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Translating Pun and Play - Wordplay and Soundplay in Hosea

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TRANSLATING PUN AND PLAY
WORDPLAY AND SOUNDPLAY IN HOSEA

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A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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By
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For my wife, Amanda, with love.

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me with their Kingdom work beyond my walls; to Dr. mom who introduced me to the Hebrew Bible and inspired me to mine its treasures; to dad who selflessly supported me and my family and always believed in me; to my girls, Alexa, Lydia, and Eliza who are great distractions and gifts in my day; and to my incredible wife for her love, inspiration, support, patience, and encouragement from the inception of my continuing education to the culmination of this work. I love you all dearly.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB   Anchor Bible

ATD   Das Alte Testament Deutsch

BBB   *Bulletin de bibliographie biblique*

Bib   *Biblica*

BibOr   Biblical et orientalia

BDB   Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford, 1907

BFC   French Bible en français courant

BSac   *Bibliotheca sacra*

BT   *The Bible Translator*

CBC   Cambridge Bible Commentary

CBQ   *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CJB   Complete Jewish Bible

ConBOT   Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series

CurBS   *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*

DRB   French Version Darby

EIN   German Einheitsübersetzung der Heiligen Schrift

ELB   German Elberfelder Bibel revidierte Fassung

ELO   German Darby Unrevidierte Elberfelder

ESV   English Standard Version

EvTh   *Evangelische Theologie*

FAT   Forschungen zum Alten Testament

FBJ   French Bible de Jérusalem

FOTL   Forms of the Old Testament Literature

HRD	German Herder Version
IBHS	*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JPOS	*Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSupp	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
L45	Luther 1545 German Bible
LeS	*Lingua e Stile*
LUO	German Lutherbibel 1912
LUT	German Lutherbibel 1984
KJV	King James Version
LSG	French Louis Segond Version
MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCB	New Century Bible
NEG	French Nouvelle Edition de Genève

NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
SCH	German Schlachter Version 1951
SCL	German Schlachter Version 2000
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TOB	French Traduction Ecuméntique de la Bible
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
YLT	English Young's Literal Translation
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

ABSTRACT

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Puns and plays of sound are distinguishing features of poetry and proclamation. Poetry uses these phonetic devices to structure passages, create euphony, or evoke emotional responses from audiences. Proclamation, particularly in a live setting, also uses sound to emphasize words or lines that encourage audiences to feel, respond, or memorize. Puns arrive in the form of wordplay, which uses similarity of sounds that create ambiguity. Soundplay also uses similarity of sounds but to establish euphony or aural tagging. These phonetic plays exist only within the confines of their native language and their effectiveness to communicate meaning entirely depends on audience's ability to identify them. These devices' dependency on their native language creates problems for translators to render meaning created by their sounds and also complicates translators' ability to reproduce their sounds in translation. Where formal correspondence often eradicates phonetic plays from translation by prioritizing semantics, dynamic equivalence often sacrifices phonetic plays by prioritizing content. When these methods cannot reproduce the phonetic plays and their meanings, translators should translate these utterances with degrees of approximation that acknowledge pragmatic signifiers including the reading experience and the reading as experience. Using degrees of approximation enable translators to access unwritten pragmatic signifiers (signifiers expressing the effects that the meaning of a text has on interpreters) to recreate in translation the phonetic plays of the source text and their meanings.

The book of Hosea contains a significant amount of wordplay and soundplay utterances that demonstrate the importance of identifying them and reproducing their phonetic play for target audiences. Hosea exhibits phonetic play that irregularly weaves wordplay and soundplay in and out of the prophet's utterances. This poetic artistry differs from much of modern day poetry and lyrical compositions where many popular level artists use similarity of sound in regular patterns and meter. The irregularity of phonetic plays in Hosea mark areas of emphasis where the prophet wants to evoke emotion and a response from audiences or enable audiences to better memorize and embrace a core principle of the oracle's message.

INTRODUCTION

> The translator is under constant pressure from the conflict between form and meaning. If he attempts to approximate the stylistic qualities of the original, he is likely to sacrifice much of the meaning, while strict adherence to the literal content usually results in considerable loss of the stylistic flavor.[1]

Since the mid-1900s, scholarship has become increasingly aware of and interested in the literary analysis of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament.[2] A neglected area, however, is translating the phonetics of Hebrew plays of sound where similar sounds and signifiers interplay to produce an identifiable effect on the hearers.[3] These phonetic similarities enhance the semantics of words and contribute to the pragmatics of texts and should be translated. Past efforts to translate these phonetics, however, have distorted semantic meaning more than enhance it. As a result, translators often either deem plays of sound untranslatable or default to translating literally as the clearer or easier option.

A consensus of scholars argues most wordplay and soundplay are untranslatable and unintelligible apart from their native languages' interconnected systems of meaning. Landers simply states the position, "It is a fact of life that many if not most puns will be untranslatable."[4] Naaijkens comments on the possibility of translating phonetics, but not without distorting semantics. He writes, "[P]atterns, based on phonological features of the source language, simply cannot be reproduced in a receptor language, unless a formal correspondence is introduced by

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[1] Eugene A. Nida, *Toward A Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 2.

[2] The increasing interest in literary analysis of Hebrew in Old Testament poetry is well documented in Thomas P. McCreesh, *Biblical Sound and Sense: Poetic Sound Patterns in Proverbs 10–29*, JSOTSup 128 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 13.

[3] Frederick Ahl, *Metaformations: Soundplay and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 19.

[4] Clifford E. Landers, *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*, ed. Geoffrey Samuelsson-Brown, Topics in Translation 22 (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), 109.

some radical distortion of the meaning."[5] Likewise, William A. Smalley states, "Because

translation is not a surface phenomenon, it follows that linguistic devices such as puns and plays

on words which depend heavily on surface similarities are not usually translatable, . . . there is

nothing remotely 'natural' about it for English, and the breaking or stretching of the English

rules is not particularly effective."[6] Delabastita comments on the difficulty in translating

wordplay because it distorts the native language. He writes:

> [W]ordplay [which I extend to soundplay] shatters the illusion of language as an
> obedient, reliable, unequivocal vehicle of meanings. It makes us aware that language
> is not an immediate reflection of either the external world or our allegedly
> independent notions about it, but rather an autonomous and self-willed structure:
> linguistic meaning ceases to be obvious.[7]

Davis arrives at the same conclusion as Delabastita but argues differently to say wordplay

and soundplay are necessarily bound to their native language systems and the external world

underpinning it; thus, the phonetic plays will not fit in target languages.[8] Alexieva specifies the

grammatical issues saying that wordplay's "interlingual asymmetry" makes translating it

difficult; that is, languages differ in terms of their semantic structure and phonological and

graphemic levels.[9] Naaijkens comments how poetry has been seen as "uncapturable" because its

images and expressions are "so firmly localized in specific cultural milieu, society, and historical

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[5] Ton Naaijkens, "Translating the *Weltsprache* of modern poetry," *Übersetzung Translation Traduction: Ein internationals Handbuch zur Übersetzungsforschung* 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 1672.

[6] William A. Smalley, "Translating the Psalms as Poetry," *On Language, Culture, and Religion: In Honor of Eugene A. Nida* (Paris: Mouton, 1974), 356.

[7] Dirk Delabastita, ed., "Introduction," *Wordplay and Translation: Essays on Punning and Translation*, special issue, *The Translator* 2 (1996): 66.

[8] Kathleen Davis, "Signature in Translation," *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), 26–27.

[9] Bistra Alexieva, "There Must Be Some System in the Madness," *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), 140–42.

epoch remote from our own."[10] He tells of poetry's history of untranslatability as derived from the impossibility to reproduce its quotation, broken syntax, hermetic deepening of the lexical surface, pluralization of the lyrical, spatial arrangements, innovative rhyme, assonances, self-reference [of the author] of writing, and the particularities of the poem that contribute to its overall message.[11]

Conclusions towards the untranslatability of wordplay and soundplay derive in part from the following factors listed by Josep Marco:[12]

1. Isomorphism, which is the degree of historical kinship or relatedness between the languages involved; the closer the languages, the likelier it will be to find a potential equivalent.
2. Degree of cultural specificity of the elements making up the pun or soundplay.[13]
3. Translator-related subjective factors such as talent, proficiency, and willingness to spend time finding solutions to the problems that arise.
4. Objective factors or working conditions (e.g., A translator is explicitly asked to reproduce a dynamic or form equivalent translation).
5. Translation norms of the target system (e.g., Rhyme in the target system of English poetry tends to happen at the end of cola whereas rap, hip hop, and spoken word use rhyme rhythmically throughout its lyrics.).
6. Textual genre (e.g., The translation of wordplay or soundplay in a novel can differ widely from the translation of wordplay or soundplay in a play intended for performance.).[14]
7. Target readership or intended audience (e.g., A pun or soundplay may be essential in a translation intended for adult readers but irrelevant or even absurd in one addressed to

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[10] Naaijkens quoting Steiner (1970, 28). "Translating the *Weltsprache* of Modern Poetry," 1669–72.

[11] Naaijkens, "Translating the *Weltsprache* of Modern Poetry," 1670.

[12] The following list is a condensed representation of Marco's expounded version which can be found in "The translation of wordplay," 271–73. Like Delabastita's translation methods, I extend Marco's list of factors to apply also to translating soundplay. Marco's list is fairly comprehensive but for other lists of factors that affect wordplays' translatability see Delabastita, "Introduction," 135–36; Sergio Viaggio, "The Pitfalls of Metalingual Use in Simultaneous Interpreting," *The Translator* 2 (1996): 181–83.

[13] Ritva Leppihalme stresses the importance that "translators also have to take target-culture norms and reader expectations into account before choosing a strategy." "Caught in the Frame," *The Translator* 2 (1996): 199, 213–14.

[14] The euphony of soundplay and wordplay in written genres do not have the luxury of a performer providing accents, using timing, or motion to accentuate the poetry's phonetics. This, however, does not minimize the usefulness of sound in written texts. Sounds help to pattern the text for readers and help them process the color, tone, emphasis, and a flow of the verse. The absence of a presenter, however, heightens the need for translated phonetics to communicate clearly and precisely.

children.).

8. Kind of linguistic structure played upon (e.g., Phonological and graphological, lexical such as polysemy and idioms, or morphological and syntactic.).
9. Stylistic function or motivation (e.g., To evoke humor, delight, produce irony, or criticize.).
10. Relative frequency of wordplay and soundplay.
11. Type of wordplay or soundplay.
12. Domain(s) of experience, that is, how audiences experience the wordplay or soundplay as a part of the whole work (e.g., Comic effect or dramatic irony can be affected by the frequency and distance between puns.).

Marco's factor isomorphism unpacked for Hebrew wordplay and soundplay, shows further difficulty in reproducing the phonetic, grammatical forms particular to each subcategory of wordplay and soundplay.[15] Translations of paronomasia require two words in the target language that sound similar to each other and mean the same as those in the source text. Rootplay also requires two words that sound similar but demands the target words to comprise the same consonants and vowels. Polysemantic puns require a word in the target language that reflects the same meanings as the word in the source text. Assonance, alliteration, and consonant repetition require translation that reflects similar vowel/consonantal sounds with each other. Rhyme requires the designated words to end with similar sounds and word-repetition requires translations to reproduce the same word consistently in the target language.

Some of these factors are internal or personal and reflect one's own ability to recognize and reproduce them. Other factors are external restrictions set by target audiences. For example, a translation composed for popular level audiences offers a different set of restrictions than an audience reading a commentary explaining the socio-historical backgrounds and phonology of the wordplay or soundplay. Still other factors involve restrictions provided by the source text. For example, the sound-pattern's size, dependency on historical reference points, and idiomatic

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[15] See below for definitions and explanations of wordplay and soundplay subcategories.

nature complicate a translator's ability to recreate the audible experience.

Another consensus of translation theorists, however, view these factors as hurdles rather than roadblocks for translating phonetics. Delabastita and Marco both argue that what is really meant when people claim wordplay and soundplay are untranslatable is they cannot find any solutions or word choices that meet their requirements of translation equivalence.[16] Although wordplay and soundplay offer challenges to translations, they are not all together insurmountable. Between the variety of methods available to translate them and one's awareness of the factors that affect their translation, a translator should be able to reproduce at some level the multivalent meanings and experiences produced by the lyrical forms of wordplay and soundplay. This conviction is largely driven by the importance of sound, particularly for poetry.

In their critical and formative volumes *Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science: Übersetzung Translation Traduction*, Preminger and Brogan argue, "Not to attend to sound in poetry is therefore not to understand poetry at all."[17] Sound structures poetry and creates audible experiences for audiences that produce and convey meaning and evoke emotional responses. Preminger and Brogan argue that sound contributes to poetry's form through "patterning." Sound patterning has "a wide range of important functions ranging from the aural

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[16] Delabastita, "Introduction," 133. This may be due in part to the conviction to remain as faithful to the letter of the text as possible. For some religiously convicted readers and translators, the words bear spiritual significance. They wish to read a translation free from alterations or additions apart from renderings closely tied to a text's lexemes. They might consider emendations as interpretive and so should be left for the reader to conclude (see Dt. 4:2). Others perceive the text's form as the guide and control that must be followed systematically to appoint appropriate semantic values to words and word combinations. As Nida states, "[D]ealing with any religious document such as the Bible, one must bear in mind that its contemporary significance is not determined merely by what it meant to those who first received it, but by what it has come to mean to people throughout the intervening years." Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 26.

[17] Alex Preminger and Terry V. F. Brogan, eds., "Sound," *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1179. Similarly, Janus J. Glück states, "Words are phonic compositions—their sound symbolism is inseparable from their meaning patterns." "Assonance in Ancient Hebrew Poetry: Sound Patterns as a Literary Device," *De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in Honour of Adrianus Van Selms*, ed. Frank Charles Fensham et al (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 69.

'tagging' of syllables in semantically important words in the line, to the tagging of thematically important words in the poem, to even more extensive and formalized structures."[18] Alliteration, for example, is a "broad-scale process of semantic underlining. Sound patterning often highlights a sequence of key terms central to the thematic progression of the poem."[19]

Preminger and Brogan argue that sounds create audible experiences in two ways. The first is sound's expressiveness, which can be mimetic or kinesthetic. Mimetic sounds (e.g., onomatopoeia) are "presentational," which means "they add to lexical meaning the enactment [imitation of the sound represented] of that meaning"[20] (e.g., Isa 10:14 ופצה פה ומצפצף "[none] opened its mouth or *chirruped*").[21] Kinesthetic sounds are "based on the presumption that the mouth and facial gestures involved in sound production contribute to meaning."[22] The second way sounds in poetry create audible experiences is through aesthesis, which evokes for audiences "the instinctive pleasure of articulating or hearing sounds, or of perceiving sound patterns, or of the repetition of sound."[23] Glück alludes to the aesthetics of sound in Hebrew poetry when he argues that Hebrew Bible authors regard assonance as "a single figure of rhetoric, modified and variegated by considerations of literary selectiveness. They were mostly guided in their use of assonance by the ear, and their sense of rhythm."[24] Glück speaks to a certain level of pleasure the

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[18] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1175. McCreesh defines tagging patterns of sound as "punctuation of syntax or thought by sounds." *Biblical Sound and Sense*, 75.

[19] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1175. See also Lynell Zogbo and Ernst R. Wendland, *Hebrew Poetry in the Bible: A Guide for Understanding and for Translating* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 155–63.

[20] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1176.

[21] Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, JSOTSup 26, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 235.

[22] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1171.

[23] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1177.

[24] Glück, "Assonance in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," 84. Assonance is the term he uses for the general category of wordplay and soundplay.

poet and audiences receive from the sounds and rhythms produced by the words selected. He

discusses the aesthetic value of words with regard to their sound's emotive contribution in

Hebrew poetry and argues that "[a]ssonantal sounds are suggestive of ideas, images and

emotions; the Biblical poet realized that the music of the rhymes stimulated the listener to

receive his message as beautiful and believable."[25] I add that the biblical poet also realized such

sounds (e.g., terse alliteration and assonance or punchy rhyme) can stimulate negative emotions

including judgment, indictment, and guilt. This evocation of negative emotions is evidenced, for

example, in the first colon of Hos 4:7 with the words כְּרֻבָּם "as they increased" and כְּבוֹדָם "their

glory" from כְּרֻבָּם כֵּן חָטְאוּ־לִי כְּבוֹדָם בְּקָלוֹן אָמִיר "As they increase, thus they sinned against me; I will

change their glory into shame." The soundplay links כְּרֻבָּם and כְּבוֹדָם to show how Israel

considered their increase their glory. The aural tagging emphasizes Israel's wealth and reputation

that Yahweh is going to judge by reversing them. The soundplay is designed to strike fear in

Israel for failing to see Yahweh as provider and motivate the people to locate their provision and

character in Yahweh.[26]

The thesis of this study proposes that the phonetics of wordplay and soundplay contribute

to structure and meaning in Hebrew poetry and should be considered more prevalently in

translations. Translators should consider as a part of a word's semantics how its phonetic plays

evoke multiple meanings, create ambiguity, or emphatically tag other words to enhance meaning

and generate emotions. As Paul Raabe states, "All translations of the Bible into English, whether

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[25] Glück, "Assonance in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," 84.

[26] Translators can reproduce the word rhyme using near-synonyms such as "gain" for "רבב" and "acclaim" for "כבוד"; thus, "As they gain, thus they sinned against me; Their acclaim, I will change into shame." "Gain" and "acclaim" are near rhymes while "acclaim" consequently extends the rhyme scheme to "shame," making the soundplay experience more predominant for audiences.

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they are formal correspondence, meaning-based, or paraphrase, give preference to the area of

semantics, that is, to the meaning of the words." The consequence, as he discerns, is "they do not

attempt to convey anything of the sound of the original, since that would inevitably require

compromising the precision of meaning."[27] Ironically, in attempting to preserve the semantic or

lexical meaning, the extralinguistic meaning (the concept or theological idea)[28] produced by

relationships between words with similar sounds gets sacrificed. One must consider as a part of a

word's semantics how its plays of sound evoke multiple meanings, create ambiguity, highlight

emphasis, generate feelings, or motivate responses.

An overview of Hebrew wordplay and soundplay, which is provided more detail in Chapter

2, reveals that rigid translation methods and a disjointed understanding for how plays of sound

contribute to meaning are sources of why translators choose to exclude phonetic plays in

translation. Definitions for wordplay and soundplay are nearly as diverse as those who employ

them. They show little agreement over their demarcation and taxonomy. Furthermore, there are

minimal controls and criteria for identifying them and explaining how they enhance meaning.

The result is that translators incorrectly locate wordplay and soundplay, misunderstand how their

sounds structure poetry, enhance semantics, or contribute meaning, and engage in conjectural

emendations.[29] The BHS for example is loaded with emendations in its critical apparatus that

explain accidentals and offer solutions to make the text clearer and more probable. In one case,

they suggest the opening clause in Hos 5:2 וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ, literally "slaughter, revolters have

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[27] Paul Raabe, "Translating for Sound," *BT* 51 (2000): 201–2.

[28] Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 29.

[29] As McCreesh states, "[T]he lack of such an awareness of these poetic devices of sound increases the likelihood of sometimes misunderstanding or even correcting the Hebrew text." McCreesh, *Biblical Sound and Sense*, 13–14.

made deep" should read וְשַׁחַת הַשִּׂטִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ "they have deepened the pit of Shittim." First, this changes the ט in שַׁחֲטָה and שֵׂטִים to a ת and the שׂ in שֵׂטִים to a שִׂ. Second, it eliminates the *hapax* third feminine singular ending on שַׁחֲטָה and transfers it to the following noun. Third, it suggests the ה should be a ב; thus, בַּשִּׂטִּים "in Shittim." Finally, the editors suggest the third masculine plural perfect הֶעְמִיקוּ is probably a second masculine plural imperfect תַּעֲמִיקוּ "you make deep" to match the second person forms of the preceding verbs in 5:1. Altogether, the emendations would read, "You have deepened the pit of Shittim," which metaphorically speaks about the priests, the house of Israel, and the house of the king (Hos 5:1) in terms of Num 25:1, when the people behaved promiscuously with the daughters of Moab (see also Mic 6:5).[30] The emendations are designed to show continuation of Hosea's indictment imagery through the hunting metaphor and place names begun in 5:1.

This translation, however, assumes an alarming amount of emendations and scribal mistakes for one small clause. This clause can be read or heard by audiences in two remarkable ways, especially if certain words are accented appropriately in the poetry's performance. Due to the phonetic subtleties represented in the suggested emendations, audiences possibly heard both meanings simultaneously: "slaughter, revolters have made deep" and "they have deepened a pit at[31] Shittim."

The assumption of this study is that the phonetics of Hebrew wordplay and soundplay can be translated to some degree in various genres of literature. This assumption admits dependency on the scribal transmission of the Hebrew text and the scribes' ability to reflect the pronunciations of dialect in Hosea's literature. Even more, the assumption gives priority to the

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[30] See Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 388.

[31] For the translation "at," see below.

vocalization provided by the Masoretes as an exercise, in part, to understand the text as less

corrupt as many textual critics demonstrate by emending difficult vocalizations and seemingly

unsensible semantics. The position of this study is that phonetics of wordplay and soundplay are

too important to a passage's semantic and pragmatic meaning to ignore. Translation theory for

Hebrew wordplay and soundplay needs to account for their significant presence in prose and

poetry and account for the importance of their phonetics in communicating semantic and

pragmatic meanings.[32] This study will, therefore, begin by discussing current translation methods

for wordplay and soundplay and examine problematic areas in formal correspondence and

dynamic equivalence (Chapter 1). It will propose revised translation theory that tends to both

semantic and pragmatic domains of Hebrew words in phonetic play. Chapter 2 will survey the

variety of definitions used for wordplay and soundplay in order to establish more precise

definitions that help identify and understand the literary phenomena in the Hebrew language.

Chapters 3–5 test the translation theory of approximation in an exhaustive analysis of wordplay

and soundplay in Hosea. Hosea provides a lengthy yet manageable text to demonstrate

exhaustively the variety of ways wordplay and soundplay phonetics can be translated. This

comprehensive analysis will test the long-term ability to reproduce these phonetic plays

throughout a whole book and observe their contribution to the larger canonical message.

Chapters 3–4 translate and exegete Hosean wordplay; Chapter 3 focuses on wordplay used for

"Yahweh's household" (Hos 1–3) and Chapter 4 focuses on wordplay used of "Ephraim" and

"Israel" (Hos 4–14). Chapter 5 identifies Hosean soundplay and proposes translations that

reproduce their euphony in translation.

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[32] As Robert B. Chisholm illuminates in his work, "A variety of literary and rhetorical devices fill the writings of the Old Testament [eighth century] prophets, lending vividness and emotion to their powerful messages." "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," *BSac* 144 (1987): 44.

The primary objective in Chapters 3–5 is to model the translation theory proposed in Chapters 1–2 by locating wordplays and soundplays and offering translations that reproduce a semblance of their phonetic play. A secondary objective is to see how an exhaustive study of wordplay and soundplay in Hosea contributes to a canonical reading of the book. Locating the appearances of wordplay and soundplay affords the opportunity to see where the prophet heightens his phonetic artistry and see how he strategically weaves in and out of phonetic play to create emphasis. Conclusions to these chapters will identify patterns in the prophet's employment of wordplay and soundplay and assess how these patterns contribute to messages and themes derived from a canonical reading. This study will end with a separate conclusion that proposes steps translators should take to render the phonetics of wordplay and soundplay and briefly assess how these phonetic plays enrich a canonical reading.

CHAPTER ONE[DS1]

THEORY AND METHODS FOR TRANSLATING HEBREW WORDPLAY AND SOUNDPLAY

Theory for Translating Hebrew Wordplay and Soundplay

Formal Correspondence

According to Nida, "formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself in both form and content"[1] It is source-oriented and "designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message."[2] The formal elements that are reproduced include grammatical units (e.g., translating nouns with nouns, keeping phrases intact, and preserving punctuation), consistency in word usage, meanings in terms of the source context.[3] Forms that are generally disregarded include lyrical, stylistic, and phonetic elements including: rhythms, rhymes, plays on words, chiasmus, parallelism, and unusual grammatical structures.[4]

The form of poetry is highly specialized, and formal correspondence, in theory, should tend to poetry's phonetic forms.[5] These phonetic forms comprise sound patterns that are sometimes used to structure the poetry, but the forms also emphasize crucial meaning and produce meaning themselves. The sounds of wordplay and soundplay cue audiences to link specific terms and they pierce through the mundane of the poem to highlight certain meanings. These sounds link

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[1] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 159.

[2] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 165.

[3] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 165.

[4] Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 4th ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1.

[5] See Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1175. See also Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 157.

particular terms and awaken audiences to emphatic messages that challenge them to think

unconventionally.[6] [DS2]Literal translations of wordplay and soundplay often render the text and

its message unintelligible, wooden, or dry. The phonetic forms of wordplay and soundplay, in

particular, require audiences to comprehend all meanings of words in play to fully understand the

message. Furthermore, wordplay and soundplay use phonetic form to tag emphatically and

highlight utterances with pragmatics that provide reading experiences to effect something in

audiences. For example, a formal correspondence of the (polysemantic) phrase in Hos 5:2 וְשַׁחֲטָה

שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ produces "slaughter, rebels have made deep," which makes little sense and raises

multiple textual concerns as seen in the BHS editorial remarks. A more thorough investigation of

this pun is provided in Chapter 4 but the ambiguity of its written form and its phonetic similarity

to the more sensible expression וְשַׁחְתָּה שִׁתִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ "they have deepened a pit at Shittim" alerts

audiences that more is happening in the text than the written form alone communicates.[7] A

formal correspondence translation, therefore, must either emend the text to something more

sensible or concede to producing an unintelligible translation for canonical readers. This example

demonstrates how formal correspondence translations struggle to intelligibly translate words that

depend on sounds and audible experiences to communicate their fullest meaning.[8]

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[6] An example of this is seen in Peter J. Sabo's discussion on Lamentations' use of phonetic play, puns, polyvalence, rhythm, and acrostic structure. He shows how these devices produce meaning and guide audiences through the lament's different structures, such as its acrostic, which he argues holds together each separate stanza while disassociating each stanza from another. Sabo describes the acrostic as creating "a loose juxtaposition of heterogeneous parts." Said another way, the acrostic promotes a linear reading, but interacts with the other poetic devices to highlight and tag the poem's concentric structures. Sabo, exhibits how wordplay and soundplay operate in tandem with poetry's other structures to create additional structures or highlight existing ones. "Poetry Amid Ruins," *Poets, Prophets, and Texts in Play: Studies in Biblical Poetry and Prophecy in Honour of Francis Landy*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 597, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi, Claudian V. Camp, David M. Gunn, and Aaron W. Hughes (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 141–70.

[7] See Chapter 4 Hosea 5:2.

[8] On the translator's reality as one who must make choices that consequently veer from a one-to-one equivalence see Delabastita, "Introduction," 133.

Formal correspondence translations can rarely reproduce poetry's sound patterns and phonetic forms because of its prioritizing of semantics. Nida alludes to the problem when he says, "The translating of poetry obviously involves more adjustments in literary form than does prose, for rhythmic forms differ far more radically in form, and hence in esthetic appeal."[9] Just as stylistic and phonetic forms are essential to the reading experience of the message, these forms exist only because of the syntax and grammar provided by the source language. Formal correspondence, therefore, sacrifices phonetic reading experience for the sake of semantic accuracy.

According to the commitments of formal correspondence, translations should value the form of sound patterning, but its prioritizing of grammar and semantics hinders phonetic reproduction. As Larson argues, "The lexicon of the two languages [source and target] will not match. This mismatch will make it necessary for the translator to make many adjustments in the process of translation. Languages will group semantic components together in a great variety of ways. This makes a literal, one-for-one equivalence of lexical items impossible."[10] This one-for-one mismatch is evidenced in canonical translations. These translations make little to no indication that wordplay or soundplay are active and none explicitly reproduce their phonetic forms in translation. Also, commentators who locate and discuss the effects of wordplay and soundplay rarely (if at all) try to reproduce phonetic forms in their original translations. As a result, these translations neglect wordplay's and soundplay's multivalent meaning, highlighted meaning, and pragmatics conveyed through euphoric reading/hearing experiences. Formal

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[9] Delabastita, "Introduction," 170.

[10] Larson, *Translation*, 169. See also Eugene A. Nida, "Bible Translating," *On Translation*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature Founded by William Henry Schofield 23 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 13.

correspondence methods cannot sustain both the conviction of literal, word-to-word, translations while tending to words' stylistic and phonetic forms. For this reason, I turn in part to the commitments and strategies that dynamic equivalence translation methods offer.

Dynamic Equivalence

Sir John Denham says in the preface to the second book of Virgil's *Aeneid* that when one translates poetry, it is not enough "to translate language into language, but poesie into poesie."[11] Stolze argues more generally that, "Translation expresses messages and is not a reaction to language structures or a linguistic derivation from the source text."[12] Said another way, the goal of translation is not to communicate a string of forms, but to reproduce the message produced by those forms. The translator stands in a modern culture and must identify with the message of the text in order to re-express it intelligibly.[13] Dynamic equivalence translation methods have tried to peel translations away from rigid adherence to grammatical forms to capture poetry's creative expressions and style. Nida propelled these methods under the conviction that "literalness and formal agreement do not let us feel really at home in such a strange literary land, nor do they actually help us to appreciate as we should how this same message must have impressed those who first heard it."[14] Nida goes on to say, "[O]ne simply cannot reproduce certain formal elements of the source message. For example, there may be puns, chiasmic orders of words, instances of assonance, or acrostic features of line-initial sounds which completely defy

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[11] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 25.

[12] Radegundis Stolze, "Hermeneutics and Translation," *Handbook of Translation Studies* 1, ed. Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010), 144.

[13] Stolze, "Hermeneutics and Translation," 144.

[14] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 25–26.

equivalent rendering."[15] Dynamic equivalence claims to provide the "closest natural equivalent to the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and second in terms of style."[16] "Equivalent" points to the source language and the commitment to allowing its message to govern the translation. "Natural" points to the receptor language and the translation's need to fit the receptor's language and culture as a whole. "Closest" "binds the two orientations together on the basis of the highest degree of approximation."[17]

Smalley outlines three major assumptions of dynamic equivalence.[18] The first is that translation is not a surface linguistic phenomenon.[19] This stems from Nida's two different systems for translating: elaborate surface structures and kernels. Elaborate surface structures are translations that transfer the source text by using rules from an intermediate, neutral, or universal linguistic structure that specify "exactly what should be done with each item or combination of items in the receptor language" (e.g., lexical/word-for-word translating).[20] Kernels are restructured expressions comporised of "the basic structural elements out of which the source language builds its elaborate surface structures."[21] Structure translating uses what Nida calls back-transformation (paraphrasing that is intralingual, faithful to a text's semantic components, and a restatement of the kernels) to break down elaborate surface structures into kernels that attend to particularities of grammatical relationships and semantic meanings of words or

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[15] Nida, *Toward A Science of Translating*, 165.

[16] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 12. See also Larson who uses the term "Lexical" equivalence. *Translation*, 170.

[17] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 166–67.

[18] Smalley, "Translating the Psalms as Poetry," 354–59.

[19] Smalley, "Translating the Psalms as Poetry," 354.

[20] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 33.

[21] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 39.

combination of words. These kernels underpin the surface structure and serve as the material restructured for better understanding in the receptor language.[22] Problems in recreating kernels, however, arise when elaborate surface structures are ambiguous. For example, genitive expressions can be understood in a variety of ways as in the case of "the love of God." It could either be an objective genitive "our love of God" or subjective genitive "God's love of us."

The second assumption of dynamic equivalence is that "in the translation of literary materials (texts which are judged to be pieces of literary prose, or poems) the objective is to achieve a translation with literary quality." The translation should match the source text's artistry with the target audience in mind, not the original reader. Said another way, the text's literary form is important, but the final product of translation should aim for comprehension in the receptor language. As Smalley states, the translator "must recreate the original author's content as it is in his final product, building it into a new form which also recreates the original expressive and evocative functions."

The third assumption of dynamic equivalence is that, "faithfulness in a translation is measured by its effect on the intended receptor, measured against the content and character of the original document."[23] Nida explains that dynamic translations are "not so much concerned with giving information as with creating in the reader something of the same mood as was conveyed by the original."[24] The focus of the translation is, therefore, on making certain the receptor experiences the text similarly as the original audience.[25]

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[22] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 33–55.

[23] Smalley, "Translating the Psalms as Poetry," 358.

[24] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 156.

[25] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 1.

Nida and Taber state four priorities that align with these assumptions.[26] The first is that contextual consistency has priority over verbal consistency (i.e., semantic equivalence).[27] Words cover areas of meaning and are not mere points of meaning. These areas of corresponding words are different in different languages, so choosing the correct word depends more on the context than on a fixed system of semantic equivalence. The second priority is that dynamic equivalence has priority over formal correspondence.[28] Said another way, dynamic equivalence has intelligibility of the text at its goal with focus on the total impact the message has on the one who receives it. Dynamic equivalence is defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. The translation must be more than informative, but also expressive and imperative.[29] The third priority is that the aural (heard) form of language has precedence over the written form. This is particularly relevant for translating wordplay and soundplay since their audible qualities are essential for understanding their expression of meaning and experiencing their semantic force. This priority forms from the assumption that scripture was written to be read aloud and heard. It is read for personal devotion ("oral" reading) and instructional purposes, heard liturgically, and spoken over media (radio, internet, mp3, television). This priority operates from the conviction that editorial remarks and footnoting are not sufficient because they move the audience off the scriptural text into a margin and limit the audience to readers. The conviction behind this priority is that the aural must be intelligible and capture scripture's fullest meaning. The final priority of dynamic equivalence is that the needs of the audience have

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[26] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 14–32.

[27] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 15.

[28] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 22, 24.

[29] Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, 24–28.

priority over the forms of language. These needs will vary depending on the audience. The form of scripture may be more appealing to academic readers in certain environments, but at large, translators will need to provide canonical readers with an audibly intelligible translation that communicates its fullest meaning. In short, this system of priorities of dynamic equivalence is centered on content over style.

Problems with dynamic equivalence can occur, however, when phonetic forms are downplayed for the sake of content. Smalley for example puts little value in the relevancy of translating poetry's literary structures such as acrostics, alliteration, or assonance. He calls them "formal gimmicks" that "do little more than demonstrate the cleverness of the author."[30] He argues that efforts seeking to capture such literary devices focus on surface forms at the expense of emotion and content. As a result, he concludes poetry in its respective form is not translatable, that is, a translator cannot do what the original author did and modify deep-structure meanings to make them fit together in the translation.[31] Said another way, Smalley argues one cannot maintain the poetic form while modifying and rearranging the kernels into identifiable meanings.[32]

Dynamic equivalence's focus on content enables meaning to surface in translation that formal correspondence's semantic focus overlooks. However, its concentration on content can happen at the expense of meaning produced by phonetic forms. The aurality of wordplay and

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[30] Smalley, "Translating the Psalms as Poetry," 359.

[31] "Deep structure meaning" comes from Chomsky's approach to semantic analysis where surface structures comprise the grammatical rules that are particular to each language while deep structure represents a universal grammar that underlies all languages. Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002), 92–105 from Philip C. Stine, *Let the Words Be Written: The Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 39.

[32] Smalley, "Translating the Psalms as Poetry," 360. "Kernels" are what Nida describes as restructured expressions that are "the basic structural elements out of which the language builds its elaborate surface structures." *Theory and Practice of Translation*, 39.

soundplay is pragmatic and produces reading/aural experiences that are designed to evoke or effect something in audiences to get them to do something. The additional shorthandedness of wordplay in particular from normal utterances is by nature designed to say, perform, and effect a surplus of meaning. Authors use phonetics at strategic moments in their poetry to create urgency, surprise, emphasis, or ambiguity through structures that leverage brevity and create aural tagging. Dismissing these forms consequently dismisses semantic forces and possibly multivalent meanings produced by forms of phonetic play.

<div align="center">Pragmatics and Semantics</div>

Formal correspondence champions semantics and dynamic equivalence prioritizes content often at the expense of the text's ambiguity, phonetics, and reading experience. Both translation methods neglect contextual signifiers produced by the pragmatic notions in wordplay and soundplay utterances. John L. Austin and John Searle observe that linguistic utterances and more particularly units of discourse are speech acts with pragmatics as their focus.[33] Units of discourse are concerned with practical purposes to achieve results in audiences. Said another way, writers want to accomplish things or effect something in their audiences with words.[34] The communicator of wordplay and soundplay wants to effect a feeling, conviction, or response in his audience with phonetics that generate emphatic tagging and ambiguity.[35] Ernst-August Gutt

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[33] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a history of Speech Act theory as a hermeneutic situated between historical criticism's prioritizing objective history and new criticism's prioritizing the text's view of history see Hugh C. White ed., "The Value of Speech Act Theory for Old Testament Hermeneutics," *Sem* 41 (Decatur: Scholars Press, 1988): 41–63.

[34] James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1997), 276–77.

[35] A prophetic utterance, for example, operates on a semantic level to convey information (locutionary act) to accomplish something in the recipient. Voelz, *What Does this Mean?* 279.

carries this principle of discourse into the realm of translation to say that "translation itself is primarily a pragmatic notion, used to indicate the kind of communication intended by the communicator."[36] Wordplay and soundplay units of discourse, therefore, have pragmatics in focus and translators ought to capture their pragmatic notions.

Utterances are shorthand for the totality of a text's desired results. Audiences must, as James Voelz describes, "fill in the blanks" of written or spoken signifiers and regard nonlinguistic signals (facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, etc.) to determine the forces or acts of an utterance.[37] As Gutt notes, communication is inferential and requires audiences to consider the "context of an utterance," which is a "psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world" and more specifically "the set of premises used in interpreting [that] utterance."[38] The rhetorical effect of shorthand utterances causes audiences to complete the communication by themselves which, as Voelz illuminates, when people communicate to themselves they usually find their own conclusions more convincing than if the conclusions came from another.[39] When recipients fill in the blanks linguistically they become the communicator and minimize the possibility of miscommunication.

Part of the pragmatics of utterances is the reading experience readers have that is produced

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[36] Ernst-August Gutt, "Pragmatic Aspects of Translation: Some Relevance-Theory Observations," *The Pragmatics of Translation*, ed. Leo Hickey (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 52.

[37] Voelz, *What Does this Mean?*, 280.

[38] I would add that the context of an utterance is also a subset of the communicator's assumptions about the world as well. These quotes are Gutt's definition of "context of an utterance" in relevance theory. "Pragmatic Aspects of Translation," 41–45. Susan S. Lanser emphasizes the importance of inference to the pragmatics of text which interpreters must recognize to accurately identify the text's ideological nature. "(Feminist) Criticism in the Garden: Inferring Genesis 2–3," *Sem* 41 (1988): 78. Daniel Platte notes how "inferential reasoning" is crucial to identifying the intentionality of the text, particularly "religious intentionality" used by biblical authors to effect a religious response in audiences. "Speech Act Theory and Biblical Exegesis," *Sem* 41 (1988): 99–100.

[39] Voelz, *What Does this Mean?* 280.

by the process of their reading.[40] As Voelz states, "Reading is a temporal experience, in which meaning develops over time, and in which the real context, as it were, is what precedes. In other words, as one reads, one does not know the ending at the beginning and one changes one's ideas as one encounters new signifiers and conceptual signifieds."[41] Raabe alludes to this reading experience when he observes that textual ambiguities produce a reading process that challenges audiences to further investigate semantic meanings as the text unfolds and then wrestle with their connections to other semantics in the passage. He notes how translators can do injustice to the audiences "delight of interpreting the Bible" by eradicating ambiguity and textual difficulties with translations that oversimplify the text and eliminate the phonetic play.[42] Raabe suggests that translators should "[m]ake the English translation neither more nor less difficult than the original."[43]

This reproduction of a phonetic play's ambiguity with ambiguity in English is not a hall pass for rendering the phonetics of wordplay and soundplay with semantically distorted translations. Semantics are foundational for conveying information and the pragmatic enterprise of achieving action in audiences is dependent on a text's ability to first convey information.[44] As Massimiliano Morini admits, "[A] general theory of translation cannot be uniquely pragmatic, just as a translator does not only work at the pragmatic level: but the latter is the higher rung of a

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[40] Massimiliano Morini speaks of the reading experience in terms of "text acts" which conveys the illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects on the world. *The Pragmatic Translator: An Integral Theory of Translation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 14–19.

[41] Voelz, *What Does this Mean?*, 317.

[42] Paul R. Raabe, "The Problem of Facile Translations," *Biblical Translation in Context*, Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture 10, ed. Frederick W. Knobloch (Bethesda: University of Maryland, 2002), 205.

[43] Raabe, "The Problem of Facile Translations," 205.

[44] Voelz, *What Does This Mean?*, 279.

hierarchical ladder comprehending semantics, syntax and phonetics."[45] The art of ambiguity, however, speaks to the need for translators to be conscientious of phonetic plays and to communicate clearly as much as possible the original challenge and ambiguity produced by them.

Reading as a temporal experience is particularly true for wordplay and soundplay where the process of uncovering phonetic similarities marks their aural tagging and shocks audiences with euphony, ambiguity, and interconnectedness of meaning. With regard to soundplay, audiences are unaware of a word's euphony until another word with similar phonetics appears. In the word-rhyme of Hos 4:7 כְּרֻבָּם כֵּן חָטְאוּ־לִי כְּבוֹדָם בְּקָלוֹן אָמִיר "As they increase thus they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame," audiences do not know כְּרֻבָּם "as they increased" creates a rhyme until they hear כְּבוֹדָם "their glory" in the following clause. Once they hear כְּבוֹדָם, audiences identify the euphonic experience as rhyme and immediately reflect back on כְּרֻבָּם to perceive the prophet's word choice as highlighting Israel's detrimental pride in its prosperity.

The temporal experience of reading wordplay is particularly involved depending on the kind and amount of ambiguity involved. The reading experience generally begins with a word that semantically sounds but ambiguously communicates. The ambiguity causes audiences to search for further clarity as the message unfolds but they only find that the contexts supports either a clearer unwritten (or unspoken) semantic meaning from a word or words that sound like the ambiguous word (e.g., paronomasia), or activates additional meaning from the same word (polysemy). In the case of Hos 12:8, audiences hear כְּנַעַן from כְּנַעַן בְּיָדוֹ מֹאזְנֵי מִרְמָה לַעֲשֹׁק אָהֵב "A merchant in whose hands are false scales, he loves to oppress" and question whether it means

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45 Morini, *The Pragmatic Translator*, 11.

"Canaan" or "merchant." Since כְּנַעַן follows shortly after exposition on the patriarch, Jacob (Hos 12:3–5), the term most likely conjures the geographical location of Jacob's inhabitance, Canaan. As the reading continues, however, economic terms of "wealth," "riches," and "scales" might change audiences' mind that כְּנַעַן means "merchant." This reading process causes audiences to rethink the meaning and discover that both meanings are applicable and likely intended. As a result, audiences can blend the semantics of "Canaan" with "merchant" to understand that the prophet accuses the merchandizing and socio-economic transactions of the original audiences as oppressive and corrupt like the Canaanite merchants in antiquity.

The reading/listening experience is meaningful and clarified by Voelz as, "the very experience one has while reading—which is itself a reaction to the meaning one perceives—[and] can itself be read as a signifier and interpreted for its meaning."[46] The reading experience signifier—which for wordplay and soundplay is conducted through aural tagging with words that use similarity of sound—contributes to the pragmatics of the wordplay and soundplay by guiding audiences to conclusions and moving them to feel and respond a certain way. Reading the experience as a signifier challenges translators to consider how audiences experience reading or hearing wordplay and soundplay and reproduce it in a similar way.

Units of discourse, which is the vehicle of prophetic wordplay and soundplay, therefore, have pragmatics as their focus and invite interpreters and translators to consider as a signifier their reading experience and reading as experience in addition to their semantic composition. These signifiers provide illocutionary (the utterance's force) and perlocutionary (persuading) aspects. The shorthand of the wordplay in Hos 2:18 for example reads תִּקְרְאִי אִישִׁי וְלֹא־תִקְרְאִי־לִי עוֹד בַּעְלִי "You will call *me* 'my husband' and no longer call me 'my Baal.'" The polysemantic

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[46] Voelz, *What Does this Mean?*, 319.

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pun בַּעְלִי in parallelism with אִישִׁי "my husband" is additionally shorthand for "my Baal" and "my husband" and leverages both contexts.[47] The reading as experience acknowledges the pun's illocutionary force as indictment through declaration. Yahweh indicts Israel saying, "You do not truly know me because you broke my covenant by acting as if Baal is your husband! Once you know me, you will begin to call me your husband." The wordplay's perlocutionary aspect seeks a response of covenantal faithfulness from audiences. The covenant context of marital faithfulness is designed to convict audiences that their devotion to Baal is unfaithfulness and breaks Yahweh's covenant. The prophet wants Israel to remember its covenant with Yahweh, turn from its marriage to Baal, and remain faithful to its marriage with Yahweh, "my husband." The reading experience as a signifier instructs translators to convey the same indictment that convicts audiences to assess their own marital faithfulness to Yahweh with their faithfulness to Baal. One could reproduce the shorthand phonetic reading experience through repetition with "You will call *me* 'my husband' and no longer call me 'my Baal-husband" or use a portmanteau with "You will call *me* 'my husband' and no longer call me 'my Beau-al [Baal].'"[48] The reading experience signifier resides in the long-hand translation that reproduces both active meanings of בעל in writing, "Baal-husband" or "Beau-al." Rendering the reading experience enables unwritten and implied meaning to surface and communicate fuller meaning that is otherwise lost in more literal translations.

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[47] For בעל as "husband" see Gen 20:3; Exod 21:3, 21:22; Deut 22:22, 24:4; 2 Sam 11:26; Joel 1:8; Prov 12:4, 31:11, 23, 28; Esth 1:17, 20.

[48] Phoneme alterations involve changes in the phonetics from "Ba" to "Beau" and requires receptors to distinguish the French loan word "beau" from its sound similarities to Baal. The portmanteau also expects readers to know that "Baal" has a second meaning "husband" that plays with the domains of "beau" and אישׁ "husband." This original English pun is efficient in presentation but expects a significant amount of decoding, especially for audible receptors. The portmanteau is also peculiar since it is an original expression and does not combine common words. This translation best fits the commentary genre where commentators have an opportunity to decode for readers how the Hebrew operates.

Methods for Translating Hebrew Wordplay and Soundplay

Delabastita identifies six methods helpful for conducting the literary transfer of wordplay and soundplay.[49] The primary goal of his methods is to translate both phonetic and semantic forms, but since the phonetics are not always possible to reproduce effectively in every textual genre, some methods only reproduce the content produced by the phonetics.

The first method is *pun to pun*. This happens when wordplay or soundplay is translated by a target-language wordplay or soundplay that is different from the original in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or textual function. An example of this method can be seen in the translation of the polysemantic pun בַּעְלִי in Hos 2:18 discussed above. The multiple meanings evoked can be translated with the English pun "Beau-al"; a portmanteau of "Beau" and "Baal," to reflect "Baal" and "husband."[50]

A second method is *pun to non-pun*. Unlike pun to pun where the translation recreates a pun for receptors, pun to non-pun reproduces the meanings of wordplay and soundplay but

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[49] The following methods are taken with some variation from Delabastita's work, "Introduction," 134, from his earlier work "Translating Puns: Possibilities and Constraints," *New Comparison* 3 (1987): 7–8, and from Marco's review of them in "The Translation of Wordplay," 268. I extend these methods to soundplay as well. I do not include several of Delabastita's methods. Delabastita describes Zero to Pun as happening when completely new textual material is added that contains phonetic play with no apparent precedent or justification in the source text except as a compensatory for previous phonetic play that was not reproduced. This distinction from non-pun to pun is minimal and manifests the same in reproducing Hebrew phonetic play. I also omit his method Pun to Zero, which completely omits the pun from the text, since the goal of this study is to recreate some level of phonetic play where the text presents it in wordplay and soundplay. Other translation methods have been proposed for more specific types of wordplay. Andrejs Veisberg focuses on methods for idiom-based wordplay in "The Contextual Use of Idioms, Wordplay, and Translation," *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1993), 162–71. Luise von Flotow focuses on methods for feminist wordplay in "Mutual Punishment? Translating Radical Feminist Wordplay," *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), 56–62. As Katharina Reiss states, "A theory of translation that is applicable to all texts has not yet been developed," so the use of multiple methods is necessary to increase the probability of translating the phonetic and semantic forms of wordplay and soundplay. *Translation Criticism – The Potentials and Limitations: Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000), 7 and 17.

[50] Hosea 2:18 contains a significant amount of euphony with word-repetition that a literal translation naturally captures; however, the multivalent meaning of בַּעְלִי remains lost.

without using any unique play of sound in the receptor language. One meaning may even be selected at the cost of the other for the sake of semantic clarity. This method may make the punning aspect or play of sound unrecognizable but preserves its key meanings. An example of this method is seen in some canonical translations of Hos 1:6 that render both meanings of לֹא רֻחָמָה by juxtaposing its etymology "No Pity" and transliteration, "Lo-ruhamah" (NET, NLT). This type of translation provides the wordplay's multivalent meaning, but eliminates, in part, the ambiguity of the phonetic experience.

A third method is *pun to related rhetorical device*. This happens when the wordplay or soundplay is replaced by a related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, etc.) that aims to reproduce the euphony of the original wordplay or soundplay.[51] A concentration of alliteration appears in Hos 5:14b–15 where the repetition of "א" emphasizes Yahweh as the subject enacting the following judgment. The passage literally reads ¹⁴ אֲנִי אֲנִי אֶטְרֹף וְאֵלֵךְ אֶשָּׂא וְאֵין מַצִּיל ¹⁵ אֵלֵךְ אָשׁוּבָה אֶל־מְקוֹמִי עַד אֲשֶׁר־יֶאְשְׁמוּ וּבִקְשׁוּ פָנָי, "I *indeed* I, I will tear to pieces and I will go; I will carry *away*, but there will be none who will deliver. I will go *and* I will return to my place until they acknowledge *their* guilt and seek my face." An English translation has no way to recreate this alliteration but it can leverage the first-person repetition created in part by the "א־." As a result, the translated phonetic play happens with word-repetition to compensate for English's inability to reproduce the original alliteration.

A fourth method is *pun in the source text is a pun in the target text*. This method is an ideal scenario that happens when the translator reproduces in the target text the same kind of phonetics or euphony appearing in the source text. One of the most compliant cases of this method happens naturally in Gen 2:23 when אִשָּׁה is called "woman" because she was taken from אִישׁ "man." This

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[51] This is also attested in Reiss, *Translation Criticism*, 36.

translation requires no changes and the English grammar already accounts for their phonetic play.

The fifth method is *editorial techniques*, which happens when a translator inserts explanatory footnotes or endnotes that identify plays of sound and explain their function in the text.[52] Some versions of the NIV do this in Hos 1:8 with לֹא רֻחָמָה "Lo-ruhamah" and לֹא עַמִּי "Lo-ammi." They follow the names with a parenthetical note explaining their meanings; thus, "Lo-Ruhamah (which means 'not loved')" and "Lo-ammi (which means 'not my people')." This method's use of footnoting assumes audiences who are willing to investigate the phonetic play and is best relegated to Study Bibles and commentaries.

A sixth method is "non-pun to pun," which happens when the translator introduces phonetic plays in textual positions where the original text has no phonetic play in order to compensate where phonetic play could not be reproduced. Non-pun to pun happens, for example, in Hos 9:16 חֻכָּה אֶפְרַיִם שָׁרְשָׁם יָבֵשׁ פְּרִי בַלי־יַעֲשׂוּן "Ephraim is stricken, their root has dried up, they cannot bear fruit." The phonetic play is the paronomasia between פְּרִי "fruit" and אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" but the polysemy of "Ephraim" is difficult to reproduce. Phonetic play, however, can happen between the semantics of פְּרִי בַלי־יַעֲשׂוּן. Translators can reproduce the phonetic play by inserting another "Ephraim" before פְּרִי and translate פְּרִי substantivally as Ephraim's etymology, "the Fruitful." Alliteration and repetition can continue in a conceptual translation of בַלי־יַעֲשׂוּן using "fruitless." This literary transfer reads, "Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; *Ephraim* the Fruitful shall be fruitless."

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[52] On the frequency of editorial techniques used in conjunction with wordplay, see Hans Ausloos, "LXX's Rendering of Hebrew Proper Names and the Characterization of Translation Technique of the Book of Judges," *Scripture in Translation: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, JSNTSup 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 55; Zogbo and Wendland, *Hebrew Poetry in the Bible*, 87.

Wordplay

The subcategories of wordplay have their own peculiarities that require different translation approaches. The translator of paronomasia must use two words in the target language that sound similar to each other and mean the same as those in the source text. The presence of two terms in paronomasia allows flexibility when seeking equivalents. Each word has a set of synonyms and associated meanings available to choose. This flexibility affords a variety of words translators can use to find a match of similar sounds whether in alliteration, rhyme, or repetition. The same goes for rootplay; however, rootplay adds difficulty with its demand for the target words to comprise the same consonants and vowels. Much of Hosea's paronomasia and rootplay is with proper names which are fixed phonemes and restricts translations to specific sound-patterns. Both often need related rhetorical devices to recreate facets of their phonetic experiences. Polysemantic puns are not possible to express in literal, word-to-word translations because the source text only comprises one word but multiple meanings are present. The translated word in the target text will not carry the same sets of meanings or sounds unless it is a loan-word, but even then, the chances the loan-word reproduces the same multivalent meanings as the term in the source text is unlikely. In order to convey such polysemy, text must be either added or altered in either a punning fashion (e.g., portmanteau) or with a related rhetorical device that evokes comparable meanings.

Soundplay

The subcategories of soundplay also have their own peculiarities that require different translation approaches. Alliteration, assonance, and consonantal repetition require translation that reflects similar vowel/consonantal sounds with each other. Reproducing this in a target text becomes increasingly difficult the more words or phrases the translator must aurally tag.

Alliteration is reproduced by selecting synonyms of source words that contribute to the front-end sound-patterning. Assonance and consonantal repetition are nearly impossible to reproduce with equivalent soundplay due to the fixed spellings in English; however, related rhetorical devices can recreate comparable audible experiences. Due to the growth of hip-hop, rap, and spoken word in popular culture, reproducing rhyme is ever more possible. Rhyme is often perceived in English through end-rhyme that is open to words that do not just end the same, but end similarly (e.g., "money" and "tummy"). Furthermore, English lyric does not have strict syntax for rhyme and can be flexible to the Hebrew syntax. Repetition is also easily reproduced in translation by translating the repetition the same throughout its occurrences.

One caution in translating repetition, or any other phonetic play, is determining if the repetition is a grammatical normalcy of the Hebrew language or uniquely used to aurally tag words. For example, in Hos 4:18, אָהֲבוּ הֵבוּ "they dearly love,"[53] the root אהב is repeated with הב which Andersen and Freedman call a biconsonantal byform of אהב.[54] Although הֵבוּ is a grammatical anomaly, the clause אָהֲבוּ הֵבוּ is a normal grammatical way Hebrew expresses severity like the infinitive absolute preceding it, הַזְנֵה הִזְנוּ "They have indeed acted promiscuously."[55] Said another way, the repetition of the infinitive absolute and the repeated form in אָהֲבוּ הֵבוּ are normal grammatical ways that Hebrew formulates emphasis. For this reason, such expressions ought not be treated as phonetic play.[56]

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[53] BHS editors follow the LXX and encourage readers to delete הבו, calling it a dittography. Landy calls this a pun. *Hosea*, 66.

[54] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 379.

[55] C. Hos 4:2 וְדָמִים בְּדָמִים נָגָעוּ "blood touches upon blood."

[56] See also the normal grammatical use of וְאֵין repeated in Hos 3:4.

Finding Degrees of Approximation

The predominate tension in translation of Hebrew wordplay and soundplay is between communicating their semantic and phonetic values. Barr says the opposed translation categories "literal" and "free" are imprecise.[57] First, "within certain limits the translator can be both literal and free at the same time."[58] Barr demonstrates this dichotomy with the Hebrew and Greek of Prov 11:7:

> MT: בְּמוֹת אָדָם רָשָׁע תֹּאבַד תִּקְוָה "In the death of an evil man, hope perishes."
>
> LXX: τελεθτήσαντος ἀνδρὸς διχαίου οὐχ ὄλλυται ἐλπίς "When a righteous man dies, hope does not perish."

Where the Hebrew has רשע "evil," the Greek has the opposite, δίχαιος "righteous," but followed by the negated verb ὄλλυται. Consequently, some of this is "free" while the rest is literal word-for-word. Second, correctness of a translation resides in its semantic quality, not necessarily how literal or free it is.[59] Barr's observation of this becomes particularly noticeable with idiomatic expressions. He states, "[A]n idiom is commonly peculiar to one language, so that the assembly of equivalent elements in another language would not have the same meaning."[60] As a result, "this is a good case where the free rendering provides an excellent representation of the total sense without distortion."[61]

Phonetic forms of wordplay and soundplay sometimes require similar representation as

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[57] James Barr, "The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations," *MSU* 15 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979), 6.

[58] Barr, "Typology of Literalism," 6.

[59] Barr, "Typology of Literalism," 289.

[60] Barr, "Typology of Literalism," 297.

[61] Barr, "Typology of Literalism," 298.

idioms. In some cases, their semantic meaning may be more accurately represented with freer

rendering that reproduces phonetic play.[62] The reality of freer rendering producing meaning more

accurately is particularly true for conveying pragmatic meaning of wordplay and soundplay.

Utterances are shorthand for a larger statement that leans on context to fill in the blanks and

motivate audiences to feel or do something. Even more, wordplay is shorthand utterances. The

pragmatics of these phonetic plays, therefore, communicate much with little semantics.

Furthermore, pragmatic signifiers are often unwritten and require translators to render the

phonetic plays more freely to represent the illocutionary/perlocutionary force more accurately.

Since the terms "literal" and "free" do not always communicate "accurate" I turn to

Matthews and Raabe who discuss the translator's role to approximate content and form in

translations of poetry. Matthews notes, "To translate a poem whole is to compose another poem.

A whole translation will be faithful to the *matter*, and it will 'approximate the form,' of the

original; and it will have a life of its own, which is the voice of the translator."[63] Translators

determine to what they will be faithful. Prose translation is faithful to the lexical content but

sacrifices its poetic sense. On the other hand, verse translation is limited in its ability to reflect

the poem verbatim but captures its sense more thoroughly. He argues that both provide only an

"approximation of form" and suggests both verse and prose translation should accompany any

translation of the source text.[64] Similarly, Raabe indicates that "it will be impossible to reproduce

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[62] As Eugene A. Nida and Ernst R. Wendland argue, "In most instances, content certainly has priority over effect, but in those passages in which the focus is upon aesthetic form and the purpose is primarily to create appeal, certain formal features may have priority over content." "Lexicography and Bible Translating," *Lexicography and Translation*, ed. Johannes P. Louw (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1985), 47.

[63] Jackson Mathews, "Third Thoughts on Translating Poetry," *On Translation*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 23 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 67. Italics are original.

[64] Mathews, "On Translating Poetry," 67–77.

in every respect the original sound play."[65] The translator must take a "middle position that

attempts to maintain as much of the sense of the original text as possible while still indicating to

the reader the presence of a significant sound pattern."[66]

Nida speaks to the importance of poetry's phonetic form when he says, "So much of the

essence of poetry consists in a formal envelope for a meaningful content."[67] He contests:

> Lyric poetry obviously cannot be adequately reduced to mere prose, for the original
> form of the "song" must in some way be reproduced as another "song." The meter
> may be different, but the overall effect must be equivalent if the translation is to be in
> any sense adequate. Thus, though in some instances the form may be neglected for
> the content, . . . in the case of lyric poetry some approximation to the form must be
> retained, even with some loss or alteration of content.[68]

Nida also argues that producing "equivalent messages is a process not merely of matching the

pairs of utterances, but also of reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication.

Without both elements the results can scarcely be regarded, in any real sense, as equivalent."[69] I

add to Nida's position that the pragmatics of poetry also ought to receive equal treatment in

reproducing the total dynamic character of wordplay and soundplay. This equal treatment of

elements will often result in an approximation of content and form.

As noted in Marco's factors of a wordplay's translatability (discussed above), translating

with degrees of approximation yields different clarity or readability for every audience and every

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[65] Raabe, "Translating for Sound," 202.

[66] Raabe, "Translating for Sound," 207.

[67] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 4.

[68] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 25.

[69] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 120. This conviction in translation is, in part, gaining momentum in translation study as evidenced in Michael Wade Martin's approach to the poetry of the Lord's Prayer. He argues that literal translations destroy the prayer's stichometry, structure, and meanings produced by relationships of sound. He shows how the Hebrew poetic structures permeating the prayer not only root its religious and historical origins in ancient Jewish liturgy, but they also help audiences to link specific clauses and concepts. He concludes from the poetic forms that the prayer comprises two stanzas each containing a tripartite petition to see jubilee, the year of the Lord's favor, on earth. From this focus, he argues that "translation ideally should reflect this same form and capture the symmetries of sound and thought native to each figure or, shy of that, should render related symmetries with similar formal effect." "The Poetry of the Lord's Prayer: A Study in Poetic Device," *JBL* 134 (2015): 371.

genre of target text. Particular to this study are the two predominate textual genres of biblical

translations, the canon and the commentary. Both contain a variety of sub-genres depending on

the target readership and translation commitments.

Canon translations (NIV, NASB, ESV, etc.) consider how the meaning of words are

understood and translated across its collection of books. Translators weigh the unique semantics

and phonetics produced by wordplay and soundplay against their normal semantics appearing

elsewhere in the canon. For example, in Hos 1:4 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו קְרָא שְׁמוֹ יִזְרְעֶאל כִּי־עוֹד מְעַט וּפָקַדְתִּי

אֶת־דְּמֵי יִזְרְעֶאל עַל־בֵּית יֵהוּא "And Yahweh said to him, 'Therefore, soon I will visit the blood of

Jezreel on the house of Jehu," the use of יִזְרְעֶאל is referential and declarative. "Jezreel" refers to

the geographical location Jezreel, and its etymology declares Yahweh's ambiguous punishment

"God will sow" against the house of Jehu.[70] A literal translation for the canon considers how

יִזְרְעֶאל in Hos 1:4 coincides with the other 36 occurrences and translates with semantic

consistency. Since יִזְרְעֶאל is most clearly the geographical location and one of its meanings in

Hos 1:4, the unanimous result is to render יִזְרְעֶאל with the referential and more normal meaning,

"Jezreel" (2 Kgs 10:11), even though the etymology of Hosea's other children (a list to which it

belongs) are translated (ESV, NET) or transliterated (NASB). Changes to the normal semantics

in canon translations (e.g., translating יִזְרְעֶאל as "God will sow" in Hos 1:4) require explanatory

notes. Dynamic canon translations or paraphrases, however, are more committed to preserving

content, concepts, or ideas and allow more freedom to either recreate wordplay and soundplay or

add text to incorporate multivalent meaning of words (e.g., NLT translating לֹא רֻחָמָה as "Lo-

ruhamah –Not loved" in Hos 1:6).

Several predominate goals of canon translation is lexical accuracy and economy of textual

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[70] The etymology "God will sow" is evoked by the name's association with the following causal כִּי clause.

representation. Wordplay, however, offers unique challenges, because its ambiguity creates a

second meaning through subtext that, in part, clarifies the written text. In short, wordplay

requires translators to render meaning that is not lexically present; i.e. not written on the page.

Furthermore, pragmatic signifiers are present in wordplay and soundplay utterances that are not

specifically written on the page. Translators tied to formal correspondences must either choose

which lexical meaning to reproduce or neglect pragmatics of the phonetic play. A fundamental

goal of phonetics is to enhance semantic meaning; therefore, in canons, a successful translation

of phonetics will enhance semantics, not distort them. Phonetics, however, are not always

possible to reproduce with clarity in lexical equivalency. As a result, the semantics of the written

text takes priority unless the subtext meaning is clearer or can be added clearly to the written text

using italics to indicate its unwritten nature (e.g., Hos 5:2).

The commentary's isolated treatment of books affords greater opportunity to translate

wordplay and soundplay with more sophisticated phonetic play. Commentaries can alert readers

to socio-historical backgrounds assumed by the wordplay or soundplay. They can also discuss

the Hebrew's unique use of phonetics to explain how wordplay and soundplay structure the

passage, enhance semantic meaning, or create new meaning. The target readership of

commentaries varies from canonical readers to Hebrew scholars, but all commentaries assume

readers who are interested in understanding the biblical text on a more sophisticated level. Like

canon translations, commentaries preserve lexical, semantic accuracy of words; however, special

nuances provided by context are considered with more creativity. Beeby, for example, translates

פְּרִי בַלִי־יַעֲשֹׂוּן "they will bear no fruit" in Hos 9:16 with "the fruitful shall be fruitless" to regard

the pun between פְּרִי "fruit" and אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" who is mentioned earlier in the verse.[71] Beeby

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[71] H. Daniel Beeby, *Grace Abounding: A Commentary on the Book of Hosea*, in ITC (Grand Rapids:

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takes liberty in the commentary format to identify the pun for his readers and explain how his translation, "fruitful" for פְּרִי, nuances the Hebrew's phonetic play that incites Ephraim's person or character and etymology.

The factors that affect the translatability of wordplay and soundplay may cause translations to fall into different textual genres and require different target readership depending on what is required of audiences to understand the phonetics and how much the phonetics distort or enhance the semantics. Translators must, therefore, assess each translation based on how the phonetics distort or enhance semantic meaning. The goal for each translation in Hosea below is to reproduce some level of phonetic play, but due to the degrees of approximation, I will indicate when changes distort semantic meaning and relegate the translation to textual genres such as Study Bibles or commentaries.

<div align="center">Using Analysis of Transference</div>

This study uses Nida's three-stage analysis of transference to create and critique translations of wordplay and soundplay that balance the semantics, phonetics, and pragmatic signifiers in wordplay and soundplay utterances. The stages move from literal to literary and include literal transfer, minimal transfer, and literary transfer. Nida explains stage one, literal transfer, as "a word-for-word and unit-for-unit 'transliteration' of the original into corresponding lexical units in the receptor language."[72] For example, in the second colon of Hos 9:9 יִזְכֹּר עֲוֺנָם יִפְקוֹד הַטֹּאותָם, a literal transfer reads, "He will remember iniquity their, he will punish sins their."

Stage two, minimal transfer, represents only those alterations from stage one that are necessary for the translation to conform to the "obligatory categories of the receptor language";

Eerdmans, 1989), 124-25.

[72] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 184.

that is, changes that must be made to secure cognition in the receptor language. Thus, a minimal change in word order reads, "He will remember their iniquity, he will punish their sins."

Stage three, literary transfer, makes changes from stage two to elaborate or enhance syntactical, phonetic, or semantic features of the source text. The changes at this stage vary because during this stage, translators explore ways to solve fundamental problems in the process of transfer between source and receptor language such as differences in grammar categories, culture, religious perception and religious vocabulary, etc.[73] The second colon of Hos 9:9, for example, contains two soundplays. The first is alliteration and assonance between יִזְכּוֹר "he will remember" and יִפְקוֹד "he will punish." The second is word-rhyme between עֲוֹנָם "their iniquity" and הַטֹּאותָם " their sins." The words in assonance can be rendered with alliteration (יִזְכּוֹר "he will remember"; יִפְקוֹד "he will reprove") and the words in rhyme can be rendered with paronomasia (עֲוֹנָם "their iniquity"; הַטֹּאותָם "their inequity"). Thus, the literary transfer reads, "He will remember their iniquity; he will reprove their inequity.[74]"

This study focuses on Nida's second and third stages in translations of Hosean wordplay and soundplay to expose the types of semantic changes made in order to reproduce their phonetics. These changes will be used to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of what is semantically lost or enhanced by preserving phonetics. The types of changes under examination include changes in word order, omissions, structural [semantic] alterations, and additions.[75]

Translators must weigh semantic changes against two types of meaning. The first is

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[73] Eugene A. Nida, *Signs, Sense, Translation* (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1991), 108–20.

[74] Another possible option is the paronym (a word similar in sound or appearance to another) "inequity," meaning "unfair," which is how Ephraim treated its people (Hos 4:2). This, however, distorts theological domains of "sin."

[75] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 187.

designated meaning which are features that permit "a particular lexical unit to be used to point to

certain types of referents."[76] This means that the more translators use words that access meanings

beyond the semantic domains communicated by the words in the source text, the more distortion

the literary transfer could have and consequently the more explanatory notes will be needed to

clarify.[77] For example, designated meanings of כָּבוֹד include "wealth" or "possessions" (Gen

31:1), "honor" or "glory" (Jer 13:16), and "weight" or "burden" (Isa 22:24). A translation that

renders כָּבוֹד "glory" with "splendor" retains the term's designated meaning, but words with only

shared domains such as "might" or "beauty" conjure additional domains that can distort

meaning.

Associative meaning is the second kind of meaning translators must weigh when making

changes in the literary transfer. This meaning comprises the "emotional responses and attitudes

of speakers to particular signs based on" the habitual use of such signs, the situations where the

signs are generally employed, and receptors' attitude toward the referents of such signs.[78] For

example, translating כָּבוֹד with "cargo" in Isa 22:24 may technically stand as a synonym for

"burden," but "cargo" distorts the literary transfer because its more customary use by target

readers evokes goods that are shipped or packed in a transporting vehicle.

The criteria I will use to judge each literary transfer derives from Nida's principles of an

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[76] Wendland and Nida, "Lexicography and Bible Translating," 12. See also Ernst Wendland, *Language, Society, and Bible Translation* (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1985), 47.

[77] John Beekman and John Callow describe a faithful translation as one that does not distort or change the original message and "should always represent the literal meaning of the original text." *Translating the Word of God: With Scripture and Topical Indexes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 21. See also Dewey M. Beegle, *God's Word into English* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 112. Although their position does not consider poetic passages where literal translations may not communicate messages fully or clearly (as with wordplay and soundplay), translators must always consider the importance of providing audiences with translations that use clear and normal terminology to minimize distorted semantic meaning.

[78] Wendland and Nida, "Lexicography and Bible Translating," 12.

efficient translation. He identifies three fundamental criteria that are "basic to the evaluation of all translating, and in different ways help to determine the relative merit of particular translations."[79] The first criterion is general efficiency, which Nida describes as "the maximal reception for the minimal effort in decoding."[80] Efficiency in translation is particularly difficult with wordplay and soundplay because they operate on terseness and brevity to communicate more than what is uttered. The more words translators add to reproduce multivalent meanings, the less efficient their performance and the less economic they become for canonical translations. Furthermore, reproducing brevity with phonetic structures in the target language heightens the risk of using odd or unique vocabulary, thereby increasing the chances of semantic distortion and decreasing the effectiveness of the wordplay or soundplay.

The second criterion is comprehension of intent, which Nida identifies as "the accuracy with which the meaning of the source-language message is represented in the translation."[81] Nida admits that accuracy is perceived differently. Accuracy for formal correspondence translations is faithfully representing the semantics of source text. Lexical equivalency, for example, is of utmost priority. Accuracy for dynamic equivalent translations is measured in part by how well the original intent of the source text is understood by the receptor culture. The accuracy of either translation will depend largely on how much knowledge target audiences are required to know of the Hebrew language and cultural backgrounds. The phonetics and ideology of Hosean wordplay and soundplay, for example, are rooted in eighth century, Northern Kingdom, Hebrew grammar and the more audiences are required to know about this information, the less chance popular level audiences will comprehend the translation without commentary or editorial techniques.

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[79] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 182.

[80] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 182.

[81] Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 182.

The third criterion is equivalence of response, which judges how well the receptor understands the basis of the original response or how well the receptor is able to respond the same as the original audience but in the receptor's modern context. If the Hebrew wordplay or soundplay is designed to indict its original audiences, then the criteria judges how well the translation helps receptors understand the indictment and understand the original response to the indictment or understand the indictment in terms of the receptors' own cultural contexts.

The literary transfer of soundplay in Hos 9:9 יִזְכֹּור עֲוֹנָם יִפְקֹוד הַתֹּאותָם (from "He will remember their iniquity; he will punish their sins" to "He will remember their iniquity; he will reprove their inequity"), can exemplify the above criterion. The transfer produces two structural alterations. The first happens with substituting "punish" with "reprove." Both terms are closely related, but where "punish" evokes general action taken against misbehavior, "reprove" usually evokes verbal reprimanding. This structural alteration causes minimal loss in semantics and maintains the goal of "punish." The second structural alteration is substituting "sins" with "inequity."[82] "Inequity" relegates the domains of חטאת "sin" to injustice, however, the context of Ephraim's injustice towards God evokes the theological domain of sin. This literary transfer preserves the semantic force of "sinfulness" that און and חטאת create while preserving the rhetorical force of the rhyme pattern.

Controls and Criteria

With an increase in awareness of wordplay and soundplay comes an increase in the need for controls and criteria to identify them.[83] Not every *hapax* or textual problem is wordplay, and

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[82] Another possible translation for חטאת is "immorality." "Immorality" does not explicitly carry the theological import of "sin"; however, it conveys the merismus of "sinfulness," which is clarified by its parallelism with "iniquity" in the first clause.

[83] The growing awareness of wordplay and soundplay in biblical poetry and prose is evidenced in the

just because a word has multiple meanings (e.g., כְּנַעַן "Canaan, merchant" Hos 12:8[84]) or sounds

similar to a nearby word may not necessitate wordplay or soundplay.

One of the largest problems leading to incorrect identifying is unclear distinctions between

wordplay and soundplay. These distinctions are established in more detail in Chapter 2 but where

both leverage similarity of sounds across words only wordplay produces ambiguity. Another

problem that leads to incorrect identification is assuming that just because two or more words

sound similar and are within reasonable proximity they are wordplay or soundplay. In speech,

this scenario usually produces the expression, "No pun intended," and happens because a word is

used in a context that unintentionally evokes several of its meanings but only one of them is

intended. This scenario could also happen when two words are used that coincidentally sound

similar but were chosen because they were the only vocabulary available to the speaker or writer

at that moment. This scenario may happen with some commentators who notice in Hos 8:9 the

similarity of sounds between the two words אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" and פֶּרֶא "wild donkey"[85] and

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following works: Paul Raabe, "Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter," in *JBL* 110 (1991): 213–27. Bill T. Arnold, "Wordplay and Narrative Techniques in Daniel 5 and 6," in *JBL* 112 (1993): 479–85; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Bilingual Wordplay in the Bible," in *VT* 38 (1988): 354–57; Stefan C. Matzal, "A Word Play in 2 Sam 4," in *VT* 62 (2012): 462–64; Lawrence Zalcman, "Ambiguity and Assonance at Zephaniah 2.4," in *VT* 36 (1986): 365–70; John S. Kselman, "Ambiguity and Wordplay in Proverbs 11," in *VT* 52 (2002): 545–48; Barry J. Beitzel, "Exodus 3:14 and the Divine Name: A Case of Biblical Paronomasia," in *Trinity Journal* 1 NS (1980): 5–20; Richard S. Hess, "Issues in the Study of Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible," in *CR:BS* 6 (1998): 175–78; Jonathan Kline, *Transforming the Tradition: Soundplay as an Interpretive Device in Innerbiblical Allusions* (PhD diss., Cambridge: Harvard University, 2014); Yvonne Sherwood, "Of Fruit and Corpses and Wordplay Visions: Picturing Amos 8.1–3," in *JSOT* 92 (2001): 5–27; Isaac Kalimi, "Paronomasia in the Book of Chronicles," in *JSOT* 67 (1995): 27–41; Greg Goswell, "Royal Names: Naming and Wordplay in Isaiah 7," in *WTJ* 75 (2013): 97–109; Nachman Levine, "Twice as much of Your Spirit: Pattern, Parallel and Paronomasia in the Miracles of Elijah and Elisha," in *JSOT* 85 (1999): 25–46; Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, "What Comes out of God's Mouth: Theological Wordplay in Deuteronomy 8," in *CBQ* 47 (1985): 55–57; Al Wolters, "Wordplay and Dialect in Amos 8:1–2," in *JETS* 31 (1988): 407–10; and Zvi Ron, "Wordplay in Genesis 2:25–3:1," in *JBQ* 42 (2014): 3–7; Tania Notarius, "Playing with Words and Identity: Reconsidering לְרֹב בָּאֵשׁ, אֲנֶךָ, and קֵץ/קַיִץ," in *VT* 67 (2017): 59–86.

[84] Duane A. Garrett argues, "There is a wordplay linking v. 7 to v. 8. The word for 'merchant' in v. 7 [Heb 8] is *kěnaʿan*, a word that also means 'Canaan' so Ephraim has become Canaan." *Hosea, Joel*, in NAC 19A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 241–42. Although this allusion is possible, "Canaan" is not a character or theme that has been seen or used by Hosea thus far to solicit such ambiguity.

[85] See also its metaphorical use in 13:15 as the verb יַפְרִיא, which Andersen and Freedman argue is "an elative

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suggest פֶּרֶא is chosen for its play with אֶפְרַיִם.[86] This may look like a case of rootplay, but there is no deliberate ambiguity (plurisignation) produced by their appearance together. It may also look like consonantal repetition, but the guttural א is silent and both have different vowel pointing. The ר is also followed by different vowels. Despite their graphic similarity, they do not sound similar. Rather, פֶּרֶא comprises one of many metaphorical objects to which Hosea likens Ephraim throughout chapter six (adulterers 6:4; oven 6:4, 7; silly dove 6:11). The term פֶּרֶא is chosen for its normal sense of the word "wild donkey" simply because it fits Ephraim's political condition. As Garrett states, Israel is a "solitary donkey of the desert . . . [that] went to Assyria for aid, but instead of gaining an alliance with a great power, it remained a lonely creature left to fend for itself."[87] The "wild donkey" is selected for its import to Hosea's imagery, but its phonetic and graphic similarities with "Ephraim" are coincidental and should not distract audiences from its normal contribution to the metaphor.

The semiotics of wordplay and soundplay suffer from a lack of controls and criteria for identifying, translating, and interpreting them. This lack of controls leads to sensationalized meaning, lost meaning, imprecise understanding, or mistranslating. A clearer set of controls and criteria will also help identify the semantic force of wordplay and soundplay to clearly discuss their contribution to the larger message.[88]

Hipʻil denominative of ʻ*pere*ʼ," not a misspelling of the root פרה "bear fruit." *Hosea*, 640.

[86] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 505; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, in WBC 31 (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 135; David Allan Hubbard, *Hosea*, in TOTC 24 (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1989), 159; Graham I. Davies, *Hosea*, in NCB (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1992), 205; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 185; Andrew A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, in ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 316; John A. Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, in NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 229.

[87] Garrett, *Hosea*, 186.

[88] A regular assumption of this criterion is that the author purposely used a given wordplay or soundplay to establish meaning or create euphony, but as Freedman notes, sometimes the author is a bystander of his own phonetic play. As Freedman states, "It is difficult if not impossible to draw the line between the conscious intention of the poet and what the attentive reader finds in a poem. On the whole, I think we have given insufficient credit to

The first control for correctly identifying wordplay and soundplay is appropriately structuring textual units as they are organized by phonetics and repetition. Margaret E. Lee and Bernard B. Scott call a form of this organization sound mapping, which highlights types of acoustic features of literature in preparation for analysis.[89] Lee and Scott begin the process of sound mapping with the need to establish boundaries for the colon/line. They admit that cola can be analyzed in multiple ways but the overarching control for establishing its colometric form is that it must span sense units.[90] Sense units are often controlled by a finite verb or some other verbal element while other times they are marked by repetition. In the case of Hos 9:3, for example, the finite verbs יֵשְׁבוּ "dwell" and וְשָׁב "return" mark their respective clauses as a combination that forms the colon, לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוָה וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם "they will not dwell in the land of Yahweh, but Ephraim will return *to* Egypt." Texts containing phonetic play that spans multiple colons should be further clustered into periods that indicate how its verbiage sets apart one sentence from another or combines them.

Within the respective boundaries of the colon or period of cola, sound mapping identifies sound patterns and compositional units structured by sound to describe their sound quality—the character of individual sounds, the ways sounds are combined, and the relation between sound and meaning.[91] After identifying these patterns and units, translators can analyze the relation between their sounds and their style of delivery. Sound patterns' style of delivery is closely

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the poet for subtleties and intricacies in his artistic creation, and it is better to err on that side for a while. If we find some clever device or elaborate internal structure, why not assume that the poet's ingenuity, rather than our own, is responsible?" David N. Freedman, "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry," *JBL* 96 (1977): 12.

[89] Margaret Ellen Lee and Bernard Brandon Scott, *Sound Mapping the New Testament* (Salem: Polebridge, 2009), 168.

[90] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 169.

[91] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 176.

linked to their illocutionary act to identify the force of the phonetic utterance (indictment, judgment, praise, declaration, etc.). Sound mapping highlights repetition patterns and aural dynamics in their compositional units to reveal how they structure each period and memorably navigate audiences through the text.[92] In the case of Hos 9:3 mentioned above the verbs יֵשְׁבוּ "dwell" and וְשָׁב "return" contain consonant repetition with שׁ and ב that highlights the reversal of Ephraim's deliverance from Egypt in antiquity. Ephraim entered and inhabited (ישׁב) the Promised Land (see also. Deut 11:31), but will soon (שׁוב) return to Egypt.

Criteria for specifically identifying wordplay coincide with its definition: a poetic device that relates words of similar sound and difference of meaning or uses words with multivalent meaning that create ambiguity for a written text that is clarified in new, unwritten text (subtext).[93] First, there must be present either similar sounding words with different meanings or a single word that evokes multiple, disparate, but relevant meanings. In the case of paronomasia, punning repetition (homonym), or rootplay, wordplay is clearer when two or more similar sounding terms appear in parallelism. Not only does the similarity of sounds alert audiences to a relationship, but the parallelism structurally relates them. This parallelism is seen in Isa 5:7:

וַיְקַו לְמִשְׁפָּט וְהִנֵּה מִשְׂפָּח

לִצְדָקָה וְהִנֵּה צְעָקָה:

He [Yahweh] waited for measure (לְמִשְׁפָּט) but behold massacre (מִשְׂפָּח)

for right (לִצְדָקָה) but behold riot (צְעָקָה).[94]

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[92] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 176–89.

[93] See Chapter 2.

[94] This translation comes from Herbert C. Leupold who reproduces the homonymous sounds with English equivalences. *Exposition of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 112. Even Leupold, though, does not use this translation in his original translation; rather, he reverts to a literal translation ("he looked for justice, but, lo bloodshed; for righteousness, but, lo, a cry." *Exposition of Isaiah*, 109.

In the case of polysemy, the context must support both the written and unwritten meaning (subtext) produced by a word. Wordplay's presence is particularly evident if the subtext brings clarity to the written text. This is seen in the case of Hos 5:2 discussed below. Little sense is made of the literal translation of וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ, "Revolters have made deep slaughter." For this reason, commentators and translators are divided over how much of the text to emend. This clause is more likely ambiguous to direct audiences to find the clearer subtext, וְשַׁחְתָּה שִׁתִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ, "they have made deep a pit at Shittim." Hosea describes the behavior of the priests, the house of Israel, and the house of the king as that of the Israelites when they were lured by Moabite women into worshipping foreign gods (Num 25:1–2). The subtext, then, helps make sense of the immediate text metaphorically, that is, the addressees revolt against God by immersing themselves in improper worship.[95]

The second essential criterion for the presence of wordplay is the presence of ambiguity (plurisignation). In the case of polysemy, paronomasia, rootplay, and punning repetition, the two or more similar sounding words must evoke the question, "What is produced when these terms are blended (operating together to produce a comprehensive meaning)?" The presence of wordplay is more evident when the terms are not typically used together. For example, the clause גֶּפֶן בּוֹקֵק יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לּוֹ of Hos 10:1 is often translated with some variation of "Israel is a luxuriant vine; it produces fruit for itself," but the verb שׁוה "produce/make" is not the usual verb used for fruit production as with עשׂה (see also Hos 9:16) or פרה. Its appearance here is the only time it occurs with פְּרִי and alerts audiences that something creative with the language is probably

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[95] The polysemy requires added text in a translation to communicate meaning produced by the subtext. I suggest translating both expressions as one using metaphor; thus, "And revolters made slaughter a deep *pit of Shittim*," "Revolters" and "slaughter" offer subtle rhyme for euphony. The translation is efficient, but the added material relegates this translation to a commentary to explain its presence resulting from the complex polysemy running throughout the verse.

happening. שׁוה is likely used because, in addition to its literal meaning "produce/make," its sounds evoke שׁוא "vain," which, when blended, communicates a vain production [of fruit]. This paronomasia parallels the polysemy of בּוֹקֵק used earlier in the verse which means both "luxuriant" and "empty."[96] Without manuscript evidence, the BHS editors suggest emending יְשַׁוֶּה to יַשְׂגֶּה "make great," but allowing the text to preserve its ambiguity allows a text to communicate at its fullest and resists gratuitous emending.

A third criterion for the presence of wordplay is the text cannot be translated only one way with any certainty. This criterion is arguably more supportive than determinative, but translations are alarming when texts spawn a variety of possible messages because translators appeal to a variety of emendations or variously translate the following: *hapax legomena*, nonsensible literal expressions, and common words with multiple common meanings. For example, in the case of wordplay in Hos 5:2 described above, translators appeal to the BHS editorial suggestions in a wide variety of ways.

The base-line criterion for specifically spotting soundplay is repetition of similar sounds across words or phrases. One control is abnormal word-order.[97] Hebrew poetry already regularly defies the language's traditional syntax, but if such order purposefully situates words of similar sounds in parallelism or rhyming, alliterative, or assonantal patterns, then the presence of soundplay is more likely. For example, the final two clauses of Hos 4:13 עַל־כֵּן תִּזְנֶינָה בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם וְכַלּוֹתֵיכֶם תְּנָאַפְנָה orders its word-rhyme and end-rhyme with an a b′ a′ chiasm ﬥﬣ ‑וֹתֵיכֶם ‑וֹתֵיכֶם ﬥﬣ.

Alliteration with "v" can reproduce the soundplay in translation; thus, "Israel is a vibrant vine that *vainly* yields fruit to himself." The literary transfer adds "vainly" to capture the paronomasia between שׁוה and שׁוא and the polysemy of בּוֹקֵק. "Vainly" also reflects part of the intended meaning of לוֹ "for itself." The alliteration enhances the semantics by connecting and highlighting the paronomasia and polysemy making this literary transfer effective in canonical translations.

[97] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 232.

The following clauses in Hos 4:14 עִם־הַזֹּנוֹת יְפָרֵדוּ וְעִם־הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת יְזַבֵּחוּ contain a b c/aʹ bʹ cʹ parallelism in its end-rhyme pattern עִם . . . וּ . . . ות . . . וְעִם . . . ות . . . וּ

A second control is the use of rare or invented words in order to align similar sounds in words.[98] Hos 2:14, for example, uses אֶתְנָה in place of the more normal אֶתְנַן "prostitute's wage" to establish rootplay with תְאֵנָתָהּ "her fig tree" earlier in the verse while evoking אֶתְנַן.

A third control is the amount of repetition of a sound or set of sounds. A specific measurement for this is difficult to quantify, but in many cases a distinctively large amount of repetition makes the presence of soundplay obvious, such as כִּי צַו לָצָו צַו לָצָו קַו לָקָו קַו לָקָו זְעֵיר שָׁם זְעֵיר שָׁם in Isa 28:10 or the triple use of וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי "and I will betroth you to myself" in Hos 2:21–22. No one of these controls is necessarily definitive but should be considered in effort to reproduce the text's originality.

Once wordplay and soundplay are identified, they must be translated with equal sensitivity to their semantics, phonology, and pragmatics to recreate equivalent, audible experiences that are comprehensible to canonical readers. Translations that privilege literary features such as phonetics are susceptible to sacrificing semantic meaning. Phonetics are indigenous to the language that creates them, so recreating the phonetics can risk forcing creative constructions that compromise semantics (surface level meanings) outlined by the grammar. To avoid over-privileging the phonology at the expense of semantics, this study maintains several principles to insure its translations balance the two. The first principle is the translated phonetics must make the wordplay or soundplay recognizable. Phonetic plays are created to be heard and detected. If translated phonetics are too faint, the audible cues are missed and meaning created through the phonetic play is lost. A second principle is the translated phonetics' enhancement of meaning

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[98] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 232.

and reading experience must outweigh any loss in semantic accuracy. Effectiveness is lost if audiences experience phonetic play but are left bewildered by its meaning. Said another way, translated phonetics must not distort meaning more than it brings clarity. A third principle follows in line with Marco's second factor of translatability, degree of cultural specificity. The translated phonetics must be comprehensible for its target audience. The more historical knowledge or knowledge of Hebrew language required of audiences, the less effective the phonetic play is at popular reading levels. Each of these principles must be considered simultaneously in one's methodology to weigh a translation's effectiveness for different audiences and what genre of literature (canon, commentary, study Bible, etc.) it can be appropriately published.

Conclusion

With respect to Delabastita's methods for translating wordplay, it is no longer tenable to concede that most wordplay and soundplay are untranslatable; rather, they have degrees of translatability. This is not to say that every translation of phonetic play yields the same level of clarity for every genre of literature, but translators must reconsider what can be gained when the phonetics of wordplay and soundplay are reproduced in translations. Chapters 3–5 will employ the revised translation theory, methods, and principles discussed above to occurrences of wordplay and soundplay in Hosea. Each occurrence will be given a translation of minimal (literal) and literary transfer. Delabastita's methods will be used to establish the literary transfer. The degree of semantic enhancement or distortion of the literary transfer will be determined by the amount of changes needed to reproduce the phonetics, including changes in word order, omissions, structural alterations, and additions. The types and amounts of change will determine how well the literary transfer meets Nida's three criteria for an effective translation: general

efficiency of the communication process, comprehension of intent, and equivalence of response. Finally, each literary translation will be assigned a textual genre and audience based on its distortion or enhancement of semantic and pragmatic meaning and the amount of historical and grammatical knowledge the translation expects of its audiences. Before translating specific cases in Hosea, Chapter 2 will define wordplay distinct from soundplay and explain how the phonetics of each contribute to meaning, structure, and audible experiences in Hebrew poetry.

CHAPTER TWO

HEBREW WORDPLAY AND SOUNDPLAY

The study of wordplay and soundplay is conflicted by inconsistent taxonomy. Problems lie in definition and consequently distinction from one another. These plays of sound are sometimes referred to as paronomasia, wordplay, word play, pun, punning assonance, soundplay, sound play, etc. They are often indistinguishable from one another because of the overly general definition used of wordplay and soundplay: the occurrence of two or more words with similar sounds but different meanings.[1] This imprecision causes taxonomic trouble that leads to poor identification and a misunderstanding of how the phonetics enhance semantic meaning. Clearly defined taxonomy for wordplay and soundplay will help to correctly identify the phonetic play, discover meaning produced by the phonetics, and ultimately recreate the phonetic play in translation with more accuracy. I begin the discussion of taxonomy with wordplay since it is the more cumbersome and variously understood of the two.

Hebrew Wordplay

Taxonomy of Wordplay

The diverse taxonomy for wordplay results from two primary issues: using a variety of

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[1] On the abuse of this general definition, see Valérie Kabergs and Hans Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay? A Babel-Like Confusion Towards a Definition of Hebrew Wordplay," *Bib* 93 (2012): 2–5. They discuss this troublesome definition in context of wordplay, but the problem extends to cases of soundplay because of confusion in the distinction of each category.

terms for a similar concept (paronomasia,[2] pun,[3] word play, wordplay,[4] etc.) and its evolving

definition due to ongoing efforts to both understand the phenomenon and distinguish it from

other poetic sound devices.[5] The variety of definitions is largely a result of different foci scholars

give to either the function of wordplay or its linguistic dimensions (phonetic, lexical, and

syntactical).[6] Definitions range from overly general to overly specific.

One of the earliest definitions of wordplay comes from the Hebrew expression לָשׁוֹן נוֹפֵל עַל

לָשׁוֹן "language falling upon language" in Qamchi's (or "Kimchi") Medieval commentary to

Micah 1:10.[7] Casanowicz builds on Qamchi's concept in his 1892 dissertation but uses the term

paronomasia as the general category of terms with similar sounds but different meanings.[8] In

1988, Cherry resurges the term *paronomasia* and breaks it down into visual and oral

denominations. His demarcation is similar to Sasson's 1976 entry on wordplay where *visual*

implies that the terms look alike, while *oral* implies they sound alike. These definitions and

categories capture essences of wordplay but are too general to distinguish visual and oral

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[2] Immanuel M. Casanowicz, "Paronomasia in the Old Testament" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1892), later published as *Paronomasia in the Old Testament* (Boston: Norwood, 1894), 4; Russell T. Cherry, *Paronomasia and Proper Names in the Old Testament: Rhetorical Function and Literary Effect* (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Louisville, 1988), 2.

[3] Scott B. Noegel, *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda: CDL, 2000). See also James Brown, "Eight Types of Puns," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 71 (1956): 20–22.

[4] Jack M. Sasson, "Wordplay in the OT," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia—Supplementary Volume*, ed. Keith Crim, Lloyd Richard Bailey, Emory Stevens Buckle, and Victor Paul Furnish (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 968; Chisholm, "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," 44–52; Gerald Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, JSOTSup 219, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 74–100; Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 11–12.

[5] Examples include assonance, alliteration, rhyme, and onomatopoeia. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 222–50.

[6] These three dimensions are taken from Stephen Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 38–42.

[7] Casanowicz, *Paronomasia*, 4; Sasson, "Wordplay in the OT," 968.

[8] Casanowicz, *Paronomasia*, 2.

categories between sound patterns that produce ambiguity (wordplay) and those used only for euphoric effect (soundplay).

Noegel and the variety of contributors to his collection of essays in 2000 use *word play*, *pun*, and *pundits* interchangeably.[9] Noegel, however, argues the term *word play* is problematic because *word* is too limiting, since some languages use symbols, and *play* is misleading, as if one is always trying to be playful or humorous with these devices.[10] He uses the term *pun*,[11] which others find misleading and even limiting by reflecting only a comical arena.[12]

The most commonly used term for this category is *wordplay* (single word).[13] I appropriate this term because of its neutrality and common usage, and because Hebrew is not a pictorial language. Furthermore, the single word, *wordplay*, avoids any emphasis on *play* so as not to evoke humor.

Definition of Wordplay

The modern study of biblical wordplay largely begins with Casanowicz who defines the phenomenon as "the proximity of two words varying only slightly in form, and having a different meaning."[14] This is a good start but proves too limiting. His definition neither considers

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[9] Noegel, *Puns and Pundits*; Brown, "Eight Types of Puns," 20–22.

[10] See Ahl, *Metaformations*, 18.

[11] Scott B. Noegel, "'Word Play' in Qoheleth," *JHS* 7:4 (2007): 3–4.

[12] For a discussion on this argument, see Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 9 fn. 21–22. Kabergs and Ausloos discuss how the term *pun* is used by some to prevent the misnomer of humor produced by *word play*. See also Noegel, "Qoheleth," 3–4; Stefan Schorch, "Between Science and Magic: Function and Roots of Paronomasia in the Prophetic Books of the Hebrew Bible," *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda: CDL, 2000), 206. Others view the term *pun* as marginalizing the phenomenon of wordplay (See Janus J. Glück, "Paronomasia in Biblical Literature," *Semit* 1 (1970): 52.)

[13] Sasson, "Wordplay," 968; Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 237; Chisholm, "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," 44–52; Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 74–100; Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 11–12.

[14] Casanowicz, *Paronomasia*, 2. He similarly states that "the charm and effect of paronomasia lie . . . in the

polysemy nor clarifies the role of wordplay in communication. This definition is more fitting for

what more recent scholarship calls paronomasia, which is a subcategory of wordplay that

pertains to words that sound similar but have different meanings. Cherry follows Casanowicz in

1988 to define wordplay (paronomasia):

> [Wordplay is] the deliberate use of a word or combination of words as a rhetorical device designed to create within the hearer (or reader) feelings of ambiguity and curiosity. This use is primarily based on resemblances of sound, but may also include willful exploitation of the meaning or written appearance of these expressions.[15]

Cherry's definition rightly includes polysemy, but his statement towards wordplay's ability to

evoke ambiguity and curiosity does not definitively distinguish between sound patterns that do

not, including *epanalepsis*, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and *figura etymologicum*.[16]

In 1996, Morris makes a significant contribution to a definition for wordplay. He describes

it as "variant repetition" that "requires both repetition (the similarity of sound that acts as the

bait) and variation (the difference in meaning that springs the trap)—the crucial element being

variation."[17] Wordplay is, therefore, "a subset of repetition, one which stresses a semantic

variation between repetends [what is repeated]."[18] Morris provides specificity to the mechanics of

wordplay as necessarily involving repetition and variation, but any mention of wordplay's

production of ambiguity is missing. Furthermore, mandating the presence of variation excludes

polysemy which appears as only one word evoking multiple meanings, thus, having no repetition

and no variation. Consequently, literary devices of sound that do not necessarily produce

ambiguity are included in his denominations, and examples of wordplay and cases of polysemy

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union of similarity of sound with dissimilarity of sense." *Paronomasia*, 26.

[15] Cherry, *Paronomasia and Proper Names in the Old Testament*, 2.

[16] Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 14–15.

[17] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 74.

[18] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 74.

are excluded.

Delabastita also published a definition of wordplay in 1996 that hints at its deliberate ambiguity. He says wordplay happens when "*structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings*."[19] Delabastita's description of wordplay's confrontation of structural features captures the way wordplay builds relationships between two or more terms that would not have otherwise been created outside of that wordplay. His definition, however, does not necessitate the presence of ambiguity, but it creates a platform of conflict from which ambiguity arises. His definition also does not allow for polysemy.

In 2000, Noegel published a collection of essays that trace the use of wordplay in various cultures from the ancient Near East through Medieval Hebrew. A variety of definitions are present in this work, but common to most of them is the specific relationship of sound and meaning in wordplay. Klein and Sefati provide the most succinct example of this relationship. They define wordplay (word play) as a "literary play on words similar in sound and different in meaning."[20] Hurowitz describes wordplay as "an intentional juxtaposition of words that sound alike but have different meanings." He adds that "the appearance of one of the words is supposed to invoke in the mind of the reader the other, similar sounding word."[21] Loprieno states that

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[19] Dirk Delabastita ed., "Introduction," *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication. Special Issue: Wordplay and Translation* 2 (1996): 128. Italics are original.

[20] Jacob Klein and Yitschak Sefati, "Word Play in Sumerian Literature," *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda: CDL, 2000): 27.

[21] Victor A. Hurowitz, "Alliterative Allusions, Rebus Writing, and Paronomastic Punishment: Some Aspects of Word Play in Akkadian Literature," *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda: CDL, 2000): 63.

wordplay (word play and paronomasia) plays with sound and meaning where "identical or similar sounds bring together two (or more) meanings."[22] He describes the interface between sound and meaning as "located between the phonetic and the semantic sphere, whereby identity—or similarity—in the former is challenged by ambiguity in the latter."[23] The majority of Noegel's collection of essays illuminates wordplay's interplay of sound and meaning strategically to create ambiguity. These descriptions help to distinguish wordplay from other literary devices related to sound; however, the different categories of wordplay remain unclear due to varying emphases given to either sound or meaning. For example, they are not always clear if polysemy belongs to wordplay (see Hurowitz).

Kabergs and Ausloos attempted in 2012 to specify wordplay through a more precise definition. They conclude similar to those in Noegel's volume to say that wordplay is "a specific play and a reciprocal interaction between sound patterns brought up by the variation in morphological structures, on the one hand, and meaning—defined by the use of a word in a specific literary context—on the other."[24] They emphasize that "wordplay can only fulfill its function within the literary context when there is an interaction between sound and meaning," in which case one will be highlighted more than the other. Hebrew wordplay, therefore, is "an ambiguous interplay between both the sound and meaning of words."[25] Said another way, wordplay must share similar sounds, but have different meanings in order to establish ambiguity.

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[22] Antonio Lorprieno, "Puns and Word Play in Ancient Egyptian," *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda: CDL, 2000): 4.

[23] Lorprieno, "Puns and Word Play in Ancient Egyptian," 4. Lorprieno advances the study of wordplay by introducing its presence in signs such as Egyptian hieroglyphics. The performance of wordplay occurring outside of traditional words is important to acknowledge. This phenomenon of deliberate ambiguity permeates areas of communication beyond alphabetical symbols. The following study, however, is restricted to Hebrew wordplay and so does not explore the phenomenon outside the parameters of the Hebrew language.

[24] Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 11.

[25] Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 20.

With the necessity of ambiguity present in wordplay, they rule out several denominations that others considered wordplay in the past including *epanalepsis*, *figura etymologica*, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, synonymous substitution, *succedanuous paronomasia*, associative pun, and visual wordplay (*gematria, atbash, not(e)rikon,* and *acrosticon*). They admit, however, that some of the denominations listed above can potentially display a difference in meaning that could result in ambiguity. Furthermore, they do not clearly accommodate polysemy in their statement that "wordplay must share similar sounds" since polysemy only exists as a single word.

According to the history of definitions, wordplay consists of the similarity of sound and difference of meaning in one or more words that create ambiguity.[26] I would like to draw attention to Schorch's entry in Noegel's volume. Schorch recognizes how a pun (wordplay) is "a menace to the textual coherence of the 'grammatical' text (the 'main' text) on the one hand, but *may* generate a new text on the other."[27] Schorch recognizes how wordplay brings together two or more meanings where one meaning is conveyed by the written text and the other is found in unwritten meaning (or "new text," according to Schorch) produced by the written text's ambiguity. I argue in line with Schorch that the new, unwritten text clarifies the written meaning.[28] Incorporating Schorch's description, I submit wordplay is *a poetic device that relates words of similar sound and difference of meaning or uses words with multivalent meaning that*

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[26] The ambiguity may be deliberate as Raabe states, "Deliberate ambiguity lies in the text and is supported by the context rather than being the result of the reader's/hearer's misunderstanding or imagination." "Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter," 213. Some wordplay and its ambiguity can also happen unintentionally or subliminally by the author. Distinguishing between a wordplay's intentionality, however, is not entirely necessary since receptors' perception is of primary importance. Whether the author intended to create ambiguity with wordplay or not, receptors must decipher it if the phonetic construction creates it.

[27] Schorch, "Between Science and Magic," 206–7. Italics are my own. Brett Jocelyn Epstein also alludes to this when she says, "The polysemic nature of some aspects of a language makes it possible for there to be two or more layers of meaning at once." *Expressive Language in Children's Literature: Problems and Solutions* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012), 168. See Johathan Culler who states, "A pun evokes disparate meanings in contexts where each differently applies. "The Call of the Phoneme: Introduction," *On Puns* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 5.

[28] See Loprieno, "Puns and Word Play in Ancient Egyptian," 4.

create ambiguity for a written text that is clarified in new, unwritten text (subtext). Wordplay

necessarily yields multivalent meaning that is not explicitly stated but is communicated in

unwritten subtext. This subtext either provides clarity to ambiguity in the written text or extends

the application of the written text to greater bounds than would have otherwise been understood.

The ambiguity of wordplay is, therefore, resolved in varying degrees by the subtext.

Demarcation of Wordplay

I resort to Watson's two-fold division of wordplay into polysemy and homonymy[29] with

slight modification. His terminology is systematic and efficiently encompasses the variety of

poetic devices used in wordplay. He says polysemy "implies that one and the same word can

have several meanings" while homonymy is "when two (or more) words are identical in sound

but have different meanings."[30] Defining the technical distinction between the two is beyond the

scope of this study, but the distinction is rooted in the development of language and how words

either came to have the same sound or had multiple meanings splinter off the same word.[31] My

interest in these categories is less in etymology and more in classifying the relationship of words'

similarity of sound but difference of meaning. For purposes of this study, polysemy is the

occurrence of one word with multivalent meaning, and homonymy is the occurrence of two or

more words with similar sounds but different meanings.[32]

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[29] Polysemy: turn, rootplay, and polysemantic pun; Homonymy: punning repetition and paronomasia. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 238.

[30] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 237.

[31] A technical distinction may not even be helpful here. Silva argues, "We must accept the obvious fact that the speakers of a language simply know next to nothing about its development; and this certainly was the case with the writers and immediate readers of Scripture." *Biblical Words and Their Meaning*, 38. See also, James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 142. From Raabe, "Deliberate Ambiguity," 214.

[32] This is similar to Chisholm who divides wordplay into appearances of a single word and two or more words. "Wordplay in the Eighth–Century Prophets," 44–45.

Watson demarcates polysemy into three categories based on identical or similar roots: turn, rootplay, and polysemantic pun. Turn, which is also called root repetition or *figura etymologica*, involves the repetition of a root with a slight shift in the nuance of the word. Turn is extremely close to the poetic form of repetition (soundplay) and, as a result, will not be handled in much depth here.

Rootplay happens when "the consonants of a key verbal root are used as the basis for alliterative transpositions."[33] An example of this happens through the play of א, פ, and ר between אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" and יַפְרִיא "he will bear fruit" in Hos 8:9; 13:15; and 14:9. Since two or more words must be present for rootplay and the root of both words are technically different, I place rootplay in the category of homonymy as a close relative to paronomasia (see below).

Watson's final category of polysemy is the polysemantic pun, which is sometimes called double meaning or double entendre. This punning denotes a word that can have two or more meanings. Sometimes the polysemantic pun is described in terms of Janus parallelism, which happens when one word has one meaning in relation to what precedes it and another meaning in relation to what follows it. Polysemantic punning occurs frequently in Hosea such as Hos 2:18 with the use of בַּעַל. Its parallelism with אִישׁ "husband" evokes at least two of its meanings, "Baal" and "husband."

I add to the category of polysemy referential punning, which happens when a word or string of words contains only one semantic meaning but evokes multiple referents. This happens for example with the names of Hosea's children. These *nomina sunt omina* are explained in greater detail below, but יִזְרְעֶאל in Hos 1:4, for example, means "God will sow" but evokes the geographical location, Jezreel," and the person of Hosea's son.

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[33] Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry, 239.

Watson divides homonymy into true homonyms (punning repetition) and near-homonyms (paronomasia and rootplay). Punning repetition happens when the same word is repeated twice, often in succession, but has different meanings. This technique is rare in the Hebrew Bible (Judg 15:16 and Prov 5:19–20)[34] and does not appear in Hosea. Paronomasia happens when two or more different words are deliberately chosen because they sound similar. Martin defines it as "a play on words seen either in the intentional juxtaposition of two words separated by slight phonetic modification, or in double entendre."[35] This technique is common in Hosea and can be seen in Hos 9:16 and 14:9 in the terms פרי "fruit" and אפרים "Ephraim" where פרי evokes the etymology of "Ephraim," meaning "God has made me fruitful" (Gen 41:52). I include rootplay with paronomasia as a near-homonym because rootplay uses the same root letters across two or more different words but with different arrangement.

Figure 1. Categories of Wordplay.

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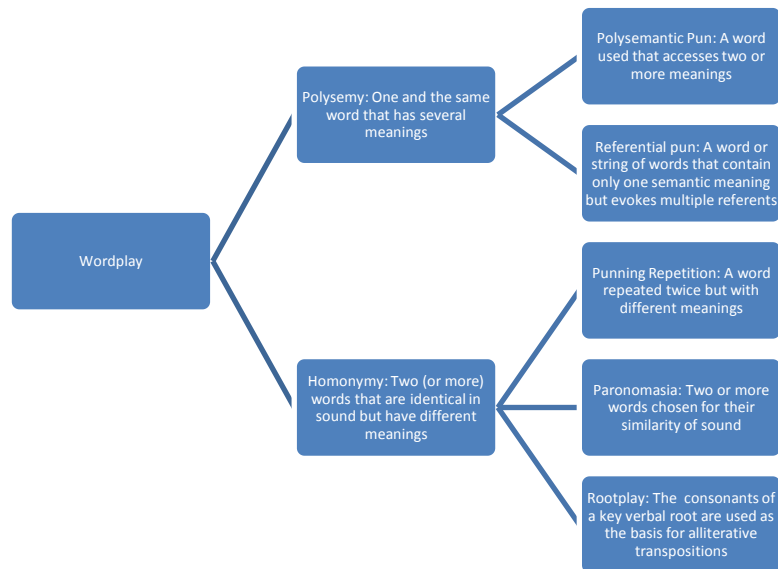
34 Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry, 242.

35 Martin, "The Poetry of the Lord's Prayer," 360.

Hebrew Soundplay

Taxonomy of Soundplay

Categorizing plays of sound outside of wordplay is complex, because soundplay and wordplay are often lumped into a single category called by different names.[36] Some effort toward a distinction between the two has been made. Glück uses the term "assonance" which he defines as "a homophonous incidence in diction which emphasizes meaning patterns conveyed by the words; it is a rhyme, external or internal, without a formal rhyme-scheme."[37] Assonance in literary studies is most commonly restricted to the consonance of vowels, but he uses it as a general term that encompasses all cases of rhyme. Within assonance, Glück includes rhyme in its wider sense of "identical or semi-identical sounds occurring internally or externally in syllables or words creating or contributing to the musical sensation which accompanies the meaning;" terminal or end-rhyme, which is "assonance at the end of poetic lines;" repetitive rhyme (figure of repetition), which is "literature . . . arranged in such a way that the concluding word of one line starts the next;" and alliteration, which is "an initial rhyme occurring at the beginning of words."[38] Different to Glück, Watson uses the two category titles "sound patterns" and "sound in Hebrew poetry" to comprise alliteration, assonance, rhyme and end-rhyme, onomatopoeia, and wordplay.[39] Brogan enlarges the corpus of soundplay to include structural poetic devices. He uses the category title *sound patterning* to refer to alliteration, sequence, chiasmus, alternation,

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[36] Ahl does not distinguish the difference between wordplay and soundplay but appears to assume his readers know the difference. One is uncertain of any distinction between the two when he talks about European languages having "strong poetic traditions *requiring* what amounts to alliterative wordplay." Ahl, *Metaformations*, 19. The taxonomy *alliterative wordplay* appears to fuse wordplay and soundplay. Later, *wordplay* appears with *soundplay*, again with no real distinction. Ahl, *Metaformations*, 54.

[37] Glück, "Assonance," 70.

[38] Glück, "Assonance," 71, 72, 78.

[39] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 53–54, 222–50.

and envelope.[40] Different yet, Zogbo and Wendland use *sound effects* to include alliteration and assonance, rhythm, rhyme wordplay, and ideophones.[41]

I will use the term *soundplay*, not because of any one convincing taxonomy, but because this term emphasizes sound as it plays between words. I do not wish to add to the vast taxonomy of soundplay, but as the survey above indicates, this field needs a clearer category for plays of sound that are distinct from both wordplay and other poetic devices (e.g., parallelism, keywords, inlusio, etc.).

<center>Definition of Soundplay</center>

The term *soundplay* has been used synonymously with *wordplay* as an umbrella term for literary plays of sound or sound patterning. As a result, soundplay is not always defined distinctly from wordplay except indirectly when wordplay is defined as its own specific subcategory (see above). If wordplay is a unique subcategory of sound patterning, then a definition particular to sound patterning outside of wordplay is helpful to understand their distinct qualities and mode of operation.

Preminger and Brogan describe sound patterning as a "broad-scale process of semantic underlining."[42] They go on to explain that this "[s]ound patterning often highlights a sequence of key terms central to the thematic progression of the poem."[43] I appropriate this description to define Hebrew soundplay apart from wordplay as *a poetic device that distinctly uses similar sounds to tag words for euphonic purposes or to accentuate certain words*. Like wordplay, these

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[40] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1176.

[41] Zogbo and Wendland, *Hebrew Poetry in the Bible*, 85–88.

[42] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1175.

[43] Preminger and Brogan, "Sound," 1175.

sound patterns are strategically used by the author to create euphony for audiences and to interplay terms that would not have otherwise been interrelated. Unlike wordplay, soundplay does not require the presence of ambiguity.[44]

<center>Demarcation of Soundplay</center>

The survey above shows inconsistency in previous demarcations of soundplay. Some systems include wordplay while others do not clearly distinguish between repetition and alliteration, rhyme, or assonance. According to the definition proposed above, soundplay comprises three predominate subcategories: phoneme repetition (alliteration, assonance, consonant repetition), rhyme (word-rhyme and end-rhyme), and word-repetition. The analysis below defines each subcategory and breaks them down into further subunits to explain how their different demarcations employ sound patterning and how these demarcations contribute meaning to surrounding text.

Phoneme Repetition

Phoneme repetition is a broad category of soundplay that uses repetition at the level of phonemes or syllables. This category is sometimes glossed as alliteration, taken in its wider sense of consonant repetition (not confined to initial consonant repetition), or assonance, which is more specifically a repetition of vowel patterns.[45] Neither of these categories, however, distinguishes between the variety of phoneme repetition in words including initial repetition (alliteration), repeated consonants (consonant repetition), or repeated vowels (assonance). It is, therefore, important to make clear distinctions between these different uses to correctly identify

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[44] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 237; Kabergs and Ausloos, "Paronomasia or Wordplay," 11.

[45] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 225–26.

them, understand their contribution to structure and meaning in the text, and properly reproduce the soundplay in translation.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the distinct "repetition of the same or cognate sounds at the beginning of words."[46] It differs from assonance and consonant repetition in that its repetition comprises both consonants and vowels and only occurs at the beginning of words rather than in the middle or end.[47] Alliteration is not dependent on poetic structure or parallelism but on close proximity. Alliteration can be seen in the verbs וְאֶסֳּרֵם from יסר "discipline," וְאֶסְפוּ from אסף "gather," and בְּאָסְרָם from אסר "bind" in Hos 10:10 בְּאַוָּתִי וְאֶסֳּרֵם וְאֻסְּפוּ עֲלֵיהֶם עַמִּים בְּאָסְרָם לִשְׁתֵּי עֵינֹתָם "When I [Yahweh] desire, I will discipline them [Israel] and peoples will be gathered against them when they are bound for their double guilt." The alliterative pattern consistent in all three is אס with the vocal *shewa* preceding it. Additionally, in two of the three verbs, the pattern אס is followed by a *reš*, two of the patterns are preceded by a *waw*, and the third is a hard *beṯ* which is in the same labial family.

Assonance

Assonance is a form of vowel repetition that "occurs when there is a series of words

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[46] Glück, "Assonance," 70–71. Glück describes alliteration as a subcategory of rhyme called initial-rhyme. Watson argues, however, that it is not limited to the beginning of words; rather alliteration has a wider sense of consonant repetition in a unit of verse. It is a form of repetition with the consonant being the form that is repeated. *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 225–26. Preminger and Brogan say alliteration is a "broad-scale process of semantic underlining. Sound patterning often highlights a sequence of key terms central to the thematic progression of the poem." "Sound," 1175. For purposes of this study, *alliteration* will refer to the repetition of similar sounds at the beginning of words, while *consonant repetition* will refer to similar consonants appearing in two or more words.

[47] Contra Watson who states, "Alliteration refers to *consonants*, not vowels." *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 225. Italics is original.

containing a distinctive vowel-sound or certain vowel-sounds in a specific sequence."[48] This is

distinct from alliteration and consonant repetition in that it is restricted to vowel sound patterns.

Like alliteration, assonance depends on the frequency of occurrence and close proximity.

Assonance can be patterned throughout a word or words and not only at the beginning or end of

a word. It is arguably more difficult to reproduce Hebrew assonance in the English than other

sound patterning devices since the spelling of English words are largely fixed apart from

irregular verb forms, prefixes, and suffixes. Translators can use related rhetorical devices such as

alliteration, rhyme, or repetition to recreate their euphony. An example of assonance appears in

Hos 4:6 with the frequent use of *a* class vowels in the clause, כִּי־אַתָּה הַדַּעַת מָאַסְתָּ וְאֶמְאָסְאךָ "because

you rejected knowledge, I will reject you." Conveniently, this clause already has aural tagging

through repetition of מאס "reject." This repetition aligns with the assonance to alert readers to

pay close attention to the cause and effect relationship between Israel's rejecting and Yahweh's

rejecting.[49]

Consonant Repetition

Consonant repetition happens when the same consonants appear throughout the word or

across multiple words.[50] This is different from alliteration in that it is restricted to consonants—

no vowels included—but not restricted to the beginning of words. Hebrew consonant repetition

is difficult to reproduce in the English for the same reason as assonance, but related rhetorical

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[48] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 222–23. See also Zogbo and Wendland, *Hebrew Poetry in the Bible*, 85. Contra Glück who defines assonance as "a homophonous incident in diction which emphasizes meaning patterns conveyed by the words; it is a rhyme, external or internal, without a formal rime-scheme." Glück, "Assonance," 70.

[49] This is the only occurrence of assonance I located in Hosea.

[50] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 225–26. This is different from alliteration in that the consonantal repetition is not restricted to the beginning of the words. Also, unlike alliteration, consonant repetition does not incorporate vowel repetition.

devices such as rhyme, alliteration, or repetition can reproduce the euphonic experiences for audiences. Hosea does not use consonant repetition often, but it appears, for example in 7:2 with the repetition of ל and ב in וְבַל־יֹאמְרוּ לִלְבָבָם כָּל־רָעָתָם זָכָרְתִּי עַתָּה סְבָבוּם מַעַלְלֵיהֶם נֶגֶד פָּנַי הָיוּ "And they do not say to their hearts *that* I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds surround them, they are before my face."[51]

Rhyme

Rhyme comprises distinct correspondences of same or similar sounds at the end of words and internally.[52] As Watson states, "[T]his sound-identity can be of varying degrees, from almost perfect to merely approximate, so that the corresponding rhyme will be within the range of good to near-rhyme."[53] Rhyme is distinct from other soundplay in its placement of sound-correspondences predominately at the end of words (e.g., Hos 9:3 מִצְרַיִם אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim Egypt"). Rhyming techniques fall into two predominate styles, word-rhyme and end-rhyme.

Word-rhyme

Word-rhyme happens when the root of two or more words contain similar sounds at the end of the words or internally. This is distinct from end-rhyme in that the sound correspondences are not limited to same suffixes; rather, they comprise part of the root word. Part of determining word-rhyme is the close proximity of rhyming words or their placement in parallelism with each

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[51] For a translation that considers the phonetics of the soundplay, see below.

[52] This definition is modified from Zogbo and Wendland, *Hebrew Poetry in the Bible*, 39. Glück defines it as "identical or semi-identical sounds occurring internally or externally in syllables or words creating or contributing to the musical sensation which accompanies the meaning." "Assonance," 70. He is not entirely clear with his distinction between assonance and rhyme. He calls assonance a "rhyme" without a formal rhyme-scheme. Watson states more simply that rhyme happens when two words sound the same in varying degrees, but this is too vague to distinguish it from other soundplay. *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 229.

[53] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 229.

other. For example, both proper nouns and verbs in Hos 9:6 מִצְרַיִם תְּקַבְּצֵם מֹף תְּקַבְּרֵם "Egypt will

gather them, Memphis will bury them," are in synonymous parallelism, and the verbs תְּקַבְּצֵם

"gather" and תְּקַבְּרֵם "bury" are in rhyme. The second colon of Hos 8:7 contains a rhyme scheme

produced by קָמָה "standing grain," צֶמַח "sprout," and קֶמַח "flour," which appear in close

proximity throughout קָמָה אֵין־לוֹ צֶמַח בְּלִי יַעֲשֶׂה־קֶּמַח "standing grain has no heads, it will not

produce flour."[54]

End-rhyme

End-rhyme happens when the same suffixes are distinctly used across a series of words.[55]

This is different from word-rhyme in that end-rhyme is restricted to same suffixes. End-rhyme

appears in a variety of repetition styles; several of the more common styles are exemplified here.

Two repetition styles of end-rhyme happen with the pronominal suffixes נוּ◌ in Hos 6:1–2 כִּי הוּא

טָרָף וְיִרְפָּאֵנוּ יַךְ וְיַחְבְּשֵׁנוּ: יְחַיֵּנוּ מִיֹּמָיִם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יְקִמֵנוּ "For he has torn that he may heal us. Let him

smite that he may bandage us. He will revive us after two days; on the third day, he will raise us

up." The pronominal suffixes in v. 1 forms epiphora[56] while in v. 2 they form epanalepsis.[57] A

case of diacope end-rhyme happens in Hos 2:4–5 with the suffixes ◌ֶיהָ, ◌ֶיהָ, ◌ָהּ, and ◌ָה used

sporadically:[58]

<div dir="rtl">

⁴רִיבוּ בְאִמְּכֶם רִיבוּ   כִּי־הִיא לֹא אִשְׁתִּי   וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אִישָׁהּ
</div>

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[54] For a translation of Hos 8:7 and 9:6 that considers the phonetics of each soundplay, see below.

[55] Michael Wade Martin calls end-rhyme homoeoteleuton which is "similarity of sound at the conclusion of affiliated cola, usually in the concluding syllables(s) of the concluding words(s)." "The Poetry of the Lord's Prayer: A Study in Poetic Device," *JBL* 134 (2015): 349. This definition, however, more accurately defines rhyme.

[56] Epiphora happens when same suffixes appear at the end of each clause.

[57] Epanalepsis in end-rhyme happens when same suffixes appear on initial and final words of a clause.

[58] Diacope end-rhyme happens when end-rhyme occurs throughout clauses or colons without any one set pattern.

וְתָסֵר זְנוּנֶיהָ מִפָּנֶיהָ   וְנַאֲפוּפֶיהָ מִבֵּין שָׁדֶיהָ

^{5}פֶּן־אַפְשִׁיטֶנָּה עֲרֻמָּה   וְהִצַּגְתִּיהָ כְּיוֹם הִוָּלְדָהּ

וְשַׂמְתִּיהָ כַמִּדְבָּר   וְשַׁתִּהָ כְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה   וַהֲמִתִּיהָ בַּצָּמָא

Contend with your mother, contend; for she is not my wife and I am not her husband;

And let her remove her promiscuity from her face and her adulteries from between her breasts,

Lest I strip her naked and establish her as the day she was born, and I make her like a wilderness

And I set her like a dry land and I kill her with thirst.[59]

Word-Repetition

Word-repetition is the distinct use of the same word or phrase multiple times across a passage. This soundplay is different from other forms of sound repetition in that its repetition comprises the whole word. Word-repetition is conveniently reproduced in translation by rendering every occurrence the same. For example, in Hosea 2:4 רִיבוּ בְאִמְּכֶם רִיבוּ "Contend with your mother, contend!" the word-repetition רִיבוּ "contend" bookends "the mother" to emphasize the imperatives to the children.

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[59] The end-rhyme soundplay is naturally reproduced in the form of word-repetition if each of the third feminine singular subjects "her" are translated.

Figure 2. Categories of Soundplay

Soundplay: A *poetic device that distinctly uses similar sounds to tag words for euphonic purposes or to accentuate certain words*

- **Phoneme Repetition:** Repetition at the level of phonemes or syllables
  - **Alliteration:** Repetition of the same or cognate sounds at the beginning of words
  - **Assonance:** A series of words containing a distinctive vowel-sound or certain vowel-sounds in a specific sequence
  - **Consonant Repetitio:** Words with the same consonants that appear throughout the word or across multiple words
- **Rhyme:** Words with distinct correspondences of same or similar sounds at the end of words and internally
  - **Word-rhyme:** The root of two or more words that contain similar sounds at the end of the words or internally
  - **End-rhyme:** The distinct use of same suffixes across a series of words
- **Word-Repetition:** The distinct use of the same word or phrase multiple times across a passage

History of Study on Wordplay and Soundplay in Hosea

After looking closely at wordplay and soundplay in the general field of Hebrew literary studies, this study now turns to investigate how they have been understood and applied in studies particular to Hosea. Casanowicz pioneered the modern study of wordplay in the Hebrew Bible with his 1892 dissertation *Paronomasia in the Old Testament*. Others before him made scattered remarks on certain Old Testament paronomasia, but he provides the first full treatment of its appearance in the Hebrew Bible. His contribution is noteworthy with his attention to detail, systematization, methodology, innovation, and organization. His categories, terminology, and definitions, however, must be considered in light of a more precise and developed field of Hebrew poetry. Casanowicz uses *paronomasia* as the umbrella term for all plays of sound including play on words (wordplay) and alliteration, assonance, repetition, and rhyme (soundplay). As the demarcation of wordplay and soundplay above indicates, this is not entirely

precise. Wordplay and soundplay both rely on similarity of sound and difference of meaning, but this description neither distinguishes between what produces ambiguity (wordplay) and what does not (soundplay), nor does it account for the variety of polysemy and homonymy.[60] In addition, *paronomasia* is no longer the overarching term for all plays of sound but is a distinct subcategory of wordplay that occurs when two or more words interplay because they have similar sounds but different meanings. Casanowicz discovers nineteen occasions of paronomasia in Hosea,[61] but under more recent definitions and categorization only eight are arguably wordplay (1:6; 2:24; 4:15; 5:8; 9:16; 10:5; 12:4; 14:9). The rest comprise repetition (4:18;[62] 8:11), alliteration and assonance (8:7; 9:11; 10:10; 12:12), or rhyme (9:6). He has additional problems with his list. First, some cases of wordplay are unaccounted (e.g., 4:6, 14; 7:2; 9:3, 6; 10:1; 12:12). Second, some of his examples of wordplay are less convincing because other literary devices are operative (e.g., the metaphorical use of יַפְרִיא "he became wild"[63] in 13:15). His examples that contain the strongest presence of wordplay involve proper names that play on their verbal root.

Following Casanowicz, scholarship gives little attention to wordplay and soundplay in Hosea for about a century. Most studies since Casanowicz are introductions to wordplay and soundplay that include only brief examples from various places in the Hebrew Bible. The first comes in Watson's 1984 work *Classical Hebrew Poetry*. This work is a worthy contribution to

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[60] Casanowicz gives only one paragraph to polysemy and remarks that "the mass of plays upon words in the Old Testament are such as are brought about by the combination of two words." *Paronomasia*, 33–34.

[61] Hosea 1:6; 2:24, 25; 4:15, 18; 5:8; 8:7, 11; 9:6, 11, 16; 10:5, 10; 12:4, 12; 13:12, 15; 14:5, 9.

[62] The Hebrew אֲהֵבוּ הֵבוּ is odd. The BHS editors suggest deleting הֵבוּ, but if it is from the root אהב "love," then this may be repetition for emphasis.

[63] This translation is encouraged by Andersen and Freedman from the root פרא "to be wild," which is usually considered a misspelling of פרה "to be fruitful." *Hosea*, 640. See KJV.

understanding techniques of Hebrew poetry. Watson designates a chapter to sound in Hebrew poetry where he discusses wordplay and soundplay separately. His overview occasionally offers examples from Hosea ("Jacob" in Hos 12:4 and "Ephraim" in 8:9, 9:16, 13:15, and 14:9).[64] The number of examples from Hosea, however, is minimal, and his distinction between wordplay and soundplay is not governed by the presence or absence of ambiguity. Furthermore, his criteria for spotting wordplay and soundplay are not well defined which results in several questionable examples (e.g., Hos 8:9; 13:15 with אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" and פרא "wild donkey").

After Watson, Chisholm's 1987 article "Wordplay in the Eighth Century Prophets" focuses on wordplay and discusses how it operates as a poetic device, particularly in eighth century prophetic literature. He concludes first that wordplay is frequently used "to indicate correspondence and contrast (or reversal)," such as sin and judgment.[65] Second, wordplay is used to "draw contrasts between two or more phenomena," such as "the sharp distinction between the divine and human perspectives."[66] These are helpful functions to understand in Hosean contexts, but there are others, including linking text, judgment, indictment, didactic, descriptive, etc. The intention of his article is not to provide an exhaustive study, but to bring awareness to the mechanics and contribution of wordplay in the eighth century prophets of the Old Testament. Chisholm's work does well to advance our understanding of wordplay's functionality, but a more comprehensive approach to Hosea will reveal a larger scope of wordplay's effect on the canonical message of the book. Like Watson, Chisholm's perception of wordplay is also not governed by the necessity of ambiguity nor does he establish any criteria for identifying them.

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[64] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 244–45.

[65] Chisholm, "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," 52.

[66] Chisholm, "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," 52.

As a result, some of his examples are untenable, such as cases of repetition of a single word in the same sense (e.g., זנה in Hosea 8:3, 5 and שׁור of 13:7 and 14:9).[67]

Of the works dedicated to Hosean studies, one of the first more serious efforts given to wordplay and soundplay in Hosea is Andersen and Freedman's 1980 Hosea commentary. They thoroughly attend to Hosea's grammar and semantic nuances and illuminate the book's poetic structures and parallelisms. Their close reading of the Hebrew and their effort towards an original translation enable them to spot several occurrences of wordplay and soundplay that were not previously recognized. For example, they notice in 12:12 the soundplay of *gil—gil—gal—gal* that interrelates the words גִּלְעָד "Gilead," גִּלְגָּל "Gilgal," and גַּלִּים "stone-heaps."[68] Also helpful is their hesitation to accede to textual corruption. For example, in 5:2 they reject the emendation of וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ "Revolters have made slaughtering deep," into וְשַׁחַת הַשִּׁטִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ "They have deepened the pit of Shittim."[69] Their ability to make sense of the original text opens the possibility of deliberate ambiguity. They do not suggest in 5:2 the possibility of wordplay, but their attention to the grammar enables one to possibly conclude that וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ evokes וְשַׁחַת הַשִּׁטִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ. Andersen and Freedman are helpful in locating wordplay and soundplay, but they do little to reproduce the multivalent meanings and phonetics of wordplay and soundplay in their original translation. For example, Andersen and Freedman recognize in Hos 2:18 the play between בַּעַל "master/owner/lord/ husband" and אִישׁ "husband," but only transliterate the plays and supply them with footnotes containing their lexical equivalents.

Gerald Morris offers one of the most thorough studies of wordplay in Hosea in his 1996

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[67] Chisholm, "Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets," 46–47.

[68] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 620.

[69] Gert Kwakkel accepts the emended text שַׁחַת הַשִּׁטִּים "pit of Shittim" from וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ proposed by Umbreit and Wellhausen. "Paronomasia, Ambiguities and Shifts in Hos 5:1–2," *VT* 61 (2011): 603–15.

work *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*. He designates an entire chapter to wordplay as a means to validate his larger thesis that Hosea belongs to the genre of poetry. He fairly states that repetition and variation are determinate qualities of poetry and supports this statement with various cases of wordplay. Morris describes wordplay as a "subset of repetition, one which stresses a semantic variation between repetends [i.e., repeating figures]."[70] He adopts Derek Attridge's description that wordplay happens when "[t]wo similar-sounding but distinct signifiers are brought together, and the surface relationship between them is invested with meaning through the inventiveness and rhetorical skill of the writer."[71] These descriptions highlight the relationship between repetition and meaning; however, they do not precisely distinguish wordplay from soundplay and the role of ambiguity.[72] He also does not provide criteria for identifying wordplay, which results in identifying several examples of wordplay that are less than convincing such as word-repetition (e.g., חטא x2 in 8:11).[73]

These various studies show that wordplay and soundplay are at least prevalent poetic devices in Hosea,[74] but they also reveal that approaches to this subject are fragmented and do not consider the phonetics of wordplay and soundplay in translation. The study of translating Hebrew wordplay and soundplay needs a methodical analysis that adheres to more precise definitions and a more reliable set of criteria to identify wordplays and soundplays correctly. The

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[70] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 75.

[71] Derek Attridge, "Language as History/History as Language: Saussure and the Romance of Etymology," *Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1988), 108. From Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 85.

[72] Attridge, however, emphatically recognizes the presence of ambiguity in puns in "Unpacking the Portmanteau, or Who's Afraid of Finnegans Wake?," *On Puns: The Foundations of Letters*, ed. Jonathan Culler (New York: Basil Blackwell, 2005), 140–41.

[73] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 86–87.

[74] McCreesh shows in his work on sound patterns in Hebrew poetry that sound patterns such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme are "thoroughly characteristic of Hebrew poetry." *Biblical Sound and Sense*, 12, 154.

field needs revised understanding of how the phonetics of wordplay and soundplay generate

meaning and revised methods for translating their phonetics in a way that enhances the semantic

meaning sought by the prophet.

The Prophet and His Audience

The effectiveness of wordplay and soundplay directly correlates to their degree of

relevance with any given audience. Xiaoli Gan summarizes the relevancy of puns from the

vantage point of how audiences process them. He argues, "The audience decodes the

communicator's ostensive utterance in its context. If the context contradicts the usual

interpretation, the audience rebuilds a new assumption with their encyclopedic knowledge,

logical and lexical information, and deduces the real implication of the utterance."[75] In other

words, audiences must be able to understand (find relevancy in) the various contexts that evoke

the multivalent meaning of words for the success of any pun. The further away audiences are

from a pun's contexts, the less relevant and understood it will be. If Gan is correct, then the

frequent use of wordplay and soundplay in Hosea assumes an audience close in culture and

context to the prophet in order to understand and be moved by them.

Hosea's oracles have various historical contexts, but faithful disciples are generally

understood to have assimilated the final compilation of Hosea during Manasseh's reign in Judah

around 687–642.[76] Many suggest the messages come from the prophet himself; however,

disagreement centers on the degree of redaction present.[77] The book's oracles were originally

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[75] Xiaoli Gan, "A Study of the Humor Aspect of English Puns: Views from the Relevance Theory," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 5 (2015), 1211.

[76] Wolff, *Hosea*, xxix-xxxii; James L. Mays, *Hosea*, OTL (London: SCM, 1969), 16; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 53; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 24.

[77] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 25.

delivered to audiences in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (Hos 1:1). Stuart identifies the addressees of the oracles to include Judah, Samaria, Bethel, the priests, royalty, and Hosea himself, but most often they are addressed to Israel and Ephraim. Whether any of these audiences were addressed with the prophet in their presence or simply rhetorically is not known for certain.[78]

Andersen and Freedman suggest Hosea "does not present us with finished oracular utterances, ready for public delivery."[79] I follow their position to give the text the benefit of the doubt, however, I submit that the prophet wrote his oracles initially and then read or performed them orally. The importance of sounds and audible experiences of wordplay and soundplay attest to the prophet's need to have processed his word selection and rehearsed them. Timing and vocalization are important to the delivery of both wordplay and soundplay. If emphasis is misplaced or timing of delivery is rhythmically off, then the impact of the euphony can be compromised. Andersen and Freedman suggest Hosea contains "preliminary reflections or soliloquies" that are not yet finished or polished.[80] I perceive these oddities as intentional forms used for punctual address in speech and performance. They reflect presentations where the speaker is present with an audience and can use body language (eye contact, pointing, facing, character embodiment, etc.), tone of voice, and speech fluctuation to direct audiences to specific shifts in address. The target audience for Hosea's oracles are, therefore, more likely Israelites in the Northern Kingdom who are contemporary with the prophet in the mid-eighth century. The relevance of Hosea's oracles continued into Manasseh's reign for Israelites in the kingdom of

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[78] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 12.

[79] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 45.

[80] By unpolished they mean, "[M]any puzzling literary features of the oracles." Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 45.

Judah when the book was likely compiled. Therefore, when I discuss the semantic force of wordplay and soundplay in chapters three through five, I have the prophet's contemporaries in the Northern Kingdom of Israel in focus.

Conclusion

Phonetic plays of sound fall into the two distinctive categories: wordplay and soundplay. Wordplay is *a poetic device that relates words of similar sound and difference of meaning or uses words with multivalent meaning that create ambiguity for a written text that is clarified in new, unwritten text (subtext)*. It necessarily yields multivalent meaning that is not explicitly stated, but communicated in an unwritten subtext. This subtext either provides clarity to ambiguity in the written text or extends the application of the written text to greater bounds than would have otherwise been understood. The ambiguity of wordplay is clarified in varying degrees by the subtext. Wordplay can be polysemous, one word with multiple meanings evoked simultaneously, or homonymous, two or more words with similar sounds but different meanings. The following types of wordplay appear in Hosea:[81] polysemantic puns, which are words that evoke multiple meanings simultaneously; rootplay, which is two or more words that share the same consonants but transpose them; and paronomasia, which is the deliberate choice of two or more different words that sound alike.[82]

Soundplay is *a poetic device that distinctly uses similar sounds to tag words for euphonic purposes or to accentuate known meaning across words in the text*. It differs from wordplay in that it does not contain deliberate ambiguity. Soundplay is divided in three categories. The first

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[81] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 237–50.

[82] Another form of homonymous wordplay includes punning repetition, which is the same word occurring twice but with different meanings.

category is phoneme repetition, which is sound-patterning at the level of phonemes and comprises alliteration, assonance, and consonantal repetition. The second category is rhyme, which is sound-patterning at the level of syllables and comprises end-rhyme and word-rhyme. The third category of soundplay is word-repetition, which is sound-patterning at the level of whole words.

This taxonomy provides a consistent way to talk about how Hebrew sound patterns and plays of sound operate and communicate in Hebrew poetry. These newly comprised definitions also create a guide for determining which literary phenomena the prophet uses (wordplay or soundplay). They help determine how a phonetic play communicates meaning, structures the poetry, and creates emphasis. This taxonomy divides the exhaustive analysis of phonetic play in Hosea into two parts. The first part comprises Chapters 3–4 where each chapter discusses individual cases of wordplay in Hosea by assessing various translations and interpretations from leading commentators, ancient translations (Greek and Aramaic), and canonical translations including German, French, and English.[83] Assessment of each wordplay begins with a history of translation that reviews how ancient sources and modern translations resolve textual and grammatical difficulties surrounding the wordplay. Translators will often show evidence of wordplay operating in the text but offer little to no means of incorporating the wordplay's phonetics in their translations. In response, I will discuss the mechanics of each wordplay—how

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[83] Translations Consulted: Complete Jewish Bible (CJB), English Standard Version (ESV), King James Version (KJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New International Version (NIV), New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), New Living Translation (NLT), New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), English Young's Literal Translation (YLT), French Bible -en français courant- (BFC), French Version Darby (DRB), French Bible de Jérusalem (FBJ), French Louis Segond Version (LSG), French Nouvelle Edition de Genève (NEG), French Traduction Ecuméntique de la Bible (TOB), German Einheitsübersetzung der Heiligen Schrift (EIN), German Elberfelder Bibel revidierte Fassung (ELB), German Darby Unrevidierte Elberfelder (ELO), German Herder Version (HRD), Luther 1545 German Bible (L45), German Lutherbibel 1912 (LUO), German Lutherbibel 1984 (LUT), German Schlachter Version 1951 (SCH), German Schlachter Version 2000 (SCL), Septuaginta (LXX), and Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio (NOV).

their semantics leverage phonetics to enhance meaning and to create ambiguity that evokes multivalent meaning—and offer ways to reproduce the wordplay's phonetics in translation. Italics in my translations indicate verbiage not semantically visible in the Hebrew. Each case of wordplay concludes with analysis of its semantic force, that is, its design to motivate audiences through the experience of sounds to feel and respond accordingly. The second part of discussing phonetic play in Hosea comprises Chapter 5 where all cases of soundplay are identified and nearly every case is given a revised translation that considers the soundplay's phonetics.

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSLATING HOSEA WORDPLAY OF YAHWEH'S HOUSEHOLD

Introduction

This study divides Hosean wordplay into two collections: wordplay pertaining to Yahweh's household and wordplay addressing Ephraim and Israel. The collections follow a natural division in Hosea between chapters three and four where Chapters 1–3 use the model of a household to depict Yahweh's relationship with his people (parent, husband, mother, children) and Chapters 4–14 focus on Israel and Ephraim.[1] Yahweh and his household are the focus of this chapter. Study of each wordplay looks closely at how the prophet uses familial relationships to build his prophetic message of Yahweh's renewal process of Israel. This section will show the interrelatedness of wordplay in the household metaphor, that is, how the prophet builds on previous wordplay to navigate audiences through Yahweh's renewal process of his people including indictment, judgment, and restoration.

Cases of Wordplay

Hos[DS3]ea 1:4

The focal point of wordplay in 1:4 is the proper name יִזְרְעֶאל "Jezreel." The land is accused of severe promiscuity in Hos 1:2. *Jezreel* follows as the first *nomen est omen* of Hosea's יַלְדֵי זְנוּנִים "children of promiscuity" (יִזְרְעֶאל, לֹא רֻחָמָה, and לֹא עַמִּי) that alerts audiences to Yahweh's impending judgment. The name is also the first of three appearances throughout Hos 1–2 (1:4;

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[1] For understanding the root metaphor of Hos 1–3 as Yahweh's "household" see Dearman, *Hosea*, 11, 44–50.

2:2, 24). This section investigates the referential punning of יִזְרְעֶאל to include its etymology, its

lexical meaning as a geographical location, and its paronomasia with יִשְׂרָאֵל "Israel," which

appears later in the verse.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

Ancient translations handle יִזְרְעֶאל differently. Greek versions transliterate it with Ιεζραελ

while the Targum translates its etymology with מְבַדְרַיָּא "scattered ones."[2] Commentators and

canonical translations translate similar to 𝔊 but variously understand its application in the text.

William R. Harper calls the name Jezreel "symbolical" and suggests it refers to the "great battle-

ground . . . on which Jehu had massacred the family of Ahab."[3] Wilhelm Rudolph explicitly

states that יִזְרְעֶאל is not used here in its "sprechlichen Bedeutung »Gott sät«"; rather, only as an

"Ortsname."[4] McKeating says יִזְרְעֶאל creates a tension between "a shattering experience for

northern prophecy" and Hosea's hope that "God sows" in spite of Israel's failures.[5] He clarifies

this tension by saying, on the one hand, that *Jezreel* evokes the unpleasant history of violent

events that took place in Jezreel, a failed secession of the Northern Kingdom, failure of Hosea's

own domestic expectations, and failure of his prophetic movement; while, on the other hand, it

expresses Hosea's hopes that God's sowing will overcome men's failures.[6] Wolff refers to this

name as a "provocative riddle" that finds its answer in the bloodthirsty event when Jehu

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[2] The Targum renders the etymology differently in 2:2 with כְּנֵשְׁהוֹן "their gathering(s)" and in 2:24 with לְגָלְוָת עַמִּי "exiles of my people."

[3] William R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1905), 211.

[4] Wilhelm Rudolph, *Hosea*, in Kommentar Zum Alten Testament 13 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1966), 51.

[5] Henry McKeating, *The Books of Amos, Hosea and Micah*, in CBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 78–79.

[6] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 78–79.

eliminated the House of Omri.[7] He argues יִזְרְעֶאל "is to be a constant reminder that the reigning

dynasty—from the hour of its founding onward—is not in accordance with God's will."[8] The

judgment solicited by the name is therefore a result of political rather than cultic abuses.[9]

Andersen and Freedman also call יִזְרְעֶאל a riddle capable of more than one meaning. They say it

"conjures up two opposite ideas—the beneficence of God in fruitfulness of plants, animals, and

people, and the crimes and atrocities of the Israelite kings."[10] Jeremias claims יִזְרְעֶאל is the most

difficult name of Hosea's children to interpret because it has "eine Fülle unterschiedlicher

Assoziationen in sich birgt."[11] He identifies five associations of יִזְרְעֶאל including the etymology

"God sows," the fertile Jezreel Valley, its ideal locale for war, a locale of land possessed by

Israel during its immigration into Palestine, and the locale of Jehu's bloodshed.[12] Jeremias argues

its primary association is Jehu's locale of bloodshed and suggests it serves as a model that

characterizes the shape of the monarchy in Hosea's own time.[13] Stuart acknowledges the

ambiguity of יִזְרְעֶאל and calls it a "message name" along with the other names given to the other

siblings.[14] He identifies a variety of meanings יִזְרְעֶאל could have but settles on two the text gives

significance. The first meaning is its locale as the place of Jehu's massacre (2 Kgs 9–10) and the

second is the message of judgment, "God sows," which would come against Jehu's dynasty

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[7] Wolff, *Hosea,* 17.

[8] Wolff, *Hosea,* 18.

[9] Wolff, *Hosea,* 18.

[10] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 173.

[11] Von Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1983), 30.

[12] Jeremias, *Hosea*, 30.

[13] Jeremias, *Hosea*, 31.

[14] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 28.

similar to the way Jehu's massacre ended the Omride dynasty.[15] Hubbard regards the ambiguity

of יִזְרְעֶאל as "an effective symbol both of judgment and restoration."[16] He argues יִזְרְעֶאל is more

than just a place name but is in wordplay with *Israel* as a means to describe "the whole nation,

ripe for judgment, yet to be restored to a covenant-relationship when the judgment has done its

necessary work."[17] Beeby notes two meanings associated with יִזְרְעֶאל. First, as Hubbard points

out, Jezreel stands in the form of a pun with "Israel" at the end of the verse. Thus, Jezreel is a

sign of Israel's end. Second, it signifies the locale of the valley and city where many kings shed

blood, particularly Jehu.[18] Davies recognizes the etymology of יִזְרְעֶאל to mean "God sows" but

gives most of his attention to its evocation as a geographical reference prevalent in Israel's past.[19]

Garrett argues יִזְרְעֶאל evokes political and cultic meanings. Politically, it is the town and valley

between Galilee and Samaria where many significant and violent events took place in Israel's

history. Its cultic significance derives from its etymology "May God sow," which Garrett

suggests addresses Israel's fertility cults and identifies Yahweh as the true sower, not Baal.[20]

Macintosh understands יִזְרְעֶאל to literally refer to the settlement, *Zerʿin*, and the Valley of Jezreel.

He suggests it figuratively refers to the "atrocities committed by the Israelite monarchy,"

particularly that of Jehu and the bloodguilt he inflicted on his dynasty with his massacre in the

Jezreel Valley.[21] Macintosh argues the similar form and sound of *Jezreel* with *Israel* transposes

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[15] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 28–29.

[16] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 69.

[17] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 70.

[18] Beeby, *Hosea*, 15–16.

[19] Davies, *Hosea*, 54.

[20] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 55–56.

[21] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 15–18.

Jezreel's meaning—violent history and violent end of the Omride dynasty—onto Israel.[22]
Furthermore, the meaning of *Jezreel* implies the punishment of Israel's inhabitants to scatter across the kingdom.[23] Dearman calls יִזְרְעֶאל a "mnemonic device that draws attention to prior bloodshed perpetrated at Jezreel" to illustrate God's judgment to come.[24] He understands its variety of meanings to include its referent to the fertile valley in Israel's heartland, the name of a prominent town during the Omride dynasty near Mt. Gilboa, the nation Israel, and its etymology "God sows," which he argues evokes God's blessing and judgment through forced dispersion.[25]

As demonstrated above, יִזְרְעֶאל bears a significant amount of meaning. The term's multivalence supports its use as a polysemantic pun that evokes literal, symbolic, and literary meaning. Literally, יִזְרְעֶאל is the name of Hosea's son that functions symbolically as a *nomen est omen* for the Israelites. Symbolically, יִזְרְעֶאל carries positive and negative geographic connotations evoked by Israel's history in the Jezreel Valley. Connotations include the valley's agricultural fertility and its bloody history of war and destruction with explicit reference to Jehu's massacre. Other bloodshed traditions in Jezreel include Sisera (Judg 4–5), Josiah (2 Kgs 23:29), Midian (Judg 7), Naboth (2 Kgs 9:26), Ahab (1 Kgs 22:38), and Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:33). As Stuart and Garrett indicate, the reference to Jehu's bloody massacre does not imply punishment is coming to Jehu's house because of his violence; rather, Yahweh's imminent judgment against Israel is going to be like it.[26] Like the valley's bloody history, the house of Israel will come to a bloody end.

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[22] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 18.

[23] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 18.

[24] Dearman, *Hosea*, 92.

[25] Dearman, *Hosea*, 92.

[26] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 29; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 56–57.

The term יִזְרְעֶאל functions literarily in two ways. First, it evokes its etymology, "God will sow," which is evident by its association with the other *nomina sunt omina* (*Lo-ruhamah* and *Lo-ammi*) that find their meaning from their etymology. As Jer 31:27–28 evidences, the imagery of God's sowing communicates a process of God renewing his people that begins with judgment/refinement and ends with restoration. Yahweh declares that when he sows (זרע) the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the זֶרַע אָדָם "seed of man" and the זֶרַע בְּהֵמָה "seed of beast," he will pluck up (נתשׁ), break down (נתץ), overthrow (הרס), destroy (אבד), and bring disaster (רעע) before he builds (בנה) and plants (נטע). Therefore, the name יִזְרְעֶאל can, on the one hand, evoke God's cultivation and nurturing (see Hos 2:23-25), but also God's refinement. The name alerts audiences to Yahweh as the true source of blessing they will experience, but the context of the name's application triggers its negative connotations. One context, as mentioned above, is its association with the other *nomina sunt omina* (Won't-be-pitied and My-not-people) that expresses Yahweh's imminent judgment and Israel's apostasy from Yahweh. The second context is its explicit association with the place of Jehu's massacre (2 Kgs 9).

A second literary function of יִזְרְעֶאל comes in its paronomasia with יִשְׂרָאֵל "Israel" later in 1:4. This association leads audiences to transpose qualities of יִזְרְעֶאל on Israel and view Israel as the embodiment of יִזְרְעֶאל. The paronomasia concisely imports both positive and negative connotations associated with its etymology, "God will sow." Therefore, the house of Israel will reap Yahweh's sowing of judgment but afterward will reap his sowing of blessing.

Problems in translation of יִזְרְעֶאל come in its uniqueness from the other *nomina sunt omina* in that it is grammatically a formal proper name. As a result, translations unanimously transliterate יִזְרְעֶאל "Jezreel" even if the etymology of the other names are translated (e.g., "No Mercy"). Footnotes are sometimes given to the transliterations of Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi to

convey their etymology but not always for Jezreel (NASB, NIV cross reference editions). This inconsistency raises problems for English readers because the punning aspect of יִזְרְעֶאל is lost and its relation to the other *nomina sunt omina* is vague.

Since יִזְרְעֶאל belongs in a series with the other *nomina sunt omina*, I prioritize its etymology "God will sow" over its transliteration, "Jezreel." I suggest adding hyphens to make it a single unit as with a proper name; thus, "God-will-sow." This translation, however, disrupts the name's paronomasia with "Israel." One remedy is to follow "God-will-sow" with a parenthetical reference containing its transliterated proper name, "Jezreel." This adds material to the text but nothing apart from meaning explicitly produced by יִזְרְעֶאל. English readers can hear from this transliteration the paronomasia between "God-will-sow" and "Israel." A proposed translation is as follows:

> And Yahweh said to him, "Call his name God-will-sow (*Jezreel*),
>
> for soon I will visit[27] the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu
>
> and I will destroy the kingdom of the house of Israel."[28]

Rendering the etymology of יִזְרְעֶאל maintains consistency with the other names of Hosea's children if their etymologies are translated. The addition of "Jezreel" following "God-will-sow," however, is a structural change that may require some explanation. Some canonical translations

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[27] The translation of פקד as "punishment" is certainly not uncommon and may be influenced by the LXX with ἐκδικέω "avenge." However, I do not find any context to suggest that פקד should be understood as "punish," especially when God praises Jehu for fulfilling his assignment of eliminating the Omrides (2 Kgs 10:30). The grammar supports the translation "visit" as well. The translation "I will visit" allows אֶת to function as the untranslated direct object marker for דְּמֵי יִזְרְעֶאל "blood of Jezreel" rather than force the עַל into an abnormal form to identify בֵּית יֵהוּא "house of Jehu" as the direct object. This allows עַל its more normal function as the preposition "on" and marker of an indirect object. See also James L. Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 28; Wolff, *Hosea*, 19; Stuart, *Hosea*, 29; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 56–57. This translation is also supported by the LXX with some variation: see W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 33, 69–70.

[28] The pronunciations of "Jezreel" and "Israel" are not as close in the English as in the Hebrew. The beginning sounds of "j" versus a short "i" and the digraph "ee" negate much of the soundplay present in the Hebrew.

use footnotes for the names of Hosea's other children, so a footnote could be used here as well. Even without a footnote, the idea of Bible names employing etymological meaning is not uncommon for audiences to understand the parenthetical reference. The need for added text, however, may render this translation most suitable for literal translations that can leverage footnoting or for study Bibles and commentaries that can explain how the wordplays operate.

Semantic Force of Wordplay

Hosea's initial use of יִזְרְעֶאל "God-will-sow" in 1:4 is punctual and projects God's refinement process of Israel. Its goal is to inform, alert, give hope. It informs the house of Israel that despite the land's promiscuity (Hos 1:2), Yahweh was richly sowing blessing. The setting, provided by 1:1, is the days of Jeroboam II. This is respectively a prosperous era in Israel's history (2 Kgs 14:25–27).[29] The Valley of Jezreel is one of the more fruitful and agriculturally rich territories in Israel, so God's sowing there has thus far been fruitful. While יִזְרְעֶאל evokes memories of a fertile and prosperous place in Israel, it alerts Israel of God's judgment because of her promiscuity against Yahweh (1:2). God's sowing of prosperity will become a sowing of disaster. The paronomasia of יִזְרְעֶאל with "Israel" affirms that God will no longer sow affluence but bring Israel to an ironic militant end from which it began. However, יִזְרְעֶאל projects a hopeful and positive future where God restores Israel to himself (see Hos 2:25).

Hosea 1:6

Wordplay in 1:6 centers on the proper name לֹא רֻחָמָה, often transliterated as the proper name "Lo-ruhamah." This *nomen est omen* is the first of three appearances throughout Hos 1–2

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[29] McKeating, *Hosea*, 1; Wolff, *Hosea*, xxi; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 31; Stuart, *Hosea*, 9; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 23; Macintosh, *Hosea*, lxxxiv; Dearman, *Hosea*, 21–22.

(1:6, 8; 2:25). It is also the second in a series of three *nomina sunt omina* given to Hosea's children (יִזְרְעֶאל, לֹא רֻחָמָה, and לֹא עַמִּי). This section examines the referential punning of לֹא רֻחָמָה as a name and as an announcement and works in paronomasia with the verb רֻחָמָה "she had been pitied" that appears later in the verse.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

The ancient translations show לֹא רֻחָמָה as a proper name with a clear surface meaning. Greek traditions translate the perfect verb form of רחם as a substantival participle, Οὐκ-ἠλεημένη "She who had not been pitied." The participial emphasizes the function of לֹא רֻחָמָה as a proper noun but its translatable grammar indicates its relevant etymology. The Targum translates close to 𝔐, but similar to 𝔊, it uses the relative pronoun דְּ to indicate a proper name with translatable etymology; thus, דְּלָא רְחִימִין "Whom is not beloved."

As with יִזְרְעֶאל above, commentaries either transliterate לֹא רֻחָמָה or translate its etymology. Differences largely center on its semantic domains and efforts to clarify the ambiguity of who does not show the pity, Yahweh or Hosea toward his own child. Harper translates its etymology as a proper noun, "No-pity," and calls it "an independent sentence used as a proper name."[30] Rudolph argues the feminine *Namensträger* should be read as a neuter expression.[31] This may be to avoid forcing Israel, a normally masculine subject, to fit the feminine referent provided by the name. McKeating transliterates לֹא רֻחָמָה with "Lo-ruhamah." He argues the name suggests Hosea does not recognize לֹא רֻחָמָה as his own child and signifies on a national level God's rejection of

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[30] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 212.

[31] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 53.

his people.[32] Similar to Harper, Wolff translates its etymology, "Without-Mercy."[33] He describes the form as a "negated perfect," literally "She finds no mercy," but suggests that its feminine passive verb form is impersonal and so translated, "There is no mercy."[34] Its nominal form, then, yields "Without-Mercy."[35] Andersen and Freedman consider *Lo-ruhamah* wordplay used to evoke Yahweh's grim warning during a theophany with Moses where Yahweh says, "And I will pity those I pity" (Exod 33:19).[36] Jeremias argues the name signals the end of an affection and translates it, "*Ohne-Erbarmen*."[37] He links it to an expression of strong emotion because of its etymology with רֶחֶם "womb."[38] Stuart calls it a "symbolic message-name."[39] He translates the verb form רחם with "She has not been shown compassion," but he translates it nominally as "No Compassion."[40] Stuart argues לֹא רֻחָמָה functions to transition concern from the house of Israel, that is, Jehu's dynasty, to the northern nation as a whole.[41] Hubbard translates the name "Not pitied." Like Jeremias, he sees its meaning enriched by associations with רֶחֶם "womb/lower abdomen." Hubbard argues this connection "connotes deep physical as well as emotional feeling" like parents have with their children (Ps 103:13)."[42] Beeby translates the name, "Not

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[32] McKeating, *Hosea*, 79.

[33] Wolff, *Hosea*, 8.

[34] Wolff, *Hosea*, 20.

[35] Wolff, *Hosea*, 20.

[36] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 192.

[37] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 32.

[38] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 32.

[39] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 30.

[40] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 30.

[41] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 30.

[42] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 70.

pitied."[43] He also connects the verb רחם etymologically to the noun רֶחֶם "womb" because of its association with Hosea's female child. He argues that together they "symbolize the bride of God" and thus her frailty and dependence on him which is now compromised in his denial of pity for her.[44] Garrett transliterates the name with "Lo-Ruhamah" and suggests its meaning is "not loved."[45] He describes the name as "figurative and a subject for popular speculation on a personal level."[46] He suggests the name alerts audiences to an estrangement between Yahweh and the people of Israel. Macintosh also transliterates using "Lo-Ruhamah" but uses a footnote to identify its translated verbal form as a *Pual* perfect, "she is not pitied/loved."[47] He notes its connection to רֶחֶם "womb" to illuminate the pity or love withheld as paternal.[48] Macintosh suggests the name does not imply Hosea did not show his daughter love, but it exemplifies the severe disconnect between Yahweh and his children, Israel. He states that the name makes Hosea's daughter a "living parable of the accelerating decline of the kingdom following the demise of the dynasty of Jehu."[49] Ben Zvi argues לֹא רֻחָמָה evokes both meanings of רֶחֶם, including "womb" and its secondary meaning "rain."[50] He argues the meaning "rain" enhances "the link between people and land and YAHWEH as merciful provider of fertility."[51] Dearman calls לֹא רֻחָמָה "symbolism" and transliterates it with "Lo-ruhamah" followed by a footnote

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[43] Beeby, *Hosea*, 16.

[44] Beeby, *Hosea*, 16.

[45] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 59.

[46] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 59.

[47] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 21.

[48] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 21.

[49] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 21.

[50] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 59. He supports his position with Gary A. Rendsburg's "Hebrew RḤM = 'Raim,'" in *VT* 33 (1983): 357–62.

[51] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 59.

indicating its translated meaning, "No Mercy" or "Not Pitied."[52] He argues the name signifies the reversal of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel as depicted in the Mosaic tradition where Israel exists because of Yahweh's רחם "pity" or "mercy" (Exod 34:6–7).[53]

The dual meanings of לֹא רֻחָמָה results in a variety of translations that prioritize different aspects of the *nomen est omen*. Some transliterate and supply readers with supporting editorial comments to explain its etymology (NASB, ASV, KJV, NIV). Others translate the etymology and reproduce it as a proper name (ESV). Still others supply both transliteration and etymology (CJB, NLT, NET), giving priority to one or the other.

The variety of translations and interpretations stem from two wordplays operating closely together: the dual meanings of לֹא רֻחָמָה and its paronomasia with the following verb רחם "to pity." A closer look at the grammar of לֹא רֻחָמָה suggests the need to translate the form in order to inform audiences of the judgment the *nomen est omen* levels on original audiences. The *nomen est omen* is a negated *Pual* perfect.[54] The perfect aspect often depicts a past or completed action, but in particular contexts such as prophetic voice, the perfect can describe present-time and future situations.[55] The following verb רחם "to pity" is a *Piel* imperfect that indicates a future action—Yahweh will no longer pity. Since both verb forms are in paronomasia, then the definite verb should set the time aspect for רֻחָמָה; thus, future.[56] The *nomen est omen* is an announcement telling of what is to come. I propose rendering the name's verbal aspect as a prophetic perfect

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[52] Dearman, *Hosea*, 89 and 96.

[53] Dearman, *Hosea*, 97.

[54] Andersen and Freedman note how the verb form רֻחָמָה is not used elsewhere and suggest the possibility that it is invented for the present narrative. This invention is possible, but its grammar remains intelligible and in the present case needs further review.

[55] Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 486–93.

[56] Contra Wolff who renders רֻחָמָה in the present "There is no mercy."

"she will not have been pitied" to reflect a situation extending from the present into the future.[57]

The *nomen est omen*, therefore, evokes the pitilessness with which Yahweh's judgment is foretold to happen against Israel.

The second form of wordplay in Hos 1:6 is paronomasia, which happens between לֹא רֻחָמָה and the following verb that shares the same root רחם "to pity." Although the repetition is remarkably close, clear distinctions happen in the grammar associated with them. The first is the expanded negation of the second verb (לֹא רֻחָמָה vs לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד אֲרַחֵם). The second is that לֹא רֻחָמָה signifies a proper name where רחם signifies action.[58] The paronomasia clarifies ambiguity set forth in the subject of לֹא רֻחָמָה. Yahweh will no longer pity the house of Israel like a loving father who comes to a point in his parenthood where he can no longer pity his daughter's waywardness. Israel is left to her own demise apart from the provision and guidance of her true guardian, Yahweh. In the same way, the tragedy of לֹא רֻחָמָה is intensified and understood more clearly in the model of Yahweh's pitilessness with Israel. Her reception of pity from her guardian is emphatically finished. She embodies a waywardness so intense that her father is no longer bound to the vows she binds for herself. She is left to her own demise.

The link between לֹא רֻחָמָה and רחם is reflected in most translations that are not restricted to transliterations. Translations that render both with the same semantics inform audiences of the connection between the two. However, I suggest translating לֹא רֻחָמָה as a proper name using the verbal aspect of a Pual future perfect to depict Yahweh's future ceasing to pity Israel; thus, "Call her name Won't-be-pitied, for I will no longer pity the house of Israel." I choose not to use the

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[57] Andersen and Freedman suggest that "since names can be ominous, it is possible that this one does not describe an accomplished fact, but announces a destiny—'Let her not be pitied.'" *Hosea*, 188. This is not uncommon in prophetic address. On the suffixed form implying a future perfect see Waltke and O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, §30.5.2 (p. 491).

[58] For the use of לֹא in compounds as proper names, see Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2006), 478.

full expression "she will not have been pitied" because of its awkward length for a proper name. Nothing is particularly gained by indicating in translation the feminine referent "she" to represent what is already known as Hosea's daughter. "Won't-be-pitied" follows the terseness of the other *nomina sunt omina* and preserves the factitive and persistent perfective form of the Pual. This translation captures the double meaning as a proper name and as an announcement, and it preserves the paronomasia that naturally forms with רחם. The translation is literal and requires no structural alterations, which makes it optimal for canonical use in addition to more dynamic translations and commentaries. If יִזְרְעֶאל is translated "God-will-sow" rather than "Jezreel," then "Won't-be-pitied" naturally follows suit to establish the prophet's pattern of using the etymology of names to make statements about Yahweh's indictment and judgment of Israel.

Semantic Force of Wordplay

"Won't-be-pitied" is strategically terse to hit its audience bluntly. This terseness is accented by its juxtaposition with the more expanded negative כִּי clause using a similar composition, כִּי לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד אֲרַחֵם. The expanded form draws out emphatically that Yahweh's pity will indeed cease to exist. As Harper, Hubbard, Macintosh, and others observe, Ps 103:13 supports how Yahweh's pity in Hos 1:6 describes the kind of mercy a father gives to his children. The prophet uses לֹא רֻחָמָה to show Yahweh as a father who is finished with his daughter's transgressions and abandons his pity for her. Psalm 103:3 provides additional verbiage that may link Hosea's familial father-daughter context to Num 30:4–16, which explains the duty of a father and husband to shoulder the responsibility of his daughter's or wife's

obligation to her vows.[59] The Psalm speaks of Yahweh as one who סלח "pardons" or "forgives" all עָוֹן "iniquity." Similarly, Yahweh is said to סלח "pardon" a daughter's or wife's obligation to a vow should her father or husband nullify it (Num 30:6 and 13). In addition, Yahweh states at the end of Hos 1:6 כִּי־נָשֹׂא אֶשָּׂא לָהֶם "that I should ever forgive them." This clause is debated, but most agree that נשׂא evokes the meaning "pardon" or "forgive" where Yahweh announces he will no longer pardon Israel's iniquity.[60] This same phraseology is used in the context of Num 30:14–16 which says if the husband says nothing to his wife (or father to his daughter) regarding her vows and obligations then he confirms them, but if he annuls them then he shall נָשָׂא אֶת־עֲוֹנָהּ "bear her iniquity." Yahweh has essentially been nullifying Israel's abominable vows and נָשָׂא "bearing" or "pardoning" her iniquity but he is no longer interested in continuing to do so.

The wordplay is, therefore, striking judgment. Israel is a wayward daughter who has for some time now been sustained only by the רחם "pity" of her father who is no longer willing to נשׂא "bear" her iniquity. Yahweh's judgment will come in the form of withholding his pity. Such judgment is designed to strike fear in audiences who realize the *nomen est omen* marks an impending bleak state of Israel.

Hosea 1:9

The focal point of wordplay in 1:9 is on the *nomina sunt omina* לֹא עַמִּי and לֹא־אֶהְיֶה. This is the first of three appearances of לֹא עַמִּי throughout Hos 1–2 (1:9; 2:1, 25) and third in a series of three *nomina sunt omina* given to Hosea's children (יִזְרְעֶאל, לֹא רֻחָמָה, and לֹא עַמִּי). Context evokes multiple meanings that spring from this referential pun, one of them deriving from its

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[59] Beeby discusses the *nomen est omen* imagery as evoking Israel as Yahweh's bride. *Hosea*, 16.

[60] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 194; Dearman, *Hosea*, 96–97; contra Wolff who suggests it reflects the idea "withdrawing" or "carrying away." For review of the debate see McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 79; Wolff, *Hosea*, 8–9 §f; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 31; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 60–62; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 21–22.

paronomasia with the repeated expression לֹא עַמִּי, literally "not my people," that shortly follows. The expression לֹא־אֶהְיֶה is in parallelism with לֹא עַמִּי and appears only here throughout Hosea's extended household metaphor (Hos 1-3). Its infrequency of use is notable when לֹא רֻחָמָה, יִזְרְעֶאל, and לֹא עַמִּי are given reversals in subsequent restoration imagery. With the exception of אֱלֹהֵיהֶם "their God" in 1:7, the name used for Hosea's God is יהוה "Yahweh." This section illuminates the referential punning of לֹא עַמִּי and לֹא־אֶהְיֶה and discusses the impact of their use in parallelism with each other. Consideration is given to the grammatical and phonetic relatedness of לֹא־אֶהְיֶה to the name of Yahweh.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

The following history of translation traces how sources handle the expressions לֹא עַמִּי and וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם. Most sources understand לֹא עַמִּי as a proper name but render it variously between transliterating, translating its etymology, or some combination of both depending on which meaning they choose to emphasize. A large amount of variation revolves around וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם, literally "I am not to you."

Ancient translations render לֹא עַמִּי similarly. Greek traditions translate לֹא עַמִּי literally with Οὐ-λαός-μου "Not-my-people." *Septuaginta* editors recognize לֹא עַמִּי as a proper name and indicate it through capitalization and hyphens. The Targum also translates לֹא עַמִּי literally with לָא עַמִּי "Not-my-people." Ancient translations, however, divide over how to render וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם. 𝔊 translates וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם literally with καὶ ἐγὼ οὔκ εἰμι ὑμῶν "And I, I am not yours." *Septuaginta* editors, however, do not reproduce it as a proper name but rather as continued discourse, which reflects other ancient sources that perceive לָכֶם as an incomplete ending to the verse. σ′, for example, changes the ending to οὐδὲ ἐγὼ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑμεῖς λαός μου "I will not be to you for you are not my people." The Targum finishes לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם with לָא הֲוָה

בְסַעְדְכוֹן "I will not come to your aid." The BHS emendation finishes לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם even more

differently with לֹא־אֱלֹהֵיכֶם "not your God."[61]

Canonical translations and more recent commentators either reproduce the transliteration or

translated etymology of לֹא עַמִּי. Most discrepancies are seen in how they render וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם.

Ibn Ezra transliterates the child's name with "Loammi" and argues its meaning reflects how the

exiled tribes never came back to their land and so begot children in exile. He argues לֹא־אֶהְיֶה is a

shorthand expression, "I will not be" and God is nowhere mentioned because of his great anger.[62]

Harper translates לֹא עַמִּי literally and writes it in the form of a proper name using capitalization

and hyphens, "Not-my-people."[63] He accepts the BHS emendation for לֹא־אֶהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם "I am not

your God."[64] Rudolph translates the etymology of לֹא עַמִּי "*Nicht-mein-Volk*" to communicate its

use as a proper name and its message of reversal of the *Erwählungsformel* that Israel assumes is

ever-present.[65] Rudolph identifies the expression לֹא־אֶהְיֶה as in parallelism with the לֹא עַמִּי from

the same כִּי clause and translates it as a verbal expression, "*ich bin nicht für euch da*."[66] Buss

translates the etymology of לֹא עַמִּי as a proper noun, "Not-my-people," but like Rudolph, he

translates לֹא־אֶהְיֶה as a statement reflecting Yahweh's rejection, "I am not for you."[67] McKeating

transliterates לֹא עַמִּי "Lo-ammi" and inserts a footnote to provide its translation, "Not my

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[61] Davies recognizes this emendation proposal by Wellhausen as an attempt to complete Hosea's words as a negation of the "covenant-making formula." Davies, *Hosea*, 59.

[62] Abe Lipshitz, *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, trans. Abe Lipshitz (New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1988), 22.

[63] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 213. See also *Septuaginta*.

[64] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 213.

[65] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 54.

[66] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 37 and 54–55.

[67] Martin J. Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea: A Morphological Study* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1969), 7.

people."[68] He accepts the BHS suggestion for לֹא־אֶהְיֶה and translates it "I will not be your God."[69] Wolff argues the child's name appears twice, the second time appearing in the following כִּי clause. He translates both, "Not-My-People."[70] Wolff likens לֹא־אֶהְיֶה to the proper name given Yahweh in Exod 3:14 and suggests it functions as a predicate noun that parallels "not my people."[71] He translates with a combination of Yahweh's name in Exod 3:14 and the literal/verbal expression; thus, "I-I-Am-Not-There."[72] Andersen and Freedman transliterate the child's name "Lo-ammi" and supply a footnote to clarify its meaning as "Not my people."[73] This, however, does not reflect their position that לֹא עַמִּי is a "suffixation of the noun compound *lō'-'ām*," that is, "my not-people" portrayed in Deut 32:21.[74] Like Wolff, they perceive אֶהְיֶה as a proper name that links to Yahweh's name in Exod 3:14. Unlike Wolff, however, they recognize only the verb אֶהְיֶה as comprising the proper name, and they transliterate it "Ehyeh"; thus, "I am not Ehyeh to you."[75] They supply this transliteration with a footnote explaining its translated meaning as the first-person form of *hāyâ* "to be, become."[76] Jeremias translates the child's name "Nicht-mein-Volk." Similar to Andersen and Freedman, he also understands אֶהְיֶה as the proper name form for Yahweh; however, instead of transliterating, Jeremias translates the expression with "*Ich bin*"; thus, "*Ich bin nicht ‚Ich bin' für euch.*"[77] Stuart translates the לֹא עַמִּי with "Not My

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68 McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 75.

69 McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 75.

70 Wolff, *Hosea*, 9.

71 Wolff, *Hosea*, 21.

72 Wolff, *Hosea*, 9 and 21.

73 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 143.

74 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198.

75 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198.

76 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 143.

77 Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 25 and 33.

People."[78] He argues the whole expression לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם proposes a new name for Yahweh because the *maqqeph* connects לֹא with אֶהְיֶה, and the possessive pronoun לָכֶם is in parallelism with the pronominal suffix יִ◌ from עַמִּי in the previous line. Stuart combines translation and transliteration to reproduce Yahweh's new name as "Not Your Ahyeh."[79] Hubbard translates לֹא עַמִּי with "Not my people" and אֶהְיֶה with "I am" or "I will be" to reflect the name of Yahweh announced in Exod 3:14.[80] Like Stuart, he reads לֹא independently from the proper name and transliterates אֶהְיֶה "*Ehyeh*."[81] Beeby translates לֹא עַמִּי with "Not my people" and accepts the BHS emendation to render לֹא־אֶהְיֶה as the verbal expression, "I am not your God."[82] He still, however, links it back to Yahweh's name announced in Exod 3:14. Davies translates לֹא עַמִּי "Not my people" and supplies his readers with its transliteration. He discards the BHS emendation for וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם and translates the expression more literally, "and I will not be on your side."[83] Davies argues the exclusion of "your God" may be "deliberate; while Israel loses her uniqueness, Yahweh does not lose his."[84] He calls the identification of אֶהְיֶה "I am" as an "ingenious" allusion to Exod 3:14 and probable based on the Elohist writing the Exodus tradition shortly before Hosea was written.[85] Garrett translates לֹא עַמִּי "Not my people" and argues the reference of אֶהְיֶה to Exod 3:14 is possible but unlikely because "the text nowhere else makes reference to the name 'I AM' or to

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[78] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 23 and 32–33.

[79] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 33–34.

[80] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 72.

[81] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 72.

[82] Beeby, *Hosea*, 17.

[83] Davies, *Hosea*, 59.

[84] Davies, *Hosea*, 59.

[85] Davies, *Hosea*, 59–60.

the burning bush episode."[86] Furthermore, the clause לֹא־אֶהְיֶה is normal Hebrew grammar where

the ordinary Hebrew reader would take אֶהְיֶה in its ordinary sense as a verb. He also states how

the absence of a predicate such as "your God" is not surprising since Hosea omits such terms

with shorthand writing. Finally, the translation "I am not yours" remains ambiguous enough to

evoke God's relationship to Israel and Hosea's estrangement from his own family.[87] For these

reasons, he favors not translating לֹא־אֶהְיֶה as a proper name for Yahweh but in its more ordinary

sense, "I am not your God," where "God" is simply omitted for the sake of short-hand.[88]

Macintosh transliterates לֹא עַמִּי "Lo-Ammi" but still considers אֶהְיֶה as Yahweh's name harkening

back to Exod 3:14.[89] Dearman also transliterates לֹא עַמִּי "Lo-ammi" and considers its parallelism

with לֹא־אֶהְיֶה "Lo-ehyeh" as paronomasia that cancels Israel's relationship with Yahweh that was

predicated on the Sinai/Horeb covenant.[90] He uses footnotes to provide etymologies for both

names. Ben Zvi translates לֹא עַמִּי "Not-my people"[91] and calls the expression וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם "a

well-crafted construction meant to allow a double reading."[92] He argues it connotes the meaning

"I am not your God" and evokes the name אֶהְיֶה mentioned in Exod 3:14.[93]

Canonical translations are also split between translating and transliterating לֹא עַמִּי. Those

that transliterate use some variant of *Lo-ammi* (KJV, ASV, NAS, NIV). Transliterations are

usually followed by a footnote that provides the translated meaning "not my people." Sources

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[86] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 70.

[87] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 70 fn. 93.

[88] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 70. See also Rudolph who argues its reference to Exod 3:14 is doubtful until it is proven certain Exod 3:14 is a primary text used by Hosea. *Hosea*, 54.

[89] Macintosh, *Hosea*, xciv, 27.

[90] Dearman, *Hosea*, 99.

[91] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 45.

[92] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 49.

[93] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 49.

that translate the etymology of לֹא עַמִּי try to present it in the form of a proper name using hyphens

or capitalization, usually with some variant of "Not-my-people" (ESV and RSV; see also 𝔊).

Other translations provide לֹא עַמִּי with both transliteration and translation (NET). With regard to

the phrase לֹא־אֶהְיֶה, most canonical translations accept the BHS emendation and render it as a

declaration, usually "I am not your God" (KJV, ASV, ESV, NASB, NET, NIV). No canonical

translations render it as a proper noun.

The history of translation for לֹא עַמִּי shows that translators emphasize the proper name of

the boy with its etymology. Andersen and Freedman alert us to an important referent for לֹא עַמִּי

that comes by way of the לֹא־עָם "not people" from the Song of Moses (Deut 32:21). This

appearance is the only other time לֹא־עָם appears in the Old Testament, but it happens at a crucial

point in the song when the Israelites make אֱלֹהִים "God" jealous with what is לֹא־אֵל "not-god"

(compare with לֹא־אֶהְיֶה). Its parallel line continues with indictment, where אֱלֹהִים will, in turn,

make the people jealous with those who are לֹא־עָם "not people," who are clarified as a גוֹי נָבָל

"foolish nation." Andersen and Freedman argue that Hosea appropriates this language reflected

by the song in 1:9 to describe Yahweh's judgment against Israel's apostasy. If the prophet links

לֹא עַמִּי to the בְּלֹא־עָם "not-people" of Deut 32:21, then Hosea projects Israel as having become

Yahweh's not-people over whom Yahweh still has ownership, but they are no better than the

pagan, foolish nations.[94] The paronomasia between לֹא עַמִּי "not my people" in the second clause

and the *nomen est omen* לֹא עַמִּי reinforces the sobering idea that Israel is not only not Yahweh's

people anymore, but it has become Yahweh's not-people.[95]

The history of translation for the expression וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם is split between rendering it

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[94] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198. Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 88–89.

[95] Both expressions use the same construction, לֹא עַמִּי, which can be seen as repetition, but the לֹא עַמִּי in the first clause functions as a proper name that creates different meanings; I consider it paronomasia.

as a verbal expression similar to "and I am not your [God]" and rendering it nominally as a proper name. The two major arguments include those who see its phraseology directly linked to covenantal traditions (Lev 26:12; 2 Sam 7:14; Exod 6:6–7) and Yahweh's announced name to Moses (Exod 3:14) and those who find such links improbable and give priority to its verbal expression. Still others understand the phrase to have double meaning comprising of verbal and nominal expressions.

The ambiguity produced by וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם encourages audiences to explore a variety of possibilities. The expression as a proper name is justified in its appearance in succession with two other proper names beginning with לֹא (לֹא רֻחָמָה *Lo-ruhamah* and לֹא עַמִּי *Lo-ammi*) of which the second name (לֹא עַמִּי) appears in parallelism with לֹא־אֶהְיֶה.[96] Furthermore, context does not discourage audiences to recall Yahweh's name as it was given to Moses in Exod 3:14 since the text explicitly states in 1:2 that the land (Israel) was promiscuous before יְהוָה "Yahweh." Audiences can sensibly conclude that Yahweh reacts to Israel's apostasy as no longer being the אֶהְיֶה "Yahweh" predicated on the origins he founded Israel through Moses. The phrase לֹא־אֶהְיֶה naturally continues Hosea's method of using *nomina sunt omina* to communicate Yahweh's judgment against Israel: *Jezreel*, *Lo-ruhamah*, and *Lo-ammi*. If the expression conjures the name given to Moses in Exod 3:14 and the covenantal traditions sprung from its origins, then the name's negation communicates a reversal of Yahweh's presence and consequently the revoking of covenants established in the name.

A translation that captures the polysemy of both *nomina sunt omina* in Hos 1:9 should try to reflect both the expressions' use as a proper name and its etymology. I prioritize the nominal

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[96] Stuart notices the Hebrew word order of the second and third colons are completely parallel (Connective—pronoun—negative—noun—possessive) which consequently puts the proper name *Lo-ammi* in direct parallelism with לֹא־אֶהְיֶה inviting audiences to view it as a proper name. *Hosea*, 33.

expression of both לֹא עַמִּי and לֹא־אֶהְיֶה because of the parallelism between the second and third colons and Hosea's patterned use of *nomina sunt omina* to drive the meaning of Yahweh's announcements. I do not include לָכֶם nor the ◌ִי on עַמִּי as a part of the name since both communicate independent referents. I suggest translating both etymologies in the form of a proper name to indicate their initial referent as person. I propose the following translation for Hos 1:9: וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא שְׁמוֹ לֹא עַמִּי כִּי אַתֶּם לֹא עַמִּי וְאָנֹכִי לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם "And he said, 'Call his name My-not-people; For you are my not-people; And I am Not-I-Am to you.'"

This translation is literal and consequently readable to the average audience; however, there are significant amounts of theological and historical backgrounds required to fully understand how these names communicate their polysemy. Audiences need guidance to connect My-not-people to Moses's Song in Deut 32:21 and Not-I-Am to the "I Am" of Exod 3:14. This literal translation captures additional nuances of more cryptic polysemy, but its syntax is obscure. The arrangement "not-people" is uncommon and obscure. For this reason, this translation should be relegated to study Bibles or commentaries that can explain the fuller meaning communicated by these semantically loaded *nomina sunt omina*.

A more suitable canonical translation can continue translating לֹא עַמִּי with the more normal etymology "Not my people," but should include לֹא־אֶהְיֶה as a part of Hosea's list of *nomina sunt omina*. One may translate Hos 1:9, "And he said, 'Call his name Not-my-people for you are not my people, and I am Not-I-AM to you.' The use of "Not-I-AM" can, at least, trigger for many readers a connection to Exod 3:14.

Semantic Force of Wordplay

Hosea's referential punning and paronomasia with לֹא עַמִּי builds on the identity of "My people" as a privileged status given by אֱלֹהִים "God" to his people when he spoke with Moses

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about going before the Pharaoh and leading them out of Egypt. Yahweh refers to them twice as עַמִּי "my people" (Exod 3:7, 10). As Andersen and Freedman note, "the climax of covenant-making" also contains a related promise. Exodus 6:7 says, "I will take you for myself as a people and I will belong to you as God." Similarly, Lev 26:12 states, "I will belong to you as God, and you will belong to me as a people."[97] The extent to which Hosea's audience perceived themselves as Yahweh's people or perceived Yahweh as their God is unclear. Hosea alludes to a degree of syncretism that questions whether worship of Yahweh is completely absent or if such worship is tainted by or substituted with forms of Baalism.[98] Israel offered sacrifices to the Baals (2:15), they consulted idols (4:12), and in the day of restoration Hosea projects Israel no longer calling Yahweh "Baal" (2:18). Whatever the syncretism or substitution from Yahwistic worship to Baalism, Yahweh is ready to undo the covenanted relationship. Hosea, in part, accomplishes this undoing with the third *nomen est omen* לֹא עַמִּי.

The prophet pronounced to his audience a pitiless judgment to come from Yahweh through the *nomen est omen* לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied." Their third *nomen est omen* gives the reason why. The polysemantic pun לֹא עַמִּי "My-not-people" alerts audiences they are no longer Yahweh's people. Either Israel has rejected Yahweh for the culture of the Baals or Yahweh rejects the people because they worship the Baals or worship him like those who worship the Baals. Said another way, either they no longer see themselves as Yahweh's people or Yahweh no longer sees them as his people. This wordplay's ambiguity likely evokes both. "My-not-people" drives audiences to look introspectively on their manner of worship.

The final *nomen est omen*, Not-I-AM, destroys any remaining notion of Yahwehism in

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[97] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198.

[98] John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 23–24.

Israel. Again, the declaration in this name is unclear whether Yahweh is no longer I-AM because the people do not recognize him as I-AM or he retracts his presence as I-AM because of their apostasy. The ambiguity is likely deliberate to evoke both. Not-I-AM reminds audiences of Yahweh's covenant with Israel when אֱלֹהִים "God" became אֶהְיֶה "I AM" to his people and invites audiences to compare and contrast Yahweh's redemptive and protective presence with his destructive absence. I AM delivered their fathers of antiquity from slavery out of Egypt, but Not-I-AM will sow pitiless judgment against them. Audiences are, therefore, challenged to assess their citizenship with Yahweh. They have just been denaturalized from belonging to his people and fallen out of whatever covenant with him they may or may not have felt was intact or operative.[99]

Hosea 2:2

Hosea 2:2 contains the second of three occurrences of יִזְרְעֶאל in Hos 1–2 (1:4; 2:2, 24). The first occurrence in 1:4 emphasizes the name's etymology, "God will sow," and speaks to Yahweh's having blessed Israel, but because of Israel's apostasy, Yahweh will now sow judgment against it. *Jezreel* in 1:4 also creates paronomasia with *Israel* to extend the identity of Jezreel to the house of Israel (1:4). This section examines how the prophet continues the referential punning of יִזְרְעֶאל to alert audiences to the complete cycle of God's sowing from judgment to restoration.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

Greek traditions, commentators, and canonical translations unanimously translate יִזְרְעֶאל as

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[99] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198.

the proper name *Jezreel*, much like is done in 1:4.[100] Differences arise with regard to understanding its various roles in the text. Ibn Ezra interprets the name as a rebuke. He argues the name refers to the day projected in 1:4 when Yahweh visits the house of Israel's iniquity like the bloodshed of Jehu in Jezreel. On that day Judah and Israel will be gathered under one king, Sennacherib.[101] Harper argues the name is given a new meaning of glorious "sowing." He states, "[T]he writer evidently described the day of Yahweh, the time when punishment was to be meted out to Israel's foes and blessings showered upon Israel herself."[102] Rudolph also reads the name as a transformation from a curse to a blessing.[103] McKeating suggests it may refer to the literal place but understands it as a day of reconciliation.[104] Wolff argues the name "first reminds us of its etymology: 'God sows.'"[105] The sowing he perceives is "a rich 'sprouting up' in the land," which refers to deportees returning back to the land. He also perceives the name soliciting its historical and geographical connotations where a certain battle of liberation will take place.[106] Andersen and Freedman translate יִזְרְעֶאל as a vocative; thus, "How great is the day, O Jezreel."[107] They argue the traditional translation "day of Jezreel" implies a time of judgment, but this interpretation "clashes with the tenor of 2:1–3."[108] Rather, יִזְרְעֶאל is the recipient of the

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[100] The Targum writes כְּגֵשֵׁהוֹן "their gatherings" in place of יִזְרְעֶאל "Jezreel." This may be due to the tendency for translators of the prophets to use realistic substitutions for metaphors of which "Jezreel" was likely deemed "metaphorical" for its parallel verb כגש at the beginning of the verse. Alberdina Houtman and Johannes C. de Moor, "Introduction: Additions and Corrections," in *A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets* 21 (Indices: Leiden, 2005), 8.

[101] Lipshitz, *Hosea*, 27.

[102] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 247.

[103] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 58.

[104] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 80.

[105] Wolff, *Hosea*, 28.

[106] Wolff, *Hosea*, 28.

[107] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 143 and 209–10.

[108] Andersen and Freedman, 210.

announcement, "great is the day," but the יוֹם "day" is Yahweh's. They argue that similar to the reversals of the other sibling names, so restoration and renewal spawns in the actual meaning of יִזְרְעֶאל "Let God sow."[109] Jeremias suggests יִזְרְעֶאל refers to the place but argues it is unclear regarding which of its many associations are in the foreground including its etymology "God sows" (people in a land), its announcement of a return from exile and the promise of increase, a new and rebuilt empire unlike the failed monarchy, or a liberation battle against the enemy.[110] Stuart argues יִזְרְעֶאל "is a day of eschatological deliverance from the covenant curses of national death and deportation."[111] He suggests the name is a "paradigm or symbol" for Israel as a whole that is "fraught with emotive overtones" that will this time establish a positive memory.[112] Hubbard follows Andersen's translation of יִזְרְעֶאל as vocative. He argues it heightens the announcement's climax and prepares for the direct addresses of the brothers and sisters that follow.[113] Hubbard calls the use of יִזְרְעֶאל deliberately ambiguous to evoke God's judgment of scattering (1:4) and sowing in restoration. He suggests there may be a slight allusion to its geographical sense but its etymology is more in focus and creates "pun-like similarity to the word Israel."[114] Davies argues the location and history of יִזְרְעֶאל is possible but "probably introduced here for the sake of its etymology, 'God sows/has sown.'"[115] Garrett focuses on the etymology of יִזְרְעֶאל as "God sows" and connects it with the metaphor וְעָלוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ "and they will go up from the land." He suggests it reflects the imagery of a unified Israel populating like plants

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[109] Andersen and Freedman, 210.

[110] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 35–36.

[111] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 39–40.

[112] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 39–40.

[113] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 75–76.

[114] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 76.

[115] Davies, *Hosea*, 63.

growing up from the earth.[116] Macintosh writes of יִזְרְעֶאל appearing here as moving from Yahweh's judgment and punishment (1:4) to Yahweh as "the author of the blessing of fertility and growth associated initially with the geographical area but now transferred metaphorically to the covenant people."[117] Ben Zvi talks about both appearances of יִזְרְעֶאל in 1:4 and 2:2 as "contrasting inclusio used to shift the text from punishment to redemption.[118] He states the name bears implications for God's sowing in terms of scattering into exile and sowing into restoration through population and agrarian produce. Ben Zvi adds that יִזְרְעֶאל as the name of Hosea's child and the name of a city and valley "connotes a sense of association between the children who stand for the people and the land."[119] Dearman notes how the יִזְרְעֶאל reverses the יִזְרְעֶאל of 1:4 and plays on its positive significance.[120] He adds that "Jezreel" represents Israel to suggest that its meaning evokes "Great will be the day of Israel."[121]

Should all these meanings be operative, יִזְרְעֶאל shoulders a heavy load. The term is understood to evoke rebuke, its etymology conveying reversal of judgment to restoration, eschatological deliverance by means of return from exile, the promise of increase, a new monarchy, a battle of liberation, metaphorical imagery of the people growing up from the land, and the nation Israel. This multivalence evidences יִזְרְעֶאל as a polysemantic pun, but its grammar and context help to establish which meanings are in focus. Although restoration is the pulse of 2:1–3, I hesitate to include the meaning of militant deliverance since the passage beginning in

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[116] Garrett, *Hosea*, 72–73.

[117] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 37.

[118] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 46.

[119] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 47.

[120] Dearman, *Hosea*, 106.

[121] Dearman, *Hosea*, 100.

2:1 incites union and gathering, not a battle of liberation (see Isa 9:3 "the day of Midian"). Also, Assyrian exile is not explicitly provided in the text nor can we conclude with any certainty that the historical setting of this oracle is after 733 when Tiglath-pileser III subjugated a large part of the Northern Kingdom and before 722/721 when Samaria collapses.[122] Additionally, the idea of a new and restored monarchy is not clearly evident. The use of רֹאשׁ "head" or "leader" instead of מֶלֶךְ "king" could harken back to pre-monarchal times.[123]

Andersen and Hubbard note how יִזְרְעֶאל is a vocative that reflects the restorative theme permeating throughout 2:1–3 and begins the series of reversals given to the names of Hosea's children provided in Hos 1. As a result, יִזְרְעֶאל harkens back to its etymology "God will sow" depicted in 1:4 as the scattering of Israel, but to highlight the future restorative side of God's sowing (יִזְרְעֶאל) to cultivate Israel. This reversal is supported by preceding reversal happening with לֹא־עַמִּי "my not-people" becoming בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי "children of the living God" (2:1) and the children of Israel uniting with the children of Judah (2:2).

At the root of every meaning of יִזְרְעֶאל is the etymology "God will sow." For this reason and its link to the יִזְרְעֶאל in 1:4, I suggest translating יִזְרְעֶאל the same as in 1:4. I reproduce its etymology in the form of a proper name using hyphens and capitalization and then follow it with its transliteration in parentheses; thus, "Great is the day, O God-will-sow (Jezreel)." Priority is given to the etymology connecting audiences to its appearance in 1:4 and establishing a fuller picture of God's sowing as judgment with the purpose of restoring. Following the etymology with transliteration helps audiences conjure the geographical location, Jezreel, from Hos 1:4 and its parallel with *Israel* to illuminate a new Israel formed from God's sowing. This translation is

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[122] Contra Macintosh, *Hosea*, 35.

[123] Wolff, *Hosea*, 27; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 208; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 39; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 72; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 36; Dearman, *Hosea*, 105. Contra Hos 3:5.

sensible to canonical readers and offers no additional distortion of semantic meaning than current canonical translations that only provide the transliteration, "Jezreel." Study Bibles and commentaries, however, are helpful to explain the vast theological and historical backgrounds that contribute to the fuller meanings of יִזְרְעֶאל.

Semantic Force of Wordplay

The second appearance of יִזְרְעֶאל gives audiences hope of a restored Israel. It champions a new day and the completion of Yahweh's sowing. The last time audiences heard יִזְרְעֶאל it delineated Yahweh's pitiless judgment on the house of Israel (1:4). יִזְרְעֶאל was the place of Jehu's massacre and consequently the place where Yahweh was going to break Israel's bow in a similar way. God's sowing was punitive and destructive. Audiences were driven to feel guilt for their apostasy, fear for Yahweh's judgment, and anxiety for the time when his blessings and their prosperity ended. No redemption was foreseen. The indictment, "God-will-sow," was determined. Yahweh's sowing, however, is not complete until Israel and Judah reunify. Audiences are, therefore, encouraged to reassess their loyalties with respect to Yahweh's new order. They are to humble themselves and submit to an impending judgment while looking beyond their generation to see the invasive reconstruction Yahweh will do to not only reunify his people but return order to their apostasy.

<center>Hosea 2:3</center>

After denaturalizing Israel with the duel meaning of לֹא עַמִּי "My-not-people" in 1:9, the prophet projects hope for naturalization in 2:3 with the two referential puns, עַמִּי "my people" and רֻחָמָה "she has been pitied." This hope begins in 2:1 with בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי "children of the living God" who are to announce עַמִּי "my people" to their brothers and רֻחָמָה "she will be pitied" to their

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sisters.[124] Hosea provides no time frame for when this will happen. The only grammar separating complete denaturalization and re-naturalization is the *waw* of וְהָיָה in 2:1, which most translate disjunctively as "yet" to reflect the contrasting images. This section investigates how עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה evoke the paronomasia of 1:6 and 9 when Israel was called לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied" and לֹא־עַמִּי "My-not-people." It will use this link to contrast the time when Israel was denaturalized from Yahweh (1:9) with her newly projected citizenship as בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי "children of the living God" (2:1).

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

Ancient translations consistently preserve 𝔐 terminology with עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה but differ in how closely they link to the proper names presented in Hos 1. 𝔊 translates the etymology of עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה, and the *Septuaginta* editors reproduce both expressions as proper names (Λαός-μου "My-people" and Ἠλεημένη "She who has been shown pity"). The Targum does not reproduce עַמִּי or רֻחָמָה as proper names but incorporates them as part of the fuller expression, עַמִּי תֻּובוּ לְאוֹרָיְתִי וְעַל כְּנֵישָׁתְכוֹן אֲרַחֵם, "O' my people, return to my law and I will love your gatherings/synagogues."

Commentators are also divided as to whether עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה reinvent the proper names of Hos 1 or just continue discourse. Ibn Ezra transliterates עַמִּי as discourse ʿ*ammi* but reproduces its

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[124] For a concise history of referents given to the second person imperative, see Davies, *Hosea*, 63. Mays, Stuart, and Davies contrast with BH³ (which emends אָמְרוּ to the singular, likely to reflect Jezreel as the addressee; See RSV) to suggest the referent is the future restored community of Israel and Judah who pronounce these new titles to one another, i.e., their brothers and sisters. I suggest the text specifies this community in 2:2 as the בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי "children of the living God." BH³ also emends אֲחֵיכֶם "brothers" and אַחוֹתֵיכֶם "sisters" to the singular by transferring the "ם" to the front of both עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה. This is likely to reflect 𝔊 (contra Aquila which keeps "sisters" plural, ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς) or harmonize the announcements with the singular use of the names in Hos 1. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 212. The emendation is unnecessary since the renaming and name reversals establish something new that incorporates not just Israel but also Judah. Keeping the plurals is therefore paramount in communicating a restoration, not reflecting Israel's isolated state in the past but a newly gathered state with Judah.

etymology as a proper name in a parenthetical note, "that is My people."[125] Harper translates עַמִּי

and רֻחָמָה as discourse; thus, "my people" and "compassionated." He considers them

announcements that people in the restored nation declared to one another.[126] Rudolph translates

the etymology of both in the form of proper names. He translates עַמִּי literally with "Mein Volk"

and רֻחָמָה dynamically with "Versorgt." He, however, maintains its form using a verb, unlike

Jeremias who translates more literally but uses a noun, "Erbarmen.""[127] Rudolph's translations

reflect the semantics he uses of the children's names in Hos 1. Like Rudolph, Buss translates

their etymology in the form of proper nouns, "My-people" and "Pitied."[128] His semantics are also

consistent with the *nomina sunt omina* of Hos 1. Like Harper, McKeating translates עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה

as discourse that reflects Israel acknowledging Judah into their nation. As a result, he adds a

second person pronoun as an addressee to each announcement; thus, עַמִּי "*You* are my people"

and רֻחָמָה "*You* are loved" (see ESV).[129] Wolff translates the etymology of עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה in the

form of a proper noun: עַמִּי "My-People" and רֻחָמָה "Mercy."[130] He argues they are signs of the

new covenant with which Judah and Israel are to address each other.[131] Andersen and Freedman

transliterate עַמִּי with "Ammi" and רֻחָמָה with "Ruhama."[132] Jeremias, like Rudolph, translates the

etymology of both. He translates עַמִּי with "Mein Volk," but unlike Rudolph he translates רֻחָמָה

nominally with "Erbarmen." Stuart translates the etymology of עַמִּי with "My People" and רֻחָמָה

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[125] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 27.

[126] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 247.

[127] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 55. For Jeremias' translation see below.

[128] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 7–8.

[129] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 81. Italics are my own.

[130] Wolff, *Hosea*, 24.

[131] Wolff, *Hosea*, 28.

[132] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 143.

with "Shown Compassion."[133] He understands both as names that the Israelites will call their

fellow citizens, Judeans included, after Yahweh's punishment is complete.[134] Garrett also focuses

on the etymology and translates עַמִּי with "My people" and רֻחָמָה with "My loved one."[135] He

argues these name changes and the verse as a whole are of "Janus-nature." He explains that the

names bind Yahweh's judgment announcements that come through the children's names in

Chapter 1 with their command to rebuke their mother in Chapter 2.[136] Macintosh prioritizes the

names' etymology in translation but follows each with a transliteration. He translates עַמִּי with

"My people" and רֻחָמָה with "Beloved."[137] He argues that רחם appropriates its Aramaic cognate

meaning "to love" as is found in the Targum.[138] Dearman transliterates both names, עַמִּי "Ammi"

and רֻחָמָה "Ruhamah" and uses footnotes to indicate their etymology, "my people" and

"mercy."[139] He describes both as reversals of the names given to Hosea's children in Chapter 1

that provide "emphatic affirmation that YAHWEH intends to overcome his people's failures."[140]

Most canonical translations render these declarations as proper names. Some transliterate

them with equivalents to "Ammi" and "Ruhamah" (KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV). Others translate

their etymology (NIV "My people" and "My loved one"; RSV "My people" and "She has

obtained pity"). Several reproduce both translation and transliteration by prioritizing one

followed by a parenthetical reference of the other (NET, "'My People' (Ammi)" and "'Pity'

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133 Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 35, 40.

134 Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 40.

135 Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 74.

136 Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 74.

137 Macintosh, *Hosea*, 30–33.

138 Macintosh, *Hosea*, 21.

139 Dearman, *Hosea*, 103.

140 Dearman, *Hosea*, 106.

(Ruhamah)"; NLT "Ammi— 'My people'" and "Ruhamah— 'The ones I love.'"). Still others translate them as normal discourse (ESV "you are my people" and "you have received mercy").

In summary, the variety of translations shown above results from different priorities translators give to each phrases' function as normal discourse, proper names, or etymological expressions. McKeating and the ESV focus on each phrase as discourse. This causes them to supply a second person addressee to both expressions; thus, "*You* are my people" and "*You* have received mercy." This is not necessarily misleading, but it assumes a general addressee without regarding the strikingly similar semantics employed in the names of Hosea's children in 1:6 and 9. As a result the ambiguity of the clauses, which otherwise would cause audiences to harken back to 1:6 and 9 for clarification, is nearly absent.

Most translations render עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה as proper names with either a transliteration or translated etymology. Translations of עַמִּי show minimal variance from "My people." A larger variety appears in translations of רֻחָמָה. Some, like the RSV, translate it literally, "She has obtained pity." Others reflect the editorial emendation of BH[3] and apply the final *mem* of the preceding plural pronominal suffixes (mechanical error of word division) to the following direct objects (מרחמה and מעמי). This leads some to render רֻחָמָה as a substantival participle or nominally, such as "Versorgt" (Rudolph), "My loved one" (NIV), "Pity" (NET), "Erbarmen" (Jeremias), and "Mercy" (Wolff). Still others translate a shorthand form of the perfect verb in 𝔐 such as "Beloved" (Macintosh) and "Pitied" (Buss).

As translations illuminate, ambiguity forms around whether these phrases are proper names or purely discourse. I argue the context evokes both. The etymology יִזְרְעֶאל "God-will-sow" shows reversal in 2:2 from its appearance in 1:4 (from indictment to restoration). A sensible reading is that the prophet would continue these reversals with the rest of his children's names.

The grammar supports the presence of reversals by using shared semantics and forms with the previously used *nomina sunt omina* in 1:6 and 9.

Translations have two levels of meaning to capture with the expression עַמִּי. The expression functions on one level as a proper noun and shares the same form as the name given to Hosea's third child, לֹא עַמִּי "My-not-people" (without the negative), and the same form as the paronomasia in 1:9. Furthermore, its gender association with "brothers" plays on My-not-people who is the younger brother of God-will-sow (Jezreel) and who is now playing out his synecdoche for all the brothers of Israel. The expression עַמִּי functions on a second level as a declaration. Its etymology is "my people." When declared, the new name reverses denaturalized Israel of 1:9 into citizenship with Yahweh once again. Those who translate the etymology of עַמִּי as a proper name grab both levels of meaning. I follow similarly and translate עַמִּי with "My-people," which uses capitalization and a hyphen to clearly indicate its use as a proper name. I suggest translating עַמִּי the same here as in 1:6 to communicate עַמִּי "My-people" as a reversal of לֹא עַמִּי "My-not-people" in 1:9.

Translations also have two levels of meaning to capture in the expression רֻחָמָה. The expression functions on one level as a proper noun and shares the same form as the name given to Hosea's daughter, לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied" (minus the negative). Like עַמִּי, its gender association with "daughters" plays on Won't-be-pitied who is the younger sister of God-will-sow (Jezreel) and who is now playing out her synecdoche for all the daughters of Israel. The expression רֻחָמָה functions on a second level as a declaration. Grammatically, רֻחָמָה is a *Pual* perfect third person feminine singular verb; literally "she has been pitied." The expression, however, should read as a prophetic perfect because of its link to that of 1:6 and its placement in

a declarative statement.[141] A translation that captures both levels of meaning is "Will-be-pitied." This simultaneously conveys the presence of a proper name and communicates its etymology as a reversal of Won't-be-pitied in 1:6.

A final translation that considers the referential punning of עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה reads, "Say to your brothers, 'My-people,' and to your sisters, 'Will-be-pitied.'" This translation does not contain semantic distortions and diverges minimally from many canonical translations that already reproduce these etymologies as proper names. The phonetics enhance the semantics by linking these names with their counterparts in Hos 1. As a result, audiences can more accurately identify the prophet's hopeful message of Yahweh's reversal of judgment demonstrated in the name changes.

Semantic Force of Wordplay

Hosea's restorative speech beginning in 2:1 climaxes in 2:3 with the referential puns עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה. The judgment of "God-will-sow" in 1:4 is reversed in 2:2 with יִזְרְעֶאל as Yahweh's inception of a newly gathered nation. The prophet continues the pattern of reversal in announcement etymologies of "Will-be-pitied" and "My-people." The punchy declarations of עַמִּי and רֻחָמָה reverse the judgments announced in Hosea's children to offer new projections of naturalization and redemption. Audiences recall their impending denaturalization and unpitied status before Yahweh but can imagine their future when Yahweh will end his sowing of pitiless judgment and begin his sowing of them into a new nation. By Yahweh's actions alone and in his time only will they be brought into citizenship with him and once again be pitied.

Hosea embeds the declarations of the new *nomina sunt omina* in an imperative clause that

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[141] See above.

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forces audiences to assume identity with the בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי "sons of the living God." Their new

identity is transformed from God-will-sow, Won't-be-pitied, and My-not-people to God-will-

sow, Will-be-pitied, and My-people. Resolution for Not-I-am, however, is suspended. Audiences

anticipate their redemption by Yahweh, but his relationship to them as I AM remains dissolved.

The name reversals in 2:3 show that Yahweh sees himself as their God by declaring them as My-

people, but what of their pronouncement of him as I AM? The prophet likely suspends this

nomen est omen reversal to entice audiences to respond. The reversal's absence challenges

audiences to reverse their posture that reflects Yahweh as Not-I-Am to them. The prophet's

desired response from the children is depicted by the following marital metaphor and begins with

the children contending (ריב) with their mother in hopes that she—like them—will realize her

apostasy. Finally, after the mother removes her promiscuity she is to imagine herself as a

restored bride (2:21–22) who responds to her husband, Yahweh, saying, "My God" (2:25).

Hosea 2:14

The wordplay under investigation in Hos 2:14 centers on the rootplay of אֶתְנָה "prostitute's

fee" and תְּאֵנָה "fig tree." The rootplay contributes to an ongoing metaphorical context of marital

unfaithfulness and promiscuity and concludes a series of declarations from Yahweh regarding

the punishment he will inflict on mother for her apostasy. The following section will first explore

how the rootplay relates the objects under destruction (vine, fig tree, and other cultic cultivations

in 2:10–13) to the mother's prostitute's fee. Second, Yahweh's judgment will be discussed in

relation to the mother attributing the success of her cultivation to her sexual favors with other

lovers.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

Ancient and modern translations largely agree on how to render תְּאֵנָה "fig tree" but vary on

how to render the *hapax*, אֶתְנָה. 𝕲 and other Greek translations assume אֶתְנָה is a variant spelling

of the more common אֶתְנַן and translate with μίσθωμα "wage (of a prostitute)." The Targum

renders אֶתְנָה with יְקָר "gift," which assumes semantic similarity of אֶתְנָה to מַתָּנָה "gift."

Prioritizing "gift" in place of using אֲגַר "wage" (Deut 23:19) may reflect the Targum's tendency

to tame Hosea's sexual imagery. The BHS editors consider אֶתְנָה corrupt. They suggest emending

אֶתְנָה to אֶתְנַן (compare with 𝕲).[142] Modern translations follow the BHS emendation and 𝕲 to

translate אֶתְנָה as "wage (of a prostitute)."

Modern translations are divided about the deliberateness of אֶתְנָה. Earlier commentators

including Harper, Buss, and McKeating accept the BHS emendation, but a number of

commentators credit the prophet with creative invention.[143] Rudolph suggests אֶתְנָה stands in place

of the more normal אֶתְנַן and argues that it is „ *wohl wegen des Wortspiels mit* תְּאֵנָה."[144] He

translates both terms literally with *Feigenbaum* and *Buhllohn*.[145] Wolff argues אֶתְנָה is invented to

focus audiences' attention on its play with תְּאֵנָה "fig tree" instead of אֶתְנַן.[146] Stuart calls אֶתְנָה an

anagram of תְּאֵנָה "fig tree" to demonstrate how the mother sees her wealth as vines and fig trees

because she honored the Baals through prostitution.[147] Andersen and Freedman, Jeremias,

Hubbard, Davies, and others observe grammatical similarities between אֶתְנָה and אֶתְנַן that

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[142] Ibn Ezra argues its semantic parallel is with מַתָּנָה "gift" but acknowledges R. Marinus's comparison with אֶתְנַן. Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 30.

[143] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 231; Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 9; McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 82.

[144] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 64.

[145] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 62.

[146] Wolff, *Hosea*, 38. Andersen and Freedman acknowledges the wordplay through Wolff, *Hosea*, 254.

[147] Stuart argues it addresses the problem that "a prostitute's fee could not pay a vow at the temple, being earned from a detestable practice" (Deut 23:19). *Hosea*, 51–52.

constitute purposeful wordplay.[148] Macintosh notes the same presence of wordplay and adds נָתְנוּ

to the phonetic play. He argues these three terms are all connected to the root נתן "to give" and

creates a triad of wordplay that marks "the identity of the true giver."[149] Dearman adds that the

variant form אֶתְנָה, has "assonance with the other words in the verse ending in –â."[150]

A consensus observes phonetic similarities between תְּאֵנָה and אֶתְנָה. A closer look at them

evidences their appearance in rootplay where the consonants of both words are the same only

scrambled. This phonetic play causes audiences to hear אֶתְנָה and harken back to תְּאֵנָה "fig tree"

and interrelate their meanings. The context of marital unfaithfulness encourages audiences to

understand אֶתְנָה as soliciting the semantics of אֶתְנַן "prostitute's wage" to link the תְּאֵנָה "fig tree"

to a prostitute's wage. Macintosh's observation that תְּאֵנָה and אֶתְנָה are connected to the root נתן

"give" is probable because of the consistent use of "ן" and "ת."[151] This connection shows

paronomasia across תְּאֵנָה "fig tree," אֶתְנָה "prostitute's fee," and נָתְנוּ "they gave" that emphasizes

tension in the identity of the giver and the gift being given. The mother understands her lovers as

the giver of her אֶתְנָה "prostitute's fee" when Yahweh is the giver who gives תְּאֵנָה "fig tree[s]"

and other cultivations that she mistakes as her prostitute's fee.

The rootplay between תְּאֵנָה and אֶתְנָה illuminates what comprises the mother's prostitute fee

and, consequently, accents the same referents of הֵמָּה "they" in the mother's dialogue. A popular

consensus understands the fig tree and vine as comprising the prostitute fee and the referents of

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[148] Wolff, *Hosea*, 38; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 254; J. Jeremias suggest the pun is with fig tree to indicate the "Charakter" of the feast in *Der Prophet Hosea*, Das Alte Testament Deutsch: Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk 24/1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1983), 45; Hubbard, *Hosea*, 87; Davies, *Hosea*, 77

[149] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 63–64.

[150] Dearman, *Hosea*, 117–18.

[151] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 64.

הֵמָּה. This, however, is a gender clash when הֵמָּה is masculine and אֶתְנָה and תְּאֵנָה are feminine.[152] Andersen and Freedman recognized this inconsistency and suggest the pronoun's closest most sensible masculine plural referent is the children of Hos 2:6. Thus, the children are the mother's payment in return for her sexual services (אֶתְנָה). They assume no antecedent for the first אֲשֶׁר and understand it as a conjunction used to set up a result clause; thus, "in that she said."[153] The result is that Yahweh's destruction of the vine and fig tree is the judgment for the mother perceiving her children (הֵמָּה) as her אֶתְנָה "prostitute's fee" from her lovers.

Problems, however, arise when the mother's children continue in the verse as the subject of the third masculine plural suffix on וְשַׂמְתִּים "I will make them" and וַאֲכָלָתַם "and it [beasts of the field] will devour them." This interpretation makes the children the objects of the wild animals' devouring, which is possible, but destruction of children is unnatural to the flow of Yahweh ending the mother's cultic practices running throughout 2:11–14. Yahweh's destruction is driven by eight first person verbs of which Yahweh is the subject: אָשׁוּב וְלָקַחְתִּי "I will turn and I will take back," וְהִצַּלְתִּי "and I will take away," אֲגַלֶּה "I will uncover," וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי "and I will end," וַהֲשִׁמֹּתִי "and I will lay waste," וְשַׂמְתִּים "and I will make them," and וּפָקַדְתִּי "and I will punish." In these declarations, Yahweh ends her grain, new wine, wool, flax, rejoicing, feast, new moon, Sabbath, festal assembly, vine, and fig tree. The final declaration in Hos 2:14 states Yahweh will make "them" into a forest. This cultic context makes children as the product of the mother's sexual favors seem out of place. The mother's children are mentioned briefly in 2:5–6, but the oracle moves quickly to a cultic context and the amount of space between v.6 and v.11 requires more

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[152] Harper, *Hosea*, 231; Wolff, *Hosea*, 31, 38; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 43, 51; Hubbard, *Hosea*, 86–87; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 84; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 63; Dearman, *Hosea*, 108.

[153] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 254. See also Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 638 (§38.3).

than an ambiguous הֵמָּה to clearly communicate to audiences that "children" are the referent of הֵמָּה.

The cultivation imagery yielding cultic produce affords a more sensible contrast to the forest imagery under Yahweh's judgment. Yahweh will, therefore, make the mother's resources used for cultic festivals into a forest as food for the wild beasts. The celebrations, feasts, New Moons, and Sabbaths are part of the prostitution activity but the cultivations (grain, new wine, oil, etc.) used during these events are perceived as part of the prostitute's fee from Baal that are used in worship of Baal when, in fact, they were given by Yahweh (Hos 1:10). The הֵמָּה, therefore, most likely includes cultivations from the list of cultic entities mentioned since 2:10, including grains, new wine, oil, feed for sheep, flax, vine, and fig tree. 𝔊 supports this interpretation by translating הֵמָּה collectively with the neuter relative pronoun ὅσα "all of which," when ἄμπελον "vine" and συκᾶς "fig trees" are both feminine. Furthermore, Hebrew regularly uses the masculine plural as a collective for a group of objects that comprise both genders.[154]

That הֵמָּה refers to these cultivations is also highlighted by the rootplay between תְּאֵנָה and אֶתְנָה. The invented אֶתְנָה "prostitute's fee" falls on the last object of the list, תְּאֵנָה "fig tree." This position marks "fig tree" as synecdoche for the cultivation items listed in 2:10–14. Said another way, the rootplay ties all the cultivations into the context of a prostitute's fee.

A literal translation of Hos 2:14 misses the phonetic relationship between אֶתְנָה "prostitute's wage," תְּאֵנָה "fig tree," and נָתְנוּ "they gave" and misleads readers to recall only the vine and fig tree as the referents of הֵמָּה "they." A literal translation reads, "And I will lay waste her vine and her fig tree which she said, 'They are a prostitute's wage for me that my lovers gave to me.'" A

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[154] For priority of the masculine see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §6.5.3.

way to reproduce the rootplay and polysemy is to use rhyme that draws audiences' attention to the key words. Fig tree is arguably the most unique of the two terms, so I use it to set the rhyme pattern. The synonym "[prostitute's] fee" (אֶתְנָה) establishes the rhyme, and the literal translation "gave me" (נָתְנוּ־לִי) continues the rhyme to link the words in paronomasia.[155] Though not entirely necessary, adding "all" to הֵמָּה "they" could encourage readers to include the other cultivations in 2:10–14, rather than just the vine and fig tree. I suggest the following translation for Hos 2:14:

> And I will lay waste her vine and her fig tree,[156]
>> because she said, "They're *all* my fee
>> that my lovers gave me."

Only one adjustment is needed to reproduce the rhyme scheme, which is to supplement the synonym "fee" for "wage." Both "fig tree" and נָתְנוּ־לִי "gave to me" remain literal. This rhyme-scheme does not accommodate all phonetic play appearing throughout the verse (see Dearman on the soundplay of הַ֯), but the rhyme allows audiences to experience Hosea's phonetic emphasis on the words in play. The rhyme draws attention to how the תְּאֵנָה "fig tree" and the cultic entities in 2:11–14 are wrongfully understood by the mother as her אֶתְנָה "[prostitute's] fee." A second adjustment in translation happens in adding "*all*" to clarify the referent of הֵמָּה. The grammar, however, treats the pronoun as a collective so *all* enhances the fuller semantics of הֵמָּה. The overall enhancement to semantic meaning offered by these changes makes the proposed

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[155] I am grateful to Dr. David Adams for suggesting the neologism "whore-fee."

[156] For imagery of vine and fig as popular symbols of the whole of Israel as Yahweh's plantation, see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 25. Of the objects mentioned throughout 2:13–14, 𝔊 translates all but ἄμπελον "vine" as plural. Most English translations and commentators follow similarly except they make "vine" plural as well. This pluralizing accommodates English grammar but is not necessary. Andersen and Freedman note how the chain of singular nouns in v.13 are collective, so the objects in v. 14 would also naturally be collective. Singular collectives are not unfamiliar in English speech and poetry and the impact of the collective is cheapened with plurals. The plurals allow audiences to question which vines and which fig trees are referred. If they are left as collective singulars, then there is no doubt that all the vines and all the fig trees in the land are referred. This totality is supported by the context of total destruction in the foreground of Israel's impending judgment (See Hos 1:4–9; 2:5).

translation suitable for canonical use, but its breadth of meaning can most effectively be captured in Study Bibles and commentaries that can explain how the language operates.

Semantic Force of Wordplay

The rootplay between אֶתְנָה "[prostitute's] fee" and תְּאֵנָה "fig tree" concludes a series of actions Yahweh will take against the mother who fails to see him as the source of her cultivation, and, in turn, uses it for Baal (Hos 2:10).[157] The irregular use of אֶתְנָה creates a focal point that directs audiences to pause on אֶתְנָה, harken back to תְּאֵנָה "fig tree," and blend the culture of a אֶתְנַן "[prostitute's] fee" with the mother's cultic behavior with Baal. The phonetics guide audiences to understand the mother's actions as prostitution and the land's productivity as gracious provision from Yahweh given despite her apostasy. The wordplays convey the degree of the mother's corruption in that she shamelessly declares her prostitution as the means to her success. The mother is so far from Yahweh she embraces her prostitution. The prophet uses the wordplay to alert audiences to the mother's misconception that she did anything to earn the cultivation of the land; rather, the opposite. The mother's lovers had nothing to do with her productivity, which falsifies her אֶתְנָה, and exposes her apostasy against Yahweh who is truly the source. Now, the land's cultivation that has thus far been graciously fertilized by Yahweh will be turned into forests for animals to devour.

<center>Hosea 2:18</center>

In Hos 2:18 תִּקְרְאִי אִישִׁי וְלֹא־תִקְרְאִי־לִי עוֹד בַּעְלִי "You will call *me* 'my husband' and no longer call me 'my Baal,'" the wordplay centers on the declaration of Yahweh as no longer בַּעְלִי, "my

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[157] The BHS editors suggest וְכֶסֶף הִרְבֵּיתִי לָהּ וְזָהָב עָשׂוּ לַבָּעַל may have been added, but the word spacing of 4Q166 (4QpHosᵃ) indicates otherwise.

Baal." The following section investigates how this title evokes multiple meanings in its parallelism with אִישִׁי "my husband." These marriage titles come near the beginning of restoration imagery that begins in v.16 and continues through v.25. Hosea uses them to revive the marriage metaphor in an eschatological setting that reverses much of the judgment and destruction laid out in 2:4–15. The titles provide reversal for Yahweh's declaration in 2:4, "she is not my wife and I am not her husband" and they introduce a new element to the conflicted marriage between Yahweh and his bride. Baal and the *Baalim* are not new characters (canonically) to Hosea's imagery (2:10, 15), but this is the first time the prophet uses them as competing marital partners with Yahweh. The extent to which Israel either called on Baal in place of Yahweh, synced the name of Baal with Yahweh, or called on both separately is difficult to know, but this section will look closely at how these titles interact to reiterate the monogamous relationship Yahweh desires Israel to have with him.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

The meaning of בַּעְלִי, "my Baal/owner/husband" is largely discussed in its relation to אִישִׁי "my husband" with which it stands in parallelism. Different translations and interpretations arise over which meaning of בעל (lord, husband, or owner) the semantics of אִישׁ activates. Ancient translations handle the metaphor differently. 𝔊 translates אִישִׁי with Ὁ ἀνήρ, "My husband," which *Septuaginta* editors write as a proper name. It transliterates בַּעְלִי to reflect the proper name but uses the plural form, (בעלים) Βααλιμ. This pluralization may be to align בַּעְלִי with the same plurals in 2:15 and 19. Aquila, however, translates בַּעְלִי with ἔχων με "Having me," which may be an etymology reflecting the idea of "owner." The Targum eliminates the reference to Baal altogether and contrasts Israel's worship of the Lord and worship of טעו "idols." This alteration is likely an effort to eliminate the marital metaphor altogether.

Modern commentators are fairly unified in translating אִישִׁי literally in the form of a proper

name, "My husband," while transliterating בַּעְלִי "Baali." Most, however, recognize some form of

play between the two expressions that activate multiple meanings. Ibn Ezra comments on the

polysemy of בעל. He describes *Baal* as an ambiguous proper name used also for an object of

idolatrous worship and for taking a wife.[158] Harper recognizes that both terms "express

practically the same idea [husband], but the latter is condemned on account of its connection

with the Baalim."[159] Wolff states that both are similar in meaning but אִישִׁי pushes the loving

affection side of marriage whereas בַּעְלִי pushes the legal side.[160] Wolff later calls בַּעְלִי a "punlike

polemic" that speaks against a syncretism where Yahweh was worshiped like Baal.[161] Rudolph

builds on Wolff's earlier work to suggest that the name בעל for Yahweh proved too ambiguous

for Israel and resulted in her syncretism to the Canaanite cult. The prophet, therefore, offers אִישִׁי

to eradicate such syncretism and align Israel's worship with Yahweh.[162] McKeating distinguishes

secular and theological meanings for בעל. Its secular meanings include master, owner, lord, and

husband while its theological meaning serves as a divine title; thus, baal Hadad (lord Hadad) or

baal Yahweh (lord Yahweh). He understands בַּעְלִי to reflect the heathen deities that came to be

known as "the baals," but it was also used more narrowly to refer to the most prominent of the

Canaanite gods, Baal.[163] Jeremias argues in line with Wolff and Rudolph to suggest that בעל

reflects the legalistic relationship between Yahweh and Israel but adds that it recalls the Baal

[158] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 30–31.

[159] Harper, *Hosea*, 234.

[160] Hans Walter Wolff, *"Der große Jesreeltag" (Hos 2:1–3)*," In *EvTh* 12 (1952–53):78–104.

[161] Wolff, *Hosea*, 49.

[162] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 78–79.

[163] McKeating, 86–87.

pantheon which includes Anath and Astart and others unnamed.[164] Stuart argues that אישׁ and בעל

both mean "husband" where אישׁ refers to the marriage partner while בעל refers to the lordship or

legal right of a husband to his wife. He emphasizes, however, that this is not the oracle's point;

rather, in restoration the Israelites will "simply never use the word בעל in *any* of its meanings.

Baal worship will not exist, *a fortiori*, because even the very word בעל will be unknown."[165]

Stuart notes that syncretism of Baal and Yahweh may or may not have existed, but in the new

age it will be impossible for it to happen.[166] Hubbard focuses on Yahweh's transformation in the

title change. Where Yahweh acted on his legal right as Israel's בעל "lord" because of her

apostasy, in the new age, after the baalim are removed, he will act more lovingly as her אישׁ

"husband."[167] Davies acknowledges Wolff's conclusions but is convinced that syncretism is at

the heart of the marital imagery. Yahweh was worshipped as Baal so the title change from בעל to

אישׁ expresses the separation and distinction between the Baal cult and worship of Yahweh in the

new age.[168] Garrett emphasizes the meaning of בעל as "lord" to suggest how easily Baal devotees

could make use of the semantic overlap between "Baal" and "lord" in the Israelite worship of בעל

Yahweh, that is, "lord Yahweh." He argues with others that elimination of this word equals

purging the Baal cult.[169] Macintosh states it is "unlikely that in everyday speech there was any

practical distinction between the two synonyms for husband."[170] Rather, he argues in line with

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[164] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 49.

[165] Stuart, *Hosea*, 57. Beeby would disagree because he suggests that syncretism is at the heart of the dilemma and discusses the series of ענה "answering" in 2:23–24 as Hosea reiterating how Yahweh is the source and fruition of cultivation. *Hosea* 31–33.

[166] Beeby, *Hosea*, 57–58.

[167] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 92–93.

[168] Davies, *Hosea*, 82.

[169] Garrett, *Hosea*, 91–92.

[170] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 78.

Davies and Garrett that Hosea uses the terms to correct Israel's delusion of calling Yahweh, "Baal."[171] He continues by saying both terms' use in the marriage metaphor seeks to "redeem the notion of love between man and woman from the murky confusion into which Baalism had dragged it and to exalt it to a representation of the faithful love of the just and true God."[172] Ben Zvi adds that Israel's use of the epithet "Baal" for Yahweh demonstrates how poorly she knows Yahweh; "that for her Yahweh is like one of the baals."[173] When she finally knows him in the new age she will call him "my husband" which eliminates any possible association with the baals. Dearman argues בעל stands for Canaanite deities that evidences Israel's syncretism with the broader Canaanite culture.[174] He concludes, Yahweh going from בעל to איש in a marriage metaphor becomes a sign of "covenant intimacy."[175]

Canonical translations reflect the variety of translations proposed by modern commentators. Some translations transliterate both expressions as proper names, "Ishi" (אִישִׁי) and "Baali" (בַּעְלִי) (ASV, KJV, Harper).[176] Some translate the etymology but write it in the form of a proper name using capitalization, "My Husband" and "My Baal" (ESV, NJB, NET). The NASB combines translation and transliteration in the form of proper nouns, "Me Ishi" and "Me Baali." The NLT translates both literally, "my husband" and "my master." The CBJ uses transliterations to convey proper names and follows them with their etymologies: *Ishi* [My Husband] and *Ba'ali* [My Master].[177]

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[171] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 79.

[172] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 79.

[173] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 74.

[174] Dearman, *Hosea*, 124.

[175] Dearman, *Hosea*, 124.

[176] Harper, *Hosea*, 234.

[177] Note the added description. See also BFC and TOB.

The variation listed above testifies to the polysemy of בעל in parallelism with אישׁ. As indicated above, the term בעל has several meanings, at least two of which are operative in this text. The first is its reference to the divine name Baal.[178] The discoveries at Ras Shamra show that בעל can be the proper name of a specific deity. Also, its use in the plural and as parts of geographical names indicate local manifestations and nuances of a בעל par excellence.[179] The book of Hosea supports בעל as a proper name with the appearance of בעל in various forms including the singular (2:10, 18; 13:1), plural (2:15, 19; 11:2), and as the name of a geographical location (9:10). The second meaning of בעל is "husband," which is established by its parallelism with אִישִׁי "my husband" and the context of marital metaphor operative in 2:18.[180] The parallelism suggests that mother will no longer say "my husband [of the Baal kind]."

A translation that captures the polysemy of בַּעְלִי must consider its use as the proper name Baal and its lexical sense "husband." A literal translation of 2:18 reads, "'And it will happen in that day,' declares Yahweh, 'you will call *me* my husband and you will no longer call me my Baal.'"[181] The CBJ successfully captures the polysemy through rhyming transliteration and the bracketing of translated meaning written in the form of a proper name: *Ishi* [My Husband] and *Ba'ali* [My Master]. The CBJ's translation for בַּעְלִי, however, is not entirely precise as it does not

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[178] Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907), 127.

[179] Johannes C. de Moor and M. J. Mulder, בעל *ba'al*, in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1975), 3:192–94.

[180] The more common Semitic meaning in the genitive is "owner," but as the term is used in various contexts additional meanings follow; some of the most common being "lord" and "husband." M. J. Mulder, בעל *ba'al*, *TDOT*, 181–82.

[181] Commentaries vary only slightly from popular, literal English translations: Harper transliterates both terms, *Hosea*, 234; Wolff translates *ishi* as "My husband" and *baali* as "My Baal" with interpretive emphasis on בעל as "lord"; i.e., the legal position of the husband as "owner" of the wife, *Hosea*, 46, 49; Andersen and Freedman transliterate both terms and add footnotes that include their lexical values, *Hosea*, 216; Stuart follows Wolff but notes the "triply ambiguous" nature of בעל "husband/lord/Baal," *Hosea-Jonah*, 55–56; Macintosh follows Wolff and Stuart, *Hosea*, 77; Dearman follows Wolff, Stuart, and Macintosh, *Hosea*, 120.

reflect the play on its meaning, "husband." In place of "master," I suggest translating בַּעְלִי with "My Spouse" or an equivalent synonym of "husband." The semantic clarity of translations like CBJ make them useful for canonical readings.

The phonetic play between בַּעְלִי and אִישִׁי can be reproduced with stronger punning formations, but these formations may distort semantic meaning or require more sophistication to interpret. The proper name in בַּעְלִי is a fixed set of phonemes. Said another way, *Baal* sets the phonetic limits available to use for translating its second meaning "husband." A possible translation is to render its etymology "my husband" and its proper name "Baal" with the portmanteau "Beau-al." Thus, "you will call *me* My-husband, and no longer My Beau-al." The portmanteau recreates the pun to convey the spousal relationship and the proper name of the Canaanite deity (Baal). The portmanteau, however, requires audiences to know the term *Baal* well enough to reassemble it from the portmanteau and to have enough familiarity with the French loan word *beau* to see its parallel with *husband*. Furthermore, *beau* creates some semantic distortion in that it does not necessitate spousal relationship, which Hosea's context evokes. This translation recreates the polysemy in the proper names, but the amount of semantic distortion in its creativity relegates its usefulness to commentaries and possibly study Bibles that can explain its punning mechanics. A translation option that is more conducive for canonical translations is to hyphenate both meanings of בַּעְלִי into one unit; thus, "you will call *me* 'my husband' and no longer 'my Baal-husband.'"[182]

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

Hosea embeds the wordplay between בַּעְלִי and אִישִׁי in the first of three בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא (2:18, 20,

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[182] I am grateful to Dr. Paul Raabe for suggesting this translation.

23) that reverses the judgment of the mother's marital unfaithfulness in a new age when Yahweh will bring the mother into the wilderness like a new exodus (2:16). In a canonical reading, Yahweh dissolved the marriage covenant by declaring the mother no longer his wife and he was no longer her אִישׁ "husband" (2:4).[183] The wordplay reverses this judgment by reinstating the marriage covenant, in part, through the mother's declaration of Yahweh as "my husband" and ending her apostasy with the Baals. "Baal" will no longer have a presence in the mother's relationship under the new marriage covenant because the names of the Baals will be removed from her mouth (2:19).

The wordplay's reversal projects hope for the mother but alerts audiences that they do not know Yahweh (see also דַּעַת 4:1, 6; 6:6; ידע 2:22; 5:4; 6:3; 8:2) and mistake Baal for their husband. The proper response for future renewal is one of obedience. Audiences are to appropriate the mother's identity and uphold their end of the covenant with Yahweh by declaring him "husband."

<div align="center">Hosea 2:23–25</div>

The prophet uses three *nomina sunt omina* to project Yahweh's restoration of the mother in the third and final בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא "in that day" (2:23; see also 2:18, 2:20). Each *nomen est omen*

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[183] For marriage as a covenant, see Gordon Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994). For Hosea's use of marriage as covenant, see Wayne W. Poplin, *Hosea's use of Nuptial Imagery* (Dissertation from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1975), 73–75. The mother's declaration is very similar to the covenantal oath that appears in Lev 26:12, Deut 29:12 and other ancient near eastern marriage formulas. The following are sources discussing other ANE marriage formulas that reflect a similar declaration. For reviews of Elephantine Papyri se: Markham Geller, "The Elephantine Papyri and Hosea 2.3: Evidence for the Form of the Early Jewish Divorce Writ," *JSJ* 8 (1997): 139–48; Mordechai A. Friedman, "Israel's Response in Hosea 2.17b," *JBL* 99 (1980): 199–204; Bazalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1968), 206; Reuven Yaron, "Aramaic Marriage Contracts from Elephantine," *JSS* 3 (1958): 2–4. Sources containing primary papyri texts: Arthur Ernest Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 44–50 (no. 15); Emil G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri: New Documents of the Jewish Colony at Elephantine*, trans. H. L. Ginsberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 131–222 (no. 2 and 7). For documentation and discussion over ancient Near Eastern marriage contracts see Samuel Greengus, "The Old Babylonian Marriage Contract," *JAOS* 89 (1969): 505–32.

contains referential punning where each one evokes multiple referents that challenge audiences to view Yahweh's redemptive process in its entirety from indictment to restoration. This section will discuss how each *nomen est omen* harkens back to the original names given to the prophet's children mentioned in Hos 1 (יִזְרְעֶאל "God-will-sow," לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied," and לֹא עַמִּי "My-not-people") to reverse the messages depicted by their etymologies and establish a new context of restoration.

Jezreel

As with the *nomina sunt omina* in Hos 1, the *nomen est omen* יִזְרְעֶאל contains referential punning and is in paronomasia with the juxtaposing verb זרע "sow"; thus, יִזְרְעֶאל[24] [25]וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ "God-will-sow, for I will sow her." The polysemantic pun יִזְרְעֶאל "God-will-sow" is the last time this expression appears in Hosea. The *nomen est omen* contributes, on the one hand, to a harvest metaphor that stretches through 2:23–25. On the other hand, its paronomasia with וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ "and I will sow her" begins a series of *nomina sunt omina* reversals that conclude the marital metaphor. The polysemy of יִזְרְעֶאל creates a variety of interpretations that combine literal, figurative, allegorical, and metaphorical meanings. The following section will investigate how יִזְרְעֶאל contributes to both harvest and marital metaphors to portray Yahweh's restoration of the land and his bride.

Translation and Grammar of Wordplay

𝕲 and most commentators and canonical translations transliterate יִזְרְעֶאל "Jezreel." Differences appear in the variety of interpretations of its referent.[184] Ibn Ezra responds to the

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[184] Commentaries vary only slightly from canonical translations: Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra*, 32; Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 244; Wolff, *Hosea*, 53–54; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 216, 288; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 55, 60–61; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 86–89; Dearman recognizes the semantic connection between יִזְרְעֶאל and זרע, *Hosea*, 131. Contra

history of the rabbinics allegorizing יִזְרְעֶאל and interprets יִזְרְעֶאל literally as the geographical place

mentioned in Hos 1:4–5 where Yahweh executed his judgment.[185] Harper argues that *Jezreel* is

Israel restored. He says the name's etymology, "God sows," leads to the imagery when Israel is

sown again to Yahweh.[186] Rudolph also suggests יִזְרְעֶאל stands for Israel and calls it a *Heilsgütern*

for Israel that redesigns the image of judgment provided by the name of Hosea's first son,

Jezreel in Hos 1.[187] Wolff argues יִזְרְעֶאל cannot mean the Jezreel Valley but "only the starving

people of Israel."[188] He notes that, יִזְרְעֶאל directly refers to those who received their sustenance

from the Valley of Jezreel and fell under Yahweh's judgment through drought and battle

(Tiglath-pileser II's conquest). Wolff comments further to say יִזְרְעֶאל symbolically represents the

nation as a whole in association with judgment behind the name of Hosea's first son (1:4). The

answering of the grain, new wine, and oil to the land describes the new action that Yahweh will

have with יִזְרְעֶאל in response to its supplication and need for sustenance.[189] Andersen and

Freedman understand יִזְרְעֶאל to refer to the elder brother who represents Israel, not the

geographic location, Jezreel.[190] Beeby calls יִזְרְעֶאל an agricultural pun, used to emphasize Yahweh

as the one who brings the "whole [agricultural] reproductive system" into completion regardless

of man's incapability.[191] This survey shows how יִזְרְעֶאל functions in two ways, as a proper name

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the Targum, which supplants יִזְרְעֶאל with לְגָלְוָת עַמִּי "my exiled people."

[185] Rashi interprets it as the children of the exile who were scattered and then gathered, while Menahem and Qara see the name as referring to the people who sow the land. Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 31, 38 n. 64.

[186] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 244. See also Dwight R. Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History* (Beigefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 191. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 103 and McKeating, *Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, 88.

[187] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 83.

[188] Wolff, *Hosea*, 54.

[189] Wolff, *Hosea*, 54.

[190] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 288.

[191] Beeby, *Hosea*, 34.

and as a statement that can serve as either a threat or a promise.

Several commentators acknowledge a particular relationship between יִזְרְעֶאל and וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ. Buss shows the relationship in his translation which uses a parenthetical reference to explain the etymological similarities; thus, "they will answer *Jezreel*. I will *sow* her for me in the land (Jezreel = 'God sow[s]')."[192] Jeremias, Stuart, and Dearman acknowledge how the common root זרע between יִזְרְעֶאל and וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ establishes a connection between vv. 24–25. [193] Davies says the etymology of וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ "I will sow her" draws directly from the name יִזְרְעֶאל.[194] Gisin suggests the repetition of the root זרע between יִזְרְעֶאל and וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ contributes to the "*aussergewöhnlich lange Reihung von Wortrepetitionen*" throughout Hos 2:23–25.[195] Garrett acknowledges a double meaning of *Jezreel* that is produced by its relation to וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ. He argues *Jezreel* recalls God sowing judgment on Israel (Hos 1:4), but eventually Yahweh promises to sow a people restored to himself.[196] Hubbard and Macintosh argue *Jezreel* is a pun for Israel.[197] Hubbard describes its function as "a slap at the Baals in the world where it is God who is the source of all well-being" for Israel.[198] Both Hubbard and Macintosh suggest the paronomasia between יִזְרְעֶאל and וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ reverses the judgment of Hos 1:4–5 and echoes the positive use of יִזְרְעֶאל in Hos 2:2.[199]

Some canonical translations acknowledge the referential punning of יִזְרְעֶאל. CJB uses a

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[192] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 10. His italicized words indicate words with rhythmic structure and repetition. Ibid., 7. He is against Rudolph's proposal to translate זרע with "impregnate."

[193] Von Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea* (Das Alte Testament Deutsch 24/1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1983), 51.; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 61.; Dearman, *Hosea*, 131.

[194] Davies, *Hosea*, 90.

[195] Walter Gisin, *Hosea: Ein literarishes Netzerk beweist seine Authentizität* (Berlin Wien: Philo, 2002), 87–88.

[196] Garrett, *Hosea*, 94–95.

[197] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 98; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 88–90.

[198] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 97.

[199] Hubbard specifically calls this "word-play" on Jezreel's name. *Hosea*, 98.

parenthetical reference to explain the agricultural meaning contained in the name Jezreel: "they will answer *Yizre'el* [God will sow]." The NLT follows יִזְרְעֶאל with its etymology, "Jezreel— God plants," and uses the same verb for וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ "I will plant."

In summary, most commentators and translations show a semantic relationship between יִזְרְעֶאל and וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ. Translation emphasis is largely given to the transliteration יִזְרְעֶאל "Jezreel," which is likely to reflect the proper name used in Hos 1:4 and 2:2. One of the more accepted semantic meanings given to יִזְרְעֶאל is the etymology "God sows" or "God will sow" to reflect the agricultural and marital metaphors. A more debated semantic domain is its reference to the geographic location, the Jezreel Valley.

As noted by others, the semantic domains of יִזְרְעֶאל reside in pivot parallelism created by יִזְרְעֶאל and its paronomasia with וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ located between two parts of Yahweh's first-person dialogue running through 2:24–25. In the first part of the pivot, Yahweh foretells a series of answering (ענה) that reflects a chain-reaction response of Israel's cultivation cycle to Yahweh's provisionary acts. Yahweh answers the heavens, the heavens answer the land, the land answers the commodities (grain, wine, and oil), and the commodities answer יִזְרְעֶאל. What the heavens, land, commodities, and יִזְרְעֶאל cry out is not explicitly mentioned, but a canonical reading shows that Yahweh ends each of their production (2:5, 11, 13–14). Each are likely answering the outcries of infertility to inform the others of Yahweh's restorative acts. The commodities, therefore, respond to the outcry of יִזְרְעֶאל to inform him of Yahweh's restorative sowing.

The second part of the pivot parallelism reuses יִזְרְעֶאל but with a feminine referent established by the feminine suffix on וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ "I will sow her."[200] The feminine suffix suggests a

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[200] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 288–90. The BHS editors suggest editing the pronominal suffix הָ- "her" to a third masculine singular הו-; thus, "I will sow him." This emendation is most likely to establish agreement with the preceding object, "Jezreel." The Targum translates the clause dynamically וַאֲקַיְמִנְכוֹן קֳדָמַי בַּאֲרַע בֵּית שְׁכִינְתִּי "And I

resurgence of the mother, i.e. Israel, who is the closest feminine referent (Hos 2:19) and an appropriate character for completing the marital metaphor. If the mother is the referent, then Yahweh's sowing her fulfills the imagery of 2:16 where Yahweh brings the mother into the wilderness to speak to her heart (2:16).

The paronomasia between יִזְרְעֶאל and וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ is, therefore, a pivot or hinge that spans and connects both sections of Yahweh's first-person dialogue: יִזְרְעֶאל concludes the first part and introduces the second. The result is a richness of identity and meaning that pours out of God's sowing fruitful cultivation with יִזְרְעֶאל. As a figure in both parts of Yahweh's dialogue, יִזְרְעֶאל assumes a variety of semantic domains including the *nomen est omen* "Jezreel," its lexical sense "God will sow" (in judgment and in cultivation), the house of Israel (Hos 1:4), "mother," and the geographic location of Jezreel due to its link to יִזְרְעֶאל in Hos 1:4.

A translation that accommodates the multiple referents of יִזְרְעֶאל and its paronomasia with וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ should prioritize communicating the name's reversal of יִזְרְעֶאל in 1:4. The translation should, therefore, read the same as the יִזְרְעֶאל in 1:4 since the grammar is the same and the etymology's meaning equally depends on context to communicate the kind of sowing by Yahweh. As a result, I prioritize the etymology of יִזְרְעֶאל and reproduce it in the form of a pronoun, "God-will-sow" just as in Hos 1:4. The brackets for "Jezreel" used in 1:4 are no longer needed here since there is no paronomasia with "Israel." The translation "God-will-sow" allows readers to link the יִזְרְעֶאל in 2:24 with יִזְרְעֶאל in 1:4 and contrast the sowing that takes place from

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will raise them in the land of the house of my divine presence," which is likely to avoid the perceptively crude marital metaphor. 𝔊 translates the verbal clause literally, σπερῶ αὐτὴν "I will sow her." Rudolph distinctly translates זרע with "impregnate" to capture the sexual imagery of a fertile bride in correlation with the third feminine suffix and the running marital metaphor. *Hosea*, 83. Buss, however, disagrees because of the agricultural emphasis of the sowing "in the land." *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 10 fn. 6. Wolff argues the protasis containing an antecedent for the suffix is missing or "lost." *Hosea*, 47.

its context of judgment (1:4) to its context of restoration (2:25). The translated etymology also gives audiences access to both harvest and marital metaphors and naturally reproduces paronomasia with the literal translation of וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ "so I will sow her." I propose the translation, "and they will answer God-will-sow; so I will sow her to myself."[201]

This translation leverages a minimal transfer (literal translation) to communicate the referential punning of יִזְרְעֶאל and reproduce its phonetic play in its paronomasia with וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ. As a result, the phonetic play enhances semantic meaning that can enrich canonical translations. Translating the etymology of יִזְרְעֶאל also reproduces the ambiguity of the Hebrew pun and encourages audiences to question its breadth of semantic domains just as the original.

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

Audiences hear that Yahweh will reverse the unfruitfulness of God-will-sow with fruitful cultivation in a time of his choosing. The *nomen est omen* harkens audiences to 1:4 to remember God's sowing of judgment on the house of Israel. They recall Israel's promiscuity that leads to her bareness. Despite God-sow's shortcomings, however, Yahweh chooses to restore fruitfulness in the land. Fullness of God's restoration is provided in his initiative to no longer sow judgment but sow Israel as a bride to himself. The feminine pronominal suffix on וּזְרַעְתִּיהָ solicits the marital metaphor to suggest fertility in the land is not only with crops but also with descendants.

This wordplay invites its audiences to identify with God-will-sow in each stage of his reconstruction under Yahweh as king. Audiences live in the land that God sows from fertility to infertility and then sows back to renewed fertility. The referential punning of *God-will-sow* embodies Yahweh's full redemptive process which begins with indictment, moves to judgment,

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[201] For treatment of יִזְרְעֶאל as "God-will-sow" in 1:4, see above.

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and finishes in restoration. Audiences are to embody Israel who is indicted with corruption and promiscuity and will foresee destruction, but afterward, they will become a bride sown by God to himself.

Won't-be-pitied and My-not-people

Hos 2:25 contains two other referential puns with two related paronomasia that center on the *nomina sunt omina* לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied" and לֹא־עַמִּי "My-not-people." The first appearances of these *nomina sunt omina* happen throughout the first two chapters (1:4, 6, 8–9; 2:1–3). In 1:4, 6, and 8–9 they announce Yahweh's judgment on Israel. In 2:1–3 My-not-people are reversed to "children of the living God," and these children are instructed to declare a set of reversals that declare "My-people" to their sisters and "Will-be-pitied" to their brothers.[202] Hosea 2:25 provides the third collection of these *nomina sunt omina* and the second time reversals are formed by their renaming. New, however, is this passage's use of both *nomina sunt omina* and their reversals in succinct wordplay together.[203]

Translation and Grammar of the Wordplay

The Greek translations agree to render לֹא־רֻחָמָה with a feminine singular perfect passive participle Οὐκ-ἠλεημένην "She who has not been pitied." The participle is likely substantival to indicate its use as a proper name. Greek translations render לֹא־עַמִּי more literally with Οὐ-λαῷ-μου "Not-my-people" likely because the clause is verbless. Both Οὐκ-ἠλεημένην and Οὐ-λαῷ-μου reflect the translations used of the same *nomina sunt omina* in Hos 1. The *Septuaginta* editors assume both are proper names and capitalize them. The Targum translates dynamically

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[202] See above.

[203] I do not include the appearance of לֹא־עַמִּי in 2:1 in this list because its reversal is not in a form of paronomasia.

by eliminating the allegory of the children's names and supplementing them with general collections of people; thus, "And I will love them who are not lovable in their acts, and I will say to whom it was said to them 'not my people', 'in fact you are my people.'

Most commentators perceive לֹא־רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי in 2:25 as the same *nomina sunt omina* in 1:6 and 9.[204] Differences in translation are largely seen in which referents each evoke. Ibn Ezra transliterates both names and argues לֹא־רֻחָמָה "signifies the earlier forebears [those who comprised Israel leading up to and during the time of exile]," and the name לֹא־עַמִּי represents those who were born in exile.[205] Rudolph translates לֹא־רֻחָמָה with a past participle, "Unversorgt," which reflects 𝔊, and לֹא־עַמִּי as a proper name with *Nicht-mein-Volk*.[206] He argues that the new declaration of יִזְרְעֶאל leads necessarily to a "*Neugestaltung*" for the other two names given to the children in Hos 1.[207] Buss prioritizes their etymology but reproduces them in the form of a proper name with capitalization and hyphens. He captures the perfect aspect of the לֹא־רֻחָמָה with "Not-pitied" and translates לֹא־עַמִּי literally with "Not-my-people."[208] McKeating transliterates both ("Lo-ruhamah" and "Lo-ammi") to emphasize their role as proper names.[209] Wolff translates the etymology of both, but renders לֹא־רֻחָמָה with stative aspect "Without-Mercy" and לֹא־עַמִּי literally with "Not-My-People."[210] He calls them "metaphors" that state "Israel, having suffered

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[204] Harper considers לֹא־רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי in 2:25 as reversals of the names in 1:6 and 9 but does not translate them as proper names. Both are written like general titles of people where לֹא־רֻחָמָה is "the unpitied one" and לֹא־עַמִּי are those who are "not-my-people." Harper, *Amos, Hosea*, 244.

[205] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 32.

[206] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 73.

[207] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 85.

[208] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 10.

[209] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 87.

[210] Wolff, *Hosea*, 54.

judgment, will by Yahweh's mercy again become his covenant people."[211] Andersen and

Freedman transliterate both ("Lo-Ruhama" and "Lo-Ammi").[212] They argue the reversals of each

name cancel the judgments set in 1:6 and 9 and reaffirm the quality of the covenant mentioned in

2:21 that will be eternal and made with righteous, justice, mercy, and pity.[213] Jeremias, like

Wolff, also translates לֹא־רֻחָמָה with stative aspect, "*Ohne-Erbarmen*," and לֹא־עַמִּי literally with

"*Nicht-mein-Volk*."[214] Stuart also translates לֹא־רֻחָמָה as a stative, "No Compassion," and לֹא־עַמִּי

literally with "Not My People."[215] He views the names as continuing the theme of Hosea's

children where they are "vehicles for the transformation of the messages" each one

communicates. Stuart goes on to say that the names are being reversed to communicate that

"'Agricultural Bounty'[*Jezreel*], 'Compassion' [*Lo-ruhamah*], and 'Peoplehood' [*Lo-ammi*] are

returned to the nation from which they had been withdrawn."[216] Hubbard translates לֹא־רֻחָמָה

statively with "Not pitied" and לֹא־עַמִּי literally with "Not my people."[217] Like others, he regards

their name changes as reversals of Yahweh's judgment depicted in 1:4–9.[218] Garrett transliterates

both and sees their reversal as concluding what has been anticipated since 1:6c and 1:10.[219]

Macintosh also transliterates the names with "Lo-Ruḥamah" and "Lo-Ammi."[220] He adds

footnotes to inform readers of their etymology in relation to their appearance in 1:6 and 9. He

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[211] Wolff, *Hosea*, 54.

[212] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 216.

[213] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 290.

[214] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 38.

[215] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 55.

[216] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 61.

[217] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 98.

[218] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 98.

[219] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 96.

[220] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 89–90.

argues that the names "now signify blessing rather than chastisement." Macintosh states the nation will enjoy the "perennial care" of Yahweh that he abandoned earlier (Lo-Ruḥamah, 1:6) and, furthermore, they will experience the joy of belonging to Yahweh once again after their repudiation from the covenant (Lo-Ammi, 1.9).[221] Dearman transliterates the names with "Lo-ruhamah" and "Lo-ammi" and follows them with footnotes that explain their etymology: "no mercy" and "not my people."[222] He argues the names are the same as those pronounced as judgments in Hos 1 but are changed for the positive.[223]

Canonical translations also differ on whether to render לֹא רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי as literal descriptions, proper names, or etymological expressions. Some translations that render לֹא רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי as literal descriptions include the ASV ("her that had not obtained mercy" and "them that were not my people"), the KJV ("her that had not obtained mercy" and "*them which were not My people*"), and the NASB ("her who had not obtained compassion" and "those who were not my people"). Other translations that render לֹא רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי descriptively produce them as titles of general people groups (see also Harper): NIV "the one I called 'Not my loved one'" and "those I called 'Not my people'"; NLT "those called 'Not loved'" and "those called 'Not my people.'" Other translations render לֹא רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי as *nomina sunt omina* and translate with their etymology (ESV "No Mercy" and "Not My People"; RSV "Not pitied" and "Not my people") or transliteration (NRSV). Still others reproduce both their etymology and transliteration (NET "No Pity (Lo-Ruhamah)" and "Not My People (Lo-Ammi)").

This overview shows a variety of meanings and referents evoked by the expressions לֹא רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי. Their translations vary depending on which ones are in focus. Some see only

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[221] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 91.

[222] Dearman, *Hosea*, 121.

[223] Dearman, *Hosea*, 131.

indirect discourse while others render the expressions as generic titles. Most view the expressions as proper names that repeat those announced in 1:6 and 9. Emphasis is sometimes given to their transliteration which often leads to footnoting to provide etymological meaning. Most translators who understand the clauses as proper names champion their etymology and reproduce them in the form of proper names using capitalization and hyphens.

Both לֹא רֻחָמָה and לֹא־עַמִּי are grammatically the same as those appearing in in 1:6 and 9. They also formulate paronomasia with like-roots as the *nomina sunt omina* in 1:6 and 9. Since the grammar and phonetics signal audiences to understand these names in relation to one another, I suggest translating both of their occurrences the same. The expression לֹא רֻחָמָה is a *Puʻal* perfect third feminine singular. As mentioned in the review of Hos 1:6 above, the perfect aspect in this prophetic address conveys a situation extending from the present into the future.[224] The expression לֹא רֻחָמָה is, therefore, a prophetic perfect; thus, "She will not be pitied," which I shorten to "Won't-be-pitied" to replicate the name's punctuality.[225] This translation harkens the name to its appearance in 1:6 to recall when Yahweh announced that He would remove his pity from Israel.

The grammar for לֹא־עַמִּי is also the same as in 1:9 and since it continues the theme of the *nomina sunt omina,* I translate it the same in 2:25 as 1:9. The etymology of the name employs Deut 32:21, which discussed in more detail above, which is to say the לֹא־עַמִּי of 2:25 reflects the "not-people" of Deut 32:21, who are likened to antagonistic foreign nations. The expression לֹא־עַמִּי is usually translated "Not my people," but considering Deut 32:21 it could be more literally rendered "My-Not-people" to parallel Israel with the foolish nations that Yahweh calls לֹא־עַם

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[224] Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 489–90 §30.5.1e.

[225] See above.

"not people."[226]

The themes of both *nomina sunt omina* are driven by two forms of paronomasia. The first directly follows Won't-be-pitied as a verb sharing the same root, רחם "to have/show mercy." The paronomasia reverses the announcement projected in the etymology "Won't-be-pitied" by eliminating the negative (לֹא) from the expression. The emphatic nature of this paronomasia, which is created by its punctuality, is highlighted by its converse to the paronomasia of 1:6 where "Won't-be-pitied" is followed by a lengthened negation (לֹא אוֹסִיף עוֹד) to emphasize Yahweh's retraction of pity (רחֵם).[227]

The second form of paronomasia immediately follows "My-Not-people" in a nominal expression that shares the same root and pronominal suffix (עַמִּי). The paronomasia reverses the declaration in the *nomen est omen* by eliminating the negative לֹא; thus, "you are my people." The paronomasia also evokes that of 1:9 when Yahweh denaturalizes Israel and calls her his not-people.[228] The syntax of this paronomasia (לֹא־עַמִּי עַמִּי־אַתָּה), however, is inverted from that in 1:9 (לֹא עַמִּי כִּי אַתֶּם לֹא עַמִּי). The new syntax structures both *nomina sunt omina* reversals by bookending them with their paronomasia—A עַמִּי־אַתָּה לְלֹא־עַמִּי A1. B1 אֶת־לֹא רֻחָמָה B וְרִחַמְתִּי—which highlights Yahweh's complete restoration and full transformation.

A translation that guides audiences to capture Yahweh's reversals must replicate the translation of their *nomen est omen* counterparts in 1:6 and 9. I recommend also reproducing the bookend structure to accentuate the paronomasia that highlights Yahweh's restoration. I suggest the following translation:

I will pity
      Won't-be-pitied and

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[226] See above. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 198.

[227] See above.

[228] See above.

> I will say to My-not-people (or Not-my-people),
> you are my people

This literary transfer is more literal than most canonical translations to an extent that לֹא־עַמִּי "My-not-people" distorts normal English syntax and requires supplementary commentary to recall its allusion to Deut 32:21. For this reason, this translation is most suited for commentaries or study Bibles that can explain the link. A possible canonical translation that abandons the Deut 32:21 reference but preserves the referential punning of the *nomina sunt omina*, their paronomasia, and the bookend structure is "I will pity Won't-be-pitied and I will say to Not-my-people, 'you are my people.'"

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

The prophet accesses the children's' *nomina sunt omina* for the last time to reverse Yahweh's judgment set forth at their birth and provide audiences with an appropriate response to Yahweh's restorative acts. The first set of *nomina sunt omina* reversals happens in 2:1–3. In the great day of יִזְרְעֶאל "God-will-sow" (Jezreel) it will be said of My-Not-people, "children of the living God" (2:1). Furthermore, My-Not-people and Won't-be-pitied, although unmentioned, are reversed in declarations from the children of the living God who say to their brothers, "my people," and to their sisters, "be pitied" (2:3). Missing in 2:3, however, is any reversal of Not-I-am from 1:9. Audiences are left to anticipate how and when Yahweh will become "I-am" to Israel again. The prophet revisits this motif of *nomen est omen* reversal in 2:25 to help audiences reimagine Yahweh after they are restored to him.

The reversals at the end of Hos 2:25 reiterate the reversals of 2:3 and lead audiences to the proper response they are to make to Yahweh's restoration. The title "my people" in particular draws on covenant vows and reveals Yahweh's commitment to his people. Yahweh, however,

does not declare his own new title but provides his people with the proper response to his restorative, renewing, and transformative acts. The prophet breaks the type scene of using paronomasia composed of the same root as the *nomen est omen* to emphasize Yahweh's new title. This is to say, the formula for reversal has thus far consisted of the *nomen est omen* plus a semantic expression composed of the same root form (e.g., לֹא רֻחָמָה and אֲרַחֵם),[229] but the prophet does not follow לֹא־אֶהְיֶה "Not-I-am" of 1:9 with the expected paronomasia, אֶהְיֶה "I-Am." Rather, the new covenanted relationship calls for a new title for Yahweh that emphasizes Yahweh as Israel's deity. The proper response of the restored people is to say to Yahweh, אֱלֹהָי "My God."[230]

Conclusion

Wordplay used throughout Yahweh's household metaphor navigates audiences through Yahweh's transformation process of his wayward people through judgment and renewal. The wordplay consists of referential puns and paronomasia that center on four categories of *nomina sunt omina* and appear in both judgment and renewal stages of Yahweh's transformation process of his people.

Yahweh's transformation through judgment uses four sets of *nomina sunt omina* to communicate the impending destruction Israel will endure and resultant absence of Yahweh they will experience. The first set of *nomina sunt omina* centers on יִזְרְעֶאל "God will sow/Jezreel" and begins the process of Israel's transformation by pronouncing Yahweh's judgment. This referential pun appears for the first time in 1:4 to communicate Yahweh's sowing of judgment on

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[229] Except for יִזְרְעֶאל in 2:3 that is reversed with בְּנֵי אֵל־חָי "sons of the living God."

[230] Davies notes how the people's response "You are my God" fulfills the prophecy of 2:22 (that they will know Yahweh), but also reverses the rejection clause of 1:9 "I am not I am to you." *Hosea*, 96. Garrett argues similarly, but adds that that their response also "fulfills the prophecy of 2:20 [2:22 MT], that they will know the Lord. *Hosea, Joel*, 96.

the house of Israel for its promiscuous behavior. The pun is semantically loaded with its etymology "God will sow," its referent to the geographical location Jezreel and Hosea's first child, destruction imagery with Jehu's bloodshed, and paronomasia with the house of Israel. The second set of *nomina sunt omina* centers on לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied." First introduced in 1:6, this referential pun clarifies Yahweh's judgment as pitiless and nullifies any entitlement Israel may have regarding Yahweh's commitment to past covenantal promises (Lev 26:12; 2 Sam 7:14; Exod 6:6–7). The third and fourth sets of *nomina sunt omina* are introduced in 1:9 and announce the results of Israel's judgment. The third set focuses on לֹא עַמִּי "My-not-people" to state how the people in their apostasy have become like the foreign nations (not-people) so Yahweh will no longer recognize them as his people. The fourth kind of *nomen est omen* concentrates on לֹא־אֶהְיֶה "Not-I-Am" to declare how Israel no longer sees Yahweh as the "I-Am" of antiquity and consequently Yahweh will no longer be "I-Am" to them.

Yahweh's transformation of Israel happens through reversals of all four sets of *nomina sunt omina*. The household metaphor contains two sets of reversals. The first set appears in 2:1–3 where three of the four *nomina sunt omina* are reversed: לֹא עַמִּי becomes "children of the living God" (2:2) and "my people" (2:3), יִזְרְעֶאל becomes a "great day" (2:2), and לֹא רֻחָמָה becomes "will be pitied" (2:3). The second set of reversals address all four *nomina sunt omina* to conclude the household metaphor in Hos 2:24–25. Each *nomen est omen* contains paronomasia that parallels the paronomasia connected to the parallel *nomina sunt omina* introduced in Hos 1. The cry of יִזְרְעֶאל is answered by Yahweh's sowing of cultivation and Yahweh's sowing of judgment becomes his sowing of the mother to himself. Yahweh, furthermore, reverses לֹא רֻחָמָה by proclaiming he will pity her and reverses לֹא עַמִּי by declaring to him "you are my people." Finally, the reversal of לֹא־אֶהְיֶה appears in the proper response requested of Israel to make in her

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renewed state, which is to say of Yahweh, "My God."

When translating these referential puns and their paronomasia, one must consider their interconnectedness and how they navigate readers through the metaphor of Yahweh's household. Translations should, therefore, try to render the *nomina sunt omina* consistently throughout the metaphor. This phonetic repetition will help canonical readers perceive how the *nomina sunt omina* tell Yahweh's story of transforming his people through judgment and renewal. I also recommend that translations prioritize the etymology of the *nomina sunt omina* since translations can be written in the form of proper nouns and the etymological meanings are imperative to understanding the reversals that carry Israel's judgment into renewal.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSLATING HOSEAN WORDPLAY OF EPHRAIM AND ISRAEL

Introduction

Where Chapter 3 discusses wordplay as it is used in Hosea's household metaphor (chapters 1–3), Chapter 4 discusses wordplay that addresses Israel and Ephraim (chapters 4–14). This section will show how the prophet emphatically uses wordplay to expose problems Yahweh has with their social, economic, religious, and political institutions. Assessment of each wordplay looks closely at how the prophet indicts, judges, exhorts, or rebuilds the institutions into a restored state with Yahweh.

Cases of Wordplay

Hosea 4:15; 5:8; 10:5

The expression בֵּית אָוֶן functions as the proper name Beth-aven which translates "house of wickedness." בֵּית אָוֶן appears three times throughout Hosea as a derogatory surrogate for "Bethel," meaning "house of God." Bethel was one of the locations where Jeroboam erected a golden calf that led the Northern Kingdom into idolatry (1 Kgs 12:28–29). By the time of Amos, Bethel became an epicenter for the kind of worship that Amos and, subsequently, Hosea disapproved (Amos 3:14; 4:4; 5:5–6; 7:10, 13).[1] Bethel was prominent in the political and cultic scene. Amos referred to the city as a "sanctuary of the king and royal residence," and it was the

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[1] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 372.

location of the royal chapel that fused the monarchy to the priesthood (Amos 7:13).[2] To speak against Bethel was treasonous (Amos 7:10–12), which Hosea does three times with the pejorative name Beth-aven (4:15; 5:8; 10:5). Many agree this derogatory substitute for Bethel developed from Amos's warning that Bethel shall become like אָוֶן "wickedness/injustice" (Amos 5:5).[3] In Hosea, the name first appears as a warning to Israel not to go up to בֵּית אָוֶן and take the oath, "As surely as the Lord lives" (4:15), an oath custom that was privileged to faithful Israelites (Deut 6:13; 10:20).[4] Beth-aven appears a second time in a list of geographical sites within the land of Benjamin, including Gibeah, Ramah, and Benjamin. Israel is instructed to shout a war cry at Beth-aven to alert the people to Yahweh's impending judgment (5:8). Beth-aven's third appearance cuts at the root of apostasy Hosea associates with Bethel. The prophet announces Yahweh's termination of Samaria's political and cultic facilities. The king will be useless against Yahweh's judgment, and its inhabitants will fear for the calf of Beth-aven because its glory will depart from it (10:5). The following section will investigate how בֵּית אָוֶן operates as a polysemantic pun to alert audiences to the apostasy happening at the cultic center of Bethel.

Translation and Grammar of the Wordplay

Ancient translations vary significantly in their treatment of בֵּית אָוֶן. 𝔊 privileges the expression's use as a proper name over its etymology by translating all three occurrences with the declension ὁ οἶκος and the transliteration אָוֶן "Ων." Other Greek versions, however, differ in their treatment of בֵּית אָוֶן as a proper name and in translating its etymology. In 4:15 α′, σ′, and θ′

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[2] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 372.

[3] Harper, *Hosea*, 263, 274, 346; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 106, 122, 195; Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 12, 13, 20; McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 99, 105, 132; Wolff, *Hosea*, 171; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 372, 406, 555; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* 84–85, 102, 161; Landy, *Hosea*, 64; Dearman, *Hosea*, 167, 181, 265.

[4] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 372.

translate אָוֶן with ἀνωφελοῦς "uselessness." The term ἀδικίας "wrongdoing/injustice" appears in

Codice 42 of σ′.[5] α′ continues in 5:8 to use ἀνωφελής, but θ′ changes to οἴκῳ Ὤν, and σ′ provides

a full transliteration Βὴθ Ὤν.[6] In 10:5 α′ continues to use ἀνωφελής while ἀδικίας appears in σ′.[7]

The Targum reads בֵית־אֵל "Bethel" in 4:15 and 10:5, which eliminates the derogatory nuance 𝔐

evokes with אָוֶן. In 5:8 the Targum substitutes בֵּית אָוֶן with בְבֵית־מַקְדְשָׁא "temple house" which

localizes the אָוֶן "wickedness" imagery at the site's temple.

The expression בֵּית אָוֶן is translated three general ways. Most commentators and canonical

translations transliterate בֵּית אָוֶן "Beth-aven" and associate all three occurrences in Hosea with the

city Bethel.[8] A second approach translates the whole expression's etymology. α′, σ′, and θ′ do

this with house of ἀνωφελής "uselessness" and ἀδικίας "wrongdoing." Ben Zvi translates the

etymology of בֵּית אָוֶן with "Iniquitytown." A third approach is to combine translation with

transliteration as seen with 𝔊, which combines בֵּית "ὁ οἶκος" and אָוֶן "Ὤν." The BFC uniquely

prioritizes the polysemy of בֵּית אָוֶן and translates with its literal referent "Bethel" followed by the

etymology אָוֶן "l'enfer"; thus, "Béthel-l'enfer," meaning "Bethel-the hell."

In order to reproduce the referential punning of בֵּית אָוֶן, a translator must consider the

phonetic similarities between Bêt ʾāwen and Bêt el and simultaneously evoke the antagonistic

etymologies of a "House of God" and a "House of Wickedness." Translations can reproduce

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[5] Frederick Fields, *Origenis Hexaplorum* vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875), 946.

[6] Fields, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, 948.

[7] Fields, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, 956.

[8] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra On Hosea*, 49, 93–94; Harper, *Hosea*, 263; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 106, 122, 195; Wolff, *Hosea*, 72, 104, 171; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 343, 399, 547; Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 64, 78, 127. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 71, 97, 156; Hubbard, *Hosea*, 116–17, 131, 186; Beeby, *Hosea*, 57, 65, 130; Davies, *Hosea*, 128, 153, 234, 240; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 136, 150, 212; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 161, 193, 399; Dearman, *Hosea*, 156, 180, 258. Canonical translations that transliterate with a variant of "Beth-aven" include CJB, ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, NIV, NLT, RSV, YLT. Translations that translate בֵּית אָוֶן dynamically include E. A. Knauf who argues בֵּית אָוֶן derives from an original *bet ʾawwan* meaning "House of Refuge." "Beth-Aven," *Biblica* 65 (1984): 251–253 and Ben Zvi who prioritizes the etymology of בֵּית אָוֶן and translates it "Iniquitytown." *Hosea*, 116.

aspects of the pun's phonetics by leveraging certain elements related to both pronouns. Common to both בֵּית אָוֶן and בֵּת־אֵל is the noun בֵּית "house," which uses repetition to link the two pronouns. Said another way, "Beth-" or "House of . . ." can evoke aspects of either בֵּית אָוֶן or בֵּת־אֵל simultaneously. Since the etymology of אָוֶן is crucial to the meaning of its use, I suggest translating rather than transliterating it. One translation option, then, is "Beth-Wicked" which preserves only a partial phonetic link to "Bethel" and does not communicate the full etymology with בֵּית "House." Another translation option is "House of Wickedness," which offers audiences the full etymological meaning of בֵּית אָוֶן but presupposes they know "House" in Hebrew is בֵּית and can link בֵּית to בֵּת־אֵל "Bethel." Arguably, the most effective way to help audiences link בֵּית אָוֶן to בֵּת־אֵל is to transliterate בֵּית "Beth." Although this transliteration loses the full etymology, its phonetics must be present for most audiences to have a chance at connecting it with בֵּת־אֵל "Bethel." One option that uses phonetic play to link אָוֶן to the אֵל "God" of בֵּת־אֵל is with rhyme; for example, rhyming "God" with "Fraud" for the translation "Beth-Fraud." The rhyme, however, presupposes knowledge of אֵל from בֵּת־אֵל to mean "God." Furthermore, the translation "Fraud" distorts the semantics of אָוֶן which refers more literally to the broader category of wickedness.

The referential punning is indictment and its pragmatic focus wants audiences to emphatically interrelate the etymology of Bethel, "House of God," with "House of Wickedness" to turn from their apostasy in Bethel. The BFC captures this focus by combining "Bethel," the literal referent, and an interpretation of the etymology of אָוֶן "the hell." The BFC translation בֵּית אָוֶן "Bethel-the hell" creates a convenient rhyme, but אָוֶן could be produced with a more literal rhyme such as "scandal"; thus, "Bethel of Scandal," or more contextually with "infidel"; thus, "Bethel the infidel." A more literal translation with less phonetic play could render אָוֶן

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"wickedness" or "iniquity"; thus, בֵּית אָוֶן Bethel of Wickedness.

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

The prophet uses בֵּית אָוֶן to undermine the cultic conventions promoted by the religious

centers in Bethel. He strategically uses referential punning that causes audiences to blend the

socio-political and cultic world of Bethel with the Yahwism he pronounces throughout his

messages. He wants audiences to realize the irony that the location bearing the etymology

"House of God" is producing behavior and worship that is contrary to anything godly of

Yahweh. At the surface, בֵּית אָוֶן calls what comes from Bethel "wicked" and "idolatrous." The

ambiguity, however, challenges audiences to explore or revisit the truths about Yahweh and

about the center of worship that promotes genuine worship of Yahweh. If Baal worship at

Bethel's religious centers, whether substitutionary of Yahweh or syncretistic, is אָוֶן "wicked,"

then what does proper worship of Yahweh look like? The derogatory name indicts the current

cultic activity at Bethel and challenges audiences to either recall in their worship what they know

is true of Yahweh or investigate the wickedness and idolatrous nature of their worship to rid

themselves of it.

The pun's appearance in 4:15 combines political and cultic contexts. The prophet expresses

his concern that Judah would succumb to Israel's promiscuity and goes on to rebuke Israel from

ever swearing in בֵּית אָוֶן, "As Yahweh lives." A similar scene is portrayed in 1 Kgs 12, only with

the fear of influence reversed. When the Northern Kingdom of Israel breaks from Judah,

Jeroboam moves Israel's worship to Bethel and Dan because he fears that his people's heart will

turn to the king of Judah by worshiping at the Jerusalem temple. After making two golden calves

he swore, "Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (1 Kgs

12:27–29). Jeroboam furthermore established Bethel as the place where the high priests were

stationed and where he regularly made sacrifices before the calves (12:32). The pun בֵּית אָוֶן

inverts and nullifies Jeroboam's actions and influence to expose how wicked and idolatrous

worship at Bethel has become. Where Jeroboam did not want worship in Judah to influence the

Israelites' loyalty to him and his kingdom, Hosea does not want Israel's idolatrous worship at

Bethel to impact Judah. Where Jeroboam established Bethel as the epicenter of the Northern

Kingdom's worship, Hosea tears it down by calling its House of God a House of Wickedness.

Where Jeroboam initiates his golden calves as the gods who delivered Israel from Egypt, Hosea

rebukes the people from swearing to Yahweh because of their deception and fraudulence. Their

worship strays so far from Yahweh that they can no longer swear "As Yahweh lives." As Stuart

notes, Israel's only recourse was to abandon worship at Bethel altogether.[9] The pun indicts

Israel's worship at Bethel as deceptive and idolatrous and shames Israel before her neighbor,

Judah, from whom she tried so hard to distinguish herself, only to accomplish apostasy.

The second appearance of בֵּית אָוֶן (Hos 5:8) concludes a series of three locations where its

people are instructed to sound alerts of impending destruction. Most commentators link this alert

to v.10 which warns of Judah's princes becoming like those who move a boundary (i.e., those

poised to conquer land). Since Alt and Noth, the historical setting is largely understood as around

the Syro-Ephraimite war.[10] The Northern Kingdom and Judah vied for the region of Benjamin

since Abijah captured Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethel from Israelite control early in the ninth

century (2 Chr 13:19; c. 1 Kgs 15:16–22; 2 Kgs 14:11–14; 16:5; Isa 7:6). Stuart suggests that

after Assyria attacked the north, Pekah likely withdrew most of his troops from the southern

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[9] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 137.

[10] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 103.

regions of his kingdom which left Benjamin vulnerable to Ahaz's taking.[11] He claims the south to north listing of the cities followed by war cries and alerts mentioned in Hos 5:8 allude to an attack from the south.[12] Whether or not Hos 5:10 and the divided kingdom's tension over the Benjamin region provides the setting for the war cries and horn blasts in 5:8, the impending disaster threatening the Benjamin region is apparent.

The prophet alerts his audiences to this disaster through staircase parallelism that climaxes in wordplay. The staircase uses a list of cities with etymologies of cultic significance and more particularly cultic apostasy. Hosea's staircase parallelism begins with normal names for the first two cities and then breaks the pattern with בֵּית אָוֶן "House of Wickedness." The pattern break highlights the etymology of בֵּית אָוֶן and causes audiences to recall the etymologies of Gibeah "hill/hilltop" and Ramah "high place." All three etymologies alert audiences to abominable worship on high places.[13] Furthermore, the list of cities shows progression away from the temple in Jerusalem, which reflects the wayward progression of Ephraim's worship from authentic worship of Yahweh.[14] The prophet uses the polysemy of Gibeah, Ramah, and בֵּית אָוֶן to illuminate Ephraim's apostasy and identify the reason for Ephraim's impending destruction (see Hos 4:13; 10:8).

The third appearance of בֵּית אָוֶן (Hos 10:5) occurs in apposition with עֶגְלוֹת "calves" to epitomize Israel's idolatry. 𝔊 and BHS editors emend the text to לְעֵגֶל "calf," masculine singular,

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[11] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 103.

[12] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 406. Of Noth. Garrett alludes to the possibility (though unlikely) that the shouts are liturgical shouts of the fertility cults. *Hosea, Joel*,150.

[13] When Jeroboam instituted the golden calves and established the priesthood at Bethel, he also set up a בֵּית "house" on בָּמוֹת "high places" for priests to live (1 Kgs 12:31) even though worshiping on such high places was forbidden (Deut 12:1–7).

[14] Gibeah is three miles, Ramah is five miles, and Bethel is eleven miles north of Jerusalem. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 102.

since the masculine is the normal form of the object of idolatry (Exod 32; 1 Kgs 12).[15] This emendation, also harmonizes the feminine plural calves with the third masculine singular suffixes that appear throughout the rest of the verse in reference to it. Most accept this emendation but several accept the more difficult feminine plural עֶגְלוֹת "calves."[16] Andersen and Freedman suggest the feminine plural is "another example of Hosea's use of plurals as the name of a deity, perhaps the female counterpart of the 'calf of Samaria' (Hos 8:5, 6), and consort of the 'Resident of Samaria.'"[17] Davies and Macintosh argue that the feminine plural ending is an abstract plural denoting "calfery" or "calfhood" (i.e., "the calf cult"). They suggest the feminine is coined by Hosea to mock the idolatry.[18]

These suggestions are possible, but another explanation for the ambiguous feminine plural עֶגְלוֹת "calves" is found in the feminine singular appearance of עֶגְלָה "heifer" in 10:11 and the feminine plural personified by the "mothers" in 10:14. In 10:11, Hosea calls Ephraim a trained heifer that needs harnessing, which evidences Hosea's tendency to call the people a עֶגְלָה "heifer." The singular feminine עֶגְלָה "heifer" is used collectively for Ephraim, but in 10:5 the prophet uses the feminine plural "calves" to foreshadow Ephraim's judgment as the slashing of mothers (feminine plural) with their children (Hos 10:14–15).[19] The "calves of בֵּית אָוֶן" may, therefore, be a derogatory way of referring to the idolatrous people of Bethel while alluding to

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[15] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 209; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 555.

[16] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 346; Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 20; Wolff, *Hosea*, 171; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 161–62; Hubbard, *Hosea*, 185–86; Beeby, *Hosea*, 131; Dearman, *Hosea*, 258.

[17] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 555.

[18] See Davies, *Hosea*, 237, Macintosh, *Hosea*, 400, and Rudolph, *Hosea*, 195–96. Dearman calls it a "polemical slur on the calf figure." *Hosea*, 224. It is possible that Hosea coined the feminine plural to mock Ephraim's idolatry; however, the grammar does not indicate why Hosea would craft his mockery with the feminine here but not in 8:5–6 in his rejection of the "calf of Samaria."

[19] Compare to the "cows of Bashan on the mountain of Samaria" used by Amos of the women who oppressed the poor, crushed the needy, and transgressed upon entering Bethel (4:1).

the calf they worship.

To reiterate, one level of meaning of בֵּית אָוֶן indicts the calf (masculine singular) worship at

Bethel as אָוֶן "idolatrous" and "wicked." This interpretation is dependent on the masculine

singular pronominal suffixes that follow throughout the verse, referring to the calf. The

inhabitants of Samaria are foretold to mourn for "it," the priests will cry out[20] over "it," and "its"

glory will depart from "it."[21] A second level of meaning comes from the feminine plural "calves"

whose more elusive referent is supported in the feminine judgment imagery of 10:14–15. By

calling the people "calves of בֵּית אָוֶן" Hosea says to his audiences that you are what you worship,

calves, and because you worship the calf of Bethel you are wicked and will be destroyed.

Hosea 5:2

The clause וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ "Slaughter, rebels have made deep," in 5:2 is the last in a

series of three indictments leveled against the priests, the house of Israel, and the house of the

king beginning in 5:1. The indictments use a hunting metaphor to explain the consequences of

the leaders' apostasy. The Hebrew of this clause is difficult to translate sensibly.[22] The ancients

struggled with its literal meaning and modern commentators and canonical translations show a

variety of ways to reasonably render it. This section will investigate how this final indictment

continues the hunting metaphor and uses ambiguity to specify the nature of the leaders'

consequences.

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[20] Most attribute the wailing to lamentation for the calves' glory departing but Garrett suggests it is a liturgical expression of Baal's life and death cycle of fertility. *Hosea, Joel*, 209–210.

[21] Commentators disagree over the time aspect of the verbs in 10:5. The debate centers on whether the glory of the calves is departing/will depart (Wolff, *Hosea*, 171; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 210; Macintosh, *Hosea*, 399.) or have already departed (Andersen and Freeman, *Hosea*, 547; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 156; Dearman, *Hosea*, 259).

[22] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 386. See also Gert Kwakkel, "Paronomasia, Ambiguities and Shifts in Hos 5:1–2," in *Vetus Testamentum* 61 (2011): 603.

Translation and Grammar of the Wordplay

The phrase וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ "Slaughter, rebels have made deep" is difficult to make clear in translation. The ancient sources struggled with it, as Harper shows in his remarkably long list of emendations translators have made.[23] Some of the more influential emendations are discussed here. Although σ′, θ′, and ε′ follow in line with 𝔐, 𝔊 turns the phrase into a relative clause that completes the hunting imagery from v. 1. It translates dynamically with ὃ οἱ ἀγρεύοντες τὴν θήραν κατέπηξαν "which those who hunt prey have fixed." The relative pronoun is neuter and reflects the antecedent, "the net" in v. 1.[24] 𝔊 makes the clause a statement of clarification regarding the professionalism of the entrapment set by the priestly and political offices mentioned in v. 1. The Targum translates dynamically with וְדָבְחִין לְטַעֲוָן מַסגָן "And they slaughter to idols numerous victims." However, like 𝔐, the *waw* initiates a new clause that builds on the depravity of the priests, the house of Israel, and the house of the king beginning in v. 1. The BHS editors suggest וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים is corrupt and should read וְשַׁחַת הַשִּׁתִּים "the pit of Shittim." Although they preserve the 𝔐 third masculine plural perfect הֶעְמִיקוּ "they have made deep," they argue it was probably a second masculine plural imperfect תַּעֲמִיקוּ "you make deep." Altogether, the emendations would read, "You have deepened the pit of Shittim." Should the emendations be accepted, this reconstructed clause continues the imagery of indictment through place names and hunting metaphors set forth in 5:1.

Commentators also differ on their treatment of the clause וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ. Ibn Ezra translates literally with "The idolaters are gone deep in making slaughter." He interprets allegorically where the idolaters denote Baal worshipers and "gone deep" implies the securing of

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[23] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 267–68.

[24] Glenny, *Hosea*, 103.

traps mentioned in 5:1 in hopes that those passing by would not notice them.[25] Harper accepts the

emendation of הַשִּׁטִּים "Shittim" as a continuation of place-names recognized for the "peculiarly

seductive character of the worship which they represented," that is, the camping place of Moses

and Joshua (Nu 25:1; Jos 2:1; 3:1) and the place where the affair of Baal-Peor happened.[26]

Rudolph calls 𝔐 "unverständlich." He accepts the BHS emendations and translates the clause as

a continuation of indictment that begins in 5:1; thus, "and a deep pit of Shittim."[27] Buss translates

with "and a pit in Shittim, dug deep." This follows the BHS which he admits is "freely

translated."[28] McKeating claims "the Hebrew is meaningless" and translates with "The rebels!

They have shown base ingratitude."[29] He considers the Hebrew for "rebel" and the context

provided by "slaughter" as concrete and builds his translation around them. McKeating admits

the BHS is a legitimate possibility since it likens "Israel to three different types of snares: a bird

trap (at Mizpah), a net (at Tabor) and a pit, for larger game (at Shittim)."[30] He continues to

suggest these places might have been chosen because of their affiliation with Baal worship

although Shittim's location near Baal-peor (Num 25) is the only real evidence for this. Wolff

follows the BHS emendations to translate with שחת "pit" because it "fits better" with the verb

עמק.[31] He also argues "the superfluous ה could have belonged to the following word and thus

would be a misreading of ב." Wolff blends this transposition with the BHS emendations to

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[25] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 57.

[26] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 269.

[27] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 115–16.

[28] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 13.

[29] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 103.

[30] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 103.

[31] Wolff, *Hosea*, 94.

translate, "a pit in Shittim that was dug deep."[32] Andersen and Freedman also deem the original

Hebrew clause "unintelligible in its present form."[33] They offer five possibilities for שֵׂטִים. The

first is to leave it as it is and read it as "a noun meaning revolters or corrupt ones from the root

שׂוט." The second possibility is to see שֵׂטִים as a variant of *šēdîm* that was inspired through

assonance in the preceding word. Third, שֵׂטִים could be translated as *Šiṭṭîm*, which is the location

mentioned in Num 25:1. A fourth possibility is "to find a noun derived from the root *śṭm*,

meaning a hostile person, parallel to *mûsār*, referring to Yahweh."[34] A final possibility is that a ח

was lost from the root of the second word שֵׂטִים and originally they were a cognate pair.[35]

Andersen and Freedman translate according to the first possibility (thus, "the rebels"), but they

make sense of it by translating עמק intransitively, "are deep," instead of the traditional transitive

"they made deep." Their final translation is "The rebels are deep in slaughter."[36] Jeremias accepts

the BHS emendations but translates עמק as an asyndetic relative clause for the translation "*zur*

tiefen ‚Fanggrube in Schittim'!" He puts שַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים in quotes to indicate the expression as

collectively and idiomatically denoting the extreme depth of the pit.[37] Jeremias supports the idea

that each place name is chosen as a historical location of a cultic offense.[38] Stuart follows the

BHS emendations to translate, "A pit dug at Shittim."[39] He argues the locations mentioned

throughout vv. 1–2 are not chosen because of their cult centers but because they show "the

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[32] Wolff, *Hosea*, 94.

[33] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 386.

[34] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 388.

[35] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 388.

[36] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 388.

[37] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 73.

[38] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 75.

[39] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 88.

leadership is corrupting the people everywhere."[40] Hubbard rejects the BHS emendations in favor

of reproducing Hosea's "normal pattern of interpreting metaphors with more literal clauses at

either the beginning or close of the figure of speech."[41] Otherwise, he argues, "we stare vainly at

the text to discern the precise nature of the crime."[42] As a result, he follows Andersen and

Freedman to translate with "The rebels are deep in slaughter," while understanding the slaughter

as referring to child-sacrifice (Isa 57:5; Ezek 16:21; 23:39; see also Gen 22:10).[43] Davies favors

the emendation of שֵׁטִים to שִׁתִּים because "it is typical of Hosea to locate the sins which he

criticizes by the use of place-names (Hos 1:4; 6:7–9; etc.)."[44] He, however, prefers to keep the

third masculine plural suffix on הֶעְמִיקוּ to maintain consistency with the third masculine plural

suffix at the end of the verse (לְכֻלָּם); thus, "They have made deep the pit of Shittim."[45] Garrett

argues the violence produced in the translation "the rebels are deep in slaughter" does not suit the

context of religious apostasy.[46] Furthermore, the translation depends on "very unusual Hebrew."

First, the feminine form of the noun שַׁחֲטָה occurs only here, so its meaning "slaughter" must be

appropriated from the masculine form שׁחט "slaughter." Second, שֵׁטִים can only be translated

"rebels" based on the root שׂוּט found in Ps 40:5 or the word סֵטִים "deeds that swerve" in Ps 101:3.

Third, the verb עמק in the *Hiphil* can mean "they make deep," but it can also be rendered

adverbially as "they are in deep."[47] As a result, Garrett opts to accept several BHS emendations

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[40] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 92.

[41] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 123.

[42] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 123.

[43] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 123.

[44] Davies, *Hosea*, 137.

[45] Davies, *Hosea*, 138.

[46] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 142.

[47] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 142 fn. 127.

to produce the translation "and a pit they have dug for Shittim." He understands this translation

to fit the overall context better and continues Hosea's use of three-fold patterns (hunting

metaphors and place names). Garrett argues that the place names are selected for their sacredness

to the people, that the places are "traps in the sense that they induced the ordinary people into

apostasy.[48] Macintosh corrects the pointing of שֵׂטִים to the participial form שָׂטִים to translate

"These perverse men." He argues the absence of an article follows "the principle of

'indeterminateness for the sake of amplification.'"[49] He also translates שַׁחֲטָה as a *Qal* infinitive

construct from the verb שׁחת "become corrupt," suggesting שַׁחֲטָה is deliberately spelled

differently (possibly for its graphic similarity to שָׂטִים).[50] Macintosh translates the whole clause,

"These perverse men have delved deep into corruption."[51] Ben Zvi does not offer a full

translation of the clause but calls שָׂטִים a "connoted pun" that evokes "Shittim" and the

circumstances of Num 25 and Josh 2 and 3.[52] Dearman adopts the BHS emendations to translate,

"a pit of Shittim they dug deep."[53] Like others, he argues it follows in line with the other place

names mentioned in v. 1 that likely target centers of Israel's political and cultic corruption.[54]

The variety of translations mentioned above show tension between making sense of the

literal Hebrew and how much to emend the text. On the one hand are the BHS emendations that

are the source of most modern translations but executed in a variety of ways.[55] Most who accept

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[48] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 143.

[49] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 179. Quoting GK 125c.

[50] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 179.

[51] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 179.

[52] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 139.

[53] Dearman, *Hosea*, 169.

[54] Dearman, *Hosea*, 171–73.

[55] Those who translate the BHS emendations include Harper, *Hosea*, 269; Wolff, *Hosea*, 94, 98; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 116; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 88 fn. 2.a, 2.b, 2.c; Dearman, *Hosea*, 169; NJB, NRSV, NLT, BFC, FBJ, EIN,

the emendations change שַׁחֲטָה "slaughter" to שַׁחַת "a pit" and שֵׂטִים "revolters" to שִׁטִּים "Shittim" and move the final ה of שַׁחֲטָה to the following word שִׁטִּים. As others have argued, though, this translation requires an unnatural amount of corrections.[56] Furthermore, the third masculine plural suffix on לְכֻלָּם "all of them" supports the third masculine plural referent of שֵׂטִים "revolters" and the subject of הֶעְמִיקוּ "they have made deep." On the other hand, some translations try to preserve the Hebrew in its canonical form. Andersen and Freedman, Macintosh, and many canonical translations (NASB, ASV, ERV, ESV, KJV, NET, NIV) literally reproduce the Hebrew in varying degrees with moderate vowel repointing.

Neither fully accepting the BHS emendations nor rendering the Hebrew literally, however, can make full sense of the Hebrew clause. For this reason, Jeremias and Ben Zvi suggest that multiple levels of meaning may be operative. I submit with them that the clause וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ is polysemantic and blends two sets of imagery into striking indictment of apostasy in Israel's leadership. The text's written level meaning states with some grammatical adjustments "the revolters have made slaughter deep." This translation assumes the feminine form שַׁחֲטָה, which occurs only here, but the feminine regularly means the same as its masculine counterpart; thus, "slaughter." Hosea also regularly uses the feminine for Israel and Israel's leadership, so the feminine שַׁחֲטָה should not be alarming.[57] One use of the feminine for Israel relevant to understanding the feminine referent of שַׁחֲטָה is Hosea's addressing Israel as a heifer in 4:16 (third feminine singular; see also Hos 10:11). Hosea's use of the third feminine singular for שַׁחֲטָה

HRD, LUT. Commentators who translate the Hebrew literally but without indicating wordplay include Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 380, 386–89, and Macintosh, *Hosea*, 178. A translation that blends the literal and the BHS emendations is FBJ. Translations that have dynamic elements include LSG, NEG, TOB, ELB, ELO, SCH, SCL, 𝔊, and the Vulgate.

[56] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 386.

[57] Hos 2:4–25; 4:15, 16, 18; 10:5, 11; etc.

"slaughter" would, therefore, harken readers to Israel as a heifer mentioned earlier in the text. The masculine form שׁחט "slaughter" is used of animals for sacrifice (Lev 6:18; 1 Sam 1:25; 14:32; see also Gen 37:31; Num 11:22), so Hosea is likely using the feminine singular with שַׁחֲטָה to identify Israel as the heifer that is profaned slaughter for sacrifice. The revolters/rebels are the royal house and priesthood who metaphorically have "deepened" or caused themselves to "stand waist deep" in their slaughter. The literal reading, therefore, states that in the leadership's profane slaughtering (i.e., sacrifices)—likely to the Baals—they have slaughtered Israel, the stubborn heifer (see also Hos 4:16).

I submit that the statement וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ is intended to evoke a subtext produced by a series of phonetically similar words that reads וְשַׁחְתָּה שִׁתִּים הֶעְמִיקוּ "and they have deepened a pit at Shittim." The reconstructed clause is usually translated "pit *of* Shittim," however, such an expression is not evidenced anywhere else. The translation "pit *at* Shittim" uses the nominal form of שׁחת but not in construct with שִׁתִּים; rather, it renders שִׁתִּים "Shittim" as an accusative of place, thus "at Shittim."[58] This subtext has minimal alterations, as shown above, and fits the context by continuing both the hunting metaphors and the list of place names started in Hos 5:1 (you have been a *snare* at *Mizpah*, and a *net* spread over *Tabor*, and they have deepened a *pit* at *Shittim*). Imagery of a pit at Shittim evokes Israel's history of fatal entrapment in their promiscuous behavior with Moabite women (Num 25). This subtext consequently clarifies the revolters and their apostasy as a deep pit entrapping Israel because of their promiscuous behavior and idolatrous sacrifices (see Hos 4:14). Israel's leadership are the revolters who are rebelling against Yahweh and turning Israel into a deep pit for slaughter.

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[58] Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010): 20 §54b.

To reproduce both levels of meaning, translators can leverage the pragmatics of the pun, which is to convince audiences of priestly corruption and turn their attention to Yahweh (see Hos 5:4). The pragmatic focus can be reproduced by writing the unwritten subtext as a modifier to its subject in the written text. I indicate the paronomasia of the semantics with the following color coding: "and slaughter, revolters made deep" (text) / "and a pit at Shittim, they have deepened" (subtext). The verb עמק "make deep" is the constant of both statements and projects a digging to entrap animals that is done by the שֵׂטִים "revolters," who is the only subject specified. The slaughter and a pit at Shittim are the objects that are deepened where a pit at Shittim clarifies the slaughter. I suggest translating the long-hand statement, which includes the written text and subtext as a collective unit using italics to indicate additional meaning that is implied through paronomasia but not written. I propose the translation "And revolters made the slaughter a deep *pit at Shittim*." This translation does not employ phonetic play; however, it communicates the wordplay's polysemy and continues the series of hunting metaphors and place names.

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

The priests, the house of Israel, and the house of the king are explicitly cited as the addressees of Hosea's wordplay, but the prophet's unique use of the feminine with שַׁחֲטָה makes the indictment fall on the entire nation of Israel. The wordplay draws audiences to associate with either those authorities who led Israel astray from Yahweh or those who are slaughtered by the authorities. The wordplay indicts Israel's leaders for leading the nation away from Yahweh through their apostasy. It reinforces the statement in 5:1 that the following מִשְׁפָּט "judgment" concerns them.[59] The subtext draws leaders to associate themselves with revolters who are

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[59] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 385; Hubbard, *Hosea*, 122. Some read מִשְׁפָּט as a double-entendre for "judgment" and "justice" (Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 142; Dearman, *Hosea*, 171).

described as men in antiquity who were promiscuous with Moabite women, offered profane sacrifices to gods, and were executed before the fierce anger of Yahweh (Num 25:1–9). The wordplay's subtext holds the leaders accountable for entrapping Israel in a pit too deep for her to escape and led her to slaughter (see also Hos 9:13). The wordplay also indicts Israel as a slaughtered people. They are a stubborn heifer who does not let Yahweh pasture them (Hos 4:16). They are a profane slaughter/sacrifice that has become entrapped by a deep pit created by their leaders.

<div style="text-align:center;">Hosea 9:16 and 14:9</div>

The prophet plays on the etymology of אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" and the noun פְּרִי "fruit" twice (9:16 and 14:9). The play arguably builds on the Genesis tradition where Joseph names his second born son אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" because "God has made me [Joseph] fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Gen 41:52). Ephraim's etymology, therefore, builds on פְּרִי "fruit" to mean "fruitful."[60] Geographically, Ephraim is one of Israel's more fertile grounds for the Northern Kingdom, but the following section will examine how the prophet ironically uses its etymology to expose Ephraim's fruitless condition (9:16) and Ephraim's inability to see Yahweh as the source of its fruitfulness (14:9).

Grammar and Translation of the Wordplays

Ancients vary only slightly from translating אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי literally. Greek traditions translate אֶפְרַיִם Εφραιμ "Ephraim" and פְּרִי καρπός "fruit" in both 9:16 and 14:9. The Targum is mostly dynamic. In 9:16, it replaces "Ephraim" with "house of Israel" and uses the expression גוֹב לָא יַעֲבֵיד "it will not reproduce growth" in place of "it will not produce fruit." In 14:9

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[60] K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 766.

Yahweh's self-proclamation as the source of Ephraim's "fruit" becomes the source of the house

of Israel's סָלְיַח לִתְיֻובַתְהֹון "pardon for their backslidings." BHS editors have no problem with the

semantics of "Ephraim" and "fruit" except to emend the second person singular pronominal

suffix of פֶּרְיְךָ in 14:9 to a third masculine singular (פִּרְיֹו) to match the third masculine singular

suffix on וַאֲשׁוּרֶנּוּ "I will regard him."

Most modern commentators translate אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי literally in both 9:16 and 14:9. Rudolph

argues that the present compilation of 9:16 is a case of homoioarcton where a scribe overlooked

16a because it begins with a mention of Ephraim like v.11 and overlooked v.16b because it

begins with a counterfactual concession like v.12a. These forgotten sections were then written in

the margin and later became absorbed into the text in its present position.[61] Rudolph, therefore,

moves 9:16a between v. 10 and v. 11 and 9:16b between vv. 11 and 12.[62] The result of this

reconstruction is a new picture that puts אֶפְרַיִם in wordplay with פְּרִי and אֲבָרִים "bird wings"

because of the fowl metaphor of 9:11.[63] Rudolph considers אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9 wordplay and

argues that it not only evokes fertility in humans, animals, and crops, but is an outward sign of an

undisturbed agreement between God and people.[64] Buss does not allude to wordplay between

"Ephraim" and "fruit" in 9:16 but sees פְּרִי as repetition that links together the oracles of 9:10–17

and 10:1–8. He translates אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in both 9:16 and 14:9 literally.[65] Wolff calls the

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[61] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 184–86. See also Macintosh, *Hosea*, 379.

[62] See Harper who puts all of v. 16 between vv. 11 and 12. *Amos and Hosea*, 337–38; Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 20; McKeating, *Hosea and Micah*, 129.

[63] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 186. Rudolph's splicing of 9:16 (and that of others inspired by Wellhausen) has been shown superfluous because of its continuation of themes proposed earlier in the section, so a polysemous wordplay between אפרים "Ephraim" and אֲבָרִים "bird wings" can be dismissed. Macintosh, *Hosea*, 379–80. For 9:10–17 as a single unit, see Wolff, *Hosea*, 162; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 537–39; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 150.

[64] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 253.

[65] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 20, 27.

appearance of אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 9:16 alliteration and a pun that "carries the meaning (see also Gen 41:52): 'The fruitful land will become fruitless.'"[66] He argues similar wordplay possibilities exist in 14:9.[67] Jeremias calls the appearance of אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 9:16 "*Wortspiel*" that continues the planting imagery from v.13 to suggest the "*Fruchtland wird fruchtlos*."[68] He argues אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי also operate as wordplay in 14:9 to say the fruit is the "*vollgültiges Leben*" that only Yahweh can give as opposed to the misguided fruitfulness and fertility expectations set forth in Canaanite mythology.[69] Stuart argues, "Since the sound of the word for 'fruit,' פרי, is vaguely reflected in the word Ephraim (אפרים), it is possible that a sort of pun is present."[70] He compares it to Gen 41:52 to suggest it shows how "Ephraim the 'doubly fruitful' . . . is now Ephraim the completely fruitless."[71] Stuart suggests אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9 are also possibly in wordplay, only this time Yahweh is shown to Israel as her only benefactor.[72] Hubbard notes Hosea "enjoyed punning on Ephraim's name both as a sign of judgment (cf. here [9:16] and 8:9) and restoration (cf. 14:8)."[73] He claims the prophet uses the pun in in 9:16 to reverse "the historic meaning of Ephraim's name which spoke of the fruitfulness . . . promised by God to Jacob (Gen. 48:3–6)"[74] and in 14:9 to strengthen the identity of Yahweh as the true source of Israel's livelihood.[75] Beeby acknowledges אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי as a pun in 9:16 and reproduces the pun with the phonetic play "The

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[66] Wolff, *Hosea*, 161 and 168.

[67] Wolff, *Hosea*, 237.

[68] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 125.

[69] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 173.

[70] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 154.

[71] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 154.

[72] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 217.

[73] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 179.

[74] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 178–79.

[75] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 245.

fruitful shall be fruitless."[76] Davies calls the appearance of אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 9:16 a "paradoxical

play on words . . . with intentional reminiscence of the popular etymology of the name (cf. Gen.

41:52)."[77] He argues the appearance of אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9 is "intentional word-play . . . but

now in the positive sense already given to the name [Ephraim] in Gen 41:52."[78] Macintosh calls

אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 9:16 a pun that "conveys the nation's fate and serves to negate the traditional

blessing of Ephraim formulated in Gen 41.52, and of Joseph in 49:22ff."[79] He also calls אֶפְרַיִם

and פְּרִי in 14:9 a word-play that helps to assure Ephraim that Yahweh is the source of its fruit.[80]

Dearman calls אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 9:16 a pun that describes the lack of fruit production which he

extends metaphorically to include children.[81] He calls אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9 wordplay and links it

to 9:16 and the mention of "fruit of the lips" in 14:2.[82] Ben Zvi calls both appearances of אֶפְרַיִם

and פְּרִי a pun. He describes אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 9:16 as a "nomen — anti-omen" of Ephraim's

etymology pronounced in Gen 41:52: "for God has made me fruitful."[83] He argues it projects "a

world upside down, that is, one in which that which is or is to be actually stands for the exact

opposite of that which should have been."[84] He extends such fruitlessness to include

childlessness as well. Ben Zvi also describes אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9 as a pun belonging to a stretch

of puns throughout Chapter Fourteen that play with the name אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim." He includes in

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[76] Beeby, *Hosea*, 124–25.

[77] Davies, *Hosea*, 231.

[78] Davies, Hosea, 309.

[79] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 378.

[80] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 579.

[81] Dearman, *Hosea*, 257.

[82] Dearman, *Hosea*, 344. This is based on the 𝔊 rendering of פָּרִים "young bull" with καρπόν (פְּרִי) "fruit."

[83] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 190.

[84] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 190.

this stretch פרים "young bulls" (v. 3), רפא "heal" (v. 5), and פריך "your fruit" (v. 9).[85]

Although most canonical translations and commentators render אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי literally in both 9:16 and 14:9, commentators generally agree that פְּרִי "fruit" phonetically plays on the etymology of אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim," an etymology that derives from the tradition of Gen 41:52 and possibly Gen 49:22. The combinations of אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי operate in paronomasia where the term פְּרִי shares in the sounds and etymology of אֶפְרַיִם. In the paronomasia, פְּרִי evokes multiple meanings of אֶפְרַיִם which in turn activates literal and metaphorical meanings in פְּרִי.

The paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי contributes to a context of judgment in 9:16 where Ephraim is stricken and its roots are withered. The paronomasia extends the degenerated plant imagery to highlight Ephraim's fruitlessness. The negative use of פְּרִי is ironic in that it activates Ephraim's etymology from the Genesis tradition which reflects Joseph's proclamation that God made him fruitful in the land of his affliction (Gen 41:52). Ephraim is birthed out of God's gift of fruitfulness to Joseph but has withered because of its wickedness. As a result, Yahweh makes Ephraim fruitless. Ephraim's fruitlessness is clarified by Ephraim's multivalent meaning as an etymological expression and a nation of people. "Ephraim," therefore, assigns פְּרִי literal and metaphorical meanings. Ephraim's etymology evokes the literal meaning פְּרִי "fruit," and Ephraim's entity as a nation evokes the metaphorical meaning פְּרִי "children," which is supported at the end of the verse by Yahweh's judgment of slaying the precious ones of the womb.

The paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9 refutes Ephraim's belief in idols as its source of fruitfulness with emphasis on Yahweh as the true source of its fruitfulness. Yahweh

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[85] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 289. I do not include the terms פרים "young bulls" (v. 3) and רפא "heal" (v. 5) as possible wordplay with אֶפְרַיִם. They are phonetically similar but אֶפְרַיִם is not in close proximity to them nor is אֶפְרַיִם the predominate addressee in chapter fourteen. Israel is the main addressee throughout 14:1-7, whereas אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" becomes the addressee in 14:8.

states in the beginning of the verse, "What more have I to do with idols?"[86] This rhetorical question is followed by a series of first person proclamations from Yahweh declaring himself as the true source of Ephraim's provisions. Yahweh declares himself the one who answers and looks after Ephraim, not its idols. His self-declaration climaxes in the paronomasia to identify himself as the source of what makes Ephraim, Ephraim. Said another way, Yahweh is the source of fruit for the one whose own etymology declares God as the source of its fruitfulness. As happens with the paronomasia in 9:16, the term פְּרִי evokes Ephraim's etymology reflected in the Genesis 41:52 tradition, particularly Joseph attributing fruitfulness specifically to God during a time when the land was afflicted. Just as God was the source of Joseph's fruitfulness, Ephraim should honor Yahweh, not idols, as the source of its fruitfulness. Also, like 9:16, the dual meaning of Ephraim as a nation of people and an etymological expression evokes literal and metaphorical meanings with פְּרִי. Literally, פְּרִי refers to plant production and harvest while metaphorically it evokes descendants.

Translators can leverage in each instance the pragmatics of the paronomasia, which encourages audiences to reflect on Ephraim's etymology and turn to Yahweh as the source of its fruitfulness. Part of the pragmatic focus is, therefore, to poke at Ephraim as the fruitful one. Beeby offers an effective lead to reproduce this focus in his translation of 9:16. He recreates the phonetic play in the clause פְּרִי בַלִי־יַעֲשׂוּן "they will not produce fruit" by recreating Ephraim's identity with a substantival פְּרִי, which he translates "The fruitful." He follows the substantival with alliterative antithesis, "shall be fruitless."[87] I suggest capitalizing the *f* in "fruitful" to graphically show "The Fruitful" as a proper name in paronomasia with אֶפְרַיִם, which signifies

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[86] On other possible speakers of this rhetorical question, see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 643–44. For this statement as Ephraim's confession, see Macintosh, *Hosea*, 576.

[87] Beeby, *Hosea*, 125.

Ephraim and "The Fruitful" as the same person. The modified translation reads, "Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; *Ephraim* the Fruitful shall be fruitless." "The Fruitful" communicates Ephraim's etymology and, consequently, its expected state as a fruitful people. The translation "The Fruitful" sets Ephraim's etymology in paronomasia with the verbal expression בְּלִי־יַעֲשֹׂוּן "be fruitless." Together, they form a new wordplay in the English that communicates the multivalent meanings produced in the original paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי ("Ephraim," Ephraim's etymology in part, and the literal translation of פְּרִי "fruit").

The same translation strategy can be used for the paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי in 14:9. When פְּרִי is translated as the substantival pronoun "The Fruitful," the title acts as a polysemantic pun that communicates in part Ephraim's etymology and preserves an aspect of its literal meaning פְּרִי "fruit." From אֶפְרַיִם . . . מִמֶּנִּי פֶּרְיְךָ נִמְצָא the translation reads, "Ephraim . . . by me you are founded 'O Fruitful.'"

The literary transfer of both sets of translations in Hos 9:16 and 14:9 create minimal semantic distortion. The structural changes that use polysemantic punning with פְּרִי in place of the original paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי preserves a literal rendering of all words in phonetic play. Slight structural alterations happen to פְּרִי to make the noun into the proper name "The Fruitful," but the literal semantics remain evident. These proposed translations maintain clear semantics and the new polysemy's phonetics enhance semantic meanings.

Semantic Force of the Wordplays

Throughout Hos 9:10–17 the prophet attacks Ephraim's etymology three times with a combination of agricultural and infertility imagery. First, Yahweh finds Israel/Ephraim like grapes in the desert. The irony, however, is Ephraim devoted itself to shame and that which was to be made fruitful by God is made barren by God (9:10–12). The prophet pronounces the irony

of Ephraim's etymology for a second time in 9:13. He appeals to the time when Ephraim was planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre but has become unfruitful with miscarrying wombs and dry breasts (9:14). The third and final cycle abandons any positive agricultural metaphor that plays on Ephraim's etymology. Rather, paronomasia solicits Ephraim's etymology to state that the one whom God was to make fruitful will be stricken; its root withered (9:16). The paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי highlights the antithesis or *nomen est omen* reversal of Ephraim to say that contrary to its name's meaning, it will bear no fruit. Even more, Ephraim's fruitlessness is extended to progeny, where Ephraim's children will be slain after birth.

Audiences are given two opportunities to reflect on positive moments in their antiquity when their existence reflected the fruitfulness implied in Ephraim's etymology (9:10, 13). The gloriousness of Ephraim's origins, however, is presented only to show audiences how depraved Ephraim has become because they devoted themselves to shame (9:10) and do not listen to Yahweh (9:17). The paronomasia highlights Ephraim's indicted state of destruction and challenges audiences to reflect on the etymology of Ephraim to see that Yahweh is the true source of their fruitfulness. Their apostasy from Yahweh, however, will lead them to the etymology's antithesis, fruitlessness.

Yahweh's final address to Ephraim in 14:9 uses paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם and פְּרִי to highlight Yahweh, not idols, as the source of Ephraim's fruitfulness.[88] The prophet prepares the paronomasia with a series of horticulture imagery that feeds into Ephraim's etymology. Yahweh declares with first person statements that he will be Israel's dew that will cause him to blossom like the lily and vine, take root like the cedars of Lebanon, gain beauty like the olive tree, etc.

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[88] As Macintosh notes, 14:10 serves as an epilogue of wisdom literature, stating the lesson one should learn from Hosea's message. *Hosea*, 582.

(14:6-8). After Yahweh projects Israel's horticultural renewal, he shifts his address to Ephraim whose etymology ironically bears the meaning "fruitful" but who attributes his fruitfulness to idols (14:9). Yahweh states clearly that he is finished with Ephraim's idols. He contrasts his presence with lifeless idols to show himself as a luxuriant tree from which Ephraim's fruit comes.[89] The paronomasia causes audiences to recall Ephraim's etymology in the Gen 41:52 tradition where Joseph credited God for his fruitfulness. The paronomasia urges audiences to abandon their idols and assume Joseph's posture to see Yahweh as the true provider of their fruitfulness.

Hosea 10:1

Wordplay in Hosea 10:1 stretches across the clause גֶּפֶן בּוֹקֵק יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לּוֹ "Israel is a vine pouring out; it produces fruit for itself."[90] The verse contains two wordplays centered on the polysemantic puns בּוֹקֵק "luxuriant" or "empty" and יְשַׁוֶּה "produce/make." Both terms pose obstacles. First, the root בקק, often rendered by ancient and canonical translations with "luxuriant," almost always conveys the idea of emptiness elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[91] Furthermore, בקק often describes land laid waste (Isa 24:1, 3; Nah 2:3; Jer 51:2) but never a vine.[92] A second obstacle is that the verb שוה "produce/make" is not the usual verb used for fruit production, such as עָשָׂה (Hos 9:16) or פָּרָא. This verse is the only time שוה occurs with פְּרִי. The following section will investigate how the unique use of these verbs leverages phonetics to

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[89] A variety of trees are suggested for ברוש but important for this study is simply its ability to produce fruit. Juniper, Macintosh, *Hosea*, 579; Cypress, Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 335; Stone Pine, Garrett, *Hosea*, 279; A possible tree of life reference, Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 647 and Wolff, *Hosea*, 237.

[90] The לּוֹ is translated as preposition of advantage (ל) "for the advantage" plus the reflexive third masculine singular suffix (וֹ) "itself." Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 107, §271a.

[91] See below for its relation to בוק "watered"

[92] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 549. In Nahum 2:3, however, בקק is used in the context of זְמוֹרָה "branch of a vine."

communicate contrasting images of Israel to expose her misconception of her prosperity.

Grammar and translation of the Wordplay

Ancient translations evidence difficulty and disagreement over how to translate בּוֹקֵק and

יְשַׁוֶּה. These different positions are reflected in modern canonical translations, which I indicate in

footnotes following discussion of the various positions the ancient translations offer. A close

look at their various positions helps explain the variety seen in modern translations. 𝔊 translates

בּוֹקֵק with an adjectival feminine singular participle εὐκληματοῦσα "growing luxuriantly." The

adjustment to the feminine may be to accommodate גֶּפֶן "vine," which is feminine in every other

occurrence in the Hebrew Bible.[93] The form εὐκληματοῦσα occurs only here, just as the Hebrew

meaning of בּוֹקֵק as "luxuriant" is unique in the Hebrew. Glenny and Muraoka note the form

εὐκληματοῦσα is created and appears here to express the idea "with vigorously growing

branches."[94] Glenny, therefore, translates εὐκληματοῦσα "healthy"; thus, "Israel is a healthy

vine."[95] LEH considers εὐκληματοῦσα a neologism, which is plausible as a means for 𝔊

translators to reproduce some punning aspect of the Hebrew.[96] 𝔊 goes on to translate the

imperfect יְשַׁוֶּה with another adjectival participle εὐθηνῶν "flourishing" or, as Glenny translates,

"abundant."[97] Altogether, 𝔊 translates the Hebrew clause, "Israel is a healthy vine; her fruit is

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[93] Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, 172. *BDB* suggests גֶּפֶן is masculine because of its subject יִשְׂרָאֵל. Andersen and Freedman mention 2 Kgs 4:39 as another possible appearance of גֶּפֶן as a masculine, but its referent is not a grapevine. *Hosea*, 549.

[94] Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peters, 2009), 237; Glenny, *Hosea*, 144.

[95] Glenny, *Hosea*, 55.

[96] Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katin Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblelgesellschaft, 1992), 1:187.

[97] Glenny, *Hosea*, 55.

abundant."[98]

α′ and σ′ translate בּוֹקֵק similarly to each other with an expression of "flowing out." α′ uses

ἔνυδρος "watery," which articulates an over-extension of growth. This translation may derive

from what Kuhnigk suggests is a *Poal* perfect of בוק, meaning "watered"; thus, "Israel is a

watered vine."[99] σ′ translates with ὑλομανοῦσα "run to wood," which focuses on abundant

shoots.[100] Regarding יְשַׁוֶּה, both α′ and σ′ translate its more general sense with ἐξισώθη "made

equal."[101]

The Targum translates the more common meaning of בקק with בְּזִיזָא "despoiled" and

continues the negative overtone by translating פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לּוֹ with the expression פֵּירֵי עוֹבָדֵיהוֹן גְּרֵמוּ

לְהוֹן דְּיִגְלוֹן "the fruits of their actions brought about their exile."[102]

The 𝕲 and other earlier sources (Peshiṭta and Vulgate) translate בקק with its uncommon

meaning "luxuriant."[103] Some attempts to explain include Gordis who argues בקק is an example

of *Addad* which is a class of Hebrew words "possessing mutually contradictory meanings," like

ברך which means both "bless" and "curse."[104] He and others also liken בקק to its Arabic cognate

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[98] Glenny, *Hosea*, 55. Canonical translations that reflect 𝕲 include ASV, CJB, ESV, NAB, NASB, NET, NJB, NLT, and RSV.

[99] W. Kuhnigk, *Nordwestsemitische Studien zum Hoseabuch* (Biblica et Orientalia 27; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 117 from Stuart, *Hosea*, 157.

[100] The interpretation of productivity in ἔνυδρος and ὑλομανοῦσα come from Jerome's commentary (Macintosh, *Hosea*, 388), but Davies interprets them with a derogatory sense that conveys the idea of "a rank vine" (see McKeating and NEB). Davies, *Hosea*, 234. The NIV also reflects imagery of overgrowth by translating בּוֹקֵק with "spreading vine."

[101] For a survey of these versions see Macintosh, *Hosea*, 388. Cf. Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 96.

[102] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 388. Canonical translations that also follow the more normal sense of בּוֹקֵק "empty" include GNV, KJV, and YLT.

[103] Most modern translations follow 𝕲: "luxuriant" (ASV, ESV, NASB, NJB, RSV); "fertile" (NET); "spreading" (NIV); "prosperous" (NLT)

[104] Robert Gordis, "Studies in Hebrew Roots of Contrasted Meanings," *JQR* 27 (1936): 49.

baqqa, meaning "be profuse, abundant."[105] BDB suggests two possibilities. בקק is either a *Qal* participle of another geminate verb בָּאָא meaning "luxuriant"[106] or of the root בוק, which derives from בקק and in its feminine form means "emptiness, void, and waste."[107] A possible explanation for translating בקק positively with "luxuriant," "fertile," or "prosperous (see ⅏) lies in its unique form as a *Polel* stem meaning "empty out." As evidenced in α′ and σ′, the idea of בקק as "emptying out" could be a euphemism for "pouring out," which is to say that in the context of plant fruitfulness, such "pouring out" attests to the vines productivity.

A survey of commentators and modern canonical translations shows a variety of ways the polysemy of בקק and שוה can contribute to the clause גֶּפֶן בּוֹקֵק יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לּוֹ. Ibn Ezra translates the more normal sense of בּוֹקֵק with "empty" and יְשַׁוֶּה with the sense of "putting forth." He suggests Israel is an empty vine that thinks it will be fruitful or that its fruit will be equal to an empty vine.[108] BHS editors permit בּוֹקֵק; however, they suggest reading יַשְׂגֶּה "grow great" in place of יְשַׁוֶּה. This alteration is likely to absolve the awkwardness of שׂוה appearing with plant growth where שׂגה does (Ps 92:13 and Job 8:11). Harper favors the translation בּוֹקֵק "luxuriant" because of its representation in the history of interpretation and because of the analogy "He multiplies fruit for himself" that immediately follows.[109] Rudolph reflects σ′ by translating בּוֹקֵק with "*weitverzweigter*."[110] He translates the *Piel* sense of יְשַׁוֶּה with "*ließ*"[111] Buss translates in

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[105] Compare with Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 548. *BDB*, however, presents the Arabic sense as possibly holding contradictory meanings. Its primary meaning is "being profuse, abundant" but it possibly can mean "to make a gurgling noise, of a mug dipped in water, or emptied of water." Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, 132.

[106] Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, 132.

[107] Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, 101.

[108] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 93–94.

[109] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 343.

[110] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 191.

[111] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 191.

line with 𝔊 using "luxuriant" for בּוֹקֵק, but like Rudolph, he preserves the *Piel* sense of יְשַׁוֶּה with

"produce."[112] McKeating translates בּוֹקֵק with "rank," which is a dynamic rendering of its normal

sense, "empty." He translates יְשַׁוֶּה with "ripening," which resembles the 𝔊 participle εὐθηνῶν

"flourishing."[113] McKeating admits "the translation 'rank' is debatable" but suggests his

translation "Israel is like a rank vine ripening its fruit" depicts the prophet's main contention that

"the fruits of Israel's success have been spent on apostasy, on more lavish sanctuaries and altars

to Baal."[114] Wolff argues בּוֹקֵק "should be interpreted in light of the Arabic *Baqqa* ('to branch off,

split, spread' . . .)."[115] He interprets Israel as the subject of יְשַׁוֶּה and translates its *Piel* sense with

"he yielded."[116] Andersen and Freedmen render בּוֹקֵק into a factitive *Polel* with the translation "he

made luxuriant."[117] They call יְשַׁוֶּה an unusual idiom that "seems to have a meaning here not

attested in its other occurrences" but proceed to translate its normal *Piel* form with "yield."[118]

The full translation from Andersen and Freedman of the Hebrew clause reads, "He made Israel,

the vine, luxuriant. He made it yield fruit for himself."[119] Jeremias follows the Arabic cognate

baqqa to translate בּוֹקֵק with *üppiger* "luxuriant."[120] Unlike Rudolph, this follows 𝔊 more closely,

but like Rudolph, Jeremias translates יְשַׁוֶּה with *ließ* "let."[121] Stuart argues that the *Qal* participle

בּוֹקֵק is the original and intended form that "is used by Hosea with both its meanings, as a

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[112] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 20.

[113] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 131.

[114] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 132.

[115] Wolff, *Hosea*, 170.

[116] Wolff, *Hosea*, 170.

[117] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 550.

[118] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 550.

[119] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 547.

[120] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 126.

[121] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 126.

purposeful double-entendre."[122] This is to say that it means both luxuriant and barren which

conveys a vine that "produces barrenness." Stuart also calls יְשַׁוֶּה a possible double-entendre that

connotes past and present action. His translation captures the clause's polysemy with

backslashes; thus, "Israel is a spreading / barren vine; he yields / used to yield plenty of fruit."[123]

Davies notes the oddity of בּוֹקֵק to mean "luxuriant" and appropriates the BHS emendation of

יְשַׁוֶּה to translate "its fruit is great."[124] Morris calls בּוֹקֵק and יְשַׁוֶּה "ambiguous wordplay" where the

words are given "double or triple meanings, sometimes even contradictory meanings" that work

against clarity.[125] He argues similar to Stuart in that בּוֹקֵק evokes both "luxuriant" and "to make

empty" while יְשַׁוֶּה evokes its *Piel* imperfect meaning "make, produce" and the phonetically

similar שׁוא "emptiness, vanity." He suggests the clause's primary meaning recalls Israel as a

fruitful vine while the secondary meaning contradicts it to evaluate Israel as an empty vine.[126] He

concludes, the ambiguity shows Israel's "sporadic obedience but also God's ambivalence toward

his people."[127] Garrett translates בּוֹקֵק with "destructive" to capture the destructive nature of a

luxuriant vine that is invasive to surrounding flora.[128] He renders יְשַׁוֶּה generally with "it makes"

or "yields" and understands לוֹ "to himself" as an expression of the vine's uselessness. He notes,

"A vine that yields fruit 'for itself' is only taking up space that should be used by productive

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[122] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 157.

[123] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 156.

[124] Davies, *Hosea*, 234.

[125] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 91. Morris quotes Shoaf to say "the pun is a device for delaying, interrupting, or otherwise frustrating closure." Richard Allan Shoaf, "The Play of Puns in late Middle English Poetry: Concerning Juxtology," *On Puns*, ed. Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 45 from Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 91.

[126] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 91–92.

[127] Morris, *Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, 92.

[128] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 206.

plants" (i.e., productive for the harvest).[129] Macintosh uses the double appearance of בקק in Nah

2:3, 11 and the traditions in α′, σ′, and Targum to show that the meaning of בקק denotes "poor

quality, deficiency or damage."[130] He argues alongside Ibn Janāḥ to suggest יְשַׁוֶּה "is to be derived

from the root elsewhere well-attested as a noun under the radicals שוא 'emptiness,' 'nothingness,'

or 'vanity.'[131] In light of בּוֹקֵק meaning "damaged," Macintosh appropriates שוא to express how

the fruit disappoints. His complete translation of the Hebrew clause reads, "Israel is a damaged

vine whose fruit fails him."[132] Ben Zvi considers the Hebrew clause an example of careful

wording to convey a multiplicity of meanings.[133] He favors the idea that בקק carries its normal

sense of "empty," "damage," or "ruin" while also reflecting a possible cognate meaning

"abundant" or "luxuriant." Ben Zvi argues Israel is "presented to the readers as both a luxuriant

vine and a damaged one" where "the two readings enhance and inform each other."[134] He also

perceives three layers of polysemy in שוה. First, it connotes its normal *Qal* meaning, "equal," to

communicate how the fruit is like Israel, the vine. Since בקק is both luxuriant and damaged, so is

the fruit. Second, the MT's vocalization יְשַׁוֶּה is a *Piel* meaning "to yield" or "make"; thus, Israel

makes fruit for itself. Third, שוה evokes שוא "emptiness" or "vanity" to suggest that the fruit

Israel produces is worthless.[135]

The survey above reveals three general approaches translators use to render בּוֹקֵק. One

general approach follows the ᵴ translation εὐκληματοῦσα "luxuriant." A second approach

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[129] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 206.

[130] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 384.

[131] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 386.

[132] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 383.

[133] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 207.

[134] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 207.

[135] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 207–08.

follows α′ and σ′ to convey the idea of flowing out. A third approach models the Targum to translate בּוֹקֵק with a faction of its common meaning, "empty" or "lay waste."

Three general approaches are also taken to render יְשַׁוֶּה. One approach follows the BHS emendation that changes יְשַׁוֶּה to יַשְׂגֶּה "grow great" or "flourish." A second approach translates יְשַׁוֶּה with its normal *Qal* meaning "like" or "equal." A third approach acknowledges its vowel pointing as a *Piel* to mean "to put, to set."

Stuart, Morris, and Ben Zvi illuminate the polysemy of בּוֹקֵק and יְשַׁוֶּה that translations ought to consider. Common in both wordplays of בּוֹקֵק and יְשַׁוֶּה is the subtext of emptiness. The participle בּוֹקֵק means "luxuriant" but also "empty." The *Piel* יְשַׁוֶּה means "make/produce," but its paronomasia with שׁוא evokes "emptiness/vanity." A translation, therefore, can reproduce this dichotomy with the term "vanity" to communicate the vine's misconceived "luxuriousness" with the reality of its empty yield. A translation that considers the wordplays could read גֶּפֶן בּוֹקֵק יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לּוֹ "Israel is a vain vine that *used to* yield fruit for itself." This literary transfer preserves the Hebrew punning with minimal distortion of semantic meaning. Israel's misconception of her prosperity is captured in בּוֹקֵק "vain" which simultaneously evokes "luxuriant" and "empty." Furthermore, the added expression "used to yield" communicates that at one point the vine was fruitful but is no longer. In the context of vanity, "used to yield" conveys the sense that even when the vine was fruitful it was empty.

A translation that uses more phonetic play can leverage the homonyms "vain" as clarifiers of both בּוֹקֵק and יְשַׁוֶּה. This translation reads, "Israel is a vain vine that *vainly* yields fruit for itself." The vine's vanity is emphatically tagged by the alliteration of "v" sounds; however, semantic distortion appears in the second appearance of "vain" which falsely communicates repetition. The distortion is minimal since the added material "vainly" is set apart with italics,

but the semantic repetition requires explanation that is conducive for commentaries and study Bibles.

Semantic Force of the Wordplays

Within a canonical reading of Hosea, audiences have become used to the prophet's agricultural metaphors that begin with statements of flourishing and end with devastation imagery. Hosea first likens Israel to grapes in the wilderness (9:10) whose glory will fly away like a bird (9:11). Ephraim is boasted in 9:13 as a pleasant meadow that develops withered roots and becomes fruitless and barren (9:16). In 10:1, audiences are told in a bout of sarcasm that Israel is a luxuriant vine, but the semantic oddity conjures ambiguity that encourages audiences to find clarity in polysemantic word relationships. The ambiguity's resolution, however, leaves audiences wondering if they should be afraid of future barrenness or offended that their prosperity is vanity. The prophet's sarcastic tone emerges in what appears to be a positive pronouncement of Israel's fruitfulness that turns sour in the wordplay's subtext. As Ben Zvi remarks, the two messages produced by the written text and subtext enhance and inform each other. In this polysemantic pronouncement of Israel, the prophet simultaneously builds Israel up and tears it down with wordplay that indicts it as a prosperous and fruitful nation whose fruitfulness happened in vain and will only yield emptiness because of its apostasy.

Hosea 10:6

Wordplay in 10:6 centers on the polysemantic pun עצה in the prophet's declaration וְיֵבוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲצָתוֹ "Israel will be ashamed because of its counsel." The lexical form עצה reads "counsel," but the context of judgment against idolatrous priests mourning over the idol calf (10:5) activates semantics from its cognate עֵץ "tree" or "wood," which are commonly used as objects for Israel's idolatry (Deut 4:28; 16:21; 28:36, 64; 29:16; Isa 37:19; 40:20; Jer 3:6; Ezek

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6:13; Hos 4:12). This section examines how the polysemy of עצה urges Israel's "counsel" to condemn its idolatrous practices.

Grammar and Translation of the Wordplay

Some commentators view עצה as problematic because "counsel/advise" is anachronistic in the context of idolatry. Others perceive the feminine form of מֵעֲצָתוֹ as problematic because of its supposed masculine referent to the calf of Bethel represented by the masculine singular suffixes throughout 10:5.[136] The survey below shows how ancient and modern translations handle these semantic and textual difficulties.

Ancient translations agree that Hosea's use of עצה means "counsel" or "advisors." 𝔊 translates עצה with βοθλή "counsel," and the Targum follows similarly with מִמְלְכֵי עֲצָתְהוֹן "because of the counsels of their advisors."[137] As early as the Vulgate, significant translation variations emerge. The Vulgate translates מֵעֲצָתוֹ with *in voluntate sua* "in its will," while the Peshiṭta translates similarly with *btr'yth* "in its belief/opinion." These variations may reflect the idea that עצה denotes Israel's aspirations and goals that the state cult of the calf represent.[138] BHS editors suggest emending מֵעֲצָתוֹ to the form מֵעֲצַבּוֹ or מֵעָצְבּוֹ "of its idol" because they perceive the oracle addresses Israel's need to purge the calf (10:5), not state policies.[139]

Commentators and modern canonical translations are divided between translating מֵעֲצָתוֹ literally, translating conceptually like the Vulgate and Peshita, or accepting the BHS emendation. Harper thinks Wellhausen's emendation unnecessary. He translates עצה with "counsel" and

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[136] Literally, לְעֶגְלוֹת בֵּית אָוֶן "for the calves of Beth-aven." See above.

[137] For additional survey of ancient traditions, see Macintosh, *Hosea*, 405.

[138] Compare with Macintosh, *Hosea*, 403–4.

[139] Modern canonical translations that accept the emendation include ESV, NET, NIV, NLT, and RSV.

argues "shame and reproach will rest upon Israel for the counsel which has been adopted as the basis of the national policy."[140] Rudolph argues "counsel" does not fit the context of idolatry and emends עצה to עֵץ "wood."[141] As a result, he translates with "*Holzstück*," meaning, "piece of wood," which parallels Hosea's earlier use of עֵץ "wood" that is metaphorically used for idol (4:12).[142] Buss translates with its normal meaning "counsels."[143] McKeating translates עצה with "disobedience," which is a secondary meaning Holladay provides with respect to its appearance in Ps 106:43.[144] Wolff translates עצה with "plan" and supports it with its similar usage in Isa 30:1.[145] He discards the BHS emendation because he argues it does not consider the transition to a focus on political subjects in v. 7.[146] Andersen and Freeman accept the BHS emendation and translate with "image."[147] They support the emendation because such a meaning also fits the use of עצה in Ps 106:43.[148] Furthermore, they link עצה to the expression with עֵץ in Hos 4:12 where the idol is called a stick of wood.[149] Jeremias accepts the possibility that עצה refers to the counsel or plan of Israel's *Bündnispolitik* mentioned throughout 10:1–8; however, he follows Rudolph to suggest "wood" is implied. Jeremias, therefore, translates עצה with "*Holz-Gott*" to reflect the calf

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[140] Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 347.

[141] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 196.

[142] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 196195.

[143] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 21.

[144] William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 1988), 280. Contra Dearman who translates עצה in Ps 106:43 "plans." *Hosea*, 266.

[145] Wolff, *Hosea*, 171, 76.

[146] Wolff, *Hosea*, 171.

[147] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 548, 58.

[148] Most translations either take the first meaning of עֵצָה "counsel, advice" or its seconding meaning "disobedience, revolt."

[149] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 558.

idolatry context.[150] Stuart argues the BHS emendation is meritless and translates עצה with "disobedience" because the passage expresses how "Israel, and specifically its capital, Samaria, has purposely decided to disobey the covenant."[151] He suggests עצה may be a "double-entendre" that also means "counsel" or "plan" because of its similar use in "Deut 32:28 to communicate Israel's foolishness as a nation."[152] Hubbard translates עצה with "idol" and supports the intentionality of the feminine form with its similar appearance in the feminine in Jer 6:6 (עֵצָה).[153] Davies rejects the emendation in favor of keeping its normal meaning, "plan," since "the removal of the idol will finally show how ill-conceived Israel's hopes of survival through submission to Assyria were."[154] Macintosh uses the verbal cognate יעץ "advise, counsel, plan, decide," as a control for how to render and interpret עצה.[155] He supports this meaning with the cognate's appearance for Jeroboam when he "consulted" and established the calf-cult (1 Kgs 12:28). Macintosh follows Ibn Janāḥ to translate the sense of עצה with "aspirations." He argues it denotes "the aspirations and goals of the Northern Kingdom, represented and expressed by the state cult of the calf."[156] Dearman translates עצה with "plans." He uses Ps 106:43 to provide supportive context and argues that "in both places the term refers to plans undertaken by Israel in rebellion against YAHWEH's leading."[157] Just as God's people in the Psalm rebelled with their counsel, so Hosea understands Israel doing the same with their plans.

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[150] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 127.

[151] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 162.

[152] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 162.

[153] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 185.

[154] Davies, *Hosea*, 238.

[155] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 403–4.

[156] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 403–4.

[157] Dearman, *Hosea*, 266.

This survey shows four general approaches to translating עצה. The first approach translates עצה as a cognate of יעץ and with its normal meaning, "counsel, plan." A second approach translates עצה with "disobedience," but this approach is meritless as the translation derives from a theoretical form. A third approach links עצה to עֵץ and translates with "wood." A final approach accepts the BHS emendation מעצבו "idol." Stuart is intuitive to note from these translation options that עצה is a double-entendre where multiple meanings operate to make the most sense of עצה.[158]

The vowel pointing מֵעֲצָתוֹ communicates the primary meaning "counsel" or "plan"; thus, Israel will be ashamed of its counsel. The calf imagery in 10:5 produces context for idolatry and enables the phonetic similarity of עֵץ to עצה to evoke the imagery of עֵץ "wood," particularly in relation to its metaphorical use for idols. The expression מֵעֲצָתוֹ is, therefore, shorthand for its pragmatic focus which is to indict the offices of Ephraim and Israel with apostacy. A long-hand translation that communicates these multiple layers of meaning can render מֵעֲצָתוֹ "because of its counsel with a tree[DS4]."[159] This translation preserves the paronomasia between written meaning of עצה "counsel" and the unwritten subtext עֵץ "wood". Another translation that captures the pragmatic focus but recreates phonetic play is the alliteration "*idolatrous* ideation." "Ideation" seizes the intuitive processes behind Israel's counsel; however, it distorts the context of guidance produced by עצה "counsel." Commentaries and study Bibles can remedy the distortion with explanation.

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

The wordplay עצה is indicting as it blends Israel's counsel with the disobedience of Israel's

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[158] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 162.

[159] I am grateful to Dr. Paul Raabe for this translation suggestion.

leaders in idolatry. The prophet's opposition to Israel's calf worship is central to the wordplay's condemnation of Israel's leadership. The prophet exploits the leadership's disobedience to Yahweh by endorsing counsel that led the nation into apostasy. In the end, the wordplay indirectly challenges audiences to turn from idolatrous counsel and listen to Yahweh's counsel because judgment for their disobedience is imminent.

Hosea 12:2–6 (3–7 MT)

The exposition of Hos 12:3–7 presents a rare case of what some call an inner biblical exegesis that uses the patriarchal Jacob narrative to reestablish the identities of Israel and Yahweh. The wordplay focuses on the relationship between the names of Isaac's son (יַעֲקֹב "Jacob" and יִשְׂרָאֵל "Israel") and Yahweh's name (יְהוָה). The prophet navigates audiences through the history of how Jacob became Israel after encountering Yahweh. The polysemy of the patriarch's names provides the vehicle that defines Jacob's character in relation to his attitude before Yahweh. The following section will discuss how the prophet uses wordplay through his Jacob narrative to illuminate the patriarch's alteration from deceiver to inheritor of patriarchal promises because of Yahweh's gracious discipline.

Grammar and Translation of the Wordplays

Hosea's Jacob exposition poses several textual difficulties. The first issue is to accept or discard the originality of "Judah" as a part of Yahweh's contention. A second issue is determining the etymology of עָקַב, whether it is the meaning given to Jacob at his birth when he "grasped the heel" of Esau (Gen 25:26) or the meaning Esau reflects when he realizes Jacob "supplanted" him twice (Gen 27:36). A third issue is establishing the meaning of אוֹן "vigor" in relation to the phonetically equivalent and possibly more sensible terms אָוֶן "harm, injustice, or

wickedness" and עָוֺן "iniquity." A fourth issue is determining the root of שָׂרָה and וַיָּשַׂר, which the

Masoretic vocalization of וַיָּשַׂר points as a *Qal* imperfect *waw* consecutive from שׂרר "rule over."

Disagreement happens over establishing whether their root comes from שׁור "to wrestle" (a

possible by-form of שׂרה),[160] שׂרר "rule over" (a meaning parallel to יכל "prevail" in v. 5), or שׂרה

"contend/strive." A fifth issue is rendering אֶל of v. 5 in its odd placement before מַלְאָךְ "angel,"

who does not appear in the Genesis 32 account.[161] A final issue is identifying whether Jacob or

the angel is the subject of the verbs in v. 5a: בָּכָה "he wept" and וַיִּתְחַנֶּן "plead for grace."[162]

ᵍ begins the exposition with a κρίσις "judgment" against Judah to punish Ιακωβ "Jacob"

according to his ways and practices (12:3). It translates the etymology of his name in 12:4 (עָקַב)

with ἐπτέρνισεν "he outwitted" to recall Jacob outwitting his brother in the womb.[163] ᵍ presumes

Jacob is the subject of the verbs in v. 5 and translates ⁴ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ ἐπτέρνισεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν

αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν κόποις [אָוֶן] αὐτοῦ ἐνίσχυσεν [שָׂרָה from שׂרר] πρὸς θεὸν ⁵καὶ ἐνίσχυσεν [וַיָּשַׂר from

שׂרר] μετὰ ἀγγέλου καὶ ἠδθνάσθη "⁴In the womb he outwitted his brother and in his toil, he

strengthened toward God. ⁵He strengthened with the angel and he was strong."[164] ᵍ translates

שָׂרָה and וַיָּשַׂר the same, likely deriving from the root שׂרר, which prioritizes the parallelism of וַיָּשַׂר

with וַיֻּכָל "he prevailed." Like ᵍ, α′ shows שָׂרָה and וַיָּשַׂר coming from the same root but translates

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[160] Of Ibn Ezra and Kimchi from Macintosh, *Hosea*, 483.

[161] α′, θ′, and σ′ clarify אֶל־מַלְאָךְ with a more divine presence. α′ and θ′ supplant ἀγγέλου "angel" with θεοῦ "God," while σ′ makes it definitive with τὸν ἄγγελον "the angel." ᵍ makes both Jacob and the angel subjects of the weeping and beseeching in v. 5.

[162] For a synopsis of grammatical difficulties and irregularities of 12:5, see Wolff, *Hosea*, 212.

[163] According to LEH and LSJ πτερνίζω creates the sense of outwitting, deceiving, or circumventing. LEH, 410; LSJ (Supp, 266). Glenny translates it "tripped up," which captures an aggressive disposition Jacob had when he grasped his brother by the heel in the womb. *Hosea*, 59, 162. The nominal form of πτερνίζω is πτέρνα which means "heel." πτέρνα appears in Gen 27:26 which is a semantic link that Brenton's translation tries to preserve with "took by the heel."

[164] α′ and the Targum supplant אֱלֹהִים/θεόν with "angel"; however, the Targum adds the article as σ′ in v. 5. This addition likely signals the deity behind the figure whom Jacob wrestled.

both with κατώρθωσε "he prospered (towards)," which may still perceive שָׂרָה and וַיָּ֫שַׂר as

deriving from שׂרר. θ′ and σ′ distinguish the root of שָׂרָה from וַיָּ֫שַׂר. Both translate שָׂרָה with

ἐνίσχυσεν "he strengthened," but θ′ translates וַיָּ֫שַׂר like α′ (κατώρθωσε "he prospered") while σ′

translates וַיָּ֫שַׂר with κατεδυνάστευσε "he got control." The commonality in these Greek traditions

is they prioritize the parallelism of וַיָּ֫שַׂר with וַיֻּכַל to define the semantics of וַיָּ֫שַׂר as similar to

"prevail."

The Targum does not reproduce the etymology of יַעֲקֹב as 𝔐 (עָקַב). Instead it supplies the

verb סגִ[DS5] "increase" with the subject יַעֲקֹב "Jacob" to read, "Was it not said that Jacob would

become greater than his brother?" This rhetorical question echoes Yahweh telling Rebekah that

the older of the two nations inside her womb will serve the younger (Gen 25:23). Like 𝔊, the

Targum understands שָׂרָה and וַיָּ֫שַׂר as derived from the same root and bases the meaning of וַיָּ֫שַׂר

on its parallelism with וְיֻכַל "and he prevailed." As a result, the Targum translates both שָׂרָה and

וַיָּ֫שַׂר with רורב "to increase/rule" from שׂרר.[165]

BHS editors suggest several emendations throughout Hos 12:3–5. First, they suggest

substituting יְהוּדָה "Judah" in v. 3 with יִשְׂרָאֵל "Israel," claiming "Judah" is a later insertion of a

Judean scribe in effort to make the passage pertinent to Judean audiences. The second

emendation is to read the direct object marker אֶת־ in place of the more awkward אֶל־ in the

expression אֶל־מַלְאָךְ of v. 5. Finally, they suggest replacing מַלְאָךְ with אֵל "God."

Commentators and modern translations evidence in a variety of ways the approaches

ancient translations make to render the textual oddities mentioned above. The following review

will identify (when available) how commentators translate and interpret the appearance of

"Judah" in 12:3, translate עָקַב and אוֹנוֹ in 12:4, identify the roots of וַיָּ֫שַׂר and שָׂרָה, understand the

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[165] The Targum supplants אֱלֹהִים with מַלְאֲכָא.

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referent of מַלְאָךְ, and determine the subject of the verbs in 12:5a.

Ibn Ezra perceives that Yahweh's quarrel is also legitimately with Judah.[166] He translates עָקַב with "he grasped the heel" because in the womb Jacob "took his brother by the heel" and translates וַיָּשַׂר and שָׂרָה as from the same root meaning "strove." Finally, Ibn Ezra argues the angel is the subject of the verbs in v. 5 who weeps and pleads with Jacob to let him go before daybreak so that Jacob would not be stricken with fear once he becomes visible.[167]

Harper follows BHS to emend "Judah" to "Israel."[168] He translates עָקַב with its general sense "supplant" based on Gen 27:36; thus, Jacob "supplanted his brother."[169] Harper considers וַיָּשַׂר in v. 5 "poetical repetition" with שָׂרָה in v. 4b and translates them both with "contend." Unlike 𝔊, Harper translates אוֹנוֹ with "man's strength" as coming from אוֹן.[170] He also agrees with the BHS to emend אֶל to אֵת and read אלהים in place of מלאך. Finally, he argues Jacob is the subject of בָּכָה "he wept" and וַיִּתְחַנֶּן "plead for grace."

Rudolph considers the replacement of "Judah" with "Israel" an "act of violence" because of the prophet's intentional use of Jacob as a "*gemeinsamen Stammvater*" for both kingdoms. He links Jacob to the house of Israel and Judah mentioned in 12:1 as well as the objects of Yahweh's indictment in 12:4.[171] Rudolph also rejects the BHS emendation to read אֵל "God" in place of the 𝔐 מַלְאָךְ "angel" because he argues there is no clear repetition between v. 4b and 5a. He, therefore, concludes וַיָּשַׂר is distinct from שָׂרָה in v. 4 and derives from שׂרר or שׂור. Rudolph

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[166] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 112.

[167] Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 113. Compare with מַלְאֲכֵי שָׁלוֹם מַר יִבְכָּיוּן "the envoys of peace weep bitterly" (Isa 33:7). These envoys, however, are not celestial beings.

[168] Harper, *Hosea and Amos*, 378.

[169] Harper, *Hosea and Amos*, 379–80.

[170] Harper, *Hosea and Amos*, 380–81.

[171] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 226–27.

translates v. 4b–5a literally with 𝔐, "he contended with God, he ruled over an angel.[172] Like Harper, he parts from 𝔊 to see אוֹנוֹ come from אוֹן "*Manneskraft*."[173]

Buss eliminates "Judah" from the text. He supplants its appearance in 12:1 with הוּא "it" and in v. 3 with "Israel."[174] He translates עָקַב with "caught the heel" to reflect the etymology of Jacob's name given to him at birth (Gen 25:26). With Harper and Rudolph, he translates אוֹנוֹ with אוֹן "adult." Like 𝔊, Buss translates שָׂרָה and וַיָּשַׂר with the same root; however, he perceives the root is שָׂרָה "fought." Jacob is, therefore, the subject of the verbs in v. 5a, where "He [Jacob] fought with the angel and prevailed, he [Jacob] wept and besought him.[175]

McKeating keeps "Judah" in his translation but argues it was inserted later to make it more relevant to the Southern Kingdom's needs.[176] He identifies the two verbs in v. 4 as "puns." The first pun is עָקַב "overreached" and plays on Jacob's etymology from Gen 25:26, and the second pun is שָׂרָה "strove," which plays on Jacob's other name, "Israel," given in Gen 32:28. McKeating keeps מַלְאָךְ but translates it with the modifier "divine," which may reflect his acceptance of reading אֵל instead of אֵלֹ־. Reading "divine angel" allows McKeating to make the angel the subject of וַיָּשַׂר and וַיֻּכָל and Jacob the subject of בָּכָה וַיִּתְחַנֶּן for the translation: "The divine angel stood firm and held his own; Jacob wept and begged favor for himself."[177] McKeating argues this subject dispersion eliminates inconsistency that Jacob would prevail over the angel and then weep and beg for his favor. He validates this translation by its consistency

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[172] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 222.

[173] Rudolph, *Hosea*, 220, 222.

[174] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 23.

[175] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 23.

[176] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 142.

[177] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 142–43.

with the negative perspective the prophet has of Jacob's character portrayed in v. 3.

Wolff supplants "Judah" with "Israel" and calls it a product of Judaic redaction.[178] "Jacob," therefore, comprises Israel. Wolff understands עָקַב to reflect not Jacob's birth etymology but Esau's description of him as deceptive from the way Jacob obtained his birthright and their father's blessing (Gen 27:36). Wolff argues this interpretation best "unmasks Jacob's present guilt," which was Hosea's goal with the exposition. Furthermore, he argues "deceptive" parallels Jacob's actions which are later characterized with מרמה "bitter" in 12:15.[179] Wolff, therefore, renders v. 4a "In the womb he tricked his brother."[180] He translates אוֹנוֹ with אוֹן but links it to v. 9 to suggest its translation is "wealth" instead of "vigor" or "strength." Wolff says, "Jacob wrestled with God as one who had become rich (Gen 32:5, 11, 22f). Ephraim now exults over his riches in opposition to the word of his God (vv. 9 and 2b)."[181] Wolff accepts a variety of emendations to smooth out the supposed narrative inconsistencies and grammatical difficulties of v. 5.[182] First, like McKeating, he understands מַלְאָךְ as a gloss and reads אֵל "God" for אֶל־ to parallel אֱלֹהִים at the end of v. 4. This emendation makes God the subject of וַיָּשַׂר "he ruled" (from שׂרר) and וַיֻּכָל "he prevailed." Wolff, furthermore, identifies Jacob as the subject of בָּכָה "he wept." Altogether, he translates v. 5, "But God [angel] proved himself lord and prevailed. He [Jacob] wept and made supplication to him."[183]

Andersen and Freedman perceive Hosea's desire to expand Yahweh's discourse of

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[178] Wolff, *Hosea*, 206.

[179] Wolff, *Hosea*, 212. Wolff translates מרמה with "deception."

[180] Wolff, *Hosea*, 206.

[181] Wolff, *Hosea*, 212.

[182] Wolff, *Hosea*, 212.

[183] Wolff, *Hosea*, 206.

contention to specifically include Judah. The use of "Jacob" in parallel to "Judah" can therefore either refer to Ephraim or both kingdoms.[184] They argue this expansion is also reflected in the names Jacob and Israel concealed in עָקַב and שָׂרָה in v. 4. They translate עָקַב with Jacob's etymology given to him at birth; thus, "In the womb he grabbed his brother's heel." They use the name Israel as a constraint for translating שָׂרָה from שרה "contend" to express the activity that Jacob did with God as reflected in the incident at Penuel (Gen 32:27). Andersen and Freedman identify Jacob as the subject of all the verbs in v. 5, which determines how they handle the textual issues through the verse. First, they perceive Jacob's contention with God is done in Jacob's אוֹן "vigor."[185] They admit to the possibilities of translating אוֹנוֹ with אָוֶן "wickedness" but suggest "vigor" balances "the natal condition of v. 4a, . . . [and] it is Jacob's native strength, not anything acquired, that is displayed in the bout at Penuel, and celebrated in his new name 'Israel.'"[186] Second, they consider וַיָּשַׂר in v. 5 a repeated form of שָׂרָה in v. 4 and translate both with the same root שרה "contend." Third, Andersen and Freedman accept the emendation of אֶל־ to אֵל "God" and make God the object of וַיָּשַׂר keeping Jacob as its subject; thus, "'4In his vigor he contended with God. 5He contended with God." They treat the next clause as parallel to v. 5a and make מַלְאָךְ the object of וַיֻּכָל; thus, "He overcame the angel." With Jacob as the subject of the next two verbs they conclude v. 5 with "He wept and implored him." Altogether, they translate vv. 4–5, "In the womb he grabbed his brother's heel. In his vigor, he contended with God. He contended with God. He overcame the angel. He wept and implored him."[187]

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[184] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 605.

[185] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 607.

[186] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 607–8.

[187] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 593, 608–13.

Jeremias keeps Judah in his translation, but he understands it as a later interpolation that happens after the Northern Kingdom falls.[188] Like those before him, he sees the verbs in v. 4 as reflecting the names Jacob and Israel. He translates עָקַב with "*hinterging*," the etymology reflecting Jacob's deception (Gen 27:36). He translates שָׂרָה with the root שׂרה to reflect Jacob's striving with God at Penuel, which culminated in his new name Israel. Jeremias translates אוֹנוֹ as אוֹן "*Manneskraft*" to capture the "virility" with which Jacob "fought" at Penuel. Jeremias does not read וַיָּשַׂר in v. 5 as a repetition of שָׂרָה (שׂרה) in v. 4 but from the root שׂרר "rule." He also emends אֶל־ to אֵל "God" and considers מַלְאָךְ a gloss. He makes אֵל the subject of וַיָּשַׂר which he carries over to וַיֻּכָל for the translation, "But 'God' [an Angel] proved himself as Lord; he escaped."[189]

Stuart preserves "Judah" in the prophet's exposition because the passage is concerned with all Israel.[190] He argues עָקַב and שָׂרָה in v. 4 are chosen "to remind the nation who their ancestor was, and how he [Jacob] got both his names."[191] He argues that the significance of their etymologies is to reflect the nation's struggle with Yahweh. Stuart considers עָקַב a double-entendre reflecting both of Jacob's etymologies from the Genesis account, but based on the birthing context of v. 4 ("womb"), he translates עָקַב with the etymology given to Jacob at birth, "he grasped the heel" (Gen 25:26).[192] Stuart translates the second verb שָׂרָה with "struggled" as a reflection of its etymological connection with the name Israel given to Jacob at Penuel.[193]

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[188] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 152

[189] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 148.

[190] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 186.

[191] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 190–91.

[192] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 186, 190–91.

[193] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 191.

Altogether, he translates v. 4 "In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; When he was powerful,[194] he struggled with God." Stuart observes v. 5a as parallel with v. 4b and translates וַיָּשַׂר with the same root as שָׂרָה (שׂרה). He does not accept any BHS emendations for v. 5 and, like Andersen and Freedman, he identifies Jacob as the subject of all verbs in v. 5, which reads, "He struggled with an angel and endured, he wept and pleaded with him for favor."[195]

Hubbard argues for the originality of "Judah" to Hosea's exposition to show Judah was "a reminder that the whole people inherited both the wicked or foolish characteristics of their common ancestor and the covenant promises which will make them one again."[196] Like most, he translates אוֹנוֹ with אוֹן "in his manhood," which he supports with its use for Jacob begetting Reuben, his first-born (Gen 49:3). Like Andersen and Freedman and Stuart, Hubbard understands Jacob as the subject of the verbs in vv. 4–5. He argues עָקַב and שָׂרָה are "[p]uns on the double name of Isaac's son"[197] and translates עָקַב with the etymology of Jacob's name given at birth, "take by the heel," and translates שָׂרָה with the etymology of "Israel" meaning "contend" or "strove." Hubbard explains the puns are designed to explain the name change from Jacob to Israel and argues both names are "signs of Jacob's impulsive presumptuousness" that showed blessing but caused pain as a price for its forcefulness.[198] He translates v. 5a as synonymous with v. 4b and reads וַיָּשַׂר from the same root as שָׂרָה in v. 4b (שׂרה "contend"). Hubbard emends אֶל־ to אֵל "God" and makes it the object of וַיָּשַׂר and translates the next clause in parallelism with מַלְאָךְ

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[194] Stuart translates וּבְאוֹנוֹ "When he was powerful," which accepts the root אוֹן, but he admits another possible translation, "wealthy." Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 186.

[195] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 185–86.

[196] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 214.

[197] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 215.

[198] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 215.

"angel" as the object of וַיֻּכַל, "and he prevailed." Altogether, he translates v. 4a–5a, "And he [Jacob] contended with God and with an angel [of God] prevailed."[199]

Garrett keeps Judah as the object of Yahweh's dispute and understands "Jacob" to encompass both Israel and Judah.[200] He argues the exposition "resumes the theme from 6:7–9 that Israel has inherited the worst traits of their ancestor without picking up any of the good qualities."[201] Garrett perceives that the exposition's focus is on "the patriarch as a desperate man transformed by God," as revealed in his name change.[202] He translates עָקַב with the etymology of Jacob's name given to him by Esau, "trip" or "deceive," because it parallels what he perceives is wordplay with the phrase וּבְאוֹנוֹ "in his vigor," which, in turn, has paronomasia with אָוֶן "deceit."[203] Garrett translates שָׂרָה and וַיָּשַׂר from שרה "struggled" to reflect the etymology of "Israel," but he notices a unique wordplay with וַיָּשַׂר אֶל. He notes the expression's literal translation reads, "And he struggled with," but Garrett credits its "unusual grammar" as designed to create the name "Isr[a] el."[204] Therefore, Israel is the subject of the verbs before the *'athnâḥ* in v. 5, which Garrett translates, "And he (Israel!) struggled with the angel and prevailed; He wept and sought his (Esau's) favor."[205]

Macintosh supplants "Judah" in v. 3 with "Israel" and argues "the original reading was 'Israel' but . . . the Judean redactor made the change in order to extend the prophecy to include

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[199] Hubbard, *Hosea*, 216.

[200] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 234.

[201] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel,* 236.

[202] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel,* 236.

[203] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel,* 236–37.

[204] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel,* 237. Garrett builds on M. Gertner's proposal that וַיָּשַׂר אֶל read together forms the name "Israel." M. Gertner, "An Attempt at an Interpretation of Hosea," *VT* 10 (1960): 278.

[205] Garrett, *Hosea, Joel,* 239.

his own country."[206] Hosea's exposition of Jacob is, therefore, originally intended for the Northern Kingdom. Macintosh argues וּבְאוֹנוֹ is a "double-entendre" that means "in his prime" but chosen by Hosea because of its similarity in sound with אָוֶן "trouble" or "wickedness." He claims these meanings are to "suggest that Jacob's conflict with the divine presence was to be associated with the precarious situation in which he knew he must face the brother he had wronged."[207] He argues שָׂרָה and וַיָּשַׂר point to the "characteristics of unscrupulous ambition" reflected in each of Jacob's names.[208] Macintosh perceives עָקַב to recall both Jacob's etymologies, "grasp the heel" and "supplant" (Gen 27:36). He considers "supplant" *ad sensum* to both etymologies and translates עָקַב accordingly.[209] Macintosh argues שָׂרָה "strove" reflects "the incident at the Jabbok (Gen 32.25ff) where, by his [Jacob's] wrestling, he gained his alternative name 'Israel.'"[210] His complete translation of v. 4 reads, "Even in the womb he supplanted his brother and in his prime he strove with God."[211] Like Garrett, Macintosh argues the expression וַיָּשַׂר אֶל evokes the name ישראל "Israel." He understands מַלְאָךְ as a gloss designed to give clarity to the awkward אֶל which was intended to read אֵל "God."[212] As a result, he omits מַלְאָךְ from his translation and translates with אֵל "God" as the subject of יָשַׂר. He sees יָשַׂר chosen for its similarity of sound with שָׂרָה but deriving from a different root, שׂרר "rule," to show that "God gained ascendancy." Macintosh's final translation of v. 5 reads, "But ISRA-EL [i.e., God gained

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[206] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 479.

[207] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 479.

[208] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 481.

[209] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 481. See Davies who says of עָקַב, it "probably does not mean took . . . by the heel but 'supplant, overreach' (see JB, NEB), as is clear from its use of Jacob's later deceit in robbing his twin brother Esau of his birthright and his father's blessing (Gen. 27:36)." *Hosea*, 273.

[210] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 482.

[211] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 481.

[212] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 483–84.

the ascendancy] and prevailed; he [Jacob] wept and implored the favor of him who encountered him at Bethel and there spoke with us."[213]

Dearman talks about the textual difficulties of Hosea's exposition in terms of multiple wordplays that stretch through vv. 4–6. He first discusses עָקַב as wordplay on יַעֲקֹב "Jacob" that evokes both narrative etymologies, including "supplants" (Gen 25:26) and "deceive" (Gen 27:36).[214] Dearman argues the second clause of v. 4 contains a double wordplay that builds on Jacob's etymologies. The first wordplay happens in the polysemy of בְאוֹנוֹ, which characterizes Jacob's strength and wealth but also evokes its second meaning "wealth" as well as אָוֶן "worthlessness" from the same root. The second wordplay happens between שָׂרָה "strove" and Jacob's name change to "Israel" (Gen 32:28).[215] Dearman argues these wordplays develop Yahweh's case against "a deadly combination of deceit and strength" that God will confront as he did with the patriarch.[216] Dearman also recognizes with Gertner, Macintosh, and Garrett that the "ungrammatical" expression וַיָּשַׂר אֶל produces another wordplay. He understands יָשַׂר to parallel שָׂרָה in v. 4 where both have the root שׂרה "strove" and together play on Israel's etymology.[217] He concludes with this focus on "Israel" that וַיָּשַׂר followed by the odd use of אֶל evokes their combined reading of "Israel."[218]

Modern canonical translations demonstrate a variety of ways to translate the textual difficulties of Hosea's Jacob exposition. Most versions translate "Judah" in v. 3 as the object of Yahweh's dispute. They show minimal variation across translations of v. 4. Those that translate

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[213] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 483. Brackets are original to Macintosh.

[214] Dearman, *Hosea*, 303.

[215] Dearman, *Hosea*, 303.

[216] Dearman, *Hosea*, 304.

[217] Dearman, *Hosea*, 303.

[218] Dearman, *Hosea*, 305.

עָקַב with Jacob's birth etymology "grabbed by the heel" include ASV, ESV, KJV, NASB, CJB, NIV, RSV, and YLT. The NET appears to take some variant of the etymology given by Esau and renders it with "attacked." The NLT parallels the meaning of עָקַב with שָׂרָה in its translation "struggle." Most versions agree that אוֹן reflects Jacob's virility and translate similar to "manhood," "strength," "vigor," or "maturity." Most versions also translate שָׂרָה from שׂרה "strive" with the sense of "struggle" or "contention" with God; however, KJV and ASV translate them from the root שׂרר with "have power." Regarding v. 5, most versions render מַלְאָךְ "angel." The YLT translates it "the Messenger." Most versions also translate אֶל־ using "with," but the KJV and ASV translate אֶל־ with "over" as an אֶל־ of "disadvantage."[219] Versions that render יָשַׂר as parallel to שָׂרָה in 4b include ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, NLT, RSV. The YLT, KJV, and ASV render יָשַׂר from שׂרר and translate it "have power over" (KJV and ASV) or "rule with" (literally "be a prince unto" YLT).

This survey of approaches to the textual difficulties shows a great variety of translation and interpretation. Earlier scholarship is willing to substitute "Israel" for the MT's "Judah" and deem "Judah" a later Judean interpolation. Later scholarship tends to accept it as either an interpolation or original as a means to address all of Yahweh's people. The phrase וּבְאוֹנוֹ is rendered three general ways. Most translators read it from the root אוֹן "virility/manhood/vigor." Some translate וּבְאוֹנוֹ with its second meaning "wealth" or "riches." Still others translate וּבְאוֹנוֹ as deriving from or in wordplay with אָוֶן "wickedness" or עָוֹן "iniquity." Commentators generally accept that עָקַב and שָׂרָה in v. 4 offer some play on Jacob's two names, but their translations for them vary. The verb עָקַב evokes the first name given to Jacob and is translated three ways: "grasped the heel"

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[219] Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 117 §303. "Over" is slightly different than "against" but conveys a similar sense of overrule.

(Gen 25:26); "deceived" (Gen 27:36); or *ad sensum* with "supplanted." The second verb שָׂרָה evokes the patriarch's second name Israel, given to him at Penuel (Gen 32:28). שָׂרָה is almost unanimously translated with the sense of "strove" or "struggle," but a few prioritize its parallelism with וַיָּשַׂר in v. 5 of the root שׂרר "rule."

The textual difficulties in v. 5 create even more diversity in translation. Translators render the verbal phrase וַיָּשַׂר two ways. They either parallel וַיָּשַׂר with שָׂרָה as a repetition of the root שׂרה "struggle," or parallel וַיָּשַׂר with וַיֻּכָל at the end of the clause from the root שׂרר "rule." Their subject of the verbs largely depends on how translators accept the following two words, אֶל־מַלְאָךְ. Some keep its awkwardness and leave it unchanged. They assume Jacob is the subject; thus, "Jacob strove with an angel and prevailed." Others change אֶל־ to אֵל "God" and make God the subject of וַיָּשַׂר. These translations treat מַלְאָךְ in a variety of ways. Some omit מַלְאָךְ as a gloss; thus, "God ruled and prevailed." Those who keep מַלְאָךְ render the divine sense of אֵל; thus, "The divine/God-angel ruled and prevailed." Some keep Jacob as the subject of וַיָּשַׂר to keep מַלְאָךְ a part of the original text; thus, "He [Jacob] strove with God, and prevailed over the angel." Others who keep Jacob as the subject of וַיָּשַׂר will make אֵל מַלְאָךְ the object; thus, "He [Jacob] strove with the divine angel/God-angel and prevailed." How translators render the opening clause of v. 5 determines the subjects of the verbs in the final clauses. If God is ruler (שׂרר) and prevailor (יכל), then Jacob is the one who weeps (בכה) and beseeches (חנן). If Jacob is ruler (שׂרר) or the one who strives (שׂרה) and prevails (יכל), then either he or the angel can be the one who weeps and beseeches depending on how the translator understands the prophet's use of the Genesis tradition. More recent scholarship reads ישׂר אל־ as a pun reflecting the name ישׂראל "Israel." More work, however, must be done to explain how this rhetorical phenomenon contributes to the passage's multivalent meanings and readings.

The eclectic readings and interpretations are a strong indicator that a series of wordplays operate throughout Hosea's exposition that produce multiple possibilities of meaning. Said another way, a translator's attempt to isolate any of these wordplays to a single meaning can either marginalize some meaning or create problems in other areas of the passage. Translators must consider the poetic artistry that Hosea employs in this exposition to glean the richness of meaning layered throughout the passage by consecutive uses of wordplay. Ben Zvi nicely articulates that these vast translation considerations "demonstrate that the intended and primary readerships of the text would have perceived and constructed the structure of the text in different ways depending on the particular reading they followed."[220] He observes that "these readings . . . are complementary, inform each other, and all together convey the full meaning of the text as it is construed by the target readership through their continuously reading, rereading, studying, and reading to others of the text."[221] I must, however, follow to say that this does not mean every reading is permissible. One must carefully establish which readings are complementary and which should be rejected.

With respect to wayward "Judah"[222] appearing in 12:1, the reading of "Judah" in 12:3 is sensible unless both occurrences are omitted. The likelihood of "Judah" as original is also supported by the prophet's selection of a patriarchal father—an international figure applicable to both Judah and Israel—as a foil for the current relational status between Yahweh and his

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[220] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 251.

[221] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 251.

[222] Compare Judah's רוד "roaming" with God here with her רוד "roaming" apart from God in Jer 2:31. See also רוד as expressing the restless and distraught nature of the psalmist in Ps 55:3. The BHS emendation of אֵל to the plural אֵלִים "gods" in Hos 12:1 supports this reading but is not necessary since אֵל can be collective. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 603.

people.[223] The presence of "Judah" at the front end of Yahweh's רִיב "case" also proves important for understanding the semantic force of "Israel" appearing in the portmanteau וַיָּשַׂר אֶל at the beginning of v. 5. Substituting "Israel" in place of "Judah" shrinks the scope of Hosea's exposition and reduces the rhetorical impact of the wordplays scattered throughout the text.

Verse three introduces the patriarch "Jacob" which establishes the semantic platform for both polysemantic puns in v. 4 produced by the verbs עָקַב and שָׂרָה. The patriarch is given two names in Genesis that Hosea's exposition presupposes its audiences know. The success of these wordplays depends on such knowledge. The first pun עָקַב evokes the etymologies of the patriarch's first name given in Gen 25:26 "grasp the heel" and 27:36 "deceive." Davies argues that the confusion of Jacob's etymology (עקב) may be a lexical problem where the name's etymology provided by Esau actually does not mean "took by the heel" as suggested by its nominal form "heel"; rather, it means "supplant" or "overreach."[224] Should "heel" remain a part of the etymology as evidenced in Gen 25:26, to Davies' point, "grasp by the heel" could be idiomatic for "supplanting" (i.e., grasping with intent to supplant). A literal translation of 12:4a reads, בַּבֶּטֶן עָקַב אֶת־אָחִיו "In the womb, he supplanted his brother." One possible way to reproduce phonetic play is to add the clarifier "of his mother" to "womb" to create rhyme with "brother"; thus, "In the womb *of his mother*, *Jacob* supplanted his brother." The italics safely shows the added material while "of his mother" indicates what is already assumed of "womb" and "Jacob"

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[223] My position on "Judah" belonging to Hosea's oracles follows Andersen and Freedman who state, "the prophet does not neglect either [Israel or Judah]. . . . [T]o a somewhat greater extent the focus is on the north, but Judah is not neglected. . . . [This] reflects the physical circumstances of the prophets who lived in one or the other of the countries but were fully aware that both kingdoms were part of the people of God and had central roles in salvation history." *Hosea*, 192.

[224] Davies, *Hosea*, 273. Davies's postulation is supported in the following canonical versions: Jubilee Bible, ASV, CJB, DBY, JPS, KJV, NASB, NJB, RSV, WEB. See also CSB, ESV, GNV, GWN, NET, NIV, NLT. The YLT prioritizes the etymology given at Jacob's birth and translates Gen 27:36 "he doth take me by the heel these two times."

is implied meaning in the subtext that is now surfaced.

12:4b וּבְאוֹנוֹ שָׂרָה אֶת־אֱלֹהִים "and in his vigor, he strove with God" contains two wordplays. The first wordplay is the polysemantic pun אוֹן which can yield two meanings, "vigor/strength" and "riches." The context of physical struggle created by עָקַב conditions the primary meaning of אוֹן as "vigor"; however, as 12:9 later confirms with the appearance of אוֹן "equity/riches" and עָוֺן "iniquity," the prophet may have had these meanings in mind along with אָוֶן "wickedness" as a parallel to Jacob's deceitfulness. Although אוֹן may function as a polysemantic pun in 12:4, I suggest prioritizing in translation its soundplay with אוֹן and עָוֺן in 12:9. The literal semantics of אוֹן and עָוֺן can be preserved in the rhyme scheme אוֹן "equity" and עָוֺן "iniquity." This rhyme pattern can be maintained and introduced by אוֹן in 12:4 with the literal translation אוֹן "vitality."

The second wordplay in 12:4b happens with שָׂרָה "strove" and its play on Jacob's second name "Israel," given to Jacob when he שׂרה "strove" with God at Penuel (Gen 32:28). A translation that captures this polysemantic pun must sound like "Israel" because of the proper name it models and because of the expression וַיָּשַׂר אֶל "Isra-el" with which it sits in parallelism at the beginning of 12:5. A literal translation of שָׂרָה reads, "he strove," but a translation that produces the phonetic play can read, "he is-a-rival *against/toward*"; thus, "in his vitality he is-a-rival *against* God." "Rival" is a close synonym to "strive" or "contend," and the hyphenated expression contains phonetic similarities to "Israel." However, like the expression "took-place-of" (see above), the hyphenated phrase "he is-a-rival" is unnatural, which compromises clarity and ease of wit. Furthermore, the hyphenated expression contains tense issues by communicating a present passive condition. Although "is-a-rival" is sensible and provides phonetic highlighting that links שָׂרָה, יִשְׂרָאֵל, and וַיָּשַׂר אֶל, these distortions need explanation that relegate the translation to commentaries that can depict the paronomasia's mechanics. The expression "he is-a-rival,"

however, enables audibility for the next wordplay created by the portmanteau וַיָּשַׂר אֶל "Isra-el"

beginning in v. 5.[225]

The final wordplay translation to address in this exposition is the clause וַיָּשַׂר אֶל in Hos 5.

The Masoretes vocalize וַיָּשַׂר as a *Qal* imperfect *waw* consecutive from שׂרר, a geminate verb (see

also Jud 9:22); thus, "and he became ruler toward an angel and he prevailed." The structure of

וַיָּשַׂר combines with אֶל to create a portmanteau of יִשְׂרָאֵל because throughout 12:3–5 Judah is the

only explicit object of Yahweh's רִיב "case" (12:3). The exclusion of Israel makes audiences

anticipate how the prophet perceives Israel in Yahweh's case. Allusions to Israel are made in the

appearance of Jacob as a main character and the verb שׂרה, which evokes Israel's etymology.

When the prophet follows these allusions with the statement יָּשַׂר אֶל, audiences can reasonably

hear "Israel" and understand that one of its meanings evokes "Israel" to include Israel with Judah

as a part of Yahweh's רִיב "case."

Another indication of יָּשַׂר אֶל as portmanteau is the irregular use of אֶל. The preposition עִם is

more sensible in this position, but אֶל incites ambiguity that causes audiences to look for clarity.

אֶל is sensible if taken as a preposition of disadvantage "against," but its awkwardness challenges

audiences to question its fuller contribution to the passage. Already anticipating the name Israel

to surface in Hosea's exposition, audiences could hear וַיָּשַׂר אֶל and perceive יִשְׂרָאֵל "Israel." With

some awkwardness, a literal translation of 12:5a ("And he became lord toward an angel and he

prevailed") sensibly reflects the patriarchal tradition when Jacob wrestles a messenger of God

(literally אִישׁ). More pointedly, however, is the subtext's address to Israel. The prophet cries out

"Isra-el" to emphatically include Israel with Judah in Yahweh's רִיב "case" and instate Israel as

he who strove with God and prevailed against an angel. A translation that recreates the polysemy

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[225] Note how "is-a-rival" rhymes with "Israel."

of וַיָּשַׂר אֶל can read "*Israel* prevailed over an angel." This literary transfer surfaces the addressee

"Israel" from the subtext to bring clarity to the subject of the verbs in 12:5a as Jacob. The rest of

the verse remains literal. A translation more phonetically sensitive to the parallelism between יָשַׂר

and שָׂרָה in 12:4 reads "*Israel* is-a-rival."

A possible translation that shows sensitivity to the phonetics of the wordplays throughout

Hos 12:4-5 reads

> [4]"In the womb *of his mother*, *Jacob* supplanted his brother,
>   And in his vitality, he is-a-rival *against* God.
> [5]*Israel* prevailed over an angel
>   He wept and sought his favor."

The following translation is better suited for canonical use. It does not convey the breadth

of wordplay present, but preserves the semantics more precisely and sets the two cola in relation

through a four-line rhyme pattern with a rest on the third line.

> [4]"In the womb, *Jacob* supplanted his brother,
>   And he strove with God in his vigor
> [5]*Israel* prevailed over an angel,
>   He wept and sought his favor."

Semantic Force of the Wordplays

This elaborate chain of wordplay centers largely on the identities produced by the

etymology of Jacob's names. By the end of Hosea's exposition, audiences know that Yahweh's

case is with all his people, Judah and Israel. First, the prophet indicts them with the identity

"Jacob" because they try to supplant their brother, which may reflect poor international or

internal relations or both. Then, the prophet indicts the people with the identity of "Israel"

because they strive with God with iniquitous vigor (אוֹן 12:4). Like Israel, they may have

prevailed in their eyes with God, but they will soon find themselves weeping and seeking his

favor (12:5).

Hosea wants the people to see, however, that Jacob came to know God as "Yahweh" in his striving. Hosea uses the wordplay to help audiences first identify themselves with the different stages of the patriarch's development. If they follow in stride, they will see in the end who is the divine with whom they are striving. In the Genesis tradition Jacob strove with a אִישׁ "man" and discovered he strove with God who met him at Bethel (Hos 12:4; see also Gen 28:13) and revealed himself as Yahweh the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac. In the same way, Hosea urges the people to see they are supplanting and striving with God. He challenges them to seek God's favor as Jacob did when God revealed his name as יהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת "Yahweh, God of Hosts" (12:6) at Bethel, which to the prophet has become Beth-aven—Hos 4:15; 5:8; 10:5).

Hosea 12:8

Wordplay in 12:8 (MT) centers on the polysemy of כְּנַעַן from כְּנַעַן בְּיָדוֹ מֹאזְנֵי מִרְמָה לַעֲשֹׁק אָהֵב "A merchant in whose hands are false scales, he loves to oppress." כְּנַעַן can refer to "Canaan," the land of peoples whom Israel was instructed by God to eradicate (Deut 20:17), or "merchant," a meaning associated with trading Phoenicians who eventually inhabited the land. The following section will investigate how context evokes both meanings to indict Ephraim with dealing unjustly with its own people.

Grammar and Translation of the Wordplay

Ancient translations toggle between translating כְּנַעַן as a proper noun or according to its profession. 𝔊 reproduces it as a proper noun and transliterates it with Χανααν "Canaan." α′ translates its profession with μετάβολος "trader" (see Zech 14:21 and Isa 23:8). Like α′, the Targum translates it with תגר "merchant" (לָא תְהוֹן כְּתַגְרִין "do not be like merchants").

Commentators and modern canonical translations reflect the different approaches evidenced in ancient translations. Harper translates כְּנַעַן as the proper noun "Canaan" and

understands it as "a figurative epithet for degenerate Israel, and equivalent to *merchant*."[226] He

notes that "Canaanite" became a synonym for "merchant" because of how long they procured the

work of merchandising.[227] Rudolph also translates כְּנַעַן with "*Kanaan*" and understands the name

to reflect Ephraim's affiliation with Canaanite customs and living not so much their *Kultformen*

but their exploitation in business.[228] Buss captures both meanings of כְּנַעַן in his translation, "A

Canaanite trader."[229] McKeating translates the profession of כְּנַעַן with "merchant" but states a

"word-play is probably intentional. Israel, once in Canaan, took to Canaanite ways, to trade and

sharp practice, and became an affluent society."[230] Wolff also translates כְּנַעַן with "merchant" and

says, "כנען denotes nothing other than contemporary Ephraim, which is filled with a Canaanite

spirit of promiscuity and commerce."[231] Andersen and Freedman translate כְּנַעַן with "Canaan" but

note the likelihood that the meaning "merchant" is possible since it became the prominent

meaning when [the land of] "Canaan" faded in use after the conquest.[232] The land of Canaan is

never mentioned in the Samuels and Kings, and "Canaanite" appears only once in each (2 Sam

24:7 and 1 Kings 9:16).[233] Jeremias translates כְּנַעַן as the peoples *Kanaanäer* to reflect how

Ephraim had become so influenced by Canaanite merchandising they lost their identity and

became Canaanites themselves.[234] Stuart translates כְּנַעַן with "Canaan" and argues it is a

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[226] Harper, *Hosea*, 384. Italics is original.

[227] Harper, *Hosea*, 384.

[228] Rudoph, *Hosea*, 233.

[229] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 24.

[230] McKeating, *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, 143–44.

[231] Wolff, *Hosea*, 207, 214.

[232] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 593.

[233] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 593.

[234] Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea*, 155. See also Beeby, *Hosea*, 157.

"derogatory double-entendre" that also means "merchant."[235] Ephraim is, therefore, a "greedy merchant" who is "no better than the Canaanites whose immoral culture deserved extinction (see Gen 15:16)."[236] Garrett translates כְּנַעַן with "merchant" but calls it a "wordplay" in *casus pendens*, linking with "Ephraim" in v. 9 to describe it as an "unscrupulous mercantile class" of people who are "as unethical as the original Canaanites."[237] Macintosh translates כְּנַעַן with "Canaan" and argues it unlikely means "merchants" or "traders" for which כנעני is more commonly used.[238] Ben Zvi translates כְּנַעַן with "Canaan" and notes its fronted position in v. 8 that would more likely have been taken by Ephraim, Israel, or a similar term. Ephraim's response to the title in v. 9 demonstrates that the two are linked and associates Ephraim's socio-economic behavior with Canaan and the threat that it will be treated by Yahweh the same as the Canaanites.[239] Dearman translates כְּנַעַן with "A trader" and isolates its etymology from "Canaan" to argue כְּנַעַן is not "a reference to a Canaanite or to the land of Canaan, but to the trading, mercantile culture of Canaan and to one who represents it, namely a merchant or trader." [240] Most modern canonical translations render כְּנַעַן "merchant/trader," including ASV, CJB, ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, NIV, NJB, NLT, RSV, and WEB. Some versions translate it as the proper name "Canaan," including GNV and YLT. A version that renders both meanings is NKJ with "A cunning Canaanite!"

The survey above shows most translating כְּנַעַן according to its meaning as the profession "merchant/trader" or as the proper name "Canaan" (or "Canaanite"). Interpretations vary whether

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[235] Stuart, *Hosea*, 192.

[236] Stuart, *Hosea*, 192.

[237] Garrett, *Hosea*, 241–42.

[238] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 494.

[239] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 251–52.

[240] Dearman, *Hosea*, 296 and 309.

one meaning is intended over the other or if both are implied through wordplay.

The primary meaning of כְּנַעַן derives from its written expression כְּנַעַן, which literally refers to the proper name "Canaan." Macintosh illuminates this distinction where כְּנַעַן is used to identify the location "Canaan" and כנעני is used to identify Canaan's inhabitants, "Canaanites." This primary meaning, "Canaan," is evidenced first by its parallelism with the proper name Ephraim in 12:9. As Garrett rightfully notices, כְּנַעַן is in *casus pendens* and finds its clarifying literal referent in Ephraim. Second, both names refer to geographic regions comprising stigmatized people groups. That כְּנַעַן also conjures "merchant/trader" is evidenced by the ambiguity of "Canaan" (occurring here for the first and only time in Hosea) and by the market context that follows.

The term כְּנַעַן is shorthand for both "Canaan" and "merchant/trader" and its pragmatic focus is to blend the culture of both to indict Ephraim with misinterpreting the favor of their wealth. Long-hand translations capture the polysemy and is seen in Buss's proposed translation "A Canaanite trader,"[241] and in NKJ with "A cunning Canaanite!" Buss prioritizes the merchant profession of כְּנַעַן and uses its primary meaning, "Canaan," to modify the kind of merchant, i.e., "Canaanite." NKJ prioritizes the primary meaning of כְּנַעַן and uses the descriptive clarifier, "cunning," from the domains of deceptive merchant conduct to describe the people evoked in the identity of "Canaanite." Both translations legitimately capture the polysemy of כְּנַעַן, and NKJ even reproduces it with phonetic play through alliteration. I propose similarly to translate both meanings where one functions adjectively. Another possible option is to put both literal meanings in rhyming apposition to tag them aurally in relationship and allow both meanings to simultaneously stand by themselves while clarifying the other; thus, "A Canaan *tradesman*."

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[241] Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 24.

This translation illuminates the polysemy through rhyme that enhances the semantics of what would otherwise only be read as either an ambiguous "Canaan" or a partially substantiated "merchant/trader."

Semantic Force of the Soundplay

The delivery of כְּנַעַן in *casus pendens* briefly suspends Ephraim as the subject of its indictment. Once Ephraim is identified, its people are challenged to appropriate the identity of כְּנַעַן "Canaan" and more particularly its jaded history as deceptive merchants. The polysemantic pun indicts and judges. It indicts audiences to specifically understand their merchandizing and socio-economic transactions as oppressive and corrupt like the Canaanite merchants in antiquity. As Stuart and Ben Zvi illuminate, the pun also judges by associating the national identity of Ephraim under Yahweh with the national identity of Canaan under Yahweh. Just as Canaan's iniquity led to its demise by Yahweh (Gen 15:16), so Ephraim's economic oppressiveness will lead to its demise.

<div align="center">Hosea 13:10, 14</div>

Wordplay in Hos 13:10 and 14 centers on the expression אֱהִי, a consonantal form that translates "I will be." The expression appears once in 13:10 and twice in 13:14 which the ESV translates:

<div align="right">אֱהִי מַלְכְּךָ אֵפוֹא וְיוֹשִׁיעֲךָ בְּכָל־עָרֶיךָ וְשֹׁפְטֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ תְּנָה־לִּי מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים׃ ¹⁰</div>

<div align="right">מִיַּד שְׁאוֹל אֶפְדֵּם מִמָּוֶת אֶגְאָלֵם אֱהִי דְבָרֶיךָ מָוֶת אֱהִי קָטָבְךָ שְׁאוֹל נֹחַם יִסָּתֵר מֵעֵינָי׃ ¹⁴</div>

¹⁰Where now is your king, to save you in all your cities? Where are all your rulers—those of whom you said, "Give me a king and princes"?

¹⁴Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

The consonantal form and vowel pointing of אֱהִי is irregular and leads to a variety of

translations spanning ancient and modern canons and commentaries. The following section will

investigate how these forms are commonly understood by translators and explore how their

irregular form evokes paronomasia with אַיֵּה "where" to state a rhetorical question while

simultaneously providing its answer with its consonantal form אהי "I will be."

Grammar and Translation of the Wordplay

The consonantal form אהי without a prefixed *waw* usually retains the final ה (אֶהְיֶה e.g.,

Exod 3:12). Furthermore, the vowel pointing אֱהִי is unique to Hosea, appearing three times and

only in these two verses. Ancient traditions expose these grammatical dilemmas in the variety of

translations proposed to make sense of the irregular form. Greek versions render אֱהִי in 13:10

with ποῦ "where," but they differ in its appearances in 13:14. 𝔊 continues translating אֱהִי with

ποῦ, while α′, σ′, and θ′ translate אֱהִי from the verb היה "to be." α′ and σ′ translate with ἔσομαι "I

will be," while θ′ translates with ἔσται with ἡ δίκη "the punishment" as its subject; thus, "the

punishment will be." The Targum reflects the Greek traditions and translates אֱהִי in 13:10 with אָן

"where" but translates it in 13:14 as a verbal expression with יְהֵי "it [my speech] will be." The

BHS editors suggest emending אֱהִי in all instances to אַיֵּה "where," which follows 𝔊.

Many commentators and modern canonical translations accept 𝔊 or the BHS emendations

and render אֱהִי with the form אַיֵּה "where" (ESV, NIV, RSV, NASB, ASV).[242] Others, however,

see additional possibilities. Landy argues אֱהִי simultaneously evokes אֱהִי "I am" and אַיֵּה

"where."[243] Macintosh rejects how the same scribal error would happen three times in the same

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[242] Harper accepts 𝔊 for vv. 10 and 14. *Amos and Hosea*, 399–405, 404–5. See also Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea*, 221; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 625, 636; and Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 199.

[243] Francis Landy, *Hosea*, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995),

chapter and suggests אֱהִי is related to the Syriac *'h'* and "constitutes . . . an interjection of derision"; thus, "So much, then, for."[244] Ben Zvi records nine popular ways v. 14 is translated, where five of them translate אֱהִי with "where" and four of them translate with "I am."[245] Dearman argues אֱהִי is "a variant or dialectical form of an interrogative."[246]

The variety of arguments suggests this form's uniqueness could be either a textual error, an unknown or rare form, or an idiomatic expression possibly coined by the prophet. The 𝔊 use of ποῦ may reflect the Hebrew form as a rare idiom meaning "where"; however, the interrogative ποῦ is hardly rare and commonly reflects the normal Hebrew interrogative אַיֵּה "where." 𝔊 more likely makes an interpretive move and translates only one of the form's several meanings. 𝔊 likely reproduces the unwritten meaning (subtext) "where," which is arguably the clearest meaning evidenced by the ambiguity of the written meaning אהי "I am."[247] The literal reading of אֱהִי, however, is sensible. Its difficulty resides only in odd vowel pointing and several ambiguous referents. If the subject of וְיוֹשִׁיעֲךָ "let him save you" is Ephraim or Baal (13:1), then what follows is a tongue-in-cheek challenge for Ephraim or Baal to do what only Yahweh can do; save and judge. Verse 14, then, follows with "I am" statements indicating Yahweh as the source of salvation and the one who is death's plagues and Sheol's sting. Compassion, therefore, no longer remains for death or Sheol. A literal translation, therefore, reads:

> [10]I am your king then. Let him [Ephraim or Baal (13:1)] save you in all your cities
> and the ones who judge you, when you say, "Give to me a king and princes."

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166. The KJV reflects a degree of both meanings.

[244] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 537.

[245] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 274–75.

[246] Dearman, *Hosea*, 317, 324, 328.

[247] The Apostle Paul also chooses the meaning "where" (ποῦ) in his translation of this passage in 1 Cor 15:55.

[14]I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol; I will redeem them from death; I am your plagues O death; I am your sting O Sheol; Compassion [for death and Sheol] will be hidden from My eyes.

The semantic possibility of both translations אֶהְיֶ "I am" and אַיֵּה "where" being operative makes אֶהְיֶ a shorthand expression of taunting with the pragmatic focus of persuading audiences towards Yahweh as Lord. KJV is one of the only translations that captures a semblance of this pragmatic focus by translating v. 10 "I will be thy king: *where is any other* that may save thee in all thy cities."[248] In 13:14, however, it renders only the consonantal form אהי; thus, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."[249] KJV provides a model in 13:10 that enables translations to render both meanings of אֶהְיֶ in a succinct form that initiates the taunt of the rhetorical question and follows it with the answer of Yahweh's presence. Translators can, furthermore, reproduce the phonetic play using word-repetition by rendering each instance of אֶהְיֶ with "where" followed by the taunt's answer "I am here."

[10]*Where* is your king then? I am *here*! Let him [Ephraim or Baal (13:1)] save you in all your cities and the ones who judge you, when you say, "Give to me a king and princes."

[14]I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol; I will redeem them from death; *Where* are your plagues O death, I am *here!*; *Where* is your sting O Sheol, I am *here*!; Compassion [for death and Sheol] will be hidden from My eyes.

The repetition reproduces the paronomasia "where" to establish the wordplay's rhetorical question and then concludes the taunt with the written meaning "I am." This literary transfer captures both meanings of the wordplay by translating its subtext. These additions are indicated by italics but are necessary to the passage because they complete the rhetorical force of the taunt. Their phonetic repetition, furthermore, adds intensity to the taunt.

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[248] The boldface is my own to highlight the two meanings represented. The italics is also my own to show additions to the Hebrew text.

[249] The boldface is my own to indicate where אהי is manifested in the translation.

Semantic Force of the Wordplay

The wordplay of אֱהִי rhetorically and tauntingly asks audiences to identify where the person who fulfills the respective characteristics is. The taunts begin in 13:9 with Yahweh declaring Israel's destruction for being against its help; i.e., Yahweh. Yahweh issues his first rhetorical taunt to contrast Israel's false perception of its עזר "helper," with himself as its true עזר. Yahweh asks Israel, "Where is your king?" and contrasts Yahweh's presence ("I am *here*") with the absence of its earthly king to save it from destruction. Verse 14 clarifies this contrast further by indicating Yahweh as the provider and taker of Israel's kings. Yahweh addresses his second and third taunt to Israel's true adversary, "death" and "Sheol," to show Israel he is sovereign over Israel's true destroyer, its own עָוֹן "iniquity" and חַטָּאת "sin" (13:12). Yahweh taunts, "Where are your plagues, O Death?" and declares, "I am *here*." He taunts again, "Where is your sting, O Sheol?" and declares, "I am *here*." The wordplay challenges Israel to reconsider who it believes reigns over it and redirects audiences to understand their own sin and iniquity against their true helper, Yahweh, as the real issue and cause of their death and destruction.

Conclusion

Identifying a precise pattern of Hosea's wordplay for Ephraim and Israel is difficult, but their appearance clusters in three general areas of Hosea. The first group contributes to the framework of cultic-center idolatry. Within this group are two of the three appearances of בֵּית אָוֶן "Beth-aven" that indict Bethel's cultic center as iniquitous (4:15; 5:8). Also, in this group is the polysemous phrase וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ that indicts religious leaders who have turned sacrifice into entrapment through their promiscuity (5:2). These three wordplays appear in close proximity respectively throughout the oracles in Hos 4–5 and collaboratively target the religious leaders' apostasy implemented at the cultic center in Bethel.

The second group spans the first half of Hos 10 with three wordplays that focus on Israel's misconception of its prosperity deriving from their calf-cult. The first wordplay appears in 10:1 to describe Israel as a vain vine: a vine that is luxurious on the one hand, but whose fruit is empty. The second wordplay continues the indictment of בֵּית אָוֶן "Beth-aven" against the "inhabitants of Samaria," who comprise the residents of the capital city or more specifically, the ruling class.[250] These inhabitants who invested in the idolatrous worship at Bethel will fear for its calf because the calf's glory will depart from it and so will their investment. The third wordplay happens in 10:6 to shame Israel for accepting and implementing the idolatrous עֵצָה "counsel" centered in the calf-cult.

The third group of wordplays navigate audiences through an exposition of Jacob in the first half of Hos 12. The wordplays center on the two names given to the patriarch, Jacob and Israel. Hosea's play on the names encourages audiences to identify with how Jacob came to know Yahweh as evidenced by the stages of his name changes. The exposition's wordplay begins with paronomasia from verbs expressing the etymologies of both names. The patriarch supplanted (עקב; parallel with "Jacob") his brother in the womb, and then in his equity/iniquity/vitality (אוֹן), he strove (שׂרה; parallel with "Israel") with God (Hos 12:4). Ephraim has behaved similarly with God's people and with God. The portmanteau וַיָּשַׂר אֶל "Isra-el" (literally "and he became ruler toward" from שׂרר) shows the patriarch prevailing over the angel in his strife but afterward leaves him weeping and seeking favor from the angel. This portmanteau indicts Israel of its vain striving and false perception that the nation is prevailing. In reality, the nation is striving against Yahweh and it will soon find itself weeping and seeking Yahweh's favor. This third grouping of wordplay concludes with a polysemantic pun that veers from the Jacob exposition to provide

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[250] Dearman, *Hosea*, 258.

commentary that clarifies the nature of Ephraim's vigor with which it supplants its brother and strives against God. The pun calls Ephraim a כְּנַעַן "Canaan tradesman," which indicts Ephraim's vigor in corrupt socio-economics and deceptive merchandizing (Hos 12:8).

The final collection of wordplay addressed to Israel and Ephraim is not based on its close proximity in a text or collective contribution to a given passage but based on their repeated use. The prophet plays on Ephraim's etymology "fruitful" twice, using paronomasia between אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" and פְּרִי "fruit." The first occurrence happens in 9:16 to expose the irony that Ephraim, whose name expresses fruitfulness, is stricken and will bear no fruit. The second occurrence happens in 14:9 to convey the same irony, only this time Yahweh appropriates the image of fruitfulness as a luxuriant tree to project himself, not idols, as the source of Ephraim's fruitfulness.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOSEAN SOUNDPLAY

Introduction

Hebrew soundplay is discussed in Chapter 2 in three main categories: Phoneme repetition, rhyme, and word-repetition. Phoneme repetition is a broad category of soundplay that uses repetition at the level of phonemes or syllables and includes alliteration, assonance, and consonant repetition. Alliteration is specified as the distinct "repetition of the same or cognate sounds at the beginning of words."[1] It differs from assonance and consonantal repetition in that its repetition comprises both consonants and vowels and only occurs at the beginning of words rather than in the middle or end.[2] Assonance is a form of vowel repetition that "occurs when there is a series of words containing a distinctive vowel-sound or certain vowel-sounds in a specific sequence."[3] Consonant repetition is the use of same consonants throughout a word or across multiple words.[4] Rhyme is another broad category of soundplay that comprises distinct correspondences of same or similar sounds at the end of words and internally.[5] One subcategory of rhyme is word-rhyme, which is the root of two or more words containing correspondences of similar sounds at the end of the words or internally. Another subcategory of rhyme is end-rhyme, which is same-suffixes used distinctly across a series of words. The third broad category of

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[1] Glück, "Assonance," 70–71.

[2] Contra Watson who states, "Alliteration refers to *consonants*, not vowels." *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 225. Italic is original.

[3] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 222–23.

[4] Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 225–26.

[5] This definition is modified from Zogbo and Wendland, *Hebrew Poetry in the Bible*, 39.

soundplay is word-repetition which is the distinct use of the same word or phrase multiple times across a passage.

Every soundplay in each category reflects a repetition pattern that organizes words to structure clauses, colon, and cola. Their aural tagging highlights particular subjects, objects, or themes and may establish extensive sound patterns that emphasize breaks in the pattern. Repetition patterns are determined by the soundplay's position in the clause, colon, or cola.

The prophet uses the following repetition patterns to structure his soundplay. Diacope is repetition broken by intervening words (e.g., Jer 3:7 "And I said, 'After she has done all these things she will *return* to me,' but she did not *return*"). Anaphora is repetition at the start of clauses or verses (e.g., Ps 29:4 "*The voice of the Lord* is powerful; *the voice of the Lord* is majestic"). Epiphora/Epistrophe is repetition at the end of successive clauses (e.g., Ps 24:10 "Who is this *King of Glory*? Yahweh of hosts, he is the *King of Glory*"). Epimone is repetition of a phrase to stress a point (e.g., Ps 136:1–2ff "Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; *for his faithfulness is everlasting*. Give thanks to the God of gods, *for his faithfulness is everlasting*").[6] Succession is repetition that immediately follows after another (e.g., Zech 4:7 "*Grace*, *grace* to it"; Isa 6:3 "*Holy*, *holy*, *holy* is Yahweh of hosts"). Anadiplosis is repetition at the end of one line or clause that begins the next (e.g., Matt 23:12 "And whoever exalts himself shall be *humbled*; and whoever *humbles* himself shall be exalted"). Epanalepsis is repetition at the beginning of a clause or sentence that also appears at the end of that same clause or sentence (e.g., "*Rejoice* in the Lord always; again, I will say, *rejoice*!" Phil 4:4). Parallel is repetition at the same places of two or more separate lines or clauses (e.g., Ps 146:1 "*Praise* the *Lord*; *Praise*, O my soul, the *Lord*").

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[6] This verse also contains anaphora with הוֹדוּ "Give praise/thanks."

These soundplay categories and repetition patterns provide structure and guidance for correctly identifying and interpreting an occurrence of soundplay. They aid in accurately replicating soundplay's semantic and pragmatic nature in translation. The following sections will discuss translation and interpretation of each soundplay in Hosea with respect to these categories and repetition patterns.

Phoneme Repetition

Alliteration

Hosea contains several cases of alliteration. One alliteration appears in 5:14b–15 with the repetition of אֶ to emphasize Yahweh as the subject enacting the following judgment. The passage literally reads אֲנִי אֲנִי אֶטְרֹף וְאֵלֵךְ אֶשָּׂא וְאֵין מַצִּיל ¹⁵ אֵלֵךְ אָשׁוּבָה אֶל־מְקוֹמִי עַד אֲשֶׁר־יֶאְשְׁמוּ וּבִקְשׁוּ פָנָי, "I *indeed* I, I will tear to pieces and I will go; I will carry *away*, but there will be none who will deliver. I will go *and* I will return to my place until they acknowledge *their* guilt and seek my face." Conveniently, the euphony of alliteration is naturally reproduced through word-repetition when each of the first person subjects is translated.[7]

A second alliteration happens in the final clause of 7:14 and the first clause of v. 15 between יָסוּרוּ "they turned" (v. 14) and יִסַּרְתִּי "I trained/strengthened/disciplined" (v. 15) in the passage ¹⁴יָסוּרוּ בִי ¹⁵וַאֲנִי יִסַּרְתִּי חִזַּקְתִּי זְרוֹעֹתָם "They turn away from me, although I trained *and* strengthened their arms."[8] Beginning with the אוֹי "Woe" in v. 13, the prophet indicts Ephraim for

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[7] Note diacope is the repetition pattern.

[8] Several translation problems arise with identifying the root forms of יָסוּרוּ (סור) and יִסַּרְתִּי (יסר). Translators take two general approaches to יָסוּרוּ. The first approach keeps 𝔐 pointing which reflects the root יסר "turn away" (Symmachus, Quinta, McKeating, *Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, 117; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 476; Hubbard, *Hosea*, 151; Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 152; CJB, DBY, NASB, NET, NIV, NLT, and YLT). A second approach accepts the BHS emendation to יָסֹרוּ from סרר "be stubborn" or "rebel" (Targum, Syriac, Lipshitz, *Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 74; Harper, *Hosea-Amos*, 305; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 152; Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 16; Wolff, *Hosea*, 108; Davies, *Hosea*, 191; ASV, ERV, ESV, KJV, NJB, and RSV). Three general approaches are made to יִסַּרְתִּי as well.

operating in opposition to Yahweh. They have strayed (נדד) from him, rebelled (פשׁע) against

him, and spoke (דבר) against him. The soundplay between יָסֻורוּ and יִסַּרְתִּי continues the

indictment to expose Ephraim as a people who turn away from Yahweh although he trains them

and who devise evil against him even though he strengthens their arm. The literal translation

naturally captures the alliteration by repeating the *t* sound.

A third alliteration appears in 10:10 with אס used in וְאֶסֳרֵם from יסר "discipline," וְאֻסְפֹּו from

אסף "gather," and בְּאׇסְרׇם from אסר "bind."

$$\text{בְּאַוׇּתִי וְאֶסֳרֵם}$$
$$\text{וְאֻסְפֹּו עֲלֵיהֶם עַמִּים}$$
$$\text{בְּאׇסְרׇם לִשְׁתֵּי עֵינֹתׇם}$$

The verse literally reads, "When I desire, I [Yahweh] will discipline them [Israel] and peoples

will be gathered against them when they are bound for their double guilt."[9] The alliteration's

movement begins with anadiplosis as אס־ ends the first clause and begins the second but

concludes in anaphora as the second and third appearance begins its respective clause. Its

euphony stacks the first two verbs in succession and tags them for emphatic delivery. The

alliteration begins the third clause with the same aural tagging to emphatically reiterate Israel's

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The first renders its current position in conjunction with חִזַּקְתִּי; thus, "I have trained *and* I strengthened" (Harper, *Hosea-Amos*, 305; Rudolph, *Hosea*, 152; Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 16; McKeating, *Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, 117; Wolff, *Hosea*, 108; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 476; Davies, *Hosea*, 191; and Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 152.). The second approach accepts the BHS emendation to delete it (See 𝔖). The third approach considers יסר an Aramaic or Arabic cognate meaning "strengthen" (Godfrey Rolles Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Minor Prophets 1," *JTS* 39 (1938): 154–86. See Ibn Janāḥ who gives יִסַּרְתִּי the meaning "I have strengthened" from the Arabic *šddt*. From Macintosh, *Hosea*, 283.). The vowel pointing of יָסֻורוּ most clearly suggests a *Qal* imperfect of סור (See Gen 49:10). Unfortunately, no imperfects of סרר appear throughout the Old Testament to compare, but the Qal imperfect of the geminate סרר most likely contains a *ḥōlem* over the first root letter as with I-Nun and Hollow patterns. As Andersen and Freedman suggest, the sense of סור "turn" or "depart" in v. 14 is suitable with יְשֹׁובוּ in v. 16 to restate the problem: they turn from me and they do not turn above. *Hosea*, 475–76.

[9] BHS editors suggest emending וְאֶסֳרֵם to the *Hiphil* וַאֲיַסְּרֵם to follow the 𝔖 (B^ab) infinitive παιδεῦσαι "to discipline" (See B παιδεῦσε "he disciplined"). This pointing is merely a conjecture according to Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 190. BHS editors also suggest emending בְּאׇסְרׇם "when they are bound" to לְיַסְּרׇם "to discipline" to follow the 𝔖 infinitive construction ἐω τῷ παιδεύεσθαι αὐτούς "when they are disciplined." Both emendations oversee the alliteration tagging these verbs with וְאֻסְפֹּו "and they will be gathered."

entrapment. A translation that reproduces the alliteration and its emphatic form follows:

"When I desire, I [Yahweh] will correct them [Israel];

Collected against them will be nations,

when they are collared for their double guilt."[10]

A fourth alliteration occurs in 12:12 with גִּלְעָד "Gilead," גִּלְגָּל "Gilgal," and גַלִּים "stone heaps" in אִם־גִּלְעָד אָוֶן אַךְ־שָׁוְא הָיוּ בַּגִּלְגָּל שְׁוָרִים זִבֵּחוּ גַּם מִזְבְּחוֹתָם כְּגַלִּים עַל תַּלְמֵי שָׂדָי "If Gilead *has* iniquity, surely they shall become worthless; in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls, also their altars are like heaps of stones on the furrows of the field."[11] The aural tagging highlights the epicenters Gilgal and Gilead and their apostasy evidenced by the numerous altars erected for non-Yahwistic worship. "Gilgal and "Gilead" set the alliterative pattern; therefore, structural alteration to גַלִּים is needed to complete it. One possible alteration is to translate גַלִּים with the French loan-word "galet"; thus, "heaps of galets." Galets are small stones that vary in size. Larger galets are sizeable enough to use for building altars. "Galet," however, is an irregular word that most modern canonical readers would not know unless they are in specific building trades or know French. As a result, "heaps of galets" requires decoding that commentaries or footnotes need to explain. Another possible translation changes "heaps" to "gallons" or "galleries"; thus, "If Gilead *has* iniquity, surely they shall become worthless; in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls, also their altars are like gallons/galleries of stone on the furrows of the field."[12] Both continue the "gal" alliterative pattern where "gallons" idiomatically recreates the expression of "piling on" that "heaps" evokes and "galleries" evokes the display factor of heaps.

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[10] I am grateful to Dr. David Adams for his suggestion "collared," which continues not only the "co-" alliteration, but also continues the double consonant pattern of "correct" and "collected." An alternative word choice is "constrained."

[11] Note the repetition pattern is diacope.

[12] I am grateful to Dr. David Adams for his suggestion of *gallons*.

One occurrence of assonance appears in 4:6 with the frequent use of *a* class vowels in the phrase כִּי־אַתָּה הַדַּעַת מָאַסְתָּ וְאֶמְאָסְךָ "because you rejected knowledge, I will reject you." This aural tagging through *a* class vowels highlights the clause to emphasize Yahweh's definitive statement of judgment. Conveniently, the literal translation of 4:6 contains aural tagging through word-repetition, with מאס "reject" appearing twice. This repetition accents the verbs that are crucial for English readers to pause and notice the cause and effect relationship of Yahweh's judgment on the people's apostasy. Another appearance of assonance happens in 9:15 כָּל־רָעָתָם עַל רֹעַ מַעַלְלֵיהֶם בַּגִּלְגָּל כִּי־שָׁם שְׂנֵאתִים מִבֵּיתִי אֲגָרְשֵׁם לֹא אוֹסֵף אַהֲבָתָם כָּל־שָׂרֵיהֶם סֹרְרִים "All their evil is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the evilness of their deeds, from my house I will drive them out. I will no longer love them. All of their princes are stubborn." This verse contains a large concentration of "a" class vowels that aurally tag Yahweh's distaste for Ephraim's evil deeds. A translation can capture a level of this euphony with a repetition of "v" sounds in "All their evil is in Gilgal, for there I reviled them. Because of the evilness of their ventures, from my house I will drive them out. I will no longer love them. All of their princes are stubborn."[13]

Hosea contains four cases of consonant repetition. The first case appears in 7:2 with a series of double consonants לל and בב falling on לבב "heart," סבב "surround," and מעלל "deeds." The consonant repetition is styled in diacope that highlights the message of the whole verse. This general use of aural tagging allows translators to recreate the phonetic play on different words other than those on which the consonant repetition falls. Two sets of word-rhyme can recreate the aural tagging. The first rhyme can happen in the first colon by substituting the synonym

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[13] Note the repetition of רע "evil."

"recall" for "remember" to rhyme with "all." The second rhyme can happen in the second colon by substituting the synonym "besiege" for "surround" to create near-rhyme with "deeds." Together, the translation reads, "And they do not say to their heart *that* I recall all their wickedness. Now their deeds besiege them, they are before my face." The two successive rhyming patterns are subtle, but they aurally tag key movements in Yahweh's pronouncement of consequences for the people's wickedness.

The second case of consonant repetition happens in 9:3 between יֵשְׁבוּ "dwell" and וְשָׁב "return" in לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוָה וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם "they will not dwell in the land of Yahweh, but Ephraim will return *to* Egypt." The expressions יֵשְׁבוּ and וְשָׁב are in parallelism and share the consonants שׁ, ב, and ו. This aural tagging illuminates a theological conflict surmised in the antithesis of Ephraim's deliverance from Egypt. Ephraim's deliverance by entering (בוא) and inhabiting (ישׁב) the Promised Land (see Deut 11:31) is reversed through antithetical verbiage. The aural tagging of these verbs can be reproduced in alliteration by substituting the synonym "remain" for "dwell"; thus, "they will not remain in the land of Yahweh, but Ephraim will return *to* Egypt." This translation preserves the literal semantics of שׁוב with "return." Furthermore, the term "remain" is synonymous with "dwell" and its association with "land" communicates the same idea of residency as "inhabit."

A third case of consonant repetition happens with the use of פ/ף in 9:11. The consonant repetition falls on אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim," עוֹף "bird," and יִתְעוֹפֵף "it will fly away" in the two cola of אֶפְרַיִם כָּעוֹף יִתְעוֹפֵף כְּבוֹדָם "Ephraim is like a bird, their glory will fly away" to highlight the departure of Ephraim's glory. The aural tagging highlights the fleeting nature of Ephraim's glory. Two of the three words in the literal translation already contain *f* sounds, so the consonant repetition can be reproduced with alliteration by substituting "bird" with the near synonym

"fowl"; thus, "Ephraim is like fowl, their glory will fly away."

A fourth case of consonant repetition happens in 10:6 between בָּשְׁנָה "shame" and וְיֵבוֹשׁ "and he will be ashamed" in בָּשְׁנָה אֶפְרַיִם יִקָּח וְיֵבוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲצָתוֹ "Ephraim will be seized *with* shame, and Israel will be ashamed because of its *idolatrous* ideation."[14] The aural tagging highlights the shame the Northern Kingdom will feel because of its idolatry. The literal translation captures the aural tagging through word-repetition between "shame" and its verbal form "ashamed."

Rhyme

Word-rhyme

Successive

Successive word-rhyme is the style of rhyming words back to back and functions to concentrate or localize the soundplay's emphasis. Successive word-rhyme occurs twice in Hosea. The first happens in the first colon of 7:6 between לִבָּם בְּאָרְבָּם "their heart in their ambush"[15] in כִּי־ קֵרְבוּ כַתַּנּוּר לִבָּם בְּאָרְבָּם "For they draw their heart near like an oven in their ambush." The expression לב "heart" is central to conveying Ephraim's character, so I recommend letting its literal translation, "heart," set the sound patterning. I suggest using consonant repetition to recreate the aural tagging and translate ארב "ambush" with "hunt"; thus, "For they draw near like an oven their heart in their hunt." "Hunt" stretches the semantics of "ambush" to include active duty whereas "ambush" evokes "lying in wait"; however, both of their semantics overlap

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[14] For explanation on the translated wordplay of מֵעֲצָתוֹ as "because of its *idolatrous* ideation," see Chapter 4 10:6.

[15] For ארב as "ambush," see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 459. The NASB translates it "plotting," while the ESV translates it "intrigue" (See BDB).

conceptually in the domains of an attack's preparatory stages. Another possible option is to understand ארב as the place where the ambush is set and translate with "hiding place"; thus, "For they draw near in their hiding place–their heart [burning] like an oven."[16]

The second case of successive word-rhyme happens in the first clause of the second colon in 9:3 between אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" and מִצְרַיִם "Egypt" in the phrase וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם "but Ephraim shall return to Egypt." This rhyme consists entirely of proper nouns which are fixed sounds. As a result, I suggest prioritizing the successive form of the rhyme and transliterating מִצְרַיִם "Mitzraim" followed by the bracketed English translation "Egypt." This preserves the soundplay and its successive form without losing the semantics of each proper name; thus, "but Ephraim shall return to *Mitzraim* [Egypt]."

Anaphora

Anaphora word-rhyme is rhyming words or phrases at the start of clauses or verses. This occurs once in Hosea in the first colon of 4:7 with the words כְּרֻבָּם "as they increased" and כְּבוֹדָם "their glory" from כְּרֻבָּם כֵּן חָטְאוּ־לִי כְּבוֹדָם בְּקָלוֹן אָמִיר "As they increase thus they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame." The aural tagging highlights Israel's detrimental pride in its prosperity. The word-rhyme is evidenced by the parallelism established in the irregular word order of the second clause, which places the verb at the end and its direct object at the beginning. The aural tagging with rhyme can be replicated with synonyms that rhyme. I suggest translating כְּרֻבָּם with "as they gain" and כְּבוֹדָם with "their acclaim" to read, "As they gain, thus they sinned against me; Their acclaim I will change into shame."[17] "Gain" and "acclaim" are near-rhymes while "acclaim" consequently extends the rhyme scheme to "shame," making the soundplay

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[16] I am grateful to Dr. Andrew Steinmann for this translation suggestion.

[17] Other possible word combinations include: *progress* and *greatness* or *boost* and *boast*.

experience even more prevalent for audiences.

Diacope

Diacope word-rhyme happens when rhyming words or phrases are broken by other words, that is, they appear sporadically throughout the clause or colon. One case of diacope word-rhyme occurs in 8:7 between the words קָמָה "standing grain," צֶמַח "sprout," and קֶמַח "flour" from קָמָה אֵין־לוֹ צֶמַח בְּלִי יַעֲשֶׂה־קֶּמַח "standing grain has no heads, it will not produce flour." The aural tagging highlights the objects that metaphorically denounce the productivity of Israel's idolatrous leadership. The rhyme scheme succinctly unfolds the process of attaining flour and goes from the stalk to the head and finally to its product, flour. The rhyme indicts Israel with sterility and its pragmatic focus is to turn audiences from their apostasy and dependency on other nations. A slight semantic alteration that changes קֶמַח "flour" to "bread" can reproduce epiphora rhyme in the literary translation "standing grain has no head; it will produce no bread." The Hebrew לֶחֶם is the normal term for "bread," but the rhyme's pragmatics are retained and bread is a common product of grain and flour. As a result, the semantic distortion of "bread" is minimal, while its phonetics compliment the rhyme's emphasis on the unproductiveness of Israel's leadership.

Epiphora

Epiphora word-rhyme is rhyming words or phrases at the end of clauses. Its first occurrence in Hosea happens in 4:2 between פָּרָצוּ "they burst forth" and נָגָעוּ "they extend/touch" from אָלֹה וְכַחֵשׁ וְרָצֹחַ וְגָנֹב וְנָאֹף פָּרָצוּ וְדָמִים בְּדָמִים נָגָעוּ "Cursing and deception and murder and stealing and adultery burst forth; blood touches upon blood." The aural tagging highlights the verbs used for the employment of abhorrent things listed in Yahweh's case against Israel (4:1). A translation can capture the verbs' aural tagging by continuing the existing English alliteration of "b" words

except render נָגָעוּ with "bleeding" to communicate the image of blood touching blood; thus,

"Cursing and deception and murder and stealing and adultery burst forth; blood bleeds upon

blood."

The second appearance of epiphora word-rhyme happens in the first colon of 5:7 between

בָּגָדוּ "they dealt treacherously" and יָלָדוּ "they bore" in בַּיהוָה בָּגָדוּ כִּי־בָנִים זָרִים יָלָדוּ "They dealt

treacherously against Yahweh, for they bore illegitimate children." This epiphora word-rhyme

bookends a stacked word-rhyme between בָּנִים "children" and זָרִים "illegitimate" to form a, b, b',

a' rhyming chiasm that highlights Ephraim's רוּחַ זְנוּנִים "spirit of promiscuity" (5:4). I suggest

reproducing the Hebrew rhymes with equivalent English rhymes and use the near-synonym

"deceive" for בגד and the synonym "conceive" for ילד. The literal translation בָּנִים זָרִים has a

natural near-rhyme if translated as "foreign children." Together they read, "Yahweh they

deceived, for foreign children they conceived."

A third case of epiphora word-rhyme happens in 7:8 between עֻגָה "bread-cake" and הֲפוּכָה

"having been overturned" in אֶפְרַיִם הָיָה עֻגָה בְּלִי הֲפוּכָה "Ephraim has become a bread-cake not

turned over." The aural tagging highlights the overheated and burnt nature of the bread-cake to

compare metaphorically the cake's inconspicuous ruin with Ephraim's ruin. A translation that

captures the soundplay can use the homonyms "roll" and "role"; thus, "Ephraim has become a

bread roll not rolled over," or compound soundplay with "a turnover not turned over." Both

literary translations distort the particular flat-cake image evoked by עֻגָה, but "bread roll" and

"turnover" retain the bread imagery while their following homonymous negated verbs express

the bread's destroyed baking cycle. These semantic distortions are minimal, but may need

explanation with footnoting or commentary.

A fourth case of epiphora word-rhyme happens in the second colon of 7:11 between קָרָאוּ

"they call" and הָלָכוּ "they went" in מִצְרַיִם קָרָאוּ אַשּׁוּר הָלָכוּ, "*To* Egypt they call; *to* Assyria they

go." The aural tagging highlights the verbs to emphasize Ephraim's unfaithful seeking of other

nations. I suggest replicating the rhyme within the original syntax using the sense of הָלָכוּ "crawl"

to produce the literary translation, "*To* Egypt they call; to Assyria they crawl." "Crawl" is a more

specific mode of travel than הלך usually conveys, but the sense of crawling is not foreign to הלך

which is used of the serpent to describe its crawling movement on its belly (Gen 3:14 NIV, NLT,

CJB). Furthermore, "crawl" communicates the idea of Ephraim senselessly turning to Assyria

which is stated at the beginning of 7:11. Another translation option is to use repetition with the

descriptor "out" after each verb; thus, "*To* Egypt they call out; to Assyria they go out."

A fifth case of epiphora word-rhyme happens in the third colon of 9:1 between אֶתְנַן

"prostitute's wage" and דָּגָן "grain" in אָהַבְתָּ אֶתְנָן עַל כָּל־גָּרְנוֹת דָּגָן "You have loved a prostitute's

wage; on every threshing floor of grain." The aural tagging highlights Israel's promiscuity in the

way it uses its cultivation to profit itself among the nations. A translation that can replicate the

rhyme and syntax substitutes "wage" with "gain" to read, "You have loved a prostitute's gain; on

every threshing floor of grain." "Gain" is a more general category than "wage," but the gain of a

prostitute is readily understood as a wage. The context of grain preparations for sales also

supplies sufficient context for general audiences to connect "gain" with economic stimulus.

A sixth case of epiphora word-rhyme happens in Hos 9:6 between תְּקַבְּצֵם "will gather

them," תְּקַבְּרֵם "will bury them," and יִירָשֵׁם "will possess them" from מִצְרַיִם תְּקַבְּצֵם מֹף תְּקַבְּרֵם מַחְמַד

לְכַסְפָּם קִמּוֹשׂ יִירָשֵׁם "Egypt will gather them; Memphis will bury them; the precious things for their

silver,[18] thistles will possess them."[19] As Macintosh notes, מֹף for Memphis is used in place of the more normal נֹף which creates alliteration between Memphis and Egypt.[20] Aural tagging, therefore, stretches throughout the declaration to highlight the irony that Israel will be destroyed by the very nation to which they turn for support. A translation that considers the original phonetics can use alliteration to read, "*Mitzraim* [Egypt] will collect them, Memphis will cover them; marvelous things of their silver, thistles will consume them"[21] Another possible translation can use consonant repetition with "m" to highlight the whole expression which reads, "Egyptian men will gather them, Memphis will bury them; the precious things for their silver, thistles will consume them."[22] In the first translation, "cover," is not specific to burial; however, Memphis informs "cover" to evoke burial or entombing.[23] The alliteration in the second translation is not as obvious but it preserves the semantics more literally. Both translations communicate the irony of the declaration; however, their semantic distortions may require commentary or footnoting to find full clarity.

A seventh case of epiphora word-rhyme happens in 9:16 between יַעֲשֹׂוּן "they will not produce" and יֵלֵדוּן "they shall bear" from אֶפְרַיִם שָׁרְשָׁם יָבֵשׁ פְּרִי בַלי־יַעֲשֹׂוּן גַּם כִּי יֵלֵדוּן וְהֵמַתִּי מַחֲמַדֵּי הֻכָּה

בְטְנָם "Ephraim is stricken, their root has withered, they will not produce fruit. Even if they bear children, I will slay the precious ones of their womb."[24] The aural tagging highlights the verbs to emphasize Ephraim's judgment of bareness for not listening to God (9:17). This soundplay intertwines with the wordplay between אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim," its etymology "fruitfulness," and פְּרִי "fruit," which renders the translation "Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; The Fruitful shall be fruitless."[25] If one should consider this translation of wordplay, then reproducing the phonetics of the soundplay happens between "fruitless" and יֵלֵדוּן "they shall bear." Their phonetic play can be reproduced through alliteration or consonant repetition by translating ילד "conceive/beget" with the conceptual synonym "fertile" to read, "Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; The Fruitful shall be fruitless. Even if they're fertile, I will slay the precious ones of their womb." The translation "fertile" creates aural tagging with "fruitless" to establish the original contrasting imagery of fruitlessness and fertility to show that future lineage for Ephraim is hopeless. Ephraim will be barren and even if she should see evidence of fertility, Yahweh will eliminate all prospects.

An eighth appearance of epiphora word-rhyme happens in the second colon of 10:2 between מִזְבְּחוֹתָם "their altars" and מַצֵּבוֹתָם "their pillars" in הוּא יַעֲרֹף מִזְבְּחוֹתָם יְשֹׁדֵד מַצֵּבוֹתָם "he will break down their altars; he will destroy their pillars." The aural highlighting emphasizes the objects of Yahweh's wrath which are the epicenters for Israel's unfaithful heart expressed at the beginning of 10:2. Conveniently, the literal translation naturally reproduces the word-rhyme in their -ars endings.

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[24] Andersen and Freedman note the rhyme between יַעֲשׂוּן and יֵלֵדוּן through their "archaic durative endings." *Hosea*, 545.

[25] See Chapter 4, Hosea 9:16.

Epanalepsis

Epanalepsis word-rhyme is rhyme with the first and last word of a clause or colon. The aural tagging highlights the words rhymed, but in larger clauses of epanalepsis, bookending often emphasizes the context the rhyming words create for the center pieces of the clause or colon. Epanalepsis word-rhyme in shorter clauses, however, often emphasize the center piece or pieces that are required to establish the context. A case of shorter epanalepsis bookending happens in the first clause of the second colon in Hos 9:4 between לֶחֶם "bread" and לָהֶם "to them" in כְּלֶחֶם אוֹנִים לָהֶם *It will be* like bread of mourning to them." The aural tagging of this clause's bookends does not establish context by themselves in this short clause; rather, their rhyming pattern highlights the break in the rhyme with אוֹנִים "mourners." The phonetic options in English are limited for creating soundplay between "them" and "bread," so I suggest translating the comparative preposition כ "like/as" adverbially with "instead" to create the rhyme with "bread"; thus, "Instead, to them *it's* like mourning bread." The expression "instead" maintains the comparative aspect of the כ, but even more, it communicates a contrastive context that anticipates the opposite kind of bread Ephraim would think it should be eating.

Parallel

Parallel word-rhyme is rhyme structured in parallelism across multiple clauses or cola that highlights the figures or objects spanning the multiple clauses and cola in a given passage. Parallel word-rhyme occurs three times in Hosea. The first occurrence happens in 4:14 between בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם "your daughters" and כַּלּוֹתֵיכֶם "your brides":

לֹא־אֶפְקוֹד עַל־בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִזְנֶינָה

וְעַל־כַּלּוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תְנָאַפְנָה

"I will not punish your daughters when they prostitute,

Or your brides when they commit adultery."

The parallelism begins with עַל functioning as an object-marker followed by the word in rhyme and concludes with a temporal כִּי clause. The aural tagging highlights the feminine figures, "daughters" and "brides," over their male counterparts who are represented with an ambiguous הֵם "they." This emphasis contrasts the women's heinous behavior with the even more abominable promiscuous idolatry the men commit. I suggest reproducing the parallel word-rhyme with consonantal repetition that uses the synonyms "maidens" for בַּת and "matron" for כַּלָּה, repeat the כִּי clause with "when," and reproduce the end-rhyme between the verbs by translating תְזַנֶּינָה with the synonym "commit infidelity"; thus,

"I will not punish your maidens for their infidelity

Or your matrons for their adultery,"

Maiden conveys the unmarried, virgin status of a בַּת "daughter" who loses her virginity through promiscuous behavior. *Matron* brings clarity to the category of כַּלָּה "bride" to communicate these women as married whose promiscuous behavior produces adultery.[26]

The second appearance of parallel word-rhyme happens in the second colon of 9:9 between עֲוֺנָם "their iniquity" and חַטֹּאותָם "their sin" in יִזְכּוֹר עֲוֺנָם יִפְקוֹד חַטֹּאותָם "He will remember their iniquity; he will punish their sin." The aural tagging highlights Ephraim's depravity and the impending judgment it yields. Subtle alliteration also appears between יִזְכּוֹר "He will remember" and יִפְקוֹד "He will punish" to emphasize the certainty of Yahweh's judgment. I suggest reproducing the soundplays with a combination of word-rhyme and alliteration for the literary translation, "He will remember their iniquity; he will reprove their inequity." The translation זכר "remember" is literal while the translation פקד "reprove" captures the disciplinary context of

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[26] Note the end-rhyme between the cola with ־נָה and reproduced here with "infidelity" and "adultery."

Yahweh punishing Ephraim for its sin. The translation "iniquity" is also literal but "inequity" marginalizes the domains of חטאת "sin" to injustice. The verse's context of Ephraim's injustice towards God, however, sensibly evokes the theological domain of sin. Despite the distortion of "reprove" and "inequity," the phonetics enhance the verse's semantic meanings by highlighting its message of certain judgment for Ephraim's מַשְׂטֵמָה "animosity" towards God (9:8).

A third parallel word-rhyme appears in the second and third cola of 10:1 with rhyme and repetition structured across two cola. The parallel words in rhyme include כְּרֹב "according to the multitude" with כְּטוֹב "according to the prosperity," לְפִרְיוֹ "to his fruit" with לְאַרְצוֹ "to his land," and מִזְבְּחוֹת "altars" with מַצֵּבוֹת "pillars." Word-repetition also happens with רב "multiply" which appears twice in the first colon.

כְּרֹב לְפִרְיוֹ   הִרְבָּה לַמִּזְבְּחוֹת

כְּטוֹב לְאַרְצוֹ   הֵיטִיבוּ מַצֵּבוֹת

According to the multitude of his fruit   he multiplied altars;

According to the prosperity of his land   they adorned pillars.[27]

The aural tagging involves every word in these cola which accentuates their total indictment of Israel's vain prosperity and empty fruitfulness because of its idolatry.[28] The rhyme is indictment and it pragmatic focus is to drive audiences to abstain from using their riches to increase their apostacy. To recreate this focus, I suggest replicating the soundplay with a combination of repetition and word-rhyme equivalent to the corresponding soundplay of each word. The following is a possible translation:

According to the multitude of his yield   he multiplied altars;

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[27] Note the conflicting number in the subjects "he" and "they." This follows the pattern of Hos 9:16–17 where Ephraim is referred to as "they"; thus the "he" and "they" in Hos 10:1 are also both Ephraim.

[28] See Chapter 4, Hos 10:1

According to the plentitude of his field   they beautified pillars

The only semantic alterations that do not provide literal synonyms are פרי "yield" and ארץ "field." "Yield" is a general category that could include fruit but also other types of economy. The term, however, captures the general productive cultivation that "fruit" conveys, and it preserves word-repetition in the wordplay immediately preceding it: יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לֹּו "Israel is a vain vine that *used to* yield fruit for itself."[29]

The other semantic alteration is "field" in place of the more general term "land." The normal term for field is שׂדה and reflects a concentrated or specified piece of land. This relationship is evidenced in Jer 32:8 which depicts a sales transaction proposal from Hanamel, Jeremiah's cousin, asking Jeremiah to buy his field in the land of Benjamin. שׂדה "field," however, can evoke general open spaces like ארץ (e.g., Ps 50:11). The phonetic contribution of *field* arguably outweighs its distortion in its ability to complete the sophisticated soundplays threaded throughout these cola.

End-rhyme

End-rhyme is the most abundant form of soundplay in Hosea with over 45 identified cases. As a result, not every case will be fully treated here; however, multiple cases are analyzed to demonstrate the various repetition patterns the prophet uses with end-rhyme.

Diacope

Diacope end-rhyme happens when end-rhyme occurs throughout clauses or cola without any set pattern. This more random repetition pattern usually functions to highlight the clause or cola amidst surrounding text. One example of diacope end-rhyme in Hosea appears in 13:9–10

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[29] See Chapter 4, Hos 10:1.

with the suffixes ךָ‌ֶ, יךָ‌ֶ and ךָ‌ֶ repeated sporadically through the clauses שִׁחֶתְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־ בִי בְעֶזְרֶךָ

אֱהִי מַלְכְּךָ אֵפוֹא וְיוֹשִׁיעֲךָ בְּכָל־עָרֶיךָ וְשֹׁפְטֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ תְּנָה־לִּי מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים "It is your ruin, O Israel, that *you are* against me, against your helper. [10]I am your king then. Let him save you in all your cities and the ones who judge you, when you say, 'Give to me a king and princes.'"[30] The aural tagging scattered throughout the passage highlights the addressee "you," namely Israel, to challenge Israel to see its ruin from misperceiving its king as someone other than Yahweh. Its literal translation naturally manifests word-repetition if the second masculine plural is translated each time. Audiences hear the numerous occurrences of "you" and "your" and know emphasis is placed on the addressee.[31]

A special style of diacope the prophet uses with end-rhyme is what I call weighted diacope. This reflects a specific two to one pattern in a colon of two clauses where two same-suffixes appear in one clause and only once in the other. An example of this is found in the second colon of 10:5 with יו‌ָ‌ָ throughout כִּי־אָבַל עָלָיו עַמּוֹ וּכְמָרָיו עָלָיו "Indeed, its people shall mourn over it, and its idolatrous priests shall mourn over it." The weighted form of the diacope establishes the יו‌ָ‌ָ pattern once in the first clause and then twice in the final clause. The aural tagging highlights *it*, namely the calves of Beth-aven, through repeated end-rhyme, but these forms also emphasize the expression אָבַל . . . עַמּוֹ "my people shall mourn," which is the only word by its break in the end-rhyme pattern. The expression's detachment from the end-rhyme sound patterning creates its own audible distinction on which audiences can pause. The absence of a verb in the following clause further supports this emphasis because it forces audiences to borrow

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[30] Note, wordplay in 13:10 could read "*Where* is your king then? I am *here*! Let him [Israel/Ephraim or Baal (13:1)] save you in all your cities and the ones who judge you, when you say, "Give to me a king and princes." See Chapter 2.

[31] Other cases of diacope in end-rhyme include Hosea 2:4–5 יךָ‌ֶ, יךָ‌ֶ, and ךָ‌ֶ; 2:12–13 ךָ‌ֶ, הָ‌ֶ; 2:18 י‌ָ‌ֶ; 5:8–9 הָ‌ֶ; 9:12 הֶם‌ֶ; 10:13 תָּם‌ֶ 10:13–14 ךָ‌ֶ/יךָ‌ֶ/ךָ‌ֶ; 13:9–10 ךָ‌ֶ.

אָבַל and cause additional reflection on it. The audible tagging is reproduced in translation through word-repetition, but I translate the pronoun עַמּוֹ "its" as a definite article to reproduce the weighted diacope's structure since the article still conveys the people of Samaria. These translation suggestions read, "Indeed, *the* people shall mourn over it, and its idolatrous priests *shall mourn* over it."[32]

Another type of diacope in Hosean end-rhyme is what I call stacked diacope. This happens when end-rhyme appears in one clause of a colon but not the other. An example of this end-rhyme appears in the first clause of the second colon of 9:10 כְּבִכּוּרָה בִתְאֵנָה בְּרֵאשִׁיתָהּ רָאִיתִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם "like the first fruit on the fig tree in its first season, I saw your forefathers."[33] All three words of the first clause end with ָה/הָ where the first two are feminine, nominal forms and the third is a feminine suffix. The second clause, which contains the suspended object, is absent of any feminine forms. The sound patterning (הָ) highlights the first clause to accentuate the simile's first fruits imagery in relation to how Yahweh found Israel fruitful in the beginning. Like weighted diacope, stacked diacope can also highlight the text that breaks sound pattern, particularly when the stacked diacope appears in the first clause and comprises most of the colon as with this example in 9:10. The clause רָאִיתִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם "I saw your forefathers" falls outside of the aural tagging of feminine endings and breaks the sound pattern to emphasize them as the object of Yahweh's finding. This dual emphasis highlights the forefathers and their first fruits attributes. The literal translation conveniently captures these emphases with the alliteration pattern of "f," which tags every word emphasized in the Hebrew: first fruit, fig tree, first season,

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[32] Other cases of weighted diacope in end-rhyme include 2:7c יָ; 2:17 הָ; 4:9 יָ; 4:12 וְ; 6:1–2 נוָ; 6:9 ים; 6:11 יָ; 12:15 יָ; 13:9–10 ךָ (2nd colon); Hosea 14:1 וְ.

[33] The BHS suggests deleting בְּרֵאשִׁיתָהּ in favor of the Syriac tradition. This is possible since its form breaks from the third feminine singular nominal pointings preceding it, but it is not necessary since it fits the rhyme scheme and contributes to the stacked diacope.

and forefathers.

Another case of stacked diacope happens in the third colon of 9:4 כִּי־לַחְמָם לְנַפְשָׁם לֹא יָבוֹא בֵּית יְהוָה "for their bread *will be* for their life; it will not enter the house of Yahweh." The first clause contains the sound patterning with the end-rhyme ָם across לַחְמָם לְנַפְשָׁם. The aural tagging highlights the bread to express the degree of defilement Israel will endure in Egypt and Assyria. Repetition of ָם "their" captures this pattern's emphasis which is reflected in the literal translation. The euphony of the clause, however, can be more pronounced if one translates the *lamed* as a direct object marker; thus, "for their bread *will be* their life." One can also add aural tagging to נפשׁ and לחם using alliteration to strengthen the soundplay experience for English readers; thus "their bread *will be* their brawn," "their bread *will be* their breath," or "Their loaf *will be* their life." The literary alterations for *brawn* and *breath* require footnoting to produce their literal translation; however, they function as conceptual synonyms of *life/soul* that English uses to describe the virility of life.[34]

Epiphora

Epiphora end-rhyme happens when same suffixes appear at the end of each clause or colon. A case of this end-rhyme appears in the first colon of 7:13 אוֹי לָהֶם כִּי־נָדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי שֹׁד לָהֶם כִּי־פָשְׁעוּ בִי "Woe to them for they wandered from me; destruction is theirs for they rebelled against me!" The first person suffix ִי "me" concludes both clauses in end-rhyme giving emphasis to Yahweh as the victim of Ephraim's apostasy. Epiphora end-rhyme happens again shortly after in the first colon of v. 14 וְלֹא־זָעֲקוּ אֵלַי בְּלִבָּם כִּי יְיֵלִילוּ עַל־מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם "They do not cry to me in their heart, but they

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[34] Other cases of stacked diacope in end-rhyme include: 5:7 ִים (note the a, b, b', a' chiasm it creates with the word-rhyme בָּגָדוּ and יָלְדוּ on either side); 10:11 ָה; 13:2 ָם.

wail on their beds." This end-rhyme puts these clauses in contrastive relationship, which can be reproduced with alliteration on the verbs; thus "They do not weep to me in their heart, but they wail on their beds."[35]

Epanalepsis

Epanalepsis end-rhyme happens when same suffixes appear on initial and final words of a clause. A clear case of this is in the first colon of 4:10 where the third masculine plural verbal pointing וּ appears at the end of the first and last words of both clauses: וְאָכְלוּ וְלֹא יִשְׂבָּ֫עוּ הִזְנוּ וְלֹא יִפְרֹ֫צוּ "They will eat, but they will not be satisfied; they will prostitute, but they will not increase." Both clauses begin with third plural perfect verbs, end with third plural imperfects, and sandwich the negative clause וְלֹא. This arrangement aurally tags the subject of these verbs, the sons of Israel (4:1), to emphasize them as insatiable. Literal translations reproduce this soundplay through word-repetition as long as each subject of the verb is translated (contra ESV, NASB, KJV, NIV, etc.)[36]

Parallel

Parallel end-rhyme is same-suffixes or endings structured in parallelism across multiple clauses or cola. This happens in the second colon of 4:14 with the configuration וֹת . . . וּ . . . וֹת . . וּ . following the word-repetition of עִם in both clauses

כִּי־הֵם עִם־הַזֹּנוֹת יְפָרֵ֫דוּ

וְעִם־הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת יְזַבֵּ֫חוּ

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[35] Other cases of epiphora end-rhyme include 2:7a םָ֫; 2:11 וֹ; 4:13 וּ; 5:4 יהֶם; 5:5 םָ֫; 5:13 וֹ; 7:13 יֹ; 8:7 וּ; 8:12–13 וּ; 8:13 םָ֫; 9:8 יו; 10:8 נוּ; 10:9 הָ֫; 10:13c–14a יךָ; 11:2 הֶם; 11:4 הֶם; 12:5 םָ/נוּ; 13:14 םָ֫; 13:15 וֹ; 14:2 יךָ/הָ֫; 14:3–4 נוּ.

[36] Another case of epanalepsis end-rhyme is 2:11 תִּי.

"For they, they go off with prostitutes;

and they sacrifice with temple prostitutes."

The parallel end-rhyme stretches across the colon to highlight the men's unpardoned cultic promiscuity in contrast to the pardoned promiscuity of the daughters and brides mentioned in the first colon. Both compilations of soundplay in the first two cola of 4:14 (word-rhyme between בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם "your daughters" and כַּלּוֹתֵיכֶם "your brides" in the first colon[37] and ‏ו . . . ות . . . ו . . . ות in the second colon) are halted by the third colon, which contains a concluding proverbial saying, "The people without understanding will be ruined." This saying is communicated emphatically without rhetorical tricks. The proverb explains in plain verse the destruction that will result from the people's disgraceful behavior.[38]

A literal translation naturally produces soundplay with repetition if all the suffixes are translated the same. The euphony, however, can be enhanced by translating the verbs with word-rhyme using "go alone" for פרד and "atone" for זבח. The end-rhyme of the feminine plural endings is lost in a literal translation, so I suggest recreating their euphony with alliteration across both direct objects:

"For they, they go alone with prostitutes;

and they atone with temple hustlers."

Anadiplosis

Anadiplosis end-rhyme is same-suffixes that end one clause or colon and begin the next clause or colon. A case of this end-rhyme happens in 7:12 with אוֹרִיֵּדֶם אַיְסְרֵם "I will bring them

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[37] See parallel word-rhyme above.

[38] Other cases of parallel end-rhyme include 8:4 ‏ִי . . . וְלֹא . . . ו . . . ִי . . . וְלֹא . . . ו (note the word-repetition with לֹא); 11:8 ךָ.

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down, I will chastise them." The aural tagging highlights the disciplinary action Yahweh will take against Ephraim because of its corrupt assembly. This emphasis can be recreated through word-repetition by translating אוֹרִידֵם literally "I will bring them down" and rearranging the words of its expression to create an idiomatic way to say "chastise"; thus, "I will bring them down, I will come down on them."

Word-Repetition

Word-repetition is unique to translate amongst the other types of euphonic soundplay because translating the repeated word literally already reproduces the soundplay euphoria for audiences. The translations proposed in the following section will, therefore, show minimal differences with other literal translations. Unique, however, is the attention given to reproducing the repetition pattern and how the repeated words are structured throughout the clause or colon.

Epanalepsis

Epanalepsis word-repetition is repetition of the initial word(s) of a clause or sentence at the end of that same clause or sentence. This happens three times in Hosea. The first occurrence is in the first clause of Hosea 2:4 רִיבוּ בְאִמְּכֶם רִיבוּ "Contend with your mother, contend!" The repetition sandwiching the mother emphasizes the imperatives to the children to state Yahweh's dispute with her. The second occurrence is in 8:11 with the phrase מִזְבְּחוֹת לַחֲטֹא appearing twice through כִּי־הִרְבָּה אֶפְרַיִם מִזְבְּחֹת לַחֲטֹא הָיוּ־לוֹ מִזְבְּחוֹת לַחֲטֹא "Because Ephraim multiplied altars for sinning, they became his sinful altars."[39] The repetition highlights the sinfulness of building the altars to reiterate and state the obvious consequence that the altars caused Ephraim to sin. The third

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[39] The BHS suggests emending the first infinitive לַחֲטֹא "to sin" to the nominal לְחֵטְא "sin" in favor of 𝔊. This doesn't add much distinction but takes away from the repetition's emphatic role to state the obvious.

epanalepsis word-repetition happens in the first clause of the second colon in 10:12 with נִירוּ לָכֶם

נִיר "Break up for yourselves the ground." The aural tagging highlights the intensity with which

Ephraim should aggressively pursue all new cultivation in Yahweh. The repetition of ניר happens

with its verbal and nominal form which yields in literal translations the different words "break"

and "ground." To reproduce the phonetic repetition, I suggest translating both with "ground"

since as a verb it evokes the idea of "breaking up"; thus, "Grind up for yourselves the fallow

ground."

<div align="center">Diacope</div>

Diacope word-repetition is the repetition of words broken by other words, that is, they are

scattered throughout the clause or colon without particular structure. This word-repetition occurs

five times in Hosea. The first diacope word-repetition highlights the nature of the land's

(Israel's) sin as "promiscuous" in 1:2 with the root זנה "be promiscuous" stretched throughout the

last two cola (i.e., Yahweh's instruction to Hosea). לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ אֵשֶׁת זְנוּנִים וְיַלְדֵי זְנוּנִים כִּי־זָנֹה תִזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ

מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה "Go take for yourself a wife who is a prostitute and a prostitute's children, for the land

has flagrantly prostituted itself before Yahweh." The second diacope word-repetition highlights

Yahweh as judge and appears in the second colon of 5:14 with אֲנִי and the first person imperfect

stretched throughout אֲנִי אֲנִי אֶטְרֹף וְאֵלֵךְ אֶשָּׂא וְאֵין מַצִּיל "I *indeed* I, I will tear into pieces and I will

walk; I will carry off and there will be none who will deliver." The third diacope word-repetition

highlights the relationship between the craftsman and his craft with הוּא used throughout the

second and third clauses of 8:6, וְהוּא חָרָשׁ עָשָׂהוּ וְלֹא אֱלֹהִים הוּא "and he—a craftsman—he made it;

and it is not God." The use of הוּא switches from referring to the craftsman to the creation of the

craftsman, namely, the calf of Samaria. With the help of rendering the third masculine singular

subject of עָשָׂהוּ "he," both referents "he" and "it" are repeated equally to reproduce the soundplay

in translation. The fourth diacope word-repetition highlights the kingless position Israel will face because of its faithless heart in כִּי . . . מֶלֶךְ . . . לָנוּ stretched through both cola of 10:3.

כִּי עַתָּה יֹאמְרוּ אֵין מֶלֶךְ לָנוּ

כִּי לֹא יָרֵאנוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־יַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּנוּ

For now they will say, "There is no king for us,

For we do not fear Yahweh; and the king—what will he do for us?

Anaphora

Anaphora word-repetition is repetition of words at the start of clauses or verses. It is the most used style of word-repetition. The first occurrence highlights Yahweh's desire to reunite with his bride under new betrothal in the three-time expression וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי "And I will betroth you to myself" in Hos 2:21–22. The second occurrence of anaphora word-repetition reiterates Yahweh's desire to see Israel end its apostasy and uses the negative אַל "not" to begin the last four clauses of 4:15. The third occurrence highlights Yahweh's internal conflict in dealing with his people's apostasy which is communicated by two interrogative statements using מָה in the first colon of 6:4, מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְּךָ אֶפְרַיִם מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְּךָ יְהוּדָה "What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah?" The fourth occurrence highlights Ephraim as the subject of apostasy with אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" beginning both cola in 7:8, אֶפְרַיִם בָּעַמִּים הוּא יִתְבּוֹלָל אֶפְרַיִם הָיָה עֻגָה בְּלִי הֲפוּכָה "Ephraim mixes himself amongst the nations, Ephraim has become a cake not turned." The fifth occurrence reiterates the arrival of Yahweh's judgment with בָּאוּ יְמֵי beginning the first two clauses of 9:7, בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַפְּקֻדָּה בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַשִׁלֻּם "The days have come *for* punishment. The days have come *for* retribution." The sixth occurrence highlights the prophet's certainty of Yahweh's judgment of barrenness. The anaphora happens with the imperative תֵּן־לָהֶם "Give to them" beginning both cola of 9:14, תֵּן־לָהֶם יְהוָה מַה־תִּתֵּן תֵּן־לָהֶם רֶחֶם מַשְׁכִּיל וְשָׁדַיִם צֹמְקִים "Give to them O'

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Yahweh what you will give; give to them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts."[40] The seventh

occurrence highlights Yahweh's internal struggle for how to treat Ephraim and Israel. The

anaphora happens in the expression אֵיךְ אֶתֶּנְךָ "How can I give/make you" beginning the first two

cola of 11:8, אֶפְרַיִם אֲמַגֶּנְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵיךְ אֶתֶּנְךָ כְאַדְמָה אֲשִׂימְךָ כִּצְבֹאיִם אֵיךְ אֶתֶּנְךָ "How can I give you up,

Ephraim; and hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah and set you like

Zeboiim?" The repetition of נתן yields different translations because of the different contexts of

each colon. The first context of נתן is illuminated by its parallelism with מגן "hand

over/surrender" to evoke the idea of "giving over." The second context of נתן derives from

Yahweh making Ephraim into something else, namely Admah. I suggest translating the

repetition like 𝔊, which translates an executive sense of נתן using διατίθημι "decree/assign" and

renders the meaning נתן "set"; thus, "How can I turn you over, O' Ephraim" and "How can I turn

you like Admah?" The term "turn" keeps the word-repetition and allows the context to specify

what kind of "meaning" from נתן is expressed: the first, being a surrendering of Ephraim, and the

second, specifying a treatment like that of Admah. The eighth appearance of anaphora word-

repetition highlights Yahweh as death's thorn and Sheol's sting. The anaphora happens with אֱהִי

beginning both clauses in the second colon of 13:14, אֱהִי דְבָרֶיךָ מָוֶת אֱהִי קָטָבְךָ שְׁאוֹל "Where is your

thorn, O death? Where is your pestilence, O Sheol?"[41] The ninth occurrence of anaphora word-

repetition highlights Yahweh as the subject of Ephraim's provisions with אֲנִי "I" beginning the

two clauses that follow the *aṯāh* in 14:9, אֲנִי עָנִיתִי וַאֲשׁוּרֶנּוּ אֲנִי כִּבְרוֹשׁ רַעֲנָן מִמֶּנִּי פֶּרְיְךָ נִמְצָא "I, I answer

you and I regard you; I am like a luxuriant cypress, from me your fruit is found"). The

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[40] Note the repeated use of נתן at the end of תֵּן־לָהֶם יְהוָה מַה־תִּתֵּן. This repetition signals epanalepsis or
anadiplosis, but the repeated expression תֵּן־לָהֶם is treated here because of its more pronounced repetition.

[41] For a translation that considers the wordplay of אֱהִי, see Chapter 4 §13:10, 14.

anaphora's emphasis is, furthermore, reinforced with multiple first common singular verbs.[42]

Epiphora

Epiphora word-repetition is repetition of the same word or phrase at the end of each clause. This repetition happens three times in Hosea. The first occurrence highlights Ephraim's ignorance with וְהוּא לֹא יָדָע "yet he does not know *it*" concluding both cola of 7:9, אָכְלוּ זָרִים כֹּחוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדָע גַּם־שֵׂיבָה זָרְקָה בּוֹ וְהוּא לֹא יָדָה "Strangers devour its strength, yet he does not know it; also, grey hair is sprinkled on him, yet he does not know it." The second occurrence highlights Lebanon as the model of comparison for Israel's restoration. The epiphora appears with the triple use of לְבָנוֹן "Lebanon" at the end of each verse in 14:6–8. Israel will take root like Lebanon, his fragrance will be like Lebanon, and his renown will be like the wine of Lebanon. The third occurrence of epiphora word-repetition highlights the righteous ways of the Lord to contrast the two types of people who confront it. The righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them. The epiphora happens with בָם "in them" in the final two cola of 14:10, וְצַדִּקִים יֵלְכוּ בָם וּפֹשְׁעִים יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָם "and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them."

Anadiplosis

Anadiplosis word-repetition is repetition where the last word or phrase of one line or clause begins the next. The purpose of this repetition is to carry an emphatic idea from one clause or colon to the next and happens three times in Hosea. The first occurrence highlights the cause and effect relationship of Israel rejecting knowledge of God. The anadiplosis appears in 4:6 with מאס "reject" linking the two clauses of the second colon: כִּי־אַתָּה הַדַּעַת מָאַסְתָּ וְאֶמְאָסְאךָ מִכַּהֵן לִי "because

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[42] Other occurrences of anaphora word-repetition include אֶפְרַיִם "Ephraim" 9:13, לְיוֹם "on the day" 9:5, רע "evil" 9:15.

you rejected knowledge, I will reject you from *being* my priest." This literal translation changes the anadiplosis structure but reproduces the aural tagging with parallelism that links the cause and effect relationship of Israel's rejecting knowledge of God. The second occurrence of anadiplosis word-repetition highlights Israel's stubbornness with סרר linking the two clauses of the first colon in 4:16, כִּי כְּפָרָה סֹרֵרָה סָרַר יִשְׂרָאֵל "For like a heifer is stubborn, Israel is stubborn." This translation changes the anadiplosis to epiphora repetition, but the parallelism keeps "stubborn" emphatic. A third occurrence of anadiplosis word-repetition highlights the consumption of Israel by foreigners with בלע "swallow" in 8:7–8 נִבְלָע ⁸יְבָלָעֻהוּ זָרִים יַעֲשֹׂה אוּלַי⁷ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַתָּה הָיוּ בַגּוֹיִם "should it produce, strangers would swallow it up; Israel is swallowed up! Now they will be among the nations." A fourth occurrence of anadiplosis word-repetition highlights the threshing floor where Israel commits her promiscuity in גרן "threshing floor" appearing at the end of 9:1 and beginning 9:2, עַל כָּל־גָּרְנוֹת דָּגָן: גֹּרֶן וָיֶקֶב לֹא יִרְעֵם "on every threshing floor of grain. Threshing floor and wine press will not pasture them." The fourth occurrence of anadiplosis word-repetition highlights Ephraim's contentment that distracted it from remembering Yahweh. The anadiplosis happens with שׂבע linking the first two clauses of 13:6, כְּמַרְעִיתָם וַיִּשְׂבָּעוּ שָׂבְעוּ וַיָּרָם לִבָּם "According to their pasture, they were satisfied, they were satisfied and their heart was uplifted." This literal translation preserves the anadiplosis which allows the repetition to emphatically carry Ephraim's satisfaction of appetite with its satisfaction of the heart.

<center>Successive</center>

Successive word-repetition is repetition of a word side by side to add emphasis to the word repeated. The effect is similar to emphasis created in the construction of an infinitive absolute followed by a finite verb of the same verb root. Successive word-repetition happens several

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times in Hosea. One occurrence accentuates large amounts of blood in 4:2 with וְדָמִים בְּדָמִים "and blood with blood." 𝕲 translates it literally ("blood with blood") while others translate the repetition comprehensively; thus, bloodshed (ESV).[43] I suggest translating the preposition בּ distributively to indicate the large quantity of blood; thus, "bloodshed follows bloodshed."[44]

A second occurrence of successive word-repetition accentuates the love of Israel and Ephraim for the "shame of her shield." The succession happens with אָהֲבוּ הֵבוּ in 4:18, "they loved they loved." BHS editors suggest הֵבוּ is dittography and should be omitted as evidenced by 𝕲. This successive repetition, however, follows in line with an emphatic infinitive absolute construction הַזְנֵה הִזְנוּ "they are continually promiscuous." I suggest with Andersen and Freedman the odd form הֵבוּ is a biconsonantal by-form of אהב which the prophet creates to coincide with the syllables and meter of הִזְנוּ and continue the pattern of emphasis.[45] I, therefore, suggest translating the successive word-repetition like the emphatic infinite absolute construction but reproduce the phonetic play with alliteration; thus, הַזְנֵה הִזְנוּ אָהֲבוּ הֵבוּ קָלוֹן מָגִנֶּיהָ "They are persistently promiscuous; they lavishly love the shame of her shield."[46]

A third occurrence of successive word-repetition highlights the hollowness of Israel's words, particularly spoken in its oaths to Yahweh. The repetition happens with דִּבְּרוּ דְבָרִים "they speak[47] words" (see KJV, CJB, and YLT) which comprises the verbal and nominal form of דבר. Translations often supply a descriptor for דְבָרִים such as "mere" (NASB, ESV) or "empty" (NET, NLT), which may find influence from 𝕲 using προφάσεις "pretense" in apposition with ῥήματα

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[43] See also Andersen and Freedman who translate the repetition, "blood everywhere." *Hosea*, 331.

[44] See ESV.

[45] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 379.

[46] See NASB

[47] Prophetic perfect.

"word"; thus, "pretentious word." Other canonical translations render the expression idiomatically: "they make many promises" (NIV)[48] and "speeches are made" (NJB). The expression דִּבְּרוּ דְבָרִים only appears here, so its idiomatic use is probable. The parallel expression אָלוֹת שָׁוְא "false oaths" provides clarifying context for the emptiness or pretentiousness of the דְבָרִים "words." A translation that captures the expression's phonetic repetition is "they spout speech."

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Table 1. Chart of Wordplay and Soundplay in Hosea
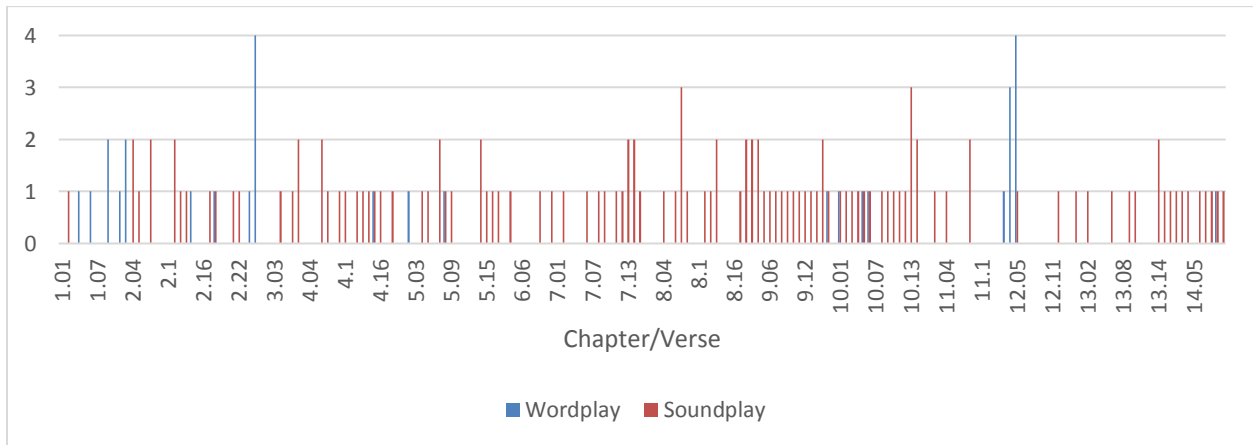
As Table 1 indicates, soundplay appears throughout the entirety of Hosea and is stylistic to the prophet's writing to communicate indictment, judgment, restoration, emotion, and wisdom. The soundplay is sporadic throughout the book and throughout individual oracles. This irregular disbursement is not like modern music and much of today's popular level poetry where the primary objective of its soundplay is to create euphony that carries audiences through the piece. The irregularity in the prophet's use of soundplay shows its use for tagging words to

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[48] See also Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 547.

emphatically deliver a message or mark a climax in the indictment, judgment, or restoration imagery. Said another way, soundplay is irregularly used throughout the prophet's poetry to regularly catch audiences' attention to focused points in his message. Soundplay, therefore, marks areas of intensity or importance in the prophet's message that he desires his audiences to remember, memorize, or recite in order not to forget. As with Hosean wordplay, Hosean soundplay has several concentrations throughout the book. These clusters do not necessarily indicate the most important parts of the prophet's collective message, but they mark notably pivotal movements in the prophet's work. The concentrated units highlighted below are not the only clusters of soundplay in Hosea, but these highly concentrated spikes demonstrate at a larger scale how the prophet weaves in and out of soundplay to memorably state his message.

The first concentration of soundplay appears in 4:12–19 with euphony spanning six of the eight verses. They comprise one of the prophet's indictment oracles targeting the people's idolatry, particularly their worship spawned by the cultic center of Bethel (Beth-aven, 4:15). The prophet describes the people's worship as promiscuous in their turning to wooden idols and sacrificing on high places. The euphony highlights the promiscuous nature of the worship and the male and female participants in the promiscuity. The concentration of euphony also highlights several significant breaks in its euphonic patterning that provide concluding statements. One break for example happens in 4:17 which states the prophet's main issue— Ephraim has joined with idols. Another break happens in 4:19 that concludes the series of euphony beginning in 4:12 by stating the results of the peoples' idolatry—they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

The second concentration of soundplay appears in Hos 9–10 where nearly every verse contains soundplay. Each chapter contains two stretches of soundplay that are marked by

concluding statements void of euphony: 9:17 and 10:15.[49] The stretch of soundplay in Hos 9 introduces Israel's apostasy as promiscuous and describes through a variety of imagery the judgment it will endure as a result. Israel's festival days will become like judgment days, scattered amongst Egypt and Assyria (9:1-9) and entrapped in their own hostility (9:7-9). Furthermore, Ephraim, the fruitful one, will become fruitless in its cultivation and in its womb (9:10-16). The repetition of soundplay breaks at 9:17 to highlight the conclusive statement to Israel's promiscuity—God will reject Israel because they did not listen to him.

The stretch of soundplay in Hos 10 navigates audiences through imagery of Israel's and Ephraim's deterioration. Israel is a vain, luxuriant vine whose apostasy brings it to sprout judgment like poisonous weeds (10:4) and grow thorns and thistles on their abandoned altars (10:8). Ephraim is a trained heifer who loves to thresh but instead plows wickedness (10:13). The series of soundplay breaks at 10:15 to highlight the consequences of Ephraim's wickedness as the devastation of Bethel and destruction of Israel's king.

The third concentration of soundplay appears at the end of Hosea, notably in the progression of Hos 14:2–10 to convey how Yahweh will restore Israel. This concentration of soundplay is divided into two sections by Hos 14:5, which does not contain phonetic play. The first section's soundplay highlights declarations the prophet wants Israel to say in its return to Yahweh. The soundplay series ends in 14:5, which begins a series of first person declarations from Yahweh regarding how he will be restorer to Israel when the nation returns to him. Yahweh becomes a healer who loves Israel and will turn his anger from the nation. The second section of soundplay begins in 14:6 and uses Lebanon imagery to highlight Yahweh as the source of

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[49] 10:7 does not have soundplay, but it arguably belongs to 10:6 as a continuation of place names (Ephraim, Israel, Samaria) followed by judgment.

Israel's fertility. The soundplay in both sections show a relationship between Israel's proper response and the nature of Yahweh. If Israel responds appropriately by returning to Yahweh, the nation will find Yahweh an abundant source of fertility. This message pivots on 14:5 to expound on Yahweh as a healer whose anger has turned away.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of Hosea shows a tendency for translators to either emend textual oddities and ambiguities to something more sensible or to ignore phonetic values and their reading experience signifiers for the sake of semantic accuracy. The tendency to emend the text predominately happens with wordplay where the prophet appears to coin new words (e.g., Hos 2:14 אֶתְנָה "prostitute's wage"), write shorthand (e.g., Hos 4:18 הֵבוּ "they love"), write insensibly (e.g., Hos 5:2 וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ "Slaughter, rebels have made deep") and idiomatically (e.g., Hos 4:18 קָלוֹן מָגִנֶּיהָ "shame of her shield"), or use words ambiguously (e.g., Hos 1:9 לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם "I will not be to you" or "'Not-I-am' to you"). The tendency to ignore phonetic values happens because reproducing them in translation has created semantic distortion or awkward English renditions.

The conviction at the outset of this study, however, is that the phonetics of Hebrew wordplay and soundplay provide too much meaning to emend or leave untranslated. The analysis of Hosean wordplay and soundplay show a striking ability for English translations to render the Hebrew phonetics with minimal to no semantic distortion. The etymology of the names in Hos 1–3 are translatable with their paronomasia (Hos 1:6 לֹא רֻחָמָה "Won't-be-pitied" with רחם "pity") and their polysemy are reproducible with their additional meaning in italics (e.g., Hos 1:4 יִזְרְעֶאל "God-will-sow [*Jezreel*]"). Even the polysemantic use of בּוֹקֵק for "luxurious" and "empty" from Hos 10:1 can be accurately reproduced by the single word "vain," which creates alliteration with גֶּפֶן "vine" in the phrase גֶּפֶן בּוֹקֵק יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרִי יְשַׁוֶּה־לּוֹ "Israel is a vain vine that *used to* yield fruit for itself." Sometimes, simply changing the syntax of the colon can reproduce a certain level of phonetic play, as with Hos 12:3-7. Note the word-rhyme ending each colon with a rest on the third colon:

> [4]"In the womb, *Jacob* supplanted his brother,
>   And he strove with God in his vigor
> [5]*Israel* prevailed over an angel,
>   He wept and sought his favor."

Many times, particularly with soundplay, translators can reproduce the phonetics with semantic equivalency by using carefully selected synonyms. For example, the epiphora word-rhyme between אֶתְנָן "prostitute's wage" and דָּגָן "grain" in Hos 9:1 (אָהַבְתָּ אֶתְנָן עַל כָּל־גָּרְנוֹת דָּגָן) is usually rendered "You have loved a prostitute's wage; on every threshing floor of grain." A small change from "wage" to a synonymous term "gain" reproduces the original Hebrew word-rhyme. With observation, dedication, and creativity, the phonetics of many Hebrew wordplays and soundplays are translatable with minimal to no semantic distortion or loss of content.

Not every Hebrew wordplay or soundplay, however, is so simply reproduced in translation. Sometimes synonyms cannot be found that create aural tagging, and sometimes a term's polysemy runs too deep for semantic equivalency to capture. For example, the ambiguous clause וְשַׁחֲטָה שֵׂטִים הֶעְמִיקוּ "and slaughter, rebels have made deep" in Hos 5:2 simultaneously means "and they have made deep a pit at Shittim." Formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence are unable to reproduce the intricate polysemy throughout the clause let alone capture the phonetics of its polysemy. In these cases, translators can consider the pragmatic implications of the utterances as in the literary translation of Hos 5:2 "And revolters made the slaughter a deep *pit at Shittim.*"

Wordplay and soundplay are concise utterances that formulate reading experiences through aural tagging to move audiences to respond accordingly. The prophet often uses wordplay and soundplay to rebuke (e.g., Hos 4:15; 5:8; 10:5 בֵּית אָוֶן "House of Fraud" or "Bethel the infidel"), judge (e.g., Hos 9:16 פְּרִי בַלִי־יַעֲשׂוּן "The Fruitful shall be fruitless"), indict (e.g., Hos 12:8 כְּנַעַן "Canaan" and "merchant"), and restore (e.g., Hos 2:18 בַּעְלִי "Baal" and "husband") so audiences

will turn from their apostasy and return to Yahweh. These reading experiences are translatable

signifiers and can be rendered by reproducing the longhand meaning of utterances stylistically

with phonetic play. For example, the expression in Hos 2:18 תִּקְרְאִי אִישִׁי וְלֹא־תִקְרְאִי־לִי עוֹד בַּעְלִי

"You will call *me* 'my husband' and no longer call me 'my Baal/husband,'" is shorthand for

"Israel, when you come to truly know me you will renew your covenant (marriage) with me and

call me your husband rather than calling on Baal as though he is your husband."[1] This longhand

meaning is dictated by the written semantics and can be used strategically and creatively in

translation to fill in the gaps of the shorthand. One way to illustrate the prophet's emphasis of

Yahweh as husband over Baal is through a series of repetition such as "You will call *me* 'my

husband' and no longer call me 'my Baal-*husband'*." This translation pulls away from word-for-

word formal correspondence, but the translation of the utterance's pragmatics is strictly regulated

by the written semantics and conveys a richer understanding of the prophet's stress on Israel's

unfounded relationship with Yahweh in respect to Baal. In cases where formal or dynamic

equivalence cannot be rendered with phonetic play, translators can render the utterance's

pragmatic signifiers evoked by the semantics in ways that aurally tag the utterance's highlighted

elements.

The translation process of these phonetic phenomena must begin with attention to

similarity of sound—supported by their position in parallelism or their closeness in proximity—

or the presence of ambiguity. Translators must consider the presence of wordplay or soundplay

before concluding that the text is corrupt and needs emending. Ambiguity, uncertainty, or

irregularity may be indicators of creative expression. Second, when translators discover phonetic

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[1] Since Israel's syncretism of pagan deities with Yahweh is unclear, the longhand expression could also read, ". . . rather than calling on me like I am your husband, Baal."

plays, they must first try to find ways to recreate some level of the phonetic play using formal

correspondence or dynamic equivalent methods which focus on the written semantics.

Reproducing the semantics as formally as possible naturally produces the utterance's pragmatics.

If translators are unable to find formal equivalences that capture the phonetic plays, then they

must consult the pragmatics of the utterance and leverage its reading experience signifiers and

longhand expression. Translations of these pragmatics must be cautious to adhere closely to the

written semantics to maintain the economy of the text, preserve semantic accuracy, and

reproduce the phonetic plays in the original shorthand style of the utterance's original

presentation.

Whether employing formal correspondence, dynamic equivalence, or pragmatic translation

methods, translators should keep in mind Nida's criteria for an efficient translation. Every

translation should maintain general efficiency which preserves maximal reception for the

minimal effort in decoding. Hos 12:4–5 has an example where reproducing all the passage's

phonetic plays distorts the semantics and requires a significant amount of decoding.

> [4]"In the womb *of his mother Jacob* supplanted his brother,
>   And in his vitality**,** he is-a-rival *against* God.
> [5]*Israel* prevailed an angel
>   He wept and sought his favor."

The general efficiency of this translation is low because it contains odd semantics and

hyphenations. A translation that is more generally efficient preserves the economy of the text and

reproduces the literal semantics in a syntax that naturally arranges a rhyme scheme.

> [4]"In the womb, *Jacob* supplanted his brother,
>   And he strove with God in his vigor
> [5]*Israel* prevailed an angel,
>   He wept and sought his favor."

The second criterion for an efficient translation is its comprehension of intent and how

accurate the translation reflects the meaning of the source-language. Intent for wordplay and soundplay is largely found in their brevity and phonetic play. Audiences ought to experience the terseness and punctuality of their brevity as well as their euphony to comprehend more fully the intent of the reading experience. The less obvious the phonetic play or the more text is added, the less audiences can comprehend the intent of wordplay and soundplay. Most types of wordplay and soundplay comprise multiple words that increase the passage's flexibility for finding equivalent or near-synonyms with matching phonetic patterns. This flexibility is seen in the first colon of Hos 4:7 with the anaphora word-rhyme between כְּרֻבָּם "as they increased" and כְּבוֹדָם "their glory" from כְּרֻבָּם כֵּן חָטְאוּ־לֵי כְּבוֹדָם בְּקָלוֹן אָמִיר "As they increase thus they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame." A matching word-rhyme pattern can use "as they gain" for כְּרֻבָּם and "their acclaim" with כְּבוֹדָם to produce the reading, "As they gain, thus they sinned against me; Their acclaim I will change into shame." The need to add text largely resides with polysemantic puns and referential puns where a single word or name evokes multiple meanings or referents that are essential to the message. Even in these occasions, however, only one or two added words are usually needed to communicate the multivalent meaning, allowing the wordplay to maintain its brevity. In the case of Hos 1:4, the referential pun יִזְרְעֶאל evokes its etymology "God-will-sow" and the geographical location of "Jezreel." Both references are maintained by rendering the name "God-will-sow" and adding an italicized "Jezreel" in parentheses; thus, "God-will-sow (*Jezreel*)."

The third criterion is equivalence of response and judges how well the translation invites modern audiences to respond, react, or feel according to how the original text was designed to cause its audience to respond. Equivalence of response is largely produced when the first two criteria are met, however, translators should keep in mind that the semantics and type of phonetic

play can factor into the effect of the delivery. In the case of Hos 7:11 (מִצְרַיִם קָרָאוּ אַשּׁוּר הָלָכוּ) "*To* Egypt they call; *to* Assyria they go"), I give two translation options: "*To* Egypt they call; to Assyria they crawl" and "*To* Egypt they call out; to Assyria they go out." Both options capture the first two criteria but the semantics of the former option invite audiences to respond more heavily to the shock and devastation of turning to other entities than Yahweh. The rhyme scheme is more punctual like the source text and the verb "crawl" arguably causes audiences to respond with feelings of shame towards the original audience and shame for their own behaviors that turn them to other providers than Yahweh.

This translation process matched with the criteria standards above can enable translators to help their target audiences experience the fuller pragmatics of wordplay and soundplay utterances and help them identify where the prophet uses phonetic artistry to highlight movements throughout the canonical piece. The wordplay throughout Hos 1–3 largely uses the *nomina sunt omina* of the prophet's children to highlight the judgment, indictment, and renewal of Yahweh's people. Wordplay also appears in clusters throughout Hos 4–14 that highlight the peoples' waywardness: indictment of בֵּית אָוֶן "Beth-aven" (Hos 4–5), the calf-cult (Hos 10), socio-economic corruption and striving against God (Hos 12). Soundplay is more evenly disbursed throughout Hosea but they also appear in various clusters that highlight movements in oracles. Concentrations include indictment of idolatry (Hos 4:12–19), Israel's promiscuity with the nations (Hos 9–10), and Yahweh's restoration of Israel (Hos 14). Unique to Hosea's use of soundplay, is the prophet's tagging of words with such concentration that the colon/cola that does not contain phonetic play often becomes emphatic (see above).

The phonetics of wordplay and soundplay play an important role in navigating audiences through the oracles and messages of the book. Further study can assess how translating the

phonetics of wordplay and soundplay cooperate with the parallelisms and other poetic devices in which they are situated. The investigation can expose what translations gain from reproducing the poetic structure and assess the ability for phonetic play and poetic structure to coexist in translation with clarity that enhances the originality of the reading experience.

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