful affective effect that can also be dangerous because of the emphasis on the metaphor's negative aspects; for instance, the negative aspect of the metaphor of God as a husband who acts violently. The divine imagery and the association of God with the husband should be read critically and a literal reading resisted. Moreover, the husband imagery should not be considered as the only metaphor representing God. If it were to be seen literally and as the sole representation of God, the images of the husband are likely to be idolised, and violence towards the wife would seem to be allowed because it is regarded as a punishment from God. Any human images chosen as a metaphor for God, such as that of the husband, gain divine qualities by being placed in an interactive relationship with God.

The interaction influences and changes the ways of thinking about husbands and the ways of thinking about God, where the characteristics of each are projected onto the other. Thus, not only is God portrayed in terms of the actions and characteristics of a husband, but human husbands derive a godlike status through being employed as a metaphor for the divine. The reader might accept the patriarchal and dominant characteristics as 'proper', since the Bible describes God in this way. In dealing with problematic metaphors like those in Hosea, images of God presented in this text should be read together with other images of God in the Bible since there are many different images of God presented there, as I have already indicated.¹ These images together operate to relativise and challenge the hegemony of any model. Instead of accepting an absolute concept of a patriarchal God within a dominant and hierarchical

¹ See Chapter 3.

worldview, exploring the religious text in a broader context that provides transformative characteristics of God is essential.

Another significant result from this research is what has emerged from a closer examination of the affective contribution of the way the woman is portrayed and punished in the text of Hosea. The process of understanding a metaphor should not stop at the understanding of the function of the promiscuity metaphor in the past. It requires further analysis of how the metaphor continues to impact people's imaginations and lives today. The descriptions of whoredom, adultery, and fornication interact directly with the image of the woman, which can readily lead readers to automatically impute the metaphor to the ethical and unclean actions of real women in real life. In other words, the biblical metaphor of the woman as an unfaithful wife predisposes contemporary readers to expect women to behave in such ways in their own contexts. Therefore, the use of the metaphor here is problematic. The metaphorical presentation of the woman influences female representation more broadly, and conversely, the female representation becomes associated with these specific negative actions.

The sexual theology, which is often read from the text of Hosea, frequently emphasises the moral superiority and sexual purity expected of the woman but turns a blind eye to sexual violence in the text on the part of the man. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse thoroughly what is considered as peculiar or transgressive sexual morality. Control of the body and control of sexuality should be analysed within a larger social, economic, and political context in order to interpret what happens to the female body in Hosea. It is dangerous to read Hosea's promiscuity metaphor as limited to the wife's wrongdoing and to highlight the husband as representative of God who loves and does violence as a curse on the female partner's disobedience. Readers need to remain aware that the female representation in the metaphor is problematic because it tends to shape the woman's sexuality as controlled by society. This negative concept was

internalised in Hosea's time and continues to be internalised in many societies today. Therefore, it is imperative to read the punishment of the female partner critically. I contend that the responsible approach to this problem is to read the background of the concept in the text critically and to resist repeating the cycle of violence from the text into the present context. The problematic implication of attributing violent images of God is investigated seriously by understanding the cognitive and affective contributions of the metaphor in the hermeneutical strategy. There are different approaches to responding to the problematic text, like Hosea, for instance, by using alternative translations, reading the text of Hosea with some warnings as suggested by feminist scholars, leaving the text behind as no longer providing meaning or even removing the text from the canon of Scripture. I resist the move to leave this text behind, and I contend that the text of Hosea, with the critical reading of the portrayal of the woman in the text, can still be used for the possibility of generating alternative interpretations as highlighted in this research.

In order to analyse the concept of promiscuity as part of the general contextual background in Hosea, it is necessary to examine ideas of promiscuity in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and ancient Israel. The comparison of the conceptual backgrounds of sexuality and promiscuity in ancient societies shows that the perspective on promiscuity in the text concerns not only individual sexual relationships, but concerns social relationships. In ancient times, especially in ancient Israel, a sexual practice outside the common practice indicated a crisis and social problems threatening the systems of social life. The act of promiscuity is seen as a threat to the economic integrity of the family, as well as to the unity and stability of social life. Therefore, one of the suggestions is to understand the metaphor of promiscuity against the conceptual background of the social-economic crisis. Extensive promiscuity imagery in Hosea emphasises an acute socio-economic crisis with its devastating impact on social disintegration and fragmentation of nature's ecosystem.

7.3.2 Insights from Social Scientific Criticism

The social scientific criticism of Hosea further explores the social promiscuity that has been highlighted in the intercontextual reading. Starting with exploring the social-political dynamics of eighth-century Israel and Judah, the research compares the situation of decentralised Israel and centralised Israel.

Gottwald argues that, in decentralised Israel, there was a shared and reciprocal exchange of economic needs. The economic system of Israel in the decentralised period was self-sufficiency. They were all interdependent on one another for survival. Any surplus of production was mostly stored for times of famine. The family was economically independent. They did not have to give their output to the higher authorities. There was a shared and reciprocal exchange between families.² It was a communitarian mode of production in which the primary productive unit was the multifamily households linked in group and tribe. The fruits of their collective labour were enjoyed by the members of the household. They also assisted each other in agrarian labour and in solidarity, granting aid to one another when any were in need.³ Paula McNutt emphasises that the land was used collectively and became an important part of a family's context. The land was shared and held communally. It was annually allocated by lot for the individual or family's cultivation.⁴

By contrast, centralised Israel in the eighth century represented a move away from land used to produce basic means for self-sufficiency to private land where the production would be traded among the nations. There was no longer a shared exchange. Reiner Albertz argues that the rise of military power under David and the resulting centralisation led to changes in the system from land tenure to privatisation. Large landowners, officials, military and merchants had

² Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 292.

³ Norman K. Gottwald, *Ideology, Class and The Hebrew Bible*, (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018), 7–8.

⁴ Paula McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 202

set themselves above the traditional small farmers whose only aim was to be self-sufficient.⁵ David tried to maintain large numbers of officials and military personnel who expected to be paid for their service, and their payment was made through grants of land. There was also a collection of taxes, rents, and services. The elite enjoyed ownership of the lands, and used economic surpluses to pay for luxury lifestyles and military materials. In centralised Israel, the creation of large estates forced aside the egalitarian ideal of the period. The desire for grain, wine, and oil (Hosea 2:7) symbolises the desire of elite rulers for profit and wealth. The period has resulted in a high degree of prosperity for Judah and Israel. The governing elite became increasingly involved in boosting commercial activity and tried to find more ways to extract surpluses. This situation resulted in social catastrophe when a small percentage of the ruling elite reaped the benefits while the peasant majority endured hardship. As seen in Hosea 2:10, the grain, the new wine, the fresh oil, silver, and gold were central to the consumption lifestyle of the elite. During the age of monarchy, a notable surge in commercial activity can be seen. The commercial activity includes the consolidation of land, the adoption of agricultural commercial crops and the wealth accumulation of privileged elite minority. This is what the promiscuity imagery refers to.

The land could represent the means of production, and Hosea describes the way the elite misused the land by using the sexual term, the land “behaves promiscuously, turning away from YHWH.” I agree with Alice Keefe who reframes the metaphor into a family metaphor and draws upon the centrality of the family in the traditional structure to speak about the destruction resulting from economic and social change.⁶ In Hosea, the situation concerns not only the production of the land but also the change of identity where kinship bonds and

⁵ Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in The Old Testament Period Vol. I* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 159.

⁶ Alice Keefe, *Woman's Body and The Social Body in Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001)190–193.

mutual networks were threatened by fragmentation and dysfunctional leadership amid socio-economic injustice.

Through an intersectional approach, I have shown that promiscuity in Hosea is not just a private or individual matter but is part of the larger discourse of economics, gender, and political crisis. Promiscuity is effectively a disintegration of the communal network that threatens the kinship bond because of social and economic injustice. Moreover, I contend that the disintegration in Hosea is not only in the social networks of human relations but also in relationship to the bodies of nature. The systemic socio-economic oppression by the elite leaders has led to Israelite societal disintegration, as well as the disintegration of the land with a negative impact on nature's ecosystem. The reading of Hosea 1, 2, and 4:1–3 emphasises that forces of socio-economics that break the collective bond and sacrifice nature and other people will not bring prosperity but disaster and devastation. Therefore, I highlight the need to include land and other creatures as part of the collective body in reading Hosea because Hosea proclaims powerfully that the land and other creatures are part of the collective body and should not be reduced to value in solely economic and power terms.

The family metaphor signifies the importance of equal relationships, partnerships, interdependent relations, and the hope for reconciliation between all members of the land, not only human ones. The powerful challenge of Hosea is to restore kinship bonds with society, the land, and other bodies of nature against the socio-economic crisis. The reconciliation in Hosea is also shown by the fertility of the land and the abundance of production. Israelite life is embodied within an agricultural worldview, and therefore, the imagery shows how the well-being of nature is connected to the well-being of humans. God in Hosea is also the God who gives blessings to the grain, wine, and fresh oil. Therefore, nature and fertility are not a separate realm of the Israelite religion. The text of Hosea effectively demonstrates the integration of decentralised Israel and religion within an agricultural worldview, including phenomena of

the natural cycle and fertility. The text of Hosea uses the natural cycle as a means of reconciliation while also using words with connotations of the erotic and sexuality.

7.3.3 Insight from Intercontextual Reading

The discussion in the intercontextual reading of Hosea among the Indonesian communities brought a number of issues to the fore. First, one of the reading groups highlighted the theme of social promiscuity. The Tentena group, which is experiencing a social and ecological crisis, understood the promiscuity in Hosea as a social promiscuity that speaks to their context. By highlighting the promiscuity act, they interpret the text of Hosea beyond a narrowly religious crisis. As the Poso group read Hosea, they criticised their own leadership, including the religious leaders, who assumed that enforced changes would bring prosperity. Instead, forced social and economic changes have threatened their survival and deep connection with nature. The Poso group claim that the promiscuity and disintegration of the text are problems of social disintegration.

At first, the Sumba group raised many questions about the characters in the text. Why did God ask Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman? Why were Hosea's children called children of promiscuity? After discussing this, the Sumba group came to the agreement that the promiscuity in Hosea could be seen as a social promiscuity that describes disintegration. The Sumba group is also experiencing a social and ecological crisis which they can relate to this interpretation. Moreover, the Sumba group highlighted that the disintegration is not only referring to the family but also to other creatures. They pointed out a further ecological aspect in their reading of the text.

The third group, the Yogyakarta community group, contributed to the intertextual aspect of Hosea by focusing on God's love and forgiveness. Forgiveness became the central theme in their discussion. This group also highlighted another aspect of hope in God as part of the central message from their reading. In the exchange and discussion with the other two groups, the

Yogyakarta group was sympathetic to the other group's struggles and contexts. They realised that they also have an ecological crisis around them, but they did not see the connection at first in the reading, and needed the insights of the other groups to prompt them to recognise this dimension. Therefore, the group expressed gratitude for their partners' readings which opened their eyes to a new aspect of the text. Through the dialogue with the readings of other groups, they understand that the text of Hosea also discusses social disintegration resulting from the intensified economic and political change that negatively impact the relationship with other bodies of nature. The Yogyakarta group was the only group that highlighted the theme of hope at the beginning of the meeting. Following that, the remaining groups were asked about their respective perspective on the topic of hope. The Poso group emphasised that hope should not be read vertically, referring only to God, because hope needs to be read in horizontal relationships with other people and creatures. The hope is within the entire ecological community movement, and God is engaged and active together with humans and other actors.

The results of the intercontextual reading exchanges are fascinating and extremely enriching. The text of Hosea resonated with the Poso and Sumba context of environmental injustice, especially on the level of socio-economic change that brings social disintegration and fragmented relationships between the land, water, and all bodies of nature that used to hold significant value as part of kinship bond. Not only does the dynamic discussion share a substantial understanding of the text of Hosea, but also the stories of social and ecological injustices are told and shared. From a theological perspective, giving voice to marginalised communities has both offered a valuable perspective to the interpretive task and valued voices that have not often been given sufficient attention.

7.3.4 The Interconnectedness of All Ecological Bodies

Many eminent feminist scholars are particularly critical of the parts of Hosea which seem to endorse gender dualism. While this kind of dualism is rightly and helpfully challenged, this research maintains that the reading of the text should be expanded to a holistic ecofeminist analysis that includes the ecological bodies of the earth and other creatures. This could pave the way for a critical rereading of dualism and hierarchical aspects of the land and body imagery in Hosea. Moreover, by focusing on land and body imagery with ecofeminist analysis in dialogue with the traditional community image of the womb of nature, the research suggests a significant interconnection between all ecological bodies in the ecosystem. Restoring the interconnection of all bodies in the ecosystem is a crucial task for practitioners and scholars. Nature's bodies, planetary bodies, and human bodies are all interconnected. Rebalancing the relationship in the ecosystem is crucial, especially in the current ecological crisis.

This assertion of the importance of all ecological bodies forms a significant contribution offered by this research through its analysis of the land and body imagery. In Christianity, there has been ambivalence about the body. Although the early teachings of Christianity affirmed embodiment, over history, Christian doctrines have developed a distrust of the body and urged the separation of nature and human bodies. The role and significance of the body is not a minor matter but, rather, essential to Christian doctrine and practices. Therefore, all ecological bodies must be respected and accepted. I agree with Sallie McFague's view on the model of the body of God that God's body includes all bodies in diversity.⁷ I contend that the body in Hosea stands not only for human bodies but includes all bodies in diversity, especially neglected and oppressed bodies, which include nature, and all vulnerable and suffering bodies. It is not

⁷ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 83–84.

only humans who suffer because of the domination and forced economic changes in Hosea but the land will also mourn, the animals in the land, the birds in the sky, and the fish of the sea will perish. Within the model of the world as God's body, all planetary parts are valuable.

The power of interconnectedness is also evident in the womb of nature imagery, which emerged from the community readings. The womb imagery is not limited to the female body but applies to the whole of nature. It can be used as a powerful imagery to articulate the drive of interconnection of all creatures' bodies in the universe. It symbolises the depth of their connection with the natural world. Instead of hierarchical relationships, the womb of nature image shows the interconnection between all aspects of nature and the mutual relationship between humans and other creatures. All creatures have rights and each one of them has their intrinsic value as a creation of God. In this way, they resist all domination and systemic violence. The womb of nature imagery emphasises that relationships with different bodies in nature are essential and need to be reimagined by humans. Hierarchy and imbalance in relationship with nature will result in alienation. The close relationship with nature that the Indonesian communities have influences the way the different communities read Hosea. Instead of focusing only on the general dualism and hierarchy in the text, the community expanded their critical reading to their deep connection with nature by offering the power of interconnectedness through the womb of nature imagery. As noted already, the text of Hosea not only criticises the disintegration of the kinship bonds but also highlights the hope of restoring the kinship bond and strengthening the power of interconnection of all ecological bodies. It emphasises the mutual interrelationships within the community of life, where God is an integral part of the interconnected relationships. By using erotic metaphors, Hosea highlights this power of connection and sharing. The term 'erotic' here encompasses not just sexuality. The erotic metaphor in Hosea, is not primarily about continuous productivity or reproduction but it is about the inter-connection of interrelated bodies in nature's ecosystem. All related bodies

recover and play their roles equally for the ecosystem to work. The body is erotic in the most profound sense. When the power of connection and sharing is respected, all bodies experience life and blessing. In contrast, if disintegration happens and interconnection is destroyed, death will be experienced by the bodies of all creatures.

7.4 Contributions of the Research

Intersectional analysis of Hosea has contributed to an alternative interpretation of the text that highlights the concern about socio-economic crises with devastating impact on social relations and the well-being of nature's bodies in the ecosystem. The research has shown that scholarly exegesis can be done in dialogue with communities using intercontextual analysis, social scientific criticism, and ecofeminist analysis. The research is a prompt to broaden the scholarly analysis focused on the limited idea of marriage imagery in Hosea that rarely talks about domination, hierarchy, social disintegration, and violence to the human bodies and the bodies of nature.

This alternative intersectional reading of Hosea is a catalyst to academic theology to expand the interpretation of Hosea to encompass social and ecological disintegration and the hope for interconnection. As seen in the dialogue of collective interpretations, the participants incorporated broader ideas than the conventional interpretation of the marriage metaphor. Academic theology can learn from the creative and new insights of the intercontextual Bible readings in the understanding of the promiscuity metaphor as depicting social ecological disintegration and the reader's hope for a better re-integrated relationship.

7.5 Practical Implications of the Research

Based on my research, I have demonstrated that the intersectional analysis of intercontextual reading, the significance of metaphor in biblical interpretation and the role of social scientific and ecofeminist analysis have broadened the interpretation of Hosea. The intercontextual reading of Hosea can be one of the ways to give voices to marginalised communities, especially when there has not been sufficient attention paid to their voices and understandings. The lived realities of communities involved in the reading shed new insight into the imagery and key features of the text. The intercontextual reading of Hosea can be used by the community to connect to other communities, broadening their perspectives and challenging each other's views on Hosea. Through the intercontextual reading groups, the participants learn from each other, complementing and challenging each other. Therefore, the intercontextual reading of Hosea has been a significant way of finding support and hope in each other in difficult times of crisis. Such intercontextual reading groups can form a bridge to other communities, and be used to mobilise social movements for ecological justice. In such ways, local contexts shape the interpretation of Hosea, and the intercontextual readings connect the different narratives arising from the different communities.

My research is intended for catalysing academic theology and church theology to integrate questions of ecojustice in theological research, teaching, and advocacy. I advocate the setting up of similar intercontextual reading groups in different contexts to explore other biblical texts and provide space to ask any question on the relationship with the bodies of all creatures not only on the land, but also in the sky, the water and the sea. I advocate such intercontextual reading as part of the ecological movement that inspires the basis of collective resistance for ecological injustice. Along the way, other creative actions have been initiated as collective movements together with the group of theological students in Tentena, APDP group, Perwati Sumba and other groups in different contexts. They are no longer alone in facing the pain of injustice but there are

solidarities from different stakeholders, nationally and internationally, who walk together with them.

Furthermore, the discussion of the theory of metaphor used in this research helps to more fully understand the way the metaphor function in biblical interpretation and adds depth to the sense of meaning of the particular metaphors in Hosea. In investigating metaphor through a cognitive theory of metaphor, the metaphor has meaning in its linguistic and situational context. In order to understand a metaphor, one needs to make use of the background information from real-life experience. The background information are grounded closely in human experience and interactional activities. The literary and the socio-cultural contexts can give background information on the metaphor. Especially in analysing an ancient text such as Hosea, the social context behind the metaphor can be understood through social scientific analysis. Moreover, the ecofeminist approach helps to analyse many symbols representing land and body throughout Hosea. The reading of Hosea 1–2 and 4:1–3 that is interwoven with an intercontextual community reading, a wider theory of metaphor, social scientific criticism, and an ecofeminist hermeneutic concerning the land and body, has contributed to a well-balanced and multi-dimensional interpretation. Simultaneously, this research will serve to raise awareness and foster a greater understanding of the significance of community solidarity and solidarity with all ecological bodies in the reading of scripture.

7.6 Limitations of the Research

In this study, it was not possible to measure exactly the impact of the research on justice in terms of concrete outcomes for the communities, partly because the communities' struggles are ongoing beyond the life of this dissertation.

Therefore, the research focuses more on understanding how intercontextual reading can bridge the narratives between actual communities and theological perspectives, and can contribute to justice in redressing the overwhelmingly patriarchal interpretations, as well as justice for all bodies regarded as equal.

Moreover, the research has been affected by the covid pandemic, which reduced access to participants who are living in different islands and have limited internet access.

7.7 Suggestions for the Future Research

Reading metaphors in the Bible using a cognitive theory of metaphors has already been undertaken by many scholars. However, the combination of interpreting metaphors using a cognitive theory while also considering the affective contribution, particularly in dialogue with specific readers in their own contemporary contexts, is rarely attempted. Therefore, the cognitive theory of metaphors should be employed alongside an awareness of the affective contribution of biblical metaphors. Similarly, intersectional analysis across a number of fields is uncommon with regard to biblical metaphor. This is suggestive for further study on metaphor in another text like Jeremiah to promote intersectional analysis that combines intercontextual reading, cognitive and affective analysis of metaphor, and social scientific criticism in interpreting the text. The selection of the text can similarly be a collaborative process with particular communities choosing the most relevant texts. My research has established the creative possibilities of such a reading in one context and focusing on one text; further work is needed in other contexts and on other texts. Such intercontextual input is essential for expanding new insights both for scholars and communities. Moreover, I contend that there is a need for women's group in intercontextual reading that could share contextual feminist perspective to the conversation as experienced by the intercontextual reading on Hosea. The reading process involved in this study demonstrates how scholars and other readers such as the farmers, fishermen/women, teachers or those who have full-time responsibilities within the home can contribute to a multidimensional reading of the text which neither of them, on their own, could achieve.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abma, Richtsje *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50: 1-3 and 54 :1-10, Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 2-3)*. Amsterdam: Studia Semitica Nederlandica, 1999.
- Albertz, Rainer *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period Vol.1* London: SCM Press, 1994.
- Andersen, Francis I., and David Noel Freedman, eds. *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 1st ed. The Anchor Bible, v. 24. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday and Company, 1980.
- Astley, Jeff, and Leslie J. Francis, eds. *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Bendor, S., *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*. Jerusalem: Simon, 1996.
- Berekiah, Olugbemiro O. ‘An Ecocentric Reading of אמת, חסד, and דעת אלהים in Hosea 4.1-6’. *The Bible Translator* 70, no. 3 (December 2019): 343–60.
- Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Bird, Phyllis A., and Anna Glenn. *Harlot or Holy Woman? A Study of Hebrew Qedešah*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2019.
- Black, Max. *Models and Metaphor*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1962.
- Boer, Roland. *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel*. First edition. Library of Ancient Israel. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Brenner, Atalyah, ed. *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Brenner, Athalya. ‘On Prophetic Propaganda and The Politics of Love: The Case of Jeremiah’. In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, edited by Athalya Brenner. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Brenner, Athalya, ‘Pornoprophetic Revisited: Some Additional Reflections,’ *Journal for The Study of The Old Testament* 21. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Carroll, Robert P. ‘Desire Under the Terebinths: On Pornographic Representation in the Prophets - A Response’. In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, edited by Athalya Brenner. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Carroll, Robert P. *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions*. London: SCM Press, 1979.
- Chalmers, R. Scott. *The Struggle of Yahweh and El for Hosea’s Israel*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 11. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2008.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chaney, Marvin L. "Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy," in *Social Scientific Criticism of the Hebrew Bible and Its Social World: The Israelite Monarchy*, edited by Norman K. Gottwald. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.
- Davies, Graham I. *Hosea: New Century Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Day, John. "Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. Supplement Series 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- de Kuiper A. *Kitab Hosea*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2010.
- de Wit, Hans, ed. *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible*. Elkhart, Ind: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2004.
- de Wit, Hans, and J. W. Dyk, eds. *Bible and Transformation: The Promise of Intercultural Bible Reading*. Semeia Studies, number 81. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
- Doorly, William J. *Prophet of Love: Understanding the Book of Hosea*. New York: Paulist Press, 1991.
- Dyk, Janet, Lénart J. De Regt, and Bryan Harmelink. "Deportation or Forgiveness in Hosea 1.6? Verb Valence Patterns and Translation Proposals." *The Bible Translator* 65, no. 3 (December 2015): 235–79.
- Eaton, Heather. "Ecofeminist Theologies in the Age of Climate Crisis." *Feminist Theology* 29, no. 3 (2021): 209–19.
- Eaton, Heather. *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2005.
- Engler, Steven, and Michael Stausberg, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- Erari, Karel Phil. *Spirit Ekologi Integral*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017.
- Eyre, C. J. "Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70, no. 1 (August 1984): 92–105.
- Faraone, Christopher A., and Laura McClure, eds. *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*. Wisconsin Studies in Classics. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.
- Fontaine, Carole. "A Response to Hosea." In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, edited by Athalya Brenner. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Fritz, Volkmar, and Philip R. Davies eds. *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 228. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Gadamer, Hans G., *Truth and Method*. First paperback edition. translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London: Sheed and Ward, 1993.
- Galpaz-Feller, Pnina. "Private Lives and Public Censure: Adultery in Ancient Egypt and Biblical Israel." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67, no. 3 (September 2004): 153–61.
- Gebara, Ivone. *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Glenny, W. Edward. *Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus*. Septuagint Commentary Series. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Gottwald, Norman K. *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel*. London: SCM Press, 1979.
- Gottwald, Norman K. *Ideology, Class and the Hebrew Bible*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018.
- Gottwald, Norman K., *The Politics of Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Gottwald, Norman K., and Richard A. Horsley, eds. *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. The Bible & Liberation Series. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Grey, Mary. 'Ecofeminism and Christian Theology'. *The Furrow* 51, no. 9 (2000): 481–90.
- Guillaume, Philippe. *Land, Credit and Crisis: Agrarian Finance in the Hebrew Bible*. BibleWorld. Sheffield: Equinox Pub, 2012.
- Habel, Norman C., and Peter L. Trudinger, eds. *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.
- Havea, Jione, ed. *Scripture and Resistance. Theology in the Age of Empire*. Lanham: Fortress Academic, 2019.
- Hayes, Katherine M. *The Earth Mourns. Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. Academia Biblica 8. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.
- Hearon, Holly E., ed. *Distant Voice Drawing Near: Essays in Honor of Antoinette Clark Wire*. Collegeville: MN Liturgical Press, 2004.
- Hessel, Dieter T., and Rosemary Radford Ruether, eds. *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*. Religions of the World and Ecology. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Hong, Seong-Hyuk. *The Metaphor of Illness and Healing in Hosea and Its Significance in the Socio-Economic Context of Eighth-Century Israel and Judah*. Studies in Biblical Literature, v. 95. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.
- Hubbard, David Allan. *Hosea: Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009.
- Hubler, Caitlin. "No Longer Will You Call Me 'My Ba'al: Hosea's Polemic and the Semantics of Ba'al in 8th Century B.C.E. Israel." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 4 (June 2020): 610–23.
- M. La Rip. *Intertribal Hermeneutics in the Context of Myanmar: A Study of Roles and Functions of Jeremianic Female Imagery*. Bergambacht: Uitgeverij 2VM, 2018.
- Kavusa, Kivatsi Jonathan. 'Social Disorder and the Trauma of the Earth Community: Reading Hosea 4:1-3 in Light of Today's Crises'. *Old Testament Essays* 29 no.3 (1 January 2016): 481–501.
- Keefe, Alice A. *Woman's Body and The Social Body in Hosea*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 338. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Kim, Grace Ji-Sun, and Hilda P. Koster, eds. *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women's Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017.
- Kim, Uriah Y., and Seung Ai Yang, eds. *Handbook of Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics*. London: T & T Clark, 2019.
- Kittay, Eva. *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Kwakkel, Gert. "The Land In The Book of Hosea." In *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology*, Vetus Testamentum volume 124. edited by J.T.A.G.M. Van Ruiten and Cor De Vos, 167–81. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Kwok, Pui-lan. *Postcolonial Politics and Theology: Unraveling Empire for a Global World*. First edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Lakoff, George. "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor." In *Metaphor and Thought*. Edited by Andrew Ortoni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Lemche, N. P. *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, v. 37. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Lim, Bo H., and Daniel Castelo. *The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary: Hosea*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2015.
- Listijabudi, Daniel K., 'The Mystical Quest as a Path to Peace Building: A Cross-Textual Reading of the Stories of Dewa Ruci and Jacob at the Jabbok as a Contribution to Asian Multi-Faith Hermeneutic.' Ph.D Dissertation. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2016.
- Macintosh, Andrew. A. *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014.
- Mandalika, Lady Paula R., Zakaria J. Ngelow, eds. *Teologi Tanah: Perspektif Kristen Terhadap Ketidakadilan Sosio-Ekologis di Indonesia*. Makassar: OASE INTIM, 2015.
- Mandalika, Lady Paula R., Christina J. Hutubessy, Sirayandris J. Botara, Aprissa Taranau, eds. *Eketeologi: Refleksi Kontekstual dan Aksi Lintas Iman*. Makassar: Oase Intim, 2023.
- McFague, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.
- McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- McNutt, Paula M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- McConville, Gordon. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets*. Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Moon, Joshua. 'Honor and Shame in Hosea's Marriages'. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 39, no. 3 (March 2015): 335–51.
- Moran, William L. 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of The Love of God in Deuteronomy'. *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1963): 77–87.
- Moughtin-Mumby, Sharon. *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Newsom, Carol A., Sharon H. Ringe eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- Ortoni, Andrew, ed. *Metaphor and Thought*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Parsons, Susan Frank, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Sherwood, Yvonne. *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996)
- Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. London: Zed Books, 1988.
- Singih, Emanuel Gerrit. 'Agama Dan Kerusakan Ekologi: Mempertimbangkan "Tesis White" dalam Konteks Indonesia'. *GEMA TEOLOGIKA: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Dan Filsafat Keilahian* 5, no. 2 (27 October 2020): 113.
- Soskice, Janet Martin. *Metaphor and Religious Language*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Spronk, Klaas. *The Present State of Old Testament Studies in the Low Countries: A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap*. Oudtestamentische Studiën, volume 69. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- Stausberg, Michael and Steven Engler, ed. *Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Stol, M. 'Women in Mesopotamia'. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 2 (1995): 123–44.
- Stuart, Douglas. *Hosea-Jonah*. Word Biblical Commentary 31. Texas: Word Books, 1987.
- Sturgeon, Noël. *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory, and Political Action*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Tong, Rosemarie and Tina Botts, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Van der Ham, Kirsten, Geke van Vliet, Peter-Ben Smit and Klaas Spronk eds. *Building Bridges towards a More Humane Society: Explorations in Contextual Biblical Interpretation on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Bridging Gaps Exchange Program*. Geneva: Globethics.net, 2022.
- Van Hecke, Pierre, ed. *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 187. Leuven : Leuven University Press, 2005.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Washam, Jamie Paige, 'Regenerating the Garden of the World,' Ph.D Dissertation. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2022
- Wenham, Gordon J., ed. *Exploring the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Westenholz, Joan Goodnick. 'Tamar, *Qēdēšā*, *Qadištu*, and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia'. *Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 3 (July 1989): 245–66.
- Wittenberg, Gunther. 'Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change' 22 (1 January 2009): 488–509.
- Yardeni, Ada, *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies vol.34*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2021.
- Yee, Gale A., *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*. Society of Biblical Literature 102. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987.
- Yee, Gale A., *Poor Banished Children of Eve*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Yee, Gale A., ed. *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. 2. ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007

Websites

- Lorde, Aurde, 'Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power,' Wordpress.com, accessed February 2022, <https://stilluntitledproject.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/audre-lorde-sister-outsider-the-uses-of-the-erotic-1978.pdf>
- Mosintuwu, Sekretariat. 'Konferensi Perempuan Poso Tentang Tanah, Air Dan Hutan'. *Mosintuwu.Com* (blog), 28 May 2022. <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/05/28/konferensi-perempuan-poso-tentang-tanah-air-dan-hutan/>
- . 'Konferensi Perempuan Poso : Tanah Masa Depan Kehidupan'. *Mosintuwu.Com* (blog), 2 June 2022. <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/06/02/konferensi-perempuan-poso-tanah-masa-depan-kehidupan/>.
- . 'Palm Oil Deforestation Makes Comeback in Indonesia after Decade-Long Slump'. Accessed 2 December 2024. <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/02/palm-oil-deforestation-makes-comeback-in-indonesia-after-decade-long-slump/>.
- . 'Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies'. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112, no. 1 (1993): 3. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3267861>.
- . *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies*. Introductions in Feminist Theology 12. London ; New York, N.Y: T&T Clark International, 2005.
- . *Politics of Ancient Israel*. Westminster: John Knox, 2007.
- . *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 2003.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- . *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE*. The Biblical Seminar 66. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Hebi, Martha. 'Tuan Rumah yang Dipinggirkan: Umat Marapu Dulu Didiskriminasi Agamanya, Kini Hidupnya Ditekan Proyek Swasembada Gula Jokowi'. Project Multatuli, 30 November 2021. <https://projectmultatuli.org/tuan-rumah-yang-dipinggirkan-umat-marapu-dulu-didiskriminasi-agamanya-kini-hidupnya-ditekan-proyek-swasembada-gula-jokowi/>
- Jong, Hans Nicholas. 'Indonesian Gold Mine Expanding In Wrong Direction Into Orangutan Habitat', n.d. <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/03/indonesian-gold-mine-expanding-in-wrong-direction-into-orangutan-habitat/>
- Gogali, Lian. 'Megilu 7 hari,' in mosintuwu.com, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2019/11/27/megilu-7-hari/>
- Gogali, Lian. 'Poso dan Apa yang Terjadi di Lutzeratz Jerman,' in mosintuwu.com, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2023/02/04/poso-dan-apa-yang-terjadi-di-lutzeratz-jerman/>
- 'Pope Francis: Destroying the Earth Is a Sin and Should Be a Crime', n.d. <https://www.stopeccocide.earth/press-releases-summary/pope-francis-destroying-the-earth-is-a-sin-and-should-be-a-crime;>
- Riski, Petrus, and Taufik Wijaya. 'Indonesians Uprooted by Mining Industry Call for a Fairer Future amid Presidential Vote', n.d. <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/03/indonesians-uprooted-by-mining-industry-call-for-a-fairer-future-amid-presidential-vote/>.
- Siruyu, Pian. 'Dokumen Warisan Geologi Danau Poso, Jalan Panjang Menuju Taman Bumi'. *Mosintuwu.Com* (blog), 10 October 2022. <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2022/10/10/dokumen-warisan-geologi-danau-poso-jalan-panjang-menuju-taman-bumi/>.
- Siruyu, Pian. 'Sawah-Sawah Tenggelam, Kerbau mati: Nasib Warga Tepi Danau Poso,' *Mosintuwu.com*, <https://www.mosintuwu.com/2020/10/31/sawah-tenggelam-kerbau-mati-nasib-warga-tepi-danau-poso/>
- Tan, Rebecca, Dera Menra Sijabat, and Joshua Irwandi. 'To Meet EV Demand, Industry Turns to Technology Long Deemed Hazardous', n.d. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2023/ev-nickel-refinery-dangers/>.
- Wandita, Galuh and Karen Campbell-Nelson, "Unlearning Impunity: A Guide to Understanding and Action for Women Survivors," *asia-ajar.org*, <https://asia-ajar.org/2015/11/unlearning-impunity-a-guide-to-understanding-and-action-for-women-survivors/>
- WALHI. 'Perusahaan Kalla Group Menenggelmkan Lahan Pertanian Masyarakat Pesisir Danau Poso', 27 December 2021. <https://www.walhi.or.id/perusahaan-kalla-group-menenggelmkan-lahan-pertanian-masyarakat-pesisir-danau-poso>.
- Yeo, Sophie. 'Ecocide: Should Killing Nature Be a Crime?', n.d. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201105-what-is-ecocide>.

Figures

- Figure 1 Friederich Schleiermacher's Diagram of
the Hermeneutic Circle
- Figure 2 Hans Gadamer's Diagram of the Hermeneutic Circle
- Figure 3 Photograph of Poso's Community Mapping Exercise
- Figure 4 Photograph of Sumba's Community Mapping Exercise
- Figure 5 One of the Giant Reservoir of PT MSM
- Figure 6 Deforestation in Sumba for the Plantation
- Figure 7 Womb of Nature