

**UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF GOD'S PATHOS IN HOSEA: ONE
OF THE KEYS FOR THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL
TRANSFORMATION OF THE SUB-SAHARAN PART OF AFRICA SINCE
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THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis has been written at a time when sub-Saharan African people are facing great religious and socio-political challenges in their history. These challenges have been such since 1960. Many questions regarding identity, religion and socio-political situations have been raised. This includes questions relating to God and the oppressive religious and socio-political leadership class and the oppressed people of sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed this thesis tries to face the question of God's pathos, *making connections* or looking for *resemblance* between Hosea's time and the religious and socio-political situations of sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore the main purpose is not to go back to the large already explored debate about the question of God's pathos over centuries, but to see how God's, Hosea's and sub-Saharan African people's pathos interact each with other, and how such an interaction could be used for the religious and socio-political transformations of the sub Saharan Africa.

In terms of methodology, we introduce a new paradigm called *tautegory* in place of the typical allegorical, holistic, literal, typological, inculturation or liberation approaches used by most of African scholars. This new paradigm warrants the creation of a new theological framework. We think this new framework could correspond to sub-Saharan culture. This new paradigm could also be used to throw new light on how to resolve some theological contradictions that classic theism has brought through the missionaries' work in the sub-Saharan African context.

RESUME

Cette thèse a été écrite au moment où l' Afrique sub-saharienne est entrain d' affronter un véritable déficit religieux et socio-politique de leur histoire cela depuis 1960. L' auteur a essayé, le long de la these à soulever de nombreuses questions comme par exemple : l' identité , la religion et l' actuelle situation socio-politique en occurrence, ce que Dieu sent à l' égard de dirigeants qui oppriment les peuples sub-sahariens et les sentiments des opprimés eux mêmes.

En effet, l' auteur a cherché à étudier la complexité qui est autour des sentiments de Dieu en cherchant à établir les connections ou à trouver les ressemblances qui peuvent exister entre l' époque qu' a vecu Osée et l' actuelle situation que traverse les peuples de l' Afrique sub-saharienne. Pour ce faire, l' auteur a fait l' analyse de métaphors bibliques et a suggéré une nouvelle méthode d' analyse du texte biblique et des événements historique qu' il a dénomme tauteurie.

Donc en conclusion la raison principale de cette thèse n' est pas la reprise du vieux débat au sujet de la problématique sur les sentiments de Dieu, qui est déjà largement exploité depuis des millénaires. Mais, l' auteur cherche à voir comment comprendre les mécanismes qui régissent l' interaction entre les sentiments de Dieu, du prophète Osée et du peuple de l' Afrique sub-saharienne. Ainsi, il s' est engagé dans cette demarche car il pense que la comprehension de ces mecanismes pourrait être utilisé pour déclencher les transformations religieuses et socio-politiques dans cette partie de l' Afrique.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, if not indicated otherwise, the findings of this thesis and research upon which it is based are my own work.

Signed

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INTRODUCTION

The Aim

The aim of this thesis is to challenge the way we theologise and, particularly, the way in which we deal with the question of the religious and socio-political form of idolatry found both in Hosea, and in the sub-Saharan African context. As is known, in most theological discourse, we preoccupy ourselves with rational theological considerations, which only refer to dogma already developed around some of the issues concerning God. Because of this tendency, the affective aspect of God is not treated with much seriousness. God is considered as someone else, one who is indifferent to what happens in the daily life of His devotees and in the rest of creation. The study of the Bible, particularly of the prophets, becomes a mere repetition of the accepted dogma and never makes a difference in the lives of those who read and believe in what they consider the basis of their faith. As Africans (Black, White, Indian and Coloured), the ones who live in oppressed and conflict-ridden religious and socio-political contexts, in which people are slaves of the religious and socio-political idols, who are also their oppressors, we think that we have, in spite of the difficulties, to forge a new theological framework, one which can move us to find a new way of understanding God. Only then may we confront our sad religious and socio-political situations and become more relevant to our time.

Indeed, as sub-Saharan African people, we find it difficult to believe in the relevance of an apathetic God whom the church and many devotees of idols try to defend. We are people who believe in the kind of relationship that is based on a real, vital dynamism. Therefore our God has to be one who is capable of sharing our feelings and, above all, one who is affected by what affects us as people. We find it opportune then, to reread the

book of Hosea to see how the chaotic religious and socio-political situations of Hosea's time could be used to understand the God whom our ancestors worshipped, and whom we worship. Also, we may see a way of freeing ourselves from the handcuffs of the oppressors, who exploit us with the cunning of their false religiosity.

Proceeding thus, we would also like to understand what the study of Hosea's book could mean, and how to balance our understanding of the book of Hosea with our theological discourse. Afterward we would like to seek a way of contextualising the results of our analysis of this biblical text within our sub-Saharan African religious and sociopolitical contexts, which have existed since 1960. In addition, we want to look at how our study can be used in pastoral ministry. We have also tried to find a way to make our contribution by discovering ways of preparing priests or pastors to be people who not only know something about God but who, in following the example of the prophets, feel and, indeed, incarnate the affective drama of God as an integral part of the life of their own ministry. We wish that similar ideas could be applied in the life of human beings in general and in the lives of Christians in particular.

We encounter many obstacles in thinking and writing. The main obstacle here is however the fact that our theme is very broad. By contextualizing our study in the sub-Saharan African region, we can limit criticism and make this controversial study very fruitful. We recognise in advance that some readers will not be convinced. The theme of the dissertation is *God's pathos in Hosea*. We find this theme important because serious biblical studies, which deal with the affective aspect of God through the prophets and

particularly through Hosea, have not been yet done from an African perspective. In Western and Eastern theological contexts there are some works of value, such as those of Heschel (1996), Fretheim (1982), Kitamori (1972), Andersen and Freedman (1980), West (1996), Lee (1974, 1979), Moltmann (1968), Fiddes (1993) Bruggemann (1977, 1978, 1989), Morgan (1964), von Rad (1965), Weems (1987, 1989), Setel (1985), Bird (1989) and Sherwood (1996). These scholars have achieved something but it is necessary to go further. The complexity of this matter is such that these books cannot reflect our aspirations as poor, oppressed and marginalized sub-Saharan African people.

The Approach

It is necessary to recognise that the question of the pathos of God is very difficult to consider and that it requires boldness. The pathos of God is a crucial problem because it expresses what God is and does, and requires not only rational but also emotional participation on His behalf. If we are created in His¹ image and His resemblance as sub-Saharan people, we must try to perceive Him as an emotional being and as being affected by us as He affects us. It is because of this that we have chosen the Book of Hosea; the only book in the Old Testament, which can, without minimizing the divine transcendence illustrated better than the other books and emphasise this *mysterious* aspect of God.

The concept of pathos is differently understood in different traditions and scholars or any ordinary readers may find the way that we understand and interpret the concept of pathos problematic. It is, thus, important to recognise that the task of definition is always

¹ This use of His is due to the influence of the Hebrew text but it includes male and female.

difficult. Anybody who decides to explore in depth the definition of a thing, a concept, must consider the multiple perspectives from which the thing or concept can be approached (cf. Linton 1981: 81; Soskice 1985: 15-23). We cannot, unfortunately, spend our time defining the term *pathos* because our approach is symbolic and differs from etymological or philological approaches to this term. It is true that the symbols that we use in our approach to the text are terms, but we cannot limit ourselves to explore the meaning of terms. Scholars often opt for etymological or philological methods as a point of departure for theologising, and try differentiating clearly between the philological and the etymological. Etymologizing a word is we think spurious if it presents itself as expressing the true meaning of the term (cf. Soskice 1985:15-23): etymologizing a word, contrary to the philological study, like giving its philological root, does not tell us about its meaning but about its history, as Barr has noted (cf. Barr in Soskice 1985: 81).

For our study neither an etymological study nor a philological one is useful, because neither contributes to our study. The approach to the text of Hosea, and, indeed, to the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political situations, remains a symbolic one, because it takes us beyond merely looking at the etymology or philology of the terms or ideas. The symbolic approach moves us to an understanding of the meaning of the symbol and to a transcending of partial views: it penetrates to the true meaning and demystifies the cunning of the idolatry that is connected to this or that symbolic term.

A careful reader of the Hebrew Bible will note that there is no corresponding term in Hebrew that expresses the Greek word *pathos*. Rarely in LXX does the author refer to it

(cf. 1 Samuel 1:2,7:2 and 12:2). Nevertheless, in the entire Old Testament and particularly in Hosea, there are many terms that express the idea of pathos. We are not however only interested in examining the term *pathos* or in trying to define it as *sympathy* which means *having or sharing the same pathos* and hence *sharing the same experience, suffering, or having fellow feeling*. Our main concern is to explore the diverse symbols which illuminate ideas of pathos and which are compatible with what we have in the religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African contexts. Two reasons can be given to justify our choice: firstly, as sub-Saharan African people, we think that pathos is the basis of our existence and that it expresses in tautegorical or trans-objective dimension the real sense of a vitally dynamic relationship between God, Humankind and Nature; secondly, the concept of pathos that we use, as displayed in diverse forms into the Hebrew Bible, is to be identified, not as the Hebrew word, but as another word or concept known from cognate sources elsewhere (cf. Barr 1968: 95)². It is true that a study of this kind sometimes requires a degree of erudition but the use of the term *pathos* as *sympathy* can help the ordinary reader to understand what his or her relationship with God means. It is crucial for the reader to know that this study is a synoptic one, which means it involves a comparison between Hosea and sub-Saharan Africa. To reach our goal we are using the assumptions of process theology rather than those of classic theism (cf. Tshishiku 1980: 19, 63-64, 74-75; Frankenbeny 1983; Bracken 2000). We have chosen Process Theology

² The term *affection* is linked to *pathetic*. It refers to the arousal of feeling, not to pity. The word *pathos* means a quality in life, which evokes sadness, pity, or sympathy for in speech, writing, music, or art, which excites a feeling of pity or sadness, or the power of stirring tender or melancholy emotion. In ancient Greek Art it referred to the quality of the transient or emotional, as opposed to the permanent or ideal. *Affectus-disposition du Coeur, de l' esprit. Sentiment, mouvement de l' âme, désir, passion (Affection, tendresse)*. Cf Bénéoit & Goelzer 1960: 63-64. See also Affectus-affection, love, desire, fondness, good evil, compassion, sympathy, ability of willing, will or volition. Contrary with *numen* (power, will). Partridge (1958:8). Affection –Latin: *afficere: affecter physiquement et moralement. Voir deux verbes: affecter et emouvoir* (cf. Fredrich 1968: 171, 186). See also *deutlich, empfundenes* (sensation, feeling or sense), *Gefühl* (feeling, emotion or intuitive understanding). Cf. also Heinz (1968: 165, 218) *nūmen* power or will.. See also Heschel 1996 vol 1: 12,17-18, vol 2: 7. See Ferreira (1975: 33-34) with Afeto (afeição, simpatia, paixão...) and afeto (*acostumado, habituado...*).

for two reasons: firstly, process theology is based on an understanding of the organic and cosmic views. This is a way of thinking which is compatible with the traditional sub-Saharan African understanding of the triad: God-Humankind-Nature (cf. Nyom in Angang *at.al* 1983: 127-135; Altuna 1985:62-92). Secondly, Process Theology with its emphasis on the freedom and creativity of *entities*, is liberating the principle of freedom instead of libertinage, and it is a source of human self-comprehension and religious and socio-political dynamism. This self-comprehension inspires the oppressed like us to seek liberation, and to break the barriers established by the devotees of religious and sociopolitical dogmas and idols (cf. Alves 1985, 1990; Bogaard 1992; Dombrowski 1995; Philipson 1982; Jones [n.d]). In addition, to vitalize our study we emphasize that the use of the symbolic method becomes increasingly effective: once we are aware that we are dealing in Hosea with poetry, that is a song, revealing the true nature of idols. In all our reflection, we resort to the symbolic method. Meanwhile, it is important to point out that our use of the symbolic method differs from the one that scholars have usually used. Our use of the symbolic or *tautegoric*³ method to analyze the metaphors found in Hosea, and in the sub-Saharan African context, is not related to the analogical method which involves the creation of contrast or opposition in order both to compare, and to explain two objects or subjects without penetrating into their deeper meaning (cf. Bastos 1992: 45-48). As Africans, Tshishiku (1980: 62-63; 74-75; Tshishiku in Angang *at.al* 1983: 29-31) and Nyom (cf. Nyom in Angang *at.al* 1983: 127-135) identify with the Luso-Brazilian thinker Eudoro de Souza (1973, 1975, 1988)⁴ and Bastos (1992: 31-43) in

³ The term *ταὐτά*, which means the same things, refers to the reflexive and multi-comprehension of the meaning of objects or subjects in relation to him/her-self or it self. This differs from *ἄλλος* (allegory) which means other or different and to *ὅλος* (holistic) that which refers to an understanding of reality in terms of integrated wholes or unity (cf. Koestler 1978) whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units (cf. Capra 1983:21). We want to emphasise that the use of *tautegory* will become apparent in the way that the reader will compare Hosea and the sub-Saharan African situation.

⁴ The philosopher and Hellenist Eudoro de Souza was born in 1911 in Lisbon. In 1953 he moved from Portugal to Brazil where he lived until he died in 1987. He was the first to suggest the idea of *tautegory* as a

noting the importance of the tautegorical method of interpreting and understanding events, objects or subjects in science and philosophy. We agree with them and given its effectiveness propose the use of this method in theology and in Biblical studies. The tautegoric method of interpreting and understanding events, language, objects or subjects transcends the more superficial allegorical approach. Borges (cf. Borges in Kloepfer 2002: 4) identifies also with us and he was indeed the one who propagated above all a tautegorical form of communication (tautos=the same), where something is , as it were, duplicated and described as the same, as in the well-known statement: “ A rose is a rose is a rose...” Tautegory is also a kind of accounting system and expression, which deals with the true meaning of objects and subjects (cf. Bastos 1992:29). Tautegory is different from the previous stated methods in that it seeks, reciprocally, the details to understand the genesis, and looks for the cause or genesis to explain the details. It implies a deeper analysis of the symbols and, above all, more profound interpretation and understanding of the true meaning, which is hidden in sub-Saharan African symbols. Schelling struggles to oppose tautegorical method to allegory as Rolf Kloepfer (2002: 3) reports:

Like Borges and Goethe, Schelling, the great philosopher, who turned to mysticism and myths, opposed allegorical writing and speech (allo agoreuein= to say something in another way). This mode of expression replaces the original expression by another mode, chosen artificially, difficult and arbitrary. However, instead of the allegory, he did not propagate - as Goethe did - a symbolic style of speech.

By opposing allegorical writing and speech, the idolatry that surrounds religious and socio-political issues can be demystified. Possibly this is what Whitehead (1979) tried to do with metaphysics and science.

It is known that scholars are divided on the issue of idolatry in Hosea. On the one hand we have the classical theologians who defend the holiness of God and Hosea, on the other Feminists and Womanists, who denounce violence and chauvinism as God, Hosea and the supporters of patriarchy exercise it against woman. We cannot stand on this or that side of the dispute. We think that the reason for the dispute is twofold: firstly, there is the misunderstanding of the truth that *logos* in poetry is equal to *mythos* (cf. Ferreira in Bastos 1992: 31; de Souza 1981: 65; Bastos 1992: 30-31; Jabouille 1985: 1-15; Detiènne 1986, 1989). This means that the interpretation of *logos* or *mythos* depends on the way that we face the enigmatic question of metaphor (cf. chapter 2); the second reason is that the methods that classical theists and Feminists or Womanists use in their dispute against each and other groups are problematic. These should be substituted by the tautegorical method because their methods of approaching the text allow greatly for dichotomy and bipolarity but not for complementarity and multiplicity. The polarization of the dispute between the supporters of patriarchy and matriarchy supporters is unnecessary. This polarization has increased human activism but as Brueggemann (1978: 45) laments, it atrophies the human capacity of imagination. Adorno (1973: 176) reacts against such a use of polarization by arguing that:

The polarity of subject and object can easily be taken, for its part, as an undialectical structure within which all dialectics take place. But both concepts are categories which originate in reflection, formulas for something which is not to be unified; nothing positive, not primary states of affairs, but negative throughout. Nonetheless, the difference of subject and object is not to be negated in its turn. They are neither an ultimate duality, nor is an ultimate unity hidden behind them. They constitute each other as much as-through such constitution-they separate out from each other.

From African tautegorical perspective, H. Aguessy (cf. Aguessy in Angang *et.al* 1979: 7)

notes:

En Europe, on se définit toujours pour ou contre. Cela nous gêne terriblement et nous avons l' impression que notre liberté n' existe plus... Je crois que c' est une de vertues des civilisations africaines que celle de vouloir transcender toutes les oppositions, de les transcender non pas verbalement, mais concrètement.⁵

Schelling (cf. Schelling in Edwards 1972.vol 7: 306) argues that this duality also governs human perception: as attraction to the self, force governs the streaming of the outer world into the inner world of sensation. The Cameroon scholars Engelbert Mveng (cf. Mveng in Angang *et.al* 1979:90-96), de Souza (1988), Bastos (1992) and Diop (1959:149-150) suggest the same idea. Then if polarization as it denied by Adorno and Horkheimer, Aguessy, Schelling, de Souza, Bastos and Mveng and above all Diop defend above is acceptable or not, the polarization seen by Biblical scholars is unjustifiable. In the case of our study, we think that the book of Hosea is understood within the context of the marital bond. If this marital bond really means the true identification of man and woman (cf. Genesis 1: 27-28) and if the term שִׁדְדָּה , which is ascribed also to Yahweh (cf. Leviticus 20: 26 and Deuteronomy 7: 6), means paradoxically holy and harlot, and if God plays the dual role of father and mother in the text, then once again there is no justification for Biblical scholars to accept polarization⁶. The method of tautegory categorically excludes

⁵ In Europe, people always define themselves by accepting or negating. This bothers us terribly and we have an impression that our freedom ceases to exist... I think that it is a virtue of African civilizations which tries to transcend all kinds of polarization, transcending it not only verbally but concretely. (The present author has done all translations unless otherwise indicated).

⁶ See, for example more details in chapter 2 of this thesis.

polarization and breaks up the self-identical and creates a tension (cf. Diop 1959: 149-150; Goudeli 2000: 2; Kloepfer 2002:1-25). This new theological framework suggests complementarity, which implies the inclusion of poles rather than their mutual exclusion (dialectic dyadic), without, however, falling into the dilemma of Hegelian synthesis (dialectic triadic). Tautegory excludes the Hegelian method because of serious difficulties for example that biblical scholars face to find the antithesis in the former binomial used by the poet in Hosea and in sub-Saharan African traditional religion. This new method leads also to the interpretation and understanding that *logos* means *mythos* in poetic literature as Schelling suggests (1957; 1959). With respect to Schelling's interpretation of *mythos* from tautegorical concept Kyriaki Goudeli (2000:2) comments that:

Rather than treating myth as invention or allegory, Schelling interpreted it as a tautegory: myth was not seen as a metaphor, a cloak for something else, as a modern viewpoint would treat it at best, but as an autonomous configuration of human spirit, as spiritual expression of an intense lived experience with its own intrinsic reality, manifested in the unity of life and thought. Myth, as a unique form of both life and thought, has an intriguing meaning, or multiplicity of meanings, that may potentially unravel fascinating aspects of human consciousness and the unconscious and their relation to the world.

This new approach shows that Hosea is a mythical text in which God is paradoxically holy as well as harlot, or in other words, God is displayed as Hosea as well as Gomer (cf. chapter 3). In the same perspective, we can also paradoxically ascribe both goodness and tyranny to God, and to most of the missionaries and sub-Saharan African religious and sociopolitical leaders (cf. chapter 5). As observed in each of the binomials cited above from the Hegelian dialectic triadic, many problems are encountered, for example, the

synthesis for the binomial in which God is considered as Hosea and Gomer or father and mother (cf. Diop 1959: 143, 149-150). In the case of former binomial the synthesis would be a monster and in the latter people could think about a child. But the child would not be considered as a synthesis of the binomial father-mother for two reasons: the child is an independent or other entity. In this manner, the child is not an indispensable element, but an optional one. Perhaps Hegel was not consistent philosophically about the possible commitment between chaos and order. The Hegelian system avoids the synthesis, which could result in something like a catastrophe. Unlike Hegel, Eudoro de Souza faces this dilemma in his dialogue with the mind of Greek and modern philosophers⁷. With the rediscovery of tautegory, de Souza responded to this dilemma, instead of looking for the unsatisfactory solution as happened also in advanced microbiology (cf. Monod 1972), mathematics (cf. Gonseth 1945) and chemistry and studies of quantum physics (cf. Planck 1922; Bohr 1948), cosmology (cf. Silk 1988). Bastos (1992: 47,56,65) is correct that de Souza, as well as all the scholars cited above, found a way of combining the *logos* and *mythos*, *psyche* and *physis*, *religion* and *eros*, *history* and *meta-history*, and *reason* and *anti-reason*. These elements which are impossible to merge in the objective

⁷ With Niels Bohr (1948) and Planck (1922), de Souza discussed the idea of multi-valence of micro-particles behavior. He also discusses with Kierkegaard (1954,1964) about Kierkegaardian dialectic dyadic and explores the idea of the encounter in the trans-dimension of the objects or subjects in tensions. De Souza discusses with Nietzsche (1933,1954,1972, 1984) about God, Human beings, ideas, things and events in the process of becoming (cf. Whitehead 1979:147-153). He dialogues with Gusdorf (1980), Jaspers (1950, 1958, 1959, 1970 and 1971) about the possible cohabitation between the day and the night, and the meaning of the tragedy and the concept of *Umgreifende* or the global view (reality). De Souza thinks that Heideggerean concept of *das Ding* (1962) is similar to the thing (*coisa*). From Cassirer (1946, 1955, 1963, 1973, 1988), Mukařovský (1979), Gadamer (1977,1980, 1983 and 1986), Gadamer (1976), Schelling (1946), Seligman (1962) or Ortiz-Osés (1986), Vico (1988), and above all Fernando Pessoa (1968) the one who most influenced him, de Souza tried to find out the way of conciliating *logos* and *mythos*, *psyche* and *physis*, *religion* and *eros*, *history* and *meta-history*, and *reason* and *anti-reason* from the Greek philosophers understanding of *mythos* and *logos*. These elements which are impossible to merge in the objective dimension, become *uno* in the trans-objective dimension and extreme horizon. De Souza disagreed with Sartre and Hegel that being and nothingness are contraries. He has also challenged the superficial interpretation of ancient Greek philosophers (de Souza 1988). De Souza considered the existence of three horizons: *objective*, *trans-objective* or *mediation* and *extreme horizon* or *horizon of re-unification* or *re-integration* as Pitirim Sorokin has also suggested (1937-41; Sorokin in Capra 1983: 13-14,16). See also Capra 1983: 1-20. Bastos (1992: 30-32) gives more details on those points.

dimension, become *uno* in the trans-objective one. This reality is explicable in art, science and mythology. de Sousa would have difficulty in agreeing with the method of Biblical contextualization as it is defended by Boff (1981,1986,1989), Gutiérrez (1974), Weems (1989), West (1993, 1995), Cone (1979), Tutu (1977), Mugambi (1995), Okuré (1993), Sherwood (1996), and others. For Eudoro de Souza, the methodology of Biblical contextualization attempts to achieve comprehension of the immediate or sensible, in others words, the historical and cultural realities, from the perspective of the people who are on the margins. de Souza would respect this approach but he would prefer to balance a contextual vision of understanding events or concepts which is used to resolve the immediate or sensible problem with another: the global, or the vision which is extended to diverse angles, or multiplicity. Indeed, the perspective of the Biblical contextual view is very limited because socio-structural, historical and cultural situations change, as for example, become unstable from Apartheid to the post-Apartheid period. The Biblical contextualization also lacks serious reflection on the question of ontology; such a lack is serious in the sub-Saharan African context, in which the understanding of the *anthropos* is inseparable from the *onto*. In Yaoundé, Accra, Ibadan, Nairobi and especially in Kinshasa where the contextual method started and was greatly developed during the decade of the 1970s, scholars like Bumwenyi (1981), Tshishiku (1980), Mveng (cf. Mveng in Angang *et.al* 1979:85-96), Hegba (cf. Hegba in Angang *et.al* 1983: 69-81), Mbiti (1986,1990), Dickson (1969,1984), Bediako (1995, 2000) and Bediako (1997), Idowu (1970,1974) and Kato (1981) insisted on something very different. They insisted on something like *theological recours à l'authenticité*⁸ but they had already rejected the *strict method of contextualization* or polarization and sought to find a way to include it into the tautegorical one. These sub-Saharan African scholars and particularly Tshishiku

⁸ The religious and sociopolitical philosophy defended by Mobutu the former president DRC (formerly

(cf. Tshishiku 1980: 19, 63-64, 74-75) very soon perceived that polarization was dangerous. Its danger lies in that it atrophies the imagination of both ordinary reader and scholar. It is such a lack of imagination that Eudoro de Souza struggled hard to correct by suggesting the combination of *contextualization*, or the particular view, with the *trans-contextualization*, or universal view, in spite of the tension between them. The contextual method is effective for the ordinary reader or for the scholar who embraces a pragmatic approach to the human situation (toadyism): it is found to be superficial by the scholars who are engaged in understanding more profoundly the human situation and by those who are trained to read the Bible (cf. Heschel 1996. vol 1:ix-xv), not from the perspective imposed by the Bible translators but from that of the classical hermeneutic and exegetical tools like Philosophy, History, Mythology, Hebrew, Greek etc. The method of tautegory should combine both: the human situation and the exegetical study of Biblical text in spite of hermeneutical and exegetical tensions as it has already been noted above. With the method of tautegory, it is also possible to deal objectively with the historical and cultural situation both of the reader and the writer on the one hand, and with the ontological or meta-historical situation of the reader and writer in the relation of this reader with Nature and God on the other. With the tautegorical method it thus becomes possible simultaneously to read the Bible from the perspective of those who are in the margin, as well as those who are in the center. It is also possible to perceive the conflicting spheres from God's perceptive. Due to the possibility that the tautegorical method seeks simultaneously to grasp the sensible and invisible dimensions of existence (cf. Bastos 1992: 25, 61-62), this paradoxically leads the ordinary, even the extraordinary, reader to believe that the religious and socio-political holocausts perpetuated in sub-Saharan Africa affect God, as if the sub-Saharan African people were really part of

Zaire).

the world in spite of Afro-pessimism. Therefore, sub-Saharan African people can never believe that the God of the Bible is *Untu*⁹, but that He is really a *Muntu*¹⁰, and they themselves as the display of the *Muntu* are created in His image; consequently, because of the vital dynamism that these people ascribe to God, this God becomes able to share His spirit of *Ubuntu*¹¹ with us and He is vulnerable like us in spite of His transcendence. We believe that this is a new theological framework and biblical approach to the text that our thesis suggests to the reader.

One of the aims of this thesis is, thus, to see how idolatry has affected the life of sub-Saharan African people since Hosea's time. It is known that comparing things, events or subjects is not necessarily reasonable. There is a time gap between Hosea and us. But we are persuaded that the task of the church is similar to Hosea's, which was to demystify the idols of his time. Hosea is a revolutionary song written in the form of poetry, with the objective of demystifying the idolatry hidden in Israelite religious and socio-political symbols. But this way of using poetry as the mechanism for revealing idols is sub-Saharan African too. Octávio Paz (cf. Paz in Alves 1990: 113) agrees with sub-Saharan African people and gives a reason for using poetry in prophecy: "Poetry reveals, then, what is: Knowledge, salvation, power, abandonment, an operation capable of transforming the world... The poetic operation is revolutionary by nature... Poetry reveals this and creates another". de Souza (cf. de Souza in Bastos 1992: 32) comments that "Poesia é a única maneira de tentar dizer o inefável, a única maneira de lidar, não com o que, de qualquer modo, não temos o direito de dizer, mas com o que temos direito e dever

⁹ Object.

¹⁰ Human being.

¹¹ Human living and feeling.

de dizer, como possa ser dito”¹². Empson (cf. Empson in Schökel 1965: 161) comments that “Poetry delights in multiplicity, it accepts and even seeks ambiguity.” Alonso Schökel (1961: 161) agrees with Paz, de Souza and Empson, and explains the subversive role of this ambiguity in poetry by saying: “it works with images and symbols, declining logic. Poetry fuses the objective with subjectivity; it creates a presence which is almost magic”. We have thus common ground, where sub-Saharan African people can dialogue and, above all, listen, to Hosea as their poet, prophet and fellow sufferer. For that reason it is essential to use a symbolic method, which is the true way of awakening the consciousness of the oppressed and of exposing religious and socio-political idols. It is, therefore, required of the reader to grasp two points about the content of this present thesis. Firstly, the reader has to be patient. The reader has to take the time to relate the symbols (*das Ding*) used by Hosea to what we have in sub-Saharan Africa; secondly, the same reader has imaginatively to challenge his or her own preconceived ideas and sing according to the melodies of revolutionary song composed by Hosea. To achieve this the theme of the dissertation will be developed from five perspectives.

The first chapter begins by briefly outlining the background of the historical trajectory of the interpretation of the mystery of God’s pathos: from the Jewish influence in the Middle Ages to our contemporary era, focusing on the method of doing theology and interpreting the issue of God’s pathos alongside this trajectory. The second chapter compares the concepts of *Pathos*, *Logos* and *Ethos* in Hosea and in sub-Saharan African culture. Here, we see how these three terms inseparably and completely interact with

¹² Poetry is the unique way of attempting to say, which is very difficult to be expressed. It is also the unique way to deal paradoxically with what we do not have the right to say and what we have the right to say in the way that this thing has really to be expressed.

each other and how these terms are used in understanding the enigmatic question of metaphor in Hosea, and in the religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African situations. The third chapter proceeds with the metaphorical presentation of God as an affective being in Hosea. The key idea is to look at what makes the God of Hosea kin to the sub-Saharan African contemporaries, with the focus on the study of the binomial father-mother or husband-spouse in relation to God, and the case of God's vengeance and frustration and violation of the human in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African context. The fourth chapter focuses on a synoptic study of the drama of God's affection in Hosea, and seeks to understand what makes Hosea the sub-Saharan African Prophet. Here the challenge is seen as the price that the person has to pay in embracing the prophetic vocation and ministry in both contexts. We have considered the case of Hosea's marriage as providing a pertinent example for the pastor or priest of the sub-Saharan African region, the relevance of the idea of the covenant in both contexts, and finally the understanding of Gomer as a challenge for the problematic daughter, spouse and mother in the sub-Saharan. Finally, the fifth chapter treats of the absence of God's pathos in Hosea's contemporary life and its implications for the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political situation. Here our focus is on the manifestation of tyranny, syncretism and dehumanization in relation to God, Hosea, missionaries and the sub-Saharan African religious and sociopolitical leaders.

CHAPTER ONE

1. A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S PATHOS FROM THE JEWISH INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES TO OUR CONTEMPORARY ERA-THE DEBATE AT LARGE.

It is regrettable that the Middle Ages of sub-Saharan Africa is not referred to at all in Western history books. Joseph Ki-zerbo (1981), Anta Diop (1974) and recently Mbokolu (1981) disagree categorically with this biased recording of history. This extensive stretch of human history, which coincides with the time of *darkness* in sub-Saharan Africa is rich and amazing. It is during this time that the foundations of modern civilization were built. The people of this epoch, with their tremendous capacity for inquiry about the basis of science, technology and philosophy, dedicated themselves to settling the conflict between reason and emotion. The emphasis was on the profound question of ontology. As Gottlieb Söhngen (1954) observed bright minds like Pascal, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Anselm of Canterbury, Copernicus and Descartes or Nicholas of Cues devoted much of their lives in the attempt to solve the problem. Our interest is not in reviewing the old debate as Heschel (1996) has done. We prefer to start our discussion by focusing on the Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages. Our choice is determined by three facts which are: Hosea is Jewish, if we use the modern term for the Israelites' tribe; Jewish culture influenced considerably theology, especially German theology (cf. Scholem 1965:165, 169,195-199); and Jewish culture is closer than other cultures to sub-Saharan Africa.

The debate about God's pathos became intensified at the beginning of the first century with Philo with the participation of the Jewish thinkers. The thought of the brilliant Jewish thinker of Alexandria was strongly theocentric; his theocentrism being the result of the combination of his Alexandrian and Jewish backgrounds (cf. Graig 1998: 357, Billings 1979: 13-25). For Philo, God is conceived in terms of being and God's essence is unreachable by human knowledge (cf. Graig 1998: 357, Paul 1967.vol 5:151-155). With such theological assumptions, Philo supports the view that the *Apathēs to theion* has to become the fundamental principle for the doctrine of God (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 1: 34). If God is *apathetikos*, this means that God is indifferent, emotionally blind to the misery of human beings, rather than profoundly moved by it (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 1: 38-39). But if the God both of Hosea and of sub-Saharan Africa satisfies the ideal of Stoics, then how could Philo explain the drama of the book of Hosea and what would Philo feel, face to face with the holocaust raging in sub-Saharan Africa? Philo would certainly resort to allegory to explain the drama of the book of Hosea, but could he do the same with the religious, socio-political and economic disasters that afflict millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa? The response depends on what side the reader stands. We think that Philo's philosophical and theological assumptions are obsolete, because the grandeur of God, and of human beings, resides in His and their being involved with one another in a truly emotional experience, one of sharing the true pathos of emotion in mutual enrichment. (cf. Heschel 1996. vol 1: 39). Philo did not experience this mystery and, unfortunately, he bequeathed this heritage to Jewish posterity. Maimonides (cf. Maimonides in M F. Sia 1994: 89-90) who was one of the most important Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages defended Philo's ideas. Indeed, Philo, as the founder of classical theism doubtlessly influenced Maimonides (cf. Conybeare 1910:158)¹³. According to

¹³ Philo as a fervent defender of the apathic god (*Ananké*) of Aristotle contradicts himself when he asserts

Heschel (1996.vol 2: 31-33), Maimonides was also influenced by the Greek concept of *Ananké*, which moved him categorically to attack all philosophical or theological tendencies to ascribe to God any negative feeling. The God of Maimonides is the God of Philo and this God is not like a human being. Maimonides thinks that God could love but never that God could suffer and be passionate as a human being, because to suffer or to be passionate means to demonstrate feebleness. But does the capacity for being passionate or suffering really indicate weakness? Is it possible for someone, even if this someone is God, to love without suffering? It seems that Maimonides's philosophical and theological mistakes came also from the Semitic conception of divinity. As Whitehead (1960: 66-67) observes:

The Semitic concept of a definite personal individual entity, whose existence is the one ultimate metaphysical fact, absolute and underivative, and who decreed and ordered the derivative existence, which we call the actual world. This Semitic concept is the rationalization of the tribal gods of the earlier communal religions. It expresses the extreme doctrine of transcendence.

Whitehead proceeds to argue from the Buddhist and Hindu perspectives that:

Throughout India and China religious thought, so far as it has been interpreted in precise form, disclaims the intuition

that: "The strangers who come to us (i.e., proselytes) must be held worthy of every privilege, because they have abandoned blood-kinship, fatherland, customs, the holy shrines of their gods, high positions and honors; and like colonists have nobly abandoned their homes, leaving behind myths and fictions in order to win the truth's clearness of vision and embrace the worship of the one really existent God. Hence the divine law bids us love the proselytes, not only as friends and kinsmen, but as ourselves; sharing so far as possible in common with them in body and soul; in spirit we must have the same sorrows and joys, so that our society resembles one organism with divers members joined and knit together in natural harmony". On this contradiction Conybeare (1910:158) comments: "We cannot understand how the apathetic God can rank the proselyte with orphans and widows as the Torah recommended it. There is a suspicion that Philo was somehow betrayed by his combination of Aristotle's philosophy with the Jewish faith".

of any ultimate personality substantial to the universe. This is true for Confucian philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Hindu philosophy. There may be personal embodiments, but the substratum is impersonal.

If in Yahwism the preoccupation is with the question of the transcendence of the divinity, in Buddhism and Hinduism devotees are preoccupied with how to deal with an impersonal divinity. The crucial questions are: Who can think of transcendence or Holiness without the immanent reality of daily pain? Who can think of love without suffering? Who suffers for no reason? True love or suffering implies the existence of another person and a price that must be paid. Passion is linked with passibility because to love is a process, which requires an investment of time and feelings. Maimonides's mistake is that he did not understand that the one, who loves, in the conjugal context such as Hosea, transcends the romance, which is related at the level of the aesthetics and the ambition to conquer the other person. For to love in the conjugal sense is not understandable analogically but tautegorically. This is because in the analogical sphere the person is characterized in the basis of *sexus* or differentiation, though in tautegorical, *sexus* is substituted by *nexus* and mutual communion or inter-dependence. One needs to touch the heart of the other, and then there is joy or suffering. Scholars ascribe love to God; but not passion and suffering. Even when they speak about passion, they delimit the use of the word only in terms of God's attributes, such as love. Lee (1974: 37) observes that:

These errors are quite easily pointed out by the empathy of God. The empathy of God means neither the merger of one into another to become one, which is the mistake of modalistic monarchians, nor the distinction of one from another to hinder a mutual participation, which is the mistake of anti-patipassians.

Lee is correct because when we consider what the Tenakh says about Yahweh; the god of these scholars could be a Greek idol or maybe the god of Spinoza, who maintains, “strictly speaking, God does not love or hate. God loves no one and hates no one” (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 32). The risk of Spinoza’s *monist* thinking is that if we love God, we cannot desire Him to reciprocate our love, for then He would as Heschel observes (1996.vol 2:32) lose His perfection and become affected by our joys and sorrows. But Spinoza, the Greek philosophers and the Christians forget that passion and suffering are the cornerstone of the relationship between God and human beings (cf. Heschel1996.vol 2: 99-101). Morgan (1964: 26-30) criticizes Spinoza’s concept. Philosophical Puritanism and pride in being a renowned philosopher may have influenced Spinoza. The God of the Bible moves and feels, hears and responds, cries and weeps, eats and speaks, hates and forgives, condemns and justifies, elects and rejects, loves and lives as a person. We have the capacity to surprise as His veritable children (cf. Cooper 1997:58). In this sense we not only remain alienated, and feel abandoned, but we relinquish our personal sense of responsibility.

The controversy about whether God shares feelings and most of all about whether He suffers is an old controversy. Fiddes (1993: 178) observes that among the Reformers, Calvin shares the view of Maimonides. Calvin defends this so-called negative theology, and refuses to ascribe to God any kind of human passion or suffering. He (cf. Calvin in Fiddes 1993: 178) prefers to maintain the idea that when the Scripture speaks of God’s grief and compassion for his people, it is merely a figure of speech that accommodates our understanding, in order to move us more powerfully and brings us closer to God. For that Calvin (1957.vol 1.v. 9) insists that:

...it is obvious that, in seeking God, the most direct path and the fittest method is, not to attempt with presumptuous curiosity to pry into his essence, which is rather to be adored than minutely discussed, but to contemplate him in his works, by which he draws near, becomes familiar, and in a manner communicates himself to us.

Calvin (1957.vol 2. XIII. 2)¹⁴ also observes clearly that: “God certainly has no blood, suffers not, cannot be touched with hands”. Luther (cf. Luther in Kitamori 1958: 56-62) thinks differently in his commentary on Genesis. He criticizes the church’s rejection of anthropomorphism as heretical and argues that God always meets us through created things, which serve as the masks behind which God is present. Fiddes dialogues not only with the pillars of protestant reform, but also with other defenders of divine impassibility in more modern times. Some of these defend the theory that God can accommodate and imagine what we feel but Fiddes (1993:178) argues that God does not only accommodate or imagine what we feel, but really is affected and would like to express His passion and suffering which are intrinsically linked with His essence as well as His existence.

Hosea does not simply find God sharing somehow in his sorrow: he is confronted as Isaiah, Elijah, Noah, Jonah and others with the already existent sorrow of God, as Fiddes remarked. God calls not only Hosea, but also all the prophets to make this sorrow *visible* to others. Why do people have serious logical problems in understanding this aspect of the reality of God? This is a complex question. From our perspective, we know that the world moves and changes but the cosmovision of many theologians has atrophied to the

¹⁴ See also Wondra 1964: 28-35; Kitamori 1958: 56-62.

extent that they are not bold enough to change their theological method from an analogical to a tautological¹⁵. The thought and belief of the defenders of classical theism are clearly pre-determined by their thinking and believing. They, as well as we, forget that to deal with the Sacred requires great intellectual, spiritual, and moral effort, honesty, and broadmindedness. The question is also how does the fear of having an affective God develop in the human mind? In response Bertocci (1955: 460) says that:

The conception of god as insensitive to the sin and suffering of his creation may be born of the all-too-human desire to escape from suffering and to picture perfection as free from it. We may be building our god out of our weakness and not out of the strength of the great men of suffering.

Bertocci (1955: 461) proceeds to challenge the fear of the moralists of classical theism:

The moral power of God consists of his absolute goodness. When we think of God as the cosmic Lover, sensitive to the responsiveness of his creatures, affected by their love and hate, willing within limits to alter his activities, as this is demanded by his relationship to all sensitive creatures, we are thinking of an ideal Person. To put it almost too crisply: God is God because he can suffer for goodness more than any other person can.

The fear of having a *Theopathetikos*, has been challenged by many theologians who treat the passionate and passible aspects of life in relation to God in early times and in our modern time (cf. Berger 1967: 25-24). We agree with Fiddes that ideas of *accommodation* or of a mere *imaginative* response of God to human suffering hardly do

¹⁵ The space to explore freely new ways of thinking or new theological frameworks.

justice to the experience of prophets such as Hosea. The great contribution of Asiatic scholars started with Kitamori. Indeed, Kitamori (1958: 24-26) challenges the idea of an impersonal world led by the impersonal spirit, as propounded by Whitehead (1960:66-67), Hegel and Hegelian philosophers are wrong in representing God as an impersonal spirit. The very idea of a spirit implies a personality (cf. Theissen 1959: 121). Indeed Spirit implies rationality and suffering. Hegel's dialectical model is connected with Heidegger's (1962 and 1982) and Whitehead's (1979). The Heideggerian terms and the terms of Whitehead's assumption of God's existence imply a concrete, sensuous being in-the-world.

In resolving the dilemma, Kierkegaard (1954) puts the passion and suffering of God at the center of his philosophical investigation and suggests the use of dyadic dialectic. If Kierkegaard's is correct, then it may be right to think of the Asiatic philosophical concepts of Yin and Yang, not as conflicting but as complementary concepts, which can be a key idea to establish a new hermeneutic, and a new understanding of the affective God (cf. Capra 1991). Both Kitamori (1958) and Lee (1974) express the idea of God's pathos, but it is Kitamori who stands out about this issue. His intervention in the debate, as noticed in his book published after the Second World War, seems to be a great watershed of opinion among Asiatic scholars about God's pathos. It is possible to think that Asiatic philosophy rooted in Buddhism and in Shintoism, influenced Western scholars such as Fiddes (1993:178). Fiddes (1993:178) observes that scholars like Kitamori, with his Eastern background, understood the idea of accommodation or imaginative passion in a positive sense. Fiddes, on the suffering God's response to human pain, speaks of the prevenient suffering as God's transcendent pain. With fine exegetical

insight, Fiddes points out that prophets such as Hosea became aware of the desperation of human beings because they found themselves in God's own situation of suffering. We find here a demarcation between Buddhism and Christianity. In the Asiatic context, Buddha offers his doctrine to enlighten the world but Jesus and Hosea sacrificed their lives (cf. Whitehead 1960: 55). According to Heschel (1996 vol. 2: 55-56)¹⁶, Isaiah says, "My ways are not your ways" and this coincides with "My pathos is not your pathos". Here, we are rather called upon to make human pain serve the pain of God and vice versa. In fact, this ambivalent aspect of the divine reality expressed through God's claim "My ways are not your ways", brings to our attention the fact that God is paradoxically a soothsayer, as well as one who needs true kin (prophets). As a human being, Hosea certainly faced serious problems from being in sympathy with God's pathos. Von Rad (1965. vol2: 62-63) understands this and tries to explain this mystery in the Israelite prophetic movement, saying that:

If, then, we have to reckon with such abnormal states of consciousness in the prophets, it is mistaken to suppose, as is sometimes done, that these have no particular importance for the theologian. Here as everywhere else, to detach matters which belong to the central substance of Jahwism close such a singular realm as the prophet's spirit, if he chose none of the already existing institutions for his new word to Israel, and if this psychic realm which had been so singularly kept open he brought such a singular thing to pass, this must stand in relationship to other matters which theology cannot ignore. It actually means nothing less than that in the states where the prophets saw visions and heard himself addressed, he became in a strange way detached from himself and his own personal likes and dislikes, and was drawn into the emotions of the deity himself.

¹⁶ There are many critics against Heschel. See for example the way that Tanenzapf (1974: 276-286) responds to diverse criticisms formulated against Heschel. According to him, Heschel is misunderstood because people analyze him through the prism of Aristotle's categories. Harold (1975: 58-62) is opposed to Aristotle's view virulently. He counterattacks by suggesting the adoption of Charles Hartshorne's metaphysic in the place of the obsolete dogma of God as defended by Classic theism.

He argues:

It was not only the knowledge of God's designs in history that was communicated to him, but also the feelings in God's heart, wrath, love, sorrow, revulsion, and even doubt as to what to do how to do it (Hos.vi.4, xi.8; Is.vi.8). Something of Jahweh's own emotion passed over into the prophet's psyche and filled it to bursting-point. Jeremiah and Ezekiel reached the highest degree of being absorbed into the emotions of the Godhead in this way, but there is evidence that the majority of the prophets experienced it to some degree.

Fiddes (1993: 178) thinks that Robinson strikes a similar note. However, Fiddes (1993: 178) correctly remarks that Robinson noted that the idea of God's suffering in the cross is a more intense in Jeremiah than in Hosea. Fiddes (1993: 178) also points out that Robinson insists that the prophet "suffers with the suffering of God". Indeed, Hosea's family tragedy awakens him to the meaning of God's suffering. It is, however, unclear whether Hosea's call to become a prophet affected his marriage or not; we have reservations about agreeing with Robinson on this point. We think rather that Hosea, being perhaps more mature than Jeremiah, opted to suffer in silence rather than to cry out aloud. We know, as the sage of proverbs taught and as Huxley (1995:237) emphasizes, that it is more difficult to understand the language of silence than of sound¹⁷.

¹⁷ In the New Testament, Pilate because of the silence of Jesus had many difficulties in his capacity as a true Roman Judge with unraveling the Enigma called Jesus (cf. Mark 15:2-5).

We believe that the expression of the suffering of God in Hosea is greater than in any other prophetic book, including Jeremiah. Therefore, those who would really like to decipher the enigma called Hosea, have to learn to listen to the *silence* which is the language of sages (cf. Proverbs 17:27 and Mark 14:61), the oppressed (cf. Proverbs 24, West 1999 and Boff 1985) and, also, of love. About the experience of suffering love, we share Robinson's (cf. Robinson in Fiddes 1993: 178) opinion. Robinson rightly affirms that: "the experience of suffering love can serve as a clue to the meaning of God's love". Robinson holds that "the *analogy* of kinship between human and divine persons is rooted in incarnation". We think that this incarnation can be expressed by a formula like "*Let Ruach become Adamah*" which becomes possible because the personalities of the human (Adamah) and divine (Ruach) are inter-connected in the creation act when God declared that: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (cf. Genesis 1: 26a) or in other words, "*Let Adamah become Ruach*". Through Hosea, we can perceive that both the human and divine are inseparable, as much in suffering as in love. This is because to love is to be vulnerable, to be open and influenced by the beloved (cf. Tanenzapf 1974: 282).

1.1 GOD'S PATHOS: CRISIS, DISPUTE AND CONCORD BETWEEN ORTHODOX AND NEO-ORTHODOX IN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT MODERN CHURCHES.

In his article on the pathos of God, Wondra (1964: 28) says that: "The modern revolution in theological thought on the doctrine of God has been very severe on the traditional formation of the attributes, especially the attribute of impassibility". This observation

seems to be pertinent, because not long after the dynamic period of the Reformation Protestant theology settled back into the same scholasticism that Calvin had attacked (cf. Wondra 1964:29). The nostalgic return to early times is due to the fact that theological and philosophical assumptions have remained unchallenged, despite the apparent radicalism of the Reformation (cf. Wondra 1964:29). Evidently theologians like Wondra and Charnock were men of their epoch, who reflected the crisis and disputes of their time. But, following the Second World War, the war in the Middle East, the genocide in Rwanda, the persistent unbalance between rich and poor and, the collapse of modernity, it has become indispensable that human beings should rethink the tremendous question of God's pathos. Theologians, philosophers and other scholars, have emerged from their monasteries, and decided to challenge the apathetic world and the Church to seek a way to understand the enigmatic God.

1.1.1 God's Pathos in the Modern Catholic Church

It is evident that in the era of Vatican II (1962-1965) to the present day, Pope John XXIII (cf. Abbott 1966: 4) has concerned himself with only one ecumenical matter. Pope John declares: "Since we are shepherds, we desire that all may have their longing satisfied who seek God". He adds, "perhaps they might find Him as they grope after Him, though indeed He is not far from each of us" (cf. Abbott 1966: 4). Healey (1997:138)¹⁸ recalls that Pope John XXIII, since the beginning of Vatican II, agreed with Heschel on God's

¹⁸ He did not refer to Pope John XXIII. Healey quoted the Christmas message given in 1966 by Pope Paul VI; who took the same approach to the matter of persons who do not belong to the Catholic Church. See also Abbott 1966: 4.

pathos. Healey (1997:138) says that Pope John XXIII, in an address to a general audience at the Vatican, remarked on the nature of human's quest for God. He cited a familiar theme of Heschel and reminded his hearers "even before we have moved in search of God, God has come in search of us". For this Catholic ecclesiastic authority, as for Pope Paul VI (cf. Abbott 1996: 660-668), the theological idea of an apathetic God is false and, indeed, incompatible with the God of the Bible. If we analyze Pope John XXIII's statement "God is in search of man" we may say that perhaps this Pope wanted to bring to his audience's attention God's care or concern for human beings (cf. Merkle 1984: 151). God shared in human tragedy to prevent the global death of the Humankind. It is, thus, possible to think that Pope John XXIII shared the idea of God's pathos and would have wished to suggest also that God is paradoxically both a tragic and a non-tragic Person. The tragic person, like the human beings of our time, is willing to stand alone (cf. Bassett 1975: 101-102) if society imposes it on him but the affective person will if possible avoid standing alone (cf. Heschel 1951; Berdyaev 1961: 25-70; Bassett 1975: 101-102). We could, thus, believe that Pope John XXIII demystified the myth of the *Invulnerability of God* in the Church's Theology. Here as the initiator of protest in the modern Catholic Church, Pope John XXIII agrees with Heschel that human being was never alone. This point of view can justify the Pope's fervent claims for ecumenism in the light of the eternal God's desire to share His pathos with all humans (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Yves Congar, an eminent theologian and one of the key men of Vatican II, opposes the idea of an apathetic God, as do the defenders of the idea that God is the male gender. The

notion of God as male is, of course, embedded in Christology. Congar (cf. Congar in Acebo 1990: 45), says à propos the concept of the *Lógos* or *Word* :

Se não corresse o perigo de cair em antropomorfismos, diríamos... que, na geração do Verbo, deus faz as funções de pai e mãe, engendrando-o em si mesmo e levando-o em si mesmo¹⁹.

It is known that Congar had the intellectual ability to overcome some difficulties of the problems presented by the metaphor and anthropomorphism. Congar is, in a sense, opposed to the dogma of the existence of a male God. He defends the idea of a pathetic God, who is able to face the poverty and injustice in our world, despite criticism of his writings. Karl Rahner (1983) and Boff (1989) share the same vision of God. Teilhard de Chardin (1965 and 1971), before Congar and Rahner, established the concept of the cosmic Christ, which is echoed in the Panentheism of Process theology. Furthermore, in the Catholic Church, the contribution by Pope John Paul II, some decades after Vatican II is not to be overlooked. Pope John Paul II, with his determination and willingness to challenge affective theology, uses Hosea's terms דָּוָן and מִחֵן to express both the male and the female pathetic reality of the compassionate God. In the encyclical *Dives In Misericordia*, for instance, Pope John Paul II (n.d.: 21-22) says that:

In describing mercy, the books of the Old Testament use two expressions in particular, each having a different semantic nuance. First there is the term 'hesed', which indicates a profound attitude of 'goodness'... since 'hesed' also means 'grace' or 'love', this occurs precisely on the

¹⁹ If there is no risk of falling into the pitfall of anthropomorphism, we can say ... that when the *Lógos* or *Word* was born, God played the role of father and mother, engendering as well as carrying the son.

basis of this fidelity. The fact that the commitment in question has not only a moral character but also almost a juridical one makes no difference. When in the Old Testament 'hesed' is used of the Lord, this always occurs in connection with the covenant that God established with Israel. The second word, which in the terminology of the Old Testament serves to define mercy, is 'rahamim'. This has a different nuance from that of 'hesed'. While 'hesed' highlights the marks of fidelity to self and responsibility for one's own 'love' (which are in certain sense masculine characteristics), 'rahamim', in its very root, denote the love of mother (rehem-mother's womb).

He proceeds to use as an analogy the gratuitous love of the mother for the child:

From the deep and original bond—indeed the unity—that links a mother to her child, there springs a particular relationship to the child, a particular love. Of this love one can say that it is completely gratuitous, not merited, and that, in this aspect, it constitutes an interior necessity: an exigency of the heart. It is, as it were, a 'feminine' variation of the masculine fidelity to self—expressed by 'hesed'. Against this psychological background, 'rahamim' generates a whole range of feelings, including goodness and tenderness, patience and understanding, that is, readiness to forgive.

The question is: could this perception of אהבה serve to emphasize *Mariolatry*? The critics of the Catholic Church may say this, but we do not. Pope John Paul II is a fervent defender of *Mariology*, as is well known, but *Mariology* is not to be confused with *Mariolatry*. We believe that the Pope's intention is to emphasize God's pathos and, above all, to recognize God's affective attribute as both male and female, overlooked by theologians, scientists and philosophers. It seems, also, that Pope John Paul II is one of those rare Popes who incarnated רחמים, manly feelings, and אהבה, womanly feelings.

His comprehension of God's pathos is extraordinarily profound. John Paul II's ideas are similar to those of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, both of whom encouraged theologians, scientists, and philosophers, and people of the church, to participate actively in the incarnation of this divine affective dimension in worship and social work.

The advent of the Charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church reinforces the revolutionary vision and emphasizes the need for recognizing affectiveness in God. In addition, this Catholic charismatic renewal movement, which is rooted in the early church's experience of Pentecost, demonstrates three important steps: firstly, challenging the conscience of the Catholic Orthodox Church to seek a balance between the medieval and the modern practice of worship; secondly, making explicit that the socio-political and economic realities are related to the global oppressive system. Hence, the church's duty to liberate the oppressed through the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. José Comblin 1987); thirdly, proclaiming the God of the Bible as being closest to His devotees, and that He is not only the *θεός* of the clergy. The God of the charismatic movement is a *Theopathetikos*. He shares His pathos with His devotees by giving them the charismas, which display His own presence in their lives. The persistent negation of this aspect of God's affective reality could be disastrous for the future of the church.

1.1.2 Barth, Moltmann and Brunner: Modern Protestant Orthodox and neo-Orthodox Approach to God's pathos-fear, trembling and audacity

Among the Protestant theologians, for two reasons we choose to analyze Barth, Moltmann and Brunner. These theologians have a strong Jewish background that is

embodied in German culture and all three play a crucial role in the extensive debate on God's pathos. It is important to note that the analysis of the three theologians is achronological and that it will consider their convergence and divergence on the matter of God's pathos.

1.1.2.1 God's Pathos in Barth: The Indefinite view

What does Barth (CD IV/ 1:187) say about God's pathos and, particularly, about the issue of suffering? Russell (1988: 226) argues "We have to agree and share the regret that, unfortunately, we find few explicit assertions regarding the divine impassibility in Barth". According to Barth (CD IV/ 1: 187), God is absolute, infinite, exalted, active, impassible and transcendent; but in all this He [God] is the One who loves in freedom. Russell sees Barth as explicitly affirming the impassibility of God (cf. Russell 1988: 226) but this contradiction does not exactly clarify Barth's thought. Anyone who seriously engages with Barth's writings will remark that his writings bring to light the contradictory attributes of God: His impassibility and His passibility, for example. Barth does explicitly affirm God's impassibility but equally God's suffering and experience of pain, and the capacity to experience suffering and pain by definition implies, passibility (cf. Russell 1988: 226). Barth (CD.IV.1: 185) himself asserts that:

The more seriously we take this, the stronger becomes the temptation to approximate to the view of a contradiction and conflict in God Himself. Have we not to accept this view if we are to do justice to what God did for man and what He took upon Himself when He was in Christ, if we are to bring out the mystery of His mercy in all depth and greatness?...He also makes His own the being of man

under the curse of this contradiction, but in order to do away with it as He suffers it.

Russell (1988: 226) defends Barth, in seeing the contradiction as apparent or maybe as a kind of antinomy (cf. Russell 1988: 223). He observes that Barth overcomes the conflict and sees him as resolving what is only an apparent contradiction by appealing to the idea of God's being as *actus*. Russell's sympathetic defense is understandable but not convincing enough. For us, Barth's point of view on this issue is problematic in three ways. Firstly, Barth (CD IV/ 1: 187) asserts that:

As God was in Christ, far from being against Himself, or in disunity with Himself, He has put into effect the freedom of His divine love, the love in which He is divinely free. He has, therefore, done and revealed that which corresponds to His divine nature. His immutability does not stand in the way of this. It must not be denied, but that this possibility is active, impassible, transcendent, but in all this He is the One who loves in freedom, the One who is free in His love, and, therefore, not His own prisoner.

Russell (1988: 232) is correct in saying that Barth thinks that God can embrace the opposite of these concepts of divine passibility and, also, it seems that Barth underestimates the contributions that this kind of logic can make to theology. He should have used the word *contradiction*, which reflects the Hegelian influence instead of the word *opposite*, which requires the transitive element or synthesis, rather than the paradox or the **πολεμοι** of Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard appeals to the tautegorical dimension which is not contradiction but symbiosis, in which the question of God's impassibility is less important than other questions.

Secondly, Barth never clearly defines God's pathos (cf. Russell 1988: 225), even though he affirms that the Bible speaks of a God who suffers (cf. Russell 1988: 221). Concerning God's pathos, Barth says that it is God's being as *actus*. But Barth, perhaps blinded by Hegelian philosophical assumptions, does not perceive that in the *actus* is paradoxically hidden the *potential actus* as well as is seen the *kinematic actus* and both converge. But what of these two aspects of *actus*? Would Barth indeed subscribe to *Theopathetikos*, the God of the Bible? Goetz (1980: 386) says that Barth criticizes Schleiermacher: "The God of Schleiermacher cannot show mercy. And there can be no suffering love where there can be no mercy". Barth's criticism of Schleiermacher, or even his recognition of the irremediable conflict in the notion of God's pathos, does not resolve the issue (cf. CD II/1: 493). Russell (1988: 223, 228 and 232) also notes this failure. The fact of ascribing *constancy* to God contains its opposite: a lack of constancy which is not to be equated with *inconstancy*.

Thirdly, it seems that instead of entering into serious theological debate about God's pathos, Barth (cf. CD II/2:162,167 and IV/1: 185) appeals to the patripassianism and theopaschitism of the early church. For he says: "In God's eternal purpose it is God...who is rejected in [Christ], for God wills to lose that [we] may win." This appeal strengthens the faith of believers but, at the same time, leaves doubts for critical minds.

1.1.2.2 Moltmann: The voice of Change (The Troublemaker for Barth)

Moltmann appears as a kind of troublemaker for Barth. He contends that Barth has a

simplistic idea of God (cf. Russell 1988: 231). Indeed, it is not clear, from Barth's writings, who and what God is and what the meaning of God's pathos is. With respect to God's pathos, Moltmann justifiably criticizes Barth for failing to develop a "sufficiently Trinitarian" thrust to God's participating in Christ's pathos on the cross (cf. Russell 1988: 231). Russell (1988: 231) claims that for Moltmann, a sufficiently Trinitarian concept of the event of Christ on the cross clearly distinguishes Christ's suffering from God's suffering. He (1988: 231) proceeds to argue that Moltmann explains God's suffering with Christ in a different ontological way. There are some problems in this respect. Moltmann falls into the trap of fear and trembling of most fundamentalists and conservatives. However, Jaeger (1977: 175) supports Moltmann when he notes: "The Christian theologian, argues that the image of God needs to be reconstructed, according to biblical rather than philosophical notions." He proceeds by concluding that, "He [Moltmann] was, however, one of the most vocal and articulate voices expressing these concerns".

In fact, Moltmann (cf. Moltmann in House 1982: 411) claims that, "the most important progress in Christian theology today is being made in overcoming the A-pathy axiom in theology". But, Moltmann has failed to contribute significantly. His error consists in his elaboration on patripassianism and theopaschitism. He contends that the old model was problematic, but he does not use the proposed new one to eradicate it. Moltmann's and Jaeger's rejection of philosophy is problematic and, on reading Moltmann carefully, we can find that Moltmann tried to embrace Kierkegaard's, Whitehead's, and Hartshorne's metaphysical presuppositions about God. Here McWilliams (1982: 38) defends Moltmann by asserting that: "Moltmann is careful to avoid the ancient heresies of

patripassianism and theopaschitism by arguing that the Father and the Son experience the crucifixion differently. The son suffers the agony of God's forsakenness, but the father suffers the grief of the loss of his Son". McWilliams's view of Moltmann's perception of God's pathos is however, also problematic. This is because the point here is not about avoiding the ancient heresies of patripassianism and theopaschitism. Moltmann failed, as Barth has failed too, because he was unable audaciously to combine *logic* with *not logic*. What Moltmann avoids as heresies are, indeed, not heresies. As such, Goetz's (1986:385) advice has to be taken seriously: "the age of the old dogma that God is impassible and immutable, incapable of suffering, is for many no longer tenable". Due to the claim of the theologian, the priest and the pastor pretend to bring the poor, oppressed and marginalized to Christ as a fellow sufferer in preaching the Gospel; the ancient theopaschite heresy that God suffers has, in fact, become the new orthodoxy. We, in agreement with Goetz, believe that this so-called heresy is contrary to the *key-idea* of God as a suffering Being²⁰. The truth is that the future of theology in this post-modern epoch depends on the way that scholars conscientiously and, above all, audaciously handle this *key-idea*.

The contribution of Asian and above all African scholars who write in the sub-Saharan context seems to be decisive because their religious heritages are based on the philosophy of organism (cf. Whitehead 1979) and Process Theology, according to which life is seen

²⁰ Temple (cf. Temple in House 1982: 414) describes their real concern in these terms: "We have to recognize that Aristotle's *apathetic God* was enthroned in men's minds, and no idol has been so hard to destroy". He proceeds: "But there is a highly technical sense in which God, as Christ revealed him, is *without passions*; for he is Creator and supreme, and never *passive* in the sense of having things happen to him except with his consent; also he is constant and free from gusts of feeling carrying him this way and that...But the term *impassible* really meant *incapable of suffering* and in this sense its predication of god is almost wholly false ... God does not leave the world to suffer while he remains at ease apart all suffering of the world is his."

holistically. For them, there is a relationship between divinity and humanity. The worlds of the ancestors (l' au delà) and of human beings are linked. What this means is that the suffering and joyfulness are blended or *entrelassem-se*²¹ in God's pathos. This combination of mythology (e.g. the history of god and the ancestors) and the daily search for the meaning of existence is remarkable, as Thsishiku (1980: 61-64) and, above all, Tillich (1963. vol.3: 431) note²². It is exactly this combination of mythology and daily search for the meaning of the existence that Fiddes (1993) and, particularly, Moltmann grasp from the idea of Jesus' cross.

For that reason, in spite of some failures, we have to concede that Moltmann's contribution to the understanding of God's pathos is unquestionable; it is especially important in that he links the event of the cross with the Old Testament. Indeed, Moltmann's (1975:78) view is that: "the pathos of God in the Old Testament is the presupposition for the passion of God according to the New Testament". Jaeger (1977: 175) argues that: "Moltmann considered the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to be the core element of the Christian faith, viewing the cross event as the central message of divine pathos in the Old Testament". Jaeger (1977: 175) says that, for Moltmann, the cross event revolutionized the understanding of God, for it revealed that God himself

²¹ It is more explicit and more profound in Portuguese rather than in English (to interlace).

²² See more details about Tillich's point when he writes that: "The philosophers of becoming can refer to biblical statements in which repentance, toil, patience, suffering and sacrifice are attributed to God. Such expressions of the vision of a living God have led to ideas which were rejected by the church, the so-called patripassionist doctrine that God as father suffered in the suffering of the Christ. But such an assertion contradicts too obviously the fundamental theological doctrine of God's impassibility. In the judgment of the church it would have brought God down to the level of the passionate and suffering gods of Greek mythology. But the rejection of patripassionism does not solve the question of the negative in the blessedness of the Divine Life. Present-day theology tries-with very few exceptions -to avoid the problem altogether, either by ignoring it or by calling it an inscrutable divine mystery. But such escape is impossible in view of the question's significance for the most existential problem of theodicy. People in "boundary-situations" will not accept to escaping into the mystery on this point ... If theology refuses to answer such existential questions, it has neglected its task. Theology must take the problems of philosophers of becoming seriously. It must try to combine the doctrine of eternal blessedness with the negative element without which life is not possible and blessedness ceases to be blessed. It is the nature of blessedness itself that requires a negative element in the eternity of the Divine Life".

experienced suffering and humiliation at Golgotha. He concludes that: “The crucifixion revealed a God able to identify with and suffer on behalf of His people, and the cross, thus understood, revolutionized Moltmann’s whole theological structure” (cf. Jaeger 1977: 175). As the cross is the great event of history (cf. Kalond in Angang *et al.* 1980: 24-25) ²³, Moltmann emphasizes that the God of the crucified Christ was a being of profound love; this divine love was of such a kind that it could embrace all the suffering and struggles involved in human history (cf. Jaeger 1977: 176). That is why, Moltmann (cf. Moltmann in Jaeger 1977:175) denied that he accepted the Greek idea of God’s perfection:

Since Plato and Aristotle, God’s perfection has been designated as 'apatheia'. God is good and cannot be the cause of evil. God is perfect and thus has no needs. God is sufficient and thus needs neither love nor hate. Nothing can befall him that would make him suffer. He knows neither wrath nor grace.

He (1992: 29) asserts that: “Our true suffering is also his suffering, our sorrow is also his sorrow, our pains are also the pains of his love” and he (1978: 25) justifies this assertion by arguing, “wounds are healed only by wounds”. Here, Moltmann agrees with Kitamori (cf. Kitamori in Mc Williams 1982: 45) who claims that: “sickness is saved by sickness” or “only the widow can comprehend another widow” or, in others words, that He is the God who is on the side of the wronged. God is always presented as **קדוש** which means He is a suffering God, a fellow-victim with those who are wronged **קדוש** (cf. Tregelles

²³ See also a profound study found in von Werdt (von Werdt in Feiner and Loehrer 1978. 1v/6: 116-121) and von Balthasar (von Balthasar in Feiner and Loehrer 1978. vol III/5: 88-94).

1950: 725)²⁴, “the great companion—the fellow-sufferer who understands” as Whitehead (cf. Whitehead in Surin 1982: 110-111) observes. We identify with Heschel because the Hebrew Scriptures never present God as perfect. We believe that the notion of God as a perfect being is not of biblical origin. It is the product not of prophetic religion but of Greek philosophy and we think that, instead of presenting God as a being of rational perfection, the scriptures focused on a deity who cared deeply for His people (cf. Heschel 1966:101). We diverge from Heschel and Moltmann because they do not have the boldness to admit that if He is experienced in the tautegorical sphere **קִדְּוֹשׁ**, he has the capacity to be paradoxically holy as well as a harlot. This paradoxical behaviour of God expresses doubtlessly, the grandeur and the profound meaning of the incarnation (cf. Anta Diop 1959: 150). Besides this the above-mentioned points obviously make Moltmann realistic, pragmatic and more comprehensive than Barth. Barth’s approach to God’s pathos is close to that of the dogmatic clergy’s or the dominant class’s; but Moltmann is the kin of the oppressed as Bonhoeffer (1975), Schweitzer (1964), Berdyaev (1961), Boff (1979), Gutiérrez (1981), Cone (1970), Malula (1980), Kivengere (1975,1977) or Desmond Tutu (1977).

1.1.2.3 God’s Pathos in Emil Brunner: The third voice

Emil Brunner (1949) intervenes in the debate as the third voice. With his neo-orthodox approach to God’s pathos, he prefers to discuss the question of God’s unchanging nature

²⁴ The same nuance is observed with the word **קִדְּוֹשׁ** (cf. Tregelles 1950: 151-152). The word **קִדְּוֹשׁ** paradoxically means a holy person (man) as well as a temple-prostitute or **שִׁדְּוֹת** (woman or harlot). The idea is that no one can be holy or the redeemer without being identified with the subject to be purified or redeemed. This identification, which is indeed the incarnation, hides the mysterious sense of God’s pathos. See also the true meaning of cruxification in 2 Corinthians 5: 21.

by entering into the old dispute about the traditional attributes of the immutability or impassibility of God. Brunner (1949: 243) goes back to the early church to shape his argument. He says that: "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the theological doctrine of the Divine attributes, handed on from the Early Church, has been shaped by the Platonic and neo-Platonic idea of God, and not by the biblical idea". Wondra (1964: 31), on the other hand, comments that, "Brunner feels that the distinction between the two is that in the Bible, God is a personal subject who reveals himself, whereas the Greek approach makes him the object of thought which is attained by a process of one's own thinking". If Wondra's perception of Brunner's view is correct, then Brunner is putting forward in Christianity the idea of the *Theopathetikos*, the God who is the fellow-suffer and *Ananké* the God who is totally indifferent to human suffering. The merit of Brunner's idea is that it recognizes and attempts to solve the dilemma by adopting Kierkegaard's paradox. Brunner's comprehension of God's pathos, thus, transcends Hegel and Barth: this interpretation confirms the effectiveness of Moltmann, as well as of the fathers of the early church. Brunner's view is very significant especially for its involvement of ethical implications in relation to God.

In all of his theology, Brunner sustains the idea of the *unchanging nature of God*. The question for debate is what Brunner means by the *unchanging nature of God*. In response, Brunner says that the idea of the *unchangingness of God* means that God alters his behavior in accordance with the changes in human being. Here, he adopts Heschel's position of defining God's pathos as *transitive action*. We disagree. God's behavior has to be understood and perceived in a multi-dimensional way. God not only enters into the activity of humankind and acts but He dialogues with people, hears their prayers, loves

and judges them. We would like to emphasize that the transitive acts of divinity can never be dissociated from God's reflexive acts. We believe that the creation of human being as related in Genesis and above all God's love drama with Israel as described in Hosea can help us to perceive this. In Genesis, with the fall of Adam and Eve, God is affected and He involves Himself in the affective human drama. Therefore, in Genesis, contrary to common belief, the act of the creation of human being paradoxically brings to our attention human being's involvement in God's affective drama, even if human being is ignorant of the beginning and the end of the ongoing tragedy. Wondra (1964:32) explains Brunner's caution in rejecting God's impassibility. According to Brunner we must not swallow the modern, unchristian notion that God is part of the universal process and that He is *becoming* along with all of us. Brunner's caution appears ambiguous. This is said because although we cannot accept all philosophical and theological presuppositions, we would like to believe that Brunner (1934: 502) accepts them in expressing clearly the use of the paradox of human and divine suffering on the cross:

This Passion is, however, vicarious through the personal solidarity, the close union that subsists between the One who suffers and those for whom He suffers. Only man can suffer from his connection with God, and only on this account can this sacrifice have meaning. The human element, in the deepest sense of the word, constitutes the "material" for this sacrifice; therefore it must be suffered in a truly human way. But God Himself can only achieve this; therefore the Person, in whom human nature truly suffers, must be the Divine Person. It is therefore wholly impossible to separate the human and the divine vicarious elements from each other. The existence of the one implies the existence of the other.

If the paradox *Anthropos-Theos* is one of the philosophical and theological presuppositions, accepted by Brunner, then the idea that the God of the Bible is unchangeable, holds true. But the idea that God is *unchangeable* in terms of faithfulness rather than impassibility becomes contradictory. In attempting to solve this, we suggest *changeableness* and *not changeableness* in the place of the idea of *unchangeableness*; Wondra prefers to support Brunner's view on God's behavior. It is true on the one hand that God alters his behavior in response to human behaviour and on the other, this transitive change depends intrinsically on reflexive changes because God is the *principia pathos*. The problem that most theologians and philosophers face in grasping the *principia pathos* is similar to these encountered in metaphysics (cf. Whitehead 1978); the grandeur of the universe in cosmology (cf. Silk 1988 and Hawkins 1988); the mystery of DNA in biochemistry (cf. Monod 1972); the theory of quantum and relativity in physics and chemistry (cf. Planck 1922 and Niels Bohr 1948); and the incertitude of financial markets in macro-economies. In all these fields of human endeavour, including theology, the understanding of God, the *principia pathos* remains an enigma, as Einstein (1935) observes. However, Eliezer Berkovitz and Heschel claim to resolve this enigma, their attempt at resolution will be demonstrated below.

1.2 THE MODERN JEWISH VIEW OF GOD'S PATHOS IN HESCHEL AND BERKOVITZ: DISPUTE, CRITICISM AND A NEW APPROACH.

Moltmann (cf. Moltmann in Jaeger 1977: 174) holds that:

When I began to grapple critically with the axiom of impassibility, which is more philosophical than biblical, I

discovered parallels that I would never have thought of. My first discovery was the Jewish concept of the pathos of God with which Abraham Heschel has interpreted the message of the Shekinah, the indwelling of God in the persecuted and suffering people of God...

Jaeger (1977: 174) writes that: "Moltmann also noted that when he did research on the Crucified God, he found that Jewish writers had already been discussing the theme of God's suffering". Indeed, when we read Moltmann we remark that he approaches his work in a fashion parallel to that of Heschel. Three points are fundamental in this parallelism: Heschel and Moltmann perceive God's pathos in the holocaust event; they both take the biblical text seriously; and both Heschel and Moltmann believe that faith is the element which moves God to become compassionate (cf. Merkle 1985: 493 and 496).

Heschel, as a pioneer, makes seven important points (1990.vol 1:11): God's pathos is not a passion, an unreasoned emotion, but an act formed with intention, rooted in decision and determination; God's pathos is not an attitude taken arbitrarily, but one charged with ethos; God's pathos is not a reflexive, but a transitive act; God's pathos is not seen in its psychological denotation, standing for a state of soul, but in its theological connotation, signifying God as involved in history and as intimately affected by events in history; the divine pathos is the unity of the eternal and the temporal, of meaning and mystery, of the metaphysical and the historical; the language the prophets employed to describe that God's supreme concern (God's pathos) was an anthropomorphism to end all anthropomorphisms (cf. Heschel 1990.vol 2: 52); and finally, the notion of God as a perfect Being is not of biblical origin (cf. Heschel 1990.vol2: 54).

From these assumptions, it is possible to confirm the claim of Fritz Rothschild (cf. Rothschild in Merkle 1984:160) that "Heschel has propounded a truly revolutionary doctrine, challenging the whole venerable tradition of Jewish and Christian metaphysical theology from Philo, Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas to Herman Cohen, Etienne Gilson and Paul Tillich". In view of the complexity of this divine pathos, Heschel's principal thesis is not simply original but, indeed, revolutionary. It is to be expected, then, that Heschel's theology of pathos would be attacked by other theologians, such as Eliezer Berkowitz (cf. Merkle 1984: 151). Eliezer Berkowitz, dissatisfied with Heschel's viewpoint, decided to launch an attack on the concept of divine pathos, as Tanenzapf (1974: 279) observes. In his address to Heschel, Berkowitz's line of attack is against the use of anthropomorphism. Berkowitz (1964: 81-82) claims:

The logical deduction runs like this: According to the Bible, the greatness of god is seen in the fact that 'man is neither an abstraction to Him, nor in His judgment a generalization. God knows man, the individual human being, and judges Him as individual. 'Yet in order to realize a human being not as a generality but as a concrete fact, one must feel him, one must become aware of him emotionally'. This would make sense if God's pathos could be explained logically. But since what we gain by the argument must be called a mystery, why don't we call for a mystery a step sooner? Why not reason in the following manner: It is inconceivable that the Supreme Being could be passible. Therefore, there could be no such thing as divine pathos. At the same time, God realizes man as 'a concrete fact' however, in order to do that one must feel him; one must become aware of him emotionally.

He proceeds by arguing that:

But God is free of pathos. Ergo, God's realizing man as a concrete fact and not as an abstraction is enrapt in mystery. We believe our way of reasoning is much more valid than that of Heschel. For Dr. Heschel commits the unforgivable fallacy that he equates the human way of realizing a fellow man as a concrete fact with the way of God. Man's way of 'knowing' a fellow being depends on feeling and emotion. Could not conceivably God's way be different from that of man? Surely, our mystery is much more logical than Dr. Heschel's.

We identify two problems in Berkovitz's accusation against anthropomorphism. Firstly, there is Berkovitz's problem concerning the way that Heschel equates the human way of recognising a fellow human with God's way. Merkle (1984: 151) believes that "the theology of pathos presupposes an analogy between the divine and the human which is an alien and objectionable concept from the Jewish point of view; thus, a God of pathos is God shaped in the image of man". Berkovitz's fear is indeed understandable from his background and is also related to his philosophical, and mythological, misunderstandings. Heschel says that he uses anthropomorphism to end all anthropomorphisms. This announcement, as Merkle suggested, puts the question of anthropomorphism in a tautegorical dimension instead of an analogical. Heschel is correct, even if he did not use the tautegorical hermeneutic because in the tautegorical dimension the **σημειον** and its significance **σημασια** transcend dogma²⁵. Whitehead (1926: 126) correctly notes that: "A dogma in the sense of precise statement can never be final; it can only be adequate in its adjustment of certain abstract concepts. But the estimate of the status of these concepts remains for determination". Heschel does not emphasize the use of dogma; he inaugurates a new way of re-making the philosophy, theology and religion, while

²⁵ See an important observation of Bastos 1992: 47-48.

Berkovitz insists on the survival of Jewish dogma. Whitehead identifies with Heschel, as he (1926: 126) observes that: "In no phase of human knowledge or belief dogma is tenable". Any dogma or axiom has to be re-interpreted in its new context, or it will become obsolete. Berkovitz's failure also with regard to anthropomorphism lies in his lack of tautegorical perception of the early religious background of the Near Eastern Ancient civilizations and especially that of sub-Saharan Africa. This does not as Hempel observes (cf. Hempel in Fohrer 1973: 78) necessarily mean the way in which unsophisticated people try to perceive the world and life. This is, in a sense, a new theological framework. This new theological perception implies the paradoxical way of combining without dichotomizing *rational* and the *not rational* things or images. Berkovitz, like many other scholars, misunderstand the importance of this new theological framework. Berkovitz, also, misunderstand the fact that in these contexts divinity is always shaped in the image of human beings. As Hempel (cf. Hempel in Fohrer 1973: 78) observes:

Yahweh is conceived solely as having human form. A later theology reversed the notion, seeing man in Yahweh's image (Gen. 1:26-27) while the ancient Near Eastern gods appear also or only in forms that range from the astral world to the world of plants and animals. In addition, Yahweh is conceived as possessing human features like love and hate, joy and sorrow, forgiveness and vengeance. This was important for the unsophisticated Israelite, who needed concrete images. His God understood his all-too-human feelings and actions, because his God himself could love and hate. Unlike the Homeric gods, however, Yahweh did not incorporate any human weaknesses and failings. He could not be ridiculed like them, for he never ceased to be an exalted deity.

Even if Hempel cautiously endorses Fohrer (1973: 78-79), it is evident that Yahweh is like the Homeric gods. Scholars or ordinary readers have problems in accepting it because of their biblical interpretations of the poetic symbols based on false philosophical and mythological assumptions, as Berkovitz has done, depicting the true identity of God. Unfortunately, these poetic symbols reveal nothing apart from superficiality, an escape into theodicy and a misreading of the biblical texts. But, if the creations of the cosmos and humankind, and, above all, the dramatic redemption of kind in Hosea, are not affective encounters between God, Human beings and the Cosmos, then, what are they?

Heschel (1996.vol 1: 4) argues that God's pathos is not a passion, an unreasoned emotion, but an essential act rooted in decision and determination. Berkovitz's reaction is very interesting: he shares Heschel's view that God's pathos is not a passion; but he disagrees with the idea that to interact with someone means to be affected by that person, and that this is true even for God. Yet he argues contradictorily, that God is personal and is concerned with human beings. In this argument, Tanenzapf (1974:281-282) perceives Berkovitz's contradiction and wonders what it means to be concerned for another, if the other does not affect you. He proceeds to explain:

If I say that I care for a person, but I do not share her joys and sorrows, that I am unaffected both by the happy and sad occasions in her life, one would rightly wonder whether I am really concerned, whether I really do care for her. Caring destroys independence and self-sufficiency; to love is to be vulnerable, to be open to and influenced by, the one loved.

According to Tanenzapf (1974: 282), Berkovitz resorted here to the Midrash to insist that God's pathos is contradictory. A similar contradiction becomes evident when he speaks about God's perfection. The notion of God as a perfect Being is not of biblical origin (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 54). We have already shown above that the Bible never refers to God as the perfect being and, given God's pathos, to be holy does not mean to be perfect. God's exigency in terms of ethical concerns (שְׂדֵדוֹת) is always linked with His concrete existence. Indeed, what we contend, with Heschel, is that Berkovitz disassociates passion from God's pathos. It is evident that à propos of pathos we are dealing with the question of *passion* and *not passion*²⁶ and God cannot be an exception, unless we use Hegel's model. It seems, at this point, that the fear of Heschel and Berkovitz is based on the faith of the Jews and Philo, and Maimonides' philosophical presuppositions²⁷. What Berkovitz failed to discuss was Heschel's phrase that God's pathos is not reflexive, but transitive. We cannot imagine how he failed to approach such an important issue. Once again, however, we affirm that Heschel wrongly limited God's redemption of Humans to the transitive dimension, forgetting that reflexive, symmetric and transitive are in the whole interlaced: namely completely reciprocal. Perhaps the silence of Berkovitz on the matter is better than Heschel's argument. Silence is implicitly encouraged by the poet in Hosea:

Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walks in them, but the rebellious stumble in them. (Hosea 14:9)

²⁶ *Not passion* (the opposite to passion) differs to *impassibility* (negation of passion).

²⁷ Moltmann has suggested some very interesting views that the pathos of God in the Old Testament is the presupposition for the passion of God according to the New Testament.

This lack of explications is certainly the cause of the dispute but, more, it cannot be the reason for discouragement. On the contrary, it has to move us to meditate in depth about the true meaning of metaphor, which is the real reason for misunderstanding the concept of God's pathos in philosophy, theology and religion.

In this chapter we started by discussing the pathos of God from the perspective of the most famous Jewish scholars, Philo and Maimonides, who focused on the difficulties that they faced in reconciling their Greek and Jewish philosophical and their theological backgrounds. Then we considered the way in which neo-orthodox scholars in Catholic and Protestant churches on the one hand and Jewish scholars like Berkovitz and Heschel, on the other entered into the debate. In the next chapter, we are going to face the enigmatic question of metaphor, analyzing God's pathos by the symbolic or tautegorical method and using two other symbols: *Logos* and *Ethos*.

CHAPTER TWO

2. COMPARISON OF THE CONCEPTS OF PATHOS, LOGOS AND ETHOS BETWEEN HOSEA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN CULTURE

In the previous chapter, we looked briefly at the ways in which the Jewish understanding of the mystery of the concept of pathos played a determining role in religious and socio-political spheres of life from the Middle Ages to the present day. Another concern was to grasp the impact that this had on the development of theology among modern Jewish, Catholic and Protestant orthodox and neo-orthodox theologians. In this new section, we would like to show, through the study of Hosea's poetry, which is a subversive song that reveals the true nature of idols, and especially through the study of metaphor, how the complex concept of pathos interacts with other concepts, for instance, logos and ethos. This interactive study is limited to the Israelites and the sub-Saharan part of Africa.

2.1 Synoptic study of the concepts of the Pathos, Logos and Ethos of God in Hosea

Heschel (1955: 3), as the pioneer student of God's pathos since the last century, says that:

It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, and insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name

of authority rather than with the voice of compassion, its message becomes meaningless.

Pope John XXIII (cf. John XXIII in Abbott 1966: 4), Karl Rahner (1974), Congar (1953,1964), King (1969, 2001), Boff (1981, 1986), Gutiérrez (1974), Malula (1985), Cone (1970), Alves (1985, 1990), Cochrane and West (1993), Kiviengere (1975, 1977), Tutu (1977), Boesak (1995), Mosala (1989) and other *protest theologians*²⁸ launch the same attack against the modern church. In spite of the horrors of events like Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the painful dictatorships in Latin America, and the dramatic religious and socio-political holocaust of the people of sub-Saharan Africa, the appeal of those theologians remains without echoes. It is not a mere coincidence that Heschel (1966: 254), in the past, observed that: "The universe would be an inferno without a God who cares. There is no echo within the world for the agony and cry of humanity. There is only God who hears". Apathy and silence have caused and still cause serious damage. Indeed, apathy and silence perpetuate the religious and socio-political holocaust in the sub-Saharan African context. In this context, the holocaust started with the Negro slave trade, but is perpetuated in a new form of slavery, with the complicity of local leadership, as it was in the past by religious and socio-political leaders. The drama of the sub-Saharan African people confirms the fact that for most of these people, including South Africans, independence from the colonial authorities is a kind of *false* religious and socio-political start. Our fear is that the continuation of this a religious and socio-political holocaust can lead to the point of total dehumanization, which would inevitably result in the liquidation of human beings (cf. Heschel 1963:16). This liquidation would destroy the spirit of *Ubuntu* or human solidarity (cf. Mbigi 1995 and 1997; Bhengu 1996). What then is the cause of the affective failure of

²⁸ See, for example, the *Kairos document* of South Africa, in which many protester theologians raise their voice against the oppressive situation of Apartheid.

history? Berdyaev (1961:10) observes that: “The failure of history is none other than the tragedy of the lack of agreement between what exists as human and personal on one hand, and on the other all objectification, which is always extra-personal, non-human, anti-personal and anti-human.” The result of this failure of history is evident among many people all over the entire world seeking for compassion. The voices of these oppressed people remain a matter of concern. Indeed, these oppressed citizens, as well as their oppressors inevitably need to hear a prophetic voice similar to Hosea’s. Looking at the biblical prophetic context of the 8th century BCE, it becomes more and more evident that modern people, and particularly those of sub-Saharan Africa, need to listen, to an effective prophet like Hosea in order to understand how God really is concerned about the agony and drama of humanity. In this book, the voice of God’s compassion is expressed through three symbols: **πάθος**, **ἔθος** and **λόγος**. These symbols are ancient theological and philosophical ones and are incomplete. This means that they do not have any meaning in isolation, but are defined in certain contexts (cf. Whitehead and Russell 1962:66) and in connection with each other so as to raise new questions, to supply new answers and, above all, to forge new comprehension from new events ²⁹.

2.2 The Meaning of God’s Pathos, Ethos and Logos and the Enigmatic question of Metaphor in the text of Hosea

Given that we have portrayed the world’s drama and its claim for compassion, we will further explore in this section the true meaning of symbols like pathos, ethos and logos

²⁹ Brueggeman (cf. Brueggeman in Brueggeman and Wolff 1975: 11). The author establishes a similar point of view asserting that: “The Bible was not shaped in isolation. It was always shaped and reshaped in serious confrontation between Israel and those, inside and out, who allied her faith. Again and again, emerging events put new questions before Israel’s memory and insisted upon fresh answers from the believing community”. This is the key-idea for the actualization of the church’s Biblical Hermeneutic. ➔

through the prophets and, especially, in Hosea. What is the bond that exists between pathos, ethos and logos? Among many other thinkers, Heschel makes a great contribution to understanding the meaning of, as well as the bond that exists between pathos, ethos and logos in prophetic studies. Heschel (1996.vol 2: 7) advances four points. Firstly, pathos, far from being intrinsically irrational, is a state which the prophet is able to comprehend morally, as well as emotionally. Secondly, pathos is the focal point for eternity and history, the epitome of all relationships between God and Human beings. Just because it is not a final reality, but a dynamic modality, pathos makes possible a living encounter between God and His people (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 9). Thirdly, pathos is the real basis of the relationship between God and Human being, of the correlation between creator and creation, of the dialogue between the Holy One of Israel and His people (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 11). Fourthly, the idea of divine pathos is not a personification of God but an exemplification of divine reality, an illustration or illumination of His concern. Hence, pathos does not represent a substance, but an act or a relationship (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 53). Obviously, the points raised by Heschel above are debatable; but, what interests us is the fact, that in the context of the prophetic studies, Heschel (1996.vol 2: 5) recognizes the intrinsic bond that exists between pathos and ethos. He notes: "There is no dichotomy of pathos and ethos, of motive and norm. They do not exist side by side opposing each other; they involve and presuppose each other". It is evident that Heschel disagrees with the Hegelian triadic dialectic assumptions and he decisively embraces Kierkegaard's dyadic dialectic. Heschel (1996.vol 2: 5) argues that: "It is because God is the source of justice that His pathos is ethical; and it is because God is absolutely personal-devoid of anything impersonal-that this ethos is full of pathos". So,

he concludes that pathos is not an attitude assumed arbitrarily. Its inner law is the moral law; ethos is inherent in pathos (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 5).

It is remarkable Heschel does not establish a formal comparison with the logos. However, it is possible to perceive, from the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political background, that in prophetic drama the logos, which is the incarnation of Yahweh through the prophet, plays the role of *reconciler* and *medium-creator*. The prophet is a true *reconciler* because as a mediator, he attempts to reconcile through the mysterious power of his logos: God, Humankind and Nature. He is a *medium-creator* because his prophetic appeal to repentance is always connected with the possibility of the coming to life again of God, Humankind and Nature. It is important to remember that the prophetic logos is one of the components of the triad: *pathos-logos-ethos*.

In terms of understanding the meaning of logos, Coleridge diverges from Heschel for two reasons: he comes up with the understanding of logos as the “Jehovah-Word” (cf. Coleridge in Perkins 1994: 17); Coleridge (cf. Coleridge in Perkins 1994: 17) also insists that: “Reality cannot have opposites” (cf. Capra 1983: 21-71). Coleridge distances himself from the Hegelian triad, as Heschel does, and he considers logos as the self-measure, self-determination, and self-disclosure of God. There is here no hint of negation, however, or of separation, only *relation*. We know that logos, ethos and pathos are mere symbols that we can use for an analogical interpretation of the metaphors found in Hosea. In spite of our support of the view points of Heschel and Coleridge, it is clear, following Ricoeur (1978) and Capra (1983), that methods of interpretation like allegory, simile and analogy, which are

frequently used in the biblical hermeneutic, have become increasingly inadequate. They are not applicable to the study of Hosea because the entire *persona*³⁰ of this prophet transcends the world of language, things and beings. The vocation of the prophet is similar to the vocation of the poet. The person who embraces a dangerous mission moves from the objective dimension of existence to the trans-objective (cf. Bastos 1992:31-43). What then happens when a person is moved from the objective dimension of existence to the trans-objective? The perception of events, things or subjects by this person changes radically and this change is displayed in new behavior and, above all, in the new ways of thinking and speaking adopted. That is why in attempting to interpret, for example, any prophetic work, particularly that of Hosea, it is necessary to use metaphor, which is not situated in the objective dimension of language, things and beings, but in the Trans-objective. The Trans-objective dimension uses the *tautegoric*³¹ aspects of language, things and beings (cf. Bastos 1992:31-43).

The Eastern mystic, Jalal-uddin Rumi (cf. Jalal-uddin Rumi in Huxley 1946: 166) enthusiastically observes: "Men's minds perceive second causes, but only prophets perceive the action of the First Cause". This means that, unlike the ordinary person, the prophet, and the poet penetrate the Trans-objective dimension of existence. We agree with Jalal-uddin Rumi that in this dimension each component of the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος** interlaces

³⁰ Personality. See Tennant, P M W [n.d]. *Mask or Mirror: A Study of Juvenal's satires as a reflection of Authorial, Personality and Perspective*. Durban: University of Natal, 1-45. This is an excellent study that merits more attention. See also Diatessaron 1: 8-9.

³¹ Symbolic (συνβαλλειν : to gather or to put together).

with the other, and that the apparent contradictions encompassed by human beings and God are not treated as irreconcilable, but as imparting tensions within reality (cf. McKinley 1996: 121-122).

In order to relate the discourse of the prophet Hosea to the form of thinking and speaking of the people of the sub-Saharan African context, it is important to understand the use of metaphor (cf. Landy 1995: 35-47), which is the richest and most dominant form of articulating profound thought and wisdom in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, in sub-Saharan Africa, tradition and wisdom are transmitted from the elders to the younger generation through enigmatic and symbolic forms of language in which metaphors are constantly used. It is well known that metaphors are obscure and sometimes multivalent (cf. Landy 1995: 37, 43 and Kittay 1987: 142). They are also fragile and incomplete (cf. Landy 1995: 36). There is danger of destroying one language and creating another (cf. Paz 1974:36-37,68-69), and it is always very difficult to discover the demarcation between the necessity for constructing, and deconstructing the text (cf. Mckinley 1996: 124). It is here that we find the backbone of the biblical hermeneutic and we can understand why many biblical scholars face serious difficulties in interpreting the prophetic books and especially Hosea. We agree with Ricoeur (1978), Kittay (1987: 30) and, particularly, Nietzsche (cf. Nietzsche in D. Breazeale 1979: 89) that metaphor is a vehicle for a message, and in using this symbolic vehicle, Hosea, as an Israelite poet, demonstrates an extraordinarily high level of creativity and imagination.

All scholars accept this point of view. In response to Ferré's thesis, Soskice (1985: 77) thinks that the Israelites because of their lack of self-conscious religious imagery were unable to differentiate between language appropriate or inappropriate to God. That is why Soskice (1985: 77) notes that:

Ferré found that it is difficult to believe that the prophets, although perhaps lacking a developed set of grammatical distinctions which enabled them to designate metaphors as metaphors, were unaware that in speaking of God as a herdsman or planter they were using language not strictly appropriate to him. Only the Hellenization process could create conditions for that.

Here we agree with Ferré (cf. Ferré in Soskice 1985: 77) because it seems that Soskice contradicts herself. We also think that Soskice's weakness is that she misunderstands the fact that, to the Israelites, before Hellenization, the God of Israel was known as a Deity, and beyond human conception as Hempel (cf. Hempel in Forster 1973:78), Heschel (1996. vol 2: 7) and Soskice (1985:77) herself recognize. We believe, however, that Hosea audaciously opened the door for a new conception of and approach to things, nature or being and, above all, God the Creator. Therefore, from Hosea's perspective, it is possible to conceive of a bipolar and complementary mode of living for God (cf. Cobb 1975: 32-61, Thishiku 1980: 63-64,75).

Reflecting once more on the issue of metaphor, we agree with Nietzsche (Nietzsche in Soskice 1985: 78) that: "It is not the metaphors which are the villains of the piece, but the human tendency to view one's own manner of categorizing as *fixed*, canonic and binding, as the one true account of truth." The study of human language constitutes a terrible enigma for all of us, as Wittgenstein (1953 and 1966) has demonstrated. Wittgenstein's contribution in this area is incontestable. However, we think that Soskice (1985: 78-79) rightly observes that some writers wrongly use Wittgenstein's ideas to fight against the use of metaphors in

human language. In his work *White Mythology*, Derrida (1974: 10-11) discusses Nietzschean ideas, as does Soskice (1985: 80) in her *Metaphor and Religious Language*. However, Derrida (1974: 10-11) views metaphor in relation to the metaphysical dimension of language. He argues that there is a sensible or anesthetic figure behind each metaphysical use of language. But what happens when this sensible figure is introduced or used into daily speech? Derrida (1974: 10-11) responds thus: "After their introduction or use, the original displacement of metaphorical terms in philosophy is forgotten and the new meaning is taken as the proper one". We think that the same phenomenon occurs in theology. The great obstacle to both philosophy and theology is the incapability of the people of our epoch to think about events. People limit themselves to using common sense and reject, questioningly, the unique, particular and singular (cf. Heschel 1996.vol. 2:10). Today, people of the global village are competent to do almost anything and to imagine almost nothing (cf. Brueggemann 1978: 45). In this global context the use of imagination is in danger. The study of Hosea could become a great opportunity for changing this state of affairs. This is because Hosea, through the use of metaphor, enables us, as Haughton (1981: 18-19, 45) observes, to break through in a new way. We perceive the newness because what we are seeing causes constant shocks of recognition. It has not "happened before" yet it is piercingly familiar, as each spring is unique, and recognized in its uniqueness as the breakthrough of an eternal newness, deeply familiar yet never to be held, always to be freshly discovered. Kruger (1988: 143) focuses on the axiom of Nietzsche when he says "*Stil verbessern, heißt den Gedanken verbessern*"³². Nietzsche is right to see God, Human beings, ideas, things and events in the process of becoming (cf. Whitehead 1979:147-153). We identify with Kruger (1988: 143) in thinking that the book in which the truth of this maxim is realized is Hosea and, certainly, it is realized through the use of metaphor.

³² Correcting (improving) style means, correcting (improving) the thought.

The idea of seeing metaphor from the perspective of becoming moves us to raise the question as to where metaphor came from? In other words, who invented metaphor? This question, posed by West (1996: 204), is pertinent. Certainly, in our context of study the answer is clear. It is neither Hosea's nor sub-Saharan Africa's invention but, perhaps, God's invention through humans and, especially, through the enigmatic language of sages, among whom God is the principal one. God surely used this language, created by Himself (cf. Proverb 1:1-8) and strengthened by human beings to express the fact of being the source of Wisdom (e.g. for the Greek), even if there was no picture in the human mind that corresponded to the metaphor. It was not crystallized as a definite concept, from which logical consequences could be drawn, nor was it raised into a dogma, an exact formulation of a belief (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 1: 53). Therefore, it not only required a cognitive dimension but above all, an affective involvement or incarnation to help Hosea to comprehend and impart the secret of His message of hope and salvation. The message of hope and salvation comes through poetry, which is the vehicle of metaphorical language and we can ask ourselves what role poetry plays in helping us to understand God's pathos. Vanhoozer (1990:61-62) tries to respond to this question by referring to Ricoeur, who says that feeling is much more than *emotion*. Vanhoozer argues that: "Feeling is a way of orienting oneself in the world." Feelings relate us to the world in a quite different manner than does knowledge. Therefore, paradoxically, feelings are also intentional acts that have intentional objects or references. Whereas knowledge tends to make the subject feel *distant* from the object, feelings *involve* (cf. Vanhoozer 1990: 62) us with things.

According to Vanhoozer, Ricoeur's view of the mystery of feeling is that we have to do not only with subjective states, but also with our profound connection to human beings and God (cf. Vanhoozer 1990: 62). Thanks to poetry, Vanhoozer claims, we no longer feel alienated from the world, but rather we feel as though we somehow *belong* to it. Poetry is able, in this

way, to create a bond of love between the reader and the world (cf. Kittay 1987: 176-177). Poetry has this capacity because both the poet and the prophet learn by feeling or suffering. As Aeschylus (cf. Agamemnon 181) said “*pathei mathos*”. However, the poet like the prophet, is the one who breaks the bond between language and things on one level in order to express significant truths about the human condition on another (cf. Vanhoozer 1990: 61).

2.3 The Study of the triad *Pathos-Logos-Ethos* in Hosea from a sub-Saharan African perspective

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts. Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst. (Hosea 2:2-3)

Previously we looked at scholars’ treatment of the question of metaphor in both secular and biblical literature. Here, we would like to approach it once more in connection both with the sub-Saharan African context, and with the text of Hosea. The biblical poetic text arouses various reactions among scholars and the debate around it is extensive. This brings us to the question of the betrayal of God. Both the *première vue*³³ and a careful reading of this prophetic text raise the serious problem of ethics. The God defended by classical theologians becomes strange and the pathos of this God is in conflict with His ethic. In the text of Hosea, the holy God becomes the harlot, if we would consider seriously the reality of the covenant which displays the deep meaning of marriage. Here, God the husband has intercourse with the harlot and together they beget the children of

³³ The first sight.

adultery. The divine imperative for unconditional love becomes quite obvious when we read Hosea about the feelings that God displays as a betrayed husband. In the text, the voice of God expresses the sorrow of someone who is oppressed, and above all, is reduced to nothing (Hosea 1-3). Indeed, the text leads us to remark that in the place of love, God is abused (cf. Geisler 1971:73), and hence, He becomes aggressive and imbalanced (cf. Hosea 2: 1-3).

It is regrettable that the monotheist scholars mostly insist on monogamy. It is true that the Torah, as Jewish and Western classic theologians interpret it, emphasizes monogamy. But Hosea introduces another dynamic into the religious sphere. Perhaps this new dynamic means that in the religious sphere polygamy also opens the door for polyandry. As is known, polygamy is the way that the chauvinists of patriarchal societies justify both on one hand, the maximum exploitation of fertility because no fertility field should remain fallow and on the other uncontrolled sexual appetites. Men of these societies, where such practices are allowed, falsely viewed intercourse as love, thus, confirming their masculinity and power over women. But if God, in Hosea, as a supposed faithful husband has the liberty to chose Assyria, Babylon and Persia as other spouses, why cannot this right be given to Israel? We learn to be faithful by suffering the pains of betrayal and it seems that God is no exception. The new religious dynamic introduced by Hosea with a very subtle shift moves us to believe that the dehumanization of women extended into the religious sphere. Because the weakness of woman implies the weakness of man, the man of moral character becomes ironically weak in relation to the woman. Indeed, in opposition to what feminist and other protest theologians think, here Hosea stands definitely on the side of women. It is true the priests of Baal, to dynamize patriarchy,

sadistically led their victims to believe that they were rulers, and stronger than Hosea. In Baalism, apparently, women were as nothing and men obsessively engaged in violent sexual practice. But we think, once again, that the text of Hosea undermines such male arrogance.

Hosea warned the people against this illusion and against the sexual abuse that this illusion that sexual dominance was a source of power and against the eroticism that the devotees of Baal introduced into Yahwehism. But in Israel, men practised polygamy, without either the objection of women or strict Biblical condemnation (cf. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and Mark 10: 1-12), as occurs in sub-Saharan Africa today. If polygamy satisfies the ego of both men, and of God, as has been observed above, how is it that promiscuity and above all, polyandry causes suffering for men, and for God? Can fidelity not be required from both: the man and the woman and from God and Israel? Another ethical issue is that, if God found that Israel was unfaithful as His spouse, why did He not opt for a divorce? Geiseler (1971:207) says: "Divorce is always wrong. The rule is this: a permanent, abiding, and unique relation is always right". He refers to the Bible by arguing that: "The scriptures are concerned with the permanence of marriage. The rule is to keep a unique love relationship going at all costs as long as it does not mean the perpetuation of an evil or lesser good in favor of greater good". We regret two things at this point: firstly, the fact that such ethical analysis tends to confirm the marital philosophy, as it is lived in sub-Saharan Africa, in which the woman remains an eternal slave due to the *groom's marriage settlement*³⁴ system; and secondly, the fact that there

³⁴ Wight (1978:127-128) uses the word dowry which is not correct because it carries on the opposite meaning of the true idea of *groom's marriage settlement* or *dot*.

are few traces of the idea of marital interaction between God and the sub-Saharan African people in the religious sphere (cf. Ephirim-Donkor 1998: 49-68)³⁵.

It is true that for most sub-Saharan African religions, God is paradoxically father and mother. This double role of being father and mother or, in other words, being the guide and the provider does not mean that there is not sufficient proof to convince Israel to be faithful in marriage. Perhaps it is for this reason that Benezet Bujo (cf. Bujo in Balembo 1987:76) failed to face this question from both an ontological, and an anthropological perspective. Theologians commonly avoid involving God in adultery. Whatever the case, in focusing on the issue of the marital bond between God and Israel, the ethical question that any curious reader would raise would be whether Yahweh did unite Himself with Israel and blessed this marital bond? Before responding to such a question, we have to consider Heschel's (1996.vol 2: 55) point that:

There are two pitfalls in our religious understanding: the humanization of God and the anesthetization of God. Both threaten our understanding of the ethical integrity of God's will. Humanization leads to the conception of God as the ally of the people, though the anesthetization of God would reduce Him to a mystery.

In the case of our study, the possibility of the anesthetization of God is dismissed because we prefer the tautegorical to the analogical way of thinking. For the analogical way of thinking or objective dimension God is *Atheopathetikos*. God is the *Theopathetikos* in the

³⁵ The author explores further the issue of the marital bond between the deity and the priesthood class in the rites of initiation in the Akan religion in Ghana. His analysis seems attractive and very important for the study of the issue of God's pathos.

tautegorical or trans-objective dimension; because of this the anesthetization of God is excluded. We opt, thus, for the humanization of God by virtue of the marital affective drama found in the text. This means that, from the perspective of patriarchy and the Sinai covenant, it is God who, paradoxically, blesses the marriage between Israel and Himself and unites Himself with Israel (cf. Genesis 15 and Exodus 19-20). This is true because before the Torah the covenant was in existence (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 10). Then God's relationship with His partner was one of benevolence and affection, as Heschel says (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 10). Comparing the covenant and love Heschel (1996.vol 2: 10) asserts:

Anterior to the covenant is love, the love of the fathers (Deuteronomy 4: 37; 10: 15), and what obtains between God and Israel must be understood, not as a legal, but as a personal relationship, as participation, involvement, tension. The covenant is an extraordinary act, establishing a reciprocal relation between God and man; it is conceived as a juridical commitment.

In the same way Neher (1955: 266-267) argues that:

Une alliance entre les hommes et Dieu est une berit au même titre qu' une alliance entre les hommes et d' autres hommes. Mais le héséd de cette berit, la manifestation de son existence, ne peut pas être juridique seulement, ni même exclusivement morale. Elle a quelque chose d'affectif et d'intuitif. Lorsque Dieu accorde une alliance à des hommes, le fait en soi constitue une grace; il a quelque chose d'exorbitant, d' incompréhensible. Aussi, la métaphore conjugale s' impose t-elle avec force et logique pour décrire cette alliance. Entre Dieu et Israël, il y a le même héséd qu' entre un homme et sa fiancée, un homme et son épouse. La relation conjugale, au sens plein que lui donnent les prophètes, ne s'épuise ni dans le contrat de mariage, ni dans la fidélité des conjoints, mais dans la connaissance (Os 2:22),

c'est à dire dans la rencontre d' amour et de fecondation.
C'est là le *héséd* des amants³⁶.

Then what is the affective meaning of *héséd des amants* or, in other words, what does this language of love mean in Hosea? Neher (1955:251) responds by suggesting that :

Il signifie d' abord que la *connaissance* accordée par le *ruah* n' est pas seulement intime et pénétrante comme l' est toute connaissance sexuelle. S' agissant de la rencontre entre le divin et l' humain, la connaissance est d' ordre conjugal et son symbole recouvre deux notions: à la fidélité constante de deux êtres différenciés par leurs sexes, s' ajoute le lien tout aussi constant de deux êtres que peuvent temporairement séparer l' espace ou la discordance de leurs sentiments. L' amour conjugal diffère du simple amour sexuel, entre autres, par sa persistance au delà de l' acte de rencontre. Même séparés par l' infini de l' espace ou par l' infini du temps, les époux se connaissent par la même force d' amour. Et même lorsque le sentiment de l' amour vient à fléchir chez l' un des époux, il suffit qu' il reste intense chez l' autre pour que la relation d' amour reste acquise³⁷.

He proceeds by arguing that:

³⁶A covenant between men and God is a *berit* in the same way that we have a covenant between men and other men. But the *hesed* of this *berit*, the evidence of its existence, cannot be simply a legal matter nor even nor exclusively a moral one. There is in it something intuitive and emotional. When God grants man a covenant this fact in itself constitutes a grace and this covenant hidden something incomprehensible about it. Thus the conjugal metaphor of conjugality suggests itself strongly or logically to describe this covenant. Between God and Israel there is the same *hesed* as exists between a man and his betratted, a man and his wife. The conjugal bond, in this full sense according to the prophets, is more than simply a homage contract or the fidelity of the of the partners to one to other; it lies in the knowledge (Hosea 2:22) which means the encounter of love and fertilization. This is what means the *hesed* of lovers.

³⁷ First of all it implies that the knowledge granted by the *ruah*, is not only intimate and penetrating as a kind of sexual knowledge. In the matter of the encounter between the divine and the human being, knowledge can be described as conjugal bond and this comprises two concepts: to the enduring fidelity of two beings of different sex, must be added the equally constant bond of tow beings who may be temporary divided by space or the discord of their emotions. Conjugal love differs from the simple sexual love, by its continuance beyond mere sexual encounter. Even when they are separated by infinite space or time, husband and wife are joined by the power of love. And even if the power of love fades in one of the partner it is enough that this power is strong in the other for the bond of love to remain secure.

Le symbolisme conjugal permet ainsi de décrire non seulement une alliance, c' est à dire une communication entre deux êtres, mais une véritable dialectique de l' alliance. Car, d' une part, celle-ci relie deux êtres qui restent nécessairement différents, en tant qu' individualités sexuelles, mais qui sont perpétuellement ressemblants par l' identité de l' amour qu' ils éprouvent l' un pour l' autre; et, d' autre part, la relation conjugale implique un jeu de proximité et de distance, de jaillissement et de lassitude, de connaissance et d' infidélité, qui la rattachent à un éternel mouvement. Ce mouvement ou, si l' on préfère, ce caractère dramatique du symbolisme conjugal, est décisif dans l' adoption du symbole par la Bible. Celle-ci y trouve une ressource pour exprimer ce qui, dans sa conception générale du monde, est essentiellement mouvant et dramatique: l' *histoire*³⁸.

From Heschel's and Neher's perspectives it is, thus, possible to deduce that the marital bond was a new meta-historical act. If one partner breaks the unique marital relation by sexually joining himself or herself to another, then both the permanence and uniqueness of the bond is broken, as Geisler explains (cf. Geisler 1971: 207). Indeed, Geisler's point is applied to the case of Gomer in Hosea. We can argue that the permanence of the marital bond transcends the ethical dimension and goes into the affective. Heschel (1990.vol 2: 10) affirms this by saying that pathos is more than the mere fact of establishing a covenant. He argues that pathos implies a constant concern and involvement (cf. Vanhoozer 1990:62); it is conceived as an emotional engagement (cf. Heschel 1996.vol2: 10). If we understand Heschel's argument, then divorce in this case, is not a pathetic issue. It concerns the covenant, in which only two forms of relationship between God and the people are possible: the maintenance or the dissolution of the covenant (cf. *ibid.* 1990.vol2: 10).

³⁸The symbolism of conjugality helps to describe not only a covenant, meaning a communicative bond between two beings, but a veritable dialectic of covenant. For, on one hand, the covenant unites two beings who remain essentially different, in that they are sexual individuals, but who are forever similar because of the love. They bear each other on the other hand the conjugal relationship implies a game of proximity and distance, enjoyment and lassitude, surging and infidelity which ties it to perpetual movement. Because of this movement, or if you prefer, this dramatic nature of the symbol of conjugality, it has been adopted by

Bujo (Bujo in Balembo 1987: 99) suggests another interesting point, which is that of the existence of the marital bond as *marriage par étapes*. This means marriage which goes through a long process and takes a long time to reach fruition. Such marriage starts from the day of public engagement to the day of the birth of the first son or daughter. The community fixes the day of birth of the son or daughter as the time of the fruition because they would like to be sure that the woman who is involved in this marital bond is not sterile. If we would be honest with Bujo, this type of marital bond implies two things: the perpetual domination of man and the painful slavery of woman.

According to our view, this understanding is not essential to the sub-Saharan African culture, which is closer to the tautegorical or trans-objective dimension and is not mere legalism. Indeed, Bujo (cf. Bujo in Balembo 1987: 99-101) fails to consider the psychological damage that an obsolete ritual such as a groom's marriage settlement causes to a woman because he wrongly assumes that it is concerned about women's well being (cf. Drewal and Drewal 1990: 73-75). If in sub-Saharan African traditional society the end of the marital process is linked to the proof of infertility, in the modern situation this criterion becomes arbitrary: we now know that a man can also be sterile. Also, the criteria of using the birth of a son or daughter, as the mainstay of the affective bond is a display of flagrant chauvinism. The period of putting all the guilt on the woman and using her as a mere slave is over. Analyzing the consequences of a break in the marital bond, from the psychological prism of Gaston Berger, we can perceive that such a break-up of relationship causes the co-partners to become inactive and apathetic, as Gaston Berger (1965: 65) observes:

the Bible which finds in it means of expressing that which, in the general conception, is shifting and

Os não-emotivos inativos não têm, por assim dizer, reação pessoal. Seguem os hábitos ou obedecem às circunstâncias...É natural que sejam os menos afetados. Os apáticos comportar-se-ão, relativamente às forças extremas que se exercem sobre eles, como se estas fossem uma mão muito pesada, cuja trajectória é difícil modificar. Seu pêso-isto é, a resistência de seus hábitos-garante-lhes a independência e uma autonomia proporcional em relação ao meio. Sua forma de adaptar-se é ignorar, deixar agir, fingir-se de morto, sua força é a da inercia³⁹.

We have some reservations about Berger's allegations being necessarily applicable in the case of our thesis, because, even if divorce fits in such a sphere, as we assert above, we still believe that, in the Torah, in a marital bond both partners have feelings and responsibility; they are not moved like mere straw. That is why, for our thesis, we think that the affective interpretation of a legalistic *either-or* ethic has to be replaced by a dynamic multiplicity of *either-may be* relationships (cf. Heschel 1996.vol2: 10). This latter view is similar to that of the sub-Saharan African people and, particularly, the Bantu. Mulago (1980: 175) defines this ethic thus: "Est une éthique vitale, non légaliste ou juridique elle est au service de la vie"⁴⁰. The same sub-Saharan African ethic is sustained by continuous and sincere affective dialogue (*λόγος*), in spite of tension, interference and risk⁴¹. The question that follows is how ethics is seen in the text of Hosea?

dramatic: human history.

³⁹ The no-emotional inactive persons do not express personal feelings. They just follow or obey which the circumstances determine. For that reason what people do often not affect them. In opposite to them, the apathetic persons are often affected by the external influences, these external forces represent a heavy hand placed upon them and they face difficulties to change their decisions. This external hand or force also represents the apathetic mechanism of defense to resist against his or her own behaviour. Most of the time this resistance guarantees to the apathetic person independence and a proportional autonomy in relation to his environment. The apathetic person prefers to ignore what happen around him, feign to be absent and dead. His force is inertia.

⁴⁰ This ethic is a vital ethic, it is not legalistic or juridical and it is used for life.

⁴¹ It is lamentable that Geisler did not explore as Christian his pathetic aspect in his valuable writing on Ethical concerns.

I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink. She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold which they used for Baal... So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands... I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot, declares the LORD. (Hosea 2:4-13)

In our pursuit of the analysis of characters, the above text shows two serious and conflicting problems in the study of characters. We have, on the one hand, the spouse who is amorphous and of unstable personality. On one other hand, we have the man who is phlegmatic. In the text, this woman represents a feminine version of King Solomon. She breaks the chain of male oppression and, as amorphous as she is, unfortunately falls in the pitfall of the abuse of liberty. However, before considering her character and her *libertine* attitude, this woman raises serious ethical questions about the use of liberty. From an existentialist point of view and, specifically, to borrow a Sartrean phrase, Gomer seems to be *tantôt libre et tantôt esclave*⁴² (cf. Sartre 1949: 516). Sartre (1949: 518) says that:

Désormais l' ensemble du πάθος déterminé sera nécessairement saisi par la spontanéité comme un pur transcendant, c'est à dire comme ce qui est nécessairement dehors, comme ce qui n' est pas elle. Cette négation interne n'aurait donc pour effet que de fondre le πάθος dans le monde et il existerait, pour une libre spontanéité qui serait à la fois volonté et conscience, comme un objet quelconque au milieu du monde⁴³.

⁴² Paradoxically a free person and a slave one.

⁴³ But then the spontaneity will exist precisely only in so far as it denies concerning itself that it is passions. Henceforth the ensemble of the determined πάθος will necessary be apprehended by spontaneity as a pure transcendent; that is, as what is necessarily out-side, as what is not it. This internal negation would therefore have for its effect the dissolution of the πάθος in the world, and the πάθος would exist as some sort of object

If we can understand what *πάθος* means from Sartre's view, we can think that the manner in which the husband abuses the liberty of his spouse can provoke revolt in any male with an honest conscience. It is possible for us indirectly to perceive once again how the identity of the woman was disfigured, due to the patriarchal interpretation of the practice of *groom's marriage settlement* in Hosea's context.

She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold which they used for Baal. ⁹ Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness... (Hosea 2:8-9)

In fact, there is, from the text cited above (cf. Hosea 2: 8-9), a clear mention of *groom's marriage settlement*. And the male voice resorts to it to emphasize male domination (cf. Hosea 2:8). According to the text (cf. Hosea 2:8-9), a woman seems to be nothing other than an object of his patronage. Our question is: Is the affective relationship between God and Israel expressed in the Bible in terms of patron and slave? Does God have the power to abuse the rights of human beings? The response depends on our stand. Then, returning to the question of women's acts and analyzing it from Berger's (1965) perspective, there is a suspicion that in the text, the woman, due to her affective dissatisfaction, exhibits an amorphous character. As the text is a display of a strange logotherapeutic case, this psychoanalytic tool helps the victim of any kind of injustice to break the silence. That is why, in the text, the wounded, betrayed and forsaken husband speaks to himself, due to his frustration. He, also, assumes the character of his spouse as veritably amorphous and,

in the midst of the world for a free spontaneity which would be simultaneously will and consciousness. (cf. Sartre 1957:442).

consequently, imagines the true woman's logos which is: "Je suis une chose légère et vole à tout sujet"⁴⁴ as La Fontaine, playing the ironic role of the poet, perceives himself as amorphous (cf. Fontaine in Berger 1965: 65). Berger (1965: 65) is correct that as in the text the woman is portrayed as amorphous, "nada o afeta profundamente; una decepção de amor e logo eclipsada por nova aventura, mesmo quando é inferior a precedente"⁴⁵. Berger identifies with Fletcher on this point of ethics. We are opposed to this as we share Geisler's (1971: 209) view that:

Sexual encounters for purely therapeutic reasons would be morally unjustifiable. There are others ways to release tension and healing. Besides, sexual fidelity is a higher value than the achievement of one's psychic balance. Indeed, sex may very well contribute to psychic imbalance.

Because of the psychic and affective imbalance described in the biblical text (cf. Hosea 2; 4-13), it is possible to suspect that Gomer's marital story is narrated in the form of a metaphor. She confuses sex and love. Sexual fidelity as a value in the marital bond is diluted in mere pleasure. Deel Arrudo (1969: 51) regrets sexual abuse and suggests that:

Com sua maravilhosa fecundidade, e não menos notável contribuição para a defesa e evolução da vida no universo, o Sexo reflete, já em íntimos degraus da escala biológica, o grande princípio de amor e solidariedade que, por lei divina, deve reunir todos os espíritos, para que a Humanidade atinja na terra, seu cabal desenvolvimento e seu bem-estar, quanto exequível, perfeito ⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ I am a light thing and I fly (offer myself) to anybody.

⁴⁵ Nothing deeply affects someone who is amorphous. If any deception happens, this person changes and a deception is immediately eclipsed by a new adventure of love even if this is lesser than the preceding one.

⁴⁶ Due to its wonderful fecundity and its notable contribution for the defense of the evolution of the universe, sex reflect in biological intimacy, the great principle of love and solidarity which by divine law, must gather all the spirits, in order to allow the Humanity to reach its human improvement and balance.

If Arrudo is accepted, then how can understanding of the true meaning of sex matter as an uncomfortable issue in sub-Saharan Africa help us to make more sense of God's pathos? A reply can be found in the study of logotherapy, which is a powerful tool for breaking the silence about sexual taboos. Using this area of knowledge as a way of healing psychological confusion that sometimes occurs in sexuality and love, Viktor Frankl (1962:114) notes that:

In logotherapy, love is not interpreted as a mere epiphenomenon of sexual drives and instincts in the sense of a so-called sublimation. Love is primarily a phenomenon as sex. Normally, sex is a mode of expression for love. Sex is justified, even sanctified, as soon as, but only as long as, it is a vehicle of love. Thus love is not understood as a mere side-effect of sex but a way of expressing the experience of that ultimate togetherness which is called love.

We doubt that in Hosea love is reduced to sex; it is evident that sexual fidelity is a tremendous display of respect for human life and a duty to God, and was never meant as an effect merely of sex. The Torah was cautious about sexuality and perhaps that is why, it is highly valued because it is not only an expression of pleasure but also of the mystery of intimacy and reciprocal feelings. In fact, in the Torah, sexual intercourse does not imply an expression merely of religiosity or of male domination over and exploitation of females. In the Torah, sexual life is perceived from the perspective of the covenant and covenant means *a fact of coming together, a mutual encounter*, as Chesterton (cf. Chesterton in Hughes 1998: 1) observes. The Hebrew prophets also speak of the coming together of God and Israel as a marriage. For that reason, Tregelles (1950: 141-142) argues that in the Torah, sexual activities are synonymous with covenant and sympathetic reciprocity. Concerning the latter aspect of sympathetic reciprocity, Heschel (1996. Voll: 59) observes that:

Just as in sexual reciprocal emotion, where the feeling of one person is in no sense an object to the other, where rather both persons share the same feelings, the structure of the sympathy implied in Hosea's hypothesis is not compassion for one another, but a suffering together, the act of sharing an inner experience.

What is the difference between sympathy and the mere sharing of feeling or compassion as expressed in Hosea and in sub-Saharan Africa? Monsengwo (1982:5) responds thus: "L' africain fait un cas de la vie"⁴⁷. Mulago (1973: 122) goes further and links the difference between sympathy and the mere fact of sharing feeling or compassion with the true conception of the life of the sub-Saharan African people: "Il ne s'agit pas d'une vie exclusivement corporelle ou exclusivement spirituelle, mais d' une vie 'totalement humaine'"⁴⁸. Monsengwo (1982: 5) in exploring Mulago's idea, comments: " c'est à dire d' une vie telle qu' elle a été participée et reçue de la puissance"⁴⁹. But Mulago (1973:122) also argues that:

la vie de l' individu est saisie en tant que participée. Le membre de la tribu, du clan, de la famille sait qu' il ne vit pas de sa propre vie, mais de celle de la communauté, Il sait que, détaché de la communauté. Il n'aurait plus les moyens d'exister, il sait surtout que sa vie est une participation à celle de ses ascendants et que sa conservation, son renforcement en dépend continuellement⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ African people pay attention to the meaning of life.

⁴⁸ When African people think about the whole of life, they are not thinking exclusively about the body or exclusively about the spiritual life, but their way of thinking concerns the entire life.

⁴⁹ That means a kind of life, which implies mutual participation and sharing power.

⁵⁰ The life of any person is realized in participation with others. Each member of the tribe, clan, and family knows that he does not live his life alone, but through that of the community. He knows that, detached from the community, he would no longer have the means of existence; above all he knows that his life is shared with the life of ancestors and that his preservation, his strength, continually depends on them.

In support of this, Maquet (1967:64) concludes that: “L’ homme africain se voit inséré dans le grand courant de la vie qui dépasse son propre moi”⁵¹. Perceiving things from the Westerner’s view Laney (1975: 412) rightly says that sympathy is not a feeling, but “the capacity through imagination, to enter into the joys and pains of another and reflexively feel joy or pain in the process”. And Max Scheler (1970: 41) rightly also says: “Pathos is that its referent is always the other person and her experience, not our own feelings”. People can become aware of other essences only if they love them (cf. Frankl 1962: 112)⁵². Scheler (1970:41) backs this up by saying: “Now true fellow feeling is wholly functional throughout: there is no reference to the state of one’s own feelings”. Therefore considering the difference between sympathy and mere feeling, as has been discussed above, we can say that in the text the woman was guilty of libertinage, which indicates a serious abuse of fellow feelings and has disastrous psychic consequences because it destroys the value of the mystery of intimacy; this act affected God as the husband and He could not be spared. God was also guilty; his affective failure was shown in three areas: He failed by asking back from His spouse the gift that he had given her (cf. McGinnis 1990: 51-56); He transgressed the fundamental principle of liberty by restricting the personal maneuvering of His spouse; He became psychologically unbalanced and apathetic to the point of exposing publicly the breasts and genital organs of His own spouse. This was and still remains a shameful practice which denigrates the image and identity or self of the women (cf. Goldingay 1995: 37-38, 40; Snyman 1993:90, Strauss1970: 230-231 and Weems 1989)⁵³.

⁵¹ The African person perceives him/her-self as inserted in this great wave of life what is beyond his/her self “I”.

⁵² Here the author speaks especially about the relationship between human beings.

⁵³ In fact it is not the first time that the image of woman is damaged. In Ezekiel (cf. Ezekiel 16), Isaiah (cf. Isaiah 3:16-26) and Jeremiah (cf. Jeremiah 3) we find the same things and even at the beginning in Genesis

Despite the theological debate around this issue, this attitude, even if it is an appropriate cultural view as Kruger (1992: 7-25) clearly demonstrates it, reflects extreme chauvinism in the context of Hosea. McKay (cf. McKay in Becking and Dijkstra 1996: 187) confirms our view: "Apart from the deity, powerful males have the right to determine who else should enjoy the same privileges as themselves. Clothes and gifts are signs of male transfer and power, or extension of credibility, to a trusted male servitor".

Unfortunately, the male voice in the text misunderstands the value of moral decency. McKay (cf. McKay in Becking and Dijkstra 1996: 190) intervenes by saying that: "One of the most basic social norms is that of decency. The nakedness of the human body, in particular of genital organs of adults of either gender, is regarded in the biblical texts as in others as shameful. So, shame is frequently portrayed as the driving force for clothing among the wise and godly". Indeed the gesture of exposing nakedness, even if it seems to be a part of punishment as of captives of war is a grave social and spiritual offense in the sub-Saharan Africa because nakedness here means the personal identity. Henry Drewal (cf. Drewal in Becking and Dijkstra 1996: 176-178) notes this in the Yorùbá culture and says: "For the people of the sub-Saharan context, the fact of wearing clothes indicates increasing closeness to, and intimacy with the supernatural powers, but also masks their individual human identity". And Drewal indicates that among many people of the sub-Saharan African context, nakedness indicates a lack of social responsibility and is considered normal and acceptable only for children and lunatics.

It is in the light of what we have said above that God had to preserve His identity as an affective God (cf. Hosea 2: 15). It is disappointing that Keil and Delitzsch (1968), Wolff (1974), Deissler (1984), Kunstmann (1980) and most other biblical commentators spared God by focusing on the adultery committed by the woman. These commentators thus defend God in spite of His grave violation of His partner in liberty and identity. According to us, this biblical approach is a sign of theological myopia and shares a misunderstanding of the subtlety of metaphor in which *logos* means *mythos* (cf. Detiène 1989: 45-55 and Victor 1986: 29-36)⁵⁴. As we know, this misunderstanding of Hosea's poetic text has evoked strong protests from feminists (cf. Bird 1989, Goldingay 1995: 37-38, Leith 1989, Setel 1985, van Dijk-Hemmes 1989 and Weems 1995) and other protest theologians (cf. Snyman 1993; West 1996 and 1999).

If God did not recognize that He failed to establish a real and permanent affective bond with His partner, how can scholars explain the shift that occurred in the mind and in the feelings of God as it is expressed in the text (cf. Hosea 2:15)? For us the shift observed in the text leads us to accept that God faces his paradoxical existence: קדוֹשׁ (holy) and not שׁוֹדֵד (harlot) as it has been observed above⁵⁵. We know that there is a difference between the image of God in Hosea and what the interpreters and traditional doctrinal images of God defend. We understand the fear of most theologians seriously to tackle

(cf. Job2: 9-10).

⁵⁴ See also deel Arrudo (1969: 58). “ Se os seus mitos, com em geral os mitos antigos, nos parecem ingênuos, e porque desconhecemos sua verdadeira interpretação. No âmago de sua própria idolatria, talvez haja segredos que o orgulho da civilização do século XX jamais consiga desvendar”. [If their myths, and generally the ancient myths, are most of the time displayed as ingenuous, it is because we do not know their true interpretation. In depth meaning of such a kind of idolatry, maybe there are secrets that human hubris of the actual civilization never will be able to understand. This view is skillfully connected with sub-Saharan one.]

⁵⁵ cf. Brown *et.al* (1979: 872-873). God, as separate, apart, and so sacred, holy or temple-prostitute (man) and harlot (woman)

this issue because of the theological embarrassment that the orthodox assumptions of their obsolete exegetical and hermeneutical approaches impose on them, however, it is evident that: “Entre la catastrophe et le salut, inéluctables tous deux, il y a le mystère du néant”⁵⁶, as Neher writes (1955: 226). The true and honest theologian cannot deny such mystery.

However, from the text and exactly here (cf. Hosea 2: 15- 23) we can thus affirm that the Living God, renounces the ethics of brutality and embraces the affective dimension of love. In this dimension, the prophet playing the role of a psychotherapist suggests to his patient, God, that He rediscovers that the equivalent word for psychotherapy⁵⁷ is dialogue (cf. Penni and Richard Crenna in McGinnis 1990: 97). Only affective dialogue is effectively resolving crisis in marriage. For, as Neher (1955: 253) asserts: “Au delà du passé et de l’ immédiat, le symbolisme conjugal projette un avenir. Dans la mesure, en effect, ou l’infidélité est ressentie et vécue, elle doit être dépassée. Elle peut l’ être d’ ailleurs de différentes manières”⁵⁸. This *dépassement*⁵⁹ of ethical principles means nothing unless there is the possibility of reconciling *Le néant* with *L’ être*. The task of reconciling the paradoxical elements as *Le néant* and *L’ être* is very complex. For that reason we would like to believe that the shift observed in vs. 16-23 of chapter 2 could be a part of later prophetic words. The verses 16-23 of chapter 2 of Hosea indeed demonstrate that the prophet is free and uses his liberty prudently, in spite of the pressure

⁵⁶ Between the catastrophe and the salvation which are both inescapable, there is a mystery of nothingness.

⁵⁷ And in the context of Hosea psychotherapy is a synonym of Logotherapy. “We prefer to maintain our dialogue in the context of logotherapy because it focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man’s search for such a meaning. In other words in logotherapy man main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life (cf. Frankl 1962: 115)”. In this point logotherapy is preferable to psychoanalysis because logotherapy focuses on the future (cf. Frankl 1962: 98).

⁵⁸ Far from the past as well as the immediate, marital symbolism projects a future. In the sense that if the infidelity is considered and realized, this has to be pushed to the limit in different ways.

of chauvinists and the dominant male voices, to help his audience to face the obscure and possibly the *demonic* side of divinity (cf. Deissler in Johannes and Magnus 1978.vol II/1: 241). This prophetic audacity proves the effectiveness of his voice and also confirms that Hosea was a true soothsayer of God and Humanity.

Whether the point that we are discussing makes sense or not, we think that it is necessary to express our disagreement with Heschel's (1996.vol 2: 11) view that the prophets never identify God's pathos with His essence. We know that when God speaks to the prophet, the word of God, which is God Himself, is absorbed into the very life of the prophet. The prophet becomes a vehicle of divine immanence as Fretheim (1984: 153) observes. We think therefore the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος** represents in itself three modes of God's being. These interact and converge with each other⁶⁰. Hitherto we have been in agreement with Heschel (cf. Heschel 1996.vol2: 5). It is then evident that for the prophets and particularly for Hosea, *living* is also synonymous with *suffering* closely⁶¹. Kierkegaard (cf. Kierkegaard in Berger 1965: 73) in his philosophical reflections sees a connection between *life* and *suffering*. 'Há correspondência, entre a significação da minha vida e minha dor'⁶² and we still believe that this axiom is applicable to Yahweh as the *Theopathetikos*.

Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her... I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names

⁵⁹ Pushing to the limit.

⁶⁰ Farley (1996:103, 300-315). The author explores deeply this idea. Unfortunately it is not easy to understand all the implications of this idea in his book. See a large debate in Glennon (1990 vol17/3: 237-251).

⁶¹ See an extensive debate Gustafson (1981). In which the author admit some difficulties in facing Ethics and Theology from a theocentric perspective.

⁶² There is a similarity between the meaning of both: my life and my suffering.

be invoked. In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle. I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD...I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved One' I will say to those called 'Not my people, You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God'. (Hosea 2:14-23)

If in the biblical text discussed previously, the predominant concern was the involvement of the woman in adultery, the position is reversed when God uses the weapon of seduction against His spouse. It is, thus, possible to understand Yahweh's affective weakness as a husband, which led His spouse to prefer other lovers. What did those lovers offer that Yahweh did not have for Israel? How did the triad *πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος* converge on each other in God? Above all, how can we conceive the rupture between the first event (cf. Hosea 1) and the new event (cf. Hosea 3)? However, what we can grasp from the text is that the God of the Bible is not unchanging. Tremendous shifts occur in His feelings, actions and discourse, which was definitively to be incorporated as part of the essential leitmotiv of Tenakh, and displayed in Wisdom Literature (e.g. Song of Songs). Indeed, we face one of the difficult texts; God's characteristics in this text are closer to the pagan (e.g. Canaanite) than to the Israelite faith (cf. deel Arrudo 1969:58). Applying the text directly,

לָכֵן הִנֵּה אֲנִי מִפְתִּיחַ וְהִלְכְתִּיָּהּ הַמִּדְבָּר וְדִבַּרְתִּי עַל-לִבָּהּ: the purpose of going to the desert, the locus of the early covenant and speaking to the heart (עַל-לִבָּהּ) of a woman induces us to grasp the deep meaning of pathos and logos. This pathos raises a

serious ethical problem. To solve the problem, the tendency is to dissociate the ethical quest from the pathos and logos; but we cannot do this. As Vuilleumier (1979: 497) rightly affirms: “Vie culturelle et vie morale sont intimement liées. Nous pouvons même dire que, pour Osée, la vie morale est encadrée par la vie culturelle”⁶³.

In the text (cf. Hosea 2: 14-23), the author refers twelve times to God as **יְהוָה**. This textual emphasis shows that God assumes the human mode of acting, feeling and speaking. Hosea audaciously confirms the ancient assumptions that God and Humankind are similar and therefore inseparable. If this is the case, it means that through the adventure of loving, God, as husband, demonstrates the maturity that He achieved from His understanding both the deep meaning of the marital bond and the value of a vital union. It is evident that from this new lived experience and the vital dynamism (cf. Mulago 1980: 175), God becomes the true Living God and consequently in the tautegorical or trans-objective dimension able to transcend the Torah. With this new attitude of God the principle of liberty gained by loving overcomes the principle of slavery found in the law (cf. Geisler 1971: 64). The *either or* which sustained the law becomes the *either-may be*. According to Mulago (1980: 175), “L’*éthique* Bantu est une éthique de communion avec autrui, avec l’homme, avec la nature environnante: c’est une éthique globale et cosmique”⁶⁴. This is the case with God’s ethic in Hosea. This ethic never counts the cost to be paid, as loving is normal. Mulago contradicts himself in that he perceives the same cosmic ethical principles from an anthropocentric view (1980: 174-175). Tulu Kia Mpansu (cf. Tulu Kia Mpansu in

⁶³ Cultural and moral lives are intimately interconnected. In the case of Hosea it is possible to think moral is enclosed by cultural mode of living.

⁶⁴ Bantu ethic is the ethic of commitment between human beings and nature: this ethic involves global and cosmic view.

Monsengwo 1982: 4) and Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 84-93) refute Mulago. Nyirongo (1997:158) supports Mulago in stating that: "Although all Africans do acknowledge the fact that man's suffering can be traced back to the original fall, in his day to day life suffering has virtually nothing to do with his relationship with God but with his fellow human beings or human spirits". While Mulago partially admits God's involvement in cosmic drama, Nyirongo rejects it. We believe that his attempt at excluding God from the cosmic drama is questionable, because God sustains the pathetic basis of sub-Saharan African and especially Negro African culture. This intellectual procedure is dishonest. Bujo (cf. Bujo in Balembo *et. al.* 1987: 76) thus observes that: "Quelques auteurs ont voulu souligner le fait que toute la morale négro-africaine est anthropocentrique"⁶⁵. The same Bujo (cf. Bujo in Balembo *et. al.* 1987: 76) proceeds by saying:

Tout en reconnaissant l' accent principal presque exclusif mis sur l' homme dans la morale, on ne saura pourtant pas méconnaître le rôle que Dieu joue dans la conception morale négro-africaine, au moins chez certaines tribus. Même Mujinya qui insiste sur l' anthropocentrisme négro-africain, souligne pourtant que Dieu intervient pour punir l' homme en cas où celui-ci va à l'encontre de son propre bien. La raison de cette intervention est donnée par Mbiti quand il affirme que Dieu n'a créé que le bien, le mal étant de l' homme ou des esprits. Chez certaines tribus Dieu a même institué quelques règles d'agir. C'est le cas par exemple des Masai dont la conception a des ressemblances frappantes avec la foi du peuple d' Israël dans l' Ancien Testament⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Some authors insist that the entire Negro-African morale is anthropocentric.

⁶⁶ While acknowledging that the principal accent is almost exclusively placed on man in the question of morally, one cannot however disregard the role played by God among certain tribes in the Negro-African conception of morality, at least. Even Mujinya, who insists on Negro African anthropocentrism, nevertheless emphasizes that God intervenes to punish man when he acts against his own goodness. The reason for this intervention is given by Mbiti when he affirms that God has created only good, will evil or injusting from human beings or evil spirits. Among certain tribes God has even instituted guidelines for human beings behaviour. This is the case for example with Massai (Kenya) whose the understanding of the laws of God bears striking resemblances to the faith of the people of Israel in the Old Testament.

We understand the difficulty of synthesizing the theocentric and anthropocentric attributes of God's pathos. Indeed Mulago (1962), Mveng (Mveng in Angang *et.al.*1979: 85-96), Idowu (1970, 1974), Mbiti (1975, 1990), Nyirongo (1997) and even Bujo (Bujo in Balembo 1987) are divided between their Negro-African background and Cartesianism loyalty, which does not allow the coexistence of *logical* and *not logical* dialogue. It must, however, be admitted that the application of the triad $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\omicron\varsigma\text{-}\xi\theta\omicron\varsigma\text{-}\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ to God is paradoxically anthropological and ontological. It may be necessary to argue that marriage, for instance, is a veritable display of vital dynamism, social continuity and a covenant between Human beings themselves on one hand and Human beings and God on the other.

In sub-Saharan African culture, the two spheres are inseparable: loving and the imperative of observing the law interlace and are paradoxically both revealed and hidden in the impenetrable mystery of vital dynamism based on the idea of covenant and reciprocity. Geisler's (1971:64) contribution as a westerner is more realistic when he states that: "Love and Law sometimes conflict, and when they do, it is the Christian's obligation to put love over the law. It is not the love of law but the law of love, which one ought to follow. To repeat, it is not the love of duty but the duty of love". What is really conflicting in the text of Hosea is the shift which occurred in God's mind when love leads Him to become the *beggar* of love. This incomprehensible demonstration of love justifies the *dei mors voluntarius*⁶⁷ realized in Hosea. This is an outrage for Yahweh and His devotees. It seems that in the Israelite's belief in spite of the excessive veneration of divinity, there is space for

⁶⁷ The divine self-sacrifice.

the notion of divine self-sacrifice. There is no trace of such a divine self-sacrifice in sub-Saharan context. However we have to recognize that the case of divine self-sacrifice through Hosea even for Israel seems to be unique. If we consider Augustine's axiom "Dilige [Ama] et fac quod vis"⁶⁸ as a satisfaction of desire, divine self sacrifice is unjustified and does not make sense. We support Fletcher's idea that Augustine's axiom is the opposite of the idea *Ama et fac quod vis*⁶⁹ (cf. Fletcher 1966: 79).

We differ then from Fletcher in his of Augustine's axiom from the perspective of situational ethics because as an African, Augustine thinks in a holistic way (cf. Mulago 1980:175). We are aware that according to Fletcher's view, marriage cannot be faced as a true vital union even if he clearly differentiates between Christian love as **ἀγάπη** and **φιλία** and **ἔρως** (cf. Fletcher 1966: 79). As there is a suspicion of ambiguity in Fletcher's understanding of the true value of the marital bond, it is possible that he should support Gomer's *laisser-aller*⁷⁰ instead of condemning her. Fletcher can be understood if we approach him from Sartre's perspective. Whether the spouse is according to Sartre (1949:516-518) *Le Néant*⁷¹ (hell) that bothers God, Fletcher as well as Sartre cannot conceive either God's self sacrifice or God's fatal affective breaking. For Sartre, God's self- sacrifice and God's affective breaking are excluded because God is an absurdity.

⁶⁸ Love with care and then what you will, do.

⁶⁹ Love with desire and do what you please.

⁷⁰ Carelessness.

⁷¹ Nothingness.

It seems that here van de Beek's idea (1990: 2) extends as a point of concern when he states that: "The sin of one person is the misery of another. The injustice of the oppressors is the misery of the oppressed. Not every form of suffering can directly be attributed to sin, but every sin does call forth suffering, either in the victim or the doer". Van de Beek's ethic obviously does not tolerate sin. We believe that it may serve as a way of realistically facing the unresolved affective dilemma, which persists between the offender and the offended. It is clear that van de Beek diverges from Fletcher and Sartre because for them *Le Néant*, which can be a synonym for offender or *l'autre* and *l'enfer*⁷², has to be fought at the point of destroying it. This is what van de Beek cannot admit. Therefore from Sartre's point of view, even if he recognizes what is involved in affective issues, the divine self-sacrifice is absurd. For Sartre this tragic act means nothing except the sadistic way that the male bourgeoisie and God as a chauvinist husband found to repress a woman and above all to refute her alienable right of the liberty. Here we prefer to support van de Beek's idea because according to the Bible and especially in Hosea, this *Néant* does not mean *la chose*⁷³, it is another version of *l'Être* or *l'Autrui*. Hence its destruction necessarily implies the quest for the feelings that Sartre and Fletcher did not recognize or avoided facing seriously (cf. Fletcher 1966:79) because for Sartre, as for Hegel being and nothingness are contraries.

We share the opinion that the maintenance of *Néant* is beneficial for a deity as well as for the human being because *Le Néant* is neither the negation of *l'Être* nor *l'enfer*. The *Néant* and *l'Être* always walk together. It is perhaps the tautological idea of commitment between

⁷² It was a character that Sartre used in a play and not Sartre himself who said, "Hell is other people".

⁷³ Thing.

Néant and *l'Être* that justifies the use of the particle טוֹעַ in Hosea (cf. Hosea 3: 1). Therefore, in the context of marital bond as found in the sub-Saharan African context and in Hosea, this *Néant* represented tautegorically *l'Être* in another extreme or πόλεμος, as we previously observed. Indeed, instead of excluding this or that pole as the main character of Sartrean play *l'Être et Néant*, Hegel and Sartre himself suggested that both aspects of living reality expressed as *Néant* and *l'Être* interact, and affect each other simultaneously as it is the case with *Yin* and *Yang*. Understanding the inescapable theological, philosophical and above all psychological dilemma, which plays a determinant role in conjugal dialogue, is crucial. It is with reason that Gómez-Acebo (1996:137) thus analyzed the dilemma of *Néant* and *L' Être* in the context of family.

This profound analysis is not missed but may be eclipsed in Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir's writings as well as through their mysterious affective commitment. Hence we can think that due to the profound understanding of such inevitable dilemma that both have refused to get married due to the fear of facing the reality of *Néant*, which is indeed the shelter of their own reality or *Être*. However the fear entertained by Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir is understandable because of the conflicting commitment between *L' Être* and *Le Néant*⁷⁴, and deals necessarily with the unavoidable principle of mutual vulnerability that the whole philosophy of existentialism tries to deny⁷⁵. Whether our analysis of Sartre's idea is correct, it seems that somewhere, it is possible to perceive some kind of behavior based on

⁷⁴ Being and nothingness.

⁷⁵ It is true that according to Sartre "Ma liberté commence là où la liberté de l' autre termine". But it is also true that in some way "ma liberté communique avec la liberté de l' autre".

legalism in his mode of thinking because the role of legalism is to avoid the pain. This idea of avoiding pain moves people to exclude others, including God. Is this not what Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir avoid facing? The response depends on where the reader stands. Although correcting such anomalies in the views of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, we have to transcend the mere analogical use of logos, ethos and pathos by going into the tautegorical and so breaking any religious or socio-political pyramids. In the context of the conjugal home, man and woman need the courage to experience the affective dimension of existence even if this implies pain and suffering, and they have also to involve themselves in their vital and dynamic union in spite of the risk of repetitive shocks. But, this vital and dynamic union must respect the fundamental triadic rule of *proximity-feelings- change* so that salvation in this context should really mean a living union?

In that day, declares the LORD, you will call me my husband; you will no longer call me my master. I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. (Hosea 2:16-17)

It is evident that in the verses quoted above we perceive some traces of God's trauma or suffering. But as we know, when God expresses his suffering, such a suffering is transcended as suffering. This rediscovering of God's meaning (cf. Frankl 1962:115) justifies the acts as found in verse 17. In verse 16, the old covenant is broken and the new affective formula: *husband* and *spouse* or equality (cf. Neher 1955:263-264) replaces the old legalistic and pyramidal relationship of *master* and *slave* or servitude. This new relationship *husband* and *spouse* is realized when the spouse and husband start an affective dialogue through prayer, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

2.4 The Alteration of God's Pathos, Ethos and Logos as the result of Human Prayers

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall. Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount war-horses. We will never again say Our gods to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion. (Hosea 13:1-3)

How can people reverse the binomial *master-slave* or the relationship of servitude to a *husband-spouse* relationship of equality? To reverse the binomial *master-slave*, God needs a prophet because this is the mediator *reconciler*, *adviser* and *soothsayer*. The role of the prophet is to teach his people how to reach God and influence Him to change God's pathos, ethos and logos. It is true that God is always in search of Human being but the opposite is also true. Prayer then takes on the connotation of reciprocal exchange between humans and God. Thereby God is removed from the old apathetic pedestal of legalism, from being at the top of the pyramid. About the meaning of the prayer in the sub-Saharan African context, Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 89) argues: "Selon la sagesse africaine le monde des vivants sur terre doit se conformer aux directives et aux orientations édictées par le monde de l' invisible. C'est dans ce contexte qu' interviennent le culte, la prière et le comportement général de l'Africain"⁷⁶. We disagree with Tese because if there is really a vital interaction between both worlds, visible and

⁷⁶ According to African wisdom human life has to follow the directives and orientations as these are decided from the invisible world. It is in such context that cult, prayer, and the general behavior of the African people can intervene.

invisible, it is possible to believe that through the prayer, the visible world interacts and, above all, affect the invisible one.

There is some hesitation and reticence in Hulstaert (cf. Hulstaert in Congo II, 1936: 668-676) and van Goethem (cf. van Goethem 1950: 1-6, 41-48) about accepting our view. Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 89) identifies with us when he says: “La prière caractérise la religiosité africaine traditionnelle. Elle est un langage de l’homme dans sa relation avec l’autre monde. Elle n’est pas une attitude univoque, elle est plutôt un reflet de la vie de l’homme qui est faite d’événements de tout genre”⁷⁷. Mbiti (1975: 1) recognizes that: “The praying tradition is well established in African societies even if we do not have enough knowledge about this tradition to understand how it developed historically through the generations”. But the historical process is not our concern. Our crucial interest lies in understanding how prayer was used to challenge and alter divine behavior; for instance in sub-Saharan Africa, the prophet (cf. Hosea 13:1-3) displayed the use of prayer as an effective means of challenging God and confronting the thorny eternal problem of idolatry.

But why do human beings resort easily to idolatry? Human beings practice idolatry for two reasons: they feel the need to be protected by a powerful subject or magical object; they practice idolatry because they feel the need themselves to control the object of their worship. In both cases prayer is used as a way of gaining protection from and controlling

⁷⁷ Prayer characterizes the African traditional religiosity. This is a language that human beings use in relation to the world. This is not a univocal attitude; it is rather than a display of human life that is based on diverse events.

the object of worship. Once again, from Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 89) we gain an insight into what moves the devotee to pray necessarily both in Hosea and in the Negro-African traditional religion:

Se reconnaissant faible et contrôlé, le Negro-africain sent en lui l' impératif qui lui dit de chercher à se concilier les faveurs du monde de l'invisible dont il dépend. Vivant constamment sous la menace des exactions des sorciers et des esprits mécontents, l' homme africain vit les différents clivages de sa vie en référence au monde de l'invisible duquel il espère bénédiction et prédiction⁷⁸.

The prayer is sometimes used as an effective way to dispell fear of enemies, sorcerers, others spirits and ancestors, while Hosea used prayer to beg for pardon from God for his suffering and the sin of idol worship. Such use of prayer after the exile became the *sine qua non* for the reestablishment of an affective bond between God and His people (cf. Daniel 9 and Luke 18: 9-14).

I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon. O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me. (Hosea 14: 4-8)

⁷⁸ Knowing himself to be weak and controlled, the Negro-African feels the urgent need to try to gain the good will of the world of the invisible upon which he depends on. Living constantly under the thread of demands from sorceress, ancestors and discontented spirits, the African man lives segmentized life in relation to the invisible world from which he hopes to receive benediction and protection.

The text above moves curiously to the point that God as the victim becomes paradoxically the soothsayer for His spouse. It is interesting, too, to observe that in his **λόγος**, the prophet never mentions the idea of divine self-sacrifice either here or in the rest of the book. This means that the effectiveness of prayer is indeed proved as a human tool for moving God into the affective direction of human beings. It is, thus, possible to think in the tautegorical and affective dimensions where **πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος** interact with each other, with prayer as the affective event. Prayer is doubtless a substitute for the gesture of offering things or human life to the divinity⁷⁹. But why is it that in Hosea, the prophet considered this sacred ritual problematic, although we know that sacrifice was indispensable in the quest for forgiveness and for the maintenance of relationship between God and His people? Such discrepancy is new because the similarity between the Israelites and the sub-Saharan Africans moves us to identify with Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 92) that:

Le sacrifice est l'un des rites les plus permanents et les plus indispensables des religions africaines. Il est une obligation vitale. Le sacrifice permet à l'homme de passer de l'état profane à l'état sacré par la destruction de l'offrande ou de partie de l'offrande au cours d'une cérémonie à l'intention des forces du monde de l'invisible. Dans ces circonstances, le sacrifice est manifestement plus qu'un don ou un échange de dons sous la forme d'une réciprocité forcée du *do ut des*, car l'object offert est immolé, c'est à dire détruit. Il n'est pas non plus une simple consecration, car il est censé assurer l'union, et mieux encore le passage du profane au sacré; il va de la libation à l'immolation, de l'immolation à la consommation⁸⁰.

⁷⁹ Look carefully at the explanation of this issue in details given by Caster (cf. Caster in Hastings 1920, vol. 11: 24-29).

⁸⁰ Sacrifice is one of the most enduring and indispensable rites of African religions. It is an essential obligation. Sacrifice permits human beings to pass from the profane to the sacred state by means of the destruction of the offering, or part of the offering, in the cause of the ceremony devoted to the forces of the invisible world. In these circumstances, sacrifice is clearly more than a gift or an exchange of gifts in the guise of forced reciprocity of *do ut des*, for the offering is immolated that is to say, destroyed: neither is it a simple consecration

Like Tese, Heschel (1996.vol 1:196) explains the meaning of sacrifice for the people of Israel:

In the sacrificial acts something happened, something sacred was evoked, conjured up, initiated; something was released or cast away. The person was transformed, a communion vital to man and precious to God established. In the sacrifice of homage, God was a participant; in the sacrifice of expiation with God, a way of entering into communion with Him. In offering an animal, a person was offering himself vicariously. It had the power of atonement.

Tese's and Heschel's arguments find resonance in what the book of Leviticus has already established. If Tese and Heschel are correct, a crucial question might be raised: why, in Hosea, did God categorically refuse sacrifices offered to Him by the people (cf. Hosea 3:4, 4:19, 6:1-6, 8:13,9:4 and 14:2)? There is cause to believe in three hypotheses: it seems that Hosea, as a revolutionary, challenges the priesthood class (cf. Hosea 4-5), as perhaps he found that offering sacrifice was a demonstration of false religiosity; it is possible to think that Hosea, as a pioneer, would like to establish the basis for the new covenant on the heart, thus bringing into being a personal relationship between the one supplicant and God. And finally the poet may have neglected mentioning sacrifice, in order to imply that response to human prayer does not depend on sacrifice but on the divine self sacrifice, understood as divine mercy, instead of divine vengeance, as was claimed by the corrupt, oppressive, legalistic priesthood class. Here Hosea thus transcends Heschel and Tese. This prophet introduced a new element to the theology of

for it is supposed to secure the union and more than that, the rite of the passage of the profane to sacred. It passes from liberation to immolation, from immolation to consummation.

Israel with his new understanding of prayer, and in so doing Hosea helps us to understand that any response to human prayer can only be a result of the combination of two things: *dei mors voluntarius* and human prayer which is in *Hominis mors voluntarius*⁸¹. Indeed it seems that the two are independent and can coexist in the tautegorical sphere. However, we have to establish if Sartre or other fervent existentialists would disagree with us that this divine self-sacrifice in its essence precedes human prayer. As God's logos, "O Ephraim, what more have I (Yahweh) do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me" (cf. Hosea 14:8).

In response people say in the text (cf. Hosea 14: 3):

Assyria cannot save us; (a1)
we will not mount war-horses.
We will never again say our gods (a2)
to what our own hands have made,
for in you the fatherless find compassion. (b1)

Here Assyria and idols are synonyms (cf. a1 and a2) that symbolize the apathetic deity. The arrogance of Assyria and the indifference of idols cannot heal Israel (cf. Hosea 6: 1-6). Hence the **πάθος**, the **ἔθος** and the **λόγος** of Assyria, the defender of idolatry are set in the cruel context of mass domination and exploitation. In contrast to the illusory religious and socio-political expectations from Assyria and idols, the author bring to us in the form of an antithetic (b1) parallelism the true expectation of the devotee. Here Brueggemann's (1992: 75) idea is relevant:

⁸¹ Human self-sacrifice. See the negation of such idea through the sacrifice of Isaac (cf. Genesis 22). Cf. Heschel 1966:225. The marriage could be considered as the great demonstration of abnegation or prayer of

The cult may be a staging for the inversion that the kings think is not possible. It is the inversion that the grim royal middle class among us does not believe in and it is the inversion that surprises people who are powerless. Inversions are not easy, not without cost, and never neat and clear. But 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. So his poetry speaks about the inversion even in exile and the images tumble out.

The prayer or sacrifice is a true display of fellowship and devotion which demystifies false religious and socio-political forces and moves God to respond to human beings. Therefore, it is possible to assert that, for the fatherless (cf. Hosea 14:3), victims of religious and socio-political exploitation, prayers expressed in many forms, songs, words, art or silence⁸², are an effective way oppressed people can use to involve God in their religious and socio-political drama to end His indifference. If we can analyze the book, as a whole and especially chapters 1-3 in the light of chapter 14, it appears that the oppressed's dependence on God is not coincidental. Indeed it is in prayer that we allow God to be a God of compassion (cf. Hughes 1998: 5). This means that prayer is more than a cry for the mercy of God (cf. Heschel 1966: 255). This is paradoxical because God has always experienced betrayal, humiliation, defeat and oppression (cf. Hosea 1-3). This ceases to be suffering the moment that it finds meaning, for example in sacrifice (cf. Frankl 1962: 114). According to our understanding of the text the major sacrifice is nothing but God's gesture of taking in the fatherless. Human prayer finds a leitmotiv and an opportunity for God to display His greatness by incarnating Himself.

the faithful devotee who did not consider the dimension of price to be paid.

⁸² Note the efficacy of songs among South African movement of liberation and particularly among Zulu people. See also the silent attitude of some leaders of religious and socio-political change such as Simon Kimbangu, Albert Mabuaka, Samora Machel, Mandela, Thsithsekedi and John Fou'ndi, that always bothers the oppressed systems (cf. Pronzato 1978:243). See Wittenberg 1991:1-2. At the beginning of this book Gerald West interprets profoundly the South African black artist Jacob Matsose' painting.

Heschel (1966: 255) rejects the idea of mutual encounters that result from prayer. He says: I am not ready to accept the ancient concept of prayer as a dialogue. Who are we to a dialogue with God? He attempts to justify his fear by asserting:

The better metaphor would be to describe prayer as an act of immersion, comparable to the ancient Hebrew custom of immersing oneself completely in the waters as a way of self-purification to be done over and over again. Immersion in the waters! One feels surrounded, touched by the waters, drowned in the waters of mercy. In prayer the 'I' becomes an 'it'. This is the discovery: what is an 'I' to me is, first of all and essentially, an 'it' to God. If it is God's mercy that lends eternity to speak of being which is usually described as a self, then prayer begins as a moment of living as an 'it' in the presence of God. The closer to the presence of Him, the more obvious becomes the absurdity of the 'I' The 'I' is dust and ashes.

It is evident that Heschel's concept of prayer is based on mystical thought especially that of the Kabbalah. According to this mystical view, the encounter between θεός and άνθρωπος is expressed in the form of *it-He* (cf. Huxley 1946: 29-44). We prefer to consider both the primal attitude of the devotee (*it-He*), which is essential in prayer but also its complement which means the process and the end (*Thou-I*) which indeed can create a locus of freedom, frank dialogue and an affective encounter. Therefore for such a perspective the usual subject "*I*" takes the place of *dust and ashes*. In the book of Hosea, the idea of *dust and ashes* is synonymous of orphan, slave or אִתָּן⁸³. Is the orphan not also the prodigal son or prodigal spouse (cf. Lima 1958: 9-25 and deel Arrudo 1969: 105)? If our arguments are sustainable, it is possible to think that in the book of Hosea, the relation *it-He* becomes the *Thou-I* because the "*it*" in itself paradoxically hides the "*I*" and dispels any religious or

⁸³ Gomer.

philosophical absurdity. In this sense, it is certain that the prayer alters the **πάθος, ἔθος** and **λόγος** of both God and the human being.

This is also a veritable eschatological display of both: *unio mystica* and *unio sympathetica* (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 2: 89-103). It is this paradoxical *unio*, once perceived through the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος** that we have tried to explore in this chapter. We believe that we may activate this by deepening our understanding of the enigmatic question of metaphor and the study of metaphor could be used to analyze the religious and socio-political crisis in Hosea and in sub-Saharan African culture. We must, at the end this chapter, remind the reader that here we have attempted a comparative study of the concept of Pathos, Logos and Ethos in Hosea as well as in African sub-Saharan African' s culture. We started by explaining how the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος** is understood in the text of Hosea, and in the sub-Saharan Africa. Our procedure has been to study metaphor and our method has been tautegory. We also considered how the dispute around metaphor has been polarized between the defenders of patriarchy and matriarchy. Instead of these extremes in the religious and socio-political approach to the Bible and to metaphor we have suggested the use of tautegorical method. In the following chapter, we pretend to see how we can present metaphorical God as an affective being in Hosea and what from such a presentation can make the God of Hosea, as a kin to the sub-Saharan African people. The reader will observe that the method remains the tautegorical one.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE METAPHORICAL PRESENTATION OF GOD AS AN AFFECTIVE BEING IN HOSEA: WHAT MAKES THE GOD OF HOSEA, AS A KIN TO THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLE?

In the previous chapter we did a synoptic study of the concepts of the Pathos, Logos and Ethos of God in Hosea. In this chapter we seek to look at how these symbols or concepts are applicable in the sub-Saharan African context. This study will be oriented to the metaphorical presentation of God as an affective being in Hosea and will then look carefully at what makes the God of Hosea the contemporary sub-Saharan African's kin.

To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing (Isaiah 40:18-26)⁸⁴.

In the search for the meaning of God's pathos, Hosea was used by the prophet Isaiah (40:18-26) to raise, in the form of diatribe, a fundamental question about God's existence:

⁸⁴See also Gómez-Acebo 1996: 9. Acebo introduced her book with one of these verses. It is not illogical to quote this text because in Hosea we find a similar idea in entire text and, possibly as Hosea was the first prophet of Israel he might also be the "Q" source for other prophets.

“To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?”. How can one respond to these big questions formulated by the poet in the text from Isaiah? For Hosea, Yahweh is Yahweh, but perhaps for the audience Baal is Yahweh. For us, perhaps the answers can be found in what other people have already thought. In Africa, from the sociological point of view, the Nigerian theologian Biang Kato (1981:46) asserts that “En Afrique Dieu et la communauté ne font qu’un”⁸⁵. Very far from Africa, from the religious point of view, the critical German biblical scholar G. Fohrer (1973:78) writes that:

Yahweh is conceived solely as having human form, a later theology reversed the notion, seeing man created in Yahweh’s image (Genesis 1: 26-27), while the ancient Near Eastern gods appear also or only in forms that range from the astral world to the world of plants and animals. In addition, Yahweh is conceived as possessing human features like love and hate, joy and sorrow, forgiveness and vengeance. This was important for the unsophisticated Israelite, who needed concrete images. His God understands his human all-too-human feelings and actions, because his God himself could love and hate.

The same G. Fohrer (1973: 78) proceeds to say that:

Yahweh will not tolerate any other gods among the people associated with him; he claims his worship for himself alone. He is justified in this prerogative because he accompanies Moses’ host on the journey and because he is more powerful than the other gods, as was shown at the exodus. Other nations may have other gods but Yahweh surpasses them all, and the Moses host must worship him alone. Mosaic Yahwehism therefore knew nothing of a theoretical monotheism that denies the existence of other

⁸⁵ In sub-Saharan African context Yahweh and the community are: one.

gods. It would be more correct to speak of Monoyahwism or practical Monotheism.

The affirmation of both Kato and G. Fohrer paved the way for the great discussion about the true image of God and His relationship with human beings in the Bible. From Kato's (1981: 46) point of view, we know that God is our kin (parent). It means that if we would like to know Him, we must use the symbols that are found in our community because "it is Him who is the foundation of the social and cosmic solidarity", as Buetubela (cf. Buetubela in Angang *et.al.* 1980:65-81) and Le Déaut (cf. Le Déaut in Angang *et.al.* 1980: 31-63) comment.

Therefore one of our tasks in this chapter is to examine Kato's assertion in terms of *onto-anthropological* proximity and distance. And for attempting to resolve this grave *onto-anthropological* dilemma, the study of the use of metaphor in Hosea turns out once again to be very decisive. Georg Fohrer accepts the use of human language for understanding the true image of God and agrees with Kato that it is only from the perspective of the community's language that God can be understood. In fact, if Fohrer's (1973: 78) second hypothesis is true, it is possible to think that the effect of the prophetic messages was to bring two things back into the religious and socio-political system. The prophet made an explicit effort to establish the basis of Mono-Yahwehism or practical monotheism and, by implication, wished to explain the difference between Yahweh and the idols. The aim of our study is thus to use the metaphorical descriptions of God for an understanding of the sub-Saharan African monotheistic system. Before discussing the metaphorical images of

God, we wish to examine the convergences and divergences between the religious and socio-political in both contexts.

3.1. Similarity between the context of Hosea and the African sub-Saharan context

To understand the audacity of Hosea in metaphorically presenting God as an affective being, and its implications in contemporary sub-Saharan African, it is necessary to understand the following three essential factors. The first way in which the prophet was called to exercise his ministry. Hosea and Amos, Isaiah and Micah (cf. Strydom 1993: 19-32)⁸⁶ spontaneously began to prophesy in the same period far more. It is important to recognize that serious problems affected the relationship between God and His people in the two divided Israelite Kingdoms. The situation was extremely complex and difficult and almost all the aspects of the lives of the people were affected. Micah and Amos claimed that this was due to the exploitation of the *privés de voix*⁸⁷. Finally, it is not possible today to imagine how the Baalist priests resolved the situation of the difference between the poor and the rich. All of them, oppressor and oppressed, shared the hope that they would be blessed by Baal in the same *denomination or church*. From the accounts of the prophets the balance of daily trade was upset (cf. Hosea 12:7-9) and the Sabbath was not respected (cf. Amos 1-5). People were far more ambitious about earning money than about observing the ritual law. In the family sphere there was no solidarity, and women, orphans, children, widows and foreigners were marginalized. In the political sphere there were cruel dictatorial systems comparable with those in many sub-Saharan African countries.

⁸⁶ This scholar defends the idea that Micah is the forgotten partner of Amos and Hosea.

⁸⁷ The marginalized

It is probable that the dictatorial leadership class of the 8th century (BCE) used the figure of Jehu as the symbol of self-affirmation or force, as happens in many sub-Saharan countries. We could mention two groups here. Firstly there was the pro-Euro-American group led by Mobutu and his loyal disciples like Eyadema, Tombalbaye, Idi Amin, Diouf, Biya, Houphouet, Kaunda, Dako, Bongo, Moi, Campaore, Savimbi, Abacha, including the previously white ruled African countries with John Vorster and his faithful ally Ian Smith, both Pik Botha and the intransigent P.W. Botha and their faithful black friend Banda. Secondly there was the pro-communist group led by Nyerere, Sekou Touré, Marrien Ngouabi, Agostinho Neto and Dos Santos, Mugabe, Samora, Musseveni⁸⁸ and by an irony of destiny, Kabila the *Fidel Castro* of Africa (cf. Ayittey 1992: 5-47; 1998: 1-145; Jackson and Rosberg 1982). In both cases, in that of sub-Saharan Africa as well that of the Israel of the 8th century (BCE), the malaise is the same and it is characterized by the intellectual and spiritual incapacity which make possible the corruption and exploitation of human populations.

With the putrid smell emanating from religious and socio-political leadership classes, who are completely manipulated by the religious and socio-political interference of the super powers, it is difficult to discover men and women with ethical principles (*homme de parole*), intellectual and spiritual capacity and prophetic intuition like Nkrumah, Amical Cabral, Lumumba, Kenyatta, Senghor, Sankara, Mandela, De Klerk and perhaps Étienne Thsitsekeledi because such persons are *rare birds* (cf. Huxley 1946: 25, 174-175). Deel Arrudo (1969:141) observes, with reason, that such persons are extremely rare; their price in any human market would be inestimable. Perhaps that is why in sub-Saharan

⁸⁸ The man who betrayed Mobutu.

African such persons should, rather than African ancestors, become the models for future post-colonial generations of sub-Saharan Africa. Only thus could its sad history take a different course. It is regrettable that from 1960 until the present, sub-Saharan Africa has been characterized by the fact that the invisible multi-ethnic and multi-racial alliances camouflaged as *Trusts and Lobbies* have oppressed the multi-ethnic and multi-racial majority by giving them the opium of patriotism and anti-colonialism (cf. Alves 1985 and Hugo 1991) which made them susceptible (like Skinner's dog) to mass-media manipulation. This is closely analogous to what happened in the 8th century (BCE) and in the situations in which Hosea wrote. There is also a likelihood that behind the political systems existing in both contexts namely, that of Hosea and that of sub-Saharan Africa, there is a strong personality cult: the chief is considered as the *father* or *priest* of the community. It is also clear that within the cell of the leadership class, people hero-worship rich members with strong emphasis on immorality based on sexual promiscuity, vertiginous material prosperity and, maybe in the occult dimension, with the dramatic and shameful practice of human sacrifice (cf. Berdyaev 1935: 25-70), as Wolff (cf. Wolff in Gerstenberg 1981: 237) observes far more. This human sacrifice was observed by the Congolese people in the *Primacuria's* cult of the Mobutists⁸⁹, in Uganda with the Idi Aminists, in Central African Republic among Bokassa's disciples and perhaps in the family circle of Eyadema and Houphouet-Boigny including some devotees of Apartheid⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ This is the religious and socio-political sect developed by the former president of Zaire (now the DRC) and involved many people, including many foreigner leaders. To strengthen their power the members of this sect used diverse forms of sexual seductions, incest, adultery, etc. It seems that this sect found its inspiration from the ancient Roman *cūria*. In the stricter sense, the authorities that administer the Papal Primacy, in a wider acceptation, embrace all the entourage or court of the Pope. *Cūria* also means the building to a Roman *cūria*, serving primarily as its place of worship. See, for example the origin of this cult in *Collins English Dictionary* 1991: 142-143; 476-481.

⁹⁰The friendship is very pertinent that existed between the Mobutu's regime with the Apartheid regime. This friendship requires a profound study in the religious and socio-political areas to be understood.

In addition, a scrupulously careful study of Machiavelli's (1963) writings proves that all of these political and religious systems of our sub-Saharan context as well as those in Hosea's time have something in common: the diabolic or Machiavellian ambition characterized by the special mark of Hubris hidden very carefully through the slogan of nationalism; and they worship the same god: power far more. It is unfortunate that on the same altar these sub-Saharan African Blacks and Whites, Indian and Coloured offer to their gods, in different ways, the same animal, which is the people (cf. Ayittey 1992 and 1998; Chabal 1992 and Davidson 1989), as will be demonstrated in depth below.

It is exactly in a situation of this kind that God solicited Hosea to become aware of the principal grave problem, which affected his people: the Canaanite cult called Baalism, as identified by most scholars. Two points are important to be considered: The first point is the problem of idolatry: we know that when the people left Egypt, God advised them to destroy any trace of the Canaanite people. It is not my task to resolve the controversy surrounding this biblical matter. Former communists, as Marchenko (1986) observes, used this point to attack the church. The point is that God did not say that the Canaanite people were not human beings created in the likeness of God. God Himself, knowing the danger and the consequences of idolatry in the life of His people, would have wished to foresee the risk of spiritual contamination and their consequent self-destruction. Unfortunately, Joshua's disobedience found resonance in the period of the Monarchy in Israel. During the period of the Monarchy, the virus of idolatry spread through all the religious and sociopolitical structures of Israel and nobody was able to eradicate this cancer. Fohrer (1973:97-101) critically observes that by that time many aspects of Baalism had been incorporated and accepted easily in Israelite lifestyle and faith. It

means that pure Yahwism never existed because God always accommodated Himself to the human religious understanding and language (cf. Fretheim 1984: 10-11). Any attempt at discovering pure Yahwism is, therefore, in vain. A comparative study between the biblical culture and the cultures of Israel's neighbors seems imperative, but the result of such a study must be limited to this area.

The second point is purely psychological: Western ways of feeling, thinking, and acting are very different from the Hebrew one. It seems that Kruger (1992:21-22) correctly observes the difficulty that Westerners have with the Old Testament. The Congolese scholar J. Nyeme Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 83-112) acknowledging the existence of this problem for the West, encourages the theologians of sub-Saharan Africa, who are culturally close to the Ancient Near East, to contribute theologically to Old Testament study. We support such a claim because often this part of the Bible is very obscure. Serious study by Old Testament and sub-Saharan African biblical scholars who have a *mystical intuition* can contribute greatly to the advance of Biblical research. In seeking to understand the Bible we must acknowledge that there is a big gap of time between Hosea and the present, as G. E Wright (1960:15-32), E. Gerstenberg (1981) and Heschel (1996) have noted. This means that all efforts made to understand Hosea and the other Biblical books can only be approximately successful.

However, in the psychological domain, it must be recognized that Hosea made three contributions of genius. Firstly, Hosea ironically pointed out the need not only for suffering and humiliation (cf. von Rad 1965. vol 2: 51-96) but also for the destruction of

ἡδέως (*not suavis*) by a new, particular and singular kind of the ἡδέως (*suavis*). A shift of this kind in psychological reality is not experienced easily: it requires a deep submission, as deel Arrudo (1969: 64) emphasis, “O reconhecimento de tal subordinação é o que custa ao hedonismo e ao orgulho humano, pois, em virtude de seu carácter dinâmico, não se fixa na imobilidade da contemplação, mas tende a deslocar-se para os domínios da vontade, obrigando-a não raro a duras renúncias e a sacrificios heróicos”⁹¹. Also with Hosea, the death of the ego or the destruction of ἡδέως (*not suavis*) became the condition *sine qua non* for someone who would be called a true prophet. This condition is an essential pre-condition of unconditional obedience to the Yahweh. But what is the ἐγώ in the context of the prophets? von Rad (1965. vol 2:76-77) correctly responds that:

We have already seen further how their office intensified all the prophet's mental capacities to the present day-and it is not inappropriate-we may say this: we are shown men who have become persons because God has addressed them and they have had to make a decision in his presence. This was something new in Israel. And these men were subject to the word of Yahweh in a far more intense form than ever before in Israel. We must guard against looking at this whole subject in contemporary terms: the people of the ancient world used the pronoun 'I' of which the prophets became conscious because Jahweh spoke to them differed both from the 'I' used by the oriental rulers of the period and, to an even greater degree, from the 'I' used by the present-day Western man, the meaning of which has been so influenced by idealist philosophy and the romantic movement. A remarkable facet of this attainment of personality, which the prophets achieved, was that their messages were issued under their own names.

⁹¹ The acknowledgement of such subordination costs a lot to human hedonism and pride. By virtue of its dynamic character; such a kind of subordination can be fixed in mobility of mere contemplation. The same subordination tends to move in the sphere of willing and this obliges human being to do rare and hard renouncement and heroic sacrifice.

Evidently Biblical scholars are aware that questions concerning the psychological life of the prophet are very controversial. If these scholars seriously consider the Israelite context, von Rad's (1965. vol.2: 76-77) observation will be found to be right and could justify some of the difficulties that the West has with understanding sub-Saharan religions and philosophy. In both contexts, it happens that anybody who is involved in spiritual matters or initiation rites undergoes psychological and affective transformations which are very difficult to explain. As Altuna (1974:279) observes:

Cada especialização, ofício ou cargo exige também uma iniciação, por exemplo a chefia, especialista da magia, forjador, guerreiro, pastor, oleira, ou ingresso numa sociedade secreta. Os ritos de iniciação banto e negro-africano ainda não são bem conhecidos, não se chegou a descobrir a sua complexidade. O Negro guarda no maior sigilo o que neles viveu; há referências mítico-místicas que desconhecemos e utilizam linguagem e nomes cifrados, esotéricos, que nunca revelam ao profano⁹².

The same Altuna (1974: 279) proceeds by saying that

O homem pode penetrar sempre mais no mistério da vida participada e nunca pode chegar a conhecer, manejar ou dominar por completo as enormes possibilidades da interacção entre os dois mundos muito fecundos em potencialidades. Além disto, o Criador, Deus, permanece sempre como o 'Outro'⁹³.

⁹²Any specialization, role or position requires a kind of initiation, as for instance a position of leadership, magician, smith, soldier, pastor, potter or the one who belong to the secret society. Bantu rites of initiation and the Negro African as well are not well known, and a long way still remains to discover its complexity. Negro people keep in deep secret the meaning of these rites of passage and the kind of language and codified names which masters of these initiation schools use to teach others.

⁹³The person can always go further into the mystery of participated life but never will be able to know, to manage or to dominate completely the huge possibilities of interaction which exist between both worlds more deeply in terms of potentialities. Besides this, the Creator or God still remains like the stranger.

The struggle to understand and to effectively participate in the reality of the true coexistence of the world and God's pathos, lead to a psychological and affective shift of $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega$. This psychological and pathetic shift of $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega$, radically affects the entire life of the candidates of God's vocation. In trying to interpret from a point of view of the New Testament such psychological and affective shifts, we discover some clues in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan mystic traditions. One of the clues is for example Jesus' fundamental *exigency* to carrying one's own cross. This means, in other words of Jesus, renouncement (cf. DeHaan 1982). Indeed we have to recognize that the reconciliation between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, both in the personality of Hosea and in the personalities of sub-Saharan mystics, constitutes a great challenge to the Freudian therapeutic process called psychoanalysis. The challenge for Freudian therapy lies in the fact that its foundation is the obligation that the patient has to destroy the oppressive utopia of the father, thereby vanquishing patriarchal power (cf. Hamerton-Kelly 1978:4-14) whereas, for the prophet and the mystic, there is no destruction of the father who symbolizes God. What is accepted by them is their own death: *Hominis mors voluntarius*.

Secondly, in terms of poetic language, in Hosea we do not have the beginning of poetry but the poetry of the beginning⁹⁴. For this reason Hosea offers a fantastic discovery: the idea of a writing of the psychology of human love as a prototype of a mysterious love relation between God and His people. This is observed by Deissler (1984:97), Harrington (1985: 278-279), Kruger (1992:7) and others. This case of Hosea is rare in the history of religion since the *reverence* that the devotee ascribes to gods is almost non-existent in the

⁹⁴ We are indebted to Eudoro de Souza for this idea.

sub-Saharan religious context.⁹⁵ In Hosea, the poet by virtue of this *reverence* relates nothing about the effect of Hosea upon God's vocation. Having been convinced by God, Hosea is with the difficulty of being the first in Israel to understand and teach his people that conjugal inner life could *again* become a tremendous vehicle for imparting the reality and depth of a loving God. The complexity of this shift has forced many scholars to spend their time discussing the validity or invalidity of the study of Hosea's narrative. Mays (1969:55) explained his view about the matter and said that:

The narrative is a more complex form of the usual report of the prophetic symbolism (e.g. 1: 2-9; Jeremiah. 13.1-11; Ezekiel. 12.1-11; II Kings 13.15-19). The elements are not precise and self-contained; instead one hears an unfolding drama in which everything moves from the potential contained in the command to love. It is as though Hosea already knew what that word meant in this particular situation, and the explanation surely is the relation in the oracular poetry of Hosea 2:2-15.

He proceeds to ask himself who the unnamed woman is, about what time in the life of Hosea the report tell us. Such questions about the biography of Hosea have not yet been answered and this does not help us to prove or disprove the historical existence of Hosea.

Mays (1969:55) concludes by saying that:

The narrative was fashioned to illumine one particular action as a form of proclamation; its connections with the rest of Hosea's life are ignored because the revelation of the divine intent did not require such elaboration.

⁹⁵ This kind of history could only be found in mythologies, especially in Greek mythology. To this tends Hosea should be considered as myth because only from the perspective of the myth can we justify the existence of this scandalous text in a sacred book like the Bible. The analysis of this text sometimes requires a considerable background of mythology.

Vogels refutes (1984: 712-713) this view . He seems more pessimistic and he asks:

Cette quête de l' "Osée historique" pourra-t-elle jamais réussir? rencontre-t-on là vraiment l' intention du texte? le nombre de questions qui demeurent sans réponse, et qui le demeureront probablement toujours, ne nous invite-t-il pas à abandonner cette recherche qui tend à savoir "exactement" ce qui s' est passé?⁹⁶

We disagree with Vogels because in spite of the metaphorical ambiguity and some contextual difficulties, in the rest of the narrative found in Hosea, the Biblical text should not be neglected but studied. It is only in this book of the Old Testament that the prophet Hosea, in the context of extreme idolatry and egoism, challenged his contemporaries and demonstrated to them, through his own conjugal life, that "l' amour peut tout céder à l' intérêt alors que l' intérêt ne sert jamais à l' amour". This love is truly divine charity because "elle (divine charity) assume souffrance et péché: com-passion transfiguratrice" (cf. Monchanin 1955:99)⁹⁷.

Finally, it is necessary to remember once again the real sense of the pathos of God, as we perceive it in the book of Hosea. For Heschel (1996.vol 1: 4) pathos is one of the modes of God's being or manifestation and it is limited to a simple sphere of *emotion*. The German scholar von Rad supports Heschel's view (cf. von Rad 1965. 2 vol: 63). Our view is different;

⁹⁶ Can this quest for the historical Hosea ever succeed? Is really possible to find the true meaning of the text? A number of questions which remain unanswered and will probably always remain so. Do not these things invite us to abandon this search which aims to discover exactly what happened?

⁹⁷ This charity assumes suffering and sin: which means *com-passion*.

we maintain that pathos is one of the attributes of God. It seems to us that Heschel had in his study of the prophets a great difficulty in clarifying his concept of pathos and his comprehension of the true essence of human being. His difficulty can be inferred because in his confrontation with Freud he (1963:56-57) observes that: "According to Freud, the deepest essence of man is the organism's instincts, and their satisfaction man's authentic occupation". Heschel (1963:56) continues to say that "what is defined here relates to *bios* (ἰσ); it does not relate to existence, which embraces both *bios* and being human". In closely examining the difference between *Bios* and *Zoë*, Hilmar Frustenau (1986: 166) observes that

Apesar de conhecer *bios* como tempo de duração da existência (incluindo os meios para a sobrevivência, cf. Lucas 21:4). O novo Testamento vê a vida biológica como algo essencialmente negativo, porque 'o homem não vive sua vida para si mesmo, nem para desenvolver as suas próprias virtudes, mas sim, é responsável diante de Deus para viver servindo aos outros.' Em contraste com *bios* o termo *zōe* no novo Testamento é inteiramente positivo, chegando a significar, mesmo sem atributo algum 'vida eterna' (especialmente no Evangelho de João sob influência helenística e gnóstica)⁹⁸.

In fact Frustenau helps us to understand the problem of Heschel. His problem is that he observes things from the Hellenistic perspective that are perpetuated in Western culture. Perhaps the word *Bios* can be understood as a content, and *Zoë* even if it means *Bios*, represents only a mere vehicle of ἰσ or *Bios*. If this suggestion is valid, it could be affirmed that *Bios* is not *Zoë*, which does not relate to existence, but that it embraces *Zoë*

⁹⁸ In spite of knowing *bios* as time of duration of human existence (including the way of surviving, cf. Luke 21:4). The New Testament looks at biological life as something essentially negative. This is due to the fact that 'human being do neither live his own life nor develop his own virtues, but yes, human being is responsible in front of God to live by serving others. Then, in contrast to *bios*, the term *Zoë* in the New

and being human. *Bios* or בָּיִת as it is understood from the Jewish background is something different. This is intrinsically linked both to essence (cf. Genesis 3:20; Hosea 2:2) and to existence and means *full Life*. It has the same meaning as Shalom (cf. Jung 1973: 25-28, 35, 86)⁹⁹. However, in spite of what we say, it is necessary to emphasize that even the use of the term *Bios* is problematic because the wise of the people of the Near East never found the right word to express the idea of existence. Frustenau (1986: 166) writes:

Não é demais dizer, que todo o anseio da sabedoria oriental em geral (cf. A Epopéia de Gilgamesh) e da hebraica em especial é descobrir e se apoderar da ‘vida eterna’, para a qual ainda nem termo havia¹⁰⁰.

If our suggestion is persuasive, we think that the Freudian comprehension of human being’s essence could be ascribed to God as His essence, thus reinforcing the view that we consider *pathos* as God’s attribute. *Pathos* substitutes mere biological instinct or mere mechanism of satisfaction and excludes the formulation of the question: What after the satisfaction (cf. Heschel 1963:57)? We use *pathos* as a characteristic not only of human beings but also of God, to face the question that follows their acts: what after the satisfaction? But before (essence) and after (existence) the satisfaction, what happens? Instead of mere satisfaction we use something more complex like *pathos*. These questions enable us, thus, to understand that the God of the Bible can become acquainted

Testament is entirely positive, it means sometimes if it miss its attribute: *eternal life*, specially in the Gospel of John due to Hellenistic and Gnostic influences.

⁹⁹In this book, Jung tries to resolve a similar problem arising from the terms *Hackmah*, *Sofia* and *Logos*.

¹⁰⁰It is not enough to say that the aim of Near East wisdom (cf. The Epopee of Gilgamesh) and specially the Hebrew wisdom is to know how to discover and to obtain *eternal life*. There is not in our language the equivalent term which can be used to express such a concept.

with himself (reflexive relation), and with the human being (symmetric relation) and with both human being and the rest of creation (transitive relation).

It is also extremely important to emphasize that thinking about the pathos of God does not reduce the grandeur of God, but on the contrary, an exegetical and hermeneutic effort needs to be made to enable us to *rediscover* the central point of the study of God for our benefit, in history as well as for Eternity. Then, if in fact the friendship between God and human being exists as we think it does, and the comprehension that we have of the idea of covenant also exists, we will have now created the conditions for speaking about the metaphoric presentation of the God whom we worship as a *Theopathetikos*. Then, in trying to respond to the poet who formulated the question “To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?” we will have created conditions for understanding our God through the symbols or metaphors of our community. As the metaphors found in Hosea are not easily accessible because of the kind of trans-objective language in which they are expressed, let us now study them under the following headings: Hosea’s God and the sub-Saharan African God as the *communicator Being*; The Binominal *Father-Mother*; the binominal *Husband-Spouse* in both contexts; God’s frustration and vengeance in Hosea; and the question of violation of human rights.

3.2 Hosea’s God and the sub-Sahara African god as *the communicator Being*

Gregory the Great (cf. Gregory in PL 77, 706) said that “Disce cor dei in verbis Dei”¹⁰¹. If there is a sphere where this maxim becomes difficult to understand, it continues in that of a dialogue between God and the human being. We know that there are many ways that God can use to communicate to the human being, but until now, it seems that the secure

way, which we can use to discover and metaphorically feel the pathos of God's heart, is that of starting with the scriptures, because there we can understand the process that God used to reveal Himself to us in diverse forms. This process of revelation may or may not be similar to what God, as the Creator, used to speak to the sub-Saharan people of Africa. One thing is clear in both contexts: there is the same fundamental belief that the God who created the human being and the rest of creation is unique (cf. Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20: 1-4) and is a *communicator being*. This God who is a *communicator being* interacts affectively with His interlocutors according to the principle of reciprocity.

3.2.1 Reciprocity of communication between God and human beings in Hosea and sub-Saharan Africa

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel: When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD. So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. (Hosea 1: 1-3)

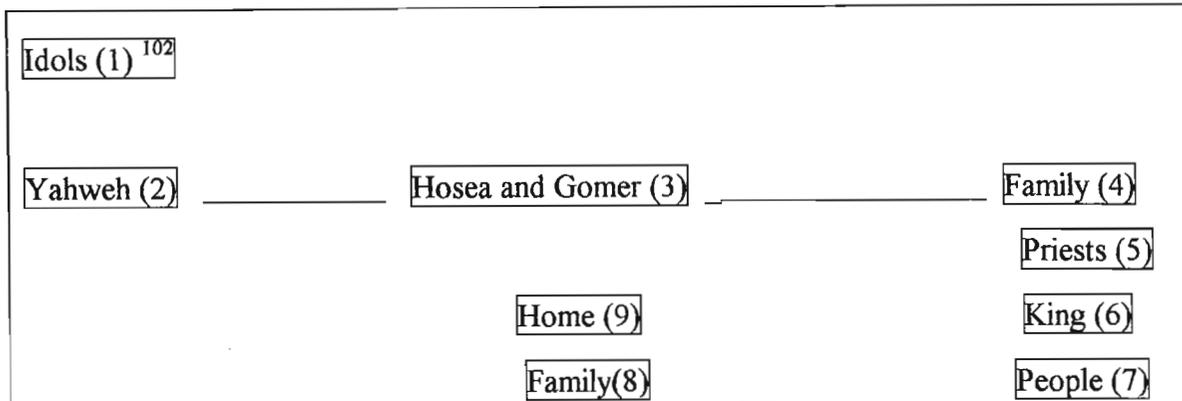
In seeking to understand the way that the principle of reciprocity functions a fresh look at the text quoted above is crucial. From this text, we can remark that one of the most important aspects of the Israelite religion is God's revealing Himself to his people **הָיָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ**

אֲשֶׁר **דִּבְרֵי-יְהוָה**. This revelation means nothing but the complex reciprocity of

¹⁰¹ Come to discover the heart of God through the words of God. See also Schökel 1965: 140.

communication (cf. Heschel 1963:46-48) or the symmetric co-participation of the receiver

and emitter דְּבַר-יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל-הוֹשֵׁעַ.



In Hosea the communication between God and the people of Israel or symmetric relationship, is realized in the context of family or community. This communication is *dialogue*, an *I/Thou* relationship, as Buber (1958:3-11) observes. The dialogue between God and the prophet is not of a short duration but it is a continuous, extended dialogue characterized by the fact that the prophet is being called to become God's partner. God is not called, but is the constant partner (cf. Neher 1955:179-202). Ruiz Asua de Altuna (1974:356-380) demonstrated that in the sub-Saharan part of Africa, human beings are engaged in a dialogue with God, ancestors, dead and spirits from birth onwards; and throughout their lives, they can intensify this dialogue by the practice of rites. In Hosea the communication between God and the people of Israel, a symmetric relationship (cf. Buber 1958:3-11), takes place within the family or community.

¹⁰² The frame shows that there is not relationship between (1) and (2). The references (4), (5), (6) and (7) represent that Israelite society interacts with (3) and God (2) and vice versa. The references (3), (9) and (8) represent the private locus in which the prophecy was displayed. This locus of revelation interacts

The point of convergence between the people of Israel and sub-Saharan Africans is that God and the prophets interact in a tension dialogue. The difference lies in our placing emphasis on the hierarchical or pyramidal structure of power in which the mediating role of the ancestors and spirits in the sacred dialogue widens the gap between God and the sub-Saharan prophets or people. Because of this difference, there is no exact parallel between the levels of personal human relationship with God depicted in Hosea and in sub-Saharan Africa. The prophets of African religions perhaps do not consider God as their kin or co-partner, as is the case with the prophets of Israel. The prophet Hosea and the other prophets of Israel could serve as, a model of eschatological dialogue and relationship with God who is as the *father-mother* for both the Israelite and sub-Saharan prophets. Hulstaert (cf. Hulstaert in Angang *et. al* 1978: 33-84) did good work in this area but we do not for theological reasons find it convincing. Ruiz Asua de Altuna (1974:390-404) and Tulu Kia Mpansu (cf. Tulu Kia Mpansu in Angang *et.al* 1978:21-32) approach this point fanatically. They recognize the existence of this gap and argue that the sub-Saharan people *minimize* this distance between God and themselves only when they are involved in the affective dimension of God's existence through dance, magic or traditional ceremonies. Senghor (1970:78) argues that it is not possible to affirm the existence of this kind of dialogue between God and the sub-Saharan people. He further argues that this kind of dialogue becomes possible only when the sub-Saharan people start observing things from a surrealist point of view. Senghor's argument is unacceptable because his knowledge about the sub-Saharan African prophetic movement is very limited. The power of the Israelite prophetic movement, as it is expressed in Hosea, lies in the dialogue between God and the prophet which,

simultaneously with (1), (2), and the rest. The conflict observed in the frame is that (4), (5), (6) and (7) interact with (1), (3), (9) and (8), but difficultly with (2).

paradoxically, takes place in two dimensions: history as the real and meta-history as the pathetic or surreal. This will be elucidated further.

In the text, the poet shows that what comes to Hosea is **דְּבַר-יְהוָה**. Three questions should be asked about the encounter between God and the prophet of *dabar*. Firstly, what is the true meaning of **דְּבַר**? It seems that nobody clearly knows the meaning of *dabar*.

Von Rad (1965.vol 2:88-89) writes:

But we shall be disappointed if we imagine that, in all the really abundant and varied material available, the prophets give a complete account of the phenomenology of the word of Yahweh. Indeed, we may even come to think that the prophets are the last people to provide an answer to this question, because their attitude to the word they receive is so from neutral –the word presses in upon them, they make it their own, and allow it to absorb all their emotions. In His word Yahweh meets his prophet in the most personal way possible.

Von Rad (1965.vol 2:84-85) further says that,

To digress for a moment: what has here been said about the Hebrew language regarded as a phenomenon composed of sounds which almost possess a creative power of their own to conjure things up also holds true, in a different way, for Greek.

Meissner (cf. Meissner in von Rad 1965.vol 2:84) helps us to understand the primitive view. He notes that,

The word has a different and much more primitive way of acting: on solemn occasions it can release meanings and establish mental affinities which lie at the deeper level of its magical matrix and which apparently have little or nothing to do with its obvious and everyday meaning.

From the Greek perspective, Georgiades (cf. Georgiades in von Rad 1965.vol 2: 87) observes that,

The characteristic of classical Greek is that the word operates as a rhythmic and musical force and at the same time as language, as a phonetic formation, as that which conveys ideas and emotions. The word serves not only a phonetic purpose; it is at the same time something more, it is rational art-material which is shaped for its own sake... what happens in such etymologies is rather peculiar. On the one hand, the word in question loses a certain amount of its meaning, and apparently acts as a series of sounds rather than as a way of conveying meaning; but this series of sounds, which is the word reduced to its original value, is at the same time given a greatly intensified meaning, in that it is now, in respect of its form, surrounded by new associations and new meanings.

Altuna (1983: 84-85) observes that in sub-Saharan culture :

A cultura banto e a negro-africana brotam, expandem-se e permanecem pela palavra. Fundamentam-se na 'oralidade'. A palavra tem a primazia e nada se mantém nem vive sem ela. Por isso cultivam-na e tratam dela com carinho. Os banto (negro-africano) não intelectualizam a palavra. Ela e a pessoa que a pronuncia estão unidas. Por ela e nela a pessoa comunica-se, translada-se e prolonga-se¹⁰³.

¹⁰³ Both Bantu culture and Negro African culture sprout expand over and remain on the word. Both cultures are rooted in orality. For both cultures, the word is a most important thing and nothing either remains or

He emphasizes that:

A palavra é a pessoa, compromete-a e empenha-a. Expressa, como nenhum outro meio, a energia vital interior. É sinal do seu dinamismo influente e a mais vital e eficaz concretização pessoal da inter-acção. Faz-se vida participada, auto-doação da pessoa e comunhão inter-pessoal. Tanto dinamismo encerra o seu conteúdo como a pessoa que a pronuncia. Pessoa-palavra-dinamismo vital, significam o mesmo. A palavra é como um símbolo eficaz, capaz de produzir efeitos e influir noutros seres depois de contactá-los¹⁰⁴.

Apparently the comprehension of the *word* had the same power and resonance in the Greek, sub-Saharan African and Israelite contexts; but if we examine the data carefully we will find some differences. Firstly, it is obvious that there is no clear-cut boundary between word of man and the word of God in ancient Greek and sub-Saharan African culture. The people of the ancient time in Greece and sub-Saharan Africa sometimes confuse the words of philosophers or sorcerers with דְּבַר־יְהוָה . Sometimes in Israel people resisted the prophet, priest or sage because of confusion, but the prophet overcame it by appealing to God's authority. We agree with von Rad (1965.vol.2: 86) who clearly asserts that: "Israel's theologians and prophets were, of course, sure that, for all the mysterious possibilities inherent in every word of man, the word of Yahweh towered incomparably high above

exists without it. For that reason people manage the word and deal kindly with it. Bantu people never use the word intellectually. There is always a connection between the word and the one who pronounces it. Through the word the person can communicate, interact and expand upon.

¹⁰⁴ The word means the person; this serves to commit and to pledge the person. The word expresses in any other way, the internal vital energy. The word also means the way for displaying a strong dynamism and vitality and concretization of effectiveness. With the word, people create, share and offer life. There is more dynamism which involves the content of the word. The vitality of Person-word-vital dynamism, mean the same. The word is like an effective symbol, which is able to produce effects and to influence other human beings when it is really well pronounced.

them". Secondly, the word is, paradoxically, historically situated. The poet gave epochs and the names of kings עֲנִיָּה יוֹתָם אָחָז יְחִזְקִיָּה מְלָכֵי יְהוּדָה וּבֵימֵי יְרָבֵעָם בֶּן-יְוָאָשׁ and he pointed to their context מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל in contrast, maybe to Judah. All of these have been done to connect the name of messenger אֶל-הוֹשִׁעַ with the names of those who were ruling the religious and socio-political destiny of people.

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel when the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, 'Go, take' to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD. (Hosea 1:1-2)

The word of Yahweh דְבַר-יְהוָה in contrast to the *words* of those Kings, challenges the oppressive established religious and socio-political system. The *dabar* of Yahweh is not only a phonetic formation (cf. Georgiades in von Rad 1965.vol2: 85) or sound, but it is also a useful tool. It affects the consciousness of the oppressed and helps them to be aware of the urgent need for religious and socio-political transformation. Von Rad (1965. vol.2: 87) argues, "The prophets' statements about the word of Yahweh are relatively independent of those made by the priestly theology. With the former we encounter what is obviously a self-contained set of ideas and traditions". Von Rad (1965.2 vol.2: 87) adds that:

This word of Yahweh is particularly characteristic, because it represents the apperception of the divine word as event, a

unique happening in history, which a man is looking for or which takes him by surprise, and which therefore in either case sets the person concerned in a new historical situation.

But this *dabar* of Yahweh is also Meta-historical דְּבַר־יְהוָה. It is not like the word of spirits, sorcerers (Africa) or the result merely of profound human reflection, that is, of human wisdom. From the sub-Saharan African traditional perspective Altuna (1983: 84-85) notes that דְּבַר־יְהוָה means “pessoa-palavra-dinamismo vital, significam o mesmo. A palavra é como um símbolo eficaz, capaz de produzir efeitos e influir noutros seres depois de contactá-los”¹⁰⁵. This דְּבַר־יְהוָה came from the Creator of the Universe. Then from that perspective of creation, the *dabar* of Yahweh receives another connotation: it is paradoxically the vehicle of the beginning and it hides in itself the principle of the beginning. This will be further demonstrated. With the advent of the *dabar* of Yahweh in Hosea, God who in Israel was considered to be conniving with the oppressor, made his choice and embraced the oppressed. In contrast with the use of the word in primitive Greek, and in other Hellenic and in sub-Saharan contexts, it is only in Israel that the *dabar* of Yahweh could essentially play the double role of *destroying* and *recreating* things.

DESTROYING

Then the LORD said to Hosea, Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another

¹⁰⁵ Person-word-vital dynamism, mean the same. The word is like an effective symbol, able to produce effects and to influence other human beings when it is properly pronounced.

son. Then the LORD said, Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. (Hosea 1:4-9)

RECREACTING

Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called sons of the living God. (Hosea 1: 10)

DESTROYING

But the more I (They) called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. Will they not return to Egypt? and will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to repent? Swords will flash in their cities, will destroy the bars of their gates and put an end to their plans. My people are determined to turn from me. Even if they call to the Most High, he will by no means exalt them. (Hosea 11: 2-7)

RECREACTING

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim. For I am God, and not man— the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath. (Hosea 11:8-9)

3.2.2 Diverse roles of God as the communicator in both contexts

In the beginning of the text of Hosea (1:1-6), the poet presents God in a way as יהוה , the true Warrior, and also as a being that is able to communicate. It is neither Baal nor Asherah who want to communicate with the prophet and the people, but it is יהוה (κύριος or *Dominus*). The Creator of the Universe (cf. Genesis 2) and the Creator of Israel, the God of the covenant (cf. Exodus 3:15), the Liberator (cf. Hosea 11: 1-8, Exodus 19-20) , the Father and Mother of the nation (cf. Hosea 11:1-8). The verb יהי (to be or to happen) is in Kal perfect. The verbal form is translated as passive Aorist ἐγενήθη in LXX, which expresses the idea of absolute certitude of the existence of Yahweh and the advent of this *novum*. The Vulgate used the term *factum* to emphasize that the word of God (*verbum Domini*) really happened (*est*). The poet by starting with יהוה אשר היה אל-הוושע , introduces the *novum* (cf. Moltmann 1968: 3,166-168) and links this with the term יהוה synonym of בראשית to express the idea that Yahweh in contra-opposition to Baal, continues to be the Ἄρχη (origin), *principium* or cornerstone of the Universe and for the religious and socio-political situation.

Following the structural syntax of the first verse of chapter 1 of the book of Genesis, the *novum* in Hosea is introduced by God to the prophet via *dabar* ויאמר לך קח-לך and ויאמר לך אהב are a part of the effective words (cf. Wolff 1983: 22-23) as these are

transmitted from God to the Prophet or from the Prophet to the people via the prophetic conjugal life expressed by $\text{לֵךְ וְקַח לְךָ אִשָּׁה}$ and לֵךְ אֶתְּחַבֵּב . These two following groups of active imperative sentences $\text{לֵךְ וְקַח לְךָ אִשָּׁה}$ and לֵךְ (cf. Hosea 1: 2) and לֵךְ אֶתְּחַבֵּב and לֵךְ (cf. Hosea 3:1), are two points of departure, which are extremely important for God to start and maintain dialogue with the people of Israel via His effective prophet. As in the case of Abraham, the home is a special locus where, as an intruder, God will begin and maintain the dialogue with His partners. The impression that is created through the incarnation is that, apart from the fact that God and the prophet co-exist in the affective sphere of living (cf. von Rad 1965.vol.2:63), God allowed the prophet scandalously to incarnate the pathos of God and paradoxically to become the opportune time תְּחִלָּתוֹ , $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$ or *principium*, which means *originator* and *originated*. Hence with Hosea the *novum* or the *new genesis* or new form of communication starts with $\text{לֵךְ וְקַח לְךָ אִשָּׁה}$ “go and take in marriage”. The formula of dialogue between God and the patriarch / prophet Abraham $\text{לֵךְ וְקַח לְךָ אִשָּׁה}$ in Genesis 12 :1-2 becomes $\text{לֵךְ וְקַח לְךָ אִשָּׁה}$. Abraham was sent to others nations or homes, but Hosea was sent to his own nation and home . This form of introducing the advent of the *dabar* of Yahweh $\text{לֵךְ וְקַח לְךָ אִשָּׁה}$ fits into the context of doubt and extreme cultural confusion about the true idea of divinity. Due to its strong emphasis on fertility, supported by the myth of a sexual link between the divinities and the soil on one hand and the changing of atmospheric conditions of the people on the other, Baalism rebounded strongly and it was very difficult for Yahwism to survive. Only a frustrated minority could have remained the true disciples of the God of Moses (cf. Fohrer 1973: 84-98). God tried to act in this situation and to challenge any other gods, He presented Himself as the tribal Warrior, the liberator or the guide : יְהוָה

Gómez-Acebo (1996:40) observes that here God definitively assumes the form of a supreme guide or Authority¹⁰⁶. God was presented in this way because of the political context of the 8th century (BCE). At this time it was the ambition of Assyria to control Palestine, which was on the main route for commerce and military strategy (cf. Bright 1985:359-459). The leaders were preoccupied with social and military alliances rather than with taking an attitude of childish and abstract docility to an invisible God like Yahweh. God once again attracted their attention by presenting Himself as a tribal warrior (cf. Gerstenberger 1996:38-54). In spite of circumstances, Hosea would like to assure the politician as well as the marginalized or oppressed people that the source of change was in Yahweh. He decided too as someone who was on the defensive, to assume an offensive posture **דְּבַר-יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל-הוֹשֵׁעַ**. It is an historical **דְּבַר-יְהוָה** or event which took place during Hosea's time. Here Hosea is in balance between proto-prophetism and classical prophetism. He used the retrospective sense and with tremendous force forged the *novum* from the *vetus* (cf. Eliade 1972:25-39, Gómez-Acebo 1996:43) bringing back to the people's memory, the unexpected historical event of genocide portrayed by the sword of Jehu the King.

Then the LORD said to Hosea, Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. (Hosea 1:4)

From the text referred to above, God presented Himself as the Protector of the innocent. Did Yahweh decide to imitate Jehu or did Jehu imitate Yahweh? There is no answer to

¹⁰⁶ See a serious and profound study by Quell in Kittel *at. al.* 1964-1976 vol 5: 971-974.

this pertinent question in the text . The metaphor of Hosea 1: 4 as well as others which are to be found in the book of Hosea, always perpetuate the power of scandal and curiosity as I will try to demonstrate further.

3.2.3 Violence as a tremendous mode of communicating in both contexts

In spite of the power of scandal and the difficulty that the scholars face in demystifying idolatry through metaphor, Goldingay (1995:42) attempted to analyse the metaphor found in Hosea 1:4. He (1995:42) writes that the male prophet portrays Yahweh as involved in the violence which is characteristic of maleness. He proceeds (1992:43): “One theological implication of such passages may be the conviction that Yahweh is willing to be compromised rather than stay unstained in an aseptic environment. If this is the inevitable price of being involved in history in its ambiguity”. We know that this ambiguity had three causes. Firstly, it is our attachment to the Hegelian dialectic and our dependence on the analogical method which atrophies our apprehension and our comprehension of divinity. Secondly, as Scholem (1965:107) observes it is our incapacity to discern simultaneously the purity of God and the reality of His living. Finally, it is our difficulty in imagining the existence of the God who is not emotionally secure ; the One who can sometimes resort to violence and tyranny to express His pathos. We know, according to psychologists that violence and tyranny are ways of communicating and that both express also a state of emotional insecurity. Gómez-Acebo (1996:14) says:

De facto, a masculinização excessiva da sociedade conseguiu fazer com que os homens perdessem contacto com sua *anima*, o lado feminino de seu ser. Na medida em que padeceram desta ignorância, maior foi o seu medo e mais fortes as tentativas de manter ‘as mulheres em seu lugar.’

pois a tirania externa é o símbolo inevitável da rigidez e da insegurança internas¹⁰⁷.

The question is: is the God of the Bible paradoxically secure (balanced) emotionally and not secure (not balanced)¹⁰⁸? We suggest that the answer to this question could come from the sub-Saharan context, because the sub-Saharan people of Africa are trained to be involved in the pathetic and tautegorical dimension of divinity. They have the capacity quickly to understand the binomial behavior of divinity. As they easily accept the binome *father-mother*, they also recognize and attribute the binomial reality אָבִי and אִמִּי, אֱלֹהִים in God. In the theology of this people, there is no hesitation about ascribing evil violence, for example, to God (cf. Dickson 1984: 60, Hulsart in Angang *at.al.*1978: 33-84, Altuna 1974: 390-405). In the West, most theologians are limited by Greek, Scholastic, Hegelian and Kantian systems of thought and avoid facing this question. They prefer to affirm the omnipotence of God, which is nonsensical. Even Fohrer (1973:78) unfortunately shows reticence about honestly approaching this matter:

Yahweh also has traits that appear negative. He is passionate and wrathful, often characterized not by his calm and secret governance, but by the blazing violence of his intervention. This violence has even led some to speak of the demonic element in Yahweh. It would be more appropriate to understand these features as expressing the irrational aspect of Yahweh: in contrast to the ephemeral human world, Yahweh possesses the energy of all-prevailing divine power.

¹⁰⁷ In fact, the extreme masculinization of the society moves people to lose their contact with their soul that is their feminine aspect of existence. The more people ignore such a problem, the more they are afraid and men use more cunning to maintain women under their control. Because the external tyranny is the inevitable display of rigidity as well as the internal insecurity.

¹⁰⁸ We avoid using the adjective insecure because it cannot function in a paradox.

For sub-Saharan African scholars, such an approach becomes more problematic; they are interested in interacting with Process Theology to resolve theological dilemmas such as the question of God's violence. As Thsishiku (1987: 63-64) affirms:

La procédure théologique de ce courant de pensée Whiteheadien rencontre aisément la ligne de cheminement de la pensée africaine, la quelle est aussi à sa manière de nature *organique* et *globalisante*. Elle s'affirme comme de très grand intérêt, et devra retenir l'attention de tout le mouvement théologique contemporain. Les africains en particulier feront bien d'échanger beaucoup dans les prochaines années avec les théologiens développant la Process Theology¹⁰⁹.

Altuna identifies with Thsihsiku and confirms this sub-Saharan African global vision: "O negro não quer o mundo para si, mas quere-o consigo num abandono activo ... animado pela razão"¹¹⁰. Thsihsiku and Altuna are correct in spite of pressure that the ecclesiastical conservative class put on the sub-Saharan theologians. We need to face our theological and biblical problems from the perspective of Process Philosophy (cf. Whitehead 1979). The biblical scholars of sub-Saharan of Africa could find in Process Philosophy that it is possible to make restitution to God of His sensory capacities. The question is: how the classic theologians will fill this serious theological vacuum and survive in sub-Saharan Africa in the future? This question merits an answer because it is clear that the religious

¹⁰⁹ The theological procedure of Whitehead's train of thought is easily compatible with the progress of African thought which by nature is also organic and holistic in its structure. It gives evidence of being of great interest and should appeal to the whole contemporary theological movement. Africans in particular will do well to take part in dialogue in the coming years with the theologians who are developing Process Theology.

¹¹⁰ The Negro people do not want the world for them, but they want it with them into a kind of active abandonment.

and socio-political chaos which results from violence did not only concern Hosea. These problems remain as they were in Hosea's time and continue to challenge both the classical theologians and the passive God that those prophets have envisaged as violent and insecure. Perhaps the poet, unfortunately, used Jehu as a metaphor for the violence that was necessary to force human beings to return to the sphere of open dialogue. But another question is whether violence as a way of communicating was the final answer.

So I will come upon them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk by the path. Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart. You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper. Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, Of whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? (Hosea 13: 7-10)

In sub-Saharan Africa, this kind of violence is categorically excluded. The sacrifice precisely plays the role of *a buffer* in this situation. For classical theism, the discussion should be limited to the old and insoluble question of the Sovereignty of God. But, returning to the text, Goldingay intelligently makes an effort to respond to this question from the perspective of the poet. Firstly, he observes that the male prophet both links Yahweh to violence and distances Yahweh from it (cf. Goldingay 1995:43). Secondly, in trying to discover the origin of violence in the law, Goldingay (1995: 43) says that: "In the Torah violence is God's business, not men's (cf. Leviticus 19: 18; Deuteronomy 32: 35)" and thirdly, he writes that it seems to him that "The first chapter of Hosea presupposes that God is not at ease with violence, that violence does not have the last word". It is very difficult to disagree with him on his first two points because it is clear that any kind of destructive or punitive violence is part of God's business. The poet, in

metaphorically presenting God as a communicating being, prefers to point out to us the passive way in which God, as the mature Being and psychotherapeutic doctor par excellence confronted his people. God prefers to resort to dialogue instead of using the sword like Jehu had done (cf. McGinnis 1979: 97). Then He used the dialogical way in weakness or repentance. He put between the prophet and Himself and between the prophet and the people the *dabar*, the effective word (cf. Wolff 1983: 22-23) as opposed to the sword of Jehu. Does the use of *dabar* mean that He totally excluded the use of force? Is *dabar* not somehow synonymous with the Sword?¹¹¹ What God actually condemns in Jehu's strategy is the *excess* which transforms the correctional message into a tyrannical one. But in chapter 13: 7-10 it is clear that God, seen metaphorically as a wild animal, will use a brutal or tyrannical method to teach Israel.

So I will come upon them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk by the path. Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart. You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper. Where is your king that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? (Hosea 13: 7-10)

Here the Theopathetikos God is presented by the poet as a lion¹¹² and a leopard¹¹³. The poet thus reverses the argument of chapter 1:1-3 and tries to reconcile v.4 with chapter 13: 7-10 and points out the possibility of God using's extreme tyranny against Israel. The

¹¹¹ cf. Hebrew 4:12. This is also the case with the human word human see for example: Proverbs 5:4b.

¹¹² cf. Hosea 5:14 and 11:10. In both texts the poet used the lion in a positive sense.

¹¹³ The Vulgate translates verses 7-8 of chapter 13 differently: *et ero eis quasi leaena sicut pardus in via Assyriorum occurram eis quasi ursa raptis catulis et dirumpam interiora iecoris eorum et consumam eos ibi quasi leo bestia agri scindet eos.*

Theopathetikos God challenges Israel, showing that no god or idol, whatever, could free Israel from His *handcuffs* (cf. Hosea 13:10). Does God sometimes seem like a demonic communicator?¹¹⁴ This question is posed because the metaphor of the lion is used both for God (authority) for Satan (terror)¹¹⁵. The same idea exists in African sub-Saharan culture where animals like the lion and the leopard symbolize leadership and tyranny¹¹⁶. And it may be because of the multivalence in the interpretation of symbols that it was very difficult for Israel to maintain a continuous open dialogue with someone who offers a psychologically unstable relationship.

Then, in opposition to Goldingay, it seems that violence even for God paradoxically has and does not have the last word. Apparently what temporarily prevents violence from having the last word, is in reality ⲁⲓⲛⲁ (ἡλεημένη), misericordia or divine compassion. This will be further demonstrated in chapter 4. Nevertheless the comprehension and acceptance of this divine compassion, which is considered as God's overture, depends on where the receiver or the sender stands. The poet, like a good pastor, preached to the unbelieving that violence never has the last word. The poet as someone who speaks not in the name of God but to God, tries to raise the morale of the oppressed and humiliated God, reminding Him of His role as protector and compassionate God: "Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount war-horses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless

¹¹⁴ See the same preoccupation in Fohrer 1973: 78.

¹¹⁵ cf. Isaiah 15:9 and 1 Peter 5:8.

¹¹⁶ The leopard-skin hat that was first used by Lumumba and later became the *Totem* of the former president Mobutu of DRC (formerly Zaire), this leopard-skin paradoxically represents leadership and tyranny. Note also Kenyatta and the Zulu Kingdom maintain the leopard as the symbol of force.

find compassion” (Hosea 14:3). Believing in this God’s pathos as compassion shows that violence never really has the last word.

3.2.4 No Dialogue between God and Idols: What is the true role of the sub-Saharan African Ancestors?

It is true that violence never has the last word except between God and Idols. It is known that in dialogue, there is a genuine cognitive and affective reciprocity between the sender and the receiver. In Hosea this is true of God and Hosea on the one hand and God and the rest of creation on the other. It is possible to observe that there is a kind of reciprocity between humans and idols because of the illusion of partnership that human beings created in relation to idols. From the text, it is observed that this kind of illusory reciprocity works, since human beings ascribe to idols, which are designed by the human mind, a human as well as a divine pathos. In Hosea the devotees who kissed (cf. Hosea 13:2b) the idols may be projecting to the idol a kind of affection which is nothing but illusion.

They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God. They sacrifice on the mountaintops and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar and terebinth, where the shade is pleasant. (Hosea 4:12-13)

When Ephraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died. Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. (Hosea 13: 1-2a)

The Baalist devotees sacrificed their kin to the idol and they paid for it.

It is said of these people, 'They offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf-idols'. (Hosea 13: 2b)

The same devotees were practised in sacred prostitution, which sometimes involved the terrible act of incest.

They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away the understanding of my people. They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God. Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution and your daughters-in-law to adultery. I will not punish your daughters when they turn to prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery, because the men themselves consort with harlots and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes, a people without understanding will come to ruin! (Hosea 4:10-14)

Then with the lack of ethical principles (cf. Fohrer 1982: 89-90), the priests as well as the people of Israel were engaged in such religious and socio-political atrocities. They all used the religious way to exploit their own kin. They lacked a sense of human solidarity as they ascribed to the idols divine powers and human feelings similar to those of the devotees who were worshipping them. It seems that in the Bible, there are no traces of a relationship of love between God and the idols or vice versa. There are reasons for this: Firstly, the idols are designed by the human hand, which means that there are made according to the image and resemblance of man and not of God. Secondly, the idols are mere objects. Even if human qualities are attributed to them, they will never be animate beings like human beings or God, with sensory capacities to speak, understand, love, kiss.

As such, there is no possibility of the idols becoming parents or kin or a God for human beings. Thirdly, the idols could not be considered as God. The divinization of idols by human beings is an illusory idea.

To maintain the communication between human beings and God, human beings have to transcend their idols or fetishes. The idols or fetishes are presented in diverse areas of human activities. For instance, the in arts, religion or science. Joseph Pijoan (cf. Pijoan 1938.vol 1:21) explains how people can transform a portrait or some other thing into an idol or fetishe:

It is possible that some of the statuettes that we call fetishes were originally portraits. There is no sharp line between the two types, because portraits, even among civilized people, may become objects of reverence to such an extent that they are nothing neither more nor less than fetishes.

Deel Arrudo (1969: 73) comments on such a complex process: “A idolatria virá mais tarde. A cegeira do instinto religioso, latente em tôdas as almas, é que irá, um dia, tornar divino o que não passava de mera figuração ou símbolo da matéria e das forças que a criam, condicionam e dirigem”¹¹⁷. He proceeds by exclaiming: “Que estranho processo mental, que diabólico metabolismo psicológico interveio para transformar, no correr do tempo, elementos da natureza e suas figurações em invólucros ou instrumentos físicos de

¹¹⁷Idolatry will come later, the blindness of religious instinct, which is latent in all the souls; it is the blindness that will be used to transform the mere figuration or symbol of material and forces that create, condition and lead.

fôrças extraterrenas, quando não em personificações de sêres mais ou menos divinos” (1969: 73)¹¹⁸. René Girard (1972), Berdyaev (1961), Rubem Alves (1985, 1990) and Hugo Assmann (1985) discuss the same problem from a socio-political point of view. They all formally acknowledge the complexity of idolatry and see the human being as having been called to demystify, challenge and destroy any kind of idol.

Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. In that day, declares the LORD, ‘you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master’. I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. (Hosea 2:14-18)

Where then can God and the people of Israel avoid the interference of idols? To reestablish the affective communication which had been interrupted by idols, God decided to go back to the desert לָכֵן הִנֵּה אֲנִי מִפְתִּיחַ הַמִּדְבָּר. The poet clearly wrote that the initiative was divine לָכֵן הִנֵּה אֲנִי. To emphasize this the poet used a personal pronoun אֲנִי where God speaks. The poet also connects the personal pronoun אֲנִי with two verbs of action מִפְתִּיחַ וְהִלְכֵתִיָּהּ. The first is a participle of the verb פָּתַח (persuade, deceive or lie). The verb is in Piel and it expresses the idea of possible

¹¹⁸ What strange process of mind, what diabolic psychological metabolism that intervenes to transform, during the space of time, elements of nature and these figurations in relief or in the form of physical tools of external forces, or may be in form of representations of beings, which take a divine form.

obligation. Maybe the intention of the author is to communicate the idea that the husband was obliged to persuade (or to use all of his resources to persuade) his spouse. In LXX the verb is translated **λαλήσω**. The poet uses **λαλέω** not **λέγω**. It does not signify repetitive discourse but a more profound communication drawn from an affective source. The second verb is **לָלַץ** in Hiphil. The author's idea might be that the husband forced the spouse to go into the desert. The verb is translated in LXX as **τάξω**. The translation of the Targum is "Therefore, behold I will make her subject to the law, and I will work *miracles and mighty deeds* for her, as I did for her in the wilderness. I will speak comfort to her heart through my servants the prophets". The miracles and mighty deeds refer to the devices that the husband used to persuade the spouse. The desert **בְּרֵית בָּרָא** or **ἐρημος** in LXX (no-man's-land) is a historical place of covenant and it later became the locus of an incomprehensible coexistence between God and Israel. For genuine affective communication, it is the ideal place where, in the absence of the virus of interference, the *vis à vis* between God and Israel is transformed into the dialogue of *heart to heart*, or in other words, the beginning of *novum* and *sincērus*, the affective dialogue which neither God nor a human being could achieve with any kind of idol.

Here the question is, which is the most sensible part of his spouse the husband thinks he could touch? It is the heart: **וְדַבַּרְתִּי עַל-לִבָּהּ**. The verb here is not **אָמַר** but **דָּבַר**, which the poet used to introduce the *novum* (cf. Hosea 1:1), as discussed above. In LXX, the poet used **λαλέω** not **λέγω**. It does not refer to repetitive discourse but to something drawn from the affective source, the heart. The **דָּבַר** affects the devotee moving into the

mind, creating another persona and leading this personality in the sense of what lies behind the persona or mask to another direction of common life. In the Vulgate, we find this interesting translation *propter hoc ecce ego lactabo eam et ducam eam in solitudinem et loquar ad cor eius*. The International Version omits the word *heart*. The translator interprets the rest of the verse as “I will speak tenderly to her”, whereas in the Targums the verse is translated as “I will speak comfort to her heart through my servants the prophets”. Would this mean not that God does not speak directly to Human beings, and makes the prophetic medium as indispensable? This cannot be fully accepted because in Exodus God spoke directly to the people (cf. Exodus 19-20).

The metaphor could have been wrongly interpreted because of the double role of God as husband and God in chapter 2 of Hosea. This double role of God might have opened the door for the sub-Saharan African religious devotees to take their personal relationship with the divinity as dependent on the existence of a *reconciler* or *conciliator* represented by the prophets, fetishes and fetishers, ancestors or spirits (cf. Nyom in Angang *et.al* 1983:127-136; Kayemba in Angang *et.al* 1983: 173-192; Lumbala 1987). Personal encounter, heart to heart conversation and free communication between God and devotees never existed in the sub-Saharan religious system. The divinity and the devotee are imprisoned by some imprisoning form of mediation. While, from the text, the interpreter can remark that the effort of poet as well as of other translators is to assert clearly that the process of communication was only possible with the pre-acknowledgement of the existence of a *Thou*, it clear that this *Thou* has never been ascribed to an idol in the Bible. What, therefore is the meaning of the encounter *heart to heart*? Von Rad (1965. vol.2: 62-63) notes that:

If Yahweh chose such a singular realm as the prophet's spirit, if he chose none of the already existing institutions for his new word to Israel, and if in this psychic realm which had been so singularly kept open he brought such singular thing to pass, this must stand in relationship to other matters which theology cannot ignore. It actually means nothing less than that in the states where the prophet saw visions and heard himself addressed, he became in a strange way detached from himself and his own personal likes and dislikes, and was drawn into the emotions of the deity himself. It was not only the knowledge of God's designs in history that was communicated to him, but also the feelings in God's heart, wrath, sorrow, revulsion, and even doubt as to what to do or how to do it (Hos. 6:4, 11:8; Is. 6:8). Something of Yahweh's own emotion passed over into the prophet's psyche and filled it to bursting-point.

This encounter between the God and the prophet implies the sharing of sympathy. In contrast to Ananké of Greek as Heschel (1996. vol 2: 3-4, 32-34) demonstrated, the God of, of Israel Who is the same as the God of sub-Saharan Africa, is the one who is able to share His love and suffering with His devotees. Here the fact of sharing sympathy paradoxically reached the level of *fusion–no fusion* between the *homo sympathetikos* and the *deus sympathetikos*. This way of thinking is opposed to that of many scholars, particularly Heschel (1996 vol.2: 37-39) and von Rad (1965 vol.2: 63), who limit the meaning of this sympathy to emotions.

Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. In that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master'. (Hosea 2: 14-16)

Therefore if the way of communication between God and the prophet and between God and the people has to take place in the sphere of the heart **לֵב** or **לֵבָב** (*καρδία* in LXX)¹¹⁹, then the question is: how do the sub-Saharan people respond to the text of Hosea 2:14-16? Or how can they identify with it and yet have their ancestors or spirits mediate in their dialogue with God? What is the role of a statue (e.g. Baal and Asherah) in sub-Saharan religious worship? How could statues be used as the *medium* for the construction of their own Christology? These are pertinent questions that merit answers. In trying to respond to these questions, most interpreters unfortunately, being ignorant of ontology and above all of the anthropo-cosmology of the sub-Saharan people, hold that most of the elements or beings that are used as mediators are linked to idolatry. Mulago (1962, 1981), Hulstaert (cf. Hulstaert in Angang *et.al* 1979: 33-84), Bediako (1990, 1995, 2000), Mveng (cf. Mveng in Angang *et.al* 1983:263-279), Dickson (1969, 1984) and others refute this idea. The difference between the people of Hosea's time and those of sub-Saharan Africa lies in the people of Hosea's time reducing Yahweh to a mere object. With a fresh glance at the text (cf. Hosea 2:14-16), it is possible to perceive that Hosea was not interested in the statues of Baal or Asherah in Israel. This is because these statues, since the primordial or patriarchal epoch, have remained among the people (Teraphim, Serpent, Ephod) and most of them were incorporated into the system of

¹¹⁹ The Hebrew word is **לֵב** =lb or **לֵבָב** = lbb = heart in Ugarite. Lb; ak libbu. Empfindugen (seat of sensation, emotion) or Neigung (heart) = mood, inclination, disposition. It is connected with "Nphsh" = Vital force or desire, affections or will. In the Vulgate "cor or cordis" and in LXX we have "καρδίαν" the organ of natural and spiritual enlightenment (emotions, wishes, desire), linked to affective attraction. To speak to the heart means to appeal to the organ responsible for affective life (cf. Tregelles 1950: 427-428; Brown *et al* 1907: 523-525) and see also Koehler-Baumgartner (1958:468-470, 626-628) and Thayer (1889: 404-405). Three verbs are linked with this word. To speak 'mr to the heart means to tender or to affect and "patah" to persuade (to induce) or to deceive (to delude). This verb does not have the negative prurient connotations, but suggests the opposite their, the magical indirectness of language, its capacity to appeal, below the surface, to human sensuality and subversive. The last verb is *anah* to respond, for this verb has sexual meaning as well (cf. Landy 1995: 50). True marriage and friendship in any culture is represented first of all as the tie of hearts (cf. 2 Kings 10: 15-16, Genesis 34: 3-4, 1Samuel 23:16-17) and the divorce or separation is nothing but the dissolution of this tie.

worship of Yahweh. Hosea struggled against what was behind the real interpretation that the people ascribed to these objects (cf. Pijoan 1938.vol 1:21). As a spreader of the message of new creation, in which God became *Adam* (incarnation) and man / woman became Yahweh, Hosea preferred to establish the new locus for this tremendous process of communication between God and the people in the deep pathetic dimension of human existence: the heart. There was a movement to the center of the process of communication, from the perspective of *vis à vis*¹²⁰ (master and servant: inequality) to heart to heart (husband and wife: equality). The readers of the text (cf. Hosea 2: 14-16) without a doubt have recognized that there is a true connection between the profane and the Sacred.

We return to the the sub-Saharan African context, where the statue plays the role of a facilitator of communication, much like the telephone. The old priests and sages of the sub-Saharan African religions, allowed the use of facilitators, given the great reverence that the devotees paid to the Creator, who was seen as the Great Ancestor¹²¹. Therefore as the people's culture is based on the reverence of ancestors, it is to be expected that the affective dialogue between God and the people had to involve the ancestors or *medium* who exercised the most influence in the beyond¹²². In this light, Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980:109) argues that:

Les ancêtres sont chez les Africains des hommes exceptionnels auxquels on reconnaît le mérite d' avoir vécu sur terre de façon si généreuse et exemplaire qu' ils ont

¹²⁰See the commentary of Neher 1955: 183, 344.

¹²¹ This idea divided many African scholars. See for example Parrinder 1969:42 and Danquah 1944 with an important explanation of the Akan doctrine of God.

¹²²See how the cabalists used the name of Elijah as one of most influential ancestors. Scholem 1965: 20.

réellement fait surabonder la vie dans la communauté des vivants sur terre pendant leur vie terrestre et que de l'au-delà ils en sont devenus les excellents protecteurs. Les ancêtres sont vénérés et relèvent du monde supérieur au nôtre, le monde de l'invisible¹²³.

In the same perspective Sanon (cf. Sanon in Angang *et.al* 1983:49) writes that "Les rites deviennent en ce cas des signes d'une présence qui est là sans être nommée : C'est Dieu que nous prions quand nous prions les ancêtres, disent les Bariba"¹²⁴. Hence we can conclude with L. Goragui's (cf. Sanon in Angang *et. al* 1983:49) comment: "...que la prière va de proche en proche: des hommes aux ancêtres, et des ancêtres aux purs esprits"¹²⁵. What is very exciting, is what le Père Goetz (cf. Sanon in Angang *et. al.* 1983:49) wrote about the testimony of Jomo Kenyatta. This sub-Saharan African leader said that : "Avec Dieu et Lui seul, adoration: avec le reste (e.g. ancestors, spirits): communions"¹²⁶. There is an emphasis in sub-Saharan Africa on the role of the ancestors in the dialogue between God and human beings, an emphasis which is justifiable because human beings consider themselves to be ignorant and vulnerable in comparison to the ancestors or spirits. Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980:88) observes that "Avec les génies, les ancêtres sont des collaborateurs actifs du dessein divin de vie dans le monde. Ensemble ils constituent, pour ainsi dire, les doigts avec lesquels le monde de l'invisible touche le monde du visible et en règle les comptes"¹²⁷. We find that sometimes in the sub-Saharan African religions, those elements that play the role of

¹²³The ancestors are for the African people the exceptional beings who are recognized for the merit of having lived on earth in a manner so generous and exemplary that they brought abundant life to those living during their earthly existence and who, from beyond the grave, became excellent protection. The ancestors are venerated and raised up to a world which is superior to ours, the world of the invisible.

¹²⁴ The rites become in this case the signs of a presence which is there but not identified. It is God to whom we pray when we pray to the ancestors say the Bariba.

¹²⁵ Prayer brings to the ancestors and the ancestors closer to the pure spirits, and the ancestors are considered as perfect spirits.

¹²⁶ With God and God alone, worship: with the rest only communion.

¹²⁷ With the spirits, ancestors are the active collaborators in the divine plan for life in the world. Together they constitute as it were the fingers with which the invisible world touches the visible world and restores order.

medium are skillfully linked to God. Sanon (cf. Sanon in Angang *et.al* 1983: 49) describes what happens among the Mynianka: “Et les Mynianka, à chaque ouverture rituelle, disent inlassablement:

Si tu trouves le bien, tu dis: ‘Dieu’
Si tu trouves le mal, tu dis encore: ‘toi , Dieu!’
Si tu dis Dieu, tu dis: ‘tes ancêtres’¹²⁸.

The important role that the sub-Saharan Africans ascribe to their ancestors in their affective dialogue with God is similar to that which the Israelites ascribed to their ancestors or patriarchs. Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980:97) argues that:

On voit bien, la religiosité des Patriarches surprend tant par son originalité que par la foi qui l’ anime. Conscients d’ être conduits par Dieu, les patriarches vivent avec Dieu et se savent dépositaires de merveilleuses promesses. Cette époque ne cessera d’ éclairer les époques suivantes de la religion de l’ Ancien Testament¹²⁹.

This led people of sub-Saharan Africa to believe that the role of the Patriarchs or ancestors influenced the spiritual life of the Israelites. Tese (cf. Tese in Angang *et. al* 1980:109) observes that:

En Israel les patriarches sont les ancêtres par excellence du Peuple non pas proprement en raison de leur paternité physique, mais à cause des promesses qui, au-delà de la race, atteindront finalement tous ceux qui imitent leur foi .

¹²⁸ And the *Mynianka* at the beginning of each ritual repeats timelessly: If you find good, you say God. If you find evil: you say once again: God. If you say God, you say: your Ancestors.

¹²⁹ As we can see, the religiousness of Patriarchs is surprising, as much for its originality as for the faith which gives it life. Conscious of being led by God, the patriarchs live with God and know themselves to be the recipients of wonderful promises. This period of history will never cease to enlighten times to come with the religion of the Old Testament.

Aussi la foi en ces milieux reste-t-elle en continuelle référence à la foi des Pères et aux Promesses faites à eux par Yahweh, le Dieu des Pères¹³⁰.

Tese's argument supports what we read in some verses of the Old Testament. Examples are as follows:

May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us. (Genesis 31: 29)

So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad' (Genesis 31:53)

Then Jacob prayed, 'O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted. (Genesis 32: 9-12)

The above biblical texts confirm our early observation concerning the tremendous audacity of Hosea in demystifying the people's attitudes to their ancestors when he spoke about the mistakes of the founder of the nation, Jacob (cf. Pury 1994:98-106.), and Adam¹³¹ the father of the human race:

¹³⁰ In Israel the patriarchs are pre-eminently the ancestors of the people, not by reason of their actual physical paternity but, because of promises which go beyond race, would eventually reach all those who followed the faith. Thus the faith among these people constantly refers to the faith of the Fathers and to the promises made to them by Yahweh the God of the Fathers.

¹³¹ Maybe the verse I am not a man could be translated: I am not like Adam who broke the covenant.

The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds. In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God. He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there, the LORD God Almighty, the LORD is his name of renown! But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always. (Hosea: 12:2-6)

Like Adam, they have broken the covenant- they were unfaithful to me there. (Hosea 6:7)

The question is: Do the myths about ancestors stop here? Of course not. Paradoxically as the founder and preacher of the coming of a new *genesis*, Hosea decided to destroy the original foundation of the people's belief so that from the debris of the old system he could construct the new religious and socio-political one¹³². To achieve his objective, Hosea questioned the ethic of the two strong pillars of the Israelite tradition as he questioned Jehu. It seems that even in doing so, the myth about the ancestors continued to be accepted by the people. The people of Israel, attached to their sacred tradition, continued to revere their ancestors. Rabbinical circles assimilated important prophetic figures into the same mediatory role as ancestors. As Scholem (1965: 20) comments:

Since the beginning of Rabbinical Judaism the prophet Elijah has been a figure profoundly identified with the central preoccupations of Jewry: it is he who carries the divine message from generation to generation, he who at the end of time will reconcile all the conflicting opinions, traditions, and doctrines manifested in Judaism. Men of true piety meet him in the market place no less than in visions. Since he was conceived as the vigilant custodian of the Jewish religious ideal, the Messianic guarantor of the

¹³² Jeremiah will follow the same prophetic way.

tradition, it was impossible to suppose that he would ever reveal or communicate anything that was in fundamental contradiction with the tradition. Thus by its very nature the interpretation of mystical experience as a revelation of the prophet Elijah tended far more to confirm than to question the traditional authority.

What is surprising is the fact that Jesus never denied that the role played by the Israelite ancestors was useful; on the contrary, He recognized them (cf. Mark 9: 2-13; Apocalypse 11:4-6 and Zechariah 3) and the author of the text ranked Jesus above Elijah and Moses as the *Great Ancestor*¹³³. It is for this reason that the affective dialogue between God and human beings via the ancestors did not stop with the advent of the *great ancestor* called Jesus. On the contrary, a new dimension in the understanding of the ancestors' role in the dialogue between God and human beings was created.

3.3. The Binomial Father-Mother

Previously we focused on the role of ancestors: here we are going to analyze the original locus of the ancestors, that of the *father-mother* and consider how this binomial is connected with the quest for God's pathos. In his discourse given in Kampala, Pope Paulus VI (cf. Paulus VI in Thsishiku 1985: 91) affirms:

Un fondement constant et général de la tradition africaine est la vision de la vie. Il ne s'agit pas simplement de la conception dite 'animiste', dans le sens que l'histoire des religions donne à ce terme à la fin du siècle dernier. Il s'agit d'une conception plus profonde, plus vaste et plus universelle, selon laquelle tous les êtres et la nature visible

¹³³ It is very interesting to note that Luke introduced Jesus as the new great ancestor and put him in a situation analogous to what of Adam (cf. Luke 3:23-38).

elle même sont tenus pour liés au monde de l' invisible et de l' esprit. L' homme, en particulier, n' est jamais conçu purement et simplement comme matière et comme limité à la vie terrestre, mais on reconnaît en lui la présence et simplement comme l' action efficace d' un autre élément, qui est spirituel, et grâce auquel la vie humaine est toujours mise en rapport avec la vie de l' au-delà¹³⁴.

He proceeds to say that: “Un element commun et très important de cette conception spirituelle est l'idée de Dieu comme cause première et dernière de toutes les choses. ...Presque toujours, surmontée la crainte de sa toute puissance, Dieu est invoqué comme Père”¹³⁵. Moreover, Kabemba (cf. Kabemba in Angang *et al* 1983:173-192) affirms that “God in African sub-Saharan culture is considered as Creator but also as Father”. Anta Diop (1959: 120-121) demonstrated that apart from the idea of God's being the Father in sub-Saharan culture, the idea of God is also associated with the universal idea of the ancient Primal Matrix or Nourrice. Gómez-Acebo (1996: 13), Haughton (1981 :160-161), and Toynbee (1957: 52, 97) support this idea. Some scholars approach the problem from the Hermaphrodite perspective which, though pertinent, is not ideal. Jung's theory of Androgyn, which is linked to the creation of male and female, is one of the best versions because it leaves us free to consider attributing to God the characteristics of androgynous Being.

¹³⁴ An enduring and general foundation of African tradition is the vision of life. It is not simply about the concept called 'animism' in the sense that the History of Religions face to this term at the end of the last century. It is about a deeper concept, such more comprehensive, more universal according to which all creatures and visible nature itself are understood as linked to the world of invisible and of the spirit. Then, in particular, is never conceived of, as matter pure and simple and limited to life or earth but there is effective in him the presence and the action of another element, which is spiritual, and thanks to which human life is continually in contact with the life beyond.

¹³⁵ “One of the common and most important element which concerns this spiritual conception is the idea that define God as the primal and ultimate cause of all things.... Almost of the time, the devotee after overcoming the fear of the powerful deity, this invokes God as the Father”.

From this perspective, the question that surfaces is whether to see the deity as having a binomial face as male-female? The question is not easily resolved. Hilmar Furstenau (1994) ¹³⁶ thinks that facing God as a *binomial* (cf. Fretheim 1984:120) being remains a point of controversy in several rabbinical schools. We know that Judaism strongly maintains Monotheism, as do the Islamic religion and Christianity. For the Rabbinical school, this particular characteristic of their historical religion, Monotheism, was non-negotiable. But does the Rabbinical school equate Monotheism, with Fathertheism? I do not think so. There is evidence that the rabbinical preoccupation is with maintaining the concept of the God of the *Tenach* as the father, approximating to Yahweh, in spite of the real theological abyss that there is between God and themselves. We know that according to the Freudian psychological view, the father is a portrait of authority and mother of the tenderness and commitment, as Gómez-Acebo (1996:38-39) observes. If this psychological view is true, then something is missing in rabbinical monotheism and in our dogmatic system.

Furstenau is right because it is not easy to dismiss the refusal of the rabbinical scholars to negotiate the special characteristic of their historical religion, namely strict Monotheism, which is the basis of church dogma. To defend their God, Scholem (1965:88) said that the Rabbis try as far as possible to eliminate the ascription of human characteristics to their God. In contrast with our viewpoint, both Saadya and Maimonides supported the Rabbinical view. It is known that philosophers and theologians preoccupied themselves with divesting God of all the mythical and anthropological attributes. Scholem (1965:88) points to the consequence:

¹³⁶I regret that hitherto this paper, presented since the post graduation meeting in the Faculdade Teológica

But this determination to defend the transcendental God against all admixture with myth, to re-interpret the recklessly anthropomorphic statements of the Biblical text and the popular forms of religious expression in terms of a purified theology, tended to empty the concept of God.

He refutes the need for such work by asserting that: “The price of God’s purity is the loss of His Living reality”. We agree with Scholem because we are conscious of the fact that the Living God cannot be reduced to abstractions. But what makes Him a Living God in the minds of believers? Scholem (1965:88) says that it is what makes it possible for humans to see God, *face à face*, via a great religious symbol, the father or mother. The obstacle that human beings face is the impossibility to reformulate monotheism and church dogma. When we try to bring in human reasoning to this issue, the metaphorical figures lose their true meaning. Scholem (1965: 89) understood this difficulty and that is why he said that “To preserve the purity of the concept of God without loss of His living reality—that is the never-ending task of theology”. All this confirms that in Hosea, the concept of God surprisingly faces the dialectical tension between the understanding of Yahweh as pure and Yahweh as a living reality. How did Hosea interpret this binomial *father-mother* figure in his book? It is not possible to arrive at an exact answer because of the distance in time between Hosea and us, but the following verses in the text can help us understand many things.

When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. *As* they called them, so they went from me: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them, And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his

branches, and devour *them*, because of their own counsels...How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *How* shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? *How* shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repenting is kindled together. They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints. (Hosea 11:1-12)

This passage cited above represents both the poem of love and the big theological dissertation never written about the Old Testament. Its equivalent in the New Testament is the parable of the prodigal son (cf. deel Arrudo 1969:105 and Lima 1958: 5). The first verse of this passage (cf. Hosea 12:1-12) constitutes one of the keys to the seing of God as the father or mother and it gives us the essence of the book. Two things have to be done to facilitate the understanding of this passage. Firstly, the word order in the first verse must be reversed “When I called my son out of Egypt, Israel (my son) was a child, then I loved him”; and secondly, this passage must be read simultaneously and synchronically with the one in chapter 9:10-13. The reason for adding the second point is that in the first the reader is faced with three explicit ideas: gestation, childbirth and maturity, and in the second there is the implication of the ancestors, which is omitted in the first. From the above two dimensions, it is possible to arrive inductively at the idea of the *father-mother* in Hosea.

The metaphorical application of the binomial *father-mother* to God started with the people of Israel; it is an ancient usage discernible also in sub-Saharan African culture. In spite of this, the metaphor continues to be a tremendous puzzle because all of us,

independently of our cultures, have serious problems with penetrating the mystery of metaphor. How is the reader to interpret this specific metaphor found in Hosea 11:1-12? This problem is due to the difficulty of separating the symbol and its meaning (cf. Ricoeur 1974:468-497, Bastos 1991:29-43, deel Arrudo 1969:1-12,49,108-110), especially in the case of the ascription of a conventional symbol like father or mother to God.

Mary Daly (1973), as a fervent feminist, makes a great contribution to our discussion. We think that her work: *Beyond God the father* has to be read. Daly is a brilliant spokesperson (cf. Hamerton-Kelly 1978:5). In her book, she discusses two problems from the feminist point of view: One is the problem of the patriarchal interpretation of the Bible and the other the problem of anthropomorphism. According to Daly, the image of the Father represents the *totem* of the oppressive force or system. It is also the cornerstone of patriarchy which is responsible for self-alienation, rape, genocide and war. The domination of patriarchy in many areas of human existence, including religion, has existed since before the 8th century (BCE) and it still exists, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Patriarchy has led to atrocities like abusive sexual objectification of women (cf. Setel in Letty M. 1985:86-88), polygamy and polyandry¹³⁷.

In sub-Saharan Africa, other consequences include: the exploitation of children, massive

¹³⁷ In our context we think that the polyandry (not declared) is a form that the woman invented to resist against the atrocity of male world.

poverty, tribal, ethnic and racial conflict, the HIV epidemic. These lead people to doubt an anthropomorphical interpretation of the Bible. Daly (1973:149) thinks that it is not possible to avoid the use of anthropomorphic symbols like father, mother, even when speaking about God. The problem is not the use of symbols. The symbols only constitute the entry points. The interpretation of symbols requires tremendous imagination and penetrating intellect to discern their true meaning. Today few people in the West and in sub-Saharan parts of Africa have this imaginative capacity (cf. Brueggemann 1978:45). However, our main interest is not speculation about human capacity but rather how a study of human imaginative capacity leads to the metaphorical and tautegorical interpretation of the events related in the biblical text.

3.3.1 Time of gestation: Oppression, slavery and colonization in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African context

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. (Hosea 11:1)

In pursuit of understanding the metaphorical and above all the tautegorical use of conventional symbols like father, mother and son or non-conventional symbols like, leopard and lion, it is thus possible, from the above quoted biblical text (cf. Hosea 11:1) to see that a God with remorse appeals to memories to get the attention of the people in the 8th Century (BCE).

The poet went back to Egypt וּמִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֶהְבֶּהוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי נֶעַר. Many scholars spent time discussing the meaning of the word נֶעַר, a discussion which we do not consider useful. The most important fact in the text is what Gómez-Acebo (1996: 40) observes: “A idea básica é demonstrar que Deus acompaha o povo escolhido ao longo de todo o seu processo histórico, deste o nascimento até a velhice”¹³⁸. Another important point is the understanding of God’s motivation for liberating the people. God Himself in the text said that He Loved the people וְאֶהְבֶּהוּ. This is likely to be His true motivation. God’s love for His people brings out the difference between God and colonialists and most of African sub-Saharan liberators. The verb וְאֶהְבֶּהוּ is in Kal perfect, and means to love with delight¹³⁹. What did מִמִּצְרַיִם (Egypt) mean for our audience? According to Gómez-Acebo, Egypt and God can paradoxically be considered as the *mater uterus*¹⁴⁰ in which Israel had in its origin. For the sub-Saharan African countries, Egypt only means the time of colonization and domination. The time of colonization and domination for sub-Saharan African countries corresponds to the time of the gestation of the embryo in the uterus of the mother. The gestation, for example, takes 63 days in cats, 642 in Elephants and 276 days in human beings¹⁴¹; but for Israel, it took 400 years and for many sub-Saharan countries, for instance, Angola and Mozambique it took 500 years, with the grave consequences of mental alienation and dehumanization (cf. Berdyaev 1935: 25-70).

¹³⁸ The basic idea is to demonstrate that God has always accompanied from birth time to old age, throughout the historical process.

¹³⁹ The Vulgate *dilexi*, the LXX translates it as ἐγὼ ἠγάπησα; but ἀγαπάω or אֶהְבֶּה in Tenach.

¹⁴⁰ Mother uterus.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Collins English Dictionary* 1991: 647.

What happens to the fetus during this length of time? God as a mother has to keep the fetus (Israel) in His mother's uterus. For Israel in this circumstance, as for any other fetus, it has to depend on the *אִמּוֹ* of his mother, which is in opposition to the male world in which paradoxically there is suffering. In the male world there are also people waiting to challenge the newborn child with their religious and socio-political oppressive systems. According to Gómez-Acebo (1996: 42), God as a mother was to adjust Her life (intra-uterine conditions) to conform to the needs of the growing fetus. If God really has the ability to adapt to the human situation by metaphorically and above all tautegorically carrying a fetus in Her mother's uterus, then it is possible to think that the absolute immutability and omniscience or even omnipotence of God as defended by classical Theism is problematic. We identify with the theologians of Process Theology who suspect that the God of Church dogmatics is still like the *Ananké* of the Greeks. A god like this, who is imprisoned in the dogma of classic Theism, would be indifferent to all human situations. There would certainly not have been the surprising historical encounter between God and Israel:

When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. (Hosea 11:1; 9:8)

The deception and remorse are reflected in the text:

When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved. (Hosea 9: 10)

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. (Hosea 11:1-2)

Humankind is free either to obey or disobey God's laws:

She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.' Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now'. (Hosea 2: 5b-7)

According to many defenders of classic Theism, such behaviour as was manifested by the Israelites makes sense but does not affect God. Unfortunately, this theological attitude is contradictory because the use of the metaphor *father-mother* is linked to the tautegorical idea of *to be with* or *to accept*, *to be affected by*. It never expresses the idea of *status-quo*, which in many cases, according to Freud and the Feminists, becomes an authoritarian and oppressive symbol. Nevertheless, our interest is in the notion that from the binomial *father-mother*, we can see God embracing the way of *being* or *becoming* that is intrinsically linked to the tautegorical idea of *being affected* (mutability).

Heschel (1963:44-47) argued that *to be* means *to be with*; it also means *to interact with* or in others words *to affect and to be affected*. Heschel (1963:45) feels also that "existence is co-existence". His argument, we think, could be applied to the God of the

Bible which he defended in his famous work on *The Prophets*. The argument can also be used to justify the use of the metaphor *father-mother* in this pericope. Through this metaphor, God doubtlessly experiments in the tautegorical dimension with co-existence or interaction with His creatures and especially with Israel as He said: “I called my son out of Egypt to be with or to interact with me” (cf. Hosea 11:1-2). God also, paradoxically, experiments with the possibility of co-essence with His people when He notes: “I [tautegorical father-mother] had the project to call my son [my own tautegorical image] out of Egypt” (cf. Hosea 11:1-2)¹⁴². It is clear from the text (cf. Hosea 11:1-2), if our paraphrase of the first verse is found acceptable, that the relationship between Israel and God cannot be limited to the historical dimension. There is a trace of the meta-historical dimension to be found. This meta-historical dimension or project is paradoxically hidden and expressed in this verse. It is a paradoxical project which takes on reality in two ways: In the first way, it expresses the concrete historical encounter between the people as if they were street kids who hope to find a liberator; and in the second way, it expresses the willingness of God to find the opportunity to become the *father-mother* and the guarantor of Israel’s liberation. This double mode of facing Israelite history, being liberator and parent is very interesting and could invite us to grasp the true meaning of the delicate and crucial moment of Israelite’s history: childbirth (or independence).

3.3.2 Childbirth: the time of Liberation or Independence

Having spoken about gestation, we can now move to the second stage, that of the development of child, focusing on what seems to be the most important: Childbirth.

¹⁴² This is clarified in the New Testament. See Gospel of John (cf. John 21:15-19) where Jesus called out to

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. (Hosea 11:1-2)

From the text (cf. Hosea 11:1-2), birth or the time of the liberation of Israel is linked to the verb קָרָאתִי , which is in the Kal perfect. The translator of LXX had the same idea when he used the aorist μετεκάλεσα. In the Vulgate the verb *ex Aegypto vocavi* communicates the same idea and quality of action. We agree with the Targum and the New International version in translating the verb as *to call*. But it seems that to call means, paradoxically, on one hand *the end* of the process, which is linked to the idea of childbirth or the liberation time, and on other the beginning of the conquest of the promise land¹⁴³. In our opinion is to consider both meaning of the verb because it is always very difficult to establish the point of demarcation between continuity and discontinuity in the gestation and childbirth period of the relationship between God and Israel, because gestation and childbirth run time together. In the next two sections we are going to analyze two cases of childbirth: of Israel and of the sub-Saharan African people.

3.3.2.1 The Difficult childbirth of Israel

It can be observed from the text (cf. Hosea 11:1-2) that the time of gestation and the childbirth time actually run together. The poet emphasizes this paradox by having

Peter.

¹⁴³ See the observation of Chamberlain (1989: 163-164) on the meaning of μετα with the Greek verb καλέω.

recourse to memory to remind his audience of the most important and health giving event of liberation, which opens up a new horizon and which supplants the chaos caused by the adoration of Baal. Keil and Delitzsch (1968:136-137) think that the verse (cf. Hosea 11:1) communicates the idea of the adoption of Israel by God. For Keil and Delitzsch (1968:137) this adoption starts here (cf. Hosea 11:1). They comment:

The adoption of Israel as the son of Jehovah, which began with its deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, and was completed in the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, forms the first stage in the carrying out of the divine work of salvation, which was completed in the incarnation of the Son of God for the redemption of mankind from death and ruin.

For many biblical scholars, this verse (cf. Hosea 11:1) expresses the idea that God clearly considered Israel as His adoptive son. What is important here, is that in verse 2 of this pericope (cf. Hosea 11:1-8) there are two problems which express a kind of frustration. Firstly, there is the repetitive and indefatigable process of calling.

But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. (Hosea 11:2)

Secondly, there is the continuous rivalry between God and Baal brought about by these two problems (v.2b). It seems that always God and Israel, in their affective dramatic relationship, have been taken over by the vicious circle characterised by the triad: *Naissance(history)-Idolatry (no history/chaos)-Re-naissance (new history)*. Alternatively,

we have another triad that God has proposed through the prophet *Naissance (history)*–*Connaissance (maturity)*–*Re-naissance (new history)*. The first triad always supplanted the second. From Hosea (11:2), Israel, instead of loving God as God loved them, followed the example of their ancestors in repaying the love of God by their inexplicable ingratitude. The poet wrote,

But I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me. I cared for you in the desert, in the land of burning heat. When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me. (Hosea 13:4-6)

It is important to point out that this triadic vicious circle: *naissance (history)*–*idolatry (no history)*–*re-naissance (new history)* is archaic and is also to be observed in the relationship between God and the ancestors of Israel אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, πατέρας αὐτῶν or *patres eorum*. In verse 1 of this pericope of chapter 11 the poet wrote that God loves a partner: “When Israel was a child I loved Israel”. But in chapter 9:10 he pointed out that God met a partner:

When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved. (Hosea 9:10)

Once more, from the text (cf. Hosea 9:10), the surprise and delight of the encounter is expressed by the use of the term **בְּתֵאֵנָה** or **בְּרֵאשִׁיתָהּ**¹⁴⁴. The same verb also expresses the idea of the perspective of the future created around this great and new event or **בְּרֵאשִׁיתָהּ**. Both events of childbirth are frustrated by the unexpected ingratitude of the metaphorical grapes, early fruit, or son (cf. Keil and Delitzsch 1968: 124-125, 136-137). The translation of the Targum is very interesting:

Like the first fruits on the tree, at the beginning of its growth, I loved your fathers. But they attached themselves to Ba'al Peor and went astray after shameful and became detestable like the things they loved.

In all of the verses of this pericope (cf. Hosea 9:10-13), the cause of conflict is pointed out in two aspects. The first aspect of conflict is the sacrifice that Israel made to Baal. Hosea's contemporaries imitated their ancestors even in this way (cf. Joshua 24:1-13). The second is the fatal love identification with the idols. At this point the people of Israel become tautegorically *apathetikos* like the object of their worship.

But they attached themselves to Ba'al Peor and went astray after shameful and became detestable like the things they loved. (Hosea 9:10c)

The idols can not think, speak or share feelings with their devotees. Humankind is imitative and those who worship such kind of divinities (idoles) imitate them. They become like the subject or object of their worship Neither Israel nor the African sub-Saharan countries were immune to this tendency.

¹⁴⁴ In LXX συκῆ πρόμυον εἶδον (2nd Aorist); in Vulgate-*prima poma vidi*. Here *vidi* come from *vidēō* which means to see but also to understand or to know.

3.3.2.2 The Tragic childbirth of African sub-Saharan countries

Having looked at the difficult childbirth of Israel, let us now explore the sub-Saharan African perspective. It is known that the African continent is the cradle of humanity. As such, it is inaccurate today to speak of the birth of African countries in general and sub-Saharan African countries in particular. The ancient history of sub-Saharan Africa falls dramatically into the dark age extending to the 15th century (CE), when the Europeans finally rediscovered and colonized the sub-Saharan areas of the African continent. When the European explorers came, they profited from the ignorance and complicity of some of the natives to colonize and to cruelly exploit the people. The coming of the colonizers or *civilizers* caused distortions in the political, social and religious spheres, with Western culture represented as the inescapable way. The period of colonization is analogous to the time of gestation in the uterus of the mother as already discussed. The discoverers of the sub-Saharan countries were overwhelmed by the richness of the soil, the natural wealth, fauna, forests and the immense population which offered a big market. Diego Cão, Stanley, Brazza, the Boer pioneers and others who discovered this part of Africa saw *the first fruits of trees*. Their surprise was comparable with that of God. That is why, early in 1958, the World Bank pointed out that : “Today Ghana should be the 7th or 8th in the rank of World economy”. The question is: what is the position of Congo (formerly Zaïre), Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sudan with their huge natural and intellectual resources, Liberia and Sierra Leone with their enormous diamond reserves, Angola without its never-ending war and South Africa without the shameful system of Apartheid? Today we cannot honestly answer this question because people’s expectations have been destroyed by the

tragic birth of independence or the false start of these countries, including South Africa.

René Dumont (1966: 19) writes:

‘False Start’. Your title is too brutal, it is going to offend the Africans, you know how touchy they are. Worst of all, by criticizing the new nations and their leaders you will vindicate the colonialists, who felt Africans were not ready for independence. I am aware of these pitfalls and many more besides. And so I hesitate in starting to write this book, as I have never done with others.

René Dumont adopted a prudent approach to sub-Saharan African socio-political problems. He knew that, seen as an oppressive system, independence was going to be the beginning of the aspiration for freedom; as Bumwenyi (cf. Bumwenyi in Angang *et al* 1979: 222) says:

Les peuples d’ Afrique, victimes de la colonisation, aspirent à leur indépendance politique, économique, culturelle ... Aspiration parfaitement légitime à l’exercice de leur souveraineté, de leurs droits et devoirs d’ hommes, à la réintégration de leur nom longtemps effacé, c’est à dire de leur dignité. Comme chacun sait, l’ Afrique retentit pour cela du bruit des discours des ‘mouvements de libération’, du bruit des bottes, du bruit des armes. Des guerres, du sang, au fil des années, entre des hommes qui rougissent de s’appeler frères. Puissances d’argent, gros intérêts, maximisation des profits, exploitation de l’ homme instrumentalisé par l’ homme. Bible en mains parfois: rationaliser, légitimer. ‘Monde libre’, civilisation chrétienne, anti-communisme¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁵ The people of Africa, victim of colonization, aspire to become political, economical and culturally independent...an aspiration which is perfectly justifiable if they are to exercise their sovereignty and their rights and duties as human beings, to the reinsert their names, too long forgotten, in other words to find again their dignity. As everyone knows, Africa, as a result of these aspirations resounds with the sound of talk of liberation movement, the sounds of boots marching, sounds of guns. And as the times go by, there are wars, blood between human beings who are ashamed to call each other brothers. The power of money, self-interest, the highest profits, the exploitation of man by man; sometimes with Bible in hand, renationalizing, legitimizing: ‘Free world, Christian civilization, anti-communism’.

He concludes that “Lexique pléthorique, quotidien nauséabond, de ruses, de contorsions, de duperie, de bonne foi: L’ homme est bafoué, L’ homme est concerné, consterné”¹⁴⁶. Unfortunately, as stated by Bumwenyi, independence paradoxically means nothing but the opportunity of equality with the oppressors, in other words the opportunity to think, live and believe like white people. Colonization affected the identities and personalities of blacks, whites, Indians and coloured people born in sub-Saharan Africa. Referring specifically to blacks, Homi Bhabha (cf. Homi in Fanon 1967: iv-v) in his foreword in Fanon’s book said,

What is often called the black soul is a white man’s artifact. Fanon argues that this transference, I have argued, speaks otherwise. It reveals the deep psychic uncertainty of the colonial relation itself; its split representations stage that division of body and soul which enacts the artifice of identity; a division which enacts the artifice of black and white – of individual and social authority.

In *Black skin, white masks*, Fanon (1967) insists that this existential crisis remains. The oppressors think that the *False Start* called *independence* can only be resolved at the psychological level; but independence is not limited to the emotions, it involves other aspects of existence, for example, economic and spiritual reality. In the same perspective, Patrice Lumumba declared that “L’ indépendance politique doit être accompagné avec l’ indépendance économique”¹⁴⁷. Later, Joseph Albert Malula¹⁴⁸ challenged the Vatican by introducing the African mode of worship, including dance, native language, clothes, and

¹⁴⁶ A plethoric lexicon, nauseous of ruse, contortion, deception, good faith. Man is held up to ridicule, man is concerned, dismayed.

¹⁴⁷ From Lumumba’s discourse pronounced from the day of Congo’s independence, 30 of June of 1960 in Leopoldville. See the videotape prepared by Peck Raul: *The Death of the prophet*. See also Kanza 1972.

¹⁴⁸ Joseph Albert Malula was the first cardinal of Democratic Republic of Congo. Malula as well as other Congolese theologians and priests struggled for the contextualization of the Catholic Church. The Vatican agreed to banish Latin and other things due to their struggles.

music into the Catholic Church (cf. Lumbala 1987, Kabasele 1983, Bwanga 1980: 151-190, Ngindu Mushete 1981).

The struggle of Nkrumah, Ahidjo, Nyerere and Sékou Touré followed the same trend of ideas in spite of the fact that they were labeled as dictators (cf. Dickson 1984:135ss). These leaders were the *rare birds* who understood the true implications of independence. They paid for it. The oppressors organized political independence in a way that was disastrous for the immature people of Africa. Perhaps this is why René Dumont (1966), referring to the sub-Saharan African context, considered independence as a *False Start*. This was said not to offend the oppressed, but, on the contrary, to serve as a kind of re-awakening. One can say that most sub-Saharan countries are still in their mother's uterus and are not able to be born as Israel was (cf. Hosea 13:13). There are three reasons for this: a lack of spiritual and intellectual knowledge; problematic leadership; and the ceaseless interference of the West in the religious and socio-political issues of the people of sub-Saharan Africa. The continuous interference of the West in sub-Saharan African issues was encouraged by the ignorance and naiveté of the sub-Saharan African leadership. Hence, after independence, in most of these countries, it was this ignorance which led to heavy reliance on African traditional witchdoctors or Marabouts and on the CIA, and on French and British Intelligence Services and on Islam, and on the Anglican and Catholic Churches (cf. Sean 1993: 1-200)¹⁴⁹. Unfortunately, all these forces predisposed the sub-Saharan African leadership class to believe that the worship of the

¹⁴⁹She represents Mobutu as *America's Tyrant* and gives details of how of the CIA and the United States discovered Mobutu, put him in power, protected him from his enemies, and helped him to become one of the richest men in the world. She also shows the negative role of the Catholic Church. More details are given in Ayittey 1991: 1-25 and 1998: 1-20. Look also at an interesting contribution by Kabue 1975;

mystic Gurus¹⁵⁰ and the Western religious and socio-political order (*dictāta*) was the unique mode of survival. In the book of Hosea, the question is: what caused the leadership's choice?

When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved. (Hosea 9:10)

From the text two points are to be observed: First, the poet used synonymous parallelism to link the Israelites with their ancestors. The God who is the father of Israel is also father of the fathers of Israel. Hamerton-Kelly (1978:35) argues that:

The 'ancestors' are symbols of God's grace, of the history of salvation, mothers and fathers together. This joyful reference to the 'fathers' occurs in the middle of indictment, as a foil to Israel's sin. Yahweh's act of adoption, symbolized by the fathers, has been forgotten by the people who are unfaithful.

Hosea also recognizes that the ancestors are symbols of God's grace. He does not hide God's delight about His affective encounter with Israelite's ancestors as we demonstrated it above.

When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers [your pre-history], it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. (Hosea 9:10)

Diawara 1998 and Ekpebu 1989: 1-97; see also Rotberg 1970; Metrowich 1975 and Hegba (cf. Hegba in Angang *et.al* 1983: 69-76).

¹⁵⁰ See the case of the religious sect called *prima-curia* in which Mobutu and his devotees participated in DRC (formerly Zaire).

Once again, we perceive that the surprised delight of the affective encounter is followed by the frustration of idolatry.

But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved. (Hosea 9:10)

The two points can be applied to the sub-Saharan African context. In the first place, our religious and socio-political history is linked to the history of our ancestors. Anta Diop (1954, 1959, 1960, 1967), Joseph Ki-zerbo (1972), Mulago (1962), Tshishiku (cf. Tshishiku in Angang *et.al* 1983:29) and Pirenne (1965:9-47) and, recently, Bediako (1995: 210-230) recognize this. The advice of Adegbola (cf. Adegbola in Altuna 1975:29) to the African erudite is appropriate. He advises that “oublier votre passé, c’ est perdre votre âme”¹⁵¹. The error of many contemporary interpreters of the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political situation lies in that they often start their criticism and superficial interpretation from the perspective of the colonial or postcolonial epoch. This is unsatisfactory as the pre-colonial religious and socio-political historical background is lacking. Secondly, the delight of sub-Saharan African independence is followed by the frustration of idolatry. Two reasons as discussed above can be advanced for this: the first is inexperience in the management of the evolution of religious and socio-political affairs and the intellectual incapacity of many leaders; the second, the psychological need of the sub-saharan African people both whites and blacks that has caused them to identify with the oppressors. The prophetic voice of the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political sphere, incarnated for instance in the persons like Cheikh Anta Diop, J.B Danquah, Simon Kimbangu, Faustus Kivengere, Shembe, Malula,

¹⁵¹ To forget your past is to lose your soul.

Steve Biko, Desmond Tutu, Simão Toko, Nkrumah, Lumumba, Massamba Deba and others did not make any major difference. Today, with globalization and the lack of religious and socio-political models, people run the risk of losing their true identity and consequently becoming more detestable than their colonialists were. As Malula writes (1985: 4-5):

Dire qu' il existe une différence entre les jeunes d' avant 1960 et ceux d' après 1960 est aujourd' hui une évidence. Les jeunes d' après 1960 se savent de plus en plus différents de leurs aînés sur plusieurs points. Ils deviennent de plus en plus conscients qu' ils vivent aujourd' hui une situation ambiguë... Leur présent est marqué par des mutations socio-politique-économiques et culturelles; c' est un présent troublé par des guerres, des grèves, mutineries, des sécessions, des couvre-feu, des grèves etc. Ils entendent parler d' écoles sans religion, ils sont témoins de vols à main armée, avortements, de viols, de corruption, d' attentats, etc¹⁵².

He concludes:

Enfin, leur présent est un présent de remise en question globale de toute la société contemporaine et traditionnelle; un présent de contestation, et de renversement de l' échelle des valeurs dans un monde en mutation et dans une Eglise en état de contestation. Ainsi au point de vue moral, les jeunes d' après 1960 accusent un manque sérieux de normes de moralité, d' appréciation objective des choses. Ils évoluent dans une confusion totale¹⁵³.

¹⁵² It is obvious that there is a difference between many people born before 1960 and these born later. Those born after 1960 are more and more aware that they are different from their elders in several ways. They are more and more aware that they are living today in an ambiguous situation... Their present is marked by socio-political, economical and cultural change; their present lives is disturbed by wars, mutiny, strikes, revolts, secessions, curfew and riots etc. They hear talk of schools without religion; they are witnesses of armed robbery, abortion, rape, corruption, assassinations, etc.

¹⁵³ In a word they live in a time of rapprochement of contemporary and traditional society; a time of dispute (change of paradigm) when the scale of values is being overturned in a world of change and a church at variance. So from an ethical point of view the youth after 1960 show a serious lack of moral norms, of a correct evaluation of things. They are growing up in total confusion. Malula (cf. Malula in Angang *et al* 1983: 15-17).

If we accept Malula's view and its application to the entire sub-Saharan African region, there is a need to feel anxious and pessimistic about the renaissance proposed by Thabo Mbeki (President of South Africa). It is true that Mbeki's idea is a signal of hope for many sub-Saharan African people, but such is the crisis in the sub-Saharan African countries that renaissance can only be illusory. Also considering the complexity of the religious and socio-political problems of this part of Africa, we think that the kind of renaissance (cf. Tulu Kia Mpansu in Angang *et.al* 1978: 31) the South African leader proposes, in this era post-Apartheid, is another *False Start*. Six reasons can be given to support this argument: Firstly, Mbeki's concept of renaissance is not clear and it is superficial. It lacks a sound objective. There is a risk here of misunderstanding of Anta Diop's slogan. Secondly, Mbeki as a new leader on the scene of the religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African situation seems to be unaware of the implications of a genuine renaissance. Mbeki believes in the actual rapid development of the South African economy as Nkrumah, Tolbert, Sekou Touré, Nyerere, and above all Lumumba and Mobutu wrongly believed in theirs, and lacked the means to control the religious or socio-political explanations hidden behind the actual sub-Saharan African tragedy. Thirdly, renaissance means a real racial reintegration. The whites, coloureds and Indians will need to accept and integrate themselves as true sub-Saharan African ethnic groups if they are to realize the *rainbow region*. Fourthly, Mbeki has never shown the connection between his idea and the idea of his predecessors like Senghor (Negritude), Nkrumah and Selassie (Pan Africanism), Lumumba and Mobutu (Authenticity), Nyerere and Samora Machel (Front Line). Fifthly, Mbeki has never identified the spiritual foundation of his actual renaissance. Anta Diop suggested Islam and Mobutu established the *primacuria*. We cannot affirm that these spiritual sources do not work but we expect to see that, the given disillusionment with Protestantism and Catholicism, Mbeki might turn to African

Independent Churches, Islam and *Primacuria*. Finally Mbeki seems not be fully aware of the problems that Nkrumah, Lumumba, Sekou Touré, Senghor, Ahidjo, Kenyatta, Sankara or Samora Machel faced in trying to control the new sub-Saharan African bourgeoisie¹⁵⁴, who are identified by Fanon as *black skin in white masks*. In the case of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, there are identified as *white skin in black masks or black skin in white masks*. In fact, these *bourgeoisies* constitute a serious problem for the rest of the population. Fanon (1963:132) analyzes this problem:

The people of Africa have recently come to know themselves. They have decided, in the name of whole continent, to weigh in strongly against the colonial regime. Now the nationalist bourgeoisie, who in region after region hasten to make their own fortunes and set up a national system of exploitation, do their utmost to put obstacles in the path of this 'utopia'. The national bourgeoisie, who are quite clear as to what their objectives are, have decided to bar the way to that unity, to that coordinated effort on the part of two hundred and fifty million men to triumph over stupidity, hunger and inhumanity at one and the same time. This is why we must understand that African unity can only be achieved through the upward thrust of the people, and under the leadership of the people, that is to say, in defiance of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Realistically, it seems that neither Mbeki nor the other leaders of his generation will be able to remove the totem of sub-Saharan African¹⁵⁵ and Western idols (cf. Tulu Kia Mpansu in Angang *et.al* 1989:30 – 31; Alves 1985:53-71; Girard 1972: 1-15). The renaissance or the re-birth of the sub-Saharan African countries is still far away and the

¹⁵⁴ *Les privileges, intouchables*, they could do everything and they never had to pay any taxes. In Zaire, Angola, Nigeria, Togo, Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique and Côte d' Ivoire. See Schatzberg 1980. *Politie and class in Zaire*. New York: Africana. The author tries to analyse the combination of mass corruption, bureaucracy and business. See Kitching 1980, Could 1980, Kuper 1965, Bolaji 1970 and Rose-Ackerman 1978.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. National bourgeoisie, traditional power, witchcraft, fetishism.

future seems to be very dark as was the case in Israel. For the true renaissance has to be simultaneously religious and socio-political. To believe the contrary is to be deluded.

3.3.3 The Infancy of Israel and its implications for sub-Saharan Africa

The frontier between the beginning and the end of the infancy of Israel is very ill-defined. From the text, scholars can geographically and historically situate the start of the time of infancy, but they cannot tell exactly where it ends. This imprecision creates enormous problems with the interpretation of God's relationship with Israel. From the two pericopes (cf. Hosea 9:10-13 and 11: 1-8) that we are studying the pre-history of Israel is linked with their ancestors and its own history starts with the process of liberation in Egypt. Keil and Delitzsch (1968:135) argue that:

The adoption of Israel as the son of Jehovah, which began with its deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, and was completed in the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, forms the first stage in the carrying out of the divine work of salvation, which is completed in the incarnation of the son of God for the redemption of mankind from death and ruin.

Wolff (1974), Feinberg (1988), Morgan (1964), Harrington (1985) and Kunstmann (1983) share this view with Keil and Delitzsch (1968) and they add nothing else to the *novum*, except to conserve the traditional interpretation of these pericopes (cf. Hosea 9:10-13 and 11:1-8). They like Keil and Delitzsch did good work in their comparative study of the texts, but they fail in their inadequate interpretation of Early Christianity and fall into Saint Paul's error of viewing all things as culminating in Christ. This approach to the biblical text is perhaps useful as a sermon but it is perhaps unsatisfactory as a

profound exegetical study of the text (cf. Pury 1994: 98). For us both Christ and Israel are *events* and also *processes*. The second aspect, that of *process*, interests us because the event is unique, and sometimes static, unlike the process, which holds dynamic possibilities. The history of Israel is a process in which God and Israel experiment and cultivate the real sense of Love. This Love is the *key-idea* in the book of Hosea and it is revealed through another triad: *teacher-doctor-wet nurse*.

3.3.4 The triad teacher-doctor-wet nurse

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them. (Hosea 11: 1-4)

Understanding the rest of this pericope depends on the verses 11:1 and 9:10. These verses describe the scene of adoption as Keil and Delitzsch (1968:137), Wolff (1974:197) and Harper (cf. Harper in Driver *et. al* 1936 : 361-362) argue. The adoption is part of Israel's traditional creed. Wolff (1974:197) argues that: "In concordance with his use of metaphor, Hosea gives the traditional confession a completely new shape". This new *shape* is what we call the new *genesis*. Here the poet adds to the pedagogical triad *teacher-doctor-nurturer* the symmetric point: love. The poet analyzes thus the binomial *father-mother* through the triadic perspective: *teacher-doctor-wet-nurse* which is, paradoxically, both cognitive and affective. Most of the interpreters of Hosea use a cognitive method to interpret these verses or pericopes. The result is that most of them, including Wolff (1974), Keil and Delitzsch (1968), Andersen and Freedmann (1980),

tend to use the theodicy as the climax of their comprehension. Heschel (1996), Freitheim (1984), van Dijk-Hemmes (1989,1991 and 1993), Gómez-Acebo (1996), Weems (1995), von Rad (1965.2 vol: 62-63) have used an affective approach to the Bible. The triad “*teacher-doctor-wet-nurse*” serves as a point of departure for our discussion. From the text (cf. Hosea 11:1-4), the poet points out Yahweh as the Teacher.

It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms.
(Hosea 11: 3a)

This entire pericope, and particularly this verse, is problematic. The key verb is **תִּרְגַּלְתִּי** **וְאָנֹכִי**. It is in Hitpael and it means “to teach someone to walk”. The idea behind it is that God has decided to prepare Israel to be like an infantry soldier (cf. Kirst *et. al* 1988:222-223) and the emphasis of the verse is on the personal pronoun **אָנֹכִי** or **ἐγώ** in LXX. Here the father or the mother play the role of teacher (cf. Quell in Kittel *et.al* 1964-1976 vol 5:977-978). And the content of the father-mother teaching is found in Hosea:

Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the LORD because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law. Israel cries out to me, ‘O our God, we acknowledge you!’ But Israel has rejected what is good; an enemy will pursue him. They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. (Hosea 8:1-4)

This teaching is centralized in the affective notion of *covenant* and the result is the total satisfaction of both parties: *good* or **טוֹב**. The reaction of the people as *pupils* is

unexpected. They purposely refuse to accept God as *father-mother* or teacher who tries to teach them. Three things characterize their refusal: they have broken the covenant; they have rebelled against the law of the teacher; and they have spoken ironically to their God by saying: “O our God, we acknowledge you ...”, but in reality the idolatry and the false teachings of the priests of Baal impede them from acknowledging Him. The people forgot that the covenant and the Torah were the affective ways of maintaining the relationship between themselves and God their father and teacher. That is why, to continue to be an effective teacher to them, God expects the respect and observation of the Torah and the Covenant.

Then in the book of Hosea, the doctor’s role is expressed¹⁵⁶.

But they did not realize it was I who healed them. (Hosea 11:3c)

The verb **רָפָא** is in Kal perfect **רָפָא** (to cure disease). Much could be said here; but it is clear that the action of healing **רָפָא** is preceded by a lack of affective interaction or acknowledgement **לֹא יָדָעוּ**. In the text, ignorance is shown of the true identity of God and His Law. Indeed, ignorance is even worse than sin. It is the cause of sin and other evil things in the world. This is observed in the text below:

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I

¹⁵⁶ The metaphor of healing is also taken up in Hosea 6:2; 7:1. See also the recommended study done by Swanepoel 1994:39-59.

also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their glory for something disgraceful. (Hosea 4: 6-7)

At this point God differs from the colonists and from many sub-Saharan African leaders, who deliberately keep the people in ignorance. From the text (cf. Hosea 4: 6-7), we observe that there is a fundamental point of demarcation between God and the colonists and God and the sub-Saharan African leaders. The colonists and sub-Saharan African leaders sacrifice the people on the altar of their idols: power. Indeed, God sometimes sacrifices His people, but unlike the colonists and sub-Saharan African leaders He paradoxically sacrifices and liberates and above all saves the oppressed from death and makes them live again.

Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom; when the time arrives, he does not come to the opening of the womb. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave is your destruction? I will have no compassion. (Hosea 13: 13-14)

Besides this text (cf. Hosea 13: 13-14), the role of wet-nurse is expressed in the verse below (cf. Hosea 11:4).

a. I led them

a.1 with cords of human kindness, (בְּחֶבְלֵי אָדָם)

a.2 with ties of love (בְּעֵבְתוֹת אֶהְבֶּה)

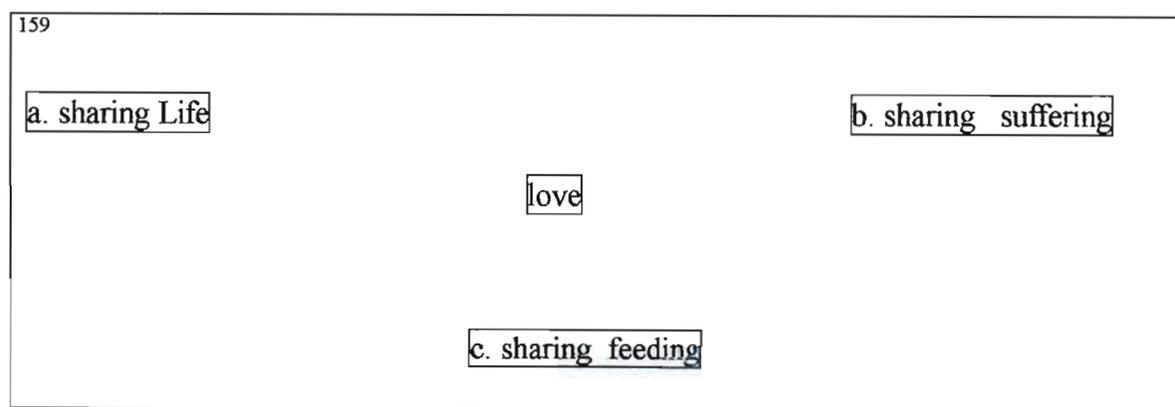
b. I lifted the yoke from their neck

c. and bent down to feed them.

From the structure above, the binomial *father-mother* is linked to the concept of God being the wet-nurse (c). Keil and Delitzsch, Andersen and Freedmann and even Wolff tried to interpret the verse but their interpretations are not convincing. What does חֶבֶל (the cord or pitfall) of human kindness mean? חֶבֶל is probably a metaphorical expression of a profound affective tie, and חֶבֶל also represents the physiological and affective inter-dependence between the binomial *father-mother* and the child. The idea behind this verse depends on traditional culture, that of the cow which draws a plough. The Torah (cf. Deuteronomy 25:4 and Proverbs 14:4) recommends that the cow be rewarded even if the plough that it is using is something which is outside of itself or external bond¹⁵⁷. In the text the author refers to something more than the simple objective relationship between the plough and the cow: this is the internal or subjective link which involves body, mind and emotion. This idea is confirmed by the second part of synonymous parallelism where the poet repeats the same idea in other words (cf. Hosea 11: 4c or a.2). This repetition probably emphasizes the poet's view of the affective link between God and the people. This affective link determines the type of relationship that should exist between God and the prophet on one hand and God and the people on the other. Further, the affective link expressed by the word חֶבֶל does not only show the identification of the wet-nurse with the fetus or child but the true meaning of *sharing feelings* (cf. Fretheim 1984:123,127-128 and 148ff.).

¹⁵⁷ The Torah struggles against the idea of total dehumanization by giving the example of the relation that exists between the person and the cow in the field. The author of the Torah advises people to share the feelings of the cow and its need for freedom instead of only using its labour for reaping the harvest.

Three things make up this sense of sharing. The first concerns the fact of sharing life. By using לְחַיֵּיהֶם (for their life), it seems that the poet would indirectly like to connect the role of wet-nurse to that of הַיָּהוָה: Eve or donor of life. The first preoccupation of the wet-nurse as הַיָּהוָה has to be to protect those who are similar to her; the second concerns the sharing of the suffering כַּמְרִימִי עַל עַל לְחַיֵּיהֶם וְאֵט אֶלְיוֹ אוֹכִיל with the son; how can we explain such psychological identification?; and the third thing concerns the sharing of food¹⁵⁸. It is regrettable that interpreters ignore the profound nature of this verse and spend time emphasizing the last aspect of sharing food, which is a logical consequence of two aspects: sharing life and sharing the suffering. Both of these two aspects including the sharing of food express the true sense of pathos and the incarnation of wet-nurse.



We know that only a person who feels what his kin feel can honestly feed them. Here

¹⁵⁸ אוֹכִיל Hiphil future of the verb אָכַל Hiphil of care of feeding; in the Vulgate *nutricius*. cf. Walke and O' Connor 1990: 445.

¹⁵⁹ Love is the true motivation for sharing: life, suffering and feeding.

once again we affirm that the act of “feeding” is synonymous to “sharing the suffering with”. For someone to have the capacities of sharing suffering with, of him /her a new attitude (new genesis) is required: לֵבֵן ¹⁶⁰. Perhaps this word can be a synonym of רִחֻן . It is strange that interpreters omit this key word. The question is: What could have happened in Hosea’s context if the priests had taught the sharing of לֵבֵן , and what could happen in sub-Saharan Africa if the sub-Saharan African leaders, colonists or even missionaries had adopted this attitude of לֵבֵן . This could be a big change in their way of managing the process of sharing of life, of suffering and of food with the infant without creating a parasitic dependence. Is it possible to think that the same לֵבֵן could also be used for introducing to their consciousness and practice the ideal or objective of relating to a true *interlocutor* who can further become their true kin?

Responding to the above question is not easy, because the Hosea pericope (cf. Hosea 11:1-8) is one of the most important and also most difficult. We face two difficulties in understanding this pericope. The first is that the Hebrew used in the text is not clear and many interpreters prefer to paraphrase it rather than to translate it. The rare exceptions are Louis Second¹⁶¹, the Vulgate and the Tradução do Novo Mundo (1986). But some verses remain obscure. Secondly, in this pericope, translators and interpreters begin with (cf. Hosea 11: 1-8) a multiple form of interpreting a metaphor, which allows for many different meanings. Two methods can be followed to understand the entire pericope and particularly verse 4 of Hosea 11. The first is the cognitive or classical. Keil and Delitzsch

¹⁶⁰ cf. gentleness, softness.

¹⁶¹ One of the French versions of the Bible.

(1968), Wolff (1974), Andersen and Freedmann (1980), Kunstmann (1983), Hubbard (1993) in their respective commentaries follow this interpretation. Their emphasis is on the evidence of the ingratitude of the Israelites and their negative attitude in returning God's love. However, to be a teacher, doctor or wet-nurse, one cannot blackmail the subject whom one teaches, cures or feeds by loving him or her. To do so is paternalistic, colonialist and oppressive (cf. Freire 1972: 1-5, 1993: 5-25, 1995: 10-27; Alves 1990: 3-15; Vasconcelos 1993:10-15; Carmagnani and Danieli 1990: 5-35). Van Dijk-Hemmes (1993), Weems (1989), Daly (1985), Lerner (1986) as well as other scholars from the biblical feminist perspective like Heschel, Freitheim, Harrington and West agree in their understanding of the metaphor. They are right because the paternalist biblical approach impedes the religious growth of a person and in the socio-political context encourages the existence of two classes: coloniser and colonized. Fanon (1986: 31), though not a theologian, observes that with the paternalist approach the colonized will never become mature.

Oh, I know the blacks. They must be spoken to kindly; talk to them about their country; it's all in knowing how to talk to them. For instance... I am not at all exaggerating: A white man addressing a Negro behaves exactly like an adult with a child and starts smirking, whispering, patronizing, and cozening. It is not one white man I have watched, but hundreds; and I have not limited my investigation to any one class but, if my claim an essentially objective position, I have made a point of observing such behavior in physicians, policemen, employers.

From Fanon's perspective, God's intention in dealing with Israel as immature coincides with the Western one. Fanon rightly sees Westerners as considering sub-Saharan African people to be permanently infantile. We identify with the affective perspective of Hosea: the teacher, doctor or wet-nurse is obliged to forget his or her position and to transcend

the immediate personal interest. The colonialist does not consider the person as an *opportunity* for accomplishing his or her professional duty but an *opportunity* for business or oppression. Indeed, in the colonial context the relationship between the *benefactor* and the *ignorant* is always characterized by what Tulu Kia Mpansu (cf. Tulu Kia Mpansu in Angang. *et.al* 1979:30) called *domination et profit* (cf. Bumwenyi in Angang *at. al* 1979 222-224).

But in opposition to such point of view, from the perspective of the text, the benefactor or colonist is moved to identify him/herself with the ignorant or colonized. Moreover, colonists accept dramatically to confess their ignorance and they open themselves to the world of *possibilities* and really expose their *vulnerability* in accepting through being taught, cured and fed by the colonized. The relationship is one of respect for the principle of symmetry, reversibility and equality. The affective contribution of each partner is crucial. Applied to Hosea, does a reversibility of relationship not imply an anarchic relationship between God and His people? Of course not, because we can clearly observe that the figure of authority Yahweh (El-Adam)¹⁶² is counterbalanced by the figure of proximity יְהוָה לְאֵלֵינוּ¹⁶³. This God of proximity is יְהוָה לְאֵלֵינוּ, who is similar to Eva הַיְיָוָה, Ζωή or Heva whose name means יְהוָה לְאֵלֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ, μήτηρ πάντων τῶν ζώντων (LXX) or *mater cunctorum viventium* (Vulgate), in other words wet nurse (*dea nutrix*) and source of all infants.

¹⁶² See the study done by Rolf Rendtorff (cf. Rendtorff in Gerstenberger 1981:155-176).

¹⁶³ In LXX : θεοῦ ζῶντος in Vulgate *Dei viventis* and Targums translate it as the *Living God* probably in contrast to the idea that הַיְיָוָה is the pure God as G. Sholem (1965:98-109) writes.

This dual concept of the divinity is comparable with sub-Saharan theology. Mbiti (1971:114) asserts that:

In African traditional societies, marriage is a duty for everyone. It is to be expected that some of these societies would attribute a wife (or wives) to God. This is more of a logical necessity than a serious conviction, springing from the social structure which makes it more convenient to give God a wife than to think of him as having none. It is noteworthy, however, that those who attribute a wife to God are extremely few, and some say firmly that since he is not a man, he has no wife.

The Ghanaian scholar Kwesi Dickson (1984: 55) observed that “The earth Goddess is referred to by the Assante of Ghana as the wife of God, but it is to be seriously doubted whether ‘wife’ is to be literally understood”. We shall respond to these African scholars, firstly to Kwesi Dickson. We agree with Kwesi Dickson that, certainly, the portrayal of God as having a wife should not be taken literally. Metaphorical language is one of the essential characteristics of African language, religion and wisdom. Moreover the metaphor of the earth or the city as mother (wife of God) is universal, as shown by Eliade (1972:74-75), Keel and Uehlinger (1998:153ff, 367) and Neumann (1972: 162ff). As to Mbiti, we doubt the soundness of his source.

The idea of God as the *childminder* exists in many cultures (cf. Keel and Uehlinger 1998:74, Neumann 1972: 281-287) and particularly in the sub-Saharan part of Africa where the people share their lives with others in communities. Monsengwo (1981:3,10-11) and Altuna (1974: 96-196) have commented on this. The foundation of community

life is the family, represented by the father and mother. For most people of sub-Saharan Africa, God is the supreme authority and a Father (cf. Mbiti 1970:91-97; Parrinder 1969: 26ff, 47,59,67, 89ff; Altuna 1974: 390-407; Tese in Angang *et.al* 1980: 84-93), but also through the image of mother, He is considered as the unique and true wet-nurse or source of providence of existence and tenderness as Senghor and Camara Laye write¹⁶⁴.

In sub-Saharan Africa, all the partners, God and Human beings, have to find the power to express their ideas and feelings in a mutually transparent way and the vehicle for their *co-apprentice-ship* or *co-medical treatment* is an affective dialogue. The crude religious and socio-political stratification and repression defended by the philosopher and theologian of the male world as the unique form of survival cannot in this context make sense¹⁶⁵, unless the sub-Saharan African leadership class could incarnate both aspects of divinity. Many sub-Saharan countries could be paradises, but unfortunately the real situation of most sub-Saharan counties is the opposite. The leadership class entrenched absolute patriarchal power and established civil or military dictatorship as their survival strategy (cf. Ayittey 1992:105-227; 1998: 113-366). This brutal cultural change has brought with it grave consequences like ethnic and racial discrimination, impunity, corruption, the drug trade (cf. Brian 1999:22-27), illiteracy, and official prostitution¹⁶⁶ as a way of marginalizing women. In adopting this behaviour religious leaders and politicians of sub-Saharan Africa have imitated some of the colonists and even some missionaries. The sub-Saharan

¹⁶⁴ Camara Laye with his famous poems known over the world as: "Femme Noire [black women]"

¹⁶⁵ In the movie called: "The death of the prophet", one of Lumumba's press assistants said that the West made a mistake in accusing Lumumba of being communist: in Africa people were born and lived thinking about the welfare of their community. And surprisingly the Kingdom of Belgium admitted this.

¹⁶⁶ The government of ex Zaire has reduced the official age of women's maturity from 18 to 14 because most members of their presidential circle, including the president himself preferred (code de la famille du Zaire) immature girls for their sexual satisfaction. They also established the system of swopping mothers,

African leadership class has forgotten that the marginalization of women and their subjugation, objectification (cf. Setel in Letty 1985: 87) and relegation to the position of domestic workers become a serious impediment to social development. The marginalization of women and their objectification and alienation has always been a point of dispute among theologians and leads people to question the veracity of Hosea's book, as will be further demonstrated¹⁶⁷.

The consciousness of sub-Saharan African political leaders and theologians could possibly be transformed, if we view sub-saharan African human life, in general, and women's lives, in particular, from the perspective of the text of Hosea. Mveng (cf. Mveng in Angang *et.al* 1979: 91-92, 94), struggling with the idea of the marginalization of women and their sexual objectification, in his writings on the anthropo-cosmology of sub-Saharan people and their initiation rites, observes that:

Dans le rite initiatique, l' homme se découvre comme dyade dans sa double dimension, Homme-Femme. L' initiation traditionnelle comporte donc une véritable éducation sexuelle, mais elle n' est pas que cela. C' est dans sa double dimension que l' homme s' accomplit comme personne. Il n' y a ni opposition, ni conflit, ni même égalité des sexes: il y a seulement complémentarité. L' homme sans la femme n' est rien; la femme sans l' homme n' est rien non plus. Mais ils sont tout dans leur complémentarité. Quand l' homme s' accepte dans sa double dimension, il accède à l' amour, à la créativité, à la fécondité. Il devient triade Père-Mère-Enfant. C' est dans cette triple dimension que l' homme s' achève comme personne.

daughters and spouses and thus many of the wives of Mobutu's ministers had sons and daughters fathered by him. The same phenomenon can be observed in central Africa, Uganda, Togo and Côte d' Ivoire.

¹⁶⁷ See Kitoko-Nsiku 2001: 1-13. This is an unpublished paper that has been presented during the annual meeting of South African Biblical Scholars in Potchefstroom. The author explores very carefully the question of the body of Women in the discourse of Hosea and the quest for Women's body in the sub-Saharan African context, with particular focus on Mobutu's dictatorship in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire).

Il plonge ses racines dans la société humaine: il est lui même une humanité en miniature, portant la totalité de l'histoire et la totalité de l'espèce¹⁶⁸.

He concludes that:

La relation de l'homme et de la femme dépasse la catégorie d'égalité. Elle est complémentarité. L'égalité les fait indépendants l'un de l'autre, étrangers, l'un à l'autre. Or, ils sont complémentaires nécessaires l'un à l'autre. Hors de cette complémentarité, l'homme n'accède pas au statut de personne: Il n'est ni libre, ni adulte, ni responsable. Il n'est qu'un projet avorté¹⁶⁹.

Mveng's point is based on a purely anthropological viewpoint. Heschel (1996.vol 2:52) refers to God and thinks that: "the language the prophets employed to describe that supreme concern was an anthropomorphism to end all anthropomorphisms". If Heschel's axiom is correct, it would mean that Mveng's observation could be applied to God. Four points interest us here. First, Mveng says that the man is a dyad: in the pericope (cf. Hosea 11:1-8) God is a dyad. This dyad is linked to the double presentation of God in Hosea as Yahweh or Adam and father, and also אִמִּי-אָדָם or Eve and mother. It is in this

¹⁶⁸ In the initiation rites, man discovers himself as dyad in his double dimension, *man-woman*. Traditional initiation allows a real sex education but it is not only that. It is in his double dimension that man is fulfilled as a person. There is neither opposition, nor conflict, nor even equality of sexes: there is only complementarity. Man is nothing without woman; woman without man is nothing either. But they are everything in their complementarity. When man accepts himself in his double dimension, he reaches out to love, creativity, and fecundity. He becomes a triad: *Father-Mother-Child*. It is in this triple dimension that man finds fulfillment as a person. He thrusts his roots into human society: he becomes humanity in miniature, carrying within him the whole of history of human race.

¹⁶⁹The relationship of man and woman transcends the category of equality to become complementarity. Equality makes them independent of each other. Thus they are complementarity one to another. Outside of this complementarity man does not attain the status of human being. He is neither free, nor adult, nor responsible. He is simply an undeveloped design.

que le moteur de la créativité humaine n'est pas la raison, mais l'Amour au sens africain du mot¹⁷².

This אֱלֹהִים or ἀγάπη referred to Mveng is manifested through the existence of a possible space of creativity and fecundity. In Hosea, this אֱלֹהִים or ἀγάπη is focused on God and Israel's dramatic disillusion and frustration. For, in Hosea, neither God nor Israel reaches the three-fold dimension *Father-Mother-Son* (cf. Mveng in Angang *et al.* 1979: 96). This achievement would become possible only in the New Testament.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| God | Israel |
| Father superiority | Father (never) |
| Mother | Mother |
| Son ¹⁷³ (never) (¹⁷⁴) | Son (inferiority) |
| Master | Servant |
| Servant | Master (never) |

Returning to Mveng's triad *Father-Mother-Child*, if it can appropriately be applied to God, we can affirm that in both Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African contexts the disillusion and frustration of doctor, teacher and wet-nurse is due to God's failure, as demonstrated by His incapacity to reconcile Mveng's triad *Father-Mother-Child* and the

¹⁷² Love in Africa is neither lust nor passion. It is the foundation of morality and also the immovable foundation upon which the universe rests. It is through love that man humanises the world and creates civilizations. The language of love should be studied through symbols of structures and the social, political, economic, cultural and religious institutions of traditional Africa. Only then would we see that the force behind human creativity is not a reason but love in African sense of the word.

¹⁷³ It is only in the messianic Psalms that God is considered as the son.

¹⁷⁴ See the observation above. God only became the son of man in the New Testament. This possibility is totally excluded in the Vetro-Testament's context.

poet's triad *teacher-doctor-wet nurse* with the finality of experiencing a *profound communion*. The point of contradiction or crisis was the refusal of God or the colonialist or liberator to appear like a *son, daughter or child* in order to experience the reality of infancy which implies curiosity, creativity, dream and dependence (cf. Freire 1993: 1-25) and to establish the conditions for raising Israel to the level of becoming wise and responsible. God's pedagogical mistake (*dictāta*) like that of the colonialists and some missionaries, and most of the post 1960 religious and socio-political leaders, might be finally rectified only through the character of Christ in the New Testament who incarnates both triads: *Father-Mother-Child* and *Teacher-Doctor-Wet nurse*.

3.4 The binomial husband-spouse in both contexts

We have discussed the application of binomial *father-mother* in our study of God's pathos. Here we shall exercise some pericopes to the binomial *husband-spouse* both in the book of Hosea and in sub-Saharan Africa. We have already drawn the attention of the readers to the fact that many scholars examined pericopes in Hosea's book. For us to understand this book, we need take into account two approaches. One is that of most conservatives who have read the text as dealing with idolatry and punishment. For them the meaning is literal, and not metaphorical. The scandalousness of the slavery and objectification of woman is overlooked. What is important for them is the message of sin and salvation, the way faith is either explicit or implicit in the text. On the other hand, there is the approach of the feminists and other critics, who raised serious objections to the conservative reading of the text as described above and who problematized the power of metaphor in this text.

For Snyman (1993: 90-91), West (1996: 203, 208-209), van Dijk-Hemmes (1989:51-52, 1991:37-42, 266-272 and 1993; 162-170), Daly (1973,1985), Weems (1996) and others the text simply exposed the voice of the patriarch. The poet, echoing the patriarch did nothing but impart falsehood to the woman in order to demean her. We would like to suggest a third possible approach which takes a pathological and above all a tautegorical approach to the text. We would try paradoxically to assume the male voice of the poet and the female voice of the woman as a victim of the metaphor. The phrase *profound communion* is applicable to the relationship between God and Israel which existed from the time of the advent of exodus from Egypt until the post-Exilic period. This tautegorical appeal means that we should proceed firstly, to study the text of Hosea and secondly, to establish the applicability of the text to sub-Saharan Africa because we know that one of the images expressive of the profound communion, which have existed between God/husband and Israel/wife, is found in dispute of chapter 2 of the Book of Hosea.

3.4.1 Dispute between Husband and Wife

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts. Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.' So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands declares the LORD. In that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master'. I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips. I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one'. I will say to those called

‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say,
‘You are my God’. (Hosea 2:2-23)

There is a dispute among scholars about whether God played paradoxically the role of Husband and Father and Israel played the role of Children and Wife. Whitt (1987: 53-54) virtually puts forward this idea¹⁷⁵ but he gives no comments. Schmitt agrees with Whitt in spite of their hermeneutical dispute (cf. Schmitt 1995: 120-121). Anderson and Freedman (1980:223) argue that the power of Hosea’s theology is felt in this incandescent experience. Wolff (1974: 33, 39) mistakenly asserted: “Here the text concerns the allegory”. It is not an allegory but a *tautegory*¹⁷⁶. Wolff (1974: 32) also observes: “Yahweh changes roles in the individual sayings, and thus a certain tension is understandable”. He proceeds that

...in the v.4 the plaintiff addresses his children; yet the judge speaks about them in the third person (v.6ff). The entire procedure that emerges here is not a reconstruction of legal process. Rather, it is a loosely knit collection of sayings, which, according to their genre, have the same setting, and which, according their content, concentrate throughout on the subject of the court proceedings.

It seems that Wolff contradicts himself because the same Wolff (1974: 33) wrote further that “The God of Israel appears first as plaintiff against his unfaithful wife. He summons

¹⁷⁵ He argues that “the metaphor of gods as parents of humans, with gods having goddesses as their spouses and vice versa, is common to the ancient Near East; the metaphor of a people as a whole as the spouse of its god (s) is totally foreign to the ancient Near Eastern

¹⁷⁶ This text of Hosea is mythic and poetical and, taking this perspective, Fernando Bastos (1992:39) correctly observes that “o mito (poetico) para o pensador luso-brasileiro (Eudoro de Souza), não é alegoria, mas tautegoria. Quer dizer, o mito relatata e expressa o que em verdade é; mito não representa as cousas ou eventos originados, apresenta as origens. Seu relato é simbólico, tendo de ser captado pela sensibilidade. E preciso que *no allos* ou *no outro* apresente-se o *tautos* ou o *mesmo*... [According to the Luso-Brasilian author (Eudoro de Souza), the myth is not allegory, but tautegory. This mean that the myth relate and expresses what really is true; the myth never represents things or invents events, but it reports the original reality. The way that the myth describes events or things is symbolic and its meaning has to be grasped through sensibility. It is thus important that for the interpreter of the myth to replace it in the *allos* (whole)

the accusing party to the beginning of the legal dispute". It is not clear how he contradicts himself because to us, it is obvious that the text followed the legal procedure.

Tatford (1974:), Keil and Delitzch (1968: 50-66), Kunstmann (1983: 15-16) and Landy (1995: 28-31) comment on text and avoid the discussion. For the feminist scholars this text probably does not make sense on the account of the excessive emphasis on patriarchy and chauvinism.

For us, against Andersen and Freedmann, the theology of Hosea as expressed in the text is not felt in the incandescent experience. In doing a synchronic reading of the three chapters of Hosea (1-3-2), the poem reaches its climax. Here the husband and his wife stand in the intimacy of a familial court. It is true that at first sight the text emphasises patriarchy and chauvinism, but in its tautegorical dimension, the meaning emerges differently. This is because of the ambiguity and power of the metaphor. Vanhoozer (1990), Bastos (1992: 31-44), Fretheim (1984: 5-6), Bird (1989:75-94), West (1996: 208) and others are in agreement about this problem. But let us once again analyze the text.

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous
look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her
breasts. (Hosea 2: 2)

In this verse, three points are pertinent: God assumes His role as the husband. He is effectively involved with His partner Israel. God in this verse has broken one of the principal pillars of Genesis which is the conjugal bond between man and woman

or into other which is tautos or what is identical or equal]. It is what we prefer to call tautegorical (symbolic) integration and interpretation. See also Heschel 1963: 73. Detienne 1986:192,195,201- 212.

כִּי־הִיא לֹא אִשְׁתִּי וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אִשָּׁה . Kuhl (1934) and Gordon (1936) think that the phrase the poet used was the Hebrew equivalent of the Akkadian divorce formula. Wolff (1974: 33-34) agrees that God expressed an ultimatum. Rudolph (1966:65) and Jeremias (1983:41) reject this possibility. Kruger (1992: 8-12) prudently approaches the texts from the perspective of other Ancient Near East documents. The old Babylonian for example reads : u-ul mu-tiat-ta; 'you are not my husband'; u-ul as-sa-ti at-ti: 'you are not my wife' (VAB 5:4:9 , 14; 5:21, 37; BRM 4,52:13; ana ittisu 7:IV:4, 10). In the Elephantine text he discerns: l' thwh ly 'ntt: 'she will not be my wife'; l' 'hwh lk 'ntt: 'I will not be your wife' (k 7; AP 15). It is clear that both the old Babylonian and the Elephantine documents contain the so-called divorce formula or the *verba solemnia* which announce the end of a relationship (Kruger 1992: 11). Gordon takes the opposite view. If Hosea 2:4b does not contain a divorce formula, however, what does it mean? Buss (1969:88) argues that this utterance in Hosea is the indication of the husband's desire to dissolve the relationship. It seems that Gordon's and Buss's (1969: 88) arguments are rooted in the text. In the text there is a repetitive insistent use of לֹא. This particle of negation (לֹא) expresses the idea of the end of a matrimonial relationship. It seems clear that this sentence announces a divorce. The emphasis is on the use of the personal pronoun אֲנִי and הִיא; this emphasis probably provides evidence of the reality of personal and affective relationship between God (אֲנִי) and Israel (הִיא).

It is not easy to describe in simple human language, the marriage between God and human beings or between God and a people as it was in the case with Israel. This only

becomes possible if we understand the role of language in creating a religious reality, as Snyman (1993: 93) and Schökel (1965: 104-118) suggest. Marriage is one of the sacred rituals in the Israelite (cf. Wight 1981: 131-142) and in the sub-Saharan context (cf. Altuna 1974:303-355 and Mbiti 1975:114-115). The formula for instituting the marriage is always bilateral which is not the case in chapter 2 of Hosea. Anderson and Freedman (1980: 199-204) say that “the key to the solution, we suggest, is in seeing verse 16 as alluding to God’s proposal of (re) marriage-You are my wife. And 17b is the response of Israel, the bride. Presumably the bride would respond ‘You are my husband’”. They (1980:199-204) suggest that the formula of divorce is paradoxically unilateral as well as bilateral. To break the marriage link only one party is called to pronounce the formula of divorce but it must be followed by the consent of the other party. That is why in the text, the silence of the anonymous wife who can be Asherah¹⁷⁷ against the accusation

(רִיבִי בְּאִמְכֶם רִיבִי) is very pertinent. The restoration of this kind of relationship,

once broken, be it either in the Israelite ritualistic context or in a sub-Saharan African context, necessarily requires the sacrifice of an animal for re-establishing both the matrimonial link and the social dignity of the co-partners (cf. Lumbala 1987:349-364).

We have difficulty in understanding how the poet omits this aspect.

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous
look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her
breasts. Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as
bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a
desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.
(Hosea 2: 2-3)

¹⁷⁷ In these verses of Isaiah 50,1 or 66, 7, Yahweh is presented as husband but who is the wife? Whitt 1987: 55 note 70 thinks that this wife should probably be identified with Jerusalem /Zion, and all Jews are their children.

Look also at the text below:

I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD. (Hosea 2:17-20)

The poet only describes the consequences that the wife faces and the reverse of the divorce process by the restoration of the old marriage (Hosea 2:17) but he never tells how the husband retracts his words without referring to an offering of sacrifice. Has the Torah failed, or perhaps the poet would like to communicate the idea that love through the אהבה above all אברהם transcends the Law? (cf. Deissler in Feiner and Loehrer 1978.vol II/1:236-237)¹⁷⁸. But it deals with God, and we know that for love to be attested, concrete facts are always required (cf. McGinnis 1990: 56). Here, God in Hosea broke the minimum of social law and we think that for the society of Hosea, sacrifice was the chosen way to reconcile the people with one another, and also, metaphorically to reconcile people with God. It means that the absence in the text of a reference to sacrifice offered to Yahweh made the true value of the Torah questionable. But in trying to defend the Torah, Neher (1955:163) says that:

Au Sinai, la révélation de Dieu était justifiée par l' intervention préalable de Dieu en Egypte. La tora ne s'

¹⁷⁸cf. Neher 1955:164. "L' amour est plus que le cédéq. Car le cédéq conserve la lucidité de l' imperfection, il sait qu' il y a péché et s' applique à le corriger. Mais l' amour est inconditionnel". [Love is greater than cedeq. Because the cedeq keeps the lucidity of the imperfection, cedeq knows that there is a sin (mistake) and it is determined to punish it. But love is unconditional].

imposait pas comme un joug sur la nuque d' esclaves. Elle était l'aboutissement d' une lutte, où Dieu avait eu raison. Aucune reproche ne pouvait être adressé à Dieu: sa victoire sur l' Egypte l'innocentait de tout soupçon. Il appelait à la servitude religieuse des hommes qu' il avait socialement libérés, comme pour souligner que cette nouvelle servitude ne devait et ne pouvait effacer la liberté récemment conquise. La tora s' inscrivait dès le début dans un plan de rédemption¹⁷⁹.

Neher's comprehension of the Torah is linked to the traditional credo that informs us that God was the liberator from Egypt, and the donor of the Torah; thus nothing could be imputed to Him.

But observing the text from the tautegorical perspective of marriage, there is some suspicion that the *innocence* of God should be questioned. And even if most interpreters connive with God, for most people of sub-Saharan Africa the situation is different. The reader of this text who knows the value of marriage will consider that a husband, even if the husband is God, if he wishes to regain his social prestige or reputation (cf. Nolan 1987:84; Derrett 1970: 40, 42 and 73), has only two possible choices: suicide or the making of a sacrifice. The second point of our argument is that the poet courageously portrays God as an incapable man who appeals to the children to be the referee between His wife and Himself. The imperative form is repeated twice (the

¹⁷⁹In Sinai the revelation of God was acceptable because of this previous intervention in Egypt. The Torah is not imposed like a yoke on a slave's neck. It was the conclusion of a struggle in which God was proved right. No reproach could be directed at God: His victory over Egypt exonerated Him from all suspicion. He called upon religious obedience of those He had liberated as if to emphasize that this new servitude should not and could not efface the liberty recently acquired. The Torah was set down from the beginning as a plan of redemption.

formula ריבו ריבו¹⁸⁰ as the emphatic particle לל. Only in the Targums did the author paraphrase it, “Reprove the congregation of Israel and say to her that”. In French the idea is “traduire en Justice ou accuser”. The feminists on the other hand lament the destruction of the female image in this text. We see here a serious, blatant demonstration of male weakness; the poet grasped the opportunity to challenge the patriarchy and androcentism of his society. The husband, instead of affirming his chauvinism, which marks sub-Saharan African men and also marked the male world of Hosea, drew back and instead of going to the extremely corrupted priest’s court (cf. Hosea 4:1-10), decided to involve in His conjugal dispute the innocent children whom He had reluctantly accepted .

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous
look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her
breasts. I will not show my love to her children, because
they are the children of adultery. (Hosea 2:2-4)

The involvement of children in his conjugal dispute leads us to think that this husband (possibly God) demonstrates that he is not a good educator in that he divides the family, involving his innocent children in his conjugal dispute. In addition, He destroyed their dignity in the eyes of society by calling them בְּנֵי זְנוּנִים¹⁸¹ (cf. Hosea 2:4). The question is why God could not simply divorce, if we are in a context where the law allows divorce? Or why would God not opt for a second wife if the law tolerates polygamy?

¹⁸⁰ The verb ריבו is in an Kal Imperative active. In LXX Κρίθητε, *indicate* in Vulgate. See the observation of Kruger 1992: 9, 10-11.

¹⁸¹ In LXX τέκνα πορνείας or in the Vulgate *fili fornicationum* which means the children of adultery. The expression is very difficult to translate. We will discuss it further.

What did He find in Israel that He could not find in other nations? Wolff (1983:23) observes correctly that “There is hardly any other sphere in which humans are so super-sensitive as when they are choosing a companion for life”. If Wolff’s observation is applied to God, the issue that God has to face, if He is a husband, is what pleasure He finds in such a scandalous and neuro–psycho-dramatic relationship? And if He really is the Husband we may ask: Is adultery the business of God? These are some questions that we shall respond to in the next section.

3.5 God’s Frustration and vengeance in Hosea: An interpellation to the people of the sub-Sahara

In addressing the psychological drama of frustration and vengeance, we will try to respond to the questions raised above. Freud discovered that human existence is centered on sexual perversion. Machiavelli (1961:103-113) in his memorable book *Prince* had tried to demonstrate that two circumstances are to be avoided by any political leader who would like to rule easily his people: *popular religion* and *the woman of their kinsman*. Machiavelli is right because religion and sex could paradoxically serve positively as the basis of social communion or negatively of social trouble. Niklas Luhmann (1986: 118) pertinently observes a point concerning the intimacy between husband and wife.

The intimate content of human relationships transmitted via sexuality is so great that simply adopting a different form of relationship, one that is only ‘friendly’, cannot ignore it. The pressure exerted by other possibilities of awareness of this problem, if only one side was to react to it, would make this difficulty all the greater. It is therefore logical to incorporate sexual relations into a model of intimate communication so as to prevent them from

becoming a source of irritation; as the relation to the environment of one of the intimate partners, they would become a permanent source of disturbance.

It is true that exegetically we cannot summarize the relationship between God and Israel in terms of sexual intercourse; but in both texts (cf. chapters 2 and 11) where God expresses his love, the poet insists on the lack of love that God feels due to the lack of אָהָבָה. In the chapters 2 and 11 this lack of love is displayed in the negative form:

She has not acknowledged that I was the one Who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold—which they used for Baal. (Hosea 2: 8)

It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. (Hosea 11:4)

Indeed, Chapter 2 of Hosea's book focuses on the wife. This wife did not *know*

הִדְעָה לֹא יָדְעָה , αὐτὴ οὐκ-έγνω and *et haec nescivit*. In Chapter 11 verse 4 the poet substitutes the personal pronoun אִשְׁתִּי (wife) by *they* (people), but in both verses the verb יָדְעָה is in Kal perfect. In chapter 2: 8 the translator of LXX uses the 2nd Aorist έγνω and in Vulgate the past tense *nescivit*. The Targum¹⁸² brings an interesting contribution. Here the verb concerns the rational aspect. The use of אִשְׁתִּי means that the wife seemed

¹⁸² cf. Hosea 2:10: "but they do not know that it was I who blessed them with grain, and wine and oil; I who lavished silver on them and gold, with they made idols". The emphasis of the translator is on the personal pronoun *I (God)*.

not to know that it was her husband who paid the dowry and provided the אָנְכִי נָתַתִּי or ἐγὼ δέδωκα in LXX. The tense of the verbs in Tenakh and the Vulgate refer to what we said concerning יָדַעַה but in LXX the verb is translated in the perfect tense which means that *The husband gave the gift and this act was supported by the evidence*. The emphasis is on the personal pronoun אָנְכִי or ἐγὼ as it is displayed in the text

כִּי אָנְכִי נָתַתִּי לָהּ הַדָּגָן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְכֶסֶף הַרְבֵּיתִי לָהּ וְנָהַב עָשׂוּ לְבַעַל Both things are needed for establishing a foundation for the self-confidence of the wife. The question is what went wrong in Yahwism or even in Yahweh, which tempted His wife to desire other husbands¹⁸³. There are four possible responses that we can consider: the absence or invisibility of the husband; the sudden interruption of the point of discontinuity and continuity between the fact of the giving of *manna* in the desert and the place of the hard work of the harvest; the opportunity that the people had found in Baalism for direct participation in the control of religious affairs, nature, and history, instead of enduring the passivity of Yahwism and submitting to the oppression of the priests and Yahweh; the excessive and unsupportable exigency of the Deuteronomist laws. In spite of what we suggest, Vuilleumier (1979: 497) identifies with us and he indicates the difference between Yahweh and Baal:

YHWH est le maître de la nature, de la création et de l'histoire. L'homme est le serviteur qui ne peut que tout attendre, en confiance, de lui. Baal, au contraire, est soumis au cycle de la nature, mais, par sa mort et sa résurrection régulières, il est le garant de la fertilité, d'une fertilité que les fidèles peuvent s'approcher par toutes sortes de rites et

¹⁸³ The Targums translate this word people as *nations*.

de pratiques. Les hommes, par le moyen que la religion met à leur portée, disposent réellement de leur dieu¹⁸⁴.

The point is that Baalism, even in its illusoriness, was more attractive than Yawhism: people felt that in the worship of the Baal, they became effective co-creators. Hence it seems that Vuilleumier (1979: 497) has to agree with us when he writes, “Les hommes, par le moyen que la religion met à leur portée, disposent réellement de leur dieu”¹⁸⁵. Our view is that with the collapse of the religious and socio-political systems, the figures of the husband as well as of the father become useless due to the lack of the affective. For, Israel ridded itself of Yahweh because Baalism offered more the way of affectivity and liberty, than apathetic, archaic and corrupted Yawhism which implies a loss of a true sense of sharing life, sharing suffering, food and responsibility. Unfortunately, to satisfy these needs human beings seek out religious sects.

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. (Hosea 4: 6)

Returning to the problems of frustration and vengeance, in chapter 2 v. 8 and in chapter 11:3, Hosea’s interpreters think only about the ingratitude of the wife and son as a negative response to what the husband or father has done. In chapter 4 v.6 Hosea gives us

¹⁸⁴Yahweh is a master of nature, of creation, of history. Man is the servant who can do no other an expect all things from Him. Baal, on the other is subject to the changes of nature but by his regular death and resurrection he is a guarantor of fertility, a fertility which the faithful can draw near to through all sorts of rites and practices. By the means which religion offers them, men can indeed have their god at their command.

¹⁸⁵ Mankind, by the means that religion puts at their disposal can make use of their god.

another motive for God's frustration and perhaps vengeance: Israel's disobedience of the Law. The reaction of feminist interpreters to chapters 2 and 3 has already been described. We suggest that the verb יָדָע be interpreted as $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ ¹⁸⁶, as it is in chapter 4, and means a sexual or profound conjugal intimacy. What interests us are not only the sexual act but also the totality of sexual life which is like the rudder of human existence. While sexuality apparently covers a very small but fundamentally important area of human existence, deficiencies in the area of sexuality are a source of irritation and a cause of disturbance and frustration. Persons, including our God, therefore become predisposed to sexual brutality, deception, divorce, polygamy, polyandry, and adultery for the sake of vengeance, suicide. In this text, once again, the children or devotees pay the price of being associated with the dispute between God and the priesthood. The poet inserts the priests in the place of the wife and the conjugal dispute thus becomes a religious affair. In both disputes, unfortunately, the husband of chapters 2-3 who became the master of the priests involved the innocent children or devotees in the dispute (cf. Hosea 4:6c). This way of resolving conjugal or any other kind of conflict, involving the third party, is seriously pathological.

¹⁸⁶ The verb יָדָע means to know or understand (intuitive understanding or knowledge), but mostly to have an intimate knowledge of someone or something (cf. Hosea 4: 6, 6: 6). This verb is very complex because the revelation and the election of Israel are sometimes described by the same verb. It expresses the idea of intimate and profound sexual relationship between a man and woman. This verb could be connected with יָדָע to be designated or elected. In LXX יָדָע is translated as $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$: to know or to be acquainted with instead of $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\mu\alpha\iota$: to know ($\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota$:around or superficially) because $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ express the idea of knowing intimately, which is the equivalent of $\omicron\iota\delta\alpha$ and involves, the co-participation of subjects.

3.6 Violation of Human Rights: Clear demonstration of God's weakness and its implications in the formation of the mindset of perpetrators of male domestic violence, such as rape in both contexts

She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold— which they used for Baal. Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness. So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands. I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts. I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them. I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; (Hosea 2:8-13a)

These two quotes are from Hosea 2:5 and such a dramatic account of psychopathology in a conjugal context exemplifies a violation of human rights. The book of Hosea (cf. Hosea 2:8-13a) greatly challenges the readers to recognize human rights. The key to understand one of these oracles is verse 8. The particle לָכֵן introduces the action that the husband will preeminently engage as a consequence: the profanation

כִּי זָנְתָה אִמָּם הַבִּישָׁה הוֹרָתָם and the wife's declaration of love

נִתְּנִי לַחֲמִי וּמִימִי צִמְרִי וּפִשְׁתִּי שָׁמְנִי וְשִׁקְוִי כִּי אָמַרְתָּה אֶלְכָּה אַחֲרַי מֵאַהֲבִי

The poet apparently spoke of Hosea in the first oracle but here it is clear that the Husband is God. Two hermeneutic methods could be adopted to interpret this oracle. The traditional way defended by Keil and Delitzsch, Anderson and Friedman, Wolff and others focuses only on the objective problem of sin and emphasizes the right of God as

the Husband to punish his spouse. We already have observed that this interpretation is patriarchal and oppressive. Our approach however differs from the feminist one and makes it possible to perceive the flagrant violation of human rights perpetrated by the husband against his wife.

Three acts define this stupid act. First the husband restricted the fundamental right of existence: liberty. He delimited the sphere of influence and movement of his wife; the verb פָּשַׁע is a Kal Imperative פָּשַׁע ¹⁸⁷. All the verbs used suggest obstruction. This oracle is linked to God's intention as expressed in Genesis chapter 3:24 where God had the cherubim prevent Adam and Eve from eating the fruit of the tree of Life. But here, if God is the metaphorical and above all tautegorical husband, He has disposed of the cherubim and personally takes charge of punishing His wife. Secondly the poet portrays the husband as a manipulator and blackmailer.

She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold which they used for Baal. Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness. So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands. I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts. I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers. (Hosea 2: 8-12b)

¹⁸⁷ In LXX ἐγὼ φράσσω and in Vulgate “ego sepiam”. Another verb is, פָּתַח which in LXX takes the form of ἀνοικοδομήσω. In the Vulgate, the verb *sepiam* is repeated.

He premeditated various actions with the objective of frustrating his wife's expectations. Here, the poet twice (v.8a and v.9b) refers to the verbal utterance לֹא תִמְצָא, the correct translation of this particle of negation in English possibly being *never*. The sentence then becomes: *She will never meet (or satisfy) her expectation*. In the text God always pre-determined the future decision of His wife who is conditioned like Skinner's dog, and with His excessive affirmation of ego, He makes His wife an echo of Himself. The verbal combination וְאִמְרָה אֶלְכָּה וְאֲשׁוּבָה reveals an intention to straighten the mind of the spouse to ensure that she will realize that her only chance of survival is her unconditionally returning and living under the conjugal roof. By virtue of the husband manipulation the woman is moved to consider טוֹב, which means goodness, to be attainably only in the first marriage.

Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now'.
(Hosea 2: 7d)

It seems that the cunning device that the husband used to manipulate his wife is effective, but that it also held some economic connotations. What God did was exactly what most men in sub-Saharan Africa do to women. Women are punished and reduced to an economic dependence which starts gently with the primitive system of *groom's marriage settlement* and continues, as the husband becomes the wife's only source of survival. To be honest, we think that this *groom's marriage settlement* is a deviation from the original one of the Israelites and the sub-Saharan African people. Altuna (1974: 303) observes that:

O matrimónio é um assunto complexo em que os aspectos económicos, sociais e religiosos estão por vezes tão intrincadamente misturados que não se podem separar ...Para nós, africanos, o matrimónio é o centro da existência. É o lugar de encontro de todos os membros de uma comunidade: os defuntos, os vivos e os que ainda vão nascer. Todas as dimensões do tempo convergem para aqui, o drama da história repete-se na sua totalidade e recomeça dotado duma nova vida¹⁸⁸.

He argues:

O matrimónio é o drama em que cada um participa como actor ou como actriz e no como mero espectador. Por isso é um dever, uma experiência fixada pela comunidade, é um ritmo de vida em que cada um deve tomar parte. Quem não participa é uma maldição para a comunidade, é um rebelde: não só é um anormal como chega a um nível inferior ao humano. Em geral, se um indivíduo não casa significa que rejeitou a sociedade e que a sociedade o rejeitou a ele¹⁸⁹.

Altuna (1974) names three aspects involving sub-Saharan African conjugal life. These are the religious, economic and social aspects. Fred Hartley Wight (1981:131-142) writes similarly about conjugal life in the Near East and specifically in Israel. If Altuna (1974: 303) and Wight (1981:131-142) are correct, it seems difficult to most people to understand the poet's audacity in focusing on the shameful dehumanization and

¹⁸⁸ Matrimony is a very complex issue because it necessary involves economical, social and religious aspects. These three aspects are intricately interconnected and it is very difficult to separate one from another...For Africans, matrimony is a central issue of human existence. It is the locus of encounter for all members of a community: the dead and the living and those who are going to be born. All dimensions of time, past, present and future converge at this point and the repetition of the drama of history takes place entirely in this locus, in which matrimony restart as something which is embodied by the new aspect of life.

¹⁸⁹ Matrimony is a kind of drama in which anybody takes part as actor or as actress but never as a common spectator. For that reason, matrimony becomes a duty. It express an experience of community, a rhythm of life in which anybody has to take part. The person who does not take part is cursed according to the law of community and this person is considered as a rebel. The same person is also considered as abnormal and reaches the inferior level of existence. Generally if someone refuses to get married, this means that this person rejected the society in the same way that the society rejected him/her.

objectification of woman in chapter 2 of Hosea. The man within the patriarchal tradition decides to strip his beloved. How do the oppressed women tolerate this? How will the sub-Saharan women feel after reading this male text? Weems (1995: 27-52) is critical of the text. We only regret the silence of נָקָר or other women in this text. These women should be the unique witnesses to tell us the truth. We fear to say that, in our context, this controversial text could encourage domestic violence, social and religious abuse of women, pornography and above all rape. What is very strange and also very difficult to accept is that the poet spent time communicating step by step the actions of this weak Husband. The poet clearly seems to be in league with patriarchy because he missed three options that the Husband could have taken: peacefully to divorce his wife, opening the opportunity for both of them to contract a new marital בְּרִית ; or to kill his wife to conform to the recommendations of the Law of Yahweh (Deuteronomy); or, finally, he could display his jealousy, by purchasing or destroying the idols. But unfortunately this cowardly husband, even if he was God, limits himself to denouncing instead of alleviating the pain within his home. The question that we can raise from this matter is: *Is Yahweh really omnipotent?* We do not know what really was the response of the people in Hosea's time. For us, the classical response obtained from the Israelite credo in Genesis (1:1) and Exodus (20: 1-4) is positive but this usual answer, which influenced Classical Theism, has perhaps to be challenged. Another question arises: if the anonymous poet, who wrote the book of Hosea, was an African from sub-Saharan Africa, how could he have written this love poem, was he trying to be honest with his audience? We do not have the answer; perhaps only someone who understands the secret power of metaphor could imagine this. The reader in acknowledging the power of metaphor can

now perceive that there is a way to consider God as our kin; the similarity in religious and socio-political problems, the reciprocity in the sphere of open dialogue between God and his interlocutor and the problems of accepting and ascribing these metaphoric meanings to God. All these problems on the one hand challenge us and on the other convince us that in spite of the linguistic difficulties that human beings have, God remains our kin. This especially becomes clear if we critically understand the meaning of God's pathos as the poet portrays it in the text. We are persuaded that this is the route that theologians who decide to struggle prophetically against all forms of idolatry can follow to divert the actual religious and socio-political situation of sub-Saharan Africa from its *false start* to a *true start*.

CHAPTER 4

4. SYNOPSIS: GOD'S AFFECTIVE DRAMA IN HOSEA: WHAT MAKES HOSEA THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PROPHET?

Previously we endeavoured to dissect the hard question of the relationship that exists between pathos, ethos and logos. We have focused our analyses on the person of God. Now we want to look at the affectionate drama in which Hosea the prophet is involved and how the personification of divine drama can make Hosea the true sub-Saharan African prophet. We ought to recognize that the emblematic role of this man as the vehicle of revelation has caused extensive debates among philosophers and biblical scholars. The main questions are: does Hosea easily accept this divine vocation? How has this drama affected him as well as his entourage? The response to these questions is examined below.

4.1 The Price and Risk of Prophetic Vocation and Ministry in Hosea and sub-Saharan African contexts.

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash King of Israel: When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD. (Hosea 1:1-2)

Hegel (Hegel in Rosenkranz 1963: 555) once said that: “*Ein grosser Mann verdammt die Menschen dazu, ihn zu explizieren*”¹⁹⁰. This aphorism of the period of Berlin, which is applied to Hegel himself, according to Bourgeois (1986: 7), can be applied to Hosea, too, according to the biblical text cited above (cf. Hosea 1:1-2). This is because this prophet, who has inaugurated the school of classic prophecy, came dramatically onto the scene of prophetic ministry through this known and problematic marriage (cf. Heschel 1996.vol 1:33-60; von Rad 1967:111-117 and Weems 1989: 87-104). Mortal Human beings can neither understand nor explain and, above all, *accept* what happened to this prophet. However, from the text (cf. Hosea 1:1-2), the author referred twice to this expression **תְּחִלַּת דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּהוֹשֵׁעַ** and at the second **דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־הוֹשֵׁעַ**, which comes with additional information.

Here the author looked at the ministry of Hosea as a particular event **תְּחִלַּת**. The divine order is clear and precise **לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים**. To become an effective tool of God, the text suggests that Hosea ought to get married with a **אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים** (woman of promiscuity). The text also suggests that God’s proclamation touched the most pathetic area of Hosea’s life. In the text, the author used the *principium loquendi Dominum in [in] Osee* (cf. Hosea 1:1) rather than *dixit Dominus ad [through] Osee* (cf. Hosea 1:2). This verbal shift between *principium loquendi Dominum in [in] Osee* and *dixit Dominus ad [through] Osee* is remarkable in the Vulgate (cf. Fillion in La Sainte Bible 1900.vol. VI: 344) as well as in the Tenach. Besides that fact, it is possible to think that it certainly took

¹⁹⁰ Un grand homme condamne les humains à l’expliquer. [A great man condemns human beings to understand his person].

time for God to convince Hosea, because the response **וַיִּקַּח אֶת־גִּמְרָה בְּתוֹדֵבָלַיִם** **וַיֵּלֶךְ** comes in the form of the Kal imperfect (he proceeds to go and get married). It is also interesting to observe that contrary to the previous sentence, the author here mentions the woman by pointing out her name and relatives (pathetic link). It can be deduced from this that, the new pathetic event carried the risk to be taken and the price to be paid in terms of an affective bond. Therefore God as a psychologist prepared his partner (Hosea) in advance. But how do **בְּאֲרָרִי** as well as **דֵּבְרַיִם** as fathers and leaders of both families let **הוֹשֵׁעַ** and **גִּמְרָה** go into this marriage, knowing that the bride **גִּמְרָה** was a prostitute? What is the value in terms of dowry that they have negotiated before accepting this marital bond? How did **דֵּבְרַיִם** react as father, listening to the fact that his daughter was indeed involved with sexual religious practices? These are some pertinent and unanswered questions and the author never refers to them.

The option of keeping silent is unfortunately also remarkable in most of the commentaries already written on this issue. Such silence is significant and may be a display of the language of prudence or wisdom because it seems to bring to our attention three things: Firstly, it is possible to explore the idea that **בְּאֲרָרִי** as well as **דֵּבְרַיִם** could belong to the high social class and were well known. This idea can move us to consider the plausible hypothesis that Hosea was a member of the royal court. Secondly, it is possible to sustain the idea that the Torah had been largely discredited in Israel (cf. Deuteronomy) since the 8th Century BCE. In fact, this hypothesis could be sustained because the author of Chronicles (cf. 2 Chronicles 15; 24) had contempt for the Torah

and the postexilic sages (cf. Nehemiah 5, 8-9 and Ezra 10), and prophets (cf. Haggai 1:4-5, 2: 4-5) have shown total misunderstanding of it (cf. Malachi 2:1-9). Thirdly, it is possible that the text subtly presents the slow beginning of the rebellion of the youth in Israel against the traditional and oppressive patriarchal order, which radicalized itself in Jeremiah and Job (cf. Job 32-37). On the other hand, if it is true that גִּמְרָה was a sacred prostitute, then perhaps בְּאֵרֵי and דְּבַלְיָיִם had realized that the incident would affect their reputation, and as such decided to underestimate the value of the marriage between Hosea and Gomer, which they considered as *quasi* nothing. The dowry of fifteen pieces of silver was equivalent to the price of a slave. This in fact corresponds in part with her name גִּמְרָה meaning *finis* (cf. Frankl 1962: 70)¹⁹¹. It is partially right that Hosea, knowing in advance the moral situation of his bride, who, according to the culture, was already considered married, experienced serious psychological problems.

Despite extensive debate around the word זְנוּנִיָּה (cf. Keil and Delitzsch 1968, Anderson and Freedmann 1980, Wolff 1975, von Rad 1965), this unbalanced sexual behaviour of גִּמְרָה means fornication. While Geisler (1971:203) observed that: “Fornication is illicit sexual relations outside of marriage, although the general understanding is that it implies that at least one member of the relationship was not married”. We can also support Geisler’s idea when he asserts that: “Fornication is evil because it, too, is a marriage outside of marriage, because it joins persons in an illicit way without their intending to

¹⁹¹The Latin word *finis* has two meanings: the end or the finish and a goal to reach. A man who could not see the end of his provisional existence was not able to aim at an ultimate goal in life. Here what interests us is the paradoxical use of this word: the end and the goal.

carry through the abiding and unique implications of their relationship” (cf. Geisler 1971:203). It is very difficult to solve this problem (cf. Kirst *et.al.* 1988: 60) because we do not know exactly how people dealt with sexual matters among the Israelites before the marital bond. If the hypothesis formulated by Wight (1978:129-130) is correct that engagement means marital bond, and also if the function of sex within marriage is threefold: unification, recreation, and procreation, as Geisler (1971:202) observes, then it is possible to suspect that Geisler’s ethical suggestion is not applicable here because in the text there are indications that זָנוּנִים, which is connected with the expression זָנוּנִים רָחֵם, should mean נֶאֱפֹפִים¹⁹². If our lexical reasoning is right and can be applied to גְּמֹר, we can thus suggest that from the psychological perspective, as well as the ethical prism, Hosea, by obeying God, seems to become an unbalanced man. This great prophet never experienced the great pleasure in a marital union due to the absence of a mutual life-long commitment of love (cf. Geisler 1971: 203).

4.1.1 The Dangerous Prophetic Vocation and Ministry in the Time of Religious and Sociopolitical crisis like 8th century (BCE) and in the actual sub-Saharan context: What is the effective role of the prophet?

When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD. (Hosea 1:2)

Then the LORD said to Hosea ‘Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at

¹⁹² מֵאֲהָרֵי

Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel'. Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God. After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. (Hosea 1:4-8)

They are unfaithful to the LORD; they give birth to illegitimate children. Now their New Moon festivals will devour them and their fields. (Hosea 5: 7)

From the verses of the text (cf. Hosea 1:2), the dangerous and painful task started with the unexpected acceptance by the prophet of the case of infidelity of his spouse to him. He also experienced the sorrow of denying the true genetic origin of his supposed sons. This marital tragedy was a pathetic heart-rending event, never experienced by someone before in Israel¹⁹³. For that reason the following can be deduced from Hosea's drama: Firstly, the lack of a sense of the perspectives of a future for both Hosea and Gomer, and for the children who were considered according to the social view as bastards. Secondly, we face a flagrant violation of friendship (pathetic bond) on the part of God. Yahweh seems to play a demonic role here as it is observed in Job and other problematic texts (cf. Deissler in Feiner and Loehrer 1978. vol II/1: 241). God's apparent human face that is displayed through the metaphor of Hosea indeed moved the prophet into losing total credibility due to his spouse's sexual reputation (cf. Proverbs 5-6). Hosea became in the eyes of the people worse than גְּמֹרָה (cf. Hosea 9:7-9). However, if גְּמֹרָה really is *finis*, as we defined it above, her situation, even if it is not acceptable, becomes comprehensible.

¹⁹³ In the New Testament, this case is similar to Joseph and Mary's case. For that reason we can understand why God sent an angel to persuade Joseph. He broke this marital bond set at the base of fidelity and trust in

For this reason, we think that there is a way of softening our critics due to the excessive patriarchal oppressive pressure, which doubtlessly moves any spouse, as well as any daughter, to become an adulterer and patriot-prostitute. Such a situation of excessive patriarchal dominance is common today and happens in many sub-Saharan countries of Africa. It happened particularly in the Congo (formerly Zaire) during Mobutu's dictatorial epoch, as will be demonstrated further.

While if we seriously examine גִּמְזָר , and her behaviour, according to the historical data, we see that this was a common occurrence among the people. On the other hand, due to Hosea's pretension of being the unique authentic prophetic voice of Yahweh and not Baal, such a marriage was a tremendous misfortune for him. However, if we should be honest and, above all, critical, even this misfortune should be minimized. From the echo that the reader can grasp from Hosea's audience, it seems that Hosea did nothing except to display publicly what most of the men, including prophets and priests, did in groves during Baalist ceremonies. Andersen and Freedman (1980: 292) expressed the same point of view, in different words:

Whether a spoken parable, or an acted one, the intelligibility of the story depends on its recognition by listeners or observers. Even as vision or parable, its terms correspond to familiar social customs and relationships. Because the meaning of what is done must have been evident to Hosea's contemporaries, requiring no exposition, it is obscure to us.

favour of the redemption of the whole of humanity. It is possible by analogy to think that Joseph incarnated paradoxically the role of Hosea as well as the father of Hosea with the advent of Jesus Christ.

This fact is true and supporting Andersen and Freedman; Maimonides (cf. Maimonides in Nahaissi 1990: 261-264) argues that the Torah never allowed such behaviour to be ascribed either to the priest or to the prophet. It is thus evident that due to his particular and unexpected renouncement of Baalism, for transmitting *דְּבַר־יְהוָה*, there is a suspicion that Hosea had to fight for the rest of his life to go against the general trend in order to remain faithful to his vocation. In this perspective, Allier (1925: 134) observes:

L'individu qui en parle le voit, tout d'abord, dans les douleurs, ou tout au moins dans les énnuis que la conversion ne manquera pas de lui attirer parmi les hommes hostiles à la doctrine nouvelle. Le sentiment de cette opposition sociale agit comme une force d'inhibition¹⁹⁴.

In the case of Hosea this feeling of rejection (cf. Hosea 9: 7-9) is perhaps due to the newness brought about by the shift that occurred in his mind and praxis (cf. von Rad 1965.vol 2: 63). In spite of what happened with Hosea, what is praiseworthy to observe is the extreme courage of Hosea. In fact, once again, Allier (1925: 134-135) asserts that:

Le courage contre l'opinion commune est rare, même chez les civilisés. Comment serait il facile à l'individu qui n'avait jamais eu l'idée d'une initiative morale? Cet homme vivait comme les autres. Il faut qu'il prenne le contre pied de ce qu'il faisait, c'est à dire de ce que les autres continuent de faire. On va le regarder, et cela le trouble. Il sera traité comme un être étonnant. Mais la curiosité sera tout de suite de la malveillance. Les gens avec qui, par exemple, il ne veut plus s'enivrer ou commettre d'autres orgies, verront dans son attitude, non pas seulement un acte d'indépendance, mais aussi une désapprobation portée contre eux: 'Si nous ne nous conduisons pas mal, pourquoi

¹⁹⁴ The person, who speaks about conversion, feels, first at all, the sorrow and adversity that this belonging to the new doctrine cannot fail to bring to him/her. The feeling of this social opposition works as a kind of the power of inhibition.

ne se conduit pas comme nous? S' il a adopté une conduite, c' est qu' il condamne la nôtre.' Et on s' irritera contre lui. On lui en voudra sourdement. On le lui fera sentir . Comment ne serait-il pas intimidé? Le non-conformisme social, au sens le plus large du mot, suppose presque de l' heroisme¹⁹⁵.

From Allier's observation, three reactions can be deduced: Firstly, as we have already speculated above, it is possible to affirm that Hosea was one of the most important actors in *Baalism*; secondly, it is also possible to think that the shock between former and new interactions with his family and people is probably due to his unexpected decision to refuse to behave horribly, according to his own past practices of idolatry; thirdly, this decision certainly provoked intense emotions and acute deception, because it was a demonstration of independence as well as religious and sociopolitical protestation and it required a sense of heroism to remain faithful. However, in spite of the intense emotion and deception, this rupture is a condition *sine qua non* to prove his new identity as the effective tool and true reformer of Yahwism. It is known that from the perspective of people such a reaction is considered as disruptive to religious and sociopolitical order. The prophet thus assumes two dangerous roles: soothsayer and poet in relation to God as well as to the people, hence his effectiveness in medical and poetic roles has to be

¹⁹⁵ Courage to oppose commonly held beliefs is rare even among the civilised. How could it be easy for a person who has no idea of initiative of moral rules? This man lived like other men. He would have to do the opposite of what he was doing, that is to say of what all the others were continuing to do. People would look at him. And that worried him. He would be treated like a strange creature. But curiosity would soon turn to hostility. People with whom he no longer wanted to get drunk or indulge in other revels would see in his attitude, not only an act of independence, but also one of disapproval. If we are not behaving badly, when do you not behave as we do. 'If he behaves in a difficult way it is because he condemns our way'. And they would be irritated with him. Silently they would hold it. They would let him feel this. How could he not be intimidated? To be a social non-conformism in the wider sense requires something like heroism.

considered through this audacious event and opportunity. Detienne (1986:47) perceived it well:

It extends to the poet who rips apart silence and forgetting to erect, with his memorial voice, to build the new memory on the site of another more ancient by reminding the forgetful of a 'hero' strength, a king's triumph or a god's dazzling deed. Every victory in the games of rival sanctuaries evokes a traditional recitation, a paradigm necessary for pronouncing the true word, the logos of Truth.

As a poet, Hosea, by appealing to this dangerous game of resorting to the memory or recollecting past events (cf. Bastos 1992: 83-89; Brueggemann 1992:45-46) of creation as well as Israel through the marital bond which symbolizes the historical covenant, touches on the most pathetic aspect of his audience's soul: the pathetic covenant, which plays a key role in Hosea's subversive movement, as will be demonstrated below.

4.1.2 The Subversive Role of Memory in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan context

When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved. (Hosea 9:10)

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. (Hosea 11:1-2)

Here, as was mentioned above, the prophet embraced other sub-Saharan African prophets who insisted on the subversive use of memory to wake up the people from religious and sociopolitical sleep. In the sub-Saharan African context, Adegbola (cf. Adegbola in Altuna 1975: 29), Bediako (1998, 2000), Mulago (1980), Mveng (cf. Mveng in Angang *et.al.* 1979: 85-96), Tshishiku (1980), Malula (1985), Mosala (1989), Cochrane and West (1993), Birago Diop (Diop in Reed 1964: 25) and Anta Diop (1959) launched a similar appeal in order to wake up the people and help them to face the immensity of their spiritual and human resources that they possess (religion, music, folklore, art and literature)¹⁹⁶. But why did Hosea and the sub-Saharan African theologians and scholars appeal to the memory? The memory of human being is precisely *the eternal monument of the Muses*; that is, the same religious reality as the speech of the poet grafted on memory and actualized in praise (cf. Detienne 1996:48). In the same perspective of praise, Brueggemann (1989: 84) argues: “Hymns have as their social function the making of the worlds. Therefore the hymn of praise must always move from the reason to the summons which is the call to the *New World*”.

However, as Hosea was one of the first classical prophets, it is possible that, at the beginning, the text could be a *song speech* before becoming a *text speech*. This song is certainly a tool of subversion due to the seed of revolution that is hidden in it. It is probable that people could use it to complain, and above all, make public their daily sorrow and pain. Brueggemann (1989: 84) intelligently states: “The concrete memory becomes something of an embarrassment and the praise is tilted toward the grand

¹⁹⁶ It is very interesting to observe how people like Miriam Makeba, Peter Abrahams, Johnny Clegg the so-called white Zulu, and Jacob Matsose used literature, music, art and folklore during the time of Apartheid in South Africa.

imperial vision". Against the ancient resistance of royal order, as happened in 8th Century (B.E.C), Brueggemann (1989: 84) proceeds and notes:

The memory is to yield a New World, but the world of royal liturgy wants to be at a distance from the memory. And when the distance is great enough and maintained long enough, a fully ordered world emerged, but one without passion, without possibility, and without humanness.

For this reason, it is almost true that to avoid such a situation and to keep the pathetic sense of passion and the lack of the sense of humanity intact, the prophet in spite of religious and sociopolitical risks often used the dangerous game of memory. Now the question is, what is the effect of this song speech in connection to the memory? In response, the gifted French mythologist Detienne (1996: 48-49) argues that, "At the level of song speech, memory thus has two meanings. First, it is a gift of second sight allowing the poet to produce efficacious speech, to formulate song speech. Second, memory is song itself, speech that will never cease to be, and that is identified with the being of the man whom the speech celebrates". Philo of Alexandria (cf. Philo in Detienne 1996:40) supports such a view by arguing that, "An old story is sometimes a song that was imagined by sages and, like so many others, committed to memory from one generation to the next". But what is the role of this old story in the process of liberation? As one of the gifted and fervent theologians of protest, Brueggemann (1989: 84) rightly notes that, "It is the old story that reminds us that God has acted and will act so that the system can and must change. It is the old story that asserts that the system will be changed, social power will be reassigned, disproportions will be changed, and justice will be given". If Philo and Brueggemann are right in their judgment, then Hosea as a book can thus be an old revolutionary song written to serve as a servomechanism for challenging the

oppressive religious and sociopolitical structures in the epoch of Israelite history. The reason for such a challenge is the fact that the oppressors moved their devotees to believe that the old story has been muted if not dismissed (cf. Brueggemann 1989: 113). For the oppressive and corrupted devotees of royal, priesthood and prophetic systems no reasons are given for telling the old story. There is no memory of such transformation. We know that without the story, the system is seen as absolute and consequently the devotees support, unconsciously or not, the totalitarian regime (cf. Brueggeman 1989:113). Contrary to those devotees, even with all religious and sociopolitical resistance, the prophet has the duty to persuade the oppressed to exclaim like an old and wise man said in Latin: *Musa mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso*¹⁹⁷.

When such duty is performed, then the prophet becomes paradoxically a personage who is mutilated and strengthened, hated and feared (cf. von Rad 1965.vol.2: 91), *deracinée*¹⁹⁸ and *enraciné*¹⁹⁹ (cf. Neher 1955: 166-202). The same prophet lived under the intense tension of being *comme les autres*²⁰⁰ and also *pas comme les autres*²⁰¹ (cf. Malula 1985:8-10), patriot and not patriot and, above all, as God and not as God. This tension

¹⁹⁷ Sidney (cf. Sidney in Norman 1962: 57) claims like we have done following Virgil. See further explanation in Norman 1962: 56-58. "O Muse recount to me those causes; what godhead was offended?"

¹⁹⁸ Uprooted

¹⁹⁹ rooted

²⁰⁰ A common person

²⁰¹ Different to the common persons

makes the prophet, as well as God, conflicting and, more than that, very strange beings for the people.

4.1.3 The Prophet: A Strange and Radical Person in Hosea and the sub-Saharan African context

The days of punishment are coming; the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac. The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins. (Hosea 9:7-9)

From the text, it is confirmed that the prophet becomes doubtlessly a strange person, unrecognizable and, worse than that, he is elusive for both sides in the dispute: God and the people. When such radical changes as these occurred in the pathos and ethos of the prophet, they affected also his expected **λόγος**, which is indeed the true incarnation of Yahweh in his/her life, and which became necessarily a tremendous vehicle of **ἀλήθεια**²⁰². Such changes are never expected and when they occur they always carry on the creation of serious antagonistic religious and sociopolitical environments. The same changes create difficulties for the people in discerning the true meaning of **λόγος**, as Detienne (1996: 48) asserts: “In the field of poetic speech, the discourse or **λόγος** is balanced between these two groups of powers. Each power is matched by another in the opposite group: in one group night, silence, and oblivion; in the other light, praise, and

²⁰² Truth.

memory”. Pindar (cf. Pindar in Detiègne 1996:48) concludes: “Exploits that go unremarked die: Mortal men forget whatever has not intermingled in the glorious streams of verses, and come to flower through a poet’s skill”. Only through the bard’s speech can silence and death be eluded. The positive values, the very existence of efficacious speech, are manifested in the voice of this special man, the poet, and in the harmonious vibration in which his praise floats aloft, in his living speech that is the power of life (cf. Henri Fournier and Charles Mugler in Detiègne 1996: 48). A poet bestows through his praise a memory on man/woman, who is naturally endowed with it. Such audacity was a new thing and served to create new events, new social orders and environments and new comprehensions of human beings and God. The prophet was not a handyman, which means a mere inexperienced bricoleur; it is possible to believe that Hosea was a responsible man and was connected to and maintained by the source of all providence, which is Yahweh’s *dabar*. It is this kind of mysterious and remarkable courage that cost Simon Kimbangu (cf. Martin 1975:1-113), Simão Toko (cf. Martin 1975: 100-101), Daniel Orekoya (cf. Mitchell in Rotberg 1970:484-485), André Matswa and John Chilembwe (cf. Alexandre in Rotberg 1970: 511-512), Isaiah Shembe (cf. Vilakhazi 1986, Bediako 2000:6), Gaudencia Aoko, Samuel Biléou and Samuel Oschoffa (cf. Hebga in Angang *et.al* 1983: 74-75), post-colonial Kivengere, Malula, Mbiti and Mveng their lives. Moreover, as was observed previously, such prophets, similar to Hosea, experience in a tautegorical dimension the mysterious *gozo*²⁰³ of transcending death by death. The initiation school of Yahweh instilled in the prophets that they should never

²⁰³ Enjoyment.

fear that obstacle (death); the initiated person is thus called to face and demystify this idol (*είδωλείον*), which can be a person or the entire religious and sociopolitical system.

Therefore if we consider Hosea as a sub-Saharan African *griot taler*²⁰⁴ and his prophecy as the revolutionary song, Brueggemann's (1992:75) perception grasped in connection to the role of a prophet as the *leitmotiv* of hope in exile fits thus in this context and his word aptly applies when he says that: "The poet engages in the kind of guerrilla warfare that is always necessary on behalf of oppressed people". Brueggemann (1992:75) proceeds and gives two reasons that should explain why this effective tool of God is used to dispel fear: "For the prophet the hated one must be ridiculed and made reachable, for 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". Then, with such *Weltanschauung*, their physical death never destroyed the flame of freedom, meaning the end of the need of establishing the new order. Contrary to that, their suffering and death are for the oppressed people a veritable seed of, or the source of inspiration for, liberation because "o exemplo e semente: germina, cresce, frutifica, multiplica-se"²⁰⁵, as deel Arrudo (1969:123) expresses it. And the diverse faces of Hosea as the example are perceived through the poetry. Alfred de Vigny (cf. de Vigny in Lucas 1962: 24) observed correctly that: "Tout homme qui n' a pas de poesie dans son coeur ne sera pas grand"²⁰⁶. Hosea was a great prophet in Israel because he had poetry in

²⁰⁴ Special and subversive African musical composer generally he/she sings alone.

²⁰⁵ The example is a seed, which germinates, grows up, bears fruit and multiplies.

²⁰⁶ The one who does have poetry in his heart never will be greater than others.

his heart and, as with him, prophets in the sub-Saharan African context are the first who re-introduced poetry in the religious and political sphere in sub-Saharan parts of Africa. They are also the first to teach and awaken the conscience of the people who are blinded by the opium of colonization.

In fact, the religious and sociopolitical oppressive systems declared them dissidents and consequently condemned them to death. This condemnation ends definitively with the hope of the oppressed. Contrary to the expectation of the oppressive system, the death of most of the prophets in Israel and in the sub-Saharan African context served, as well as helped, the oppressed to understand that death was nothing but a mode of intimidation that western colonists and their religious and sociopolitical sub-Saharan African allies use to silence the subversive voice of their victims.

You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper. Where is your king, which may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, Give me a king and princes? So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away. The guilt of Ephraim is stored up, his sins are kept on record. Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom; when the time arrives, he does not come to the opening of the womb. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? I will have no compassion. (Hosea 13:9-14)

Therefore with the courage of facing death, which is the *sacred canopy* of the oppressive system, as is shown in the text above (cf. Hosea 13: 14), faith in Yahweh as a Theopathetikos God becomes the unique way of transcending death. The same trust in

Yahweh becomes an empowering source of inspiration for demystifying the religious and socio-politically oppressive structure which, in many cases, is the strength of false motivation and pretexts like civilization, Islamization, evangelization and further nationalism. Koenig calls for demystifying the actual false religious and socio-politically oppressive motivation in Christianity: “Com demasiada frecuencia, o cristianismo professo não é a religião de Cristo. O egoísmo, o nacionalismo, o colonialismo causaram grandes calamidades na Historia por fazerem uso do cristianismo corrompido...”²⁰⁷. In the same prophetic perspective the famous Gandhi, whom the false Christianity discouraged from becoming a Christian, asserted: “O cristianismo europeu é a negação da religião de Jesus”²⁰⁸.

Evidently, the oppressed people affected or aimed at by Koenig and Gandhi’s prophetic message had to militate in favour of the negation of death as the price of prophetic vocation. We know that Koenig and Gandhi directly or indirectly were victims of religious and socio-political oppressive systems. We grasp from the text that, for the prophet, the challenge is to face death with dignity, after having faced all the trauma of tragedy and having experienced the exuberance of triumph (cf. Bassett 1975: 105). As it is known, pathos lies in the fact that acceptance is available to the person who achieves it, as well as to the person who does not. In the last century, the claim of the oppressed Agostinho Neto (cf. Neto in Makgoba 1999: 37) from the prison of Luanda fits in this context:

²⁰⁷ Most of the time, the professed Christianity is not really the religion of Christ. The egoism, nationalism and colonialism caused more calamities in human history by using the corrupted Christianity. *É a biblia realmente a Palavra de Deus?* 1969: 70.

²⁰⁸ The western Christianity is a negation of Jesus’ religion. See more details in *É a biblia realmente a Palavra de Deus?* 1969: 70.

Here in prison
rage contained
I patiently wait
For the clouds to gather
Blown by the wind of history
No one can stop the rain.

Birago Diop (cf. Diop in Reed 1964:25) found in a skilful dependence on the ancestors (living dead) and the living, the force for challenging the *sacred canopy* of invincibility of the colonialists:

Those who are dead have never gone away
They are in the shadows darkening around,
They are in the shadows fading into day,
The dead are not under the ground.
They are in the trees that quiver,
They are in the woods that weep,
They are in the waters of the rivers,
They are in the waters that sleep.
They are in the crowds, they are in the homestead.
The dead are never dead.

The prophetic sight of Agostinho Neto and Birago Diop seems to be echoed in Hosea:

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will
redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your
plagues? Where, O grave is your destruction?
(Hosea 13:14)

The difference between Hosea, and Neto and Diop, is that Hosea, as a spokesperson of Yahweh, rooted his subversive and revolutionary song of victory over the totems of idolatry, imperialism and colonialism in which death follows the perspective of faith in

Yahweh. Contrary to him, Neto believed in the inevitable causality of the rule of nature and Birago Diop believed in the vital dynamism between the ancestors and the living. What is interesting to observe is that in both the Israelite context and in the sub-Saharan African context, the person of pathos stops short of acceptance and accepts defeat. Indeed, the death of the pathetic person who is not the official prophet means paradoxically the end as well as the beginning of new life.

This becomes an obsession (cf. Bassett 1975: 105). To confirm his obsession Hosea, who incarnated Yahweh (cf. chapters 2-3), divorced and took back the abused spouse, which, in a way, is dying and coming back to life. Although in opposition to that the official religious and socio-political oppressive prophet always suggested that the orgy and life, which excludes death, are the indispensable gains as well as the unique aim of living. Malula (1985:8-17) and others categorically refuted such facts, even though we know that such a false prophetic voice was, and still is, used to imprison God and the people. The quest for prophetic mission, in any epoch of human history, has to be faced with its perplexing dimension when it becomes the way for liberating God as well as the people we pretend to develop.

4.2 Hosea's Marriage: A Pertinent Example for the Theologian, Pastor and Priest in the sub-Saharan African context

Previously we tried to analyze the price and risk of prophetic ministry in both contexts, which, in both contexts, culminate in the death of the prophet. If there is a locus where such a ministerial price is paid and risk is taken, it is in the first three chapters of Hosea.

Furthermore concerning Hosea, Saint Jerome (cf. Jerome in La Sainte Bible 1900.vol 6: 341) said about Hosea: “*Commaticus est, et quasi per sententias loquens*”²⁰⁹. Fillion (cf. Fillion in La Sainte Bible 1900.vol 6: 341) commented that Jerome’s observation is justified. In fact, this book highlights the impressive effects of painting or of lighting and a singular mark of intensive eloquence never seen before. The first three chapters of Hosea are arranged selectively in diachronic form [1-3-2], which means that there is an interruption or break between Chapter 1 and Chapter 3. Such diachronic arrangement reveals a clever form of combination through the use of the trinomial: History [order]=no History [chaos]=new History [re-order]. In fact in the first chapter the prophet is called to remind the people of their history. In the third the author paints the real situation of the people who had broken the covenant, slavery; then in the second the author uses an impressive artistic movement to convince his audience that, in spite of chaos, there is a chance to redo the covenant, new history.

| 1 | 3 | 2 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1:1-8 | 3: 1-5 | 2: 1-16 |
| Crisis | Crisis | Crisis |
| Breaking off | Breaking off | Breaking off |
| Chaos | Chaos | Chaos |
| New-Hope | New-Hope | New-Hope |

Using the frame above, we can realize that this trinomial (order=chaos=re-order) characterizes the true trajectory of human history and that of the Israelites in particular

²⁰⁹He is terse, and speaks, as it were, through maxims.

(cf. McKay 1959:21-40). Here the question is, what is peculiar in this book? The striking thing is the fact that, in the tragedy, the author included comedy. Buss (1984: 72) is right to say that tragedy and comedy, while contrary to each other, are not contradictory. Contrary to Bassett (1975:100), Buss (1984:72) makes a clear difference between both concepts by stating that:

As ideally conceived, they are characterized by a set of contrasts. Tragedy is concerned with death, suffering, and isolation; comedy with life, love, liberation, joy, and integration. Tragedy focuses on fate and plot, which often contain an element of inevitability; comedy describes character types and is full of surprises in the details of its development. Tragedy is serious, including among its repeated figures a prophet, who may also be a critic; comedy is playful and may parody the sacred.

Tragedy versus comedy carries a third element, irony. As Hosea is an ironic prophet we prefer to consider both ironies: comic irony and tragic irony, because on one hand the prophet experienced the real human tragedy through his broken marital bond (cf. Hosea 1-3), and on the other the same prophet became comic due to the fact that God called him to preach from his own imaginable marital tragedy (cf. Hosea 1:1-3). James Williams (1977: 51) notes: "The ironist, in this case the prophet of Israel, is one who experiences the pathos of the middle". In this context the prophetic message is ironic poetry. This ironic poetry, argues Williams (1977:51), is seen as indicative of the existential tension of the prophets and, above all, of the sense of being *caught* between God and the people, vision and reality, and between pretense and reality. Certainly, Williams (1977:51) is correct that there are grounds enough to pose the question whether irony is one of the significant features of prophetic speech and experience. This is because, in analyzing the text, it is remarkable that the end of irony (where human sense and comedy interact) is

necessitated by the divine pathos, as God needs a new Israel and must have a joyous ending (1977:51). If for God it is possible to perceive the joyous ending of the disastrous drama as the case of adultery committed by the spouse, this point of view seems to be unacceptable. It seems that the author, due to the strong resistance by the female against the oppressive male system, tried to manipulate the text in displaying the figure of man as a compassionate one. This effort of the author to induce ironically his audience to transcend the human limit of imagination and reverence is a matter full of serious psychological and theological issues. However, the author's tremendous effort to persuade people that, in spite of all the turbulence caused by the exile, the home remains the locus of revelation makes it important to determine how Hosea can be useful for sub-Saharan African people.

4.2.1 Hosea²¹⁰ and the sub-Saharan African Marital Homes as the Locus of Revelation

The sub-Saharan people and the people of Israel consider the community, and particularly the conjugal home, as the central part of human existence. This conjugal home is the locus of apprenticeship, refuge, relaxation, mutual conflict and self-acceptance; in the religious sphere, the conjugal home is also the locus of revelation. People think that the goodness and the punishment that anyone receives from the deity are displayed through life in the conjugal home. It may be for that reason that some prophets were impeded from organizing their marital homes. Maybe God would like, apart from the requirement of absolute dedication, to spare the prophets from some daily

²¹⁰ See also other prophets like Ezekiel 24: 15-27, Isaiah 8: 16-23 and 1Samuel 1-2. Here, the word home refers to a restricted family contrary to the idea of large African family, which includes relatives.

harassment and outside attacks. From the fall of mankind until the present time, the conjugal home is sometimes displayed as a locus in which tension and disaster are permanent among its members. Indeed, this occurs even to those whose parents and sons are involved in kingship, priesthood and prophetic ministry. Most of the time there is a serious conflict between what the parents believe in and what the sons reflect, in terms of character and *vice versa*. People and God also agree to reject this or that part and then opt for one or other locus of revelation. The case of Hosea exceeds the limit of human imagination in that the conflict is around what a husband and a spouse believe and what indeed both reflect in terms of ethics and morality. Hosea's home thus becomes, in some way, the display of the Adamic home, which can only be reconstructed in the eschatological time by Jesus and the church.

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel: When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD. (Hosea 1:1-2)

The five kings mentioned in the text above were in serious trouble with the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The trouble in those kingdoms was the display of the real dismantlement of homes. In many cases, most of these kings were unable to keep peace within their own homes. It is possible that the son of Ahaz's promise in Isaiah (Isaiah 7-11) could be a way that God wanted to make peace in the king's home, and consequently in the kingdom of Judah, due to the fact that the covenant was a display of God's pathos in relation to Israel and one of the *key-ideas* or the foundation of the whole theocratic

society of Israel. The continuity and the discontinuity of the existence of the society depended on the good mutual relationship between Israel and Yahweh.

The marriage of Hosea is, in a way, the display of a broken priesthood, prophetic and kingship institutions and an opportunity to restore the friendship between God and the people that has been destroyed. The marriage is in itself applaudable. However, concerning Hosea's marriage, Wolff prefers to agree with André Jolles (cf. Jolles in Wolff 1965: 57-58) that: "decisive, however, is the recognition that the passage belongs to the particular genre of memorable of symbolic action". Keil and Delitzsch (1968: 66-70), Rudolph (cf. Rudolph in Davies 1993: 80-84), Sherwood (1996: 203-216), Deissler (1984: 103-112), Harper (cf. Harper in Driver *et.al* 1936:252-279) and Andersen and Freedman (1980: 291-309) analyze the verses differently. However, for us the key word to solve the debate is חַיֵּי . This term חַיֵּי which means *once again* must be considered as the key-idea or permanent chance that the partners in dispute or conflict have, to reverse the chaos to order and to create and maintain constantly a new family. For that reason verse 3 of Chapter 3 of Hosea needs to be combined with another (cf. Hosea 3: 1-2), before being analyzed as Keil and Delitzsch (1968: 66-70), Tatford (1974:15, 29-45-52), Sherwood (1996: 203-216) and West (1996) have suggested. This is due to the fact that this symbolism is deeply ambiguous and extremely difficult to understand. For Bird (1989), Weems (1989), Setel (1985), Sherwood (1996), van Dijk-Hemmes (1989) and others, the difficulty with authenticating such a marital bond remains due to the way the author paints this kind of woman: Gomer. In fact, the Feminist allegation is understandable and also acceptable, but, for us, the problem is the kind of man that Hosea was, a man deprived of ideals, personality and identity.

Here, the question is: Was Hosea to be manipulated easily by someone, even if this was God, in order to satisfy God's *ego-centric* interest? The question is pertinent and the response depends on one's viewpoint. Hitherto, according to our understanding, the difficulty in deciding where one stands depends on whether one combines in an analogical or a tautegorical dimension. The difficulty is due to the fact that in a tautegorical dimension it does not matter whether we are comparing God and Hosea or Israel and Gomer. In this dimension Hosea and God, on the one hand, and Israel and Gomer on the other, simultaneously play the same role as a unique character, even if in their essence the distinction of this and that persona is still maintained. We have to recognize that such a way of interpreting biblical characters can sometimes cause dispute and trouble, because scholars or ordinary readers, all of us, are not prepared to imagine or think differently. However, in the actual context of religious and socio-political trouble and inversion of value, as it is in sub-Saharan parts of Africa, the shock could be minimized. The reason for minimizing a shock is that such a person as Hosea could be a prototype of most of the sub-Saharan black and white religious and socio-political leaders who are easily manipulated due to the poverty and weakness of ethical value. Also, Yahweh here is painted as one of the sub-Saharan African *spirits*, *which* present some kind of ethical embezzlement. In this case the strict sense of morality as it is defended in the Torah has sometimes to be ignored. Such a dilemma requires us to observe attentively the question of Hosea's marriage.

The LORD said to me, Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes. So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with

any man, and I will live with you. For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days. (Hosea 3)

From the text above (Hosea 3), the trouble in Hosea's conjugal home increased with a strange order from Yahweh. The familiar utterance לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ is replaced by the expression of pathos עוֹד לְךָ אֶהְבֵּב. The debate around this first verse is extensive and commentators are divided on this matter. From the sight of the first pair לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ , Keil and Delitzsch (1968: 27-32) approach the verse in connection to the second pair. Keil discovers that the significant pair לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ and עוֹד לְךָ אֶהְבֵּב are introduced again, but with a *fresh application*. This fresh *nouveauté*²¹¹ is hidden subtly in this verb אֶהְבֵּב and the audacity of resorting to memory justifies the fact of analyzing this verb in connection with כָּאֶהְבֵּבְתָ יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. Here the tremendous artistic capacity of the prophet becomes more and more evident and fascinating because it seems that the prophet represents the painting of an ancient history of great friendship and passionate encounter between Yahweh and Israel. The use, therefore, of the particle עוֹד means three things: . Firstly, Hosea's redemptive action, even if it does display a chauvinist attitude, confirms the fact that there is always an *again* with love (cf. James 1947: 242). Renard (cf. Renard in Decreus 1957: 93) justifies James's view by commenting that:

L' homme peut tout recréer par l' amour, Dieu l' a rendu capable d' amour, et Dieu veut n' être pas le seul à aimer. Il

²¹¹ New thing or new information.

veut un amour partagé, librement consenti et offert; en échange de cet amour, il donnera à l'homme la force de vaincre le monde à travers le Christ, dont l'amour est plus grand que l'amour créateur²¹².

If Renard (cf. Renard in Decreus 1957: 93) is right that “L'amour du Christ est plus grand que l'amour créateur”²¹³, then it is possible to think that Hosea transcends Christ due to his marital experience and perhaps this וְיָיִב expresses in the context of Hosea the true reason for his whole ministry. This idea could be correct because the second part of the verse seems to portray the decisive end of the popular quest concerning Hosea's vocation; secondly, the marital bond between Yahweh and Israel is done *par étapes*²¹⁴, as in the sub-Saharan African context (cf. Bujo in Balembo *et.al* 1987:90-91); thirdly, the scenario in which Yahweh met Israel is identical with the situation of Gomer. Who knows whether עֲבָדִים could not be a synonym of idols (cf. Andersen and Freedman 1980: 291-294; Keil and Delitzch 1968: 66-71)? is it not true that God violently snatched Israel and their ancestors from the idols? Indeed, as a man of an archaic society, Hosea has done nothing except to re-enact (cf. Eliade 1964:13) what Yahweh had already done. It is Yahweh, and not Hosea, who first transformed the adulterous behaviour into a tremendous vehicle of love. This display is not by Hosea but by Yahweh Himself. The critical text of Ezekiel 16 and the disturbance of the conjugal home of Joseph and Mary in the New Testament by Yahweh as an adulterous intruder serve as a base for our

²¹²Human being can create all things through love. God has made him capable of love and God does not want to be the only one who loves. He wants a shared love freely consented to given; in exchange for this love, God will give man the power to defeat the world through Christ, whose love is greater than this creative love.

²¹³ Christ's love is greater than God's.

²¹⁴ Step by step

argument. Interpreters of the texts like Ezekiel 16, Hosea 3 and, particularly, the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:18-24) try to conceal this reality by spiritualizing the flagrant case of adultery between Yahweh and Mary. But it is in a way a waste of time and those scholars and preachers have doubtlessly a difficult task to convince us.

Such apologetic work seems useless because Yahweh never said anything in the Bible about a guarantee that He had before taking such a risk. As a whole, any thoughtful reader will remark easily that God always struggles to get control of His pathetic relationship with human beings, and with Israel in particular. The silence is total in the whole sacred Scripture. We are persuaded that the second part of verse 3 (3b) is a tremendous cry of God's despair. God does not have a short and sleeping mind (λήθη), as is the case with human beings. God could thus not forget the sorrow that He endured during His time of commitment with Israel and their ancestors. Hence, in this verse, Yahweh finds in the person of Hosea the opportunity to meet an unexpected friend, interlocutor and, above all, a soothsayer. Therefore, from the same verse we suspect a possible lack of pathetic relationship between God and Israel. It is evident that God made a covenant with Israel, but does the idea of incorporating someone in the conjugal partnership necessarily imply love. Gomer's obsessive preference for other lovers מְאַהֲבָי , as is directly and coincidentally connected in the text with the key verb אָהַב , could be the way that the poet used to display the revolt of many women in Israel who felt used rather than loved? Here Andersen and Freedman (1980: 293) have a good perception: "There is no ending to assert that love conquers all". They (1980:293) proceed to say: "The story ends abruptly and unsatisfactorily at 3:3, perhaps because the hoped-for reconciliation was no more than a hope, a hope grounded in unquenchable

love, like Yahweh's love for Israel". But Rudolph (cf. Rudolph in Davies 1993: 84) asks what kind of love is represented by the treatment of women in v.3 and of Israel in v.4? From this verse, we suspect that such *unquenchable love*, as suggested by Andersen and Freedman, can become a pretext for Yahweh as the husband to impose such restrictions as a real oppressor. Indeed, such restrictions imposed by Yahweh on Israel make clear that Yahweh as a husband recognizes implicitly His weakness in loving, which in turn implies an acknowledgement of the extreme capacities of loving of idols. Andersen and Freedman (1980: 293) worked on the issue:

The discipline enforced in 3:3 is not the training of a bride, but the subjection and the purgation of the fallen wife. Although 3:3 could correspond to the incarceration supposed to be described in 2:8, and represent the implementation of that threat, we have proposed a somewhat different interpretation of 2:8, and caution once more against accommodating the two sections to each other. There is a separation between husband and wife in 2:8, whereas in 3:3 they are close to each other.

Contrary to Ewald (cf. Ewald in La Sainte Bible.1902. vol.xvii: 83), Wolff (1965); Rudolph (cf. Rudolph in Davies 1993: 80-81), Rowley (1956: 200-223), Hubbard (1993:84-104), Kunstmann (1983:19-20), Deissler (1972:129-136), Keil and Delitzch (1968:66-70) and Tatford (1974:8-28), Andersen and Freedman's (1980:241-309) explanation emphasizes some traces of hermeneutic connivance. Doubtlessly, there is in both texts the fact that the husband used a patriarchal and oppressive attitude to insist on his rights. What is worrying, above all, is the silence of Gomer; but who stopped her from raising her voice to start singing? Is Gomer really a victim only of metaphor, as Weems (1989: 87-104) puts it? Doubtlessly we would like to hear the voice of this woman, spouse and mother, because according to Brueggeman (1989:41): "The song not only

remembers, it also dreams and waits. Each time the women sing and dance the memory, they evoke in Israel all the sensitivities and hopes belonging to slaves on the brink of liberation”.

The poet seems thus unjust to Gomer and to the ancient sub-Saharan African culture. Such unfairness actually penalizes sub-Saharan African women. Women in Israel behaved as they did in the ancient sub-Saharan African context: they sang and danced. They were free persons of outgoing character and initiative²¹⁵. They were the tools of protest and liberation²¹⁶. In the text Gomer was a true prototype of the actual African sub-Saharan oppressed woman. Thus, in many cases, woman is not allowed to say anything against the oppressive patriarchal system. Unfortunately all the good initiatives in the text are also ascribed to male characters (cf. Andersen and Freedman 1980:293-4). In fact in the text (cf. Hosea 3) the male poet described negatively the figure of women. This male poet merits our reprehension and, due to such remarkable injustice, he became in a way indebted eternally to humanity and to all oppressed women, in particular. Besides, what could also bother any curious and honest reader is why the husband, whether He is God or not, experienced tremendous fear, especially at the point of using violence, intimidatory tricks and restrictive rule of freedom against his beloved spouse. The text (cf. Hosea 2-3) displays a profound and comic, tragic and ironic scenario. By using Hosea as His own display, it is possible that, ironically, God discovered the pathetic efficacy of the icon that He never had. He would learn to become the icon through Hosea. God found in Hosea then the opportunity to start the pathetic process of bringing together

²¹⁵ See for instance the case of matriarchy among Yorùbá and Bantu with some exception of the extreme patriarchalism found among the Baluba.

²¹⁶ See two remarkable examples: Miriam Makeba (South Africa) and Maman Eyenga (DRC).

His deity with our humanity, in spite of the ethical risk of breaking the exigency of Torah (cf. Jung 1973). Here God perhaps understood that only humanity (*imago dei*) could paradoxically attract as well as save humanity (*imago dei*). In fact, the incarnation of Yahweh in Hosea is a veritable pathetic encounter between the creator (*deus*) and His icon (*imago dei*). Perhaps Yahweh did it with the intention of learning how to attract to Himself this unsatisfied and prodigal spouse. From such experience God teaches us that there is a tremendous attractive power in the icon made by Him. Indeed, the prophets did not deny the power of idols; what they denied was the divine origin of such power (cf. Caravias 1992: 27). Yahweh recognizes humbly the limit of His pathos and, to overcome it, He had to imitate Baal. This paradoxical point could thus lead missionaries who are working in the sub-Saharan African region how to incorporate rituals and symbols of African traditional religions in African Christianity. In fact, when the Western explorers made the first contact with the native people of sub-Saharan Africa, the holders of biblical and ecclesiastic colonial powers pretended to underestimate the power of icons. They had been blinded due to their excess of zeal from recognizing the efficacy of the didactic role of icon found in many sub-Saharan African religions (cf. Dickson 1984: 50-53).

However, it is regrettable that Yahweh is always more flexible than many people who come to us with the Gospel of love. This colonialist attitude and practice caused serious damage to the Gospel, which still remains an outsider issue, though the pioneers of mission could humbly use several elements of similitude including icons, through which the Gospel of love could be transmitted without many mistakes. One of the theological incidents concerns the Christological issue. The Christological drama started when missionaries did not find a way of inserting Christ into sub-Saharan religious and

sociopolitical structures. The same drama became worse when the promoters of the Gospel incorporated into religious affairs an apartheid between Christ and our ancestors, on the one hand, and between Christ and sub-Saharan icons on the other. This fact created the radical distance between Christ (*imago dei*) and the sub-Saharan African religious statues (*imago hominis*) found in many traditional religious places. The question is whether the icons, repressed hitherto by the religious and sociopolitical oppressive classes, are valuable for the didactic proposed to communicate the message of love. The message of love that the prophet addresses to the religious and sociopolitical leadership classes through himself, as Yahweh's icon, is how to avoid the pathetic distance created by a false devotion to God and contempt of the oppressed. To respond, Hosea resorts to the conflicting text of his conjugal life:

So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.
(Hosea 3: 2-3)

It is evident that the pathos of distance and the contempt of the oppressed are expressed in this text (cf. Hosea 3:2-3) above. The statement *I bought her* highlights an oppressive male voice. The price of *fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley* shows how women in Israel suffered from serious psychological depression. To be sold means to become a slave or an object of male willing and feeling. Here Gomer represents the oppressed women of Israel and, as evidence, she easily accepted this insignificant amount as the price of her dowry (cf. Keil and Delitzch 1968: 55-72). The restriction in terms of liberty points out the terrible male practice and quasi-excessive patriarchal domination, noted above. In the face such a text, Nietzsche's approach to the pathos of

distance and the contempt of women's issues is constructive. Patton (1993: 23) takes

Nietzsche's view and comments as follows:

Nietzsche's understanding of the pathos of distance exposes not only that normative discourses assume a male subject, but also that they rely on constructing woman in a certain way. Man creates an image of woman as other in order to secure his corporeal identity. At a distance woman's difference is complementary and promises to affirm man's self-presence; in proximity her sameness heralds the death of the self. There is no exchange between man and his creditor, woman. Rather, woman's gift to man is his (impossible) self-certainty; the return for her investment is a contradictory corporeality suspended between virtue and shame. In so far as women fulfil this impossible role, as a man's other they uneasily embody these contradictory concepts without a place of their own. But, as I have argued, the operation of will to power is such that women's bodies also remain open to possibilities aside from those, which position them under man. The embodied meaning of woman is dispersed beyond virtue and shame, beyond the riddle of femininity Nietzsche tends to uphold.

It is evident that Nietzsche's understanding of the pathos of distance exposes not only that normative discourses assume a male subject. We think that Nietzsche's point of view is connected with the difficult task of upholding the damaged image of the woman, which is an ancient struggle that wisdom literature in Judah will endeavour to support without many satisfactory results after the exile. Hosea resorted to the male practice of dowry, which indeed is the negation of the Torah that gave pre-eminence to the female. This practice enlarges the distance of pathos between man and woman rather than reducing it due to the seed of tyranny it hides. Females in this system remain the object of male-dominant society. It is regrettable that in the text Hosea omitted to re-establish the genesis of the ideal matriarchal practice of the man leaving to join the female clan (cf.

Genesis 2:23-25 and Diop 1959:116-122). Perhaps, in the book of Hosea, the author could have changed the meaning of *groom's settlement marriage*, as one of the displays of an aspect of the covenant which was the marital bond based on the matriarchal system, and taken another route for his writing due the male pressure of his society.

4.3 The Covenant: The Basis of Prophetic Reconstruction of the New Perspective of Existence in Hosea and in sub-Saharan Africa Culture

Despite the male pressure in Hosea's society, which had the trend to break the entire covenant and particularly the marital one, a study of **בְּרִית** which engages with the complexity of the book of Hosea certainly raises an important question: What is the meaning and the nature of this **בְּרִית**? Farr (1958: 104) is right to say that the answer must be supplied from the prophecy as a whole. Speaking specifically of the nature of **בְּרִית**, Farr (1958: 104) states:

The covenant must be the marriage-bond between Yahweh and fallen Israel, broken as Gomer had broken her marriage vows to Hosea. For the prophet sees the story of his wife's infidelity *writ large* in the religion of his nation. The covenant, then, about which God speaks through Hosea is not only personal but also intimate.

The understanding of Farr (1958:103-4) of **בְּרִית** gives us the nature of this theological concept, which serves as the basis of an intimate relationship between Yahweh and Israel. How do people face this kind of intimacy? In opposition to the passionate tendency which tends to transform true love in the sphere of mere romance, in Hosea this intimacy

which is based on the **בְּרִית** is viewed as marital bliss and requires that sensuality be integrated into the process of the reciprocal formation of spiritual and mental forms (cf. Luhmann 1986: 120). Luhmann explains his idea by saying that: With what other concept according to the text is the **בְּרִית** related? Many scholars support the idea that **בְּרִית** is connected to **חֶסֶד**. If this is the case, which is the element that people had to give pre-eminence to between **בְּרִית** and **חֶסֶד**? Farr (1958:102-107) notes that God's **חֶסֶד** must be prior, for the covenant is the expression of His **חֶסֶד**. We remark that Farr's analysis is limited and he has fallen victim to his predecessors. He insists that we affirm that **חֶסֶד** is the key-idea of the book of Hosea. For us it is only one of the components of the triad **חֶסֶד-דַּעַת-אֱמֶת** and the key point of Hosea is indisputably **אֱהָבָה**. Indeed this **אֱהָבָה** is the central idea of the book of Hosea instead of **חֶסֶד**, as many interpreters think. Hosea is the Vetro-Gospel, written in the audacious form of poetry. In fact this **אֱהָבָה**, found in this Vetro-Gospel, transforms the concept of biblical covenant into the true pathetic **בְּרִית**, in spite of the fact that sometimes this true pathetic **בְּרִית** becomes an incomprehensible love, **אֱהָבָה**. Here our point of view coincides with Luhmann, because once this **אֱהָבָה** is established through the pathetic **בְּרִית**, the orientation towards the individuality of the partner was enhanced by means of this difference and, at the same time, came up against the limits of what could be preprogrammed by cultural codification (cf. Luhmann 1986: 120).

Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: There is no faithfulness, no love, and no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed... But let no man bring a charge, let no man accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest. You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother—my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. (Hosea 4:1-6)

From the text above, the fresh insight moves us to argue that **חֶסֶד** is really connected with two other elements **דַּעַת** and **אֱמֶת** (Hosea 4:1c) and that each interlaces with the others. These three elements express the concept of **בְּרִית**. Whether the **בְּרִית** is a synonym of the pathetic bond in which the triad **אֱמֶת-דַּעַת-חֶסֶד** is hidden, and whether the **בְּרִית** is a display of **אֱהָבָה**, once again we assert that it is not **בְּרִית** but **אֱהָבָה** which is really the highest utterance or the key-idea of vital dynamism between God and the whole of creation. This triad **אֱמֶת-דַּעַת-חֶסֶד** is one of the strophes of Hosea's revolutionary song. The actual sub-Saharan African world does not allow Hosea's revolutionary song, because the content of this song is against religious and sociopolitical pretension, oppression, idolatry and false ideology. However, against the deadliness of idolatry and the falsehood of ideology, Israel projects another world to reality. The subject in the text is neither the king nor the priest or prophet. The subject of Israel's song is Yahweh who works wonders on earth, wonders marked by justice, equity, and righteousness (cf. Brueggeman 1989: 159-160). Besides justice, equity and

righteousness, from the text (cf. Hosea 4: 1-6) we find the question for knowledge, which is one of the components of the triad referred to above.

The absence of knowledge (תֵּעָרָה) is a serious problem for the sub-Saharan African people. Here, we can perhaps risk saying that the sub-Saharan African problem is not due to the lack of human, natural or mineral resources but it is due to the lack of knowledge of Yahweh. This lack of תֵּעָרָה, which means the real interaction between Yahweh and sub-Saharan African people, is actually visible and it has serious inalienable repercussions in religious and socio-political spheres with the total absence of truth (אֱמֶת) and mercy (רַחֲמִים), which are the result of human rights abuse, corruption and war. While it is true that there is evidence in the Bible that Yahweh is also the God of Africa, it seems that the relationship between Yahweh and sub-Saharan African people has been altered and suffered some internal and external theological modifications. It is maybe these modifications that can be used as justification for the slave trade and the actual drama of sub-Saharan African people that missionaries were unable to change. This will be dealt with in the next chapter. Returning to the text, Hosea, as someone who understood the sub-Saharan African drama, denounces the absence of רַחֲמִים-תֵּעָרָה-אֱמֶת. It is possible to perceive that this prophetic denunciation causes us to agree with the observation of Brueggemann (1989: 159-160), when he observes that: “The outcome of Israel’s praise is another world marked by justice, mercy, and peace. Israel sings out of a long memory of transformation, out of a passionate hope for all things new”. From Brueggemann’s perception, בְּרִית is the synonym of אֱמֶת. This אֱמֶת becomes the

symmetric point between God, Mankind and Nature, but what happens when this point of symmetry is absent or displaced? The next section examines the essential three points, which are the consequences.

4.3.1 Rupture of the Covenant between God and Human Beings: The Theological Dimension of בְּרִית

The triad אֱמֶת-יְעֵת-חֶסֶד has the same equivalence as found in LXX or Vulgate. The difference is that the symbols which constitute the triad אֱמֶת-יְעֵת-חֶסֶד could never be a mere matter of speculation or debate. If this triad is a foundation of pathetic בְּרִית, as noted above, then the pathetic בְּרִית is the actual *space play*, displaying the true sense of existence or life. This life is based on אֱהָבָה which is the key idea of the book as we have already argued it. This is because the story of Israel, the dialogue, the dispute and even the testimony²¹⁷ of Yahweh and the people always turn around the maintenance and rupture of the covenant, in other words the crisis of אֱהָבָה. The breaking of the covenant in the Israelite context means the dilution of אֱהָבָה. That is why, in thinking about the pathetic interdependence between the בְּרִית and אֱהָבָה, Schenker (1994: 484) notes that:

La berît a deux fonctions: elle souligne d'abord la liberté, la spontanéité de l' adhesion; en second lieu la promesse librement assumée renforce l' obligation puisqu' elle a été

²¹⁷ We are indebted to Brueggeman because he is the first to suggest the use of this triad in the whole process of the history of Israel. See Brueggemann 1989: 159-160.

pleinement voulue en connaissance de cause. L' obligation n' a pas été imposée contre le gré d' Israel... la réponse à l' alliance avec Yahweh formulée par Israel²¹⁸.

Due to these two roles of **בְּרִית**, the God who is involved with human beings in Hosea in the form of a marital bond is not the apathetic God of the Greeks. He is extremely passionate and the poet in the book of Hosea portrayed Him as a mother and called Him: **אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּים**, Living God, the source of pathos and life. Life and death depend on how human beings would quench their thirst from this source²¹⁹. In the sub-Saharan African context this **אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּים** becomes more visible through the establishment of **בְּרִית**. This practice sometimes serves to exclude or to include extra members of the clan or tribe. For that reason **בְּרִית** sometimes means, paradoxically, apartheid²²⁰ which excludes the xenon and sometimes not apartheid²²¹ which includes the xenon. Therefore it is obvious that the latter concept of **בְּרִית** is more real and acceptable than the first in sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political spheres. We can thus once again think that there is a clear connection between the triad referred to above and the idea of **בְּרִית** in the sub-Saharan African context. Indeed for us **בְּרִית**, which is the display of **אֱהָבָה**, becomes thus the ethical basis which sustains the moral relationship between the Living God (**אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּים**) and human beings, including the dead. Here it is opportune to say that sub-Saharan people are different from Israelites. These sub-Saharan African people, due to the deep

²¹⁸ The berit plays two roles: Firstly, it underlines the question of freedom, spontaneity of adhesion. Secondly it concerns the aspect of the promise freely assumed which reinforces the obligation, because this berit was accepted knowing in advance the cause. The obligation of berit was imposed on the people of Israel by Yahweh...the response to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel formulated by Israel.

²¹⁹ See a profound study done by Bultmann 1965:1-19.

²²⁰ Tribal or ethnical exclusivity.

²²¹ Not clanical or not ethnical exclusivity

comprehension of the interaction of the Living God in their religious and socio-political life, believe in the eternity of אֱלֹהֵינוּ. God and people are eternal partners in the same way that the entities are, according to Whitehead (1979), Dombrowski (1995) and Cloots (1978). Kimball (1979), like others theologians, finds a tremendous incoherence in our way of thinking; but in spite of this, we think that such theological comprehension of בְּרִית establishes without doubt a clear equality in dialogue and partnership. In the case of Israel such comprehension became more and more clear only after the exile (cf. Genesis 18: 16-33, Hosea 13: 14, Zechariah 3, Isaiah 38, Job1: 1-8, 1 King 22: 19-23, 2 and Maccabees 7:7-14,12:38-44) and in the time of Jesus (cf. John 15:13-15). This new comprehension of eternal partnership fits in with the sub-Saharan African tautegorical comprehension of בְּרִית. If we can grasp what Hosea means by בְּרִית as a post-exilic text, we can say that Hosea introduced new religious and socio-political life to his contemporaries. It is for that reason that in Hosea the pathetic ethic which is based on pathos, transcends the legalist sphere produced by the false understanding and interpretation of the Torah for becoming the indispensable home (source) and the way of maintaining existence (cf. Hosea 2-3). What is really represented in the text is the use of אֵין as a particle of negation, וְאֵין־חֶסֶד וְאֵין־דַּעַת (cf. Hosea 4: 1). The use of this particle in front of each element of the triad finds its concordant resonance in this verse לֹא־אֶהְיֶה וְאֵנֹכִי (cf. Hosea 2: 8) and expresses the idea of total mutual alienation or the negation of vital dynamism. Putting this verse in the context of בְּרִית , Verse 8 of Chapter 2 of Hosea is obscure and it is extremely difficult, as most scholars agree. However, in spite of such difficulties of interpretation, a fresh approach can move us to think from the sub-Saharan African perspective that this verse may be expressing

the idea of the drying-up of Yahweh as the source of pathos. This is absurd and unacceptable for sub-Saharan African people, who still believe in the eternity of בְּרִית . If this rupture happens, as Hosea has suggested, then what will be the consequence? The consequence is that Yahweh becomes Baal or *Untu*²²² and for the people of עַמִּי בְּרִית (my people), this people become לֹא עַמִּי (not my people). Thus, contrary to גִּוִי, the word עַם is used to distinguish between the pagans and the Israelites. This is very comprehensible for the people of sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, from 1960 until the present, and particularly with the end of apartheid, the meaning of the word עַם changes in the sub-Saharan African context. We now have to include white and black, coloured and Indian. With the end of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, the social *berit* took another dimension and affected the religious and socio-political sphere. There is a significant change in the opinions of people and we hope that with tragic events such as Rwanda's and Burundi's genocide, and the end of the tyrannical dictatorship in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the people of sub-Saharan Africa should understand that the time of supporting black apartheid is over.

Now what is the role of the particle of negation לֹא found in the text? This particle of negation intervenes to mean that the breaking of the covenant opens the door for the people to go in search of a pathetic encounter with other partners. The absence of בְּרִית , as expressed by the negative particle לֹא , means in a way a religious and sociopolitical disease. The opportunity for healing the religious and sociopolitical classes is appointed

²²² An object or something.

by the expression **וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה**, which means the obligatory re-encounter of the prodigal human being with the inseparable partner, the prodigal God who, paradoxically, is the source of life and a doctor. In many religious spheres of sub-Saharan African people, sacrifice is used as the way to perpetuate eternally the friendship between God and human beings.

4.3.2 Rupture of the Covenant between God and Human Beings themselves: The Sociological Dimension of **בְּרִית**

There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery;
they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
(Hosea 4:2)

Making the contrast between Amos and Hosea, G.F. Moore (1948:176) states that:

The God of Amos is the apotheosis of right, the conscience of the world that can neither be corrupted nor sophisticated; the God of Hosea was born in the heart of a man whose love the grossest wrongs do not quench. Retribution is divinity of the one, redemption of the other.

Farr (1958: 98) comments that Amos' emphasis on righteousness is contrasted with Hosea's doctrine of love; but how can love stand without righteousness? In a way, is righteousness not a display of loving awareness? It is evident that in Amos there is more emphasis on justice than on love, even though both concepts are intimately interconnected. From the text (cf. Hosea 4:2), we observe that the break of **בְּרִית** implies social disorder and disruption, thus dehumanization, as has been largely observed

above. The absence of אֱהָבָה , which is the anchor of בְּרִית אֱהָבָה, leads to unrighteousness. The source of people's ethical behaviour as וְכַחַשׁ וְרָצַח וְגַבַּח וְנָאֵף , cited in the text, seems to express the antithesis of the triad אֱמֶת-דִּיעַת-חֶסֶד , the implications of which in the sociological dimension are not negligible. Here we observe thus the reverse, because the symmetric point of the triad אֱמֶת-דִּיעַת-חֶסֶד (1) is of אֱהָבָה , which implies life, but which is now replaced by another element in the polynomial אֱלֹהִים וְכַחַשׁ וְרָצַח וְגַבַּח וְנָאֵף (2). This element is death. It is evident that in the context of our debate death implies things like a total and mutual alienation and dehumanization. Whether what we are thinking is true or not, we can say that the polynomial אֱלֹהִים וְכַחַשׁ וְרָצַח וְגַבַּח וְנָאֵף (3) serves in the text as the *leitmotiv* for the defense of political interests to the detriment of the poor, oppressed and marginalized people in the religious and sociopolitical sphere of life. Deel Arrudo (1969: 80) observes that:

A politica nada tem de commun com a moral. O governo que se deixa guiar pela moral não é politico e, portanto, seu poder é frágil. Aquêlê que quer reinar deve recorrer à astúcia e hipocrisia. As grandes qualidades populares – franqueza e honestidade – são vícios na política, porque derrubam mais os reis dos tronos do que o mais poderoso inimigo²²⁴.

Deel Arrudo (1969: 78) proceeds to conclude that: “Por isso a moral, que constitui um elo nas relações entre o homem e o Ser Supremo, é posta fora do campo das artes, da

²²³ Cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery.

²²⁴ There is no link between politics and morality. The government that is led according to moral rules is not a political party and its power is consequently weakened. The person who would like to rule has to use

economia e da política”²²⁵. In fact, in the text, the verb פָּרַצוּ expresses the tendency of human beings to extrapolate the moral limit. This extrapolation leads to the maximal exploitation of their partners. The blood, which is the totem of בְּרִית , serves thus to save lives in (1), and becomes in (2) the symbol of בְּרִיתִים בְּרִיתִים (cf. Johnson 1964:70)²²⁶ which means death and oppression or the tremendous display of breaking bonds (v.2c). This spiral of violence does not, however, spare the religious and sociopolitical people from such a practice, as Wolff (1965: 68) notes: “Those who are intent on living their life in violence against their neighbors must learn that in bringing death to others they are bringing terrible consequences upon themselves (cf. Hosea 4: 9; Hosea 5: 5)”. The world of בְּרִיתִים בְּרִיתִים is a world where there is a rupture of alliances. We have already demonstrated that for people in the sub-Saharan African context, the alliance is eternal and the sacrifice is what people use to re-establish this when a momentary break or discontinuity happens. Thinking about the idea of discontinuity and continuity of alliance in Israel, Theil (1970:217) notes that Hosea is the first to introduce this theology in Israel; but we disagree because the establishment of בְּרִית is a paradoxical event. Though בְּרִית reveals the willingness for partnership, it carries in itself, paradoxically, the possibility of rupture or continuity. The catastrophe or the continuity of history dovetails continuously, because, contrary to the actual historic thought which emphasizes the freedom of human being, we think that the establishment

cunning and hypocrisy. The great popular qualities like frankness and honesty are considered as vices in politic which is why they remove more kings from their thrones than do more powerful foes.

²²⁵ For that reason moral rules that could be a basis of a link between human relationship and Supreme Being are missed in arts, economy and politics.

²²⁶ He argues that: “Indeed the simple term is often used symbolically for violent or premature death; and this is especially true of the plural, which is employed by itself to denote not only shed blood but also even the guilt arising from such bloodshed. Hence any shedding of blood from within or outside the social unit is a responsible matter involving some form of retaliation.”

of בְּרִית between God-Mankind-Nature is metahistorical (cf. Shapiro 1975 vol 15/1-2: 25-47; Hall 1985 vol 25/4: 254-263; Chapman 1976 vol 21/3: 251-264; Heinz 1970. vol 41/6: 360-365; Inchody 1993 vol 18/3: 333-339; Cazelles 1982 vol 33/1-2: 133-144 and Ruether 1978. vol 95/38: 1129-1132). This becomes concrete and is always upgraded in history. Israel was only the display in miniature of this mystery, which, indeed, involves the entire cosmos.

4.3.3 Rupture of the Covenant between God and Human Beings and Cosmos: The Ecological Dimension of בְּרִית

It is evident not only from the ancient people but also from the Israelites that the question for בְּרִית is skilfully linked to the cosmos. Bastos (1991: 36) emphasizes such a triadic and pathetic interaction in the triad *Theos-Anthropos-Cosmic*'s reality: "Os três formam a tríade teo-antropo-cosmogônica ou o triângulo simbólico e complementar. E das inter-relações das três partes constitutivas do triângulo conclui que se efectua a ocultação do divino e, em consequência, o aparecimento do homem e do mundo"²²⁷. Bastos (1991: 92) is closer to the sub-Saharan African theology and philosophy (cf. Tshishiku 1980: 62-63; Nyom in Angang 1983: 127-135; Altuna 1985:62-92). He interprets the breaking of בְּרִית as a result of a catastrophe or a tragedy that happens in the triangle of complementarity, of which the points are *Theos-Anthropos-Cosmos*. Bastos (1991:37) proceeds by saying that:

²²⁷ The three points represent a kind of theo-anthropo-cosmogonic triad or the symbolic and complementary triangle, and the interactions of the three constitutive parts of the triangle conclude that inside of this the

No triângulo complementar e simbólico ocorre uma catástrofe, pela qual se determina a teocriptia cosmoantropogônica. O deus-projeto de homem e mundo oculta-se, todo ele, no mundo e no homem. Mas o deus occulto a eles, mundo e homem, impregna-os de divindade²²⁸.

What happens when this catastrophe occurs? Hosea foresees the catastrophe through the paradoxical perspective of a new exile or death, as well as a new liberation or living. For him, after such catastrophe, Yahweh will send the people into exile and it will be the same Yahweh who will raise them up from the death and restore the ecological balance. This is because, according to Hosea, *human being disorder* means *land disorder*. Eudoro de Sousa (1988) and Bastos (1992) agree with Hosea in their imaginative response to the prophet. As philosophers and modern prophets, both are not interested in the issue of **ἁμαρτία** or sin which carries on into exile or catastrophe. However, as Neher (1955:223) has done before them, de Souza and Bastos recognize the positive tautegorical role of catastrophe, although they prefer to point optimistically to the new event or the event after the exile. Bastos (1992: 42-43, 83-88) observes: “Depois de catástrofe, o deus occulto no homem e no mundo penetra-os, impregna-os na divindade”²²⁹. The question is how human beings can avoid the catastrophe? Eudoro de Souza and Bastos suggest that it is knowledge (*connaissance*), which can help human beings escape from the catastrophe. On the other hand, Neher (1955: 223) perceives the response in the proper words of the prophet:

process of occultation of divine occurs and, consequently, the appearance of human being as well as the appearance of the world.

²²⁸ Generally a catastrophe happens into a complementary and symbolic triangle which determines a kind of cosmoanthropogonic hiding of God (theocriptia). The god-project of both human being and world occult itself behind both human being and the world. But this god who is occulted behind human being and the world, also embodies them by his divine nature.

²²⁹ After the catastrophe, the god, which is hidden in human being and in nature, penetrates into them as well as impregnates them (human being and nature) in the sphere of divinity.

Cependant, plus qu'Amos, Osée a ressenti et exprimé ce qu' il y avait de mystérieux dans la liaison entre la catastrophe et le salut. Ce prophète a été éminemment pathétique. Sa sensibilité vibrante s'est laissé pénétrer par les secrets de l' intention divine. Il sait que le mouvement qui mène vers le salut est une interprétation à rebours, un renversement intérieur du mouvement de la catastrophe, et il perçoit qu' il y a dans ce retour, dans cette *teshouva*, mystérieux paradoxe²³⁰.

William Wade Harris, John Swatson, Sampson Oppong, Joseph Babalola, in West Africa; Simon Kimbangu or Simão Toko in Central Africa and Isaiah Shembe in Southern Africa shared similar experiences to Amos and Hosea, as Hebga (cf. Hebga in Angang *et.al* 1983: 74-75); Bediako (2000: 6-7) and Martin (1971:57) recognized. For these sub-Saharan African prophets, and others who are not mentioned, the fact of counting backwards to the sub-Saharan ancestral form of worshipping the real Living God was the import of their revolutionary song. Jennings and Hillard (cf. Jennings and Hillard in Martin 1971: 57) comment that: "Kimbangu wants to found a religion which is in accord with the mentality of the African, a religion which contains the characteristics of Protestantism but with the addition of practices taken from fetishism". Kimbangu's view is what Shembe and others thought. From this prophetic view, the paradoxical mystery of שׁוֹבָה is explained by the use of certain rites in sub-Saharan African religions. Martin (1971: 56) regretted that this prophetic view was misunderstood from the beginning, when she asserts: "Unfortunately, protestant missionaries in Ngombe-Lutete were unable to view the phenomenon in this way, just as the missionaries in South Africa were unable at first to understand the upsurge of prophetic movements". Martin (1971: 56) thus

²³⁰More than Amos, Hosea felt and expressed the mystery that was in the connection between the catastrophe and the salvation. This prophet was to a high degree full of pathos. His sensibility was delicate enough to rescue the secrets of divine intention. He knows that the movement, which leads to salvation, is a contrary interpretation, an internal reversal of the movement of catastrophe and he is aware that this reversal, in this *teshouva*, there is a mystery paradox.

concludes that: “The crucial thing is ultimately not the phenomenon itself but the faith which is expressed in it”. Though religious and sociopolitical leaders, and particularly missionaries, still perceive the danger in this counting backward to the ancestral form of worshipping Yahweh, we prefer to insist on the need for exploring the mechanism of faith which is hidden in this religious and sociopolitical movement. It is this mysterious faith that is the key for understanding how to maintain the balance between the religious and sociopolitical catastrophe and the new religious and sociopolitical order which is guaranteed through perpetual rites and sacrifices. Such faith, rites and sacrifices have taken another form in Hosea: the incarnation. Due to this incarnation, Hosea becomes, besides the fact of being the true incarnation of *Ubuntu*, the point of equilibrium of the triad *God-Mankind-Nature* in which the catastrophe, and the new order, occurs simultaneously (cf. Hosea 2-3).

Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away, the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying. (Hosea 4:3)

From the prophetic lament referred to in the text above, we can anticipate the ecological catastrophe that the religious and sociopolitical **ἀμαρτία** can generate due to the break of the balance in the triad: *Theos-Anthropos-Cosmos*. This *amartialogic* approach to the question of ecological catastrophe seems important. Keil and Delitzch (1968: 75) say:

These words affirm not only that the inanimate creation suffers in consequence of the sins and crimes of men, but also that the moral depravity of men causes the physical destruction of all other creatures. As God has given to man the dominion over all beasts, and over all the earth, that he

may use it for the glory of God; so does He punish the wickedness of men by pestilence, or by devastation of the earth.

Wolff (1965: 68) comments: "It is noticeable that the judgment results not from the direct actions of Yahweh himself, but from an *organic structure* of order, a sphere in which one's actions have fateful consequences resulting from a *synthetic view of life*". Wolff's thought is not strange to sub-Saharan African people, because their traditional societies are generally peaceful and stable. They live in harmony not only with others but also with the natural environment, including wildlife (cf. Ayittey 1998: 15). From Ayittey's point of view, it is noticed that two paths could be grasped: firstly, the reality that sub-Saharan African peoples seek to live peacefully with nature, instead of a polemical stand on one side and a polarization between nature and mankind on the other. This ecological conscience of sub-Saharan African people coincides with the interpretation of Biblical issues from a tautegorical perspective, rather than from the current analogical one. From a tautegorical perspective, biblical interpretation treats nature, as a partner and, above all, nature itself operates as a powerful medium of God's presence or absence (cf. Ruether 1978: 1131). It is in a prophetic approach to nature that the biblical vision is drawn from the sub-Saharan African one, as Ruether (1978:1131) points out:

The prophetic vision neither treats nature in a romantic way nor reduces it to a mere object of human use. Rather, it recognizes that human interaction with nature has made nature itself historical. In relation to humanity, nature no longer exists "naturally," for it has become part of the human social drama, interacting with humankind as a vehicle of historical judgment and sign of historical hope. Humanity as a part of creation is not outside of nature but within it.

Due to the mysterious vital dynamism that exists in the triad: *Theos-Anthropos-Cosmos*, the notion of ecology for sub-Saharan African people suggests that they must re-immense God and humanity in nature, so that they can once again interact with nature as spiritual kin, rather than as an enemy to be conquered or an object to be dominated (cf. Ruether 1978:1130). From such a view of nature, the model of development for sub-Sahara African countries requires more attention to be paid to the environment than is being paid by the West. Unfortunately, such preoccupation starts too late and the question is whether sub-Saharan African people are a truly ecologically balanced people. In response we wonder about the truth of it, given that, as defended above by Ayyitey (1998: 15), it is probably a matter of the remote past. We suspect some trends towards misreading the actual sub-Sahara African societies from the perspective of the traditional ones in Ayitney's (1998: 15) writings, because we sometimes feel very embarrassed about justifying the tragedy of the Negro's departure to America and other lands. It is known that from the tragic time of the Mau Mau and Tippu Tip to the actual sub-Saharan African tragedy, the slave trade and even neo-colonialism is linked with the destruction of spiritual, human and natural resources. Ayitney prefers to defend his view, insisting that the ancient sub-Saharan African people were peaceful. Thus the question is, if those societies really were peaceful how can the slave trade be justified? Or how can we face the actual practice of slavery as it happened in the western parts of sub-Saharan Africa? It is evident that Ayitney is not a theologian. We have a doubt concerning the pre-existence of such *shalom* balance because the slave trade, colonialism and at the end a cruel neocolonialism are linked with the ecological issue. In the Bible and in the sub-Saharan African mentality, there is an essential interdependence between each element of the triad: *Theos-Anthropos-Cosmos*. The breaking of this triad is doubtlessly the cause of what actually happened in the sub-Saharan African context, which we have faced daily

from 1960, i.e. total degradation of people's lives, poverty, social oppression, war, ethnic hostility, land conflict and the large devastation of nature, which express this violation of the **בְּרִית**. We know that dehumanization and devastation of nature are profoundly linked together in the Biblical vision as parts of one covenant (cf. Ruether 1978:1132). In the sub-Saharan African tautegorical point of view, which coincides with the biblical one, the raping of nature and the exploitation of people in society are profoundly understood as part of one reality, creating disaster in both (cf. Ruether 1978:1132), and in God. The text cited below can be seen from an ecological restoration point of view, as well as the Israelite national one.

I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon.
(Hosea 14:4-7)

Indeed this moves us to agree with Wharton (1978: 83), as he states that: "Human life marked by the concrete expressions of God's love, justice, and wholeness discloses, from the human side, the heartbeat of the universe". What Wharton would like to emphasize in a way is that human life is connected with God and with nature or *vice versa*. This interdependence determines the true sense of shalom. Therefore, when that shalom is complete, as the consequence of the genuine **שְׂוֵה**, then nature itself, the land, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea will participate in the single cosmic echo of praise, as Wharton (1978: 83) thinks. Therefore, in such a context, man

and woman become the true fellow of both: the divine and nature (cf. Shapiro 1975.vol. 15/1-2:28). In support of this Irwin (1977: 231), comments:

Such then, was the Hebrew view of the nature of the world. At its center there sat enthroned as a being of unutterable greatness and holiness, which were at once its creator and sustainer. But Israel never went the distance of abstracting this One into a cold and remote absolute. The *I-Thou* relation in which primitive man saw his natural environment was maintained, no, rather, was sublimated, in Israel's faith: the world was to be understood in terms of personality. Its center and essence was not blind force or some sort of cold, inert reality but a personal God. And for them personality meant the sort of concept that they, and we, in turn, apply to human nature.

Here Irwin accepts Ruether's perception of the matter. Both, including most of the pioneers of sub-Saharan African theology (e.g. Mulago, Tshishiku, Mveng, Kwesi, Danquah...), move us to recover ancient animism's *I-Thou* relationship with nature, rather than the *I-It* relation of Western religion, in which we can recover the principal root of harmony with nature that has been destroyed by Biblical religion and its secular step-children (cf. Ruether 1978: 1130). The actual religious and sociopolitical crisis, displayed through ecology, must be faced as a break of the covenant involving "God-Mankind-Nature". The future biosphere balance of this part of the African continent will depend on the way that the immense geological reserves found in Cameroon and Congolese equatorial forest and rivers will be protected. Whether sub-Saharan African people can do it, the Sahara and Kalahari dramas must be avoided. In terms of religious and socio-political stability, Wharton (1978: 83) observes that the triad: **דְּעַת-תְּסֻדָּה** **אֱמֶת** is what maintains the pathetic balance of which the symmetric point is love with 'God-Mankind-Nature' (cf. Hosea 14:4). In fact the view of Wharton (1978: 83) can be

one of the ways for understanding in a macrocosmic vision the context of the crisis in sub-Saharan Africa.

There are many cases of inter-ethnic or inter-racial conflicts²³¹. Besides this sociopolitical conflict, the quest for the ecology raises another issue of how people can balance their actual mere contemplative attitude in relation to nature that limits them to produce just what they need for their survival. What people can do is to become involved in a real and aggressive engagement to create a necessary space or environment for empowering true religious and socio-political developments. What can also be done is to create in the mind of sub-Saharan people a way of balancing their contemplative world with real daily events. We suspect that, in a way, the maintenance of the extreme worship of nature benefits the dominant religious and socio-political classes and it is perpetuated by the actual leadership class, which indeed egotistically exploits these diverse resources, to the detriment of the fervent devotees of nature. To challenge the paradoxical state of superstition and avarice, we have to cultivate the sub-Saharan African conscience as a people, and for that we think that the religious and sociopolitical leadership classes have to be engaged on the behalf of poor, women and the marginalized, in order to demystify the idols highlighted behind nature. Fear, circumspection and clever conformity to natural elements are the real keys to human survival. Outsiders who, in the name of progress, mishandle the maintenance of the eco-system break the pathetic balance in the sub-Saharan African context due to excessive exploitation.

²³¹See, for instance the struggle between Xhosa and Zulu (cf. Schlemmer 1983), Hutu and Tutsi in the Great Lakes (cf. Ndarubagiye 1996; Mamdani 1997; Ayittey 1998: 54-7,59,151,272,346 and 354), Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá (cf. Ayittey 1998:102-105), Ashanti and Akan (cf. Ayittey 1991: 42-44, 60-71,80,135, 212 and 32), Ndebele and Shona (cf. Colquhoun 1969), Afrikaners and British (cf. Ayittey 1991: 91-92), Black and White (cf. Le May 1971).

The prophetic claim in favour of these religious and sociopolitical sub-Saharan African slaves coincides with what Wolff (cf. Wolff in Gerstenberger 1981: 240) has already said: “Em favor do homem Amado, mas escravizado, o mundo precisa ser desmitificado e a humanidade liberta dos idolos de poder”²³². The question is what is required for sub-Saharan African people as a whole, and their religious and socio-political leadership class, to be free? According to Wharton (1978: 80), what is required is the courage and hope that can send individuals and communities the real willingness to defend the oppressed. To succeed, the oppressed have to plunge themselves into a kind of anarchical behaviour with respect to relationships, fidelity and devotion. However, we have already remarked that the claim for the eco-system is connected with the tragedy of human beings. As nature cannot raise its voice, we think that the voice of oppressed nature coincides in the sub-Saharan African context with the claim of the oppressed in Hosea. If what we are thinking is true, then we can say that Wharton (1978: 80), sharing Wolff’s view, identifies with us when he concludes that: “The very claim to relationship expressed here in the form of a horrendous indictment, discloses the presence in and behind human affairs of him who has other intentions for human life”.

4.4 Gomer: A Challenge for the Problematic Daughter, Spouse and Mother in the sub-Saharan African context

They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away the understanding of my people. They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are

²³² In favour of loved and fellow human beings, but enslaved, nature has to be demystified and all mankind have to be free from the idols of power.

unfaithful to their God. I will not punish your daughters when they turn to prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery, because the men themselves consort with harlots and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes — a people without understanding will come to ruin. (Hosea 4: 10-14)

We have tried to see how the covenant is used as a basis for the prophetic reconstruction of a new perspective of existence in Hosea. There is no place where the breaking of the covenant can become more visible than in the conjugal home between husband and spouse or parents and children. It is possible to imagine that in Hosea, adultery, rape, incest and similar practices are part of people's daily lives. Verse 13 of chapter 4 leads us to understand and to have a real picture of the behaviour of the daughters-in-law. The text is silent but who can guarantee that בְּאִרְיָ did not sleep with גְּמֹרָה, and also with the mother, or who can assert without doubt that דְּבָלָיִם did not sleep with Hosea's sisters and mother? It is perhaps possible that the poet's intention of keeping the names of the mothers anonymous is due to their extremely degrading moral reputation. It is true that, according to the text, the word זְנוּנִיּוֹת, which is deduced from the expression זְנוּנִיּוֹת וְרִיבָה, has two meanings: false worship (cf. Hosea 4: 11-12) and also illicit and deliberate sexual relationships (cf. Hosea 4: 13-14). In fact, in Hosea, the latter is the consequence of the former and both interact with each other. Wolff (1965: 85) is right in saying that: "Hosea, in speaking of a spirit of harlotry, views the guilty persons directly in the light of their own actions. As an infecting, seductive power, this spirit makes all of Israel incapable of finding its way, so that they go a-whoring away from their God." The question is what is the origin of such a spirit that the people were ascribing to? Von Rad (1967: 112) recognizes the difficulty in solving this enigma. Davies (1993: 52-92)

approach differs from that of Keil and Delitzsch (1968:72-91); and Landis (cf. Landis in Jarick 1995:53-72), Snaith (1953) and Knight (1960: 67-69). All those scholars prefer to comment on the entire pericope rather than to respond specifically to such a question. Then, contrary to such an approach, Wolff (1965: 85) audaciously argues that “Hosea does not conceive of the spirit of whoredom proceeding from Yahweh, nor, on the other hand, does he assume that it is an independent spiritual being. Instead, this spirit is embodied in the priesthood, making them guilty”. But in this *Weltanschauung*, where the good and the evil or, in other words, the profane and the sacred are inseparably and fatally connected with Yahweh (cf. Job and Isaiah), how can the people tell the difference between what is sacred and what is profane? It seems that this distinction came after the exile (cf. 1 Kings 22: 18-23; Job1: 1-8, Zechariah 3).

For that reason the text (cf. Hosea 4: 10-14) becomes more of a tremendous exegetical and hermeneutical piece of unexplainable social trauma. It is hard to admit that Hosea possibly practised such religious acts. There is no way to defend the prophet. This man was as ignorant as others. If what we are thinking is true, it is possible to suspect that it is due to the misunderstanding of the Torah by the priests, and consequently the people. The prophet, as a poet, after being called by Yahweh, accepted the challenge to break against any expectation of silence, demystifying the sexual *taboo*. Unfortunately Hosea’s prophetic drama was to display at large through his personal experience the painful case of adultery, fornication and incest, prohibited hitherto by laws in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, but which were faced as some of the crucial practices of Yahweh-service. What is painful and inexplicable is the fact that Hosea condemns these abominable practices, but practises the same crimes. Then what is really meant by the sin referred to

in Hosea 4: 10-14? Harper (cf. Harper in Driver *et.al* 1936: 258) comments that: “The sin referred to here is a part of the Baal cult which the Israelite priests have introduced into the Yahweh-service. According to this, every woman was required to prostitute herself once in the temple with a priest”. In opposition to this popular belief that the people had, the prophet had the heavy task of denouncing it and, above all, pointing out the fact that such practice was not the key-idea of Yahwism, as the oppressive and corrupted priesthood class presented it. From the text, it is evident that Hosea ascribed such religious and sociopolitical collapse to two causes: misunderstanding of the partnership between Yahweh and the people and the alienation, marginalization and total dehumanization of women, leading to the loss of their identity as human beings and their becoming mere objects of man’s selfish, proud and sexual auto-satisfaction. We can grasp some impressions of male resistance in the text; but the right of women is protected: *Non visitabo*²³³. Jerome (cf. Jerome in Trochon 1902: 41) commented on Yahweh’s support of the women in spite of their practices:

Absque ulla vindicta in scelere suo relinquuntur, In tantum iratus est Deus, ut nequaquam percutiat delinquentes. Qui amatur corripitur; qui negligitur suis peccatis dimittitur. Tantusque fuit numerus fornicationum Israel, ut cesset ultio desperans emendationem.²³⁴

At first sight it is true that Israel here means spouse, but the critique, as formulated, is addressed against the patriarchal class, which is supposed to instruct the family in the right way. Hence, from the cultic perspective, the fact of worshipping the wooden idol

²³³No punishment or not guilty. It comes from the text: “I will not punish your daughters when they turn to prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery”. (cf. Hosea 4: 14)

²³⁴ So great is the angry of God, but He did not strike at all delinquents. He who is chided, He who loved sinners and He who neglected and moved away his sins. So great were numerous the sins of Israel that His vengeance and desperation were not able to correct Him.

implies the breaking of a relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel. However, if, in Hosea 4:14 the woman really is the victim of the oppressive and patriarchal class, then the poetic voice emerged with rare intensity in challenging the male voice. Once again, contrary to the slogan of chauvinism, the author ascribes to the men the cause of moral weakness and social decadence. Our intention is not to spare the women, but it is clear in the text that the poet subtly introduces through this revolutionary song the end of patriarchal domination. It will be difficult to re-establish and sustain it further.

To insist on his new ideology, the prophet advocated, with tremendous liveliness, that the practice of incest is a religious and social disturbance. Many scholars defend the idea that דֹּוֹן is the key-idea in Hosea, or even the basis of all creation (cf. Shapiro 1975: 25). Contrary to this most supported opinion, we maintain that אֶהְבֵּהָ of רַעֲיָה ²³⁵ is the key-idea of the book and above all the basis of all creation. This πλαησίον can be God, nature or our fellow person but never a wooden idol (בַּעֲצוֹן) or a stick of wood (מִקֵּלָיו)²³⁶, which symbolizes the absence of pathetic or vital dynamism. For this reason, it is evident that only the absence of אֶהְבֵּהָ , which indeed means of בְּרִית אֶהְבֵּהָ (cf. Cazelles 1982:136-137), and is displayed through the pathetic trinomial $\text{אִמָּת-דַּעַת-חֹסֶד}$, can move any man to sleep with his own daughter and daughter-in-law. If what we defend is

²³⁵ πλαησίον or Nearest kin.

²³⁶ Cf. *suo ligno* in Vulgate.

true, then Hosea emerges as a veritable gospel of the Old Testament instead of Isaiah, as scholars hold. If we also look at the trauma caused to women by religious and socio-political orders, we will believe that this gospel is the urgent cure that the leadership class needs to heal their chronic diseases of oppression, corruption and immorality. Other dramatic cases, such as in Angola, Nigeria, Togo, Liberia, Guinea, Cameroon, Tanzania, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa and, above all, the Democratic Republic of Congo, are not left out. In the DRC President Mobutu Sese Seko had to sleep with the daughters and spouses of his government ministers due to the so-called friendship of blood based on the free *chiasmus* of mother, daughters and spouses. These leaders sacrificed their daughters, spouses, and offered even their mothers, on the altar of *primacuria*²³⁷, as a reward for a religious and socio-political *status quo*. According to diverse editions of Jeune Afrique, published especially in the 1980s, Jean Bedel Bokassa and Idi Amin Dada used the same practice to strengthen their religious and socio-political powers. Some independent sources ascribed the same facts to many other sub-Sahara African leaders. Still concerning the worship of the religious and socio-political idol of power, flagrant cases are seen in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and the DRC.

In Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana the leadership class strictly follows the path instituted by Nkrumah, which is based on the cult of personality and the use of dictatorship. In the DRC (formerly Zaire), Mobutu who was called Sese Seko, which means eternal, mapped a supplementary objective. With his emphasis on power, he broke one of the

²³⁷ This is the religious and socio-political sect belonging to the former president of Zaire (now the DRC) and involving many people, including many foreigner leaders. To strengthen their power the members of this sect used diverse forms of sexual seductions, incest, adultery, etc. It seems that this sect found its inspiration from the ancient Roman *cūria*. In stricter sense, several authorities that administer the Papal Primacy, in a wider acceptance, embrace all the entourage or court of the Pope. *Cūria* also means the

Machiavellian (1963: 73-76) principles and subtly marginalized the figure of women through sexual domination. The leadership class manipulated the Congolese familial code, reducing the mature age of women from eighteen to fourteen years, with the aim of replacing their older spouses with female adolescents (cf. *code de la famille du Zaire* 1980). These adolescents, who were considered as girl sex slaves, once used, abused, humiliated and forsaken, were exposed as veritable אִשָּׁת זָנוּנִים for the other men.

There is a suspicion that most of the sub-Saharan African countries that were under the influence of Mobutu's military force and monetary empire followed his steps. It is not yet proven, but the friendship and deep similarity between Mobutu's black apartheid regime and the white Apartheid one in South Africa can move us to believe that the white minority, who claimed to belong to the Dutch Reformed Church, could have some links with the *primacuria* and could also have used and abused white and black, coloured and Indian women to reach their religious and socio-political objectives.

It is therefore important to point out that the majority of those black and white leaders, even the former pro-Soviet ones such as Kabila, Marien Nguabi, Sékou Touré, Nyerere, Mugabe, Neto, Dos Santos, Museveni and Samora Machel, with some rare exceptions, were, or still are depraved (cf. Ayittey 1998:224). Our suspicion is based on the indications that in opposition to the trinomial: אִמָּת-דָּעַת-חֶסֶד , another trinomial *blood-money-sex* was used, and is still used, as the totem for strengthening their ideology and powers. The same

building to a Roman *cūria*, serving primarily as its place of worship. See, for example, *Collins English Dictionary* 1991:142.

thing can be ascribed to leaders like Ange Diawara²³⁸, Jonas Savimbi²³⁹, John Garang²⁴⁰, Abbé Diamatune²⁴¹ and Oueddeimi Goukouni²⁴², as well as men and women who are thirsty for power and who came to the leadership class by force. All these sub-Saharan leaders were, or still are, the priests of their religious and sociopolitical cults. There is a suspicion that most of them were, or still are, cannibal (cf. Primacuria). Then if what we are thinking is true, we are in a way allowed to connect this sub-Saharan African cannibal practice with the time of Hosea. Hitherto, it is deplorable that in the book of Hosea the poet does not make direct mention of the cannibalism among the people of Israel. We presume that according to sacrificial practice the priest had to eat the rest of the sacrifice with the worshippers (cf. Harper in Driver 1936: 258). It is possible to suspect that they fed on sacrificial (human) meat, following the custom of any ancient priesthood practices (cf. Leviticus 22). In such circumstances, after drinking the blood and feeding on the body of *πλησίον*, which is prohibited in the Torah (cf. Leviticus 17:10-14), these abominable acts affected them psychologically to the point that, for these cannibal devotees, אֱהָבָה is replaced by hatred and indifference but, above all, the total absence of pathos. Hence the children who were born from such immoral relationships, and who were sacrificed behind the grove of most of the sanctuaries, only could be called: וַיִּלְדֵי זְנוּנִים. Here the poet went back to the time of the prophet Samuel, when the priests misled the people by bringing to an end the Israelite kingship. The next section will effectively tell more about these וַיִּלְדֵי זְנוּנִים.

²³⁸ Leader of opposition movement of Republic of Congo.

²³⁹ Leader of the opposition movement in Angola. He led the famous movement called UNITA since almost 1970. A veritable ally of the Apartheid regime and Mobutu. See Ayittey 1998: 66.

²⁴⁰ Leader of the opposition movement against the Sudan Islamic government for more than 20 years

²⁴¹ The most important figure of the Kazamance Liberation Movement in Senegal.

²⁴² Former president of Chad and now he is Chad's main rebel leader. The closest ally of president Mouamar Kadhafi, he is exiled in Libya. Decalo 1987:150-153.

4.4.1 Hosea's three children's names, their psychodrama and its implications on the understanding of the actual Religious, Sociopolitical and Historical crisis of sub-Saharan African youth

When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD. So he married , Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to Hosea 'Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel.' In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel. Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, 'Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them.' Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God. After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. Then the LORD said, Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. (Hosea 1: 2-9)

What is the role of Hosea's three children as **בְּנֵי הוֹשֵׁעַ** in the whole prophecy? The interest of many interpreters is concentrated on the thorny question of Hosea's marriage. As their energy is spent in speculating on the problematic marriage of Hosea, they miss discovering the immense cultural, religious and sociopolitical richness of meaning that the three children display. It is important to point out that, in Hosea, it is not only the husband and the spouse who are of concern but the whole family, including the children. One can deduce that these two sons and one daughter were involved in the marital dispute and are victims of the decision made by their parents. Hence the importance the

poet ascribes to them seems to be beneficial in understanding the crisis of sub-Saharan

African youth:

When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, 'Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD.' So he married Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. (Hosea 1:2-3)

The poet is precise and he brings clearly to his audience the fact that Hosea married Gomer. Hitherto Hosea's children cannot be considered as bastards or **וְיִלְדֵי זְנוּנִים**.

The second text (cf. Hosea 3:2-3), on the other hand, embarrasses us in comparison to the former one (cf. Hosea 1: 2-9). There are some nuances between the latter and former one. What is interesting is that such nuances move us to doubt the children's identities and biological origin. Here we identify ourselves with the Feminists' concern about this book. The Feminists are preoccupied firstly with the role ascribed to the spouse and secondly to the role of the daughter and daughter-in-law in the text (cf. Hosea 1-3). The Feminist struggle concerns the fight against male abuse and smear campaigns against the female, as found in the text (cf. Hosea 1-3). In a way, due to a male hermeneutic imposition, the females' gender struggle is justifiable because of what happened and is reported in the text. The male poet tried to camouflage the moral perverse behaviour of the prophet. There is no mention of the virginity of Hosea or even of God in the text. This moves us to suspect the possible pre-existence of traces of a lack of *morality* in the prophet and in God. If we face Yahweh as a pathetic as well as a living being, which means subject to changing, then we can assert that God is paradoxically *faithful* and *not faithful*.

According to Maimonides (cf. Maimonides in Nahaissi 1990: 223-228), as a *faithful man*, Hosea cannot accept the bastards due to the principle of purity that such a relationship implied, but as the *not faithful man*, due to the principle of living reality (subject to change and weakness too), Hosea leaves the door of his mind open to comprehend the religious and sociopolitical drama of those children. Hence, as one of them, he can accept them. But even if Hosea is flexible and accepts easily these sons, it is not sufficient to help us understand the complexity that the entire book, and particularly the text below:

So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to Hosea, 'Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel.' Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God. (Hosea 1: 3-7)

From the text above (cf. Hosea 1: 3-7), we can try to understand what we have previously demonstrated, namely that the verb קָיָם confirms the existence of a marital bond between Hosea and Gomer. However, besides this verb, two others (cf. verse 6-7) play important roles and are used in the historical process of the Israelites. The poet with his subversive way of using memory brought to the attention of his audience two crucial events. We are not sure what event the second child refers to, but if we believe the post-exilic authors of Exodus and the books of Chronicles, it may be the kingdom of David

(cf. Unterman 1982:541)²⁴³, which, in contrast to those of Pharaoh and Saul, was characterized by the **דָּוִד**, in relation to a neighbour (cf. I Samuel 30: 11-20). What is also pertinent is the fact that this new David is displayed as a woman, even if it came in negative form (**דָּוִד אִשָּׁה**). Obviously, what is true is that in these two events: the contrast of David with Pharaoh and of David with Saul via Jehu, the important issue is the breakdown of *berit*. Here the poet, as the spokesperson of the oppressed and marginalized, introduced these events in his revolutionary song as the sign which had to serve as the servomechanism for constructing the new religious and sociopolitical order.

Whether *logos* indeed means *mythos*, as we have already observed, here the poet, as someone who is engaged in *guerilla warfare*, comprehends that he has to use these memorial events to wake up the sleeping memory that has been damaged by the tragic and sorrowed exile caused by the false teachings of the corrupt and oppressive priesthood class. The oppressive class prohibited such an appeal to the memory (cf. Hosea 9: 7-9). It is sometimes very difficult to understand why Hosea opted for poetry in writing his revolutionary song to display the religious and sociopolitical drama of these children. Perhaps as an oppressed prophet and poet, Hosea is forced to use poetry because poetry is subversive. He also used poetry because it is a form of creative memory, a sister of forgetfulness. The use of poetry might perhaps save the truth or at least rescue it from the

²⁴³ He argues that: "Redemption is the spiritual act of God reaccepting Israel, which is accompanied by the physical acts of God-returning Israel to the land, increase of agriculture and population, reinstatement of the Davidic monarchy, reunification of the people, etc". See also Bakon 1986: 88, 94. The author connects this event with the time of Samuel.

clutches of the religious and socio-political oppressive orthodoxy²⁴⁴. In the same perspective, Huxley (1946: 159) justifies such use of poetry:

The poet is born with the capacity of arranging words in such a way that something of the quality of the graces and inspirations he has received can make itself felt to other human beings in the white spaces, so to speak, between the lines of his verse.

From Huxley's view, we can therefore conclude that the analysis of Hosea's three children resembles events which are written in the white spaces. These names of Hosea's children have to be studied in order to understand their impact on the whole historical process of Israel.

Then the LORD said to Hosea, 'Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel. (Hosea 1:4-5)

In that day I will respond, declares the LORD— I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth; and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, You are my God. (Hosea 2: 21-23)

The text cited above confirms our idea that poetry is always an important subversive tool. In fact the text (cf. Hosea 2: 21-23) is a flagrant display of the way that God, without reservation, interferes in the marriage between Hosea and Gomer, especially in their sex

²⁴⁴ We are indebted to Detienne 1986: 133. In this book the author expresses the same idea in another form. 270

life. God seems to have an absolute paternal right over Hosea because it is obviously He who names the children. God seems to play the role of grandfather or grandmother in some sub-Saharan African contexts. These parents have the power of giving names to their grandsons or granddaughters. These children face serious problems in the society because their destiny seems to have been sealed before they became conscious of their psychodrama. The usurpation of the father's role, perpetuated by Yahweh, which in a way excludes the true role and, above all, the father's presence in the home, seems to justify in a way the frustration of the children. Our disappointment with many scholars is that they avoid critically analyzing the drama in Hosea's children.

It is true that we cannot advocate this remote case in analyzing what actually happens to our children. On the other hand, it is difficult to deny that the absence of the figure of a father, in Hosea's time, and in modern societies, perpetuates the lack of authority and the lack of a role-model for children, as Freud (cf. Freud in Strachey *et.al* 1964. vol.23.), Malula (1985: 5) and Tellenbach (1972:176-192) have emphasized. Indeed, this absence of a father in the home can affect us because of the rapid increase in the number of young people, as well as indiscipline, in many sub-Saharan African families, due to the problems of poverty, unemployment and war. In South Africa and Namibia, for instance, from the heritage of an Apartheid perspective, we observe a tremendous lack of meaningful familial living among the black and coloured people. In fact, as is known, the Apartheid system destroyed many families, forcing, for instance, the men to remain in

slavery for diamond and gold businesses, with the mothers working as domestic slaves²⁴⁵.

The children, who are in a way **וְיִלְדֵי זְנוּנִים**, and whose destiny is prefixed by the religious and socio-politically oppressive class, are generally the cause and agents of perpetual religious and sociopolitical entropy as for instance violence, murder and rape. In Hosea, the absence of a figure of the father and mother makes it worse in the drama of Hosea's children (cf. Hosea 2-3).

Nevertheless, it could be possible, in spite of our inner frustration, to think that the way of absorbing this is to understand the role of a name in this cultural context. With respect to the quest for a name, Michaud (cf. Michaud in Allmen 1958: 278) affirms that: "A name expresses the profound reality of the being who carries it". Kitoko-Nsiku (1994: 4-5) comments that "nesse sentido, os nomes dos dois filhos e da filha de Oseias carregam significados, ou então são portadores de mensagem por si mesmo, ao exemplo dos filhos de Isaías (cf. Isaiah 8: 1-8, 18)"²⁴⁶. This fits von Rad's observation (cf. von Rad in Fretheim 1984: 152): "The prophetic office increasingly invaded their personal and spiritual lives". Looking at the role of children's names in prophetic ministry, Fretheim (1984: 152) notes that: "While with Amos the distinction is clear, with Hosea and Isaiah the boundaries between office and private life begin to collapse. Both give names to their children which contain a prophetic message". Furthermore, Kitoko-Nsiku (1994: 4-5) argues from the sub-Saharan African perspective that: "Alias, o nome, no mundo afro-oriental, sempre esteve ligado a circunstancia ou qualquer outra coisa"²⁴⁷. Before

²⁴⁵ See this important contribution done from the South African perspective (cf. Comaroff 1985).

²⁴⁶ This means that the names of Hosea's sons carry meanings in themselves or, in other words these names are themselves the message, as in the case of Isaiah's sons.

²⁴⁷ According to Afro-oriental perspectives, the name of a person is always connected to many circumstances or other things.

returning to the subject of the name of the first son, what, indeed, is the meaning of the birth or the death of a son in such a culture? Kelley (1980: 46-47) states that: “O nascer, como o morrer, sempre reforçava ou acrescentava algo ao que já existia. por esta razão, o nascimento de um bebê era sempre algo que despertava a atenção de muita gente”²⁴⁸.

Brueggemann (1992:97-98) and Eliade (1964: 33-34) deal with this issue as well. If Kelley, Kitoko-Nsiku, Brueggemann and Eliade are correct in their views, then the birth of Hosea’s first child serves to awaken the conscience of the people. This birth is the crucial and first note of the child called *the bow*. This bow was sung in lamentation of the death of a king and a prince and at the end of the dynasty (cf. Freedman in Anderson and Freedman 1980: 187). Freedman’s view is in accordance with the terrible period of the 8th century (BCE). However, this bow means, paradoxically the end as well as the beginning of a new era. This latter view makes Hosea’s bow different. That is why if we analyze the same text from the exilic perspective, Hosea’s bow becomes an important revolutionary tool that feeds the memory of the oppressed and hopeless people. But what is the connection between this manner of striking the bow as a form of taking back the memory and God’s pathetic affair? Fretheim (1984:122) states: “The pathos of God in these questions is part of the larger context; it draws upon the intimacy of past experience. Memory intensifies the painfulness of the present as God struggles over what shape the people’s future should take”. Fretheim (1984:128) explains this crucial point further: “Moreover, memory entails not simply a mental act, but an activity associated with that which is remembered”. He (1984:128) concludes: “Thus God generates such activity in the present as is entailed by the promises made in the past to the fathers. God is actively

²⁴⁸ The birth or the death always increased something that had already existed. For that reason the birth of a

faithful to the implications of the promises made". This indicates the existence of a skilful connection between oppression, suffering and music. For this reason, Neher's analysis of this song is profitable. He contrasts two notes of the bow (Andersen and Freedman 1980:187): the historical and biological. However, looking at the paradoxical meaning of these notes of this bow, Neher (1955: 224-226) says that:

L' une des images permet de reconnaître la portée du paradoxe. Osée a un fils premier-né qu' il appelle Yzréel. Nom ambigu, puisqu' il a une signification historique et aussi biologique. Dans l' histoire, Yzreel désigne la vallée et la ville où Jéhu avait abattu la dynastie des Omrides²⁴⁹.

He proceeds to say that: "Sens contraire à la valeur historique du terme. la pourriture politique n' y est pas cause de catastrophe, mais élément de salut, comme le semence ne peut germer qu' après avoir pourri dans le sol"²⁵⁰. As an argument, he holds that: "Yzréel est le geste du dépôt de la semence dans la terre: en condamnant la graine à mourir, il lui permet de revivre. La catastrophe prépare le germe du salut"²⁵¹. Such a paradox is understandable and fits into the ancient sub-Saharan African struggle of renaissance. In relation to *renāscor* or rebirth, people have to be aware of the inevitable paradoxical reality such as *nascor et morīor*²⁵² and *vice versa*. Indeed, in spite of the price to be paid, people have to know that since the entire sub-Saharan African historical process began, the fact of *nascor* and *morīor*, which sustains the principle of religious and sociopolitical

child was something that created more expectation in the minds of people.

²⁴⁹One of the images allows one to see the extent of the paradox. Hosea has a first-born son who he calls Jezreel. This is an ambiguous name because it has both historical and biological significance. In history, Jezreel is the name of the valley and the town where Jehu defeated the dynasty of Omri.

²⁵⁰The opposite meaning to the historical value of the term: political corruption is not here the cause of catastrophe, but an element of salvation, as the seed cannot germinate before turning rotten in the soil.

²⁵¹Jezreel is the action of depositing the seed in the ground: by condemning the seed to die, he allows it to live again. Catastrophe prepares the seed of salvation. We think that the use of such a paradox is understandable and fits in the tautegorical view.

²⁵²To be born and to die.

renaissance, paradoxically interlace. Then, if through the name of Hosea's first child we can grasp the positive aspect of *nascor*, the sense for the sub-Saharan African renaissance, the key question is how the people can initiate a true renaissance? From the text, the key word, which can release a such process, is **שׁוּב**²⁵³. This verb means *to return toward*. Evidently, for Hosea this *return* is towards Yahweh, which is the opposite of the proper name of Jezreel, and it implies obligatory reconciliation of a fellow human being with God as well as with nature. Then if for Hosea **שׁוּב** means the reintegration of the three elements of the triad *Theos-Anthropos-Cosmos*, what does this mean for sub-Saharan religious and socio-political prophets? For the religious and sociopolitical prophets of sub-Saharan Africa, the solution is to resort to ancestral roots. Anta Diop (1974), Senghor (1988), Aimé Césaire (1972), Moussa Konaté (1981), Mongo Beti (1974), Peter Abrahams (1952), Milolo (1986) and other sub-Saharan African poets and philosophers found in the idea of Negritude the starting point of the **שׁוּב**. For the religious prophets, and particularly for André Matwa, Hamallah and Simon Kimbangu, **שׁוּב** means the need for challenging the religious and socio-political systems installed by the colonizers.

It is perhaps fair to say that in his searching for a sub-Saharan African religious identity, and by insisting on the need of true **שׁוּב**, Kimbangu wants to found a religion, which is in accord with the mentality of the African. This **שׁוּב** could be a religion which contains the characteristics of Protestantism, but with the addition of practices of fetishism, as L.

²⁵³ See more information in Bakon 1986: 94-95.

Morel (cf. Morel in Martin 1971:57) suggested. As does Kimbangu, Hamalah challenges Islam. Matswa did the same with traditional Catholicism (cf. Alexandre in Rotberg 1970:511-512). Returning to politicians, Mobutu following Nkrumah, Haile Selassie and Lumumba, suggesting the *recours à l'authenticité*²⁵⁴ which is not the *retour à l'authenticité*²⁵⁵, as the way of experiencing the true **שׁוֹרֵב**. According to Mobutu, this **שׁוֹרֵב** must be the way of demystifying the heritage of the religious and socio-political false start inherited from colonialism²⁵⁶. Mobutu's suggestion became thus the possibility of releasing the true start, which could reverse the false start (Dumont and Fanon 1967, 1982) inherited from the colonialists and which could consequently sustain the long and painful process of renaissance, which, in a way, means the reverse of Jezreel. It is evident that Mobutu's philosophy contributed to the rediscovery of the true identity of the sub-Saharan African people, like a specific people among others, and also served to open the eyes of the oppressed to envisage truth and reality in a different way.

However, there is also a great pitfall that is hidden behind Mobutu's suggestion. This pitfall is that, contrary to his direct master, Lumumba, who insisted on the use of spiritual, natural and human resources to reverse the chaos inherited from colonialism, Mobutu and others confiscated the use of natural resources for their personal profit (cf. Ayittey 1998: 14-24). They neglected human resources and finally usurped the place reserved, for instance, to *Modimo*, *Muantiave*, *Nzambi a Mpungu* or *Njankomba*²⁵⁷. This usurpation of divine power justified the fact that Banda, Kenyatta, Mobutu, Machel and

²⁵⁴ Resorting to authenticity.

²⁵⁵ Going back to authenticity.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Kabue 1975 and also the famous address by Mobutu in the tribune of the United Nations 04.10.1974

²⁵⁷ Names which designated Yahweh.

Nkrumah became the guides of revolutions or simply the founders of the states. To confirm such a divinity, Mobutu became *Sese Seko* and Nkrumah became *Osageyfo*, which means eternal saviour. In Ghana and in the DRC youth thought, sang and cried that those leaders should never die (cf. Bediako 2000: 26-27 and Kabue 1975: 201-260). Edgerton (1990: 93-94) reports the song that people have sung since the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya before independence:

Onward Mau Mau Soldiers,
 Marching as to war,
 Looking unto Jomo²⁵⁸,
 Who has gone before,
 Jomo the Royal Master,
 Leads against the foe,
 Forward into battle,
 See his banners go.

This usurpation of divine power is a flagrant contradiction for those who pretended to be the promoters of African renaissance. The audacity of overthrowing God and taking his place in religious and sociopolitical affairs, as Jehu and his ancestors had done, and which justified thus the using of the image of *יְזַרְעֵאל* in the text (cf. Hosea 1:4), is the veritable bridle to start the true renaissance. In fact, this usurpation of divine power is an ancient issue, as Michelet (cf. Michelet in Boegner 1943: 13) notes: “El obstáculo de Dios son los dioses”²⁵⁹. In the sub-Saharan African context this is not limited to Mobutu, Nkrumah and Kenyatta; it can be extended to other religious and socio-political leaders. For this reason, Houphouet-Boigny and Bongo were considered as the sages, P.W. Botha and Ian Smith the indispensable, Samora the chief, Museveni the prophet and Nyerere the

²⁵⁸ Jomo Kenyatta.

²⁵⁹ The major obstacle that God faces, is the existence of others gods. This idea is very conflicting but it proves the reality.

master. We suspect that even the pseudonym of *Tata* or *Madiba*, which is ascribed to Mandela, is linked to what we are saying.

Of the sub-Saharan African religious and sociopolitical leaders willing to be worshipped as God, perhaps Mandela, F.W. de Klerk, Sankara and Masire could be spared. However, for many sub-Saharan African leaders, in spite of the use of the masque of the Catholic, Protestant or even Muslim devotees, this **שׁוֹב** , which is the key to reverse the religious and socio-political chaos (**יִזְרְעֵאל**), means nothing except the opportunity to strengthen their egolatry. It is thus evident that, for them, **שׁוֹב** symbolizes the support for their personal dictatorship and egolatry. Besides this problem of idolatry, we think that sub-Saharan people can yet find in the philosophy of *recours à l'autenticité* a key-idea for their daily religious and socio-political struggles. Nevertheless, if the leaders today are concerned with misruling and the continuous abuse of power, then who are the sub-Saharan people that are really concerned with the struggle of the renaissance? Aimé Césaire (1972: 21-22) writes:

I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out....I am talking about thousands of men sacrificed to the Congo-Ocean. I am talking about those who, as I write this, are digging the harbor of Abidjan by hand. I am talking about millions of men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkys.

As a fervent defender of Negritude, Aimé Césaire ascribes to the colonizers the cause of the existence of **יְזֵרְעָאֵל** and the reason which delays the start of the true African renaissance. It is evident that Césaire is talking about societies drained of their essence in the whole of Africa. Here, we refer to the millions of people who died in the mass murders in Rwanda, Burundi and Nigeria. We are specifically talking about people who suffered due to the fratricidal wars in diverse sub-Saharan African countries such as Angola, Cote D'Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Niger, Sudan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. We are referring to those who are suffering under disastrous dictatorships in Cameroon, Djibouti, Namibia, Zambia, Togo, Tanzania, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Malawi (cf. Carter and O'Meara 1985: 45-96 and Furley 1995: 1-109). We are concerned about the black, white, Indian and coloured homeless people in South Africa who have only seven dollars a month to live on and cry every day for agrarian reform (cf. May 1995; Haanman 1997; Roberts 2000). We are talking about white farmers and black people in Zimbabwe, who are oppressed by Mugabe and Zanu-PF. We are talking about the people of Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea-Bissau, whom the Portuguese colonialist system and the post-independence Marxist leaders oppressed to the point of thingification.

In such a context of oppression and despair, we would like to ask if the God of sub-Saharan African religions really is the one who feels the drama of the people. This drama is symbolized in the text by the expression **יְזֵרְעָאֵל דְּמִי** (cf. Wolff 1974:60-62;

Johnson 1964: 69). The perpetual suffering of sub-Saharan African people does not constitute a mere crime, but a veritable massacre or even a holocaust. In fact, this perpetual holocaust of the sub-Saharan people involves God who is paradoxically the source of *Ubuntu* and the true incarnation of *Ubuntu* in their daily struggle. This incarnation of God, through the spirit of *Ubuntu*, is confirmed in the text by the verb **פָּקַדְתִּי**²⁶⁰. This expresses the idea that God is a blood avenger and a warrior. The verb expresses the idea that God is a sadistic person. In fact, many interpreters are embarrassed by the verb **פָּקַד** and think that it is *not bad language*, but rather symbolizes the expression of the will to press God into the service of human beings, with the intention of injuring or destroying other human beings (cf. Wharton 1978: 81). We do not share this view, because, for us, God displays His genuine essence of power: to injure or to destroy without reservation. Therefore it is human being who enters the service of God's mysterious power and not the reverse. Although it is evident in the text that His first intention is always to destroy, on the other hand the same verb portrays God as one who intervenes in favour of the oppressed.

However, the verb **פָּקַד** is, from the religious and socio-political perspective, the subject of God who is the Warrior and the Liberator. Therefore, in contrast to the idols, which represent the gods of death (cf. Caravias 1992:11-46), Yahweh is a living God. Then, in the text, this becomes an effective **אֱלֹהֵי** or **גֹּאֲלֵי**²⁶¹ of the oppressed who are condemned to death before their birth and also of whom the identity as the effective

²⁶⁰ This verb **פָּקַדְתִּי** is the same as that found in the episode of Zipporah in Exodus (cf. Exodus 4:24).

²⁶¹ cf. Job 19: 25a **גֹּאֲלֵי**

בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים is denied due to religious and sociopolitical oppression, as Calvin also observed (cf. Calvin in Keil and Delitzsch 1968: 41). Yet we think that sub-Saharan African people are concerned because, as oppressed people, once their memory is awakened, we suppose they are able to sing the same revolutionary song as the oppressed did in Hosea's era. The truth is that in singing Hosea's revolutionary song, the orphan, the poor, women, the alien and all the oppressed and marginalized of sub-Saharan African context will realize that the poet's desire is not to force them to make a choice between dying and living. The intention of the poet in composing the song is to involve the reader subtly in the tautegorical dimension, in which the victim of religious and socio-political oppression can become able to perceive the way of overcoming death by entering a new life that could never be envisaged or experienced by the opulent and oppressive class. Neher (1955:225) explains this phenomenon further by stating that:

Point de choix ici entre la vie et la mort, mais pénétration dans le mystère de la liaison entre la mort et la vie, du dépassement de la mort par la vie: *Mort ou est ton message* (Osée13:14)? En se réalisant, la catastrophe consomme sa propre défaite: elle prépare le salut²⁶².

In opposition to such conviction, Eichrodt (1967.voll: 335) reveals the intention of the official religious and sociopolitical poets:

There was here a real danger that undertakings called for by dynastic interest would be justified by identifying them with Yahweh's holy war, and that ruthless imperialist policies, which could be forwarded only at the cost of the

²⁶²No choice here between life and death, but penetration into the mystery of the connection; between life and death, of the overtaking of death by life. Death where is your message? In being realized catastrophe destroys its own defeat: it prepares the way to salvation.

nation's internal well-being, would be exalted as pious zeal for the greatness of the national God.

It is possible to suspect that for these politicians this supposed national god is not Yahweh but their own self-projection: in other words, the self-image or idol as projected by Nkrumah, Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Idi Amin, Bokassa, Machel, Moussa Traoré, Banda, P.W Botha and Mobutu. The daily religious and socio-political catastrophe denied their religious and socio-political utopia. Indeed, the voices of prophets like Malula (1985), Mongo Beti (1974 and 1986), Tutu (1977) and Kivengere (1975 and 1977) caused fear and terror inside the palaces. To impede the perpetuation of Hosea's prophetic voice, the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political oppressive class used the cunning attitude of nationalism, as was happening in Israel. Eichrodt (1967.vol 1: 335) is correct when he states that: "When the nabism became a highly regarded and regularly consulted political tribunal, it came under strong pressure from the national will to power embodied in the monarchy; and the successful maintenance of its own integrity must have become more difficult". Unfortunately, in the sub-Saharan African context, the oppressive class never sees things from Eichrodt's perspective. The difficulty for those who are in power in sub-Saharan Africa is how to maintain the oppressed in their *status quo* in order to avoid revenge. That is a big mistake that the oppressor always makes, because the cruelties of property and privilege are always more ferocious than revenge of poverty and oppression, as C.L.R. James (cf. James in Edgerton 1990: 242) taught Kenyatta. The oppressive class, to avoid this difficulty and maintain the oppressed under their control, appeals to fierce nationalism. But it is evident that in mentioning יִזְרְעֵאל, Hosea denied this use of false nationalism, as Neher (1955:192-193) intelligently established five decades before us:

Pour eux, la fidélité ou la trahison n' étaient pas d' ordre politique: l' unité de la nation ne dépendait pas du patriotisme des Israelites, mais de leur attachement à l' alliance, à la *berît*. Une lutte menée pour Dieu, ou plutôt avec Dieu, était, selon les prophètes, une lutte juste du point de vue national. Une lutte sans Dieu était impie et politiquement absurde²⁶³.

It is obvious from Exodus that Yahweh is associated with warrior gods; but the prophet attempts to make clear that the pathetic God called Yahweh is a different warrior. The difference is that this Warrior God did not support the oppression, as Egypt, Assyria or Bablyonia have done. He always struggled against any kind of religious and sociopolitical oppressive system. Jehu's case is one of these examples. God criticized the king for using His order to forcefully establish his own authority, instead of eliminating the root of idolatry. Such deviation of vocation and mission, which is common among many religious and sociopolitical leaders, seems intolerable to Yahweh.

For Yahweh, excessive religious and socio-political ambitions, even when they take on the zealous marks of obedience, can never be the motive for justifying cruel behaviour against fellow human beings; otherwise it would be the height of absurdity.

In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel. Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, 'Call her Lo-

²⁶³For them, loyalty or betrayal were not political issues: the unity of the nation did not depend on the patriotism of the Israelite people but on their faithfulness to the covenant, to the *berit*. A struggle undertaken for God, or rather with God; was according to the prophets, a just struggle from the national point of view. A struggle without God was blasphemous and politically absurd.

Ruhamah,' for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. (Hosea 1: 5-6)

Understanding the place of this kind of absurdity and the religious meaning of Hosea's daughter רַחֲמָה לֹא (cf. Hosea 1:6), in the whole historical process of Israel, still constitutes a challenge for most of us, as Biblical scholars, including such famous interpreters of the book of Hosea as Keil and Delitzsch (1968: 43-44), Andersen and Freedman (1980: 187-189), Neher (1955:226). Moreover Wolff (1965: 20) thinks that the form of the name is the negated perfect and the land is the subject of the sentence. Keil and Delitzsch (1968: 43-44) and Andersen and Freedman (1980: 187-189) prefer to concentrate on the first and the third children. Indeed, their analogical approach is interesting, but it does not serve to resolve the historical enigma hidden behind the name. Besides all the speculation, one thing is clear, namely that with the birth of רַחֲמָה לֹא the pathetic world is gone. It is possible that the coming of רַחֲמָה לֹא surprised everyone. Tatford (1974:23) suggested that, with the birth of this daughter, marital love and domestic peace disappeared, because while Hosea provided a home for the child, he could not play the paternal role. This must have been a heart-rending paradox for Hosea, whose own name means *Yahweh saves* (cf. Knight 1960:45). Contrary to the female softness, in the text the birth of Hosea's daughter effectively implies the implantation of dehumanization and horror :רַחֲמָה לֹא. However, in Hosea 1: 2-9, it seems that רַחֲמָה is synonymous with רַחֲמִים. Therefore Rowley (1955: 130) could be correct when he states that: "This mercy could be a form of the expression of רַחֲמִים, which was, however, much more than compassion". Rowley (1955:130) proceeds to note that:

It was a quality of loyalty and devotion, which a man should show towards God in response to all that God had done for him as a member of the covenant. It involved more than mere loyalty to one another. It also involved a devotion, or loving-kindness. Hosea declares that it is this quality, which looks more than a sacrifice.

The absence of this crucial element provoked three reactions through the announcement of the birth of this daughter: Firstly, in the context of despair and oppression the mother in Israel is expected to give birth to more sons and not to girls, perhaps due to the messianic expectation based on the patriarchy, which condemned people to believe that the Messiah never could be a woman (cf. Isaiah 9-11); secondly, the leader or liberator had to be a man, but in the text the leader who is appointed as the Davidic king is a man, but displayed according to the female characteristics **לֹא רִחַמָּהּ**; thirdly, the gospel here is that the end of any Davidic hope had occurred. What is regrettable is that the poet in the book of Hosea once called into question the reputation of women, pointing to women as the vehicle of disaster. However, in the second part of verse 7 of the first chapter we face something very different in the text: “Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God” (cf. Hosea 1:7). Indeed, this verse appears here like an antithesis to, or the reverse of, the situation. At the place of **לֹא רִחַמָּהּ** the author replaces **רַחֲמִים**. This shift, as it is made in the text, enriches the song. The verse (cf. Hosea 1:7) becomes thus one of the most decisive notes of the revolutionary song that the devotees of the present religious and sociopolitical order ever wish to hear. The content of the same verse expresses the possibility of establishing reconciliation, fraternity and commitment between the palace and the common people.

In his desire to resolve the religious, socio-political and historical crisis, the poet resorts to *memorabilia* through the use of the name of one of Hosea's children: לֹא רִחֲמָהּ. The question is now, with this style of *memorabilia* (cf. Wolff 1965: 57), did the author bring back the name to David at the place of Jehu? What are the similarities and the differences that the poet would establish between both characters in the text? We perceive three points of similarities between Jehu and David: Firstly, both are Kings of Israel and were anointed by Yahweh. Secondly, both were called to share God's pathos with their peoples. Thirdly, both were called and commissioned, which means they have a specific mission: to struggle against a religious and socio-political oppressive system. As such, both have the right to be involved in the holy war²⁶⁴. Here we find two ways used by the oppressed to resolve their religious, socio-political and historical crises: Jehu and David. With Jehu the oppressed tend to be like their oppressors, and when the oppressed are used in this way, they inevitably become involved in the interminable cycle of violence. For Yahweh, this way is excluded. The poet thus opts for David, and in this way the softness of poverty and hardness of the oppression are always stronger than the cruelties of property and privilege of the oppressors. Hence in the text לֹא רִחֲמָהּ has to become רַחֲמֵי. We cannot know how the oppressed reacted to hearing this strophe of song. Indeed it depends on where one stands. What is the crucial difference between Jehu and David that could influence the option of the people in making their religious and sociopolitical ideology of revolution? The difference between the two is that Jehu started as the ideal tool for establishing the רַחֲמֵי of Yahweh in Israel. Unfortunately, as soon as he became great, he extrapolated the limit and became לֹא רִחֲמָהּ. In contrast to

²⁶⁴ See the contribution of Wright (cf. Wright in Janzen 1975:73).

Jehu, it seems that David always recognized his limit in the end (cf. Psalms 51) and so remains the totem of a true divine warrior, by the incarnation of אֱלֹהִים for the people, as well as for the alien (cf. I Samuel 26: 9-35 and 30: 6-20-25). The sad incident of Bathsheba and the way that he deals with it seems to confirm his humility (cf. 2 Samuel 11-12). In fact, in verse 7 of the first chapter of Hosea, David becomes the true incarnation of the divine warrior. Wright (1969:140) fits into this debate when he says: “As the Divine warrior brought freedom and rest in those first glorious events, so he will do again to the scattered people”. He proceeds and notes, “...God the Warrior is simply the reverse side of God the lover or of God the Redeemer ” (cf. Wright 1969:130). We suspect that in the text (cf. Hosea 1:7), the Warrior, which is simply the reverse side of God the lover or of God the Redeemer, is appointed as David, who is displayed in the figure of mother of the nation, אֱלֹהִים. In the context in which the figure of women was reduced to the level of נְזִירָה, this strophe of song had to attract many oppressed in favour of Hosea’s campaign against the cruel male world. In the same perspective as Hosea, Camara Laye (cf. Camara Laye in Lee 1984: 27) claims:

Femme noire, femme africaine.
 Oh! toi ma mère je pense à toi.
 Oh! Dama. Oh! Toi ma mère, toi qui me
 portas sur le dos, toi qui m’ allaitas, toi qui
 gourvenas mes premiers pas, toi qui la
 première m’ ouvris les yeux aux prodiges de
 la terre je pense à toi ²⁶⁵.

²⁶⁵ Black woman, African woman. Oh! Thou my mother I think of thee. Oh! Dama, O! My mother, thou who carried me on your back, thou who suckled me, thou who guided my first steps, thou who were the first to open my eyes to the wonders of the earth, I think of thee.

Senghor (cf. Senghor in Dixon 1990:270) repeats the same issue, when he exalts the figure of the mother:

Femme nue, femme noire
Vêtue de ta couleur qui est vie, de ta forme
qui est beauté!
J' ai grandi à ton ombre; la douceur de tes
mains bandait mes yeux.
Et voilà qu' au Coeur de l' Été et de Midi, je
te découvre, Terre promise, du haut d' un
haut col calciné
Et ta beauté me fourdroie en plein Coeur,
comme l' éclat d' un aigle.
Femme nue , femme obscure
Fruit mûr à la chair ferme, sombres extases
du vin noir,
Bouche qui fais lyrique ma bouche
Savane aux horizons purs, savane qui frémis
aux caresses ferventes du vent d' Est²⁶⁶.

Here, Laye and Senghor exalt the figure of woman in challenging the post-colonial male dominated and cruel world created by the colonizers and sustained faithfully by the alienated post-colonial religious and sociopolitical sub-Saharan African leadership class. Born, paradoxically, in Islamic (Camara Laye) and Christian (Senghor) patriarchal conjugal homes, Camara Laye and Senghor claim two points: Firstly, the use of this image of the mother is a metaphor for black womanhood, a magnified projection of eternal motherhood, which is a further symbol of the motherland and of Africa (cf. Lee 1984: 27). But why do Camara Laye and Senghor write this subversive song? We agree with Gaston Bachelard (cf. Bachelard in Lee 1984: 27), when he responds and says that:

²⁶⁶ Naked woman, black woman clothed in your colour, the colour of life; in your form which is beauty. I grew up in your shadow; the gentleness of your hands blindfolded my eyes. And now in the heart of summer and midday, I discover you, Promised Land from the top of a sun-naked pass. And your beauty overwhelms my heart, like the brightness of an eagle. Naked woman, mysterious woman. Ripe fruit with firm flesh, dark rapture of black wine, mouth which makes my mouth lyrical. Savanna of pure horizons, savanna which trembles at warm caresses of the east wind.

“filial love is the first active principle to induce image projection, it is the projecting force of the imagination, the inexhaustible energy which takes possession of all images in order to place them in most secure human perspective: the maternal perspective”. Sonia Lee (1984: 27) supports our view when she comments that: “The maternal image, projected as a symbol for the motherland is not in African letters. This is a powerful drawing that moves woman to become the archetype of African motherhood, while still retaining the warmth and vulnerability of a real character”. We think that Camara Laye, Senghor and Hosea “défigurem le monde (masculin) à grands coups pour le transfigurer”²⁶⁷, as Renards (cf. Renards in Decreus 1957:76) observes.

Secondly, Camara Laye and Senghor perhaps sang these songs to demystify the idols and male tyranny²⁶⁸ that sustain the sub-Saharan African chauvinism, as will be discussed in the next chapter. They sang in favour of the real re-establishment of the female world that the false interpretation of genuine Islam and Christianity omitted to face in the sub-Saharan African context. Camara Laye and Senghor identify with Hosea, and with poets, prophets and any other oppressed people, who suffer cruel tyranny and who should pessimistically explore the incompatibility between what is preached about the pathos of God and what is experienced by those who pretend to be the official defenders of the religious and socio-political credo, namely men. Therefore, by replacing Jehu with David (cf. Hosea 1: 2-9) on the one hand and father by mother on the other, Hosea, Camara

²⁶⁷ Camara Laye, Senghor and Hosea disfigure the world in order to give to it another form.

²⁶⁸ About the idolatry and tyranny of sub-Saharan African male world see Lee 1984: 20-31. This point of view is a veritable conflict for white men born in the sub-Saharan African context who are extremely patriarchal.

Laye and Senghor emphasize the obligatory need of both societies to reconsider the figure of woman as the foundation of an equitable and peaceful world. Strangely, as men, Hosea, Camara Laye and Senghor raise their voices in favour of women, whose voices hitherto have been muffled.

Once again, the poetic and prophetic activities of Hosea, Camara Laye and Senghor coincide and suggest for us that we have to replace Jehu with David (cf. Hosea 1: 2-9) or father by mother as a foundation of sub-Saharan African societies. Two reasons justify our view: firstly, this replacement restores to women their true identity and feelings, אֱהָבָה , the foundation of the universe, the nation and particularly the conjugal home. Their identity and feelings were damaged by the patriarchal system that imposed on women the terrible identity and feelings of אֵלֵּי אֱהָבָה and אֵלֵּי אֱהָבָה; secondly these poetic and prophetic activities open the path for the oppressed towards a new opportunity of religious and socio-political humanization and the hope that only God, who is, paradoxically, a warrior אֱהָבָה אֵלֵּי and lover אֱהָבָה , can offer. But the existence of this paradox creates a real tension in the mind of the devotee of Yahweh, on the one hand, and Yahweh, with the devotees of Baal, on the another. Wright (1969:130) thus helps the readers to grasp the tension, which exists between God and the religious, and socio-political oppressive leadership classes:

God the warrior is the theme that furnishes hope in time. What is cannot be sanctified for the future because a vast tension exists between the will of the Suzerain and that of his vassals. Our world is under judgment. Wars and rumors of wars are a Biblical reality, a present reality, and we see

an immediate surcease of them in the future. Yet strong, active power given language in the Warrior-Lord means that there is a force in the universe set against the forces of evil and perversity. Life, then, is a battleground, but the Divine warrior will not be defeated.

Commentaries seem to run in the same direction. If our perception is in accordance with the intention of the poet, the name of David represents in the positive sense the universal utopia of the struggle and hope for marginalized and oppressed people. Indeed, although rejected and persecuted by Saul, the name David is a synonym for the fundamental meaning of suffering, affection, and compassion, with more emphasis on love (cf. King 1982: 92). The hope for oppressed people is that, with the new David, who is the figure of a mother of the nation, a transformation, rooted in love, will take place in the relationship between Yahweh and His people; the people of the north and the south will also be reconciled (cf. King 1982: 92).

Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.' The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. (Hosea 1: 10-11)

The reconciliation follows the principle of replacing the name of Jehu with that of David. In this new context of hope and humanization, David, whose name is now a synonym of **רִחֵם**, or mother's uterus, becomes thus the locus in which conflicting people will be gathered as identical twins. In this day of reconciliation, the former meaning of **יִזְרְעֵאל**, terror and blood, changes to peace and fraternity. That is the gospel for people in the sub-

Saharan African context and particularly for their religious and socio-political leadership classes, who have lost the ideal of Pan-Africanism, which was defended by the fathers of independence since the 1960s. This gospel has to become a *leitmotiv* for the religious leadership class in motivating politicians to optimistically face the actual contexts of conflict situation in sub-Saharan Africa. As the politicians fail, it is required that people of God become the true **יְהוָה**, or the pathetic locus for peace and reconciliation²⁶⁹. This can only become possible if God's people experience in advance the true **שׁוֹב**. Therefore the religious leaders, whom we suppose to be the holders of the spiritual key of reconciliation and the divine conscience, must confess their limitations. They should also believe that if God's people are unable, of their own accord, to reform their ways and return to God, divine graciousness can forge a renewed relationship, thereby affording a fresh start, a new beginning, as King (1982:91) observes. The question now is what Hosea's female audience think about this king, displayed in the figure of woman? For the women of Hosea's time, this daughter called **לֵאָה רַחֲמָנָה** by God's order does not own female feelings; this daughter represents the king who pretends to embody the feelings of a woman. This is an ironical verse, because the name **לֵאָה רַחֲמָנָה** points out clearly evidence of idolatry, which is like an evil cancer among the people of Israel. It destroyed the feelings of humanity when they faced such a situation. The true enemy of pathos is not the indifference of the dominant religious and socio-political leadership class, but idolatry or the worship of oneself, to which Heschel (1996.vol1: 55) has already adverted:

²⁶⁹ Here is the synonym of Judah, **יְהוָה**. Paul explores this idea in Romans 2-4 advocating the arduous task of Israel: to extend peace to others nations in reconciling them with God.

To the prophets of Israel the idea of a human being copying or imitating the inner life of God would have appeared as the height of absurdity. For man to play God, to believe himself to be God, would have been horrible blasphemy.

Furthermore, in the same perspective, Wolff (cf. Wolff in Gerstenberger 1981:254) affirms that: “O homem, com suas concepções e apresentações dos deuses, encobre as chances de Deus. Assim, ele deifica os poderes da história e da natureza, que ficam sujeitos à efemeridade, com todas as obras humanas”²⁷⁰. He proceeds and notes: “A realidade dos deuses é a fraqueza humana, revestida de soberba”²⁷¹. In the same line of thought, Ghéhenno (cf. Ghéhenno in Boegner 1943:13) reminds us of the way Michelet faced the actual tragedy of the oppressed and regretted the insensibility and, above all, the incapacity of Christianity in giving an adequate response to the expectation of the people:

Evoquemos el recuerdo de Michelet, quien no temía decir que hacía la guerra a los dios porque entendía servir así al dios del porvenir. Quería un Dios igual al deseo del hombre, un Dios que fuese el Dios de los hombres, y consideraba al cristianismo como incapaz de señalar a ese dios generoso: ‘El obstaculo de Díos, son los dioses’²⁷².

Such blasphemy, as is pointed out by Michelet and Wolff, is confirmed by the use of the name לֵא רַחֲמָה . We suspect that for the oppressed and exploited woman like גַּמְר , the birth of the daughter (לֵא רַחֲמָה) paradoxically becomes the totem of despair and for

²⁷⁰ A Human being, with his conceptions and presentations of gods reduces the chances of God. For, this human being worships both the power of history and the power of nature which are subject of weakness as all human deeds.

²⁷¹ The reality of gods is a human weakness that is hidden through his hubris.

²⁷² We would like to refer to Michelet who never feared to say that he was engaged in warfare against gods because this was a correct way that he used to be of service to the God of hope. He would like to face a god who could be able to share human feelings, a god who could be a god of human beings, and he considered

hope. The name symbolizes the opportunity of restarting the nation and fraternity around the mother. People were convinced that the negation of such opportunity would culminate in the disastrous suicide of the people and deicide of Yahweh, as is cited in verse 9 below.

After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. Then the LORD said 'Call him Lo-Ammi', for you are not my people, and I am not your God. (Hosea 1: 8-9)

The verse referred above (cf. Hosea 1:9) is the climax, and also the point of inflexion of the whole historical process of Israel. Perhaps due to patriarchal dominance and the male preconcept against woman, Gomer expected to give birth to a son who could bring two things: peace and joy to her²⁷³; but the worst happened. Here the incomprehensible and the unexpected interlace and the author emphasizes clearly the existence of the possibility of a rupture between God and Israel. The expression לֹא עַמִּי is accompanied by another: לֹא־אֱהְיֶה. This pathetic expression לֹא־אֱהְיֶה, which generates an extensive debate, could only be understood in the context of בְּרִית. The breaking of the בְּרִית is subversive (Brueggemann 1980) and such a break means the possible end of existence (Hosea 1:9). Therefore בְּרִית in the pathetic aspect becomes a display of life and death. For this reason it seems that the poet opposes religious and

that Christianity was unable to generate this kind of generous God. Michelet thought that the obstacle that God faces, is the existence of others gods.

²⁷³ See the case of the people of China today; they prefer to conceive boys rather than girls, due to the male pressure of their society.

socio-political expectations; the expression אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּי (cf. Hosea 1:10) is exactly the antithesis of לֵאלֹהֵי אֲדֹמָיִם. In opposition to the idol, the prophet points out that only God has the prerogative to decide if He would like to exist or not (cf. Wolff in Gerstenberger 1981: 238). Surprisingly, the prophet has incorporated this antithesis in his song and this manner of composing a revolutionary song causes serious and inevitable anomalies to the prophet from the religious and sociopolitical oppressive order. It is possible that by introducing this note into his song, the prophet would like to challenge the religious and sociopolitical class by saying that life and death still remain the prerogative of Yahweh. At this point, blackmail and intimidation, like the installation of chaos, which means *non-history* in the case of the end of the order already established, is now juxtaposed diachronically with *history* and *new history*.

The son probably caused more frustration and pain to Hosea and Gomer and this new event seemed to activate the lyric bow. We cannot really imagine the dramatic situation of the people who were oppressed: perhaps they had nothing except faith to believe in the possibility of change. They lived without god, land, and identity and consequently without the covenant, so the idol and its devotees imposed themselves upon the oppressed, closing decisively the gate of the pathway to hope. In such a horrible context, the unique way of surviving for the oppressed is to opt for silence, conformity and inalienable submission or, in the case of defiance, a heroic death or suicide. This is perhaps what Yahweh as the אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּי or אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּי²⁷⁴ of the oppressed did through this

²⁷⁴ וְאֲנִי יִדְעֵתִי גֹאֲלִי חַיִּי וְאֲחִירֹן עַל - עֶפְרַיִם יְקוּם: This expression is taken from Job (19:25).

paradoxical form of negating his name: לֹא־אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה. However, in spite of this risk of schism between God and Israel, the author ascribes to God the power to change the situation.

Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.' The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one'. (Hosea 1: 10- 2:1)

The text cited above confirms God's power to change the situation. Unfortunately, even with this strong conviction and confession of faith and this incomprehensible verse (cf. Hosea 1:11) of hope for the oppressed, there emerges a small cloud. The song took an unexpected and different tonality. It is possible that this poetic reverse caused more fear than before to the oppressive class. It is like the sound of the bell of independence, which tolled in the decade of the nineteen-sixties among diverse people of sub-Sahara African countries, or the day of the end of Apartheid in South Africa. The unexpected event finally happened and the poet audaciously used such a change to confirm the reality that God acts in spite of the struggle. Politics, tradition and religion divide people, but the message of hope unites them against the common enemy.

However, for reasons that Alter (1985:137-162) aptly explains, the poet incorporates this reversal in his song. This verse is a tremendous revolutionary seed sown in the minds of the slaves because, when it is sung, the oppressed jointly feel themselves involved in the

tragedy. They then feel capable of breaking the barrier of structural discrimination imposed by the dominant class. They realize that divine love (cf. King 1982:91), which is the basis of human hope, does not die; humanity can never make God stop living. We believe, as does King (1982:91), that anyone who can speak eloquently of the unqualified love of God in the midst of extraordinary domestic, national and even continental disaster, as happened in sub-Saharan Africa, has a message of hope. Indeed, this message of hope was analyzed in this chapter through the synoptic study of the affective drama in Hosea and sustained by the question: what made Hosea the sub-Saharan African prophet?

We have sought to see similarities between Hosea and sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political prophets in three aspects: firstly, in terms of the price of prophetic vocation and ministry in both contexts, which involves the quest for a prophetic dangerous vocation, the ethical risk of the prophet in Hosea and in sub-Saharan Africa, the role of the covenant in both contexts; secondly, we focused our attention on the prophetic marriage as a pertinent example for the theologian, priest and pastor in the sub-Saharan African context, culminating in the analysis of the meaning of the names of Hosea's children. Thirdly, special attention was paid to the name of Hosea's only daughter. The name is a powerful vehicle for sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political transformation. Our view, after studying this chapter, is that sub-Saharan African prophets are similar to Hosea. We are convinced that, in spite of distance and time and cultural contexts, Hosea and religious and socio-political prophets of sub-Saharan African have messages which are displayed through their painful lives. These messages represent a kind of flame of hope that women and children, the oppressed and marginalized, need for empowering the sounds of revolution, sung as in Hosea in spite of

the numerous obstacles such as the increasing forms of tyranny, dehumanization and alienation. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

5. THE ABSENCE OF GOD'S PATHOS IN HOSEA'S DAY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS

In the preceding chapter we have tried to resolve the question of God's drama in Hosea, focusing on what makes Hosea a sub-Saharan African prophet. From the beginning of the thesis, up to this point, our approach to the text as well as to the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political situation turns around the tautegorical analysis of the symbols that are used to determine the historical destiny of the sub-Saharan African people who remain very traumatized. To reach our objective, the preoccupation is still to know how to demystify the symbols and then to use this resource as a powerful vehicle of prophetic message in contemporary times. We are humble enough to recognize that it is not possible for our thesis, and particularly this chapter, to cover all the details of the religious and socio-political of sub-Saharan African situations. The reader will sometimes notice a kind of *generalization* and perhaps *subjectivism*, but it is better for the reader to know in advance that our aim is to grasp only the essence (*causes*) of the problem, which is the common malaise, even if it is experienced at different levels in this or that religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African context.

We are following the methodology that Altuna (1975), Milolo (1986), Rotberg (1970), Bumwenyi (1981), Diop (1959) and Carter and O' Meara (1985) employed in their works. Those scholars focused their research on the essence rather than on the details. Therefore, in proceeding with the present study, effort will be made to examine some implications that the studies of the question of God's pathos have in our current lives. In chapter 5 our interest will be concentrated on seeking the causes of the absence of God's pathos in Hosea and what the religious and socio-political consequences are, resulting from the absence of God's pathos. It is true that the period between our time and Hosea's is considerable, but there are many similar points that allow us to relate the peoples' religious and socio-political realities with ourselves. To reach our goal we would like to pursue our analysis in three directions: Tyranny, consequence of the utopia based on the lack of spirituality without God in both contexts; Syncretism, the malaise of the African Religious and Socio-political leadership; the Dehumanization of People in Hosea and sub-Saharan Africa.

5.1 Tyranny: consequence of the utopia based on the lack of spirituality without God in both contexts

We are not going to dwell on the search for the meaning of the word tyranny in our debate, because many scholars have already made such profitable contributions. What we would like to see here is the way that this concept could be used to understand the same religious and socio-political abuses that happened in Hosea's context as well as in the sub-Saharan African one. The important question is what is meant by tyranny? According

to Thomas More (cf. More in Fenlon 1981:453-454), a religious and socio-political prophet, tyranny is defined in four different ways: firstly, tyranny is something more than a negation of political life. It is an everyday temptation of those who exercise authority; secondly, it is something into which the state declines on its own responsibility, through dereliction of office and complicity in evil; thirdly, tyranny stands for the destruction of everything, including for instance, the integrity of marriage, the integrity of law, the integrity of the church and the integrity of the kingdom; finally, as More understands it, it is an assault upon the human soul; but for More, the grace of Christ is conferred in times of persecution by the example of religious and socio-political leaders who accepted to die as martyrs.

We can grasp the spiritual background of More's thought. It seems that More differs from Machiavelli (1965), who in a way faced religious and socio-political tyranny as a way of survival (cf. Fenlon 1981: 476). More includes strongly the person of God in religious and socio-political leadership matters though Machiavelli seems to minimize the role of God in such matters, giving predominance to the figure of the leader. Perhaps it is due to this difference that many sub-Saharan African leaders and particularly Mobutu and P.W. Botha have adopted Machiavelli's ideas, marginalizing More's completely. This choice led most of the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political to become tyrants, as it did many kings in Hosea's time. In both contexts, one of the problems is tyranny. We can then ask ourselves how this religious and socio-political phenomenon affected Hosea's contemporary life and, above all, how Hosea understood and demystified this religious and socio-political malaise.

Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed... my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away the understanding of my people. They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God. (Hosea 4: 1-3,6, 10-12)

As a poet and prophet, Hosea pointed out firstly the consequence rather than the cause. The absence of the religious and socio-political triad אֱמֶת-דִּיעָת-חֶסֶד clearly demonstrated the implantation and manifestation of tyranny. Diverse faces of such cruel phenomena are observed in the text (cf. Hosea 4: 1-3,6, 10-12). Hosea regarded the lack of knowledge and serious religious and socio-political ethical foundations, based on an intimacy between God and human beings, as the gravest cause of tyranny. Indeed, here Hosea agrees with More that tyranny sometimes become an ideology of leadership, and of the whole nation. But who is actually speaking in the text (cf. Hosea 4:2-4,6,10-12)? Apparently it is the prophet, but the one who speaks here is Yahweh (cf. Wolff 1965:77, Keil and Delitzsch 1968:73-75). We are impressed by the way the author paints the display. In the text, Yahweh played the double role of being oppressed, which means He identifies with the oppressed as a real co-sufferer, and also He is the defender of the oppressed. Therefore what Yahweh, as the oppressed, is doing is to gather the oppressors and oppressed in a true reconciliatory meeting, in which the past has to be faced. Because of this dual role we can hope for a better future, as Cochrane and West (1993:26-28) have suggested.

To achieve His goal of re-establishing truth and promoting reconciliation, God resorts to historical memory. This way of acting diverges from that of the Western missionaries and sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political leaders. Western missionaries, in most of the cases, remained hypocritically concerned with the tyrannical religious and socio-political leadership classes and so forced the people to dream their *dangerous* memory, in spite of the disastrous religious and socio-political tragedy, which happened in the sub-Saharan part of Africa. They try to convince the people who are under their religious and socio-political control that they are not politicians. However, their behaviour reflects clearly their ideology; in the text Yahweh avoided such hypocrisy, flattery and, above all, dangerous malevolence. Paradoxically, as the oppressed God and the liberator of the oppressed, Yahweh shared the misery of the people. The *Theopathetikos* God of the Bible is never indifferent. He always clearly assumes His involvement in the religious and socio-political aspects of people's daily lives. That is why, in Hosea, He gathered the poor and oppressed to raise their voices and sing this verse of His revolutionary song (cf. Hosea 4:1-3,6,10-12). This song, composed by God Himself, certainly has to seriously worry the religious and socio-political dominant classes, because it is obvious that this song pointed out the existence of many anomalies in the religious and socio-political structures that Hosea considered as the inalienable display of tyrannical ideology (cf. Hosea 1:2-8).

For the majority of missionaries who were, and still are, the defenders of colonialist order (cf. Comaroff 1985, Kabue 1975; Liyong 1998: 81-91; Villa-Vicencio 1989: 25; de Vries 1978; Camara 1969; Hellberg 1997) and sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political leaders who are enslaved and alienated by these missionaries or religious

masters, Hosea deserved to die. Bourdillon (1990: 269-270) and others refute our point of view. They claim that missionaries regarded themselves as opposed to the colonial and postcolonial ideology or, in others words, missionaries never promoted tyranny and oppression. It is correct that sometimes our view seems to be very severe and may be related to the colonial time. Here Arntsen (1997: 48-51) identifies with us and says “there is no reason to dismiss such attitudes as a thing of the past, however. Many of the same sentiments can be found in contemporary religious expressions and among the leaders of various religious groups”. It is impossible to separate people from their home religious and socio-political structures, even in modern times (e.g. beyond American missionaries there is an American flag). Those who deny such aspects of reality are mere cowards.

Nolan (1977:93) also refutes such a cowardly point of view. For, he (1977:93) states that: “It is argued that Jesus had nothing to do with the politics of the time, that he preached a purely spiritual and religious message and that the Jewish leaders who wanted to do away with him fabricated the political charges”. We agree with Nolan in thinking that such theological allegation is not compatible with the cosmo-vision of the Ancient Near Eastern world. We think that the living way, in terms of justice, politics and religion, and above all, an understanding of the prophetic call and mission coincide with what Nolan (1977: 93) notes about Jesus as a Jews:

The Jews made no distinction at all between politics and religion. Issues, which we would today classify as political, social, economic or religious would all have been thought of in terms of God and his law. A purely secular problem would have been inconceivable. A cursory glance at the Old Testament alone ought to make this quite clear.

Nolan (1977:94) concludes:

Jesus set out to fulfill this religio-political expectation though not in the way in which the people might have expected and certainly not in the way the zealots attempted to fulfill it. Jesus set out to liberate Israel from Rome by persuading Israel to a change. Without a change of heart within Israel itself, liberation from imperialism of any kind would be impossible. That had been the message of all the prophets, including John the Baptist. Jesus was a prophet and he was involved in politics in exactly the same way as all the prophets had been.

Besides Nolan, Prozanto (1987:242-243) gives an additional contribution when he observes: *Que é scandalo? Fazer amor? não é por acaso muito mais escandaloso defender e proteger a injustiça porque me falta a inteligência espiritual e profética para descobrir aonde ela se esconde*²⁷⁵. He emphasizes that:

*Os profetas autênticos devem desempenhar a missão de pôr na boca dos integrantes dessa última categoria o sabor da cinza. O profeta, portanto, é um homem capaz de dar escândalo aos de bon senso. É capaz de gritar contra o escândalo. Contra todos os escândalos*²⁷⁶.

Prozanto (1987:243) thus agrees with Nolan, concluding that: *“O profeta faz-nos compreender que o Evangelho é uma força de contestação, não de bênção*²⁷⁷. Such a cosmo-vision described by Nolan and Prozanto has already been suggested by von Rad

²⁷⁵ What is the scandal? Maybe the fact of sleeping with someone? Worse than this is the fact of defending and protecting an injustice because I do not have spiritual and prophetic intelligence for discovering where this injustice is hidden.

²⁷⁶ A mission of any authentic prophet is to put in the mouth of the soldiers of warfare the category of intelligence that only the prophet gets. Therefore the prophet is able to create a scandal in the good sense. He is also able to cry against the scandal. Against all kind of scandals.

²⁷⁷ The prophet helps us to understand that the Gospel is a force of protestation rather than force of blessing.

(1965.vol 2: 69). It is not surprising to observe that a similar view of prophetic call and mission is attested in the sub-Saharan African context. Whether we accept the validity of the sub-Saharan African religions or not, we have to accept the assumptions that in this context the prophetic movement (proto-prophetism) started before the missionaries came to this part of Africa. Therefore, if this assumption is true, we have to agree that the prophet always played a double role of adviser and rebel in the sub-Saharan African context, as in Israel. As an adviser, the prophet was one of the most listened to persons. His role sometimes was similar to the fetisher or witchdoctor (cf. Morel in Martin 1975:56-57). In spite of the coming of independence, the religious and socio-political leadership classes continued to depend on the traditional prophet, and most of them became leaders of African Independent Churches. In addition, the same prophets could play the role of rebel. This happened when the religious and socio-political leadership classes rejected categorically their advice and used violence against them and their followers.

As the frontier between the religious and socio-political issues was sensitive in Israel, as it is in the sub-Saharan African context, rebellion of the Israelite prophets, and of the sub-Saharan African ones, is always related to the lack of responsibility of the priesthood. The key point is that in both contexts the prophets always played the role of the king's conscience. This means that the destiny of both Israelite people and sub-Saharan African people depends on what the divine sphere communicates to the human sphere through the person of the prophet. As it was for Israel, it is still true for sub-Saharan African people that any kind of ideology, which is separated from the religious and socio-political, is poison. The *Kairos Document*, written during the Apartheid era in South Africa, confirms our point of view. Backing up this document is the recent theological satire written

intelligently by Gerald West (1999) in the form of a hermeneutic book from the perspective of the oppressed. Hence, in both contexts, the failure of the political implied unequivocally the failure of the priests, who were the holders as well the teachers of divine knowledge. It is observed that the trend of the priesthood is to support the king in protecting their *status quo*.

The prophets play thus a role of adviser. They protect people, and specially the royal court, against any religious misguidance and socio-political oppression. Since 1960 the danger has been that some members of the sub-Saharan African church have raised their voices as politicians and priests, but have failed to involve themselves radically in the prophetic mission soon after the independence of most of the sub-Saharan African countries (cf. Martin 1975: 1-57). Such engagement unfortunately comes later, and even with this change most of them prefer to keep quiet about what happens today. They fear death because from the time African countries gained independence, many prophets have been humiliated, marginalized, imprisoned or murdered due to religious and socio-political tyranny. Where does God stand in relation to such religious and socio-political tragedy? Is God really indifferent to the suffering of those who are victims of religious and socio-political wolves? There are several reasons to believe that God is never similar to the *Ananké* of Greek and that He is unable to intervene in stopping this holocaust. However, Stone (1996:13) challenges the Afro-pessimists, encourages the sufferers and brings to them the faintest glimmer of hope by saying that:

The life and the experience of those who suffer affords us a unique and genuinely privileged perspective on what God is up to in the world and what, therefore, we ought to be up to.

If God is to be found in our world today, it is, as always, with those who suffer and are trampled upon not because God prefers some people to others, but because wherever God's children are being excluded from human community, God is working bringing liberation and healing.

It is obvious that Stone's perspective represents a voice of the minority, because only a few black, white, coloured and Indians born in sub-Saharan Africa think that the death of the martyrs, as More (cf. More in Fenlon 1981:476) called them, cannot discourage the struggle for justice and truth. In contrast to the pessimism that predominates in the minds of the majority, this minority, which is a *little flock*, believes that the death of the prophets is indeed the way of confirming the existence of the true religious and socio-political catastrophe. In other words, the death of those prophets means the end of ancient orders and the beginning of a new one. We join the caravan of this *little flock*. We consider the corpses of those prophets, and the corpses of the poor, women, the marginalized and the oppressed, as the fertilizer for enriching the ground to germinate the seed of hope and prepare the great harvest.

Therefore, whether our view is acceptable or not, we have to affirm that the actual catastrophe is beneficial and people have to avoid listening to the false prophetic voice of the calf. This false prophetic voice denies the existence of the religious and socio-political catastrophe or the end of religious and socio-political order found in sub-Saharan Africa. At least it is such a catastrophe that was once denied by the holders of religious and socio-political orders that motivated many post-colonial prophets who were frustrated and sometimes excluded by the official church. Frustration or maybe persecution forced these prophets to be converted into African Independent Churches, as we have observed above and as is explained by Comaroff (1985:176-177). Though the prophets foresaw the

catastrophe and the resistance of the religious and socio-political oppressive classes, they accepted the sacrifice of their lives for defending the truth. The future of a genuine sub-Saharan African church depends on the progress of the African Independent Churches (cf. Arntsen 1997: 48-51; de Gruchy 1997: 176-182; Fernandez 1965: 71-75; Comaroff 1985: 176-177).

But let no man bring a charge, let no man accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest. You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother and my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:4-6)

However, tyranny is Hosea's dilemma and in the text above (cf. Hosea 4:4-6) we have some key verses for understanding once again the religious and sociopolitical drama of the people in the 8th century (BCE). The author starts this chapter by noting many failures of people in the area of ethical morals. The verses represent the key-idea of the absence of God's pathos in the Hosea era. It is interesting to note the audacity of the prophet. It seems that the mention of knowledge refers to the priests. According to the Torah and the prophets, it extends to the priests the responsibility of teaching Yahweh's knowledge, which is in a way a synonym of the entire Torah (cf. Malachi 2:7-9). The question is, did Hosea have a problem with priests? It did not matter for Keil and Delitzch (1968: 74-91). But Neher (1955: 295) noted:

Or les prêtres auxquels se sont uniformément heurtés les prophètes sont des faux pharisiens. Ils sont en situation d'abus par rapport à la loi. Le texte biblique est net: les prêtres ne sont pas attaqués par les prophètes parce qu'ils sont prêtres, mais parce qu'ils ne le sont plus. Ils sont

mentionnés avec leurs péchés. Leur liste équivaut à une nomenclature d'usurpations et de trahisons²⁷⁸.

Andersen and Freedmann (1980: 350-351), Davies (1993: 57-61) and Wolff (1965: 351) supported this view. Wolff (1965: 79) commented that: "The priests are not attacked by the prophets because they are priests, but because they are priests no longer. Hosea's portrayal of the priest is similar to the chronicler's description of the teaching Levites". Wolff (1965:86) observes "Hosea censures the priests' lustful desires with irony". More aggressively Wolff (1965: 82) concludes: "Hosea severely censures the priests for surrendering themselves to an egotistic, sacrificial cult and its shameful sex rites as the fruitless result of their apostasy from Yahweh, by whose saving instruction they should actually live".

It is true that the absence of real confrontation, as it occurs in Amos and Jeremiah, leaves us to grasp this sound of irony. However, whether or not what Wolff says is true, such a way of omitting the confrontation is the true irony, because the whole attitude of the prophets has often been described as *culture hostility* (cf. Weber in Carter and Meyers 1996: 94), because of their status, and they were considered as a great sounding-board of the world-political stage of their times (cf. Weber in Carter and Meyers 1996: 94). However, this fact cannot prevent us from asking the question: why should the lack of knowledge constitute a great preoccupation for Hosea, or what indeed does knowledge mean to Hosea? Once we replace the prophet in the context of marriage, as it is noted in

²⁷⁸ Now the priests whom the prophets collectively attacked are like false Pharisees. They are in breach of trust with the law. The Biblical text is clear: the prophets do not attack the priests because they are priests but because they are no longer priests. They are named with their sins according to the list which is comparable to a catalogue of wrongful usurpations and betrayals.

Chapters 1-3, knowledge means mutual interpenetration, which reaches its climax in sexual intercourse. If, in Hosea's time, the marital bond was substituted with prostitution, such sexual practice is not a mutual interpenetration. On the contrary, it is a mere demonstration of male tyranny, because when the relationship between a man and a woman is based on the practice of prostitution, there is no time for the sexual partners to know each other.

This knowledge is extremely superficial and the interest of both sides is based uniquely on profit, which destroys the human beings feelings. Thus the marriage of Hosea challenges such male mentality. Hosea, by being willing to take back his spouse, ironically avoids opting for the view of tyrants. In most cases tyranny means the lack of mutual interpenetration. The problem we have in understanding this word **דַּעַת** is due to the extreme dependence on Western biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. To solve such a problem, Senghor endeavoured to suggest an interesting path. He thinks that there is a difference between *Negro-African knowledge* and *European knowledge*. The former (Negro-African knowledge) is knowledge by confrontation and intuition, while the latter is knowledge by analysis and discursive reason. Senghor (cf. Senghor in Gbadegesin 1991: 39) said:

Thus to know an object, it not longer suffices to see it, to dissect it, to weigh it, even if one has the most perfect precision instruments. One must also touch it, penetrate it from the inside ... and finger it ... More specifically; knowledge coincides with the essence of a thing in its innate and original reality, in its discontinuous and undetermined reality, in its life.

Senghor (cf. Senghor in Gbadegesin: 1991: 39) continues:

The African, in contrast to the European, does not draw a wedge between himself and the object of knowledge. He does not just observe and analyze. He touches, feels and smells the object. He sympathizes, abandons his personality to become fully identified with the other, dies to be reborn in the other.

It is evident that the polarization of the question of epistemology between West and sub-Saharan Africa is really childish, as has already been defended above. Because we are still thinking in the tautegorical dimension, any hermeneutical idea based on the epistemological dichotomy does not make sense. Contrary to our view, Gbadegesin (1991: 40) accepts Senghor's view when he reports: "For Senghor the vital force of Negro African knowledge ...is animated by reason, but it is not the reasoning eye of Europe, it is the reason of touch ...the reasoning-embrace, the sympathetic reason". Our view is that both Western and sub-Saharan African epistemologies interact with each other. In one sense Western epistemology displays the sub-Saharan African one, and in another sub-Saharan African epistemology hides the Western one. Unfortunately, Gbadegesin falls emotionally within Senghor's epistemological hypothesis. At least somewhere Senghor contradicts himself in clinging to Mulago's concept of a Bantu *vital force* to defend his supposed sub-Saharan African epistemology.

If our understanding of Mulago is correct, Mulago's vital force, which is skill embodied in the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λόγος**, is neither Hegelian's Geist nor Senghor's vital force, but is what in a way Whitehead called *creativity*, which involves paradoxical reason, intuition

and emotion. Bastos (1992), Eudore de Sousa (1988), Capra (1983) and Tshishiku (1980) disagree with Senghor too. For this reason לַעֲדָתְךָ or knowledge, as suggested by Hosea in the text (cf. Hosea 4:1), means an affective and mutual inter-penetration, and so sexual intercourse thus fits here. This same לַעֲדָתְךָ is the true foundation that supports the spirit of *Ubuntu* (cf. Mbigi 1995 and 1997; Bhengu 1996)²⁷⁹.

Whether what we are defending is true, perhaps we can say that Hosea's affective capacity transcends Jesus at this point because there is no way of acquiring a profound knowledge by confronting a partner without sexual intercourse. Understanding the need to explain God's profounder love, Paul sought to relate such a mutual commitment mystery by linking Christ with the Church, but this is just a metaphor. That is why we think that, until we find proof to the contrary, Hosea remains the unique and true image of Christ in the Old Testament. We have to regret that the lack of writings (oral culture), and the advent of religious and socio-political colonialism, destroyed this understanding of African knowledge, which should be as it was in ancient Egypt (cf. Diop 1959, 1974; Ki-zerbo 1981) the base of the scientific, technological, religious and socio-political progress of Negro-Egyptian people. Nkrumah (cf. Tuteng 1977), Nyerere (1975), Sékou Touré, Kimbangu (cf. Martin 1975: 54-57) and, above all, Lumumba²⁸⁰ advocated for the revival of this spirit of *Ubuntu* in the sub-Saharan African context. Such revival should indeed be multi-dimensional and thus involve the knowledge of God, human beings and

²⁷⁹The author explores the concept of *Ubuntu*, as a key idea for the establishment of the essence of democracy. This idea could be extended to the establishment of the African renaissance.

²⁸⁰ Videocassette. Death of the prophet. Kanza 1972; Ekpebu 1989: 220. We understand now why the Western people confused the ideals of politicians like Nkrumah, Sekou Touré and Lumumba, Mandela, John Fôu-Ndi and Etiënne Tsitsekedi. The Western people considered them wrongly as communists. For us

Nature, but Western ignorance spoke loudly and those holders of religious and socio-political knowledge and power confused their prophetic voice with a communist one. Traub (1979: 11) however rejects this Western malevolent attitude, demonstrating how the power of community is even used as the way to understand God:

But not only have Africans, like all peoples, learned of the invisible God from nature. From this great teacher they have gained other very valuable knowledge. In their battle with the forces of nature and the wild beasts of the forests, Africans learned the power of community.

Traub's frustration is comprehensible and Monsengwo (1982) also has the same perception about the force of the *power of community*. It is thus this *power of community* that God (e.g. *Modimo, Mungu, Njambe*) Himself, as co-partner of sub-Saharan African communities, teaches Africans. Unfortunately, when the colonizers came to sub-Saharan Africa, they destroyed the *power of the village*, to the detriment of the city. By destroying the power of the village the colonizers did two things: Firstly they placed the demon of Mammon and the demon of sex, power and money in the place of God. Secondly they destroyed the power of communal life, which they confused in many cases with Marxist-Leninist communism.

Therefore, whether what we are thinking makes sense or not, the death of the prophets like Nkrumah, Lumumba, Kimbangu, Sankara, Marien Ngouabi, Steve Biko, Janini, and the complete abolition of the use of this particular dynamic of knowing the object as well as the subject, actually constitutes one of the key problems which caused damage in the

the communism does not make sense. We are the people who live and partake life in communities in which

lives of sub-African people and particularly sub-Saharan African Christianity. However, in spite of this, we can suspect that the tragic lack of knowledge started when most of the Western missionaries faltered due to their Biblical, philosophical and anthropological ignorance and failed to face positively the spiritual shape that they met in this part of the world. Such ignorance led most of the missionaries and most of the religious and sociopolitical sub-Saharan African leaders, trained according to their ideology, to adopt repressive methods, like for instance the objectification of women, inferior education for indigenous, limited access to the indigenous to leadership positions in order to maintain their power and false hegemony (cf. Alves 1985; 1990 and Comaroff 1985). This kind of tyranny, based on an oppressive pedagogic and dominant ideology, is part of sub-Saharan African leadership's considerable incompetence, the actual cause of sub-Saharan African religious and sociopolitical chaos. The continuity of such a chaotic situation, due to lack of knowledge, is intolerable because diverse religious and scientific evidence is clear and actually points out that this lost heritage was closer to the theological heritage of Ancient Near Oriental people, and especially Israel, than the religious and socio-political ideology that most of the missionaries and colonizers brought in their bags of colonialism. The consequences are similar to what the text below ascribed to the priesthood:

Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness. And it will be: Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds. (Hosea 4:6-9)

The lack of knowledge, as it is established clearly in the text (cf. Hosea 4:6-9) above, moves God to complain about religious and sociopolitical tyranny. Whether the God worshipped by the ancestors of sub-Saharan African people is always Yahweh, as we believe, He is the teacher in Africa; His complaint does not concern the *Nganga Nkisi*²⁸¹. God's complaint is directed to the *Nganga Njambe*²⁸². In this group of priests there are the Africans and the missionaries of the religious class. He did not complain because they are not priests, pastors or missionaries, but because they have become irrelevant to the people. The expression *like people, like priests* (cf. Hosea 4:9) fits into the sub-Saharan African context. The crisis among the religious leadership class is a result, in a way, of the low moral, spiritual and intellectual quality of the sub-Saharan African *Nganga Njambe* and, above all, most of the missionaries that the missionary agencies sent to Africa. Smith (1926:46) confirms our critique when he reports one of the statements of the missionary's conference held in Le Zoute in 1910:

...surely the day has gone when the best men (and women) could be picked out for India and China and the rest sent to Africa, as any man or woman were good enough for Africa. The time for amateurs has passed~if it ever existed. Nothing is too good for Africa²⁸³.

It is thus evident that, with some rare exceptions, such as David Livingstone, Albert Schweitzer, Bishop Colenso and a few other anonyms, most of the missionaries were sent because they were useless in their native countries. They represented and still represent, in some cases, what Smith called *the rest*, in contrast to the best. It is perhaps such a situation that can justify their soft adherence to the socio-political oppressive systems

²⁸¹ Sub-Saharan African witchdoctor.

²⁸² Priests or pastors who belong to the Churches.

²⁸³ See a large explanation of this idea in Bediako 2000: 4-7. This situation still remains among many protestant or so-called evangelical missionary agencies.

before and after the independence of most of the sub-Saharan African countries. This adherence is perhaps due to the psychological insecurity that they faced. For this reason religious and socio-political tyranny was the unique resource of cunning that they used to camouflage their intellectual and spiritual incompetence. We think that, due to such a situation, *Afro-pessimism*, as it is called in Western countries, is momentarily acceptable but the *Missio-pessimism* is not to be excluded because one depends on *the other*. Perhaps our view could be understood in the light of Christ's sayings:

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. (Matthew 7:15-20)

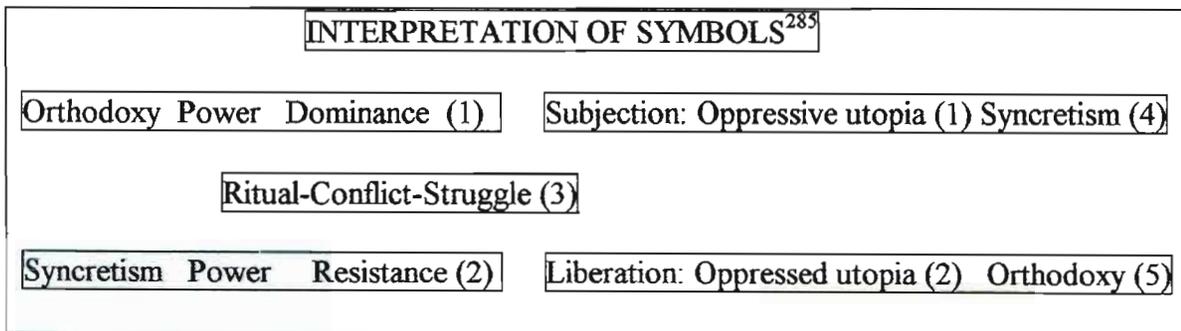
If we are serious in our intention of leading an African renaissance, these verses (cf. Hosea 4:7-9 and Matthew 7: 7-20) are a warning for future generations and a tremendous challenge for agencies which still keep on in sending missionaries to sub-Saharan parts of Africa. Jesus' revolutionary song, which gives hope to the oppressed, poor, sufferers and humiliated, constitutes a challenge for those who are supposed to be models of society. In this group missionaries are included. They have to assume this role of failure, because it is impossible to deny that most of the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political leaders²⁸⁴ are end-products of the missionaries' work (cf. Smith *et.al* 1981: 164-167).

²⁸⁴ e.g. Nkrumah, Agostinho Neto, Kasa-Vubu, Senghor, Samora Machel, Mugabe, Kaunda, Tshiluba, Moi, Massire, Mobutu, Peter. W. Botha and Ian Smith.

Whether our point of view is valid or not, missionaries have to face the fact that their role is questionable. Doubts about the positive role of missionaries in preaching the Gospel and training leaders in sub-Saharan Africa increase due to the persistence among the people of such phenomena as poverty, war, genocide, racism and, above all, syncretism.

5.2 Syncretism, the Malaise of the African Religious and Socio-political Leadership Class

It is evident that the incompetence and irresponsibility in public affairs of the sub-Saharan African religious and the socio-political leadership class depends on their mentors: the missionaries. For that reason, we previously focused on the role of missionaries in the daily struggle of sub-Saharan people. It is easy to attribute to them such failure, but the big challenge remains within the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political sphere, hence the need to analyze the phenomenon of syncretism.



²⁸⁵ This frame is ironic, because people have to face (1) as well as (4). These two points represent the ideology of the religious and socio-political oppressive class. The established religion promotes the false orthodoxy which is indeed a mere syncretism (2) as well as (5) and both are connected because those who challenge the established orthodoxy generally are considered syncretists, but they are defending the true orthodoxy. The points (2) and (5) represent the ideology of the oppressed and are ironically antagonist in relation to points (1) and (4). And in the middle (3) we place the three spheres in which the oppressor and the oppressed are conflicting until the end of the dominant system, which implies: liberation.

According to Berlin (cf. Berlin in Stewart and Shaw 1994: 196), the term *syncretism* is often used in anthropology and history as if it were a transparent, descriptive term, referring to the borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition with another, by a process of selection and reconciliation. Our interest is not to search for the meaning of the concept, as Berlin has done. Our interest is to discover how the integration and the process of selection and reconciliation of concepts, symbols, or practices affects the relationship between God and His devotees. However, in addition to that, what also interests us is the fact that Berlin discovers the connection which exists between concepts, symbols and practices in religious issues. Obviously, we can suspect that he had difficulty in defining such a complex term. As a form of resistance, the phenomenon of syncretism that occurs in Hosea, and in Africa, is similar and above all singular. It requires particular attention because it involves two triads *orthodoxy-power-dominance* and *syncretism-power-resistance*. In Hosea's discourse on liberation both triads interact and re-interact simultaneously. Therefore if we would like to compare one with another, according to the frame traced above, the first represents the oppressive and orthodox way of handling religious and socio-political situations, the latter represents the response or the way that the subversive voice launches itself against the oppressive power.

In that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master. I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. (Hosea 2: 16-17)

Israel cries out to me, 'O our God, we acknowledge you!' But Israel has rejected what is good; an enemy will pursue him. They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria! My anger burns

against them. How long will they be incapable of purity?
They are from Israel! This calf—a craftsman has made it; it
is not God. It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria.
(Hosea 8: 5-6)

The syncretism dispute resolves around the triad: *concept-symbol-practices* in religious issues. This means that concept is connected with idea, symbol with form, and practice with the use of the object or subject that people worship. From the text cited above (cf. Hosea 8:5-6), God Himself speaks once. People acknowledge Yahweh but the gap between acknowledgement and knowledge is large. The pretension of the religious and socio-political oppressive classes had been that they respected the orthodoxy and consequently they worshipped Yahweh. But, judging by the text cited above, their ignorance is evident because they ascribed to Yahweh the form of a *calf*. Regarding such a radical religious shift, deel Arrudo (1969: 73) comments:

Que estarnho processo mental, que diabólico metabolismo psicológico interveio para transformar, no corer do tempo, elementos da natureza e suas figurações em invólucros ou instrumentos físicos de fôrças extraterrenas, quando não em personificações de sêres mais ou menos divinos?²⁸⁶

Deel Arrudo's complaint coincides with God's own, as it is found in the text. Both complaints express the deepening cry of indignation and despair. On the one hand, deel Arrudo is surprised by the increasing human creativity, but, on the other, God is deceived (cf. Hosea 8: 5-6). The reason of His deception is the fact that His true identity is denied. To get back His identity, the text says that God is struggling against the human will to re-

²⁸⁶ How can we understand this strange mental process? What is the diabolic psychological metabolism that intervenes in the mind of human beings which is able to transform during the historical process things that people consider as natural elements and their mere projections or physical tools of external forces into things more or less divine?

establish Himself as the true icon, instead of Baal. Why, according to the text (cf. Hosea 8:5-6), did God decide to play the same role as a priest? How can human beings substitute the creator with this idol? Two reasons can be given: Firstly, a shortened vision, the result of the knowledge of God; secondly, the vacuum of an affective presence that Yahweh left in Yahwehism. We are at the stage at which the temple, the ark and other symbols are in Judah. Therefore, in the absence of these permissible concepts and symbols, people used the Canaanite elements that the ancestors or predecessors of Israel had already purified and incorporated as the legitimate elements of the cult dedicated to Yahweh. Indeed, Yahwehism was similar to an esoteric religion. Only a few people among the Israelites could get access to and share religious power, even though Canaanism offers to the people the chance to get friends from other ethnical groups.

Priests in Israel proved to be ineffective in containing the new wave of the cult of worshipping Yahweh brought by the prophets and priests of Baal. They became blinded and uncaring. These priests were indifferent in relation to Yahweh and to the people. Yahweh thus becomes more of a hindrance than a help to them. To survive, they ascribed to Yahweh another form and meaning: calf. How did the priests deal with such a novelty? Did the priests impose it or did it develop gradually? We are betrayed by the distance of time. We cannot know exactly how the priests went about inserting such seed into Yahwehism. Perhaps deel Arrudo (1969: 72-73) rightly says:

Como as débeis crianças dos nossos modernos parques infantis, os rudes caçadores de bisontes de dez ou mais mil

anos atrás, já se deliciavam em brincar com linhas e cores,
copiando a natureza ambiente²⁸⁷.

He argues that:

A idolatria virá mais tarde . A cegeira do instinto religioso,
latente em tôdas as almas, e que irá, um dia, tornar divino o
que não passava de mera figuração ou símbolo da matéria e
das forças que a criam, condicionam e dirigem²⁸⁸.

We have to admit that the demarcation between idolatry and the true worship of God is extremely sensitive. Israel has always had the tendency to oscillate between both sides: God and idol. Sub-Saharan African people are not an exception. We think that due to such sensibility only eternity will be able to reveal to us the mystery of idolatry, if God will be interested in revealing the secret hidden in this religious and sociopolitical mystery. Even if it is very difficult to be accepted, in Israel, we think that the idea of God's pathos that developed around the calf is justified because, in the middle of tremendous religious and sociopolitical indifference, the calf as the point of encounter becomes more pathetic than Yahweh. Moreover, the calf was living among the people. People could kiss and touch freely their object of devotion, while Yahweh remained remote. It is true that the time of Yahweh becoming closer to the people had not yet come and the presence of the calf was a great challenge for the apathetic religion of Israel. Traub (1979:11-13) criticizes the way that sub-Saharan African leaders were trained. After their training, they always remained aloof from their people. For this reason, the

²⁸⁷ Similar to those children who are mad and those we meet in our modern childish parks, ten thousand or more years ago the rude hunters of bison had already dedicated themselves to play with threads and colours imitating the nature.

²⁸⁸ Idolatry always comes later. A blindness of religious instinct which is latent in all human souls, this one day will be used to transform icons into idols which indeed represented nothing less than a mere display of painting or symbol of material that people used to create, to present and to manipulate these idols.

pedagogy of Yahwehism had to change, because though it is true that in terms of perception of Yahweh the people were wrong, they were correct pedagogically.

People, as a body of resistance (cf. Comaroff 1985), appreciate the leader who remains amongst them. This use of an icon, as the mainstay of Israelite religious and socio-political systems, is not a novelty. People used calves, snakes and other concepts and symbols for such purposes. It was always difficult to remove such ideas and symbols from the Israelite people. So this return to the mother's uterus or origin is always latent in any human being and exerts tremendous power on the mind of the oppressed. It is the form that they use to resist an oppressive system. In their struggle against religious and sociopolitical domination, the sub-Saharan African people used this strategy, as Pato (1990: 26) explained:

The new society into which the African converts were integrated relegated them to the background through a strategy of hegemonic domination that denied the power of their symbol .

He proceeds:

The hypothesis of syncretism as an explanatory tool of the African Independent Church promotes this strategy. This approach also does not take seriously the context in which African conversions have taken place. Yet forms of expression of the Christian faith are always determined or influenced by the social context out of which they emerge.

Stewart and Shaw (1994:15) are correct in saying that the contexts of domination to which Pato refers are precisely the focus of Comaroff 's analysis of Tshidi Zionist churches, which departs from previous studies of syncretism in independent South African churches. However, Comaroff (1985:126-161) did not limit her important analysis to the religious sphere. She established clearly how the dominant and oppressive religious ideology interacts with dominant sociopolitical and oppressive spheres and work together as the unique dominant voice.

Taking the opposite view to that of Pato, we think that the emergence of the movement of independence is the chance that the oppressed people have to re-establish the orthodoxy that the oppressive classes lose. If our assumption is correct, and if we have to consider seriously, as Pato said, that "Yet forms of expression of the Christian faith are always determined or influenced by the social context out of which they emerge", then the emergence of the independent churches is similar to the socio-political sphere that people found to demand the establishment of religious and socio-political justice. This demand for justice that the official defenders of orthodoxy missed, implied radical shifts of concepts, symbols and practices, because the three elements of this triad *concepts-symbols-practices* interact with each other and there is always a great link between the concepts (idea), symbols (form) and practice (action) in the mind, discourse and behaviour of the oppressors, and of the oppressed. In this case, syncretism loses its sense and becomes the true orthodoxy (cf. Martin 1975: 50-57) because to survive the oppressive system requires a religious branch. This religious support is nothing unless the deviation of true religion, in another word, syncretism, that the prophet and the oppressed contest.

Any religious and socio-political revolution depends on the radical demystification of this triad. In the sub-Saharan African context, for instance, the true orthodoxy has to start

with the demystification of white skin because white skins represent the sacred canopy of the official religious and socio-political authorities. Whether our comparison between the sub-Saharan African context and Hosea's contemporary daily life is tolerable or not, white skin becomes a symbol of the calf in Hosea's context. We know that in Hosea the calf, which is the symbol of official orthodoxy, symbolizes power and prosperity but also the apathetic world. This conception of the calf is what the colonialist ascribes to the white skin. Such a false dominant and hegemonic slogan convinces blacks, coloureds and Indians to accept the process of assimilation and maintains them as inferior in relation to white people.

Unfortunately, the same slogan is used to damage the self-image of white people who are born in Africa, for whom the white skin is seen as black. This kind of psychological torture affects most of the sub-Saharan African white people and moves them to deny their belonging to the sub-Saharan African region. It becomes more and more evident that the coming of Canaanism played the same role as colonialism in the sub-Saharan part of Africa. Both started with the religious spheres and at the end both involved the rest: military, economic and sociopolitical spheres. Indeed, with the substitution of this animal symbol for Yahweh, syncretism is strengthened by iconolatriy or idolatriy and the pathos is consequently gone. We have to agree with Nolan (1986: 31):

Idolatriy was not merely a matter of worshipping wooden or metal statues. Idolatriy was an abomination because it involved three things: rejection of the Law; cultic prostitution; human sacrifice. The basic trouble with the false gods or idols or Baals was that they did not demand any kind of justice or morality from those who worshipped

them. Unlike the true God they had no moral commandment, no Law, no demand that justice be done.

In the absence of Yahweh, justice and morality, it is evident that a devotee becomes paradoxically identical to, and a victim of, his own object of worship. Hence excessive depravation of the moral occurs, as happens with wild animals. Instead of the knowledge of Yahweh, the priest of Baal had instilled into the conscience and the ethos of the people an animal behaviour. It was very hard for the people to get rid of this mode of living. When people face this situation, the price for deliverance is death and **שׁוֹבֵה**. People have to embrace this death and **שׁוֹבֵה** even if the propaganda of the dominant and oppressive system suggest a soft solution and the impossibility of liberation. Here it requires the creative imagination of the prophet to unmask this religious and socio-political propaganda and forge the door of possibility which has to lead the oppressed to establish the new order. Such *creative imagination* is based on the knowledge of the Torah and the decisive proclamation of it. In this regard, Bijlefeld (1969:7) observes:

The prophets share in (what may be called) ‘creative imagination’. The prophets [they] proclaim ideas connected with what is deepest and most central in human experience, with special reference to the particular needs of their day and generation. The mark of the great prophet is the profound attraction of his ideas for those to whom they are addressed.

During Hosea’s time the aim of the oppressive class was to end any possibility of space for creative imagination. They probably banished all the ideology and symbols that should not converge on the worship of the calf. Hosea challenged such restrictions. This prophet emerges as the opponent of religious and socio-political official orthodoxy. In his struggle against this orthodoxy, which was indeed mere syncretism, Hosea uses such

creative imagination, enriched by the multiple reference of the remote Israelite history and, above all, enriched by incomprehensible metaphors rooted in the syncretism. Certainly, due to that novelty hidden in metaphors, Hosea became the spokesperson of the new orthodoxy and attracted many people. He became an apostle who had to deliver the victims of false and oppressive religious and socio-political orthodoxy. To succeed, Hosea had ironically to grasp the entire meaning of the religious and socio-political mechanisms of his time.

What then is the main intention of Kimbangu, Mabuaka, Kivengre, Malula, Danquah, Janini, Tutu, Dosumo (cf. Rotberg 1970: 512-513) and others, understood from the mind of the colonial and post-colonial holders of the religious and socio-political oppressive system? What is the main animal that these holders of the religious and socio-political oppressive systems sacrificed on the altar of their worship? Similar to what happened in Hosea's contemporary daily life, these false gods, who were often gods of fertility, demanded only rites and sacrifices as the price the people had to pay in order to ensure that their land and their women would be fertile, in other words, in order to ensure a good harvest and many children (cf. Nolan 1986: 31). This demand was reached through what women and children endure in our modern context, as the primary victims of religious and sociopolitical official orthodoxy. The religious and sociopolitical linkage between Western and sub-Saharan African religious and sociopolitical systems requires the sacrifice of the people.

In his daily context, to show up the suffering of the people, Hosea insisted on the re-actualization of the use of *בְּרִית אֱלֹהִים*, that is the spirit of *Ubuntu*, as the veritable display of the *תְּעֵת* or knowledge of Yahweh. Only the *תְּעֵת* of Yahweh could be the foundation of a new order because the world which was not ruled by the *תְּעֵת* of Yahweh, that was founded in some taboo, becomes a jungle. In the place of the *hesed*, which also means the manifestation of the spirit of *Ubuntu*, people used the law of the jungle and consequently they caused the *de-ubuntu-nization* of religious and sociopolitical structures in sub-Saharan African societies. Due to that chaotic situation, Kimbangu and others required from the missionaries nothing except the restitution of a true comprehension of diverse concepts, symbols and practice of sub-Saharan African religion through the *תְּעֵת* of the living God of the people that most of them confused and confounded with their religious and socio-political ideologies. Such a lack of a mechanism of substitution, already noticed by those sub-Saharan African prophets, will echo later in the religious and socio-political vision of many sub-Saharan African leaders. From Nkrumah to Samora Machel, there is the mystery of the adoption of concepts and symbols from sub-Saharan African religious backgrounds that is seen in the behaviour of the people. Bediako (1998: 27) observes something very interesting about the adoption of concepts and symbols by Nkrumah:

When Dr. Kwame Nkrumah accepted the title of *Osagyefo*, he must have known what he was doing. Nkrumah was not concerned to promote the interests of the *old* sacral rulers and he was not from a royal house himself. But the title *Osagyefo* portrayed him as the *Saviour* from British colonial rule. Under his presidency, Ghana's coins bore his image and the inscription: *Civitas Ghaniensis Conditor, founder of the state of Ghana.*

The same Bediako concludes “Nkrumah, for all practical purposes, became an ancestor in the old sacral sense. It is not surprising that the Young Pioneers recited: Nkrumah never dies!” What Kwame Bediako displays here could easily be extended to the rest of the sub-Saharan countries. With a few nuances the example of Nkrumah can be seen in Mobutu, who became *Sese Seko*, and Bokassa, who created his Empire. Whether Bediako is right or not, we can affirm that the adoption of some wild animal, as well as some mystical religious symbols on most African coins, follows the same line of thought. Beyond these symbols and writings is hidden all the cunning of religious and sociopolitical languages and practices. To challenge the official orthodoxy and strength of their faith in their sub-Saharan African religion, Samora Machel loved the green snake called Mamba, Mobutu and Kenyatta identified themselves with the leopard, Ahidjo, Kabila and Senghor preferred the lion, Houphoet Boigny and M.G. Buthelezi adopted the elephant, Savimbi and Kaunda the cockerel. Tiranana and others prefer the scorpion. It is not wrong to ascribe the symbol of the rhinoceros to the leadership class of the ANC. However, all those concepts and symbols claim cleverly in favour of one ideology: arrogance and tyranny. It is paradoxical that the accusation of the use of arrogance is made against the oppressors or colonialists, who are their religious and socio-political allies, though religious and socio-political leaders of sub-Saharan Africa make use of tyranny against their own people. The choice of these symbols hides the necessary second intention, because no one uses the figure of the monkey which is a symbol of entertainment. Monkeys are present in many sub-Saharan African countries and could express the idea of community, vital force and affection. Due to lack of knowledge, people of sub-Saharan Africa are destroyed. The verse cited below portrays the four important things that characterize the living reality of those who fall into tyrannical pits, perpetuated by official orthodoxy due to lack of knowledge.

They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves to prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away the understanding of my people. They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God. (Hosea 4:10-12)

All these elements: prostitution, orgy, idolatry and an unfaithful attitude are connected to one another and are the effective tools of such an official orthodoxy. Apparently it seems that the text (cf. Hosea 4:10-12) shows how the prophet would like to establish a discipline in the practice of sexual intercourse. Hitherto it was without doubt that אֱדִבְרֵי אֱלֹהִים, which is the veritable display of the אֱלֹהִים of Yahweh, is a convergent point of those elements and also a great display of Humanity. There is a very strong link between prostitution and politics. Sex is always at the centre of official orthodoxy and the tyrant issue. In the same perspective of demystifying the official orthodoxy, Sakombi, the former Minister of Information and Propaganda of Mobutu's government, reported that²⁸⁹

Mobutu was after power, money and women. Inongo states that to be obedient to the official orthodoxy dictated from *Primacuria*, Mobutu prefers willingly to sleep with the spouses of his friends and colleagues in order to impose over his entourage and to underestimate the value of the rest of the men.

He proceeds: "It was quasi obligatory to offer your spouse, daughter or mother if someone wanted to succeed and maintain his status quo". It is thus not surprising that this misrule of Mobutu was due to his excessive intellectual and socio-economical inferiority complex, that he learned to camouflage with the mask of hubris. It is unfortunate that

²⁸⁹ Interview in the film: Mobutu King of Zaire 1999.

such a horrible way of living, devoid of compensatory intellectual and moral capacities, should be extended to most of the religious and socio-political leaders of the sub-Saharan part of Africa, which today are born poor and the next morning become leaders and patrons (cf. Kitching 1980; Could 1980; Kuper 1965; Bolaji 1970).

It is really regrettable that, in many cases sub-Saharan African leaders, whites and blacks, identify themselves more with wolves, businesspersons, than with leaders. In most cases, the homes of these leaders are broken and adultery and the practice of polygamy even among the Roman Catholic and Protestant religious leaders is a justification that they use to satisfy their sexual appetites. To attain power means to become white, rich and polygamist. Concerning this religious and socio-political collapse, Moussa Konaté (1981: 136), as an oppressed, writes: “Depuis que vous régniez, rien ne va plus. Vous nous avez trompés avec des paroles mielleuses (...) Vous avez apporté la nuit”²⁹⁰. Since 1960, this contradiction and unbalanced attitude between *des paroles mielleuses* and *la nuit* have had repercussions for their mode of leading families, churches and nations. Where, then, do missionaries stand as holders of religious and moral power in sub-Saharan parts of Africa, in the face of such religious and socio-political tragedy? Should the training received according to the ideology of religious and socio-political official orthodoxy from most of the missionaries be considered as the wine, which fascinates as well as misrules the religious and socio-political leadership classes? Can Jesus’ words: “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from

²⁹⁰ Since you are in power, all things are going wrong. You have deceived us with the honeyed words. You have brought the darkness.

thistles” (cf. Matthew 7:16), not be applied to most of the missionaries? In response, in most of the cases, missionaries use two devices, repression and the slogan of *Afro-pessimism*, to justify their innocence. We repeat here that *Afro-pessimism* is temporarily acceptable due to the evidence of the real incompetence of the religious and socio-political leadership classes (cf. Carter and O’Meara 1985: 57). Contrary to this, it is also true that *Missio-pessimism* is not to be excluded. Evidently we can support the lack of knowledge which keeps the people of the sub-Saharan part of Africa contemplative and superstitious but, as deel Arrudo (1969:43) notes:

Pior que a superstição é a hipocrisia religiosa aquela, se é um falso culto, pode dirigir-se ao verdadeiro Deus; a ignorância a torna perdoável. Esta, porém, a hipocrisia, realmente é culto, mas de alguma divindade falsa, cinicamente escondida nas aparências da verdadeira. No altar de Deus, adora-se, entao, o Interêsse Commercial ou Político, a Ambição ou a Vaidade, ídolos que Cristianismo jamais conseguirá destronar, enquanto lhes não arrancar corajosamente a mascara²⁹¹.

As an oppressed, deel Arrudo is more flexible than most of the missionaries. The latter would like to maintain the myth that God sent them to Africa, but their religious and socio-political hypocrisy was camouflaged through proclamation of an uncompleted Gospel (cf. Dickson 2000) and tyranny, which betrayed them. This hypocrisy is today unmasked and all of us are more and more aware that most of them are still strongly used to spreading western religious hegemony and socio-political interests (cf. Arntsen 1997; Comaroff 1985). At this point Adu Boahen (cf. Boahen in Bediako 1996: 6) seems more

²⁹¹ Worse than superstition is religious hypocrisy, which, if it is a false cult, could be directed to the true God; due to ignorance, it is possible to understand such a situation. The hypocrisy is really a kind of cult, but this cult is ascribed to the false divinity, which is hidden in the appearances of a true God. At the altar of God, the devotees worship commercial or political interests, ambition or pride, idols that Christianity never will be able to overthrow if people do not decide to move its mask.

tolerant vis-à-vis most of these messengers of God and recognizes the positive role of missionaries in training African leaders:

The spread of western education, due mainly to the activities of the western missionaries, was... mainly responsible for producing the educated elite, which not only spearheaded the overthrow of the colonial system but also constitutes the backbone of the civil services of independent African states.

Kenyan scholar Ali Mazrui (1978:168) spoke on behalf of missionaries when he pointed that: "A distinction needs to be made between the Christian message and the European messenger who brought it". Bediako (1996: 5-20) emerges as a strong interlocutor in the debate, but there is some nuance, in our opinion, between his writings and his discourse. Crane (1965:367) presented the same nuance. Such nuance, grasped from Bediako as well as Crane's views, leads us to suspect that there is something questionable in missionaries' works. We have some difficulty in embracing Mazrui's view because the man is a message. The dichotomy is a childish affair. Given the way that this part of the world is misruled, it may lead us to conclude that instead of wine drunk in the name of Baals, most of the missionaries who trained most of the actual leaders gave them strong, unlimited measures of whisky, in the name of Western ideology and hegemony (cf. Liyong 1988: 80-91; Arntsen 1997: 45-50; Villa-Vicencio 1989: 25-26). From this perspective, whether or not the slogan of African renaissance strengthens the economies of some countries like Angola, DRC, Cameroon, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria, future generations of sub-Saharan African people will refuse to admit them as God's messengers. Due to the chance of this possible refusal, most of these foreign missionaries have to be replaced by native ones. To reach this goal God has to raise up Hosea and send

him once again to Africa. However, this expected Hosea, who arose among the dead, is not necessarily a *xenon* missionary. This expected missionary can be raised among black or white, coloured or Indian born in this lost paradise called Africa.

Today we depend on these people to bring their brothers and sisters back to Yahweh. Due to the urgency of mission, we think that these sub-Saharan African oppressed have to be ready to integrate in the warfare as the true soldiers of Maccabeus (deel Arrudo 1969: 79) for the defence of the neo-orthodoxy, the ideal of their identity and the truth. This is not a mere utopia; it is what should start to happen and what people of sub-Saharan Africa have to be prepared to do. The time to expect messengers of God only from outside sub-Saharan African lands is over (cf. Malula 1985, Tsishiku 1987 and Bediako 1997 and 1999). Native missionaries have two hard tasks to realize: Firstly, they have to review and to demystify the old orthodoxy rooted in the missionaries' concepts, symbols and practices of theology, as Hosea has done (cf. Hosea 1-4, 8:5-6) in order to display the religious and socio-political nakedness of the Western calf embodied in sub-Saharan African clothes. Most missionaries attributed the entire sub-Saharan African spiritual structure, and especially the role of the ancestors and wooden or golden statues, to the devil (cf. Arntsen 1997: 49-50; Butler 1993: 362-369; McVeigh 1974: 103-130 and Dickson 1984: 50-55). It is true that the role of the ancestors and wooden or golden statues is debatable, but we cannot exclude this from the whole spiritual perspective because, according to Hosea, the cause of misleading is neither the ancestors nor the calf but is entirely linked to the ignorance of אֱלֹהֵי of Yahweh. This is the basis of the neo-orthodoxy of the religious and socio-political leadership classes. Hosea, in his struggle

against syncretism, emphasized the utility of **תע**. Hosea insisted on this, because official orthodoxy or syncretism does not necessarily mean ignorance, it means, in a way, the distorting of **תע**. The second task that these sub-Saharan African missionaries have to accomplish is to look very carefully at the social aspects of their brothers and sisters.

It is well known that this part of the world is the most problematic. We assist in the terrible drama of the existence of human beings. What we have is corruption, illiteracy, war, genocide, poverty, and violation of human rights, tribalism, racism, rape and HIV. Hosea was not interested in physical diseases, but he emphasized religious and socio-political malaises, for instance injustice, exploration, adultery, war and lies, which carried consequent diverse physical diseases. This also happens in modern times. Here Hosea's cosmology identifies with ours, as Nyom (cf. Nyom in Angang *et.al* 1983: 129) notes: "il faut ajouter que la mentalité bantu ignore la dichotomie grecque de la matière et de l'esprit; elle se refuse à tracer une frontière entre le monde sensible et le monde invisible. Elle ne les confond pas; elle ne connaît la distinction"²⁹². From such a perspective there is a clear interdependence between the sensible world and the not sensible or divine world.

For this reason it becomes more and more clear that syncretism always perpetuates religious and physical diseases. We have to recognize that in the past, in spite of severe

²⁹² In addition we have to consider the fact that Bantu culture ignores the existence of the Greek dichotomy between the spirit and material; this culture refuses to draw the line of division between the sensible world and the invisible one.

criticism of Western missionaries, some of them worked hard to end these religious and physical scourges, but did not have total success, for two reasons: Firstly, they did not focus their ministry on demystifying the western calf worshiped in the form of civilization in this part of the world; secondly, they forgot to use the Gospel as the tool that could be employed as a mechanism of cosmic healing. In the book, Hosea is not only a prophet; he is a cosmic healer, because syncretism disturbs the cosmic order. To attend thus entirely to the Lord's commission, as Hosea has done, sub-Saharan African missionaries have to play a double role. They have to be prophets and cosmic healers, called by God and rooted in the knowledge of the neo-orthodoxy (תְּעֵתָ) of the people, the politicians and the religious leaders, in order to demystify the cunning of the calf of the old orthodoxy or syncretism that they worship²⁹³. They also have to be prophets for their societies in order to denounce two phenomena: the social indifference created by the devotees of the calf and the false utopia of paradise instilled into people's minds by the uncompleted teaching of the Gospel carried out by most Western missionaries and their followers (cf. Dickson 2000). This is the unique path that sub-Saharan African missionaries can follow to bring back the בְּרִית אֱלֹהִים , or the true spirit of *Ubuntu*, into our religious and socio-political structures and to end progressively the unexplainable shameful situation of corruption, illiteracy, unemployment, hungry, war, genocide, poverty, violation of human rights, rape and HIV, which are the manifestation of religious and socio-political syncretism, and of serious dehumanisation.

²⁹³ Un penseur chrétien africain qui ne serait pas pleinement engagé dans le devenir de sa société ne saurait prétendre pouvoir être un théologien africain authentique. [An African Christian thinker who should not be entirely engaged in the transformation of his/her society could not pretend to be an authentic African theologian.] (cf. Tshishiku 1980: 83).

5.3 The Dehumanisation of People in Hosea and sub-Saharan Africa

Do we believe what we are, or do we live what we have, or by what we have? These fundamental questions posed by Heschel (1965:5) merit profound reflection and constitute a base for our inquiries in order to end the spiral of violence and chaotic religious and socio-political dehumanisation. Responding in the name of Western people, Heschel (1965: 5) thinks that the difficulty in answering such questions is that Western people know what makes a human being, but Western people do not know what they are. We believe that such an observation as Heschel's not only concerns Western people, it is a sub-Saharan concern, too. The same observation can be ascribed to the drama of Hosea's time. In Hosea's time, the religious and socio-political classes repeated the slogan of the death of Yahweh. With the death of Yahweh, the holders of the *apathetikos* world used the impoverished and weakened man as the cow, i.e. as tools of economic power. They abused the illiterate and marginalized woman as an object for their entertainment. The same men sacrificed sons and daughters on the altar of the beast and the religious and socio-political leaders took the place of Yahweh. Berdyaev (1961:29) avers that: "In making himself God, man (woman) has unmanned him/herself". Here Berdyaev (1961:30) denounces clearly the establishment of modern bestiality and defines such a fact by saying that: "Modern bestialism and dehumanisation are based upon idolatry, the worship of technics, race or class or production, and upon the adaptation of atavistic instincts to this worship". Unfortunately this modern bestialism or dehumanisation coincides with what Hosea ascribed to Baalism (cf. Hosea 1-4, 8:10-12). It also coincides with the actual situation of the people of sub-Saharan Africa, as we tried to describe in Chapter 4. In the actual sub-Saharan Africa, the religious and socio-political leadership classes inaugurate the pure bestialism through the worship of the calf

of the Western power and such religious practices as *primacuria*. This sub-Saharan African bestialism is a denial of the spirit of *Ubuntu*, which implies the denial of the value of the human person, of every human personality and the denial of all sympathy with the fate of any person (cf. Berdyaev 1961: 28). In this next section we are going to analyse what kind of specific mechanism the sub-Saharan African defenders of tyranny and bestiality used since 1960 to reinforce the process of bestialization or dehumanisation of the sub-Saharan African people.

5.3.1 Political Dehumanisation: The Conflict between Oppressor and Oppressed in Hosea and the sub-Saharan postcolonial epoch

They are from Israel! This calf—a craftsman has made it; it is not God. It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria.
(Hosea 8:6)

This verse of revolutionary song found in Hosea was sung by the oppressed. For Hosea, dehumanisation started with religious conflict. We have already demonstrated that to the one who worships the calf will look like the object or subject of his/her worship. From this assumption, it is evident that people, who worship the calf think, act and behave like their sacred canopy. Hosea insisted that שִׂרְטָן (in Vulgate *artifex*) is neither a human being nor God. The song moved people to dismantle or demystify this idol from its roots. Here Hosea clearly declared the beginning of warfare against the religious and socio-

political oppressive systems. The *Amandla*²⁹⁴ that Hosea used to gather and involve those oppressed in warfare is לֹא אֱלֹהִים, whose equivalent is לֹא-אֱלֹהִים. We can listen to two voices in the dispute; the first is based on the old orthodoxy and supported by the oppressive class in their struggle against the new orthodoxy. The second voice is heard as the cry of the oppressed, who discover in this לֹא אֱלֹהִים, whose equivalent is לֹא-אֱלֹהִים, the chance of establishing a new order from the new orthodoxy rooted on the יְהוָה of Yahweh. It is important to observe that both expressions לֹא אֱלֹהִים and לֹא-אֱלֹהִים are religious. The boundary between true religion and idolatry is extremely sensitive and sometimes unrecognisable. Here the idolater, who pronounces לֹא אֱלֹהִים, is not the person who has broken with religion, as we have demonstrated above, but the one who is practising it (cf. Morgan 1964:28). Idolatry is religion seeking to worship God through any representation of Himself (cf. Morgan 1964:29). We repeat that it is not easy to discern the frontier between idolatry and true worship of God. In a situation of war, misery and foreign imperialism, as is found in Hosea, where did the oppressed find the inspiration to struggle against the religious and socio-political processes of dehumanisation? Eliade (1964:31) responds that:

The man of the traditional societies feels the basic unity of all kinds of ‘deeds,’ ‘works,’ or ‘forms,’ whether they are biological, psychological, or historical. An unsuccessful war can be homologised with a sickness, with a dark, discouraged heart, with a sterile woman, with a poet’s lack of inspiration, as with any other critical existential situation in which man is driven to despair. And all these negative,

²⁹⁴ The slogan of the *African National Congress* (South Africa) “Amandla ... awethu: power...for (us) people”.

desperate, apparently irremediable situations are reversed
by recitation of the cosmogonic myth.

It is evident that Hosea's text is, in a way, a recitation of the cosmogonic myth that serves to condemn and to struggle against the oppressive process of dehumanisation. In the text, the dispute for the choice of the word to reverse the tragic display of the people is **לֹא אֱלֹהִים** and is **לֹא-אֱלֹהִים**. Yahweh discerns the gravity of the situation and opts for the former voice: **לֹא אֱלֹהִים**. The poet replaced the sacred name Yahweh by **אֱלֹהִים**. It seems that the poet made an existential distinction between Yahweh and **אֱלֹהִים**. The text omits: **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים** (other gods) as is in Exodus (cf. Exodus 20:3). The crucial distinction between Yahweh and idols moves us to suspect that, in contrast to what we find in Genesis 1:1, **אֱלֹהִים** is synonymous with a calf or any object and subject raised to the level of a deity. If our suggestion is correct, the adoption of the former voice: **אֱלֹהִים**, as was done by Yahweh, means that He refused to be forgotten, banished and, above all, to die. This is confirmed by the use of the particle of negation of existence or reality: **לֹא**. In His despair, God refers to the oppressed as His partners. God's struggle becomes that of the oppressed one and the survival of Yahweh, which, paradoxically, is the same as that of the marginalized poor and oppressed, depends in a way on the audacity and the trust of His fellow-sufferers.

It is known that history is a vast panorama of idols worshipped and idols smashed (cf. Heschel 1965: 104); hence the expression induces us to say: לֹא אָדָם²⁹⁵, this is not Man. The expression לֹא אֱלֹהִים not only concerns God, it also involves Humanity. In this case, by appealing to such an expression, the poet would like to mean that the image of human being has been shaken and has begun to disintegrate after it was revealed (cf. Berdyaev 1961:29). Perhaps the same author would also like to communicate the idea that, in making himself God, human being has unmanned himself, as Berdyaev (1961:29) observes. There is no doubt that this verse of song, לֹא אֱלֹהִים, sounds the cry of mobilization of the sub-Saharan people since their independence era, and still resounds even today. To challenge the actual sacred canopy of idolatry established and worshipped by the actual false religious and socio-political leadership classes, and to reverse this holocaust endured in sub-Saharan Africa, it is important that whites and blacks, Indian, and coloureds have to repeat together this cry of *Amandla*: לֹא אֱלֹהִים. At least Lumumba (cf. Lumumba in Kabue 1975:175) as a poet had already anticipated this generation and had found in this mechanism of reversal the point of departure:

...Et pour te faire oublier que tu étais un homme, On t'
 apprit à chanter les louanges de Dieu.
 Et ces divers cantiques, en rythmant ton calvaire, Te
 donnaient l' espoir en un monde meilleur.
 Mais en ton coeur de créature humaine tu ne demandais
 [guere]
 Que ton droit à la vie et ta part de bonheur...²⁹⁶.

²⁹⁵ לֹא אִישׁ אֶל וְיִכּוֹב וּבִן־אָדָם וַיִּתְנַחֵם סְהוּוּא אָמַר וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה וְדַבֵּר וְלֹא יִקְיַמְנָה:

²⁹⁶ And to make you forget that you were a human being, they taught you to sing God's praises. And these different canticles giving rhythm to your suffering gave you hope of a better world. But in your human heart you asked ardently that your right to live and your portion of happiness...

Maggiolini (1984: 542) understands, in a way, Lumumba's view when he comments:

C'est pourtant bien ce qui arrive en fait: la 'dictature douce' dont nous parlons prend soin d'éveiller les désirs et les demandes qu' elle a d' avance décidé de satisfaire et n' en admet pas d' autres. De la sorte, l' individu manipulé a l' impression de 'découvrir' et de 'célébrer' la liberté, dans le temps même où il ne fait que suivre, sous une contrainte inaperçue, et se conformer aux consignes qui lui sont soufflées, au 'style de vie ' qui lui est imposé²⁹⁷.

Lumumba's revolt and frustration can be extended to Agostinho Neto, Mandela, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Tiranana, Kasa-Vubu, Ahidjo, Youlou, Sékou Touré, De Klerk, Tombalbaye and Samora Machel. In addition to Lumumba, these leaders were the ones who were able to foresee the danger that affects all sub-Saharan African countries. It is not surprising that the alienated churches that we have in sub-Saharan Africa embraced, due to their religious and intellectual myopia, the political voice since the famous Cold War and considered these leaders as communists (cf. Kanza 1972: 168-169 and Tshishiku 1980: 126-131). It is from such an incorrect perception that the Anglican Church in Anglophone Africa, the Reformed and Lutheran churches in southern Africa and the Catholic Church in Francophone Africa contributed greatly in the emergence of cruel leaders in sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Oosthuizen 1968: 1-22; Verstraelen 1992: 11-56). The argument of these Official Churches was that they feared the unexpected emergence of independent churches because they suspected that these Independent African Churches were working with the enemies of the state and Official Churches (cf. Comaroff 1985: 10-12, 137-140; Kabue 1975:171-186). In the case of South Africa and Namibia, it is

²⁹⁷This is in fact what happens: the *benign dictatorship*, we are talking about is careful only to awaken the desires and demands which it has already decided to satisfy and do not admit of others. In this way, the manipulated individual has the impression of discovering and extolling liberty, at the same time that he only follows, under constraint of which he is unaware, the rules which are suggested to him, and the life style which is imposed on him.

possible that the Reformed church used a kind of machiavellic and strategic tolerance in relation to the great emergence of Independent Churches among the minorities and the black majority, this was perhaps the way that they found to maintain the religious and socio-political ideology of Apartheid.

From this ideal of struggling directly or indirectly against the emergence of Independent Churches, Protestant and Catholic official Churches in sub-Saharan African countries had to work together with their idols, as will be demonstrated later. Are the Official Churches, those that depend on the old orthodoxy, able to humanize the state in sub-Saharan Africa? The response depends on where the reader stands. We think that the mistake of official churches is that they forget that אֱלֹהֵינוּ and אֱלֹהֵי in sub-Saharan Africa are never a matter of the state. Analysing the history of the formation of the state, Berdyaev (1961:11) says: “We find non-humanity in the history of the formation of states and empires, in the struggles of tribes and nations, in revolutions and reactions, in wars”. Berdyaev (1961:11) concludes that: “It is very difficult, for instance, to humanize the state, that pet creation of history”. If Berdyaev is right, we understand now why this religious and socio-political prostitution, based on idolatry, is costing dearly the Official Churches, as well as the people. We also know that the attempt to rupture such a false marriage, which apparently moves politicians and religious leaders to kiss, embrace and worship together the same calf is very costly for the churches. To muffle the prophetic voice, the politicians, together with their allies from the official churches, never hesitate to sacrifice prophets at the altar of Zeus and Moloch. Mveng, Malula, Kivengere, Danquah, Steve Biko, Janini, Ives Plummey and other anonymous individuals are victims

of such religious and socio-political atrocity. This sub-Saharan African modern cruelty is not dictated from the popular locus as it was in the village. Unfortunately, with the end of the power of the village, the modern structure opts for the palace as the locus for decisions and, above all, is where the process of the dehumanisation of sub-Saharan African modern societies is planned²⁹⁸. The next section deals with this connection between the palace and the mechanism of dehumanisation in Hosea, as well as in the sub-Saharan African context.

5.3.2 The Palace: The Locus of Dehumanization in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African context

Ephraim mixes with the nations; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over. Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice. Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the LORD his God or search for him. (Hosea 7:8-10)

In the book of Hosea, the conflict started in the locus of the home, then it moved to the temple and now it is present in the palace, which is the symbol of political power. What is the role played by the palace in this process of dehumanisation in Hosea's time? The palace is close to the temple. When the poet demystifies it, he displays the nakedness of this supposed holy place. For him seven things misrule the nation: immorality; banquets and orgy; conspiracy; assassination and the struggle for power; and false electoral process. Hosea did not hesitate to declaim against such things:

²⁹⁸ Here we would like to get clear for the reader that modernity is not evil. What we are questioning is the negative consequences that modernity brought into the religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African structures.

They delight the king with their wickedness, the princes with their lies. They are all adulterers; burning like an oven whose fire the baker need not stir from the kneading of the dough till it rises. On the day of the festival of our king the princes become inflamed with wine, and he joins hands with the mockers. Their hearts are like an oven; they approach him with intrigue. Their passion smolders all night; in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. All of them are hot as an oven; they devour their rulers. All their kings fall, and none of them calls on me. (Hosea 7:3-7)

This text confirms once again that Hosea is really a free man. The prophet clearly paints the reason for the religious and socio-political drama. According to him, in the absence of a charismatic system to legitimise power and rulers, people intensify their ambitions by turning to murder. In the northern part of Israel one king succeeds another in a short space of time. The reason for such political crises is the total exclusion of Yahweh. It does not matter whether the system is good or strong; the one which does not include God becomes demonic and the consequence is conspiracy, war, assassination, the struggle for power and the sacrifice of the people. Why does the exclusion of God generate such a situation? Alves (1990:109) notes, "The power of love produces beauty and happiness. But the love of power can only produce pain and death". He proceeds "... if power without love is the devil, we come to the conclusion that there is something demonic in the realm of politics. Indeed, the highest expressions of the political order are nothing but the triumph of power over love". It is not by coincidence that Augustine (cf. Augustine in Alves 1990:109) observes that "Robberies: what are they but little kingdoms?" Alves (1990:109) comments on Augustine and says that when he defined the state as a successful robbery, he was saying that its essence is not the happiness it promises to produce, but rather the power it holds with impunity. This impunity goes together with the use of force, as Marx Weber, and Trotsky said (cf. Weber and Trotsky in Alves 1990:109). The use of force as a way of ruling people causes profound

frustration. In fact, force, which is the synonym of power, is the negation of the people's expectation of harmony and equality. Alves (1985:56) is correct in stating that "compreende-se que esta familiaridade que existe entre poder e crueldade faça a alma religiosa estremecer"²⁹⁹. He notes that:

Seria mais facil falar apenas sobre a vida e sobre o amor. Mas, existiria amor sem o poder? Haverá vida sem poder? O fato é que somente os mortos fazem abstinência do poder. E, se formos honestos, teremos de reconhecer que só nos entregamos a um deus quando ele nos recompensa com a dádiva do poder. Não se trata de uma afirmação da teologia; é a própria observação empírica que o constata ³⁰⁰.

Here Alves poses a really pertinent problem because the use of force and cruelty, instead of dialogue which maintains the spirit of *Ubuntu*, destroys God's and people's pathos. It is from this perspective of a world without pathos that we can understand two things: firstly, the unexplainable changes that occur in the behaviour of sub-Saharan African leaders, who start as the *salvador da patria*³⁰¹ and later, become *destruidor da patria*³⁰². From Nkrumah to Sekou Touré, Bokassa, Bongo, Gowon, Moussa Traoré, Matthias Nguema, Idi Amin, Paul Biya, Abiarimana, P.W. Botha, Abacha, Buyoya, Sasou Ngwesu and Mobutu, or from Nyerere to Machel, Mugabe, Michombero, Kayimbanda, Maga, Obote, Abdio Diouf, Eduardo dos Santos, Mengistu, Museveni, Paul Kagame, Blaise

²⁹⁹ It is easily understood that the familiarity, which exists between power and cruelty, strains any religious soul.

³⁰⁰ It could be easier to speak about life and love. But it is possible for love to exist without power? It is possible to get life without power? The truth is that only the dead are not preoccupied with power. And, if we are honest, we have to recognize that we can only give ourselves up to any divinity if it is able to reward us with the gift of power. This is not a theological affirmation, but results from the empirical observation.

³⁰¹ The pejorative expression that is ascribed to the one who would pretend to be a liberator and would like to do everything for his/her country.

³⁰² Looter of the country.

Compaoré, El Beshir, Chissano, Melesse Zenawi and, above all, Laurent Desiré Kabila, sub-Saharan African history always repeats itself.

Secondly, we consider the frustration of sub-Saharan Africa since the colonial era. This frustration carries leaders to extreme nationalism which results from unprepared independence, but now this frustration is displayed in the form of coups, civil wars and secessions. Sub-Saharan African people are betrayed (cf. Ayitteh 1992: 1-140). They are lost in this world in which the *demon* of power requires the sacrifice of any kind of spirit of *Ubuntu* to legitimise its tyranny and indispensable role. This demon, disguised in diverse forms, was in the past sometimes painted as *capitalism*, and in many cases as *communism*, as has already been mentioned. The devotees on both sides were divided in the socio-political struggle to prove their faithfulness to their idol. With the end of communism as a religious and socio-political movement, idolatry is substituted with a new one: globalisation. The devotees discovered in this new idol the balance between economic and political power. This is not a novelty, however, because in Hosea's time the economic and politically oppressive systems walked together, for the great gods of the ancient Near East were associated both with fertility or economic power and political power (cf. Lind 1984: 399). What is interesting is the fact that, on both sides, the ritual was the same, as well as the sacrifice to be offered: the people, as it was in Hosea's time. Meanwhile, what has changed in the new context? There is no significant change.

In this new context of legitimising power, it does not matter what price the people would have to pay; famine and civil war are used for obtaining, legitimising and maintaining

power. It is from this prism that we can understand the pursuit of war since Apartheid, in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Senegal; likewise in Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Namibia and the interminable war for diamonds and oil in Angola. It will take time to persuade the sub-Saharan African leaders that the abusive use of the *demon* of money and power never can relieve the suffering of people or muffle the voice of the oppressed. Jacques Chevrier's (1974: 276) observation is thus appropriate and in this context when he asserts:

Il est grand temps de cesser de geindre et de récriminer, le Nègre doit, une fois pour toutes, congédier ses rancœurs vis-à-vis de l'ancien colonisateur; il faut éviter de renverser les rôles et de devenir, à son tour, l'opresseur³⁰³.

Milolo (1986: 19-20) comments on Jacques Chevrier's prophetic observation and says:

...la dénonciation des nouveaux maîtres qui n'ont pensé qu'à régner et à tirer les avantages que leur conféraient leurs fonctions. Ils sont devenus plus tyrans que les colons. D'où l'amertume de la population devant le manque d'organisation économique et politique dont ces nouveaux dirigeants d'Afrique sont les symboles³⁰⁴.

Our disappointment with Chevrier and Milolo is due to the fact that they think that most of the missionaries, colonizers and sub-Saharan African tyrants are distinct and separate.

³⁰³ It is time to stop whining and recriminating: the Negro must, once and for all, cast off his rancour towards the former colonizer: the Negro must avoid reversing roles and becoming, in his turn, the oppressor.

³⁰⁴ The new masters, who thought only of being in power and benefiting from the advantage conferred on them by their office, use the political system of denouncing, but these new masters have become more tyrannical than their colonisers. Hence the bitterness of people in the face of the lack of political and economical organization symbolised by the new African leadership.

The link between missionaries, colonizers and sub-Saharan African tyrants is a very sensitive one. Arnsten (1997: 49) intervenes in the debate and notes:

The role of the missionaries in the colonisation of the region was also considerable in terms of cultural and political domination of the people. Although the missionaries' task was to make people accept the Bible and its teachings, Christianity was turned into an ideology which could be used to convince people not to resist white domination. Religion was used to legitimate, sustain and even promote political tyranny and oppression, as well as in other instances for reasons of political liberation of the people.

Villa-Vicencio (1989: 25) insisted that: "In Africa religion has functioned both as *the opiate of the people* and a *source of the social renewal*". Bourdillon defends missionaries and says that: "missionary Christianity cannot simply be identified with colonialism". In a way Bourdillon is correct, but Father Wolf Schmidt (cf. Schmidt in Arnsten 1997: 49) replies that "the early missionaries did not differentiate between their faith and their own culture". The issue seems to be sensitive and there is no reason to dismiss such attitudes as a thing of the past. Many of the same sentiments can, however, be found in contemporary religious expression and among the leaders of various groups (cf. Arnsten 1997: 49-51). The question is, is it possible after one decade for those who have supported or suffered under a regime like Mobutism or Apartheid to change all aspects of their religious and socio-political view, or will the change only be achieved in the next generation? Chevrier and Milolo, due to the latter's experience in the DRC, are aware that the actual form of ruling is still the proposed perpetuation of missionaries' and colonizers' tyranny (cf. Martin 1971, de Gruchy 1997, Turner 1963, Carolyn 1993). Concerning this perpetuation of tyranny, Mongo Beti (1974: 84) notes that: "Aujourd'

hui l'oppression se couvre du masque de la coopération, cette dernière n'est que la poursuite de la colonisation, par les mêmes méthodes, mais avec d'autres mots"³⁰⁵. Mobutu, following Mongo Beti, once courageously challenged his western religious and socio-political creators by asking: "Qui aide qui?"³⁰⁶ We identify with Mongo Beti and Mobutu, as we are convinced that this proposed perpetuation of tyranny became possible because, since 1960, people of sub-Saharan Africa were not given the chance either in the religious or in the socio-political sphere to freely elect their proper leaders. Indeed, the religious and socio-political leaders are merely symbols of Western tyranny. They are leaders *made in the West* and not *elected by the people*. They do not therefore have the chance to decide for themselves and to rule according to the spirit of *Ubuntu*. These leaders are obliged to obey faithfully orders of their creators, namely Western religious and socio-political leaders, and worship the same calf, *globalisation*, which is the dangerous and shameless symbol of Western religious and socio-political arrogance and manipulation. Our view on this issue can be seen as mere simplification, but we would like to emphasize that behind American missionaries there is a flag of the U.S.A., or behind Kimbanguism (cf. Martin 1975) there is a Congolese flag. Yahweh foresaw, as the God of the sub-Saharan African people and Israel, the danger of such a way of establishing and manipulating religious and socio-political leaders. He claims:

They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria! My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of purity? (Hosea 8:4-5)

³⁰⁵ Today the oppressive system is clothed with a mask of cooperation, this new form of cooperation is nothing but neo-colonialism, using the same methods but changing the discourse.

³⁰⁶ Who does help whom?

Why was Yahweh, the God of the sub-Saharan African people and Israel, opposed to the electoral process that occurred in Israel? What is wrong with the people making a choice to freely elect their leaders? Lind (1984: 401) responds that: “In Ancient Israel, religion and politics were one. Yahweh as political leader to whom the people committed themselves in obedience made his will known through the prophet”. In other words, Yahweh played the double role: God and King. With such a double role in politics and religion, Yahweh was indispensable and therefore the people had to be consulted before electing a king. In fact, Lind (1984:401) is correct when he says that Yahweh requires such involvement because people committed themselves freely in obedience to Him. The text cited above reminds us of the turbulent epoch of Samuel.

At least two symbols were always considered as opposites to the faithful devotee of Yahweh: city and kingship. Instead of speaking to the people through the king, Yahweh made His will known through the prophet. Lind (1984:401) proceeds and concludes that: “Thus torah and the word of Yahweh through the prophet, rather than kingship as an institution representing violent power (*the Enlil*), were at the centre of Yahwistic politics.” Whether what Lind defends is true or not, the text referred to above (cf. Hosea 8:4-5) is a vibrant antithesis for Assyrian ideology. It is true that Lind’s reflection is based on another text, but this reflection fits into our debate and Lind is right when he (1984: 401) says that:

For the Assyrians, religion and politics were one. The king of Assyria, leader of the armed forces, was the servant of the god Ashur. Thus the institution of arbitrary rule was at the center of Assyrian politics and religion. As a servant of

Ashur it was the king's responsibility to manipulate that power to make evident Ashur's rule in the world.

Such a conception of leadership fits into our context in which, according to Bediako (1996: 11): "The ruler is the central figure at the instituted religious rituals which ensure the maintenance of the desired harmony between the living and the ancestors". If Bediako and others are right, we can say that the text referred to above is a vibrant antithesis of those who are in power or expect to control religious and socio-political power in sub-Saharan Africa. This is because Yahweh was understood as the One who sets slaves free. In this respect, Yahweh could not actually be compared to the kings in the ancient Orient (cf. Wolff 1973:261). In their daily struggle to acquire freedom, sub-Saharan African people endeavour, in one way, to disregard the idol of power which muffles their desire and creative energy for assuming their own fate and, in another way they are struggling for the democratisation of religious and socio-political power. If the Latin proverb *vox populi, vox dei*³⁰⁷ is applied here, it is possible to think that the same text serves as a very strong servomechanism to denounce the electoral system of fraud established in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ephraim mixes with the nations; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over. Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice. Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the LORD his God or search for him. (Hosea 7:8-10)

If we put the text cited above with Hosea 8:4-5, we can remark that the poet is still concerned with foreign interference in Israel's religious and socio-political affairs and

³⁰⁷The voice of the people is the voice of God

especially in its electoral process. We know that, through electoral fraud, people assume the right to rule. Even if it is supported and encouraged by the incompetent religious and socio-political internal leadership class and invisible outsiders, electoral fraud is ironically one of the elements which enforces Afro-pessimism, weakens the religious and socio-political authority and the popular power, and above all adverts the immaturity of sub-Saharan African people, who are easily manipulated.

Such religious and socio-political prostitution has to end and it is time for sub-Saharan African people to realise that a leader who is not elected in free and democratic elections cannot be a servant of the people. He will always work to satisfy the external interest. Sub-Saharan African people have to resort to the ancient form of leadership, which depended on charisma (cf. Weber 1970:72,244-247) and competence, rather than on external interference. When there is an external interference, charisma is substituted by force, love of the people is substituted by the will to power, truth is substituted by fraud and humanity is replaced by interest. The person who assumes this kind of leadership is *made in the West* instead of being *elected by his/ her fellows*, and being the manifestation of the people's choice, this person eventually becomes a veritable tyrant (cf. Mongo Beti 1974, Konaté 1981, Milolo 1986: 1-58, Chevrier 1974 and Sean 1993), prostitute and slave of the devotees of the wooden calf. Machiavelli (1963: 69) supports Yahweh's opinion and justifies his point of view:

A man who is made a prince by the favour of the people should work to retain their friendship; and this is easy for him because the people ask only not to be oppressed. But a man who has become prince against the will of the people and by the favour of the nobles should, before anything else, try to win the people over; this too is easy if he takes

them under his protection. When men receive favours from someone they expected to do them ill, they are under a greater obligation to their benefactor; just so the people can in an instant become more amicably disposed towards the prince than if he had seized power by their favour.

Yahweh and Machiavelli's points of view converge here, because the leader who is like a product *made in the West* is always a slave and inhuman. This leader will never become a real fellow-sufferer with the people. In his discourse he will always pretend that he shares the people's pathos, but his deeds will contribute to the dehumanisation of all the religious and socio-political structures. Such dehumanisation leads to disastrous situations such as injustice, famine, war, violence and repeated assassinations. Yahweh and Machiavelli perceive the pitfall and above all the danger of political and military dependence. This dependence carries the risk of idolatry and slavery. In fact, due to the strict law of obligatory submission that the slave has to observe with regard to his/her owner, the protected always worships publicly the gods of protectors (e.g. money, arms) and secretly they frequent traditional *Nganga nkisi* or some Guru of African or Asian mystical sects. Yahweh and Machiavelli understood such a risk more than Israel and sub-Saharan African leaders. Here, contrary to the foreigners' power and idols, Yahweh presents himself as a veritable God, fellow sufferer and fellow protector. Therefore, in skilfully suggesting this fundamental pathetic encounter and interaction between the palace, temple and plebs, Yahweh and Machiavelli unmask the owners of the religious and socio-political circus and establish the principle of friendship, freedom and good governance between religious and socio-political leaders and the plebs. Those who believe in Yahweh and those who work with Him to end idolatry and dehumanisation completely can only experience this principle.

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his sores, then Ephraim turned to Assyria, and sent to the great king for help. But he is not able to cure you, not able to heal your sores. For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, like a great lion to Judah. I will tear them to pieces and go away; I will carry them off, with no one to rescue them. Then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery they will earnestly seek me. (Hosea 5:13-15)

Apart from this danger of the dehumanisation of religious and socio-political power, other problems include injustice, famine, war, violence and successive assassinations. Hosea denounces this and notes that any alliance with the calf necessarily implies military dependence. In the following quotation, Machiavelli (1963:77) becomes the ally of Yahweh and prophetically refutes the worship of the calf:

Now, I say that arms on which a prince bases the defence of his state are either his own, or mercenary, or auxiliary, or composite. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous. If a prince bases the defence of his state on mercenaries he will never achieve stability or security.

Instead of resorting to mercenaries and auxiliaries, Machiavelli (1963: 77) identifies with Hosea and notes:

The main foundations of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms; and because you cannot have good laws without good arms, where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow.

Machiavelli's perception is exact. There is no hint of xenophobia in his writings. What is true is that, as a prophet, Machiavelli foresaw that mercenaries, independent of their identity or nature, always bring with them a new ideology and religion. The insertion of

many *mercenaries* and *auxiliaries* into their religious and socio-political systems could also be one of the causes of the sub-Saharan African drama. This interference by foreigners causes more instability. The cunning attitude of the insiders and outsiders is to create a *banana state*, in which there is no law and consequently no veritable republican army. In most cases, the armies that most sub-Saharan African countries have are indeed simply militias that are used to protect the tyrants and their regimes. This fact perpetuates religious and socio-political instabilities. The religious and socio-political instabilities encourage abusive actions for the owners of the circus who are profiting from the weakness of their devotees.

The merchant uses dishonest scales; he loves to defraud.
Ephraim boasts, I am very rich; I have become wealthy.
With all my wealth they will not find in me any iniquity or sin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt; I will make you live in tents again, as in the days of your appointed feasts. I spoke to the prophets, gave them many visions and told parables through them. Is Gilead wicked? Its people are worthless! Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal? Their altars will be like piles of stones on a plowed field. Jacob fled to the country of Aram; Israel served to get a wife, and to pay for her he tended sheep. The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him. But Ephraim has bitterly provoked him to anger; his Lord will leave upon him the guilt of his bloodshed and will repay him for his contempt. (Hosea 12: 7-14)

The rude field test for any religious and socio-political power of idolaters is the socio-economic sphere. The text shows that the poet launches an appeal against injustice. With the placement of the calf in the midst of the socio-economic environment, meanness becomes the way of enrichment. Trade, which is the opportunity of people to encounter and strengthen relationships, becomes the unique basis of dehumanisation and exploitation. Amos seems firmer than Hosea on this point, although both point out the

grave case of the interference of idolatry in socio-economical life, which results in dehumanisation.

The question is, who was concerned by the message of Hosea? The new orthodoxy brought by Hosea defended the right of the people who are utterly powerless. The voice of the poet coincides with Jesus' petition for mere daily bread and James' cry for the oppressed. If the situation of the people was similar to what actually happens in our context, then we can suspect that Hosea's song aims directly at the conscience of all the religious and socio-political leadership classes. This concerns those who have control over the oppressive socio-economic mechanism. Hosea seems to suggest the replacement of the ancient leadership class by a new one. Berdyaev (1961: 20) perceives this continual need for searching for ideal leaders among the oppressed:

The search for leaders who can lead the masses, offer alleviation for woes, solve all problems, means simply that all the classic authorities have fallen, monarchy and democracy together, born of collective 'possession' of the mass. The leader must provide bread and the theatre.

However, Berdyaev (1961: 20) regrets that the leaders usually provide more theatre than bread. If our approach to Berdyaev is correct, this modern prophet understands Hosea very well. Berdyaev does not seem to support a kind of parasitism in relation to the leaders, as is encouraged by some humanitarians, missionaries and sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political leaders. This childish dependence is, according to our view, the motive for the frustration of the people. To perpetuate such dependence, which is a kind of neo-religious and socio-political colonialism, the colonizers, and most of the

missionaries support an Afro-pessimism and defend the idea that “sub-Saharan African people never become mature” (cf. Arnsten 1997:48-51). What does it mean that sub-Saharan African people are not able to assume their fate? While from the perspective of the text (cf. Hosea 12:7-14) the poet is in opposition to a perpetuation of such childishness and dehumanisation, he preferred to point out how the leadership deceives people via palace turbulence and trade disorder. It is exactly what Berdyaev has observed; this points to the key role of the leadership class in providing resources and creating a profitable socio-economic environment for the promotion of socio-economic justice. If Berdyaev looked at this role positively, Juvenal who imagined this role used it as a satire against the Roman Empire. Indeed, Juvenal (cf. Juvenal in Bueno1991: 1235) denounced this Machiavellian form of combining bread and theatre which results in the total dehumanisation of people. As a poet, Juvenal laments that people were used as dogs. Bread and theatre are what the people need, although they are able to get, think and realize more if the oppressive leadership creates a free space for them. This satire sounds like the humble prayer of the oppressed and landless made by Jesus, who, in contrast to the opulence and indifference of royal palaces and landowners, said that people need only their daily bread. The sharing of pathos, which the religious and socio-political holders of power, the landowners and others profiteers of the oppressed class refused to share with them, is confirmed in the parable of *the Rich man and Lazarus* (cf. Luke 16:19-31).

The merchant uses dishonest scales; he loves to defraud.
Ephraim boasts, I am very rich; I have become wealthy.
With all my wealth they will not find in me any iniquity or
sin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of
Egypt; I will make you live in tents again, as in the days of
your appointed feasts. (Hosea 12: 7-9)

Hosea, Juvenal, Berdyaev and, above all, Jesus, as masters of subversion (cf. Peterson 1989: 51), do not insist on the perpetuation of the system of *welfare*, which passes from the great father to the rest of the generations and installs an eternal parasitism in the mind of *beggars*. These modern beggars, spread over many cities of sub-Saharan Africa, claim the restitution of their human dignity that the oppressive class refuses to recognize. Hosea had to walk among sub-Saharan African markets. He is very objective. In the text the poet points out the use of fraud in commerce, which is the modern source of bread for the poor and superfluity of money for the rich. He increased the spectacle by displaying moral decadence, which affects the affective relationship and obviously questions the permanence of the spirit of *Ubuntu*. Felix S. Cohen (cf. Cohen in Carter and O' Meara 1985: 332), analysing the situation, observes that:

Political independence then is not an adequate answer to all colonial problems. Recognizing the distinction between economic and political dominance, we can formulate our basic problem in this way: How can we minimize the evils of political over-lordship without increasing the evils of private economic exploitation?

It is evident that two problems affect Cohen's perception of the issue: his myopia in trying to understand the cunning of colonialism and his incapacity to analyse the political demon and the economic demon as the same entity, clothed in different forms. It seems that Cohen is not a part of the problem of *Belgo-Congolaise*, *Nigerian-UK*, *Zimbabwe-UK* or *Angola-Portugal*, *Senegal-European Union* or *South Africa-European Union*, *Ethiopia-Italy* litigation, just to name but a few. The text of Hosea thus contributes to understand the role of economy in the daily life of people. For Hosea the economic issue is linked to the religious and socio-political situations. Also, for Hosea, the worship of the calf affected the whole system of human existence, including the economy. There is a

lack of such a profound perception of the calf's power among sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political prophets. It is very dangerous for those who are involved in this guerrilla warfare to underestimate, on the one hand, the tremendous capacities of seduction that the calf owns and, on the other hand, the force and the ambition of the calf to control its slaves spread over the world, and particularly over sub-Saharan Africa. Those who are fighting for truth, justice and, above all, for the restoration of the spirit of *Ubuntu* in sub-Saharan Africa have to be aware that these devotees of the calf are prepared to be obedient to their god, to prostitute anyhow, anytime and anywhere, provided that the nakedness of the calf be covered and its worship be maintained intact.

From Hosea's macro-economical perspective of the calf it is also possible to think that Jesus' satire of the *rich man and Lazarus*, which actually coincides with Berdyaev, and Juvenal's idea of dehumanisation, move in the same direction. This way of understanding the macro-economic aspects of the realities of the calf's influence from Jesus' perspective seems very important, because the turbulence that people face in the sub-Saharan African context is due to their very large incommensurable reserve of natural resources³⁰⁸. The trade exchanges with natural resources occurring in sub-Saharan Africa and perpetuated by the West, with the complicity of the religious and socio-political leadership classes, are disastrous. This dramatic scene is taking such a long time that it is going to cause fatigue. We suspect that the sub-Saharan African audience is tired of visiting their circus: leopard, lion, snake, cockerel, crocodile, or any other animal, which indeed are veritable

³⁰⁸ See the actual drama which is offered to their spectators, a scene like Cameroonian and Togolese socio-political backwardness, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Central African turbulence; Ethiopian, Eritrean, Somalian and Sudanese drama; Sierra Leonean, Liberian, Chadian, Congolese and Angolan wars; Bissau Guineans, Malawian, Djiboutien and Mozambican alienation; Rwandan and Burundian genocides; South African and Namibian Apartheid; Zimbabwean land conflict; the existence of an oppressive monarchy in Lesotho and

monkeys (entertainers). The inside and outside patrons or owners of these monkeys use them uniquely to entertain and distract people from their real historical tragedy. These owners of those apparently *savage* animals display them according to their willingness in the circus until the end of the next programmed episode. If what we are saying is true, we can thus assert that the long stay in power of certain figures³⁰⁹ is questionable. In addition, there is suspicion that the deaths of leaders like Mondlane, Cabral, Steve Biko, Diallo Telly, Chris Hani, Hoje Hayenda, Ngandu and Paul Thembo are not mere coincidences.

From the same perspective, we can say that the way that Nkrumah and others³¹⁰ were removed from power, and also the recent assassination of Laurent Desiré Kabila, Jonas Savimbi and General Tembo, might teach us more about the conflicting interests of those insiders and outsiders who own the sub-Saharan African circus. We seriously question the way that Nyerere, Massire, F.W. de Klerk, Kaunda, Ahidjo, Senghor, and recently Abid Diof, left power. It is possible to suspect that these leaders left power just to obey the order of the owners of the religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African circus. Who knows if Chiluba withdrew to make changes to the Zambia's constitution and José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola declined recently the possibility to remain in power due to the pressure of the insiders and outsiders who own the circus? Why did the owners of the

Swaziland; the massive brain drain to the north, which is almost a new version of slave trade even if it is less painful than in the past.

³⁰⁹ See for example Paul Biya, Eyadema, Bongo, Chissano, Dos Santos, Moi, Museveni, Allasan Conté, Paul Kagame, Sam Nujoma, Mugabe, Taylor, El Bechir, Derby and the return to power by Matthieu Kerékou, Pierre Buyoya, Didier Ratsiraka, Obasanjo and Sassou Ngwesu.

³¹⁰ See for example Sylvanus Olympio, Tombalbaye, Lumumba, Kasa-Vubu, Moises Tsombe, Massamba Deba, Nguabi, Abdo Diouf, Abacha, William Tolbert, Moussa Traoré, Tirannana, Haile Selassie, Mengisto, Idi Amin, Kona Bedier, Ahidjo, El Nymeri, Samora Machel, Agostinho Neto, Bokassa, Oueddeimi Goukouni, Ian Smith, Sankara, Obote, Kaibanda, Babangida, Abiarymana, Ndadaye, Maima Sarra, Micombero, Bagaza, Lisuba and, above all, Samuel Doe, P.W. Botha and Mobutu.

circus impede Maître Wade and Laurent Gbagbo, and are they still impeding Thishekeledi, Mwai Kibaki, Dhakhama and John Fou-Ndi from rising to the top of political affairs in their countries? Perhaps it is possible to think that dos Santos and Savimbi, on the one hand, and El Beshir and John Garang, on the other, were only cynically obeying the rules of the circus to perpetuate the holocaust in Angola and Sudan? Is it not true that Dhakhama obeyed the calf and was backed by the devotees of Apartheid to foment trouble in Mozambique after Samora Machel's death? This is actually happening in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal and in the Congo with the *Congolese rebel leaders*. In obedience to the calf, Mobutu and P. W. Botha had backed diverse rebels against many sub-Saharan African governments (cf. Oliver 1999: 312-314). People alleged that Nkrumah was implicated in the assassination of Sylvanus Olympio (cf. Tandon in Rotberg 1970:1153) and Houphouet Boigny in the assassination of Sankara. Who is able to clarify the cause of the deaths of Malula, Danquah, Mveng, Ives Plummey, Abiola, Kimbangu, Diallo Telly, Chris Hani, Kotaliko, Steve Biko, Janini, Amilcar Cabral, Ken Saro-wiwa and Paul Thembo? How can people understand the complete indifference of the international community to the negation of some patent allegations of flagrant electoral irregularities, and even electoral victories, ascribed to the opposition parties in sub-Saharan African countries? Why are Western leaders opposed to Mugabe but not to Didier Ratsiraka or Sasou Ngwesou? Who would benefit from the claim of African Renaissance? In other words, who is effectively behind this African Renaissance, about which Thabo Mbeki is remarkably vocal? Mbeki seems to misunderstand many aspects of Anta Diop's ancient credo. The question is what is the true role of Thabo Mbeki in this shameful circus? Mbeki's vision sometimes seems very folkloric, obscure and conflicting. As a new-comer into this dangerous and disgraceful circus, this statesman remains an enigma that time will have to solve for us. In the name

of the calf, the ANC, through Mbeki, promises much and feigns to dissipate the drama of the South African people. Mbeki has to recognize that his pressing task is not the African renaissance but a South African one. It is true that the calf, after abusing the rights of South African people during the Apartheid era, would like to compensate for this suffering by offering a taste of hegemony and leadership over the rest of the sub-Saharan African countries. In spite of Mbeki's attraction to the nakedness of the calf, which apparently satisfies the temptation of the thirst for power and prestige, such a way of entertaining is ancient and leads many leaders to fall. This was especially true of Nkrumah and Mobutu. Mbeki has to be careful to avoid this pitfall and has to face the thorny question of land, crime and poverty that affect most of the poor and marginalized in South Africa, instead of becoming the leader of sub-Saharan Africa.

All these questions and doubts are raised because we think that the time has passed to sustain clowns like most of those who have ruled the religious and socio-political leadership classes since 1960. The false and favourite sound of the trumpet of those animals of the sub-Saharan African circus is *nationalism* and *imaginary plots* against them. They often use the excuses of nationalism and imaginary plots, especially when their lives are at risk in the circus. Indeed, the emphasis of these religious and socio-political leaders on *nationalism* and *imaginary plots* seems to be a cynicism, because it is known that these clowns never serve their people. Here Cohen (cf. Cohen in Carter and O' Meara 1985: 331) is correct, when he writes: "Cynicism, however, must not be one-sided. The diseases of colonialism are not limited to those who govern. Those who are governed develop equally stubborn and serious maladies". Cohen (Cohen in Carter and O' Meara 1985: 331) explains:

Chief among these maladies are: (1) native toadyism, in which the native politician secures crumbs of power by adopting the usual habits of lickspittles, sycophants, and courtesans; (2) blablaism, in which natives aspiring to posts of leadership among their people, having no opportunity to demonstrate capacities for non-vocal behaviour, are appraised, selected, and bred solely on the basis of noises that come from their mouths; and (3) noises, in which the patient, deprived of the opportunity of action, is reduced to a position of continuous objection on the course of administration.

Once again we confirm that since 1960 sub-Saharan African leaders have been nothing but representatives of their mentors. Cynicism is the cunning skill used by colonialists and missionaries. Most of the colonial masters pretended to ignore what happened³¹¹ here. Indeed what most of the colonialists and missionaries refused to admit is that they did worse than their animals in the circus.

Besides cynicism, what else impedes sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political leaders from serving their people? A long time ago an anonymous African diplomat responded to such a pertinent question:

We discover fairly soon that independence had little meaning and that economically things were worse than under the colonial regime. Yet we had hoped that independence, UN membership, a flag, a Government, a President of the republic, Ministers and a small national army would all give us human dignity we had not known for centuries. But at Stanleyville this dignity was made mockery of. We were shown that we were not really masters in our house³¹².

³¹¹ Consider, for example the recent revelations about the genocide in Rwanda. This revelation concerns the apathy of the USA and other western countries, in spite of their pre-acknowledgement of the event (RFI August).

³¹² This is quoted in Tandon in Rotberg 1970: 1161.

Tandon (cf. Tandon in Rotberg 1970: 1155) and Franz Fanon think that the Congo is a testing ground for African international relations. From this mirror we discover another crucial problem of the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political system, which impedes these leaders from being really concerned with the situation of the people. This is the fact these leaders are not free. All of us know that perhaps only the realization of free democratic elections can liberate them from the clutches of the calf, and end with a nostalgic memory of the colonial era.

They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. (Hosea 8:4)

Then they will say, We have no king because we did not revere the LORD. But even if we had a king, what could he do for us? They make many promises, take false oaths and make agreements; therefore lawsuits spring up like poisonous weeds in a plowed field. (Hosea 10:3-4)

In place of the religious and socio-political leadership class *made in the West*, which indeed are slaves, sub-Saharan Africa needs intelligent and charismatic leaders that emerge from among indigenous people. Evidently, from Cohen's (cf. Cohen in Carter and O' Meara 1985: 331) diagnosis of the religious and socio-political malaise, it is possible to conclude, as Cohen does, that:

The combination of the last two maladies generally produces a situation in which a depressed group will choose its leadership from those who most eloquently express the common distrust of the power that governs. To expect such a leadership to accept with joy promises of self-government, or of better conditions in the future, is childish.

In the text (cf. Hosea 10:3-4), the lives of the people of Israel depend on God's will. In the theocratic context, God's will is, in a way, the synonym of popular will (cf. 1 Samuel 8-9). Therefore, from Cohen's observation, we perceive that it is exactly the lack of implantation and solidification of *vox dei* through *vox populi*³¹³ that the devotees of the calf refuse to recognize in sub-Saharan Africa.

Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria! My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of purity? They are from Israel! This calf—a craftsman has made it; it is not God. It will be broken in pieces, that calf of Samaria. They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up. Israel is swallowed up; now she is among the nations like a worthless thing.
(Hosea 8:4-8)

How many sub-Saharan African refugees are spread over the world? This situation reminds us of the need for the struggle for democratisation of this region. Black and white, Indians and coloureds have to be aware that *genuine democracy* is the effective way of overthrowing the calf of *modern Baalism* and of expelling the demon of the calf from their habitat. In the text (cf. Hosea 8:4-8), Yahweh, allied to the oppressed, required the end of this false cult, the end of the false electoral process and the end of worship of the calf. More and more Yahweh accepts the principle of *vox populi, vox dei*. Here it is remarkable to observe that, contrary to Machiavelli's fervent sub-Saharan African devotees who denied the similarity between *vox populi* and *vox dei* with regard to the legitimising power, Machiavelli (1963: 69) supports Yahweh's opinion. Both Yahweh and Machiavelli foresee the danger of idolatry and try to advise their devotees. Yahweh is objective and Machiavelli ironic. Though contrary to Machiavelli, it is very interesting to note in the text (cf. Hosea 8: 4-8) that, due to the danger of idolatry, Yahweh's softness

³¹³ The voice of the people is the voice of God.

gives way to fire. God's emotional change has to teach the reader about how God suffers and how the sub-Saharan African holocaust affects Him. If, in the text, God appeals to His people as His co-sufferers to join Him in the struggle against the calf, it is also time for sub-Saharan African people to appeal to Him to join them in their daily struggle. It is their responsibility to appeal to Him, to join them as people in their struggle for denying the worship of the calf, as it was imposed on them by outside and inside oppressors. Here the *Amandla* previously suggested $\text{לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי}$ and $\text{לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי}$ change and becomes $\text{לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי}$ and $\text{לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי}$. This has to be repeated daily, as a credo of a new religious and socio-political sub-Saharan African order.

The oppressed cannot minimize the danger of the calf and they have to be aware that the process of terminating a colonial status in an orderly, non-violent manner is one of the most difficult of political operations. It is such operational difficulty that moves, in most cases, the calf's devotees to use the actual chaos and holocaust as an argument for justifying the colonial atrocities and also to perpetuate the false nostalgic idolatry of the colonial era. We have to lament that most of those religious and socio-political leaders agreed with such a use of the plebs' memory and, with some rare exceptions, are kissing, worshipping and serving the calf that placed them in power. As any devotee is the display of his object or subject of worship, the repetitive interaction with the calf destroys their sense of humanity and patriotism. Those leaders are more preoccupied with maintaining their alliance with the calf than being useful to their compatriots.

For that reason, any sub-Saharan African leader who discerned this danger later and would have liked to worship another symbol rather than the calf, paid either with their lives or by their humiliation, such as in the past with Tombalbaye, Oueddeimi Goukouni, Bokassa, Haile Selassie, Idi Amin, Mengistu, El Nimery, Samuel Doe, Obote, P.W. Botha, Ian Smith and, more recently, General Guie, Kona Bedier, Lisuba, Watara, Savimbi and Mobutu. All of them are removed from the circus in the same way that their owners introduced them into it. We resort thus to Carter and O' Meara (1985: 52) to understand how the priests of "modern Baalism" use their victims in the sub-Saharan African circus:

The National realm of open, public politics that usually existed for a brief and somewhat artificial period before and immediately after independence has withered and been supplanted by personal power, influence, and intrigue in most sub-Saharan countries. Those with power have restricted the political process to 'palace politics,' an elite activity of jockeying for power and place among big men and their collaborators who are usually concerned only with their own narrow interests.

He proceeds:

Politicians who have been placed there by people in a competitive election and who therefore see themselves and act as popular representatives rarely occupy the palace. Little public politics or even political activity takes place outside the palace, unless we consider the public posturing of rulers or private machinations of subjects who desire to keep peace with the regime and its agents to be 'politics'. The only political activity that ordinarily is possible is conspiracy and the threat or use of force to resist a regime or to displace it, and only those who are prepared and equipped to take serious risks can engage in such an activity. But even when a ruler and his regime are replaced, it rarely results in anything more than a change of personnel; a new clique occupies the palace, but palace politics remains.

It is obvious from the description of socio-political prostitution, as presented by Carter and O' Meara, that the worship of the calf serves to satisfy the interests of the priests and excludes any covenant with God's pathos. Thus the religious and socio-political history of sub-Saharan Africa is always epitomized by robbery, conspiracy, a blind struggle for power, incompetence, false electoral process and total dehumanisation. Before us, Augustine (cf. Augustine in Alves 1990:109) denounced the existence of *robberies* in religious and socio-political affairs. It is evident that Augustine referred to Rome, but we would like to believe that Augustine, as an African, had already foreseen the malaise that should eat into his continent, the sub-Saharan African region in particular. As in the past, since 1960 the religious and socio-political leaders have practised robberies in complicity with their internal and external supporters. The repetitive scandal of corruption in *Elf Aquitaine*, the most important French petroleum company, the death of Ken Saro-wiwa leader of the Ogoni, the recent episode of the purchase of weapons by Angola via Charles Pascua, Mitterand and Pierre Falcon³¹⁴ and the extreme scepticism of some European leaders such as Lionel Jospin³¹⁵ towards sub-Saharan African leaders, indicates what has occurred on a large scale in the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political circus. The interesting list of western companies which are involved in the illicit trade in minerals in Congo and oil in Angola and Sudan, should help us to raise some ethical questions about the moral relationship between the calf and its devotees. It is perhaps clear now, at least for us, that robbery is what the colonialists taught their slaves, if we agree with de Gruchy (1997:476).

The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds. (Hosea 12: 2)

³¹⁴ Information from Radio France International April and May 2001.

³¹⁵ Information from Radio France International April 2001.

Formerly Augustine, and recently de Gruchy, link the structuralisation of robberies with the coming of colonialism. Hosea agrees with these African prophets, but for Hosea robberies also concerned the ancestor Jacob³¹⁶. It is evident that Jacob existed before in the announcement of Torah in that robberies are included in the moral law as *taboo*. Hosea was not preoccupied by this question of time; he questioned Jacob's ethics as a devotee of Yahweh from whom the Israelites received not only a spiritual heritage but also the vice of robberies (cf. Pury 1994:100-101). Here the audacity of Hosea becomes tremendous as well as dangerous. We are convinced that it is such courage that the people of sub-Saharan of Africa need: to question the sacred role of their ancestors (e.g. slave trade). If the analysis of the text is correct, by identifying Jacob, the poet would like to remember not the virtue but the vice of the patriarch (cf. Genesis 27-30). According to the Israelite's tradition, Jacob is a founder of the nation and a hero for those who believe in Yahweh. Jacob is a man whose virtue is laudable. Hosea courageously questions such a tradition. The prophet resorts to a memory and points out indirectly how the patriarch usurped the right of the first-born, of his brother (cf. Genesis 27: 1-30); he cheated his father and did the same to his uncle. For Hosea, Jacob promotes the vice of robbery and the worship of idols (cf. Genesis 31-35). This patriarch is the worst person in terms of being a model of leadership (cf. Genesis 37:1-4).

Here, Hosea moves the oppressed to demystify Jacob, the major symbol of the people. This is the strophe of the revolutionary song that sub-Saharan African people have to sing daily to change the identities of their religious and socio-political leadership classes, which are in most cases the mere representatives of the calf and Jacob, in order to end with the old and sad history and start with the new one, which means the true renaissance.

³¹⁶ Jacob means he grasps the heel (figuratively, he deceives).

Jacob fled to the country of Aram, Israel served to get a wife, and to pay for her he tended sheep. The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him. But Ephraim has bitterly provoked him to anger; his Lord will leave upon him the guilt of his bloodshed and will repay him for his contempt. (Hosea 12: 12-14)

The people who live in Samaria fear for the calf-idol of Beth Aven. Its people will mourn over it, and so will its idolatrous priests, those who had rejoiced over its splendor, because it is taken from them into exile. It will be carried to Assyria as tribute for the great king. Ephraim will be disgraced; Israel will be ashamed of its wooden idols. Samaria and its king will float away like a twig on the surface of the waters. The high places of wickedness will be destroyed— it is the sin of Israel. Thorns and thistles will grow up and cover their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, Cover us! and to the hills, 'Fall on us!' (Hosea 10:3-8)

It is obvious that Hosea wishes to emphasize that the worship of the calf implies the punishment of exile. So by mentioning Aram (cf. Hosea 12: 12-14), the synonym of the Babylonian superpower which supplanted Assyria, perhaps the poet would like to identify this with the patriarchal locus of exile and robberies. Therefore it could be true to think that here, as a genuine religious and socio-political reformer, Hosea criticized the leadership class who became robbers and changed virtue into the vice of impunity and consequently are the cause of the new exile of the people to Babylon. Indeed, the name Jacob is, in a way, a display of a merciful man, but it is evident that this only became a reality when his name changed and became Israel. However, in the text (cf. Hosea 12:12-14), the state is not called Jacob but Israel, hence the need for replacing the idol of Aram by Yahweh who is the Living and pathetic God.

Jacob fled to the country of Aram, Israel served to get a wife, and to pay for her he tended sheep. The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him. But Ephraim has bitterly provoked him to anger; his Lord will leave upon him the guilt of his bloodshed and will repay him for his contempt. (Hosea 12: 12-14)

What will happen when lies, impunities and robberies take place? Hosea says the persistence of such vices perpetuated two things: the absence of God's pathos and the new exile. However, in the same verse, the poet paints Hosea as the prophet of hope, the man who brings back the presence of God's pathos among the people and announces the creation of a new kind of human relationship and society. Here Hosea diverges from Augustine's view of the state. Augustine's perspective of the present order, particularly in relation to the state, is negative. That is why Augustine's critique formulated against the state is correct when he thinks that the essence of religious and socio-political power is not the happiness it promises to deliver but rather the power it holds with impunity, as Alves (1990:109) comments. According to Alves, Marx Weber almost repeated Augustine's words (cf. Alves 1990:109). The state, he says, is the human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. In the case of sub-Saharan African politicians, the animal community (jungle) takes the place of the human community, while Alves (cf. Alves 1990:109) questions the use of the expression: *the legitimate use of physical force* ascribed to the state.

The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac. The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of

Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins. (Hosea 9:7-9)

From the perspective of the verses of his song (cf. Hosea 9:7-9), Hosea suggests the end of the use of physical force and the end of the interference of idolatry in the palace, as well as in trade. This time of the end, which coincides with the time of divine punishment, means the closing of the theatre. God clearly denounces corruption, injustice and contempt of the prophets and any kind of **ἀμαρτία**. The poet thus points out a tremendous struggle of interest between Yahweh and the owner of the circus and their devotees, disguised in *Salvador da patria*³¹⁷. The poet insists that Yahweh, as co-sufferer and co-oppressed, will intervene to close the theatre or religious and socio-political circus. This intervention implies punishment for the animals, which are the devotees of the calf, as well as for the priests of the modern Baalism, who are the owners of the circus. This is the message of hope for the sub-Saharan African oppressed, poor and marginalized.

In conclusion, we would like to say that this chapter is really broad and may in many aspects be subjective. The objective of this chapter is to reveal not the details but the real causes of the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political drama. Sometimes the criticism of the colonizers, missionaries and the actual sub-Saharan African leaders seems to be severe, but it is better to be open and frank than to be cowardly in expression. This criticism is not only of others. We are also concerned and are looking forward, as brothers and sisters, with optimism, humility and the spirit of forgiveness, to how we can

³¹⁷ The liberator or saviour of the nation. This is the pejorative expression that people who speak Portuguese use to denote the one who pretends to resolve any problem of his/her country.

face the future in our different ways. *Afro-pessimism* cannot impede missionaries from coming to this part of the world and *Missio-pessimism* cannot move sub-Saharan African people to think that they do not need missionaries' support. The religious and socio-political future of the sub-Saharan African region is open and we have to build it together, challenging idolatry in its multiple forms, such as tyranny, syncretism and dehumanisation as Hosea did, for the glory of Yahweh, who is our father and mother.

6. CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

A new theological framework or paradigm, which should become a polemic issue for both scholar and ordinary reader, has been introduced in the present work. Thomas Kuhn (1970: 43-44) supports this shift of paradigms:

The determination of shared paradigms is not, however, the determination of shared rules. That demands a second step and one of a somewhat different kind. When undertaking it, the historian must compare the community's paradigms with each other and with its current research reports. In doing so, his object is to discover what isolable elements, explicit or implicit, the members of that community may have abstracted from their more global paradigms and deployed as rules in their research. Anyone who has attempted to describe or analyze the evolution of a particular scientific tradition will necessarily have sought accepted principles and rules of this sort. Almost certainly, ...he will have met with at least partial success. But, if his experience has been at all like my own, he will have found the search for rules both more difficult and less satisfying than the search for paradigms.

He proceeds:

Some of the generalizations he employs to describe the community's shared beliefs will present no problems. Others, however, including some of those used as illustrations above, will seem a shade too strong. Phrased in just that way, or in any other way he can imagine, they would almost certainly have been rejected by some members of the group he studies. Nevertheless, if the coherence of the research tradition is to be understood in terms of rules, some specification of common ground in the corresponding area is needed. As a result, the search for a body of rules competent to constitute a given normal research tradition becomes a source of continual and deep frustration. Recognizing that frustration, however, makes it possible to diagnose its source.

Schüssler Fiorenza (cf. Fiorenza in Mahan and Richesin 1981:95) explains Kuhn's idea:

According to Kuhn, a paradigm represents a coherent research tradition, and creates a scientific community. Since paradigms determine how scientists see the world and how they conceive of theoretical problems, a shift in paradigm also means a transformation of the scientific imagination, and thus demands an "intellectual conversion" which allows the community of scientists to see old "data" in a completely new perspective. For a period of time different paradigms may be competing for the allegiance of the scientific community until one paradigm replaces the other or gives way to a third.

Here Kuhn (1970) and Schüssler Fiorenza (cf. Fiorenza in Mahan and Richesin 1981:95) identify with Capra (1993) the real need for reviewing the present author's perception of the old data in any area which involves human life. This suggestion, which offers a new perspective, leads the reader to regard Hosea as old data, but it also becomes possible to find a new way of understanding the poetry that is in Hosea's book. What the present author has tried to do is to substitute allegory, analogy and other hermeneutical methods by tautegory.

This shift is necessary because most of the time scholar and ordinary reader study the book of Hosea with a fragmentary vision, which could be cultural, religious, ethical or political. The present author looks at the book as a whole picture and makes an effort to struggle with all the problems and ambiguities that the book contains. The question that remains in the mind of the reader is why we have to read the book of Hosea or why we

have to regard the dead prophet as a sub-Saharan African prophet or perhaps ancestor? Is it really possible to find similarity between what happened in Hosea's time and what has happened in sub-Saharan Africa since 1960? It is possible to listen to the original voice of the prophet from among many others (cf. Bellis 1994). It makes sense today and does affect us. There are two major conflicts. Taber and Nida (1969:7) think that even if the languages of the Bible are subject to the same limitations as any other natural language, the writer of the Biblical book can be understood. Taber and Nida thus encourage scholars to seek ways of presenting to the new audience the meaning of the text, as the writer originally meant it to be understood. Remy Kwant (1966:173) is very pertinent:

We can make use of language and still not speak in the full sense of the word. This happens when we use the spoken word. We are then repeating and making precise what has already been really said. We place ourselves within the world of speech and of constituted meanings. We take the world of speech and field of meanings for granted. In this case we speak about meanings without knowing that meanings are really the translation of the silent world into speech. The speaking word embodies the deepest reality of speech. In the speaking word we presuppose, of course, the world of words and the field of meanings; but we approach them as the expression of the silent world, and we live in the act of expression. We try to transform the essence into meaning³¹⁸.

But if Kwant, Taber and Nida are positive, Jacques Derrida, Schüssler Fiorenza, West and other philosophers and theologians, who support the theory of deconstruction of the text, deny that that meaning of the original author of the text can be known. They assert that the author's intention, in fact, is impossible to know. Roland Barthes (1987: 75-76) sums up:

³¹⁸ We accept Kwant's idea because the book of Hosea has to be faced primarily as speaking word rather than a written text.

We are generally inclined, at least today, to believe that the author can lay claim to the meaning of his work and can himself make its meaning legal; from this notion flows the unreasonable interrogation directed by the critic at the dead writer, at his life, at the traces of the intentions, so that he himself can guarantee the meaning of his work: people want at all costs to make the dead writer speak...

Barthes is correct if we observe the issue from the Western point of view, because most of Western people look forward rather than backward and refuse to listen to the world of silence³¹⁹. This is opposite to the sub-Saharan African view, as Healey and Sybertz (1996: 213) point out:

African time looks backwards rather than forward. Deceased people become ancestors who still remain part of the community. Traditionally, the living dead were remembered in the oral traditional for five generations. They were also remembered for a longer time in proportion to how much good they had done on earth, especially service to others.

This opinion supports Birago Diop: *Those who are dead are not dead*. Here we disagree with Jacques Derrida, and especially with Barthes, because in sub-Saharan Africa, the dead writer is not dead. According to the sub-Saharan African culture, the so-called dead writer is a living dead. Is this not what the Israelites thought about their ancestors? What the Torah prohibits is not the acknowledgement of the dead as living dead, but the worship of the living dead (cf. Scholem 1965: 18-23). Moreover, in the case of the prophets their ministry never ceases with their deaths. Even dead they are still prophesying (cf. Mark 9: 2-10; I Samuel 28) and acting (cf. Luke 16: 19-31; Matthew 27:

³¹⁹ Most of the Western historians; archeologists; mystics (cf. Huxley 1946, 1954) and theologians, especially those who use the historical critical method are really challenging the worlds of silence.

50-53; 1 Peter 3:19-20; 2 Kings 14:20-21). Then if there is a way of *making connections* (cf. Healey and Sybertz 1996:31) between the Israelites and the sub-Saharan Africans' traditional beliefs we now have the option to believe that the so-called dead poet who wrote the book of Hosea can be listened to and understood like one of our ancestors, in our contemporary time.

In spite of what has just been said, the reader of this thesis should observe that it is not possible to solve all the ambiguities that Hosea and sub-Saharan Africa present. We merely suggest a new paradigm for understanding both contexts. To achieve our goal, we used five routes for trying to understand the question of the pathos of God in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African context.

The first route is the search for reconstructing the background in which this question has been widely debated in the past. We focused our attention on Philo and Maimonides, the thought of Pope John XXIII and John Paul II in the Roman Catholic Church and Moltmann, Barth and Brunner in the Protestant Churches, to end finally with the two eminent modern Jewish thinkers, Heschel and Berkovitz. This connection with the past was made in order to show that the question of God's pathos is not only our concern but it was also a preoccupation of those who existed before us.

The second route is forged on the comprehension of the enigma of metaphor in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African context. But why did we have to contextualize this study of metaphor? Here we share the view of James Robinson (1971:1):

Every scholar or scientist who deals with a subject matter from the past does so in terms of his present grasp of reality, and the results of his research in turn flow into the current body of knowledge from which the continual modification of our understanding of reality emerges.

The present author thinks that the Biblical scholar, scientist, philosopher and, above all, oppressed people like the people of sub-Saharan Africa, are struggling in different ways to see how they can deal with the continual modifications of our understanding of certain questions like myth and metaphor in our emerging situation (cf. Stienstra 1993: 9-69; Doyle 2000: 1-144). Our study of the multifaceted metaphor from the poetry of Hosea, and from the sub-Saharan African context, searches thus to understand how the elements of the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λογος** are interlaced and are the *key-idea* for analyzing the book of Hosea and the religious and sociopolitical situations of the sub-Saharan African people. We show how God, Humankind and Nature interact and are inter-dependent. This comparative study differs from the usual comparative study that many sub-Saharan Africans have made until now, and is based on the idea of *making the connections* (cf. Healey and Sybertz 1996:31) or *seeing resemblance* (cf. Ricoeur 1978:23), which means a search of a profound and real dialogue between God, Hosea and the sub-Saharan African people. We explore the triad **πάθος-ἔθος-λογος** in connection to poetry. But it is very important to know that the poetry that we have in Hosea is a kind of *religious discourse*. Here Ricoeur (cf. Ricoeur in Vanhoozer 1990:121) intervenes and distinguishes religious discourse from poetic discourse:

Poetry imaginatively explores various human possibilities under rule of play; religious language adds the dimension of commitment. Unlike poetry, that is, religious language calls for a decision. Moreover, religious language involves belonging to a specific community with a particular social and ethical stance.

About the question of religious language used in Hosea, Ricoeur (cf. Ricoeur in Vanhoozer 1990: 121) helps us to understand that:

Religious language is a modification or intensification of poetic language; not just any human possibilities are displayed, but only *limit-possibilities*. Religious language is odd because it speaks not of commitment *tout court* but *limit-experiences*. These *limit-experiences* may be positive (e.g. wonder, joy, love) or negative (e.g. guilt, anxiety, morality), but in either case they refer to a dimension that, though part of our experience, is not of our own making and is beyond our control.

We identify with Ricoeur, because Hosea is an example of a religious discourse which displays, paradoxically, negative and positive aspects of *limit-experiences*. The key idea of Ricoeur's religious analysis is commitment or involvement which expresses the idea of the vital dynamism of sub-Saharan African culture. According to us, these *limit-experiences* are those which in tautology we call *trans-objective and extreme dimensions*, or what Capra (1993: 88) calls *mutual enfolding projections* or what for instance Piritim Sorokin (cf. Sorokin in Capra 1993:13) considers as *ideational* or *idealistic*. The comprehension of the existence of these *limit-experiences* is what characterizes the sub-Saharan African traditional religion (cf. Tedanga 2002) and what most of the

missionaries had or still have problems in understanding, when they would like to face the sub-Saharan African culture.

The third route is based on the consideration of God as an affective being. We raise the question of, for instance, what makes the God of Hosea a nearest kin to the sub-Saharan African people? In searching for possible responses, we look at some metaphor, for instance: God the communicator, the binomial Father-Mother, violence, the true role of idols and ancestors, ending with the negation of the objectification of women and the search for a true sense of marriage between God and Israel, as well as man and woman. Concerning the kind of God described above, Heidegger (1975: 32-49) considers that the God who acts here is not thought of theologically but purely ontologically, that is as the highest being by whom all beings and Being itself are created. We agree in part with Heidegger, because for us this God is also thought of theologically. What we mean here is that it is possible to correct such a contradiction, which is seen in classic theism. We demonstrate that such a contradiction depends on the philosophical assumptions of Aristotle and Descartes (cf. Capra 1993:49-91), Leibniz (cf. Heidegger 1975:32-54 and Whitehead 1979: 46-47) and Hegel (1982) who cannot accept the co-habitation of two apparent contradictory concepts or symbols, which indeed have to be faced not separately but as pertinent binomial elements. The intention of separating or of polarizing such theological reality from the ontological one leads necessarily to theological and philosophical catastrophes, the consequences of which are seen in the religious and socio-political comprehension of Hosea's time and of sub-Saharan African daily life since 1960.

The fourth route leads to questioning what makes Hosea a sub-Saharan African prophet from the understanding of the synopsis of God's affective drama. The key point of our debate is around how the prophet has to move within the struggle to defend the restoration of truth and the sense of human dignity among the oppressed.

The last route moves us to face the question of the absence of God's pathos in Hosea's contemporary life and its implications in sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political contexts. Three concepts characterized the focus of our démarche: tyranny, the consequence of a utopia based on lack of spirituality without God in both contexts; syncretism, the malaise of the African religious and socio-political leadership class; and, finally, the dehumanization of the oppressed people in Hosea and in the sub-Saharan African context. The main argument developed in this last route is that tyranny, syncretism and dehumanization happen because of the lack of knowledge by both missionaries and the sub-Saharan African religious and socio-political leadership classes. Indeed, this question of knowledge was raised because it is the key-idea to understanding some of the contradictions, as well as difficulties, that most missionaries face in working in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the missionaries who have worked in Africa since 1960 look definitively to David Hume (1902: 47) in analyzing the religious phenomenon. Hume thinks that

Nothing is more free than the imagination of man; and though it cannot exceed that original stock of ideas furnished by internal and external senses, it has unlimited power of mixing, compounding, separating, and dividing these ideas, in all the varieties of fiction and vision.

The view of John Locke and later David Hume (cf. Whitehead 1979) are in a way similar to those of most missionaries. From the tautegorical view, we disagree with Hume on three points. Firstly, nothing is freer than imagination, but it seems that Hume confuses imagination with rationalization. If imagination is really free, why does it have to be limited by the stocks of internal or external ideas. Secondly, this use of imagination is a mere dogma. Thirdly, Hume leads most of Western missionaries to pretend to know the Bible, but they deny the essence of the Israelite culture that was written in the Bible. Robert Ernest Hume (1959: 179) notes that:

Judaism was the first living religion to spring from the primitive religious life of the Semites. Those uncultured, yet religiously minded, nomads are still represented by the modern Bedouin tribes. Their original belief was that various objects, either natural like a mountain or a spring, or artificially consecrated like a post or an ark, were intimately connected with their special deity.

In the present work we seek to prove that this Israelite religious background is similar to the sub-Saharan African one (cf. Diop 1959). It perhaps becomes clear that *animism* is a childish term. In ascribing the so-called *animism* to the traditional religious cosmic vision of sub-Saharan Africa, it is shown how far most of the anthropologists, missionaries and above all sub-Saharan African scholars who support this view are from the true knowledge of the sub-Saharan African spiritual essence, the Bible and God.

In the present work we show how, in the sub-Saharan African traditional context, the involvement of a deity in clan affairs moves the community to face the objective and the

trans-objective dimension of life. Here the question is, how can people experience this paradox? Responding on behalf of Western culture, Capra (1993:22) observes that:

Our culture takes pride in being Scientific; our time is referred to as the Scientific Age. It is dominated by rational thought, and scientific knowledge is often considered the only acceptable kind of knowledge. That there can be intuitive knowledge, or awareness, which is just as valid and reliable, is generally not recognized.

Talking about the knowledge of the biblical prophet, Brueggemann (1992: 45) criticizes

Western epistemology:

The prophet does not ask if the vision can be implemented, for questions of implementation are of no consequence until the vision can be imagined. The imagination must come before the implementation. Our culture is competent to implement almost anything and to imagine almost nothing.

If Capra and Brueggemann are right, their arguments lead us to believe that the use of tautology becomes really crucial because it involves the rational (objective) and intuitive (subjective) way of apprehending the reality. Capra (1983: 21-22; 1983 and 1992), Huxley (1946), Whitehead (1979) and Sorokin (1937-41) support our view and they help us to end with dichotomy or polarization. Therefore it also becomes possible to perceive God as holy and harlot, father and mother, transcendental being and closer to us, or nearest kin. This new theological framework situates Western epistemology at the same level as the sub-Saharan African intuitive or mystical epistemology. Huston Smith (1992:199) shares a similar point of view, by saying:

Science is our sacral mode of knowing. As court of ultimate appeal for what's true, it occupies today, quite isomorphically, the place of Revelation enjoyed in the Middle Ages. The crux of science is the controlled experiment. We are obviously involved here with the doctrine of intuitive imagination as the distinct organ of perception in the human soul, the eye of the soul as Plato called it.

The question is, what lies behind these various locutions? Smith (1992: 219-220) responds that:

Hegel's distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*-Spinoza's between science and intuition could be added to them-is the fact of in metaphysical matters insight cannot be produced by assembling brute data or initiating chains of formal logic, or any combination of these. For the reigning epistemologies of our time this is a scandal.

Capra (1983 and 1992) also identifies with Smith's view. In itself, Western epistemology, which is displayed in what we call modernity, is not wrong or evil. In our view, we think that instead of polarizing this issue between rationalism and metaphysic, or between Western and sub-Saharan African epistemology, as Senghor has done, it is suggested in this thesis that both have to walk together as an *binomial of epistemology* and have to resort to creativity. Indeed, the tautegorical approach helps us to understand that religious experience and discourse are based on the multiplicity of vital dynamism. If, then, we believe in the essence of the Israelite faith, as it is described by, and seen in, the Bible, then the sub-Saharan African way of apprehending the cosmic reality becomes more relevant. Perhaps this is one of the true ways which both scholars and ordinary readers

could embrace to forge a new route. Smart (1991:29) shares the same opinion, when he notes:

Primal people conceive of themselves as surrounded by a myriad of unseen forces. These forces range from impersonal power which anthropologists, borrowing a South Sea Island expression, call mana, to spirits and gods, including, in many such cultures, a supreme High God. Their world is alive, populated, shot through with the unseen. But it would be wrong to think that this sort of religious and magical view of reality makes any sharp distinction between the spiritual and material aspects of the universe. These are inextricably interwoven into a single but complex fabric.

As an African, Saint Augustine (1992.vol 7: 7) supports us and says:

I set before the sight of my spirit the whole creation, whatsoever we can see therein (as sea, earth, air, stars, trees, mortal creatures); yea and whatever in it we do not see...and I made one great mass of Thy creation...And this mass I made huge, not as it was (which I could not know), but as I thought convenient, yet every way finite. But Thee, O Lord, I imagined on every part environing and penetrating it, through every unmeasured space, one only boundless sea, and it contained within it some sponge, huge, but bounded; that sponge must needs, in all its parts, be filled with unmeasurable sea: so conceived I Thy creation, itself finite, full of Thee, the infinite; and I said, Behold God and behold what God hath created; and God is good, yea, most mightily and incomparably better than all these...

At the same time we identify with Smart and Augustine in disagreeing with the anthropologist's view. In this thesis we seek to show that, in many cases, what most anthropologists, classic theists and most missionaries consider as *impersonal* forces are

not, because the adjective *impersonal* excludes and limits the capacities that those forces have to become personal. Peacocke (1993:159) thinks that the “Augustine model of God’s relation to the *world-as-a-whole*, the total world system is seen as ‘in God’ who (uniquely) is present to it *as a whole*, as well as to its individual component entities” (cf. Koestler 1978 and Whitehead 1979). We disagree with him. We suspect that Augustine’s thought cited above contains a latent trace, a tautegory, because, as an African, Augustine perhaps did not have a holistic view in his mind but a tautegorical one. Augustine’s last words, “God is good, yea, most mightily and incomparably better than all these”, displays, in our view, the tautegorical tension between the world of Creator and the world of creatures, as well as between the *Holy* and *Evil* as it is explained in his book *The city of God and the city of Man*.

Indeed, from a tautegorical view we show that these forces, creatures or entities involved and all elements involved, have the possibility to adopt and incarnate this or that form of *mana*. The *mana* suggested by the anthropologists and missionaries is nothing less than the unexplainable or non-logical creativity (cf. Whitehead 1979) that exists in the sub-Saharan African religion. Smart (1991:28-29) thought that this view concerned only primal people, but for us, with the end of science (cf. Horgan 1998), philosophy (cf. Horgan 1975, Heidegger 1975 and Malraux in Malula 1985:3), economy (cf. Capra 1993) and religion (cf. Lash 1996), this primal religious view becomes the *key-idea* for forging a new biblical hermeneutic, science, economy and philosophy, by the fact that it moves the scholars of any area of knowledge to put back God, human beings and Nature at the center of their daily issues and research. To re-establish the pathetic harmony between God, Human beings and Nature, it is important for most of the missionaries, the

oppressive religious and socio-political leadership classes of sub-Saharan Africa and the sub-Saharan African oppressed people to listen to the voice of the living dead poet, who claimed:

Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them. (Hosea 14:9)

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