

HOSEA'S GOD

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HOSEA'S GOD

A Metaphorical Theology

Mason D. Lancaster

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For Susie

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In our stammering after a transcendent God we must speak,
for the most part, metaphorically or not at all.

—Janet Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*

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Acknowledgments

“The book of Hosea is complex and sophisticated, but ultimately everything revolves around gifts.”¹ As Göran Eidevall asks of Hosea’s metaphors, “How do you summarize a universe?”² so I wonder: How does one offer adequate acknowledgment in a universe where everything is a gift?

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1. Eric J. Tully, *Hosea: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, BHHB (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), x.

2. Göran Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models, and Themes in Hosea 4–14*, ConBOT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996), 2.

(metaphor?) to me of his חסד. And finally, my great thanks are due to the Giver of all good and perfect gifts (ממני פריך נמצא).

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Abbreviations

4Q78	Twelve Prophets ^c
4Q82	Twelve Prophets ^g
4Q167	pesher Hosea ^b
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AcBib	Academia Biblica
ACEBTrSup	Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities: Supplement Series
ACT	Ancient Christian Texts
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
<i>AnCrac</i>	<i>Analecta Cracoviensia</i>
ANEM	Ancient Near Eastern Monographs
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
<i>AoF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ARCL	<i>Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics</i>
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
ASV	American Standard Version
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AUUWR	Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Women in Religion
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> .
BerOl	Berit Olam
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium

BHHB	Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible
BHQ	Schenker, Adrian, et al., eds. <i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i> . Fascicle 13: The Twelve Minor Prophets. Prepared by Anthony Gelston. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010.
BHRG	Merwe, Christo H. J. van der, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze. <i>A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar</i> . 2nd ed. London: T&T Clark, 2017.
BHS	Elliger, Karl, and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds. <i>Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BibJudStud	Biblical and Judaic Studies
BibThSt	Biblich-theologische Studien
BIT	The Bible in Its Traditions
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BRLAJ	The Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism
b. Sanh.	Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin
BSL	Biblical Studies Library
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancient Testament
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEB	Common English Bible
CELCR	Converging Evidence in Language and Communication Research
<i>CI</i>	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
<i>CL</i>	<i>Cognitive Linguistics</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger, eds. <i>The Context of Scripture</i> . 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016.
CS	<i>Cognitive Semiotics</i>
CTAT	Barthélemy, Dominique. <i>Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament</i> . Vol. 3, <i>Ézéchiél, Daniel et les 12 Prophètes</i> . Göttingen: Editions universitaires, 1992.
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>

<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>DCH</i>	Clines, David J. A., ed. <i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2014.
<i>DDD</i>	van der Toorn, Karel, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, eds. <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . 2nd rev. ed. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
<i>DOTPr</i>	J. Boda, Mark, and J. Gordon McConville, eds. <i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets</i> . Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.
<i>Dtn</i>	Deuteronomic
<i>DULAT</i>	del Olmo Lete, Gregorio, and Joaquín Sanmartín. <i>A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition</i> . Translated and edited by Wilred G. E. Watson. 3rd rev. ed. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
<i>EA</i>	El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of Jørgen A. Knudtzon. <i>Die el-Amarna-Tafeln</i> . Leipzig, 1908–1915. Repr., Aalen: Zeller, 1964. Continued in Anson F. Rainey, <i>El-Amarna Tablets, 359–379</i> . 2nd rev. ed. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1978.
<i>EBR</i>	Klauck, Hans-Josef, et al., eds. <i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–.
<i>ESV</i>	English Standard Version
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>FAT</i>	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>FCB</i>	Feminist Companion to the Bible
<i>FHN</i>	<i>Frontiers in Human Neuroscience</i>
<i>FOTL</i>	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
<i>FRLANT</i>	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>FSRT</i>	Friedensauer Schriftenreihe: Reihe A, Theologie
<i>GKC</i>	Gesenius, Wilhelm. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arthur E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. Electronic ed. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>

<i>HBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBS	Herder's Biblical Studies
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HCP	Human Cognitive Processing
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
HMS	Hebrew Monograph Series
HOSSNME	Handbook of Oriental Studies: Section 1, The Near and Middle East
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>IBHS</i>	Waltke, Bruce K., and Michael O'Connor. <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IP</i>	<i>Intercultural Pragmatics</i>
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
<i>JAL</i>	<i>Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCP</i>	<i>Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JMP</i>	<i>Journal of Medicine and Philosophy</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
Joüon	Joüon, Paul. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991
<i>JP</i>	<i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>
<i>JPR</i>	<i>Journal of Psycholinguistic Research</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>

<i>JT</i>	<i>Journal of Translation</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
<i>KTU</i>	Dietrich, Manfred, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, eds. <i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. 3rd enl. ed. of <i>KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995 (= <i>CTU</i>).
Lam. Rab.	Lamentations Rabbah
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSPC	Lexington Studies in Political Communication
LXX	Septuagint
MAPW	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of the World
<i>ModTheo</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Metaphor and Symbol</i>
MT	Masoretic Text (as found in Codex Leningradensis, represented in <i>BHQ</i>)
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCB	New Century Bible
NET	New English Translation
<i>NIB</i>	Keck, Leander E., ed. <i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i> . 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004.
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology

<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
OTWSA	<i>Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika</i> (= OTSSA: <i>Old Testament Society of South Africa</i>)
Pesiq. Rab.	Pesiqta Rabbati
Pesiq. Rab Kah.	Pesiqta of Rab Kahana
PG	Patrologia Graeca [= <i>Patrologiae cursus completes: Series graeca</i>]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
<i>PL</i>	<i>Philosophy and Literature</i>
PMP	Princeton Monographs in Philosophy
<i>Poet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>
<i>Presb</i>	<i>Presbyterion</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
Readings	Readings: A New Biblical Commentary
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Rhetoric</i>
RIPT	Routledge Innovations in Political Theory
<i>RM</i>	<i>Review of Metaphysics</i>
<i>RPF</i>	<i>Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SAS	Series in Affective Science
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
<i>SEÅ</i>	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SeptCS	Septuagint Commentary Series
SESI	Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SLTHS	Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures

SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
StBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
STR	Studies in Theology and Religion
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SymS	Symposium Series
Syr.	Syriac
TD	<i>Theology Digest</i>
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Helmer Ringgren, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–1976.
Tg. Neb.	Targum of the Prophets
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
Vulg.	Vulgate
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WSC	Wisconsin Studies in Classics
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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Conceptualizing Yahweh with Metaphor Clusters: Introducing the Argument and Methods of This Study

The source of metaphor is the liberty of the mind among such words as there are.

—Denis Donoghue, *Metaphor*

The God of Hosea has been an enigmatic and highly contested figure for centuries, largely due to the variety of Hosea's metaphors. Is Yahweh essentially a loving father (11:1) or one who will snap Israel's neck (10:2)? How can Hosea's deity be a lion who will tear his¹ people to shreds (5:14) and refreshing dew that will bring life to a languishing land (14:6)? Is he a kind farmer lifting the harness of the animal so the animal can eat (11:4) or a moth that will subtly but assuredly eat away at the fabric of Israel's existence (5:12)? Hosea's God has been variously characterized as the quintessential deity of doom or of compassion, of abuse or of self-giving generosity. How is a reader to make sense of such rapidly shifting depictions? Walter Brueggemann concludes that the narrative flow of this poetry depicts a God who is "a recovering agent of violence," replete with remorse and relapse.² The metaphoric variety has led other scholars, such as Francis Landy, to conclude simply that Hosea's language is "fractured, baffling, and claims a status verging on madness" and that God himself "lacks coherence" in the book.³ Thus, amid the many advances since bibli-

1. Since most metaphors for the deity reflect masculine gender, I will refer to God with masculine pronouns throughout the book.

2. Walter Brueggemann, "The Recovering God of Hosea," *HBT* 30 (2008): 19, emphasis removed.

3. Francis Landy, "In the Wilderness of Speech: Problems of Metaphor in Hosea," *BibInt* 3 (1995): 56, 46.

cal and theological studies embraced metaphor around forty years ago, an area that continues to invite inquiry is how to make sense of the Hebrew Bible's tendency toward having multiple overlapping and at times conflicting metaphors for God, even within a single passage.

It turns out that this is not a new arena of confusion. The book of Hosea itself witnesses to a contest between conflicting interpretations of Yahweh, between which divine images should reign supreme. Hosea 6:1–3 quotes Israel's cultic elite who are confident in Yahweh's generosity. Bracketing that quotation are Hosea's rebuttals, challenging the priests' optimistic construal of Yahweh as a beneficial storm god. Hosea responds that they do not properly know Yahweh and instead offers opposing storm-god images for Yahweh.

It is no wonder that Jerome needed "much more" divine help with Hosea than with the other prophets, crying out to God, "Expound to us this parable."⁴ From the days of ancient Israel to early Christian interpreters to modern Western scholarship, discerning a portrait of Hosea's God has been a perennial challenge. That is, the pluriform nature of biblical metaphors still presents challenges—and opportunities—to the reader. Who is the God of Hosea? This book aims to shed light on the question of Hosea's metaphorical portrait of Yahweh. The point of departure for my approach is the recognition that Hosea's divine metaphors are not evenly distributed but tend to cluster together into groups. This observation opens new vistas into the book's metaphoric presentation of Yahweh and communicative purpose.

The Shape of This Study: Questions, Thesis, and Contributions

One could think of the book's questions, thesis, and contributions as an hourglass. Many questions and their pluriform answers (the wide end at the top of an hourglass) lead to the primary thesis of the book regarding Yahweh's fidelity (the narrow middle of the hourglass), which in turn contributes to multiple larger conversations (the wide bottom of the hourglass).

The primary question driving this investigation is: Who is Yahweh according to the metaphors of Hos 4–14? Several additional questions are

4. Jerome, *Commentaries on the Twelve Prophets*, ed. Thomas P. Scheck, ACT (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 2:148.

pertinent. How does one respond to the hundreds of diverse—at times conflicting or paradoxical—metaphors for God in Hos 4–14? What, if anything, holds them together? How does any pluriform unity relate to the discourse’s rhetorical purpose? How are Hosea’s metaphors deployed to achieve their rhetorical purpose? What would cause such diverse metaphors to remain together in the final form? And what is one to make of all these metaphors—both individually and collectively—theologically? What kind of mosaic portrait of God emerges? What do all these metaphors say about Yahweh? The varied questions outlined above led me to a single conclusion. I will ultimately argue that Yahweh’s enduring loyalty to Israel is the key to everything, the core of Hosea’s portrait of God.

In order to address these questions in a way that offers new insight, I develop a new approach to metaphorical theology that brings metaphors into conversation with one another while respecting their diversity and considering their literary, rhetorical, and theological functions in light of the larger discourse. The remainder of this chapter outlines the parameters and initial methodology of my study, drawing especially from research on metaphor clustering. My approach is further developed throughout the book, drawing on insights from narratology on characterization (esp. part 2), and the ancient aspective approach (introduced in ch. 8 to shape part 3).

Part 1 applies the metaphor-clustering framework to an analysis of 103 divine metaphors across fifteen clusters. Each metaphor cluster is analyzed in isolation from the others in terms of their contributions to a portrait of Yahweh. In part 2, I turn to intercluster analysis, identifying patterns across the clusters of the book pertaining to divine emotions, literary development and inversion of metaphors, and the rhetorical purpose of the book, which is procuring Israel’s return to Yahweh. Part 3 is where I attempt to bring all the threads together, offering an aspective constellation of Yahweh’s diverse presentation in Hos 4–14, then identifying five divine characteristics arising from the metaphors under study. A conclusion summarizes the findings in each chapter and the central thesis at which I arrive, which concerns Yahweh’s fidelity to Israel as essential to the Hosea’s metaphorical presentation of God.

In pursuing this project, I hope to make contributions both methodological (a fresh *approach* to biblical metaphors) and exegetical/theological (a fresh metaphorical theology of Hosea). Furthermore, one of the broader implications of this study is that it demonstrates how metaphors affect worldviews, how the *contesting* or *changing* of those metaphors can desta-

bilize and rebuild a social imagination, and thus how metaphors can influence the shape and ethics of a society.⁵ This is, as we shall see, Hosea's goal in deploying such metaphors.

Let me turn now to explain my approach to the project.

Preliminary Matters Regarding Hosea

My investigation of divine metaphors focuses on the final form of Hos 4–14. The choice for the final form arose because, at base, metaphors have meaning within a given verbal and social context.⁶ The *literary* context used for metaphor identification in this study is the final form of the book of Hosea, as presented in the MT (*BHQ*), because it is the earliest extant stable literary context available (anything earlier being hypothetical, fragmentary, and lacking consensus).⁷ The *temporal* context of eighth-century

5. For an analysis of social imagination in modern societies, see, e.g., Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); also Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 171–72. For modern examples of how metaphors shape this process, see George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

6. For instance, according to Raymond Gibbs Jr., “Metaphorical language also emerges from the interplay of the brain, bodies, and world, and must be ultimately explained as the product of an entire context-sensitive dynamical system.” See Gibbs, “Metaphor, Language, and Dynamic Systems,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language*, edited by Elena Semino and Zsófia Demjén (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 60. The challenges to metaphor interpretation in Hosea are evident, given that modern readers are not part of Hosea's “language community,” nor do they share its complex of associated commonplaces that are necessary to complete the enthymeme, i.e., “arguments in which the audience participates in forming the conclusion.” See Thomas R. Burkholder and David Henry, “Criticism of Metaphor,” in *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*, ed. Jim A. Kuypers, LSPC (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2009), 99.

7. See Sungjin Kim, “Is the Masoretic Text Still a Reliable Primary Text for the Book of Hosea?,” *BBR* 28 (2018): 34–64. An alternative approach is to interpret metaphors according to their redaction strata. E.g., Juan Cruz, *Who Is like Yahweh? A Study of Divine Metaphors in the Book of Micah*, FRLANT 263 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016). The choice for the MT as a base text does not preclude text-critical decisions resulting in departures from the MT (see Hos 4:10–11a; 6:2–3, 5c, 10; 10:10; 11:2, 3b).

Compositional theories of the book range from its being the product of ninth- and eighth-century prophecy (Gruber) to an original composition by Persian-Yehud literati (e.g., Trotter, Ben Zvi, Bos). See Mayer I. Gruber, *Hosea: A Textual Commentary*,

Israel is the world within which the metaphors and their literary context are intended to be read and interpreted.⁸

My decision to focus on chapters 4–14 came about for several reasons. First, this study is interested in metaphorical *variety*. Hosea has a greater density of metaphors for God than any other book of the Bible,⁹ yet these are not evenly distributed throughout the book. The first three chapters deal in relatively homogenous metaphors concerning the sexual and marriage metaphor domains, supplemented with some agricultural imagery. Hosea 4–14, on the other hand, holds most of the book's metaphorical variety. The second reason is related to the first: Hos 4–14 has attracted comparatively little attention, largely because scholarship has demonstrated an “overwhelmingly myopic focus on the marriage metaphor in

LHBOTS 653 (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 6; James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud*, JSOTSup 328 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001); Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, FOTL (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); James M. Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea: The Case for Persian-Period Yehud*, LHBOTS 580 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013). For recent surveys of composition theories, see Bos, *Reconsidering the Date*, 21–30 (see 30 for an example of the lack of consensus); Brad E. Kelle, “Hosea 4–14 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship,” *CurBR* 8 (2010): 324–32; Stuart A. Irvine, “Hosea,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Minor Prophets*, ed. Julia M. O'Brien (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 405–8.

8. That is, regardless of one's view on the origin or compositional history of the book, the eighth century is the book's “intellectual horizon,” from which it “never overtly departs.” See Mark W. Hamilton, “History among the Junipers: Hosea 14:2–10 as Metahistoriography,” *BZ* 63 (2019): 108; see also Nadav Na'aman, “The Book of Hosea as a Source for the Last Days of the Kingdom of Israel,” *BZ* 59 (2015): 232–56; Irvine, “Hosea,” 407–8. It is, in other words, the world of the text. The difficulty of the text of Hosea has occasioned speculation as to the dialectical northern origins of the text. We have not found instances in which a clear northern dialect makes a substantial difference for the reading of a metaphor. For more, see Yoon Jong Yoo, “Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Hosea” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1999). Macintosh and Gruber are among commentators who affirm a northern dialect in Hosea. See Andrew A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1997); Gruber, *Hosea*.

9. Casper J. Labuschagne, “The Similes in the Book of Hosea,” *OTWSA* 7 (1964): 64; James Luther Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1969), 7; Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea*, trans. Gary Stansell, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), xxiv; Paul A. Kruger, “Prophetic Imagery: On Metaphors and Similes in the Book Hosea,” *JNSL* 14 (1988): 143, 150; Macintosh, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, lxiii; Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel*, OTM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 49–50.

Hos 1–3, often to the exclusion of serious engagement with other parts of the book.”¹⁰ Commensurate attention to the metaphors of Hos 4–14 is overdue. Third, attending to the substantial discussions of Hos 1–3 (necessary for developing a truly exhaustive Hosean theology) would make this volume unmanageably long. Fourth, the marital and agricultural imagery of Hos 1–3 is echoed in 4–14 (esp. chs. 4, 10, and 14), so one could argue that a metaphorical theology of Hos 4–14 thus includes aspects of 1–3 and is therefore relatively representative of the book as a whole, though admittedly such a project bypasses many of the important scholarly discussions of Hos 1–3. Hence, my investigation focuses on the metaphorical portrait of Yahweh in Hos 4–14 specifically.

The metaphorical variety in Hosea is crucial to understanding the book's message. Indeed, the final verse explicitly demands that the reader “understand these things,” things that center on Israel's God and are largely communicated figuratively.¹¹ The crucial observation that sets the trajectory of this investigation is that even within Hos 4–14, metaphors are not uniformly distributed. Hosea 5:10–6:5, for instance, involves fourteen metaphors for God, yet other passages of the same length, such as 4:2–10, lack any metaphors for Yahweh.¹² This raises several questions. Does Hosea evidence other such metaphor groupings? If so, why do metaphors tend to group together? Are there any patterns to their groupings? Why do they coalesce where they do?

To answer these and other questions and to further investigate Hosea's divine metaphors, metaphor research provides a number of useful tools and perspectives.

10. Kelle, “Hosea 4–14 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship,” 315. The major exception in terms of longer work focused on metaphors in Hosea 4–14 is Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*.

11. I follow MT versification, and all translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

12. My initial observation that certain metaphor domains are introduced in tight proximity to one another in 5:8–6:6 and are then revisited and inverted throughout the remainder of the book was eventually published as Mason D. Lancaster, “Wounds and Healing, Dew and Lions: Hosea's Development of Divine Metaphors,” *CBQ* 83 (2021): 407–24.

What Is a Metaphor, and What Does It Do?

Metaphor: Definition and Holistic Approach

The state of biblical scholarship is now such that an acquaintance with metaphor theory can usually be assumed. What follows is far from an overview of the whole field of metaphor research.¹³ It is, more modestly, a brief description of the definitions and criteria used in this study.

According to the prevailing theory of metaphor from cognitive linguistics (namely, conceptual metaphor theory), people write and speak in metaphor because we first think in metaphors.¹⁴ Metaphors are fundamentally conceptual and only secondarily linguistic.¹⁵ A conceptual metaphor may be defined as “understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)” or even more concisely as a “cross-domain mapping in thought.”¹⁶ (I do not follow

13. For an entrée into this vast field, see Mason D. Lancaster, “Metaphor Research and the Hebrew Bible,” *CurBR* 19 (2021): 235–85; see also Jakub Mácha, “Metaphor in Analytic Philosophy and Cognitive Science,” *RPF* 75 (2019): 2247–86. For an up-to-date compendium, mostly from a cognitive-linguistics perspective, see Semino and Demjén, *Routledge Handbook*. For concise summaries of major theories in relation to biblical studies, see, e.g., Hanneke van Loon, *Metaphors in the Discussion on Suffering in Job 3–31: Visions of Hope and Consolation*, *BibInt* 165 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 4–32, particularly focused on cognitive accounts; Benjamin M. Austin, *Plant Metaphors in the Old Greek of Isaiah*, *SCS* 69 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 12–65, covering a broader swath of theories. For a philosophical and literary perspective by a biblical scholar, see Paul K.-K. Cho, *Myth, History, and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 17–38.

14. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.

15. Contra Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 16.

16. The first definition comes from Zoltán Kövecses, “Conceptual Metaphor Theory,” in Semino and Demjén, *Routledge Handbook*, 13, emphasis removed. The second definition comes from Gerard J. Steen, “Deliberate Metaphor Theory: Basic Assumptions, Main Tenets, Urgent Issues,” *IP* 14 (2017): 3. For other conceptual metaphor theory definitions, see George Lakoff, “The Invariance Hypothesis: Is Abstract Reason Based on Image-Schemas?,” *CL* 1 (1990): 39–74; Mark Turner, “Aspects of the Invariance Hypothesis,” *CL* 1 (1990): 247–55; George Lakoff, “The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor,” in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 203, 215–16, 228–29; Lakoff, “The Neural Theory of Metaphor,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*,

the practice of writing conceptual metaphors in small caps in this book.) A particular linguistic instantiation of a metaphor is called a metaphorical expression.¹⁷ For the sake of simplicity this study will often use the term *metaphor* to refer to Hosea's textual metaphorical expressions.

Additionally, conceptual metaphor theory emphasizes the ordinarieness of metaphor. Metaphor is not merely poetic flourish intentionally added to ornament speech. Rather, metaphor is embedded in everyday speech because it reflects the fundamental ways in which we conceptualize the world. Recent studies probe the metaphorical conceptualizations underlying everyday speech in the Bible.¹⁸ For the purposes of this study, it is irrelevant whether Hosea's metaphors for God are intentional or poetic metaphors, as we are interested in Hosea's conceptualization of Yahweh.¹⁹

Conceptual metaphor theory is certainly the most well-known and probably the most used account of metaphor, but it is not the only theory.²⁰ In fact, as scholars recognize the limitations of conceptual metaphor theory and that no single theory is sufficient to account for the richness

ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 26; Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 130–32. For literary and theological perspectives, see Benjamin Harshav, *Explorations in Poetics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 32–75; Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 15.

17. See Lakoff, “Contemporary Theory of Metaphor,” 209; Kövecses, “Conceptual Metaphor Theory,” 16–17.

18. See, e.g., Nicole L. Tilford, *Sensing World, Sensing Wisdom: The Cognitive Foundation of Biblical Metaphors*, AIL 31 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017); Johan de Joode, *Metaphorical Landscapes and the Theology of the Book of Job*, VTSup 179 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

19. That is, I focus on particular instances of communication as parts of the large conceptual systems behind them. See Beth M. Stovell, “‘I Will Make Her Like a Desert’: Intertextual Allusion and Feminine and Agricultural Metaphors in the Book of the Twelve,” in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire, ANEM 10 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 37–39. Doubtless many of Hosea's divine metaphors are “deliberate.” On this emerging field, see Steen, “Deliberate Metaphor Theory.”

20. In addition to multiple philosophical, literary, and rhetorical accounts, there is conceptual blending theory, career of metaphor theory, class-inclusion theory, conceptual metaphor and metonymy theory, and deliberate metaphor theory, among others. See Lancaster, “Metaphor Research and the Hebrew Bible”; Van Loon, *Metaphors in the Discussion*, 10–15.

of metaphor, the future of the field of metaphor research seems to be hybrid, integrative, or multidisciplinary accounts of metaphor.²¹ I have tried to use an approach in this study that is holistic, both in terms of metaphor *theory* and in terms of attending to its *function* in the text. I adopt a holistic theory of metaphor in that I have incorporated conceptual, philosophical, linguistic, and rhetorical accounts of metaphor, as will be evident here and throughout. Next, I provide a brief account of metaphor's holistic function.

The Whole Power of Metaphor

Functionally speaking, metaphors have historically been considered in terms of their cognitive impact. But there are also long traditions—including among poets and philosophers—analyzing their impact on affect and volition. My approach is functionally holistic because I have tried to be aware of the cognitive, emotional, and volitional implications of metaphors on an ancient audience or even a modern reader. A brief outline of the multifaceted *function* and power of metaphor is crucial for the holistic metaphor analyses of this project. Accounting for metaphor's impact on thinking, feeling, and acting directly shapes my reading of Hosea's metaphors.

First, metaphors do not merely repeat what is known but introduce fresh knowledge or ways of knowing. They involve semantic ingenuity. "Metaphor, or something very much like it, is what renders possible and intelligible the acquisition of new knowledge."²² This is true on the linguistic plane and on a deeply neurological level.²³ Since the semantic ingenuity of metaphor constitutes the major turn in metaphor studies in the past sixty years and is therefore well known, a few representatives from various

21. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., "Why Do Some People Dislike Conceptual Metaphor Theory?," *CS* 5 (2009): 14–36; Mácha, "Metaphor in Analytic Philosophy," 2274–77. For examples of integrated accounts of metaphor, see, e.g., Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., *Metaphor Wars: Conceptual Metaphors in Human Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Gibbs, "Metaphor, Language, and Dynamic Systems"; Steen, "Deliberate Metaphor Theory."

22. Hugh G. Petrie and Rebecca S. Oshlag, "Metaphor and Learning," in Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, 582; see also 580–84. On what and how exactly a reader/hearer "knows" after interpreting a metaphor, see also Josef Stern, *Metaphor in Context* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 316–17.

23. Lakoff, "Neural Theory of Metaphor."

disciplines should suffice to illustrate the point that metaphors can open novel ways of perceiving reality.²⁴ Philosopher Paul Ricoeur affirms “the power of metaphor to project and to reveal a world.” That is, metaphors “re-describe reality.”²⁵ As cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson put it, metaphor has “the power to define reality.”²⁶ Because of this, theologian Janet Soskice notes, “A good metaphor may not simply be an oblique reference to a predetermined subject but *a new vision, the birth of a new understanding, a new referential access*. A strong metaphor compels *new possibilities of vision*.”²⁷ This is profoundly the case for *theological* metaphors. Biblical scholar William Brown observes, “The power of the metaphor, moreover, lies in its ability (and its manipulability) to inspire new theological vision.”²⁸

Second, metaphors have the power to affect feelings. This fact has received comparatively little scholarly attention, as emotions—like metaphors—have historically been considered outside the realm of “serious” rational scholarship.²⁹ Recent researchers have rightly tried to keep these

24. For some recent work, see further Sam Glucksberg, *Understanding Figurative Language: From Metaphor to Idioms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ted Cohen, *Thinking of Others: On the Talent for Metaphor*, PMP (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

25. Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 93, 7; see also Ricoeur, “The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling” *CI* 5 (1978): 143–59; Ricoeur, “Poetry and Possibility,” in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdéz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 455.

26. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 157.

27. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 57–58, emphasis added; see also 48, 144.

28. William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 214.

29. Thomas Hobbes is representative when he includes metaphors among those “senseless and ambiguous words” that are “for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment.” See Mark Johnson, “Metaphor: An Overview,” in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 2:209. The two quotations are Hobbes’s, the first cited from *Leviathan*, part 1, ch. 5; the second from *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, book 3, ch. 10. For a survey of views, see Amy C. Cottrill, “A Reading of Ehud and Jael through the Lens of Affect Theory,” *BibInt* 22 (2014): 433–37.

aspects in better balance.³⁰ Emotions relate to metaphor in at least three different respects. Metaphors can (1) describe an emotional state, (2) reflect the feelings of the creator of the metaphor, and (3) cause the recipient to feel things.

Metaphors can be used to (1) describe the emotion itself. In English one might say he is “boiling over” with anger, or she is “green” with jealousy. In Hebrew, one’s nose grows hot with anger (חרה אפי, Hos 8:5); God’s wrath can be “poured out like water” (אשפוך כמים עברתי, Hos 5:10), or God can have a change of heart (נהפך עלי לבי, Hos 11:8).³¹

Additionally, a metaphor can (2) reflect the emotions of its creator regarding the target domain. “When metaphor is used to talk about ‘something in terms of something else,’ it seems that people choose that ‘something else’ so that it expresses how they feel about what they are saying.”³² An important implication for our investigation is that when Yahweh chooses metaphors for Israel, it can indicate not only facts about Israel but how Yahweh *feels* about Israel. For instance, the metaphors of sexual promiscuity (זנה) in Hosea perhaps reflect, among other things, Yahweh’s sense of shame by virtue of association to “his” promiscuous wife.³³ The farmer metaphors in Hos 10:11 reflect Yahweh’s feelings of frustration and disappointment with Israel.³⁴

30. Among more recent work, see Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*, rev. ed., SESI 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Kövecses, “Metaphor and Emotion,” in Gibbs, *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor*, 380–96. For recent overviews of the science of emotions, see David Sander and Klaus Scherer, eds., *Oxford Companion to Emotion and the Affective Sciences*, SAS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017). On metaphors and emotion within biblical studies and a discussion of divine emotion, see ch. 5.

31. For some examples, see Alec Basson, “A Few Metaphorical Source Domains for Emotions in the Old Testament,” *Scriptura* 100 (2009): 121–28.

32. Lynne Cameron, “What Is Metaphor and Why Does It Matter?,” in *Metaphor Analysis: Research Practice in Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences and the Humanities*, ed. Lynne Cameron and Robert Maslen (London: Equinox, 2010), 5.

33. This shame is both an emotion and a social status. See further ch. 2, cluster 1.

34. See ch. 3, cluster 10.

A metaphor can (3) change the receiver's feelings.³⁵ This is a direct result of the previous point. The speaker intends hearers to share in the emotional evaluation of the target domain. Philosopher Ted Cohen affirms,

*A principal ambition in the use of metaphor ... is to induce others to feel as we do, and to do this by describing the objects of our feelings in a way which requires a special effort at comprehension on the part of others. When I offer you a metaphor I invite your attempt to join a community with me, an intimate community whose bond is our common feeling about something.*³⁶

This can occur in literature as well, as a reader is invited to relive the experiences of the characters.³⁷ This may indeed be true of Yahweh's emotions in the book of Hosea. Emotional reevaluation can happen *through* the conceptual semantic ingenuity of the metaphor, or *independently* of conscious rational processes. In conceptual metaphor theory, the cross-domain mapping of a metaphor consists of cognitive *and* emotional mapping: such metaphorical "image mapping allows us to map our *evaluation* of the source domain onto the target."³⁸ By "evaluation," Lakoff here refers to evaluations that are not primarily rational but affective, such as the recognition of beauty and the inspiration of awe. As Laura Otis observes, "The command to 'move on,' for instance, implies that life is a journey on which a person contemplating her pain is balking. Personal pains often have social causes, and orders to 'move on' not only humiliate sufferers; they delegitimize protests; they drown accusations in shame."³⁹ Having heard a metaphor, it is not simply that we *think* about the target differently but that we *feel* differently as well.

Third, there is the pragmatic or performative aspect of metaphor: its use or function in discourse. Metaphors can shape how people behave; they can have volitional impact. This occurs implicitly and explicitly. A few examples illustrate how this can happen implicitly or indirectly. One's everyday actions, if one thinks of life as "a full-contact sport," will be dif-

35. Laura Otis, *Banned Emotions: How Metaphors Can Shape What People Feel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

36. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor, Feeling, and Narrative," *PL* 21 (1997): 233, emphasis added.

37. Otis, *Banned Emotions*, 3; see also Cottrill, "Reading of Ehad."

38. Lakoff, "Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 230, emphasis added.

39. Otis, *Banned Emotions*, 1.

ferent from if one thinks that “all the world’s a stage.”⁴⁰ How one feels and behaves while operating with the metaphor of sin as burden is different from a person assuming sin is debt.⁴¹ Metaphors can even influence sensory perception: “Fishy smells induce suspicion, . . . unburdening yourself of a secret lowers the estimation of the upward slant of hills.”⁴²

But speakers can also intentionally deploy metaphors for the explicit purpose of changing the behavior in others. This brings us to the art of persuasion—in many ways the conceptual home of metaphor in Western thought: rhetoric.⁴³ Because metaphors shape possibilities for behavior, they have long been recognized as a powerful means of persuasion: *change* the metaphor, and you can *change* someone’s behavior.⁴⁴ Policies and actions

40. Burkholder and Henry, “Criticism of Metaphor,” 98.

41. Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); see also Joseph Lam, *Patterns of Sin in the Hebrew Bible: Metaphor, Culture, and the Making of a Religious Concept* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

42. George Lakoff, “Mapping the Brain’s Metaphor Circuitry: Metaphorical Thought in Everyday Reason,” *FHN* 8 (2014): 7; see also Lisa M. Lindeman and Lyn Y. Abramson, “The Mental Simulation of Motor Incapacity in Depression,” *JCP* 22 (2008): 228–49; Somogy Varga, “Embodied Concepts and Mental Health,” *JMP* 43 (2018): 241–60, esp. 248–50 for examples. For the broad implications of the embodied nature of cognition, see Francisco J. Varela, Evan T. Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic, 1999); Zoltán Kövecses, *Where Metaphors Come From: Reconsidering Context in Metaphor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made*.

43. For the purposes of this study, *rhetoric* is defined as “the strategic use of communication, oral or written, to achieve specifiable goals.” See Jim A. Kuypers and Andrew King, “What Is Rhetoric?,” in Kuypers, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 4.

44. Aristotle provided the first detailed studies of metaphor in the Western tradition, doing so from the perspectives of rhetoric and poetics. See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1404b–1411b; Aristotle, *Poet.* 1457b; see also Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 9–43. Western philosophy continued to discuss metaphor primarily under the rubric of rhetoric from then until the 1960s. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 1–14; Mark Johnson, “Introduction: Metaphor in the Philosophical Tradition,” in *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, ed. Mark Johnson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 4–8, for brief summaries of Greek thought on metaphor and rhetoric. For modern work on metaphor and rhetoric, see Wayne C. Booth, “Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation,” in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 47–70; Burkholder and Henry, “Criticism of Metaphor.” As John L. Austin famously argued, all words *do*. See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*,

around drug use, for instance, vary dramatically depending on how one characterizes the issue, whether as “a problem of addiction,” a “symptom of social dysfunction,” or a “war.”⁴⁵ In these cases, Lakoff and Johnson recognize that “metaphor was not merely a way of viewing reality; it constituted a license for policy change and political and economic action.” By changing one’s perceptual field, “a metaphor may thus be a guide for *future* action.”⁴⁶

Likewise, the rhetorical function of metaphor has long been recognized by biblical scholars.⁴⁷ Two representatives will suffice to illustrate the point. Theologian Sally McFague, in one of the early influential works on metaphor, comments, “Good metaphors . . . are implicitly revolutionary. . . . They shock and disturb; they upset conventions and expectations and in so doing have revolutionary potential.”⁴⁸ Brueggemann similarly notices this prophetic-poetic rhetorical weaponry:

The poet engages in the kind of guerrilla warfare that is always necessary on behalf of oppressed people. First, the hated one must be ridiculed and made reachable, then she may be disobeyed and seen as a nobody who claims no allegiance and keeps no promises. The big house yields no real life, need not be feared, cannot be trusted, and must not be honored.

2nd rev. ed., ed. James O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). Recent metaphor scholarship has recognized this, increasingly attending to not only the *content* of metaphors but their *function* in communication as well. See, e.g., Zazie Todd and Graham Low, “A Selective Survey of Research Practice in Published Studies Using Metaphor Analysis,” in Cameron and Maslen, *Metaphor Analysis*, 26–41, esp. 26–27; Lynne Cameron, “Metaphors and Discourse Activity,” in Cameron and Maslen, *Metaphor Analysis*, 147–60; Steen, “Deliberate Metaphor Theory.”

45. Burkholder and Henry, “Criticism of Metaphor,” 101. They provide dozens more examples. For more on metaphor and politics, see, e.g., George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: A Cognitive Scientist’s Guide to Your Brain and Its Politics* (New York: Penguin, 2009); Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo, eds., *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World*, RIPT 30 (London: Routledge, 2011); James Underhill, *Creating Worldviews: Metaphor, Ideology and Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Andreas Musolf, “Metaphor and Persuasion in Politics,” in Semino and Demjén, *Routledge Handbook*, 309–22.

46. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 156, emphasis added.

47. For an overview of the use of rhetoric and metaphor in biblical studies, see Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, AcBib 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

48. Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 17; see also Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 1, 269.

When the Babylonian gods have been mocked, when the Babylonian culture has been ridiculed, and when the dethroned king is re-enthroned, then history is inverted.... *We ought not to underestimate the power of the poet. Inversions may begin in a change of language, a redefined perceptual field, or an altered consciousness.*⁴⁹

Hosea deploys radical metaphors for Yahweh, in part because they have the power to create a novel set of possible futures. Brueggemann summarizes their effect:

What the poetry of Hosea—poetry that characterizes God—does is to load us with a world that is not available to us—and surely did not exist—until this utterance.... The imagined poetic world of Hosea creates alternative space in which Israel can live, if and when it is willing to forego either the certitude of *quid pro quo* or the narcotic of entitlement.⁵⁰

Given that Hosea's metaphors concern a deity, the relationship between metaphors and behavior implies that metaphorical theology shapes ethics.⁵¹ Metaphors create a new vision of reality, in which there are new possibilities for action. When considering Hosea's metaphors, then, it is crucial to account for how the metaphors would affect the behavior and volition of their recipients.

In sum, metaphors have the power to change how people think, feel, and act in the world in a variety of ways. Hosea intends its vision of God and Israel to persuade its audience to change their course of action and so change their future.⁵²

Having outlined my understanding of an individual metaphor and its holistic function, we turn now to consider how *multiple* metaphors interact with each other, how and why they group together, and how to identify such clusters.

49. Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 73–74, emphasis added. Notice that all three beginnings of inversion are the realm of metaphor.

50. Brueggemann, "Recovering God of Hosea," 7.

51. See Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 23–25, 46.

52. Andrew A. Macintosh, "Hosea and the Wisdom Tradition: Dependence and Independence," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, ed. John Day, Robert P. Gordon, and Hugh G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 125.

Metaphors Move in Families: Identifying and Analyzing Clusters

“A metaphor,” as Ricoeur observes, “never comes alone. One metaphor calls for another and all together they remain alive thanks to their mutual tension and the power of each to evoke the whole network.”⁵³ “Metaphorical meaning,” therefore, “feeds on the density of imagery released by the poem.”⁵⁴ Philosopher Josef Stern notes that “metaphors move in families.” That is, the interpretation of a given metaphor “is sensitive to the networks to which its vehicle is presupposed to belong (in that context)... The content of a metaphor in a context is highly dependent on and sensitive to the other elements in the various complexes in which it figures.”⁵⁵ Adele Berlin recognizes this phenomenon in relation to biblical poetry, claiming that “to understand the Bible’s use of imagery is to perceive the *network of relationships* in the biblical text and in the view of the world that it represents. Therein lies the meaning of the biblical message.”⁵⁶

Metaphor theorists have noted that metaphors are rarely evenly distributed through a text but instead group together. They have termed this phenomenon “metaphor clustering” and have recently begun to study clusters in real-world spoken and written discourse.⁵⁷ Their perspectives offer a helpful set of tools for identifying and analyzing these families in which metaphors move. In order to identify a metaphor cluster, one must first be able to identify a metaphorical expression. This has proven more difficult than many high school English students have assumed. In what

53. Paul Ricoeur, “Biblical Hermeneutics,” *Semeia* 4 (1975): 94. Kruger claims this is a *conscious* strategy in Hosea. See Paul A. Kruger, “The Divine Net in Hosea 7:12,” *ETL* 68 (1992): 132–36, esp. 134.

54. Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 214.

55. Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 316–17. This warrants assigning interpretive significance to the slightest shifts between metaphors (317).

56. Adele Berlin, “On Reading Biblical Poetry: The Role of Metaphor,” in *Congress Volume: Cambridge, 1995*, ed. John A. Emerton, VTSup 66 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 35, italics mine. This is especially the case due to the similarities between the functions of metaphor and parallelism. See also Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 99–102; Nancy Louise Rogers, “Poetic Revelation: The Relationship between Parallelism and Metaphor in Biblical Hebrew Poetry” (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2010); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic, 2011), 10, 17.

57. For a few earlier studies, see Lynne Cameron and Juurd H. Stelma, “Metaphor Clusters in Discourse,” *JAL* 1 (2004): 108.

follows, then, I will first provide criteria to identify metaphorical expressions in the text. Next, I discuss some aspects of evaluating the strength of a figurative expression. Then we turn to criteria for identifying and analyzing metaphor clusters, and finally explore why metaphors cluster in the first place.

Identifying Metaphorical Expressions

In order to identify clusters of metaphors, one must first be able to identify a metaphor. I try to be as precise and objective as possible in the identification of metaphors, while realizing that ambiguity is the poet's playground.

Debate on metaphor identification has raged for centuries. A simple criterion for identifying a metaphor is whether an expression brings together two disjunctive domains of experience.⁵⁸ (Consistent with contemporary metaphor theories, this includes similes.)⁵⁹ Sometimes it can be quite difficult to identify those domains and determine whether they are sufficiently disjunctive to be metaphorical. Thankfully, metaphor researchers have developed a more precise process.

A group of scholars known as the Pragglejaz group offers such an approach, called metaphor identification procedure. In this process, one

58. This is consistent with understanding metaphor as *the mapping itself* of one domain of experience onto another domain of experience (see Lakoff, "Contemporary Theory," 206–7; Kövecses, "Conceptual Metaphor Theory," 14).

59. E.g., see Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 248; Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 59; Lynne Cameron and Robert Maslen, "Identifying Metaphors in Discourse Data," in Cameron and Maslen, *Metaphor Analysis*, 110–11; Susan E. Haddox, *Metaphor and Masculinity in Hosea*, StBL 141 (New York: Lang, 2011), 47–49; Joseph Lam, "The Metaphorical Patterning of the Sin-Concept in Biblical Hebrew" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2012), 59–62; Gerard J. Steen, "Identifying Metaphors in Language," in Semino and Demjén, *Routledge Handbook*, 75.

Hosea prefers similes for Yahweh (וַאֲנִי מוֹסֵר לְבָלִים [5:2], if nominal, may be the exception). Perhaps this was to avoid risking idolatrous misinterpretations (Labuschagne, "Similes in the Book," 76; Kruger, "Prophetic Imagery," 149; Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 51–53). Verbal metaphors, of course, are exceptions because they cannot be used with comparative כ (e.g., in Hos 4:16, God "feeds them" [יִרְעֵם] as a shepherd). In these cases, "it seems that Hosea was not afraid of being misunderstood and had other reasons to employ similes frequently." See Bernhard Oestreich, *Metaphors and Similes for Yahweh in Hosea 14:2–9 (1–8)*, FSRT 1 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1998), 30. This is especially true in appropriation of metaphors frequently associated with other deities (e.g., see discussion on 14:9).

first reads the whole discourse. Second, one identifies the lexical units of the expression in question. Third, one analyzes each lexical unit by (a) determining its meaning in context, then (b) asking whether there is a more basic or concrete sense of that lexical unit. “Basic meanings tend to be more concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste]; related to bodily action; more precise (as opposed to vague); [or] historically older.”⁶⁰ If there is a more concrete contemporary meaning, the analyst then (c) determines whether “the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.”⁶¹ Fourth and finally, if there is a contrast and comparison with a more basic meaning, the analyst marks the expression as metaphorical.

I will use this operationalized definition to identify metaphorical expressions in this study. That is, metaphorical words or phrases “have one meaning in the context and another, different, meaning which is more basic in some way, usually more physical or more concrete than the contextual meaning.”⁶² This operational definition of metaphor will capture “words and phrases that are *potentially* metaphorical.”⁶³ For the purposes of this study, and consistent with the metaphor identification procedure

60. Peter Crisp et al., “MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse,” *MS 22* (2007): 3. The first (longer) bracket is original, the second (“[or]”) is mine. See also Cameron and Maslen, “Identifying Metaphors in Discourse Data”; Gerard J. Steen et al., “Pragglejaz in Practice: Finding Metaphorically Used Words in Natural Discourse,” in *Researching and Applying Metaphor in the Real World*, ed. Graham Low et al., HCP 26 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2010), 165–84; Steen, “Identifying Metaphors in Language”; Gerard J. Steen et al., *A Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification: From MIP to MIPVU*, CELCR 14 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2010). When analyzing according to usage, as here, it is necessary that the more basic meaning be still available in contemporary usage (Steen et al., *Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification*, 75). נָס , e.g., displays within contemporary Biblical Hebrew both meanings of “nose” (more basic) and “anger”; therefore “anger” can be regarded as a metaphorical expression. The use of this approach in Biblical Hebrew is complicated by the fact that these modern tools for metaphor identification have been primarily worked out with English examples, using appropriate dictionaries (Steen, “Identifying Metaphors in Language,” 85), yet Biblical Hebrew lexicography is considerably more ambiguous. Very little work has been done in applying these tools to languages beyond English, and to my knowledge they have never been used in Biblical Hebrew or any other ancient Near Eastern language.

61. Crisp et al., “MIP” 3.

62. Cameron and Maslen, “Identifying Metaphors in Discourse Data,” 102.

63. Cameron and Maslen, “Identifying Metaphors in Discourse Data,” 102.

approach, it is immaterial whether the creator or audience would have recognized expressions as metaphorical.⁶⁴ The key question for an expression's inclusion in this study is, Is this a metaphor that contributes to the characterization of Yahweh in Hos 4–14?⁶⁵

While I will use this method of metaphor identification in the following investigation, it is appropriate to acknowledge its limitations. For one, it is heavily dependent on individual lexical units, which sounds similar to early metaphor theories that saw the word as the locus of metaphor. The solution to this is to “locate the notion of incongruity and indirectness not in word use but at the level of concepts and referents.”⁶⁶ Sometimes, therefore, a metaphorical expression may be identified using the simpler criterion mentioned above, of an expression that brings together two disjunctive domains of experience.

Another limitation of the metaphor identification procedure approach is that texts require readers, and metaphorical expressions require readerly construal. The metaphoricity or literalness of a given phrase may be ambiguous, as in the phrases “no man is an island” or “he lives in a glass house.”⁶⁷ This mitigates the reliability of the metaphor identification procedure criteria in isolation. Metaphorical construal takes a certain level of native-speaker intuition and a knowledge of the context of the utterance. This is significantly more difficult in the case of modern interpreters wrestling with metaphors of an ancient society in an ancient language, for which there are no native speakers to consult. While every effort will be made to responsibly handle the expressions in Hosea, interpretive certainty is unobtainable.

Additionally, the metaphor identification procedure process operates on the assumption of binary categories: either an expression is metaphorical, or it is not. The reality of metaphor deployment is more complex than this suggests. So while metaphor identification procedure is a helpful operation that I adopt, additional perspectives are necessary to account for the

64. Steen et al., “Pragglejaz in Practice,” 175.

65. This can include metaphors for Israel that imply something about Yahweh (see more below). See also Brigitte Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden von Gott im Hoseabuch*, FRLANT 166 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 252–54. Some potential metaphors for Yahweh are excluded as too thin or weak (see n. 71, below).

66. Steen, “Identifying Metaphors in Language,” 83; see also Cameron and Maslen, “Identifying Metaphors in Discourse Data,” 105–8; Steen et al., “Pragglejaz in Practice.”

67. See the discussion and examples in Joseph Lam, “Metaphor in the Ugaritic Literary Texts,” *JNES* 78 (2019): 41–44.

spectrum of metaphoricity that one finds in Hosea. Once expressions have been identified as metaphorical, their relative strength must be evaluated.

Evaluating Metaphoric Strength and Contribution

Not all metaphors are created equal; certain metaphors are more arresting than others. Toward the beginning of the modern philosophical interest in metaphor, Max Black recognized this fact, creating categories of strong and weak metaphors.⁶⁸ Strong metaphors are those that are both emphatic and resonant. Emphatic metaphors are those in which only *this* source domain will do. They are not “‘expendable,’ ‘optional,’ ‘decorative,’ [or] ‘ornamental’” but are “intended to be dwelt upon for the sake of their unstated implications.”⁶⁹ Resonance is the degree to which those implications can be elaborated, unfolded, extended. Resonant metaphors are “relatively rich in background implications” and “support a high degree of implicative elaboration.”⁷⁰ More recently, Paul Avis notes, “‘Literal’ and ‘metaphorical’ are merely limit concepts on a sliding scale of imaginative investment.”⁷¹ Consequently, certain metaphors are likely to contribute more substantially to Hosea's characterization of Yahweh. I have already noted that the husband metaphor has been a myopic focus of scholarship, yet who remembers that Yahweh is also pictured as a fowler (7:12)?

68. Max Black, “More about Metaphor,” in Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, 19–41.

69. Black, “More about Metaphor,” 26. No doubt some will take issue with Black's implication that any metaphor can be merely “ornamental.” Despite the assumptions of some, Black—and Richards before him—recognized the ubiquity of metaphor in everyday language. There seems to me to be some resemblance between Black's account here and that of deliberate metaphor theory (see Steen, “Deliberate Metaphor Theory”).

70. Black, “More about Metaphor,” 26.

71. Paul Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination: Metaphor, Symbol and Myth in Religion and Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999), 102. See also David Aaron's suggestion of a spectrum of metaphoricity in *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics and Divine Imagery*, BRLAJ 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), esp. 30. For reflections on the theological import of such a spectrum for god-talk, see Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 118–41. For a survey of how three biblical theologians deal with the “yes” and “no” of metaphors for God, see Matthew R. Schlimm, “Different Perspectives on Divine Pathos: An Examination of Hermeneutics in Biblical Theology,” *CBQ* 69 (2007): 678–90. Schlimm argues that Heschel emphasizes discontinuity between God and humanity, Fretheim tries to find a middle ground, and Brueggemann emphasizes the continuity of the metaphors.

My categorization of metaphors must therefore account for the relative strength of an expression's depiction of Yahweh.

For the sake of simplicity, a three-point scale will be used. A score of 1 means the expression is a weak metaphor. It is common, simple, and not resonant, such as God being a fowler (7:12).⁷² A score of 2 refers to an expression that may be a common metaphor with a strong claim about God (e.g., "God is king") or an expression that is uncommon but also does not make a strong claim about Yahweh. This frequently includes metaphors for Israel that only imply things of God (e.g., Hos 4:16a: "Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn calf"). A score of 3 means the metaphor is both more metaphorical than most other expressions and is strong according to Black's definition (i.e., it is emphatic and resonant). Hosea 5:12, in which God is a moth (שע), is an example of this: it is a unique metaphor for God in the Hebrew Bible, and it is highly suggestive.

A more complex example is the lion metaphors. A stock metaphor for kings and deities (by default scored as 1) is given new life by being extended into a miniature metaphorical narrative with terrifying detail (5:14–15), which is subsequently intensified (13:7–8) and inverted (11:10). These extended uses of the stock metaphor make a significant contribution to Hosea's presentation of Yahweh and thus warrant a higher rating—2 or 3 depending on contextual usage.

Because metaphors for *Israel* that imply something about Yahweh are included in this study on metaphors for *God*, the directness of each metaphor is also identified in part 1. *Direct* means it is a metaphor for Yahweh;

72. Certain metaphorical expressions are not included because their contribution to a metaphorical portrayal of Yahweh is too thin for a project of this scope. E.g., there are interesting patterns conceptualizing relationship in terms of proximity or distance. In Hos 5:6, Israel cannot find Yahweh because he has *withdrawn* from them (ולא ימצאו חלץ) (מהם). Conversely, Israel is invited to *return* to Yahweh (ואתה באלהיך תשוב) [12:7]; (שובה) [14:2]; (ישראל עד יהוה אלהיך) [5:4]). This relational-distance conception may reflect a conception of sin as waywardness. Sin is also conceptualized as debt (4:9; see Lam, *Patterns of Sin*). For more on the ancient Near Eastern "seeking and (not) finding" myths and their inversions in Hosea, see Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 248–52; for an alternate interpretation of the immanence and transcendence of Yahweh in Hosea, see Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden*, 256–59. On the use of Hosea's Assyria-Egypt motif to denote distance from Yahweh, see Yisca Zimran, "The Prevalence and Purpose of the 'Assyria-Egypt' Motif in the Book of Hosea," *JSOT* 46 (2021): 3–23.

indirect means it is a metaphor for something else that implies something about Yahweh.

A relative weightiness can therefore be determined for the contributions of metaphorical expressions explored in chapters 2–4. In chapter 8, the relative weight of whole source domains can be established. Having identified individual metaphorical expressions, one is then in a position to identify metaphor clusters.

Identifying and Analyzing Clusters

I adopt and modify for Hosea Lynne Cameron and Juurd Stelma's method for identifying clusters.⁷³ Each instance of a metaphorical expression is counted individually, even if multiple consecutive expressions reflect the same metaphorical domain.⁷⁴ For example, the extended discourse around sexual promiscuity in Hos 4:10–15 includes four metaphorical *expressions*, even though they share a single metaphorical *domain*. The second step is to graph the occurrence of metaphorical expressions across the span of Hos 4–14. Similar to prior studies surveyed by Cameron and Stelma, a line graph maps the total number of metaphorical expressions (*y* axis) against the total cumulative number of verses in the text (*x* axis). More illuminating for the data set in Hosea is a bar graph mapping the total number of metaphorical expressions within three verses. This makes clusters easily identifiable (see appendix). A cluster is defined for this study as having an *average* of at least three metaphors within three continuous verses, equivalent to a score of 1 on the bar graph.⁷⁵ The maximum metaphoric density in the book reaches a score of 3, at Hos 6:2.

73. For a survey of methods of identifying clusters and problems in previous studies, see Cameron and Stelma, "Metaphor Clusters in Discourse," 111–18.

74. There are a few cases (e.g., Hos 14:6–8) in which a set of metaphors for Israel implies a uniform metaphor for God by association (e.g., a farmer). These were counted as a single metaphor for God.

75. This corresponds roughly to the threshold Cameron and Stelma used, who count by intonation unit ("Metaphor Clusters in Discourse," 119), though Cameron and Maslen note that "written texts can also be prepared for metaphor identification by being segmented by sentence or clause, if that seems appropriate or if software constraints demand it" ("Identifying Metaphors in Discourse Data," 101). Verses were chosen as a heuristic equivalent to intonation units. Maslen writes that clusters can be simply identified by underlining metaphorical expressions and noting where they are more common. "A more quantitative approach," however, is setting a density threshold

Admittedly, such an approach requires “stat[ing] how one is managing to count what is essentially uncountable.”⁷⁶ Every effort has been made to objectively identify clusters, but—given the nature of Hosea as a literary text—poetic and structural features at times impressed a hermeneutical force on cluster delineation and metaphorical analysis.

In light of these ambiguities and subjective decisions in metaphor analysis, Graham Low and Zazie Todd’s five guidelines are instructive. Metaphor analysis involves “recognizing that metaphoricity can be complex, indeterminate and unstable; admitting the problems and treating one’s solutions as compromises; knowing what the compromises entail; telling the reader how/why one arrived at conclusions; and admitting the limitations of one’s conclusions.”⁷⁷ While the definition of or criteria for clusters could be reformulated, resulting in slightly different identifications of clusters in Hosea, I do not think this would significantly change the interpretations presented here.

As noted above, it is the *interactions* between the metaphors—their relationships, contrasts and similarities, ingenuity and opaqueness, mutual clarifying and obscuring functions—that make a passage meaningful. Once clusters are identified, therefore, the interactions between the individual metaphors within each cluster must be analyzed, a crucial step not always taken in biblical studies.⁷⁸ Sometimes these networks clarify the meaning of their metaphors through overlapping entailments, including minor semantic variation.⁷⁹ Other times, the proximity of jarringly discor-

“markedly greater than the transcript average,” as I have sought to do here. See Robert Maslen, “Working with Large Amounts of Metaphor Data,” in Cameron and Maslen, *Metaphor Analysis*, 191.

76. Graham Low and Zazie Todd, “Good Practice in Metaphor Analysis,” in Cameron and Maslen, *Metaphor Analysis*, 225.

77. Low and Todd, “Good Practice,” 218.

78. Examples of notable exceptions are Alison Ruth Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures: A Reading through Metaphor*, BibInt 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Antje Labahn and Danilo Verde, eds., *Networks of Metaphors in the Hebrew Bible*, BETL 309 (Leuven: Peeters, 2020). The latter volume became available too late to be well integrated into the current monograph.

79. Note, e.g., the overlapping entailments of the four metaphors in Hos 13:3, or the five in 13:7–8. On overlapping entailments, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 89–105; Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 121–33; Kövecses, “Conceptual Metaphor Theory,” 15. For a lexical-semantic account of metaphor clusters and meaning, see Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures*, 28–33. On discourse

dant metaphors can challenge readers. Additionally, the metaphors may reside on differing conceptual planes (be they temporal, causal, speaker, or belief-related conceptual planes).⁸⁰

Extensive guidelines for the interpretive process were produced and followed.⁸¹ But as Hans-Georg Gadamer persuasively argued, the rigorous application of a “scientific” method cannot guarantee “accurate” interpretation of literature.⁸² The test of a methodology such as that presented here is whether it illuminates the text. Sometimes one perspective is especially beneficial in elucidating the metaphoric interactions of a passage, and for other clusters a different perspective is more helpful.⁸³ Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth rightly ask, “Isn’t theory—any theory with or without a capital T—supposed to work this way? Operating with a certain modest methodological vitality rather than impressing itself upon a wiggling world like a snap-on grid of shape-setting interpretability?”⁸⁴

coherence among diverse metaphors, see George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 86–89, 140–59; Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 9–13, 87–105; Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 285–89. For analyses of coherence among mixed metaphors by a variety of means, see, e.g., Michael Kimmel, “Why We Mix Metaphors (and Mix Them Well): Discourse Coherence, Conceptual Metaphor, and Beyond,” *JP* 42 (2010): 97–115; Andrea L. Weiss, “From ‘Mixed Metaphors’ to ‘Adjacent Analogies’: An Analysis of the Poetry of Hosea,” in *Built by Wisdom, Established by Understanding: Essays on Biblical and Near Eastern Literature in Honor of Adele Berlin* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2013), 127; Lance R. Hawley, *Metaphor Competition in the Book of Job*, *JASup* 26 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 28–42, 62–66.

80. Kimmel, “Why We Mix Metaphors.”

81. I have not included those guidelines in this volume, but for a helpful visual model similar to my own, see Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures*, 33.

82. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004), 1–161; see also Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 108.

83. This is true of interpretive steps (e.g., comparing the metaphorical imagery to ancient iconography) and of metaphor theories (e.g., conceptual metaphor theory, poetic perspectives, rhetorical criticism).

84. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.

Why Metaphors Cluster

Having defined metaphor, holistically explored its functions, and provided criteria to identify and analyze metaphors and clusters, let us finally ask the question: *Why* do metaphors coalesce in certain places and not others?

Cameron rightly notes, “Using metaphor as a research tool involves understanding what people *do* with metaphors, as well as which metaphors they use.”⁸⁵ Lakoff and Johnson similarly claim that “the most important thing to bear in mind” when analyzing the coherence of multiple metaphors “is the role of purpose.”⁸⁶ While scholars have noted *that* metaphors move in families, they have only recently started to explore *why* metaphors group together at certain places in a discourse. Several recent studies on metaphor clusters share three common conclusions relevant to this study: metaphor clusters occur at rhetorically significant locations in a discourse, they occur in order to aid listeners’ comprehension of difficult topics, and they are often inextricably and intricately connected to other metaphors in the discourse.

According to Daniel Corts and Kristina Meyers, metaphor clusters are more likely than other figurative language to be (1) coherent, (2) novel, and (3) topically central.⁸⁷ Clusters are *produced*, though, due only to their tendency to be coherent and topically central, not due to their novelty.⁸⁸ Other studies confirm that topical centrality is a crucial feature of clusters. Cameron and Stelma conclude, “Metaphor clusters occur when some *intensive interactional work linked to the overall purpose of the discourse* is being carried out.”⁸⁹ Michael Kimmel likewise observes that metaphor

85. Cameron, “Metaphors and Discourse Activity,” 160, emphasis added.

86. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 97.

87. Daniel P. Corts and Kristina Meyers, “Conceptual Clusters in Figurative Language Production,” *JPR* 31 (2002): 393. Cameron and Stelma confirm in their own research that clusters tend to be “novel” and “topically central” (“Metaphor Clusters in Discourse,” 113, 134).

88. Corts and Meyers, “Conceptual Clusters,” 406. By “coherent,” they mean that the metaphors derive from the same conceptual metaphor, but they grant that not all clusters demonstrate this feature (393). Cameron and Stelma found that clusters “very seldom” arose from a shared conceptual metaphor (“Metaphor Clusters in Discourse,” 132; see also 114). Lakoff and Johnson note that metaphors can be “coherent” even when not deriving from the same conceptual metaphor (*Metaphors We Live By*, 95; see also Kimmel, “Why We Mix Metaphors”), as is the norm in Hosea.

89. “Metaphor Clusters in Discourse,” 134, emphasis added. See also Lynne Cam-

clusters occur “where the action is.”⁹⁰ In other words, clusters tend to occur in places central to the rhetorical purpose of the discourse. Consequently, rhetorical strategy or communicative purpose must be a key consideration for metaphor analysis.

The *reason* this happens is the second point relevant to our study. Metaphors are an effective tool to help listeners understand another point of view, because they by nature help listeners to see things in a fresh way. The accumulation of multiple novel metaphors helps to crystallize the new point of view—in a sense by triangulating onto the intended aspects, thereby ruling out unintended ones.⁹¹ This is especially important in the case of overcoming alterity, in presenting one's view to another who does not share it,⁹² as Hosea does. Hence, the more abstract the topic, the more frequently clusters occur.⁹³ Kimmel notes that clusters are frequently “used to shed light on complex and unfamiliar subject matters.”⁹⁴ Hosea's many metaphors, sometimes in tension with one another, are clustered in order to describe what is essentially indescribable.⁹⁵

Third, Kimmel also finds that clusters are an “attention-grabbing and thus a relevance-producing device.” This makes them highly efficient

eron, “Confrontation or Complementarity? Metaphor in Language Use and Cognitive Metaphor Theory,” *ARCL* 5 (2007): 107–35; Lynne Cameron, “Metaphor and Talk,” in Gibbs, *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor*, 197–211.

90. Kimmel, “Why We Mix Metaphors,” 98.

91. This is done through the accumulation of overlapping entailments between metaphors, as mentioned in n. 78, above.

92. Cameron and Stelma, “Metaphor Clusters in Discourse,” 133–34.

93. Cameron and Stelma, “Metaphor Clusters in Discourse,” 113; Maslen, “Working with Large Amounts,” 191.

94. Kimmel, “Why We Mix Metaphors,” 98.

95. From the perspective of metaphor studies, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 89, 95, 105. From the perspective of ancient Near Eastern god-talk, see Michael B. Hundley, “Here a God, There a God: An Examination of the Divine in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *AoF* 40 (2013): 68–107; see also ch. 8 of this volume. From the perspective of biblical scholars, see Walter Brueggemann, “Preaching a Sub-version,” *ThTo* 55 (1998): 199; Brent A. Strawn, *What Is Stronger Than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, OBO 212 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 272; Andrea L. Weiss, “Motives behind Biblical Mixed Metaphors,” in *Making a Difference: Essays on the Bible and Judaism in Honor of Tamara Cohn Eskenazi*, ed. David J. A. Clines, Kent Harold Richards, and Jacob L. Wright, HBM 49 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012), 326; Weiss, “From ‘Mixed Metaphors,’” 127.

and effective for discourse. They “connect and dynamize discourse.” That is, they “extend, reject, limit or elaborate” previously used metaphors—an extension of the idea that metaphors never move alone but travel in families.⁹⁶ This facet of metaphor clustering is especially important when considering Hosea’s dynamic reuse of metaphor domains, hence the intercluster analyses of part 2.

It is noteworthy that these studies, though analyzing different kinds of discourses, arrive at similar conclusions. They agree that metaphor clusters occur at rhetorically significant parts of a discourse, aid in describing complex or abstract topics, and are integrally connected to other metaphors throughout the discourse. Robert Maslen summarizes Cameron and Stelma’s findings—that metaphors “tend to be produced more frequently where speakers are dealing with themes which are difficult, either conceptually or in terms of the dynamics between speakers”—then infers: “Metaphor clusters can therefore point to moments in a discourse which are worth investigating more closely.”⁹⁷ I think this is certainly the case with Hosea. Clusters are a crucial tool in considering Hosea’s rhetorical strategies to conceptualize Yahweh in a new way for Hosea’s audience. More closely investigating these specific instances of the deity’s figuration will open new windows into the communicative purposes and functions of the book as a whole.

Conclusion

This book is about exploring the complex and contested presentation of God found in the metaphors of the final form of Hos 4–14. In this chapter I have introduced the shape of my argument and the tools, perspectives, and criteria used therein. I noticed early on that Hosea’s metaphors are not evenly distributed but tend to cluster together in certain places. As shown above, clusters tend to be crucial to the communicative purpose of the discourse, aid in comprehension of difficult or abstract topics and in overcoming alterity, and connect and dynamize a wider network of metaphors throughout the discourse. Clusters therefore warrant closer examination for opening windows into important aspects of the discourse as a whole.

96. Kimmel, “Why We Mix Metaphors,” 98.

97. Maslen, “Working with Large Amounts,” 191.

Adopting a holistic understanding of metaphor that attends to cognitive, affective, and volitional implications as described above, I attempt in part 1 to explore 103 metaphors identified among fifteen clusters in Hos 4–14 in as far as they contribute to a portrait of Yahweh. In part 2, I account for intercluster patterns, focusing especially on emotive, literary, and rhetorical patterns. Part 3 synthesizes these findings in two ways: an aspective constellation of Yahweh and a fivefold character portrait of Yahweh. Among other things, I conclude that Yahweh's fidelity to Israel undergirds the book's metaphoric presentation of God in almost every respect and that such commitment will transcend even Israel's inevitable death.

In a society facing increasingly overt antagonism and vitriol, how can metaphors be used to overcome alterity? How can new images for God be used, particularly among spiritual and religious communities, to increase understanding, to change worldviews, to reshape priorities and values, to confront injustices, to improve our communities? The ancient text of Hosea provides a number of strategies for doing just that. Perhaps some could be revived for a new day.

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