



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Between Remembering and Forgetting:
A Theological and Contextual Investigation of Nation-building in Deuteronomy and
How it Intersects with Nation-building in Zimbabwe**

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate Programme in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

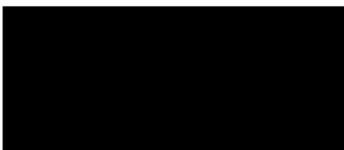
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Andrew Moyo
Student Name



2 December 2021
Date



Prof Gerald O. West (Supervisor)



Prof Paul B. Decock (Co-supervisor)

DEDICATION

To my late father Simon Moyo and my mother Serafina Zondi Moyo, victims of the second chimurenga.

Though your suffering at the hands of the liberation fighters has not been acknowledged and justice has not been met, it is my hope that through this work, one day your sufferings and the sufferings of so many other victims will be acknowledged and justice will be served.

Justice and only justice, you shall follow (Deut.16:20).

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To my family, friends, parishioners and fellow priests too numerous to mention by name, who helped me during this journey, I say thank you and God bless you abundantly.

ABSTRACT

This work seeks to highlight a biblically inspired notion of nation-building which advocates the unity of all the people as an imagined political community, with a sovereign role in the land. The definition of nation-building will be based on Benedict Anderson's terms 'imagined political community' and the 'sovereign role of the people' in order to emphasize the notion of nation-as-people which is most appropriate for this work. The emphasis of this work is influenced both by the ideo-theological perspective to read the Bible from the perspective of the poor and from a liberationist perspective which privileges the 'dangerous memories' of the subjugated communities in order to work for a future that is better. Within this framework it is possible to bring the use of memory in the ancient community of Israel into dialogue with the modern post colonial state of Zimbabwe.

The research will use literary narrative and rhetorical analysis to compare the use of a liberation memory to construct the imagined political community in the book of Deuteronomy and in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The biblical model of nation-building, as motivated by the pacifying memory of divine deliverance and the dangerous memory of the oppression of the people, advocates the ethical liberation categories of freedom, justice and equality to build the unity and sovereign role of the imagined communities. A tripolar analysis will bring the text of Deuteronomy into dialogue with the context of postcolonial Zimbabwe, to highlight the differences in the use of the pacifying and dangerous memories of liberation. The focus will be on the realization of unity and freedom for the people through the ethical use of the memory of liberation. This work concludes that the dangerous memories of the people are fundamental to the construction of a nation-as-people and that the ethical use of the pacifying and dangerous memory of liberation can be a unifying factor for postcolonial countries and a fundamental resource for the construction of a nation-as-people.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| ESAP | Economic Structural Adjustment Programme |
| FTLRP | Fast Track Land Reform Programme |
| GPA | Global Political Agreement |
| MDC | Movement for Democratic Change |
| MPLA | People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola |
| ONHRI | Organ of National Healing Reconciliation and Integration |
| PF-ZAPU | Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union |
| SWAPO | South Western African People's Organisation |
| UN | United Nations |
| ZANLA | Zimbabwe African Liberation Army |
| ZANU-PF | Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front |
| ZCBC | Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference |
| ZCTU | Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union |
| ZIPRA | Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army |

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Chapter 1 General introduction

1.1 Background and motivation

My research aim is to explore the nation-building aspects in the book of Deuteronomy and to examine the interconnections for nation-building in Zimbabwe in the period from 1980 to the present. My work is motivated by a selective articulation and misuse of the memory of the war of liberation struggle *Chimurenga*¹ by ZANU-PF as a paradigm for nation-building. This has resulted in exclusive nationalism, legitimization of violence and intimidation, a lack of the rule of law, human rights abuses and the failure to establish responsible and accountable leadership.

Since the attainment of independence in April 1980, Zimbabwe has struggled to build a harmonious country with a common national identity. In the first ten years Zimbabwe entered a phase of postcolonial nation-building in order to deliver on the promises of the liberation struggle, to deliver a sovereign Zimbabwe inhabited by free citizens who would enjoy a restored land that had been stolen by white settler colonists. For an agreed period of ten years (1980–1990), the Zimbabwean government could not amend the constitution. This led to an inability to redistribute the land to the ordinary people. Much of the land remained in the hands of a minority of white citizens after independence. This fact would come to haunt the country in later years.

After only two years of independence, Zimbabwe was plunged into a political and humanitarian crisis by the *Gukurahundi*² Operation which left over 20,000 mostly Ndebele-speaking people dead as a party state and a party-nation was constructed.³ These came to an end in 1987, with the signing of the unity accord between ZANU and ZAPU. Although the unity agreement was

¹ The umbrella term ‘*Chimurenga*’ comes from Shona Language and refers to a nationwide uprising or revolt especially against a racist, discriminatory or oppressive social, political or economic system.

² The word *Gukurahundi* comes from the Shona word which means early spring rains. This had been used by ZANU PF in their electoral campaign under the slogan the year of the people’s storm or *Gore reguukurahundi*. This was now used by Mugabe in relation to a campaign in Matabeleland and was taken to mean, sweep out the rubbish. This was in reference to the ex-ZIPRA guerrillas who were deserting the joint Zimbabwe army citing tribalism and marginalisation. Mugabe interpreted the dissension as a military uprising and thus instigated *Gukurahundi* in Matabeleland, through the deployment of the Korean-trained fifth brigade

³ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Making Sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics: ‘So Blair, Keep Your England and Let Me Keep My Zimbabwe,’” *Third World Quarterly* 30, no. 6 (2009): 1139–1158.

signed, the lack of acknowledgement of the suffering of the people deeply polarized the Ndebele and Shona peoples.

Between the years 1990 and 1999, Zimbabwe was plunged into an unprecedented economic crisis as a result of its involvement in economic liberalization, in accordance with the demands and conditions of the notorious Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This neo-liberal transition not only destroyed the progress that had been made in the social spheres of education and health but also provoked protests from workers and students who were hard hit by a combination of retrenchment, withdrawal of subsidies on basic commodities and privatization.

The period between 2000 and 2009 was dominated by agrarian transformation. Beginning from 2000, the government's quest under the banner of the Third Chimurenga and the radical Fast-Track Land Reform Programme which was meant to deliver land to Zimbabwe's landless black people, further collapsed the national economy, partly because the implementation of land reform was chaotic and partly because it led to Zimbabwe being ostracized by the international community.⁴ The political climate became tense with the emergence of a strong opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which was seen as a front for neo-colonization. The ruling party blamed the West for these crises and interpreted this as a strategy by the West to effect regime change in Zimbabwe.⁵ Amidst the crises the ZANU-PF leadership abandoned the conciliatory rhetoric of nation-building predicated on reconciliation and inclusivism and revived revolutionary nationalism which tended to be adversarial, exclusive, violent and intolerant (Sachikonye 2012:211; Chimedza 2008:90-91).⁶ This has left the population deeply wounded and polarized.

⁴ Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros, "Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution in Zimbabwe," in *The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, ed. Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros (London: Zed Books, 2005), 165-206.

⁵ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Politics behind Politics: African Union, Southern African Development Community and the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe," in *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement*, ed. Brian Raftopoulos (Harare: Weaver Press, 2013), 149.

⁶ Lloyd Sachikonye, *Zimbabwe's Lost Decades: Politics, Development & Society*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2012), 211. Tinashe L Chimedza, "Bulldozers Always Come: Maggots, Citizens and Governance in Contemporary Zimbabwe" in *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*, ed. Maurice Vambe (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), 90-91.

Then between 2009-2013, an Inclusive Government was formed with the mediation of South Africa. This achieved very little in terms of the unity of the people. The ruling party went into the inclusive government in bad faith and behind the scenes they worked to outmaneuver the opposition. Although violence decreased and the economy stabilized slightly, power did not shift from the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF). Although the Organ of Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), had been set up to promote equality, national healing, cohesion and unity following the Gukurahundi atrocities and more recent atrocities, its work progressed very slowly.

In 2011, ONHRI Minister Mzila Ndlovu and Father Marko Mkandla were arrested after attending a rural prayer service for Gukurahundi victims. This event suggested that what was being underlined by ZANU-PF was that in Matabeleland, healing should take place without revealing and acknowledging the wrongs of the past. This period failed to foster national cohesion but instead consolidated ZANU-PF's power stronghold. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020:2) concludes "If anything, ZANU–PF used the five years of the government of national unity to recover and consolidate its power and in the 2013 elections the party emerged stronger and in charge of government once more."⁷

The period from 2017 to the present time of writing (2021), is considered to be the time of the 'Second Republic.'⁸ This was initiated by the military coup d'etat, which led to the fall from power of the long serving president Robert Gabriel Mugabe paving the way for the rise to power of Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa.⁹ On 15 November 2017, the Zimbabwe Defense Forces, led by General Constantino Chiwenga, intervened in the succession struggle in the ruling party, ZANU-PF by putting long time ruler and strongman President Robert Mugabe under house arrest. This was followed by massive anti-Mugabe demonstrations and under this pressure Mugabe resigned on 21 November 2017; he was replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa

⁷ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Pedzisai Ruhanya, "Introduction: Transition in Zimbabwe: from Robert Gabriel Mugabe to Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa: A Repetition without Change," in *The History and Political Transitions of Zimbabwe: From Mugabe to Mnangagwa*, eds. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Pedzisai Ruhanya (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 2-3.

⁸ According to Mnangagwa the 'First Republic' is the time from independence to the time when Mugabe resigned on 21 November 2017.

⁹ Mugabe later died on 6 August 2019 in Singapore and was buried at his rural home in Zvimba, Mashonaland West province.

on 24 November 2017. In his inauguration speech, Mnangagwa boosted the confidence of the nation by declaring that ‘Zimbabwe is Open for Business’. Presenting this mantra as his guiding economic principle he enunciated the new government’s intention to introduce a robust business reform agenda: prioritize economic growth, adhere to constitutionalism and re-engage the international community.¹⁰

The optimism was short lived as the international community did not immediately commit to financial aid for Zimbabwe before the necessary constitutional changes were implemented. The litmus test of whether the government would commit to constitutionalism came with the elections in July 2018. The delay of the results led to demonstrations, to which the state responded on 1 August 2018, by using disproportionate and indiscriminate force, resulting in the death of 6 civilians and the injury of many more civilians. This act was widely condemned by the international community. Zimbabwe is also experiencing massive unemployment, low investment, industrial stagnation, low agricultural productivity and high domestic and foreign debts which have reduced the country’s access to credit.¹¹ This has made it difficult to deliver on the promises.

The deteriorating economic conditions and food and fuel shortages led to mass demonstrations and national stay away 14-16 January 2018. During this period, over 17 civilians were killed and over 586 civilians were assaulted. Since then, Western countries have lost confidence in the Mnangagwa administration’s capacity to uphold human rights, democracy and constitutionalism in the country. Zimbabwe has once again descended into militarism. The members of the security forces allegedly involved in murder and other gross human rights violations have not been held accountable. In the face of accusations of human rights abuses, the ZANU-PF government has reverted to the familiar scapegoat narrative from the past: attacking the west for interference and attempts to destabilize the country and accusing those who challenge the government as enemies of the state. Zimbabwe under president Mnangagwa, has failed to adopt an inclusive international re-engagement policy that is responsive to human needs and sensitive to human rights.¹²

¹⁰ ‘President Mnangagwa’s Inauguration speech in full, Chronicle, November 25, 2017, <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.chronicle.co.zw/president-mnangagwas-inaugurationspeech-in-full/amp>

¹¹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ruhanya, “Introduction: Transition in Zimbabwe,” 10-12.

¹² Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ruhanya, 10-12.

The government has also failed to unite the people or offer programs of healing to the nation. President Mnangagwa's five-point plan of action makes no mention of reconciliation, as was clearly articulated in the Global Political Agreement (GPA) (2009), though this was never implemented. The Zimbabwe population is deeply wounded, angry, fearful and deeply polarized. The unresolved past such as the *Gukurahundi* massacre undermines any hope of unity and the victims of political violence are still crying for justice which continues to spawn even more angry new generations. The people who oppose the government still continue to be labelled as enemies of the state. The government continues to use commemorations such as Heroes Day and Independence Day celebrations to divide the people into patriots/non patriots, puppets and sell-outs. The use of the chimurenga narrative as a state of continuous war against colonialism is an abuse of the memory of the liberation struggle in order to hide the government failures and secure its hold on power. The defense forces are used to divide the people and to call for loyalty and to rule without accountability. The ZANU-PF government has no regard for the people and human rights. The people, especially the most vulnerable, do not feature in the national agenda. For example, the agreement between the Zimbabwean Government and former commercial farmers does not include the interests of the farm workers and their families who lost livelihoods. The government seems to have turned its back on the people and those who dare criticize are called enemies of the state.

Zimbabwe is captured by the nationalist oligarchy who practice the politics of patrimony to enrich themselves, have no regard for human rights and continue to abuse the memory of the liberation struggle to divide the people and perpetuate their hold on power. In the face of the government failure, civil society and churches have condemned the current policies of the Zimbabwean government and called for transformation. On the 14th August 2020, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), issued a pastoral letter entitled, *The March is not ended*, bemoaning human rights abuses and corruption. The Catholic Bishops speak for many when they plead: "We make an urgent plea to *peace* and *nation building* through inclusive engagement, dialogue and collective responsibility for transformation. This will come by establishing consensus among the citizens as to what should constitute a comprehensive agenda towards a lasting solution to Zimbabwe's challenges."¹³

¹³ Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC). *The March is not Ended: Pastoral Letter of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference on the Current Situation in Zimbabwe*, 14 August 2020. <https://www.google.com.www.zcbc.co.zw>.

This should include the healing of past hurts and using the memory of the liberation to build a cohesive society, and a victim led process which adheres to globally accepted norms and international law, a reform process towards constitutionalism and the rule of law.

In light of the problems in Zimbabwe and inspired by the Catholic Bishops plea, I intend my work to focus on Deuteronomy's use of collective memory in nation-building to contribute to the ongoing debate and programs on nation-building in Zimbabwe. My work will use narrative and rhetorical analyses of the persuasive speech of Moses to reveal how a united and inclusive community was constructed.

In the narrative of Deuteronomy, the memory of the past foundational events are inculcated for the new second generation in order to conflate all the generations of Israel into one people and thus establish a historical continuity for this one imagined community through time. The collective memory also builds a common foundation for the social, political and religious life of the narrative community. The collective memory of Israel's foundational events includes memories of injustice and oppression for the purpose of affecting a change in the present and future, through just and equal treatment in the ethical laws. The laws therefore promote unity and solidarity where the rights of all members of the community are respected. The deliverance from Egypt is a message of freedom for Israel to live in equality and solidarity with one another including the most vulnerable members of the society. The responsibility for the application of the laws lies with the people (Deut. 16:18-20) and the people appoint the king. All institutions, including the king are subject to the law (Deut. 17:14-20). In Deuteronomy, true leadership is restricted and limited by accountability.¹⁴ According to Frank Crusemann, the sovereignty of the people underlying the law, compels us to speak of something like a democracy. This is a highly democratic picture.¹⁵ These provisions of Deuteronomy bear witness to what later became known as the separation of powers in which the modern democratic theory finds support.¹⁶

The ethical foundation of the laws of Deuteronomy have a validity across the centuries and can be used as a measure of a society in the way it treats the weakest members of their community.

¹⁴ Gunther Wittenberg, *Resistance Theology in the Old Testament: Collected Essays* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2007), 107.

¹⁵ Frank Crusemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of the Old Testament Law* (T&T Clark, 1996), 96.

¹⁶ Gordon J. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Nottingham: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 305.

The collective memory of freedom and oppression in Deuteronomy inspires the ethical foundation of the laws and the commemorative practices reflect the collective memory which sustains the unity of the nation.

The collective memory of freedom and oppression in Deuteronomy contains both pacifying and dangerous memories. The work of Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society, toward a Practical and Fundamental Theology*, will be used to inform our understanding of the pacifying and dangerous memories. In a theological context Metz distinguishes between the pacifying and dangerous memories. The pacifying memories are promoted by the powerful to create narratives of continuity and satisfaction with the way things are. In this narrative of the past the victims of history are forgotten. This dominant narrative actively forgets the unacceptability of real situations and narratives that are disturbing and demand acknowledgement and repentance. On the other hand, the dangerous memories are subversive memories, they are seeds of resistance and change for the marginalized. They inspire change and motivate a solidarity with the suffering other, namely the dead, the oppressed, the weak and the poor to work for a just and better future. The dangerous memory of those who went before us inspires action in the present. These memories are kept alive by the narrative retelling of communities who witnessed the lives, struggles and deaths of the victims of history. When we remember them and tell their stories, we are transformed by the stories we tell, establishing a solidarity between the living and the dead in order to motivate a responsibility to build a just and better future.

It is the collective memory of both pacifying and dangerous memories that is lacking in Zimbabwe. The pacifying memory in Zimbabwe aims to preserve the status quo in a narrative of the glory of war which is focused on one leader and his party. This dominant narrative has blocked out the dangerous memories of Gukurahundi and other atrocities committed during the third Chimurenga. These dangerous memories of the people are subversive, taking the form of dangerous liberating stories, protesting and resisting the pacifying memories in their self-satisfaction. They have the potential to inspire a just future for all, especially the victims of history. The dangerous memory is in tension with the pacifying memory by bringing a new moral imagination into political life. This is very important for Zimbabwe in its struggle to construct the nation as a people.

Mugabe failed to acknowledge the wrongs of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities and the violent crimes committed by his government and the Mnangagwa government has failed to heed the lessons

and to learn from the past. The past needs to be recovered in order to restore truth and justice to the present and to craft a new vision for the future. My work which focuses on nation-building and Deuteronomy's use of collective memory in nation building is pertinent in informing and addressing the crises of unity and the political role of the people facing the country of Zimbabwe in the immediate present.

1.2 The aims and objectives of the research

The ancient people of Israel and the modern postcolonial state of Zimbabwe have a common foundation of a liberation struggle which was used by their leaders as the foundation of the people's collective memory. My research will use a narrative analysis of the Book of Deuteronomy and rhetorical analyses of the use of memory in Deuteronomy and the speeches of Robert Mugabe to analyze the different uses of the liberation memory for both peoples ancient and modern. I will use the nation-building resources of the collective memory and especially the dangerous memory in Deuteronomy to show how the nation as a people may be constructed and how the ethical categories of liberation should guide the formation of the sovereign role of the people in the administration and governance of the nation.

By means of contrasting the rhetorical speech of the biblical leader Moses with the rhetorical speech of the state leader Robert Mugabe, I will show how the memory of freedom was articulated to persuade the people to act for the benefit of all the community in Israel, and on the other hand how the memory of liberation was used to promote war and division in Zimbabwe. By means of a tripolar analysis which brings the text of Deuteronomy into the context of Zimbabwe I intend to show how the dangerous memories are key to unity and reconciliation, for building the nation-as-people and for establishing their life in the land based on justice, solidarity and equality.

The use of commemorations and teaching practices will also be a tool in highlighting the model of nation-building in Deuteronomy based on the pacifying and dangerous memory of freedom from oppression, in contrast with the use of the pacifying memory of liberation only, in Zimbabwe.

1.3 Research methodology

In order to make a theological and contextual analysis of the book of Deuteronomy I will use Jonathan Draper's definition of the Tripolar model. This model will act as a framework for reading the Bible in Africa in order to take account of the importance of the context in the production of meaning.¹⁷ The three poles of this model are distantiation, contextualisation and appropriation.

For the analytical pole of distantiation my specific methodology for analysis of the biblical text will be a narrative and rhetorical analysis which provides for a 'moment of autonomy for the text' over and against the reader. Draper's definition of distantiation is especially useful for this work in his understanding: "that the text constructs a world which we can enter and in which we can imaginatively 'live' so that we may be transformed by the experience of another."¹⁸ Transformation is the goal of such a conversation with the other in the text, which in theological terms means that the liberative praxis is the goal of our conversation with the Bible as Christians, who consider it to be a sacred text, as the normative text of our faith community.

This brings us to the ideo-theological orientation of the reader of the Bible and the pre-understanding with which the reader approaches the text. It is the particular context of the reader, my ideo-theological orientation which brings the text and context into dialogue and enables the production of meaning and ultimately transformative praxis.¹⁹ Mosala affirms the importance of context when he writes: "The starting point of any serious textual hermeneutics must be the historical and social context of the hermeneutician."²⁰ Our social location determines what questions we ask, what tools we use to interpret the text and what accounts as

¹⁷ Jonathan A. Draper, "African Contextual Hermeneutics: Readers, Reading Communities and Their Options between Text and Context," *Religion and Theology* 22, no. 1-2 (2015): 9.

¹⁸ Draper, "African Contextual Hermeneutics," 10.

¹⁹ Gerald O. West, "Interpreting the 'The Exile' in African Biblical Scholarship: An Ideo-Theological Dilemma in Post-Colonial South Africa" in *Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa* otwsa/otssa, Pretoria August 2007, ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2009), 247–267; Gerald O. West, "Biblical Hermeneutics in Africa," in *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*. Spck International Study Guide 46. ed. Diane B. Stinton (London: SPCK, 2010), 21–31.

²⁰ Itumeleng I. Mosala quoted from Gerald O. West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), 117-124.

an answer from God. According to Draper contextualization involves spending time analyzing who we are and what our location in society and history is.²¹ My social location as a Zimbabwean Catholic priest instructs my ideo-theological orientation as I engage with the Bible as a sacred text and reading from a liberationist perspective, I have an accountability towards the struggle of the poor and oppressed for justice by upbringing on the side of the dangerous memory. This results in the need to hear and acknowledge the dangerous memories of subjugated communities and to strive for justice.

The acknowledgement and arousal of the ‘dangerous memories’ brings into focus the liberationist categories of equality, solidarity/unity and justice in the study of Deuteronomy and in particular the construction of the imagined political community in Deuteronomy. The transformative praxis engenders an accountability to others, taking responsibility for the implications of the interpretation, since there are no neutral or disinterested readings, but only interested readings declared or undeclared.²² As a Catholic priest from Zimbabwe I must appropriate transformative meaning from the biblical text in the cause of justice for the poor and oppressed of my country.

The message of the Bible resonates with the political elite and with the believing religious masses in Zimbabwe. They turn to the bible for sustenance and they base their ideological and spiritual positions on the Bible. This would suggest that a theological and contextually based piece of research would be particularly useful and respected in the rich religious heritage of Zimbabwe. However, the Bible has also been mis-used for political ends. I come from a country where political and religious discourse overlap. In the late 1990’s ZANU PF appropriated religious texts and themes to justify its seizure of white owned farms. Both Christianity and traditional religions were employed in support of what they called the Third Chimurenga (revolution).²³ The biblical memory motifs of the deliverance from Egypt were used by the party to justify their hold on power and their exclusive nationalism and persecution of the opposition. Thus, it was common for ordinary people on the streets to justify, not only the seizure of white farms by quoting religious themes, but also to justify why President Mugabe

²¹ Jonathan A. Draper, “Reading the Bible as Conversation: A Theory and Methodology for Contextual Interpretation of the Bible in Africa,” *Grace and Truth* 19, no. 2 (2002): 3-22.

²² Draper, “Africa Contextual Hermeneutics,” 20.

²³ Ezra Chitando, “In the Beginning was the Land: The Appropriation of Religious Themes in Political Discourses in Zimbabwe,” *Africa* 75, no. 2 (May 2005): 221.

and his ZANU-PF should continue to rule. The mis-use of the Bible reached an extreme level in the claim for totalitarian leadership when in 2008 Mugabe told a group of business leaders, ‘only God who appointed me will remove me’. This could not be a clearer example of the political will to power overthrowing the political will of the people. There is a deliberate attempt from the ruling elite to subvert the liberative message of the bible in order to justify their rule and to maintain the status quo.

The voice of the churches in Zimbabwe has also been diluted by the fear of repressive tactics from the political elite who threaten violence to those who critique its ideology. This fear of militant tactics causes many individual Christians to stay away from engaging in political discourse, confining themselves to personal activities such as attending prayer sessions, meetings. The bible has been reduced to the personal and moral dimensions. Denominational organizations have been polarized with African Initiated Churches like Destiny for Africa Network, the Family of God, Zion Christian Church which gives religious support to the elite and hence maintains the status quo. On the other hand, main line churches such as the Roman Catholic church, who have taken a stand for the masses, have been threatened with violence. In the words of Mugabe, “Once [the bishops] turn political, we regard them as no longer spiritual and our relations with them would be conducted as if we are dealing with political entities and this is quite a dangerous path they have chosen for themselves.”²⁴ Consequently, individual church leaders such as Archbishop Pious Ncube, Father Marko Mkandla, Pastor Evans Mawarire who critiqued the state and stood out in defense of the oppressed were singled out as enemies of the state and met the full wrath of the law- being victimized imprisoned and persecuted.

Despite this the Catholic church has continued to speak with one voice and courageously. In the midst of the political, social and economic crisis they have opted to speak out and give hope to the poor and oppressed in line with the ‘prophetic’ calling of the church. Most notable was the groundbreaking report produced by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, *Breaking the Silence* which exposed the Gukurahundi massacres. In 2007 they issued a pastoral letter, “God Hears the Cry of the Poor” characterizing the unresolved economic crisis in Zimbabwe as, “in essence, a crisis of governance and a crisis of leadership, apart from being a

²⁴ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence*. (London: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 68.

spiritual and moral crisis.”²⁵ They gave hope to the people assuring them that, “God ... is always on the side of the oppressed” (Psalms 103:6), and “that God hears the cry of the oppressed.”²⁶ In the letter “The March is not ended” they highlighted the shrinking of the democratic space, the abuse of the law, the use of religion to enact veiled autocracy, and the polarization of the people.²⁷ Their challenge to the leaders was to build a nation by taking care of the poor, the oppressed and the victims of the Gukurahundi massacres. The Catholic Bishops see their role as a commitment to uphold the transcendent dignity of the human person and to affirm that the legitimacy of any political authority lies in its accountability to the common good, understood as a moral order in this human dignity. The church has a significant role in fighting for the poor and initiating a conversation that will change the status quo.

In the context of the abuse of the biblical message and a polarized and politicized religious environment, I am inspired by the consistent message from the Catholic Bishops and as a Catholic priest, I engage with the liberative message of the Bible on the side of the poor and oppressed. They need a voice in the toxic environment in which they are fearful of the consequences of state repression when they engage in politics. As a Catholic priest from Zimbabwe, I speak out and appropriate transformative meaning from the biblical text in the cause of justice for the poor and oppressed of my country.

I will engage with the Bible as a sacred text and read from a liberationist perspective. Christians cannot afford an ahistorical or neutral way of reading the Bible. The Bible is not ahistorical but it is a product of contextual struggles in every stage of its formation. West affirms this point, “In every period of biblical history there have been ideological contestations and power struggles. Being able to identify these power struggles casts illuminating light on the Bible as we have it, making it a relevant source for communities of faith today who stand in continuity with its witness.” In so far as the Bible is still influential today for the people of Zimbabwe and as it forms part of the people’s lived experiences, we must read the text in the light of its

²⁵ Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC). God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed. Pastoral Letter on the Current Crisis in Zimbabwe. Holy Thursday, 5 April 2007. Harare. <https://www.google.com.www.zcbc.co.zw>

²⁶ ZCBC. God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed, 6,7.

²⁷ Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference. The March is not ended. Pastoral Letter of the Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference on the current situation in Zimbabwe, 14 August 2020. Harare. <https://www.google.com.www.zcbc.co.zw>.

dominant shape of liberation for the transformation of society. The struggles and suffering of the people ‘within the text’ reveal that God is a God of the downtrodden and the oppressed who acts in history to liberate the oppressed. Appropriating the sufferings and struggles of the victims or the voiceless standing in continuity and solidarity with their ‘dangerous memories’, serves as a source of inspiration for contemporary struggles. This will inspire us to transform our societies and enhance our commitment to liberation.

We will engage with the final form of the biblical text in order to make hermeneutical connections with our contemporary setting. I will make a close literary narrative analysis of the book of Deuteronomy on the basis of the final form. Firstly, such an engagement is informed by my understanding that the final form is accessible to the ordinary reader (the masses, the commoners, the voiceless), who read the text for survival, to hear the word of God in their struggles. Secondly, the final form of the text offers a more egalitarian entry point for ordinary readers to participate and engage on more equal terms with scholarly readers,²⁸ thus leading to more inclusive and collaborative work with the ordinary reader.²⁹

The choice of a literary-narrative reading of the text, is born from the fact that the book of Deuteronomy is a literary and coherent text. I will deliberately read the text of Deuteronomy with the grain to hear the final ideo-theological agenda of the text. I acknowledge Itumeleng Mosala’s caution that the final form of the text has been subject to redactional processes, being written from the dominant perspective which has silenced the voice of the marginalised: in the final form we only find ‘absence’ of marginalised voices.³⁰ It still remains true, however, that this ‘absence’ is partially ‘present’ and we should not be reticent about reading the final form. According to Gerald West, “the redactional processes of the dominant sectors never entirely eradicate the voices of the marginalised sectors they co-opt. Remnants or fragments of marginalised voices remain.”³¹ The context of the struggles of the people of Zimbabwe provides access to the fragmentary ‘presence’ of the ideologically co-opted social sectors

²⁸ Gordon J. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 5-6.

²⁹ Gerald O. West, “Interlocution after Liberation: Who do we Interpret with and which biblical Text do we Read with?” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73, no. 3 (30 September 2020): 1-9. a6031.https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v7613.6031.http.hts.org.za.

³⁰ Itumeleng Mosala quoted from West, “Interlocution after Liberation,” 1-9.

³¹ Gerald O. West. “Foreword,” in Gunther Wittenberg, *Resistance Theology in the Old Testament: Collected Essays* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2007), 7.

which will be appropriated. The liberatory fragments of the final text will be appropriated through the ‘deconstructive literary narrative methods’ in order to detect more detailed glimpses of the struggle that produced the narrative, in the text.

The biblical text and the post-colonial Zimbabwean context do not, on their own, participate in a conversation. The two are brought into dialogue or conversation with each other through a postcolonial liberationist mode of appropriation. The postcolonial liberationist perspective will be used in the analysis of the selective appropriation of the memories of the anti-colonial struggle, in order to imagine the postcolonial nation on a common foundation. The liberationist axis provides a suitable perspective for grounding the construction of the imagined political community in the book of Deuteronomy and Zimbabwe. Central to the liberation paradigm is the commitment to reclaim the past in order to transform the present. The past is reclaimed through the subversive power of the ‘remembered past’ or ‘dangerous memory’ in order to provide the roots for the imagined community which allows for solidarity amongst all people, past, present and future who share the same memories.

In the book of Deuteronomy, the dangerous memory of freedom from slavery in Egypt is a liberation motif. It works across time to unite all communities who have suffered similar experiences of oppression and serves to engender the ethical categories of solidarity, justice and equality in the lives of all people. The ethical motivation must be that those who have been freed from oppression must now establish the rights of freedom equally between one another. These ethical categories constitute the moral force of memory in Deuteronomy and will be brought into dialogue with the historical context of Zimbabwe in order to illuminate the memory of liberation as a nation building paradigm to ensure that there is accountability and responsibility.

Within the historical context of past events in Zimbabwe, I will use a narrative analysis of the use of the liberation memory in Zimbabwe, based on the rhetorical evidence of direct quotes from Robert Mugabe. I will show how the noble aims of the memory of liberation were rearticulated after independence to become the rhetoric of war and a cause of division among the people. Ultimately, I will use a tripolar analysis to bring Mugabe’s rearticulation of the memory of liberation into dialogue with the evidence of the narrated memory of liberation in Deuteronomy. A deconstructionist reading of the pacifying memory of liberation will reveal how the dangerous memories of the people are suppressed and blocked by the dominant narrative memory. I will also argue that a sustainable renewal and reconstruction requires an

honest audit of the past with a view to including both the pacifying and the dangerous memories in order to create the nation as deep and horizontal comradeship.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is made up of seven chapters. It begins with a general introduction in chapter one and provides a background description, a statement of motivation for the study, an outline of the research methodology and outlines the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents important concepts that are crucial for this study. The constructivist school of nationalization as authored by Benedict Anderson and Stuart Hall will be used to explain the notion of 'nation' and by extension, its underpinning ideology of nationalism as an imagined political community in which the sovereignty and citizenship of the people is acknowledged in order to shape the identity of a nation. For Anderson, a nation is an imagined political community, limited and sovereign within a common culture of shared stories of the past and supports the view that communities are to be distinguished from one another, not by their authenticity, but by the way in which they are imagined. People who share similar stories of the past can create a common culture with which every member identifies himself/herself. Such common stories become the ground for solidarity, equality, a sense of belonging, compatriotism, and deep horizontal comradeship. The people's storytelling then becomes an important element in recovering and guaranteeing the continuity of collective memories of past events.

The notion of collective memory as espoused by Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann and Johann Baptist Metz is central to the formation of individual and collective or national identity. I will use the concept of collective memory to study the book of Deuteronomy and show how collective memory plays an important role in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Within collective memory both the pacifying and dangerous memories contribute to the stability and viability of the nation state. Such memories are crucial in nation-building and they must be aroused and acknowledged in order to inspire action in the present and motivate solidarity, freedom, equality, accountability and justice for all in the imagined community.

Having established the key concepts for nation-building which will be used in this research, I will now explore how the biblical model of nation-building was expounded for the people of

Israel for many generations. In line with the biblical foundation of this research, I will take the book of Deuteronomy in its final form as a starting point and a model of ethical nation-building.

In chapter 3, using both narrative and rhetorical analyses, I will study and explore the use of memory in the process of constructing a collective memory with a view to creating a lasting unity among many generations in Israel. The four speeches of Moses will be analysed in order to explore how Israel as a nation was built on the basis of collective memory. A collective memory of both the pacifying and dangerous memory are remembered so that Israel may continue to rely on God's actions of deliverance and also use her experience of slavery in Egypt to promote justice, equality, unity and fraternity among all the people. With the collective memory as a reference point, Israel is motivated to build an imagined community which is guided by the principles of freedom, equality, inclusion, solidarity and human dignity.

In the next chapter the rhetorical analysis will progress to explore how the memory of liberation of Israel from Egypt is used by Moses to persuade rather than to coerce the audience to agreement. My analysis will also explore how the dangerous memories provide the people with an ethical foundation for just action in the future.

Chapter 4 focuses on how the rhetorical argumentation of Moses uses the pacifying and dangerous memories of Egypt in order to promote a decision on the part of the people to obey and honour the covenant commandments. A narrative and rhetorical analysis of two texts in Deuteronomy: 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 both reveal how the pacifying and dangerous memories are used to persuade the audience to accept the divine authority of God and to inculcate in their mind the ethical values characteristic of God. The dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt motivates them to be in solidarity with those who suffer because of injustices and oppression in the land. The analysis of 5:12-15 dwells meaningfully on the role that the Sabbath rest plays in proclaiming the equality and freedom of every person. A common feature of both units (5:12-15 and 24:10-22) is that they focus on the relationship with God and the people's relationships with each other. The dangerous memory of the past must motivate them to fight against oppression, marginalisation and dehumanisation of God's people. Therefore, these dangerous memories provide the people with an ethical foundation for just action in the future.

The biblical model of nation-building has been explored and revealed in the analyses of chapters 3 and 4 and may now be followed by a contrasting analysis of the use of memory in the context of nation-building projects in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5 offers a narrative analysis of the use of the liberation memory in Zimbabwe based on the rhetorical evidence of direct quotes from Robert Mugabe, the national commemorative site and memorialised narratives. A rhetorical analysis of direct quotes from Robert Mugabe will explore how he manipulated the collective memory of the past to suit his intentions to uphold power and maintain a spirit of entitlement. The Zimbabwean elite used the pacifying memories to maintain the legacy of a glorious war that liberated Zimbabwe from colonialism. The ideology of liberation was also used as an instrument to divide the people into patriotic/unpatriotic, puppets and sell-outs. On the other hand, the dangerous memories that are associated with the experience of oppression, intimidation, killing, exploitation and exclusion remain trivialized and suppressed. Intimidation rather than rhetorical persuasion is used so that people who stand against the ruling party and its government continue to be treated ‘as the enemies of the state.’

The methods of narrative and rhetorical analysis will be used to analyse and contrast the persuasive speeches of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy and those of Robert Mugabe in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Following the evidence of chapter 5, I will now in chapter 6 make connections between the nation-building model in Deuteronomy and post-colonial Zimbabwe. I will compare the use of the liberation memory in the speeches of Moses with that of Mugabe. It is evident that Moses’ speeches aimed to unite his people and construct an imagined political community that promotes horizontal comradeship and sovereignty in the land. This is not the case with Mugabe whose speeches sound divisive and derogatory. Moses continuously exhorted the Israelites to remember both the pacifying and dangerous memories of all the events in Israel’s past, to construct a united people with a sovereign role in the land. Mugabe exalts pacifying memories of a glorious war and he dismisses the dangerous memories of the people in order to construct the elitist version of the narrated past. Moses seeks to persuade his people to protect the unity of Israel as an imagined community through laws which promote freedom for all while in contrast Mugabe has used military power to coerce and oppress his people in order to consolidate his power.

A tripolar analysis of nation-building in Deuteronomy in dialogue with nation-building in postcolonial Zimbabwe will bring the text and context into dialogue for the purpose of illuminating the different uses of the liberation memory to unite and empower the people in justice or to cause divisions and suffering among the people.

Chapter 7 offers a general conclusion. The thesis ends with a summary and overview of the work in the light of the aims and objectives. The general conclusion will state the major achievements of this work and the future possibilities for nation-building in post-colonial countries. I will also outline the challenges faced in the work and indicate the areas for future research.

Chapter 2 The notions for understanding nation building in Deuteronomy and postcolonial Zimbabwe

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the theoretical framework for nation-building, starting with an examination of the term ‘nation’ drawing on the view of scholars, which leads us firstly to the idea of national identity, built upon a collective memory of the past both historical and in myth. Secondly, we shall examine the notion of ‘collective memory’ collective memory in nation-building and the preservation of the collective memory for the viability of the imagined community. Thirdly we will discuss the ‘dangerous memory’ that foregrounds the values of solidarity, continuity and accountability in nation building.

The understanding of national identity in this work draws mainly from the constructivist school of nationalism espoused by Benedict Anderson (1991) and Stuart Hall (1996) among others. This school of thought views modern nations and nationalism as social and cultural artefacts. The constructivist school of thought sees identity formation as a construction, a process never completed – always in progress.³² I will draw on Anderson's ideas of an imagined political community, the sovereignty and citizenship of the people, and the rootedness of the people, to shape the identity of a nation. I will also draw on the work of other scholars who presume the centrality of collective memory to national identity formation and the preservation of the historical continuity of the nation. The works of Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann, and Johann Baptist Metz will inform our understanding of collective memory.

2.1.1 The concept of nation and national identity

Anderson's understanding of a nation is captured in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, where he argues that the nation and, by extension, its underpinning ideology of nationalism, is an imagined political community. According to Anderson the roots of national consciousness and the possibility of imagining nations began with the breakdown of traditional religious and dynastic ways of understanding

³² Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, eds. B.A. Houston Jr, D. Mantia, D & R.H. Lindeborg (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 210-222.

the world leading to the rise of historicizing national identities. With the decline of the idea of sacred communities and hierarchical dynasties there arose the possibility of allowing people to imagine themselves and society in a different way.³³ People became able to reimagine the boundaries of their worlds, replacing allegiance to universal religions and divinely ordained dynasties with a new kind of community, based on citizenship and conceived as a fraternity of equals and ‘deep horizontal comradeship’.³⁴ These nations became idealized communities, while also recovering the history they needed to bind the diverse elements into a single whole.

Nevertheless, nations did not simply arise from religious communities and dynastic empires.³⁵ The socio-political changes, namely capitalism and the revolution in communication which Anderson terms ‘print capitalism’, brought about cultural changes, making possible new ways of national imaginings.³⁶ Print capitalism created unified fields of communication and exchange extending beyond and below the elite which enabled speakers of a diverse variety of languages to become aware of one another via print and paper. Though the people reading are anonymous to each other and will never meet each other, yet print media is capable of uniting and creating bonds of solidarity between people, across large stretches of time and space. Print capitalism created a homogeneous empty time, at a time that was everywhere the same, creating felt communities of fate across wide communities.³⁷ The transformation of temporality and the associated interest in the past, according to Anderson, made it possible to think about the nation. Spread through newspapers, novels and school books, common cultures developed among the people who would never meet face to face.³⁸ Within these common cultures, shared stories that were general enough to appeal to the diverse experiences of everyone within a national territory, were especially important. In this way, large new circles of readers were formed which could be mobilized for political and religious purposes (for example, Protestantism and the Reformation) and later for national purposes. Therefore, the convergence

³³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

³⁵ Anderson, 46.

³⁶ Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London, Sage Publications, 2002), 70.

³⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 22-24.

³⁸ Anderson, 6.

of capitalism and print technology on the diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of an imagined community: “which . . . set the stage for the modern nation.”³⁹

Thus, Anderson defined a nation “as an imagined political community, limited and sovereign.”⁴⁰ Anderson characterizes nations, as well as all other communities that are larger than ‘face-to-face groups’ as imagined communities with a common culture of shared stories of the past and supports the view that communities are to be distinguished from one another not by their authenticity, but by the way in which they are imagined.⁴¹ The nation is *imagined* “because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them; yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁴² The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. It is imagined as *sovereign* in terms of citizenship and a fraternity of equals and deep horizontal comradeship because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.⁴³ Anderson refers to religious communities and dynastic empires as linked to each other by sacred languages and by writings passed on through generations, as the cultural roots of nationalism, the miracle of which was turning chance into destiny.⁴⁴ Thus the nation is imagined in three respects as limited, sovereign *and* a community with cultural roots.⁴⁵ To

³⁹ Anderson, 46.

⁴⁰ Anderson, 6.

⁴¹ Anderson, 6.

⁴² Anderson, 6.

⁴³ Anderson, 6-7.

⁴⁴ Anderson, 19.

⁴⁵ A detailed discussion of culture is outside the scope of this work. This footnote serves to clarify our understanding of cultural roots in this thesis. Culture is a shared system of symbols, beliefs and meanings that forms the basis of all social identities. Anthony Smith describes culture as, “both an inter-generational repository and heritage, or a set of traditions, and an active shaping repertoire of meanings and images, embodied in values, myths and symbols that serve to unite a group of people with shared experiences and memories, and differentiate them from outsiders.” Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism. A Critical Survey of Recent Theories on Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 187. The components of a group's culture are varied and can be rooted in various cultural artifacts such as language, rituals, myths, characters, traditions, memory or historical events etc., through which collective memory can be transmitted and preserved. Culture is also the medium through which a sense of collective identity can be created, re-produced, communicated and maintained, Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1997), 139. The very idea of common cultural roots has significant political

call a community ‘imagined’ is to refer to how it is cultural rather than natural. As a framework for this thesis the most useful notions of a nation are Anderson’s ideas of an imagined political community which forms cultural roots through shared stories of the past and which imagines the sovereignty of the people in terms of citizenship and deep horizontal comradeship. With the help of scholars in this field, I now turn to elaborate on this definition.

The use of the term ‘imagined’ does not take its conventional sense of imaginary or falsity or fabrication. The issue for Anderson is not one of falsity/genuineness but of style and imagination. The cohesion of a group is a matter of collective imagining, of how the group understands itself, rather than the direct expression of biology or some other feature of nature. Anderson’s conceptualisation provides a model of a community where members may not know each other, but all share the idea of belonging to a collectivity. In Anderson’s examples the shared collectivity is based on shared print material which has facilitated the sharing of common ideas. The sharing of stories from the past can create a common culture if the ‘readers’ identify with the stories of the past.

A community is contingent on its members sustaining a certain image of itself that is based on their perceptions and feelings. Anderson identifies ‘deep horizontal comradeship’ as a felt perception that sustains the imagined community because the rhetoric of nationalism suggests a deep relationship between members of the same nation even though all nations are guilty of various forms of inequality and exploitation. He explains: “a nation is imagined as a community because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship.”⁴⁶ The fact that this horizontal comradeship is in some regards an artificial imagining does not make it less powerful. This comradeship is felt even if it is in tension with the inequalities and sectional divisions. Thus, the nation is always imagined as a felt horizontality of comradeship. David Miller, *On Nationality*, supports this contention by arguing that a nation is a group of people held together by mutual recognition rather than an aggregate of people distinguished by their physical or cultural traits. He explains this contention when he argues that nationalities are constituted by

undertones or associations. It brings with it traces of egalitarianism – a sharing of a common culture implies that all have the same or equal access to it, equal ownership of it and have equally contributed to making or creating it, Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 72.

⁴⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

belief: “nations exist when their members recognise one another as compatriots, and believe that they share characteristics of a relevant kind.”⁴⁷ This horizontal comradeship is an important element in nation building as, without amiable feelings between members, each will not consider the other as equal and deserving familial protection.

Anderson further underscores the importance of fraternity/comradeship in his observation that fraternity inspires people to make sacrifices for the nation, to the point of death. He explains: “it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love and often profoundly self-sacrificing love.”⁴⁸ He affirms: “Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many of the people not so much to kill but to die, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”⁴⁹ This is what is symbolized in the tombs of unknown soldiers. The identity of each with his fellows and his nation, takes priority over an individual name.⁵⁰ Thus, the horizontal comradeship even includes those who have died and they are part of the imagined community. A nation is a unity of both the living and dead.

The imagination of a nation runs hand in hand with the construction of a national identity. National identity is the extent to which people may be seen or see themselves as members of a given nation with shared characteristics. As soon as it is elevated to an imaginary collective level, a national identity is constructed. In other words, the imagined community defines the inner group and outer group, who ‘we’ and who ‘they’ are depending on the manner of imagining and the criteria used for determining membership. For Anderson, national identity is not only cemented by ‘Print Capitalism’ but also by the imagination of the people as a collective of deep horizontal comradeship. This shared belief amongst the people, in their existence as a people, is a characteristic of the imagination of a nation and it is common to both ancient and modern nations.⁵¹

In order for a diverse people or individuals who are anonymous to each other, to be united into a single whole, as deep horizontal comradeship, a nation needs to recover its cultural roots in

⁴⁷ David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 22.

⁴⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 113-114.

⁴⁹ Anderson, 7.

⁵⁰ Anderson, 6-7.

⁵¹ Stephen Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 20-21.

the past which may be expressed in language, myth, drama or iconography. These roots give a sense of belonging and encourage members to situate their own identities and self-understanding in the imagined community. Within the common culture, shared stories of the past emerged which gave roots to the imagined community. Anderson identified the social and material conditions for the cultural imagination of a nation with the crucial recognition of narrative storytelling. Stuart Hall (1996), agrees with Anderson on the importance of storytelling. He explains:

National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about the nation with which we can identify. These are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past and imaginations which are constructed from it.⁵²

The story of the nation as told in national narratives, in literature, national symbols, rituals and other elements of popular culture, presents shared experiences and concerns, triumphs and destructive defeats. Through these accounts of national triumphs and disasters, individuals are helped or invited to feel themselves connected with the past and future of a national destiny. Duncan Bell, *Introduction, Memory, Trauma and World Politics*, also affirms the importance of narrative:

It is argued that communities require a relatively shared understanding of history and its meaning, for the construction of a narrative, tracing the linkages between the past and present and locating self and society in time. It is this understanding that helps to generate affective bonds and a sense of belonging which engenders obligations and loyalty to the imagined community.⁵³

Anderson's theoretical focus on narrative storytelling for the cultural imagination of the imagined community undergirds the appreciation of the past in the construction of nationhood. The importance of the past in the formation of nations is further confirmed by the theoreticians of nationalism. To the primordialist, the modern nation has a long formation through a developing national or ethnic culture with a long, unbroken (although sometimes suppressed)

⁵² Hall, *Cultural Identity*, 613.

⁵³ Duncan Bell, "Introduction, Memory, Trauma and World Politics," in *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present*, ed. Duncan Bell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 4.

history.⁵⁴ It is this historical and ethnic rootedness that enables the population to have a sense of unity. Modern nations therefore sustain themselves on the basis of older ethnic ties, but if they lack these they will have to be invented.⁵⁵ According to Ethno-symbolists, nations and nationalism are historical phenomena in the sense of their foundation that is rooted in a particular collective past that spans through long periods across antiquity and modernity. Anthony Smith argues that most nations originated historically on the basis of ethnic communities and are to a certain extent the heritage of older collective groups. He further attests that the collective past/heritage consists of beliefs that could include, shared awareness of past history, a belief that there exists a territory belonging only to one people, language, myths of ancestry, and ethno-symbolic elements such as language, rituals, memories and symbols.⁵⁶ The ultimate goal is the identification of individuals with the nation, to achieve a measure of sodality, autonomy and a uniform national identity.⁵⁷ The works of Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa*, who analyse the origins of nations and nationalism by analysing national traditions which are themselves invented traditions, also affirm the importance of the past. They write:

Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past.⁵⁸

The invented tradition is there to establish social cohesion of groups and real or artificial communities. In doing so they legitimize institutions and relations of authority and aim to socialize by inculcating beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.

The nationhood of the imagined communities is constructed by the stories of the past that are told about the nation. People can identify with the remembered stories which link its present to

⁵⁴ According to primordialist theories, nationality is a natural part of human beings, as natural as speech, sight and smell and they claim that nations have existed since time immemorial.

⁵⁵ Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 70.

⁵⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2000)

⁵⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin books, 1991), 65.

⁵⁸ Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-2.

its past, leading to the production of a national identity, a sense of belonging and a sense of unity with others belonging to the same nation. Nations are imagined through time by means of a national narrative or shared memory which suggests historical continuity. The nation's past which embodies its collective memory belongs to the sacred foundation of nations. Rootedness in the past thus constitutes the sacred foundations of the nations, both ancient and modern. Thus, the concept of memory and in particular collective memory becomes important for this work in relation to the formation and preservation of a nation.

The second of Anderson's definitions of a nation is the sovereignty and citizenship of the people which will be used in this work. He argues that nations emerged as a protest and struggle against the organizational structures which preceded the modern conception of the nation. The organizational structures were vertical rather than horizontal. Within these structures, be they religious or dynastic, authority flows downward from God to the supreme human authority, whether religious or secular, and outward from there to the rest of the community. Consequently, these dynasties came to be seen as mythical, serving the interest of those at the top and oppressing those at the bottom. Therefore, according to Anderson, the political community is constructed in pursuit of freedom and self-determination from these oppressive structures in order to create deep and horizontal comradeship marked by the values of equality and justice. Thus, he affirms: nations dream of being free, and if under God directly so.⁵⁹ For Anderson freedom was the underlying principle at the centre of the imagined communities and the state was the gauge and emblem of this freedom. This new kind of community was imagined on the basis of citizenship in which every person is an equal member and free. Anderson's perspective resonates with both the modern aspect of sovereignty and with the liberalist perspectives of freedom.

The concept of 'sovereignty' is a key characteristic of modern nations. The basic meaning of sovereignty (or autonomy) of the state, is that the state has exclusive control over a portion of the earth, over which it exercises jurisdiction and law enforcement over all its residents and whose integrity it is committed to protecting against encroachment from any other political power.⁶⁰ In terms of the exercise of jurisdiction and law enforcement, the authority of the state

⁵⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Community*, 6.

⁶⁰ Christopher W. Morris, *An Essay on the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 45; Graeme Gill, *The Nature and Development of the Modern State* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 5.

is supreme over both the ruler and the ruled. The citizen cannot appeal against the state to any other authority; the state is supreme and its will cannot be retracted. Further, the decisions of the state cannot be overridden by another state or an international institution.

The understanding of a nation as sovereign also brings in the notions of political institutions and citizenship which are key attributes of a nation. Citizenship is the legal status of people in relation to the state. It is a passport in a literal sense to rights and political participation. Graeme Gill, *The Nature and Development of the Modern State* affirms, “Citizenship thus entails rights and privileges as well as duties and obligations vested in individuals with respect to the state.”⁶¹ The state expects and demands the loyalty of its citizens and inhabitants of its territory by virtue of their membership. Citizenship entails participation and political responsibility in what is incumbent in the state institutions. The institutions require that the citizens use judgement and make decisions⁶² creating a dispensation of freedom, equality and justice. In this capacity for responsible decisions lies what can be termed political equality. Political equality presupposes individual freedom, the inclusion of all individuals and groups in the community with equal rights, the equality of all people before the law, a clear system of individual rights and obligations and an emphasis on procedural safeguards such as the rule of law.

2.1.2 Conclusion

Anderson’s contribution is important because it introduces the centrality of the imagination in the creation of a nation. Our understanding of nationhood in this work shall be based on the assumption that nations are to be understood as mental constructs, as imagined political communities. For the purpose of this work, we will argue that the imagined political community is constructed on the basis of a shared collective memory which further unites the imagined community in deep comradeship by the sovereign role of the people in the land. Having now established our understanding of nationhood I will now turn to a discussion of collective memory as a resource in the construction of the imagined community.

⁶¹ Graeme Gill, *The Nature and Development of the Modern State* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 196.

⁶² Gordon J. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 95.

2.2 Collective memory as a resource in nation-building

2.2.1 Introduction

Anderson (1991) and Hall (1991) have highlighted the importance of narrative or story telling in the construction of the collective memory in which the imagined community finds its roots. Memory provides individuals and collectivities with a cognitive map that helps orient them with regard to who they are, why they are here and where they are going. Memory in other words is central to the formation of individual and collective or national identity.⁶³ Johann Baptist Metz affirms this when he says: “The destruction of memory leads to a loss of identity as a subject. The reverse is also true, identity is formed when memories are aroused.”⁶⁴ Jan Assmann also affirms that the conscious activity of remembering is crucial for processes of collective identity formation and that group identity can only be reproduced by remembering, as it is through remembering that groups imagine themselves. Collective memory equips the members of the imagined community with a collective identity and a sense of belonging.

In this section we will explore the role of collective memory as a resource in the formation of the ‘imagined community’ establishing its importance in the construction of identity, the unity of the people or social cohesion and the historical continuity and sovereignty of the people. With regard to collective memory, we will argue for the importance of both the pacifying and dangerous memories that contribute to the stability and viability of the nation state.

In order to do this, it is now necessary to use the scholars Johann Baptist Metz, Jan Assmann and Maurice Halbwachs to investigate the power of collective memory to unite the imagined political community. Maurice Halbwachs, as a sociologist, lays the foundation for understanding memory as a constructed and social phenomenon. Halbwachs illuminates the function of memory in the present rather than in the past. Thus, collective memory is selectively driven by the concerns of the present in order to shape the group’s identity and enhance the social cohesion of members of society. Jan Assmann contributes to the argument on collective memory, by explicating on the cultural roots of the imagined community. In an effort to understand the role of memory in the imagination and construction of society, he developed the theory of cultural memory. According to Assmann cultural memory is a highly organised form of tradition which focuses on foundation myths in the past. The foundation myths, which

⁶³ Ron Eyerman, *Memory, Trauma and Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 25.

⁶⁴ Johann-Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical and Fundamental Theology* (London: Burns and Oates, 1980), 66.

consist of foundational events, are the cultural roots of nations, forming the building blocks of a group's identity and providing a sense of social cohesion. The work of Johann Baptist Metz (1980), adds to the theological context of collective memory by bringing out the distinction between the pacifying and dangerous memory. The dangerous memory takes into account the victims of history, the subversive character of these memories and the moral force of collective memory. These memories must be aroused and acknowledged in order to inspire action in the present and motivate solidarity, freedom, equality, accountability and justice for all in the imagined community. Taken together, the concepts of Halbwachs, Assmann and Metz help to illuminate: what is remembered, by whom, how it is remembered and for what reasons.

2.2.2 Understanding collective memory

Memory is a fundamental property of the mind, an indispensable component of culture and an essential aspect of tradition. Memory is a common human activity, which refers to a mental faculty or process where events or impressions or images from the past are recollected, preserved and recovered. Memory is thus a "process of active reconstruction in which elements may be retained, reordered or suppressed."⁶⁵ Although individuals alone possess the capacity to remember the past, they never do so singly, they do so with and against others situated in different groups. Memory is not merely subjective by nature; it is social at the same time.

Individual memory does not exist in a vacuum, instead it depends on a social framework for its existence, maintenance, and reconstruction. In order to unite a community with a past that is shared, individual memories must be framed into a *collective* which is meaningful to the community. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, observes:

"It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is in society also that they recall, recognise and localise their memories...and the groups of which I am part at any time gives me the means to reconstruct them."⁶⁶

One cannot conceive individual memory apart from its social environment and surrounding culture. These include the variety of a person's overlapping communities such as kinship groups, religious groups and society. Group membership is essential to the process of individual remembering as well as forgetting. Because these collective frames determine

⁶⁵Chris Wickham and James Fentress, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 40.

⁶⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* Translated by Lewis A Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

individual memories we can speak of collective memory. It is through this collective framework that individuals as group members perceive and interpret the past, present and future.

Halbwachs furnished a theory of remembering as well as of forgetting. With regard to forgetting he argues that the flip-side of collective memory is amnesia. This is caused by the dissolution or change of the social framework.⁶⁷ The changes to the framework occur as the result of an adjustment of the social framework to changing conditions or when individuals separate from the group permanently.

The changes in the social framework means that the past is not simply preserved in collective memory, but is instead (constantly) reconstructed with the aid of material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past. According to Halbwachs, memories are altered through the course of time and therefore do not always contain entirely historical data but an appropriation of the past to suit the needs of the present.⁶⁸ Jan Assmann also supports this dynamic of memory. He writes:

Collective memory is not a repository of memories but the selective reconstruction and appropriation of aspects of the past that respond to the needs of the present. The present is haunted by the past and the past is modelled, invented, re-invented and reconstructed by the present.⁶⁹

Consequently, the past is selectively remembered, appropriated or forgotten, and shaped by the moral and political considerations, interests, and aspirations of the present.⁷⁰ In view of this,

⁶⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* Translated by Francis Ditter Jr. & Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 24-30.

⁶⁸One of the central features of Halbwachs' view is how groups use memory to make the past relevant to the present. For this reason, his approach is often called "presentist." Indeed, such a focus is what, he says, distinguishes memory from history. History, he argues, is a relatively fixed framework aiming to construct a thorough and, as far as possible, objective view of the past. Memory contrasts this, however, for it is an elastic framework that views past events in reference to their significance to present issues concerning the group. As such, memory is intentionally selective and subjective. For Halbwachs, this does not mean memory is necessarily untrustworthy when it comes to historical events. It means instead that memory is simply concerned with interpreting their significance for the present (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 25-27).

⁶⁹ Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique: Cultural History/ Cultural Studies* 65 (1995): 132.

⁷⁰The dynamism of memory also finds support from other scholars and is a very important element in national identity. Elizabeth Tomkins summarises this dynamic of memory when she

collective memory is a social construct of the past in the light of the present and our interpretation of the past is tailored to our basic requirement to find viable patterns for the present.

According to Halbwachs and Assmann the main function of collective memory is to create social cohesion. For this reason, society tends to erase from its memory all that might create friction among group members. In order to maintain a sense of social cohesion over time, groups consciously rearrange their recollections in such a way as to adjust them to the variable conditions of equilibrium.⁷¹ Hence, groups preserve their pasts under aspects of continuity and distinctiveness of their identity, while blanking out all which is not in support of a positive group image.⁷²

The collective memory which perpetuates the identity and unity of a group, is formed around foundational events and these are crystallised into a tradition.⁷³ Jan Assmann, specifically uses the term ‘cultural memory’ to refer to the social memory of a community. The content of cultural memory “focuses on fixed points in the past” in the form of symbolic figures or events, which are celebrated in festivals and used to explain situations in the present.⁷⁴ Groups base their distinctiveness on foundational or formative historical events of their community, such as memories of liberation, a golden age, victories and defeats with subsequent heroes, and martyrs etc. These events or figures become transformed, through cultural tradition, into *myth* and *remembered history*. For Assmann history turns into *myth* as soon as it is remembered, narrated, and used, that is, woven into the fabric of the present. For Assmann the definition of a myth is that it is a well-known and widely shared foundational story irrespective of its historical or fictional base.

says, “memory makes us and we make memory.” Memory creates individual identity and memory provides the group with the interpretive framework that informs and restricts the actions of its members, a frame through which the group perceives both its past history and present. At the same time “we make memory” too, for our interpretation of the past is tailored to our basic requirements to find viable patterns for the present. This dynamic is also affirmed by Radstone and Schwartz “Memory is active, forging its pasts to serve the present needs.”

⁷¹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 382.

⁷² Assmann and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 40.

⁷³ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 84-119.

⁷⁴ Assmann and Czaplicka, “Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity,” 129.

Assmann emphasises the power of the myth as a foundational story for a culture and therefore this memory is able to span many ages, while including many generations in its remembering community.⁷⁵ According to Assmann, myths can fulfil two functions, firstly as an identity-reinforcing agent in the foundational narrative, in support of the status quo. Secondly the myth has the potential to fulfil a revolutionary function, by contrasting the present situation with a collective memory of a better past. Myths in their revolutionary function are utilized in national liberation movements.⁷⁶ Myths are given significance through festivals, liturgies and cultic rituals.⁷⁷ These cultural activities are internalised by the individual, as they identify with actual people who have acted at those moments, re-appropriating their deeds and conceiving the memory as part of themselves.

All nations and groups have founding myths, stories that tell who we are through recounting where we came from.⁷⁸ Modern and ancient, young and old nations alike resort to a myth of political origins for imagining the ongoing formation of the nation. These core national narratives and related commemorations cement the collective identification as they distinguish *us* from *them* those *inside* and *outside* the collective or imagined community. In this way the core identity of the group and of the individual members is established and social cohesion enhanced.

So far, the importance of remembrance for identity formation, continuity and social coherence has been stressed, but collective memory can serve a double function. It not only endows the group with stability, but remembering also bears a subversive potential for resistance, conflict, exclusion and change. Jan Assmann refers to the subversive potential as counter-memories. In the words of Havel, it is a 'sight of contestation and of struggle' if the memory is one of a conflicted past. It is a struggle over power and who gets to decide on the future.⁷⁹ The selective

⁷⁵ Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, eds. Astrid Erill & Ansgar Nunning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 112-113.

⁷⁶ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1997), 57.

⁷⁷ This point will be taken up later in 2.2.3, the preservation and inculcation of collective memory.

⁷⁸ Eyerman, *Memory*, 146.

⁷⁹ Brian F. Havel, "In Search of Public Memory: The State, the Individual and Marcel Proust," *Indiana Law Journal* 80, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 653.

use of memory for the purposes of an elite group gives rise to divisions due to contradictory versions of the past.

This struggle over memory occurs when a certain group shares collective memories of a heroic or golden age marked by freedom, wealth or military power that stands in stark contrast to the present experience of deficiency or inequality, caused by foreign occupation or other forms of dependence. In such cases the oppressed groups counterpose the memory, or criticize the *status quo* and ultimately the urge for revolution and change may arise. The memory of such a heroic past can turn into a social utopia for the future, a counter-history that raises hope and expectation and mobilises people to call for a change.⁸⁰ The second, more subtle struggle over memory occurs when people or groups sacralise the events of the past which fit their search for identity and cut off the memories which do not correspond to their view of history. The priority given by the dominant group to its memories leads to violence because the groups whose memories are excluded from commemoration feel threatened and resort to force to reinstate their view of the past. In this sense, the memory of the minority may be referred to as ‘subjugated knowledge’ which if suppressed, will lead to discord and fragmentation of the ‘imagined community.’⁸¹ Collective memory therefore, bears a subversive potential for resistance, conflict, exclusion and change.

In summation, we have now established the importance of collective memory in the construction of the imagined community and in the maintenance of the sovereign role of the people in the land. Now, in the following section we discuss the preservation and transmission of these memories.

2.2.3 Preserving collective memory for the continuity of the imagined political community

Every society or in our sense every ‘imagined community’ requires a sense of continuity in order to maintain its identity and social cohesion over time (Anderson:1991, Hall, Smith, Ranger and Hobsbawm). Since social groups are delimited in space and time, the question then

⁸⁰ Assmann, *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, 40.

⁸¹ Assmann, 40.

arises: how is this collective memory preserved within the same group to establish historical continuity?

According to Halbwachs (1992), Jan Assmann (1997) and Paul Connerton (1989) the collective memory of a group reaches the individual in a variety of ways. Since individuals in a society do not remember events directly, according to Halbwachs, continuity "...can only be stimulated in indirect ways through *reading* or *listening* or in *commemoration* and festive occasions when people gather together to remember in common the deeds and accomplishments of long departed members of the group. In this way the past is stored and interpreted by social institutions."⁸² It is through participation in these commemorative meetings or events with group members of the current generation that we can create, through imaginatively re-enacting a past, a memory that would otherwise slowly disappear in the haze of time.⁸³

Further, the celebration of calendar festivals and the teaching by the parents and elders strengthens and inculcates the collective memory.⁸⁴ This point finds further support from Jan Assmann who affirms: "The primary technique for transmitting cultural memory is the festival. The reason for this is that through regular repetition, festivals ensure the communication and the continuance of the knowledge that gives the group its identity."⁸⁵ Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember*, observes that all rites are repetitive and repetition does not merely imply continuity with the past but they explicitly claim such continuity by ritually re-enacting a narrative event held to have taken place at some time past. Thus, participation in periodic celebrations serves as focal points in the drama of re-enacted citizen participation. Participation in the group events by individuals is key to inculcate these group memories. Through participation the collective memory is inculcated into the individual and the identity of the group is formed and maintained. Whether celebrated by a nation-state, a political party, a faith community or an interest group, they reinforce identity, especially in situations where identities are threatened by external forces, and they create social cohesion.⁸⁶

⁸² Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 24.

⁸³ Halbwachs, 24.

⁸⁴ Halbwachs, 25.

⁸⁵ Assmann and Czaplicka, *Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity*, 123-133.

⁸⁶ Philippe Denis, "Memory and Commemoration as a Subject of Enquiry for African Christianity Scholars," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 41, no. 3 (2016): 4-22.

The traditions and acts of commemoration stimulate the memory of the foundational events in the past through sensory imagination, in order to recreate the remembered event for the next generation. Another key aspect to remembering involves the use of cognitive capacities such as learning from experience and imagination which reconstructs past events and images which were never actually experienced. In this vein Lyn M. Goff and Henry L. Roediger speak of ‘Imagination inflation’.⁸⁷ This occurs when a person holds as true, a memory that is either an exaggerated version of a true event or an entirely fictional one. Lyn M. Goff and Henry L. Roediger go on to suggest that imagined events come to be seen as memories when they are encoded with memory-like features.⁸⁸ What makes an imagination memory-like is an increase in qualitative characteristics, namely *perceptual* and *contextual* aspects. Therefore, true memories betray a deeper familiarity with the event, both in what it was like and where it occurred, so the more an imagined item reflects this, the more it will register as a true memory. Goff and Roediger further identify *perceptual* and *contextual* aspects respectively as sensory (sights, sounds) and temporal or spatial, which create visually detailed episodes of particular times and places.

While an increase in sensory features in general, causes an imagined item to be seen as real memory, there is one aspect that is especially influential and that is sight. The visual features are the most powerful features which transform imagined events into memories. The preponderance of visual detail causes a person to hold the event not as something imagined, but as something perceived.⁸⁹ This is further enhanced when the rememberer envisions himself

⁸⁷I am grateful to this idea which has been used by Culp in his work. Culp shows how Israel’s collective memory comes to inhabit individual Israelites to shape them to be the kind of people desired by Deuteronomy. In the light of the studies, he proposes that the presence of visual or scenic features are vitally important for they determine the fundamental nature of one’s autobiography. Then using the notions of Picture-superiority and imagination inflation, he argues that visual features provide the all-important point of exchange between collective and autobiographical memory. This therefore makes an important connection in Deuteronomy, which insists that visual memory is necessary for motivating covenantal obedience for the second generation which did not experience the events in Egypt. They are addressed as if they participated in the Exodus, often calling them to remember “what their eyes saw”. This important concept will be used to understand how Deuteronomy builds and shapes and inculcates collective memory.

⁸⁸ Lyn M. Goff and Henry L. Roediger, “Imagination Inflation. Repeated Imaginings lead to Illusory Recollection,” *Memory and Cognition* 26, no. 1 (1998): 20-33.

⁸⁹ Goff and Roediger, “Imagination Inflation,” 20-33.

as a participant in the scene.⁹⁰ The rehearsal of events in vivid visual detail and with oneself as a participant, therefore causes a person to see the events as part of his own autobiography. By rehearsing events in visual detail, the collective constructs in the individual a synthetic personal memory; it is as if each new generation actually experienced the defining events for itself.

Thus, we can draw the conclusion that the acts of transfer that make remembering possible and establish historical continuity are through the ongoing process of reading/listening and commemorative ceremonies, which recall the group's common heritage and shared past. Such processes are as much physical and emotional as they are cognitive in that the past is both embodied and recalled through such cultural practices.⁹¹ The very mind in which they are stored and the mediums by which they are formed are culturally formed. Like individual memory, these cultural acts select and creatively shape and orient past experiences for a purpose. Each act of commemoration reproduces a commemorative narrative, a story about a particular past, that accounts for the ritualized remembrance.⁹² Through storytelling and 'imagination inflation' the rememberer sees himself or herself as part of the original event. The commemorative narrative focuses on the group's distinct social identity, highlighting its historical development. In this sense commemorations contribute to the formation of the nation, portraying it as a unified group through history and providing a moral message for the group members.

2.2.4 Summary

To this point, in section 2, we have established the importance of remembering the past, in the construction of the imagined community. According to Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann the conscious activity of remembering in the formation of a collective memory plays a central role in the processes of collective identification, as a group's identity can only be reproduced through remembering and it is by remembering that groups imagine themselves. Therefore, every collective identity is a social construct depending on the collective imagining of its individual members. Collective memory fundamentally, depends on the social framework of the group. In this thesis we understand collective memory as a shared pool of cultural resources

⁹⁰ Goff and Roediger, 20-23.

⁹¹ Eyerman, *Memory*, 25.

⁹² Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 239.

and a stock of knowledge that constructs the group's identity, social cohesion and its historical continuity.

The cultural resources which constitute the collective memory of a group become myth once they are remembered in commemorations. These are crystallised to become the foundational myths of societies. Because of the dynamic nature of remembering, the foundational memories are open to a process of reinterpretation and reconstruction in order to suit the present needs of the society to enhance social cohesion. Memories that do not suit are left out of the narrative, in a process that may result in collective amnesia. Although, there is a constant shift, the collective memory per se, does not change, change only lies in how and what is remembered. The relevance of collective memory for the processes of national identification and social cohesion becomes apparent when we turn to the imagined communities of Deuteronomy and post-colonial Zimbabwe that endured long-term oppression and totalitarian rule. Emerging from conflict and oppression increased the need to rebuild just and equitable societies. The leaders of both communities turned to foundational memories of liberation in order to create an identity framework and unite the people. These memories were crystallised into foundational myths: the *chimurenga* myth for Zimbabwe and the exodus myth for Deuteronomy.

In this work we will argue that whereas Moses selectively used memory to unite the imagined community of Deuteronomy, Mugabe on the other hand selectively used the memory of the liberation in order to cut some people from the remembered narrative through forms of organised forgetting thus depriving them of their collective identity and consequently failing to homogenise them into a people. In the next section we will move on to explore how memory was used to this end.

2.3 The role of dangerous and pacifying memories of liberation

2.3.1 Introduction

Our discussion on collective memory has highlighted the dynamic, subversive and selective nature of collective memory. The understanding of the subversive nature of memory and the question of the struggle over memory means that memory cannot be privatized and that the understanding of the past is integrally linked with values and beliefs. Memory potentially

involves intergenerational collective obligations.⁹³ The question about the subversive and selective nature of memory now leads us to a discussion of the duty of memory or the ethics of memory. Which memories should be taken into account in order to unite the nation? What are the values embedded in the collective memory which constitute the ethical imagination of the imagined communities?

Therefore, in the following section we will focus on the ethical categories embedded in the collective memory, which are fundamental ethical categories for the purposes of uniting the imagined community in their sovereign role in the land. In this section we begin by illuminating the duty of memory from a theological and liberationist perspective, through the work of Johann Baptist Metz who makes the distinction between the ‘pacifying memory’ and ‘dangerous memory.’ We will then, in the light of the categories of the dangerous memory, discuss their purpose for the sovereign role of the people in the imagined community.

2.3.2 Dangerous and pacifying memory

The foundational stories and myths of ‘imagined communities’ are mostly formed around stories of success and the golden ages. There is a tendency to leave out those accounts which according to Halbwachs and Assmann would be disruptive to the social order. These are usually memories of failure, suffering and pain, which are labelled as insignificant and ugly. Yet these are memories which count and they are regarded by the suppressed groups as counter memories. Without such memories the narrative of the group remains incomplete and a culture of willful amnesia prevails. The work of Johann Baptist Metz illuminates the discussion with the distinction between ‘dangerous’ and ‘pacifying memory’, highlighting the liberationist categories embedded in the dangerous memory.

Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History*, elaborates on collective obligations and the beliefs and values of freedom, solidarity and justice that are embedded in collective memory which are crucial to nation building, contributing to the unity and sovereignty of the people. In line with Anderson, Metz acknowledges the importance of the past and the category of liberation in the constitution of communities. From the liberationist perspective the memories of those with

⁹³ Jan-Werner Muller, “Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory,” in *Memory and Power in Post War-Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 32.

power and those who are subjugated must all be remembered in the construction of the collective memory of the communities. To make his argument, Metz distinguishes between two kinds of memory, the dangerous memories and the pacifying memories. The pacifying memory is a memory of false consciousness, which does not take the relationship with the past very seriously. Metz writes:

There are those in which we just do not just take the past seriously enough. These are memories in which the past becomes a paradise without danger, a refuge from our present disappointments, the memory of the good old days. These are memories that bathe everything from the past in a soft, conciliatory light. Here the past is filtered through a harmless cliché: everything dangerous, oppressive and demanding has vanished from it: it seems deprived of all future. In this way, memory can easily become a false consciousness of our past and an opiate for the present.⁹⁴

These are the memories promoted by the powerful in their construction of the imagined nation. They give voice only to triumph and success, forgetting the names and stories of those who are vanquished. In this history those who are conquered and oppressed are not remembered.⁹⁵ These are memories which according to Anderson, Halbwachs, Assmann and Connerton are at the foundation of the roots of nationalism and are culturally celebrated in the commemorations and rituals of the nation. The pacifying memory constructs the narrative of the glorious struggle for freedom and celebrates the heroes who fought for freedom. But the subjugated knowledge of the sacrifices and death of those exploited in the liberation struggle can be lost and forgotten.

The dangerous memories on the other hand are the memories that challenge and bring a new moral imagination. Metz writes:

There are memories that make demands on us. These are memories in which earlier experiences flare up and unleash new dangerous insights for the present. They illuminate for a few moments and with a harsh steady light the questionable nature of things we have apparently come to terms with, and show up the banality of our supposed realism. They break through the canon of the ruling plausibility structures and take on a virtually subversive character. They are memories that one has to take into account, memories that have a future content, so to speak.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 66.

⁹⁵ Metz, 66.

⁹⁶ Metz, 60-61.

The dangerous memories are constructed around memories of failure, pain and suffering, oppression, dehumanization, death and marginalization mediated through dangerous liberating stories.⁹⁷ The dangerous memory is disruptive and subversive and is initiated by the insurrection of subjugated knowledge. Metz affirms: “In order to break through the official history or the dominant narrative, the oppressed need to break through the official spell of the official awareness of history by unveiling it to be the propaganda of the powerful and the rulers.”⁹⁸ The dangerous memory *resists and protests* in the present situations of the degradations of the human subject by totalitarian regimes and also resists the abstract ideals of emancipation. It also exerts an influence on those who remember, reminding them and exhorting them to resist the status quo because there is still hope for the dead and there is something we can do to protest about what happened to them, preventing it from happening again. The dangerous memory makes the past truly present again, it empowers action for change in the present and inspires a hope in a future that is radically different from what has gone before.

According to Anderson’s definition of the imagined community there is a felt horizontality in its membership, contributing to the unity of the people. If the people are to feel united in their collective memory, then the memories from all the groups must be included, namely the pacifying and the dangerous memories. The dangerous memory thus brings the vision of *solidarity* into political life, in societies that emphasize forgetfulness and suppress suffering. This is a solidarity with the ‘others’ suffering which would mature into a generous and uncalculating partnership on behalf of the victims, the weak, the poor, those from the underside of history and included among these would be the dead. Those who lost their lives in the struggles and whose stories have not been preserved because they did not live to tell their tales.⁹⁹ This memory of the dead makes claim on the present and it calls for a remedy for the wrongs done to the dead and inspires the living to seek justice for the wrongs done to them. In the words of Metz:

It inspires us to a new form of solidarity, of responsibility for the most distant stranger, since the history of suffering unites all men and women like second nature....it will not

⁹⁷ Metz, 106.

⁹⁸ Metz, 75.

⁹⁹ Metz, 72, 117.

allow any peace or any freedom at the price of repressing the histories of the suffering of other peoples and groups.¹⁰⁰

Solidarity itself means a particular kind of action, a lifestyle expressive of sympathy for and identification with the victimized.¹⁰¹ We hope for change but change that not only brings consolation and healing to the victims and the offenders and that things will change for tomorrow for future generations, but a revolution that will decide anew the meaning of our dead and their hopes. The power of the dangerous memory to bring subjugated knowledge to the fore and improve the situations of those who still suffer shows its huge significance for the construction of a united imagined political community.

By standing in solidarity with the suffering of others Metz explains that a future freedom can be imagined, nourished by the memory of suffering- *memoria passionis*. But freedom degenerates wherever those who suffer are treated as a cliché and degraded to a faceless mass.¹⁰² We cannot consider ourselves free when we know that there are some of our people who are oppressed. The *memoria passionis* articulates itself as a memory that makes one free to suffer from the sufferings of others and to respect the prophetic witness of others suffering, even though the negative view of suffering in our progressive society makes it seem as something increasingly intolerable and even repugnant.¹⁰³ A society that suppresses these and similar dimensions in the history of freedom and in the understanding of freedom, pays the price of an increasing loss of all visible freedom.¹⁰⁴ The memory of suffering is grounded on the promise of freedom for all and it takes seriously the suffering of others. The memory of victims, especially the dangerous type of memory that stipulates change and hope, requires the effort to tell the stories from the past and allow one's self to be transformed by them.

Metz has outlined the subversive power of the dangerous memory. Dangerous memories threaten the status quo because they remind people that things can and should be other than they are because the current system is unjust. The memory reminds the living to resist and protest against the current system. The memory of the dead and the victims of history restores

¹⁰⁰ Metz, 104.

¹⁰¹ Johann-Baptist Metz and Jurgen Moltmann, *Faith and the Future: Essays on Theology, Solidarity, and Modernity* (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 11.

¹⁰² Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 112-113.

¹⁰³ Metz and Moltmann, *Faith and the Future*, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Metz and Moltmann, 11.

the subjectivity of all people. The hermeneutical categories embedded in the dangerous memory: freedom, solidarity, justice and equality are essential for the construction of the imagined community. These categories are the basis for the ethical values which must be the foundational values for all nations.

Now having established the importance of ‘dangerous memory’, we now turn to discuss how the tendency to suppress them can be countered in order that these values can be used for the sovereign role of the people.

2.3.3 The role of the dangerous memory in the sovereign role of the people

The suppression of memories belonging to one group in the imagined community may lead to violence and disunity as the group whose memories have not been acknowledged feels threatened and resorts to violence in order to restore their identity. Thus, the lack of acknowledgement and suppression militates against the sovereign role of the people. In the previous chapter we established that the sovereign role of the people is to act with justice, equality and solidarity for all under the common rule of law, by which means, a life of freedom may be established for all the people. In this section we argue that for the sovereign role of the people to be maintained in the land, the subversive memories must not be forgotten but must be exposed.

Memory is subversive and is linked to normative questions and values whether about justice, accountability, solidarity or reconciliation. For example, there is an ethical impulse to commemorate the dead, most often those killed in wars and who died without justice. There is a perceived duty of individuals and groups to remember past injustices, in the cause of achieving reconciliation. The ‘dangerous memories’ leads to historical accountability to the memory of suffering. A nation is called to remember for the sake of those who suffer. It is a matter of restoring the dignity of the victims and survivors by ensuring that their suffering does not pass unnoticed. It is to say to victims and survivors “your suffering is part of our healing as a nation. We remember you.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Charles Villa Vicencio, “Around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Rhetoric and Public Good,” *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 1-2 (2002): 40.

The memories of suffering must be made public. Such questions as: Who suffered and why, as well as who inflicted the suffering, matters in constructing the imagined political community and building solidarity between the people. Without the ‘dangerous memory’ the narrative of nationhood remains incomplete, it tells only part of the truth. Without the truth the dreams of *imagining* the freedom of a sovereign community or nation are shattered. James Cochrane affirms:

The construction of a viable nationhood will only be possible through the institution of discourse which allows the subjugated voices of past domination full play. Where the goal is subverted by a return to the policies of maintenance of a particular power against the subjugated power of the oppressed, violence will be engendered.¹⁰⁶

Thus, societies and imagined communities must allow the suppressed voices to emerge as constitutive of public discourse, public institutions and national narratives.

To suppress the ‘dangerous memory’ can be dangerously explosive especially when these memories burst out in a manner cut off from their original source. Gerald West and James Cochrane sum up the importance of addressing the issue of ‘dangerous memory’:

The bitter memories of a people cannot be suppressed or repressed. They cannot be erased or buried without account. Nor can they be healed by suppressing or repressing them. The lack of healing, especially if they are sufficiently intense and extensive, will engender not only personal brokenness but also social brokenness.¹⁰⁷

Michael Lapsley also affirms this point when he writes:

The key to national healing is knowledge and acknowledgement. There are many examples in the history of nations who tried to bury rather than face the past. No nation has ever succeeded. If we try to ignore or bury the past it will haunt us and even destroy us.¹⁰⁸

By acknowledging ‘dangerous memories’, progress towards a better future can be made and true solidarity, continuity and accountability within the nation can be achieved and preserved for the future.

¹⁰⁶ James Cochrane, “Theological Discussion on Public Policy: The Church and the Reconstruction of South Africa,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 97, (1997): 11-12. James R. Cochrane and Gerald O. West, “War Remembrance and Reconstruction,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 84 (1993): 33.

¹⁰⁷ Cochrane and West, “War Remembrance and Reconstruction,” 25-40.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Lapsley, “From Victim to Survivor to Victor: A Testimony from South Africa,” *Fellowship* 70 (2004).

The dangerous memory is a crucial resource for constituting democratic power. Gesine Swan a German political scientist writes that “the quality of democracy can improve though dealing openly with the past, then conversely, forced silence and forgetting might severely damage democracy.”¹⁰⁹ Democracy at a basic level is itself about reiterated acts of accountability and without facing the past, there can be no accountability. Ultimately, without facing the past, there can also be no civic trust which is the outcome of a continuous public deliberation about the past.¹¹⁰ The recovery and recognition of the memory of the oppressed fosters true social cohesion in the imagined political community. The dangerous memory is both an obligation and a resource for healing and unity in the sovereign political role of the people.

In summation, we note that the dangerous and pacifying memories lie at the heart of the construction of the imagined political communities. This thesis will examine how the dangerous memory is used in the construction of the imagined communities of Deuteronomy and post-colonial Zimbabwe. In line with our tripolar approach, the dangerous memory brings into focus the liberationist principles of freedom, justice, solidarity and equality, forging the line of connection and facilitating a dialogue between the text of Deuteronomy and the postcolonial context of Zimbabwe.

We argue that while Moses, in Deuteronomy includes both the pacifying and dangerous memory, Mugabe has ignored and suppressed the dangerous memory. Consequently, this has resulted in a fractured nation and violence has ensued in the country. This section contributes to the thesis by highlighting the importance of arousing and acknowledging the importance of the dangerous memory in order to build a just, equitable and peaceful society. Without the narrative of the dangerous memory the narrative of the nation remains incomplete, justice and equality a utopia.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted from Jan-Werner Muller, “Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory,” in *Memory and Power in Post War-Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 34.

¹¹⁰ Muller, *Memory and Power in Post War-Europe*, 34.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have established our understanding of the nation for this work. We have argued that a nation is an ‘imagined political community’ constructed on the basis of a shared collective memory. The collective memory is established for the unity and sovereign role of the people in the land.

For the purposes of this work, I understand collective memory as a pool of shared cultural resources in the form of storytelling and a stock of shared knowledge filtered through the present needs of the group in order to give the imagined community its sense of identity, social cohesion, solidarity, and historical or mythological continuity. These are enhanced and preserved through commemorations, linking past and present in order to give the group its sense of continuity. Through participation in the cultural acts and through imagination inflation each individual is made to feel a part of the imagined collectivity, thereby establishing a national identity and a sense of unity which is confirmed by a sense of patriotism or deep horizontal comradeship in the individuals and the people who are called to participate in these celebrations.

Within the formation of a collective national memory there must be included, the dangerous memories of the past for the purpose of continuity, accountability and solidarity with the suffering of the other and action to ensure a future that is different. The hermeneutical categories of the dangerous memory, namely solidarity with the suffering ‘other,’ accountability and responsibility bring out the ethical and normative dimension of the dangerous memory and they are the grounds for establishing the sovereign role of the people in the land. The imagined political community has responsibilities for taking part in the administration in the land and this includes just and accountable leadership within the political class. Any politics without morality is destructive.

The ideas of an imagined political community and the sovereign role of the people will now be used in chapter 3 as we make a literary narrative analysis of the book of Deuteronomy to locate the use of memory in the narrative. This will enable a focused rhetorical analysis in chapter 4 of the use of the liberation memory of deliverance and slavery to construct the imagined political community of Israel. In chapter 5, I will make a similar analysis of the use of the liberation memory to construct the imagined political community in post colonial Zimbabwe

and chapter 6 will bring the modern and ancient communities into dialogue to find nation-building resources for the future.

Chapter 3 A narrative-literary analysis of the book of Deuteronomy

3.1 Introduction

I will study the book of Deuteronomy within the dynamic of its narrative world. My study will follow the narrative sequence of the book's self-presentation: "These are the words" (1:1). These phrases emphatically repeated in the book of Deuteronomy serve the ideological and pedagogical ends of the text (1:1–34:12).¹¹¹

The literary structure of the book of Deuteronomy moves from the past story (1:1-4:43) to present imperatives (4:44-28:68) to a new covenant (29-32:52) and to future blessings (33-34:12). When one reads the book, one notices these four important editorial superscriptions that mark the major sections of the book of Deuteronomy which help the reader to discern the movement of its thought and theology.¹¹²

These four superscriptions will be used for the purpose of my literary narrative analysis to divide the text into subsections for analysis. I will also focus on how the narrative features point to memory as a key concept in the text as my thesis will explore how the past and present are used in order to inculcate the audience with a collective memory of the Mosaic past in order to construct and preserve the imagined political community of the people. I will also highlight the role of pacifying and dangerous memories in shaping the sovereign role of the people in the land.

3.2 The First Speech of Moses: These are the words (1:1-4:43)

The first speech of Moses' farewell address can structurally be divided into three parts. 1) A prologue (1:1-5). 2) An imagined review of Israel's journey from Horeb to Moab (1:6-3:29). 3) An exhortation to observe the Lord's instructions (4:1-43).

¹¹¹ Brian M. Britt, "Remembering Narrative in Deuteronomy," in *The Oxford Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danah Fewell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 217.

¹¹² Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 38-39. Ronald E. Clemens, *Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 13-14. Denis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (Fortress Press, 1994), 17.

3.2.1 The prologue (1:1-5)

In the prologue (1:1–5) the narrator identifies the main characters in the exposition as Moses, All Israel, the Lord, indirectly himself, and the narrative is situated “beyond the Jordan, in the wilderness” (1:1,5). The omniscient narrator indicates that “these words” (v.1) which Moses will speak are also “this law” (v.5) and “all that the Lord had given him in commandment” (v.3). The latter is framed in verse 3 by two temporal markers, suggesting that *all* the words which Moses will speak, will be delivered “on the first day of the eleventh month,” (v.3) and “after he had defeated” the Amorite kings (v.4). The repetition of the spatial marker “beyond the Jordan” with “the words” and “this law” (vv.1,5) would also support this and indicate that Moses will effectively transmit everything, according to the divine order which highlights the divine authority behind Moses' words.

A critical moment in the exposition is created with the juxtaposition of the spatial setting of “eleven days march” (1:2) from Horeb to Kadesh with the temporal “It was in the fortieth year” (1:3). This rhetorical situation may lead the implied audience to wonder why Israel is still in Horeb in the 40th year? The narrator may be setting the scene for Moses to explain what has gone wrong. In 1:4 the narrator conveys background information about the defeat of Sihon and Og. The relevance of this information is not yet clear to the reader but as part of the exposition it sets out what the narrative might involve thus engaging the interest of the reader. When setting the stage, the narrator locates the narrated present, not in relationship to his own present but rather in relationship to the events in Horeb from forty years earlier (v.3). As part of the exposition, this indicates a theme of the narrative in leaving open the possibility for re-appropriation of the words which follow, for any future audience.

3.2.2 An imagined review of Israel’s journey from Horeb to Moab (1:6-3:29)

The narrator now allows Moses’ words to be the primary channel for the message in direct speech (v.6) while giving no further information about the character of Moses which also suggests that it is the words of Moses which are of primary interest. The narrator now hands over the telling of the narrative to the character of Moses whose direct speech gives the illusion that the narrative and implied audience is present in the narrative. This effect is known as performative speech in which the drama is *shown* imaginatively to the audience through the characters' use of direct speech creating the illusion that the audience is present in the narrative

and witnessing the event for themselves. The narrative starts in v.6 when Moses begins to recall the events which took place in Horeb, 40 years earlier. Here Horeb is presented as the starting point of Israel's journey, and Moses is addressing the new generation of Israel who did not witness these events for themselves (v.4).

The narrator uses the character of Moses to tell the remembered story of the past and he positions Moses himself with the narrative audience through the character's use of the pronouns 'you, we, us' in "The Lord our God said to *us*" (v.6), "at that time I said to *you*" (v.9), "and *we* set out from Horeb" (v.19), which gives the illusion that the narrative audience in Moab was present in the story of Horeb. To further this dramatic showing, Moses quotes other characters speaking in direct speech, such as God (vv.6-8, 35-36, 38-40), Moses himself (vv.9-13, 16-17), the Horeb generation (vv.14,22), which makes the memory seem as real as possible to the narrative and implied audiences. As the inclusive language of Moses places the Moab and implied audience imaginatively in Horeb, the story and the memory of it is inculcated into their minds and the imagined community is united with the same imagined memory.

The narrative construction of the imagined community continues with the use of direct address in "you" which includes every audience. Moses quotes God in direct speech, giving the instruction to begin the journey: "turn and take your journey and go" (v.7). The listing of each geographical place builds narrative momentum up to the proclamation: "Behold" (v.8) which acts as a sign post that the divine promise of the land is the goal of this journey and that God is giving the order "go in and take possession of the land" (v.8) which was promised to the patriarchs and their descendants after them. But instead of the narrative continuing with the journey, the impetus is broken in (v.9) when Moses gives a description of God as faithful to his promises: "behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude" (v.10) and the people of Israel as difficult and burdensome (v.12).¹¹³ This description may be proleptic in terms of setting the scene for the complication of the narrative which follows, but the position of this subunit (vv.9-18), concerning the appointing of corporate leaders to represent Israel (1:13-18), in the text at this point, is significant as the preceding verses have set the scene for Israel's possession of the land (1:8), whereas those which follow show what went wrong (1:26-28). So, the purpose of 1:9-18, based on the "burden and strife" of Israel (v.12) may be to

¹¹³ Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 50.

suggest that justice in the land will require the appointment of judges and the devolution of authority can emphasize the corporate responsibility of the people. Moses shares in the responsibility for the action of the nation, as his use of ‘we/ us’ in the narrative indicates but the people as a whole are responsible for disobeying the command of God (1:35).¹¹⁴

The remembered journey has begun with the execution of the command: “And *we* set out.....just as the Lord had commanded *us*” (1:19 cf.1:7). At this point, the journey motif is characterised by Moses’ inclusive language using ‘we/us’ (vv.6,19) when Israel and Moses receive commands from God which they obey. The use of inclusive pronouns acts to conflate the narrative and implied audiences in an imagined memory of the events which Moses is narrating. Thus, all who hear the story will be rooted in a collective memory of the past and the imagined community of All Israel begins to form. However, in 1:9-18 the disunity of the people is suggested in “the weight and burden of you and your strife” (v.12), as Moses distances himself from the people with the use of ‘I/you’. The break in the narrated journey at this point may serve as a warning against a lack of trust in God’s word which results in injustice. Thus, the provision of judges in 1:9-18 is a crucial insistence on justice which will be practiced in the land. The new Israel evoked and imagined in this summons, is to be a unified, just, and peaceable community.¹¹⁵

Moses continues to remember the events in Horeb which is highlighted by the frequent use of the temporal marker “at that time” (vv.9,16,18), to emphasize the setting of the memory being recalled, as being in Horeb (v.6). The memory of events at Kadesh highlights the words which were spoken in order to make the imagined scene ‘real’ for the audiences and to construct the shared memory across the generations. The narrative tension builds with the repeated command of God “Behold” (v.21), following the similar pattern of v.8 with the emphatic verbs “go up” *עֲלֶה* and “take possession” *יִרֶשׁ* of the land as the Lord has told you (v.21). The verb ‘go up’ *עֲלֶה* now becomes a key word in the non-execution of the re-iterated divine command as it appears in 1:21,26,41,42,43.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Gordon J. McConville and Gary J. Millar, *Time and Place in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1994), 25-26.

¹¹⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy AOTC* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 47.

¹¹⁶ Patrick D. Miller, “The Wilderness Journey in Deuteronomy: Style, Structure and Theology in Deuteronomy 1-3,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament/Supplement Series* 267 (2000): 572-592.

The addition of the exhortation “do not fear or be dismayed” (v.21) to the original command, is to inspire confidence to go up with faith. The detailed commands at this point in the story are included to reveal the character of Israel as fearful and lacking in faithful trust in God. This character detail will be an important marker of the dangerous memories in the narrative which are key to the ultimate goal of life in the land. The divine command in vv.6-8 is repeated in v.21 for emphasis and setting up in more dramatic terms the failure of the people to obey God. This transposition of the previous divine command into a new context pushes the narrative forward by building the dramatic tension of a potential military success in the context of Israel’s apparent fearfulness.¹¹⁷ The command in 1:21 is repeated however with lexical shifts that highlight Israel’s military task. Instead of depicting Israel as outsiders who must **בוא** come and enter (1:8), the new command uses the verb **עלה** “go up and take possession.” The command now depicts Israel as being in close striking range (1:21) so Moses prepares them “do not fear or be dismayed” (v.21). But now instead of the assurance, the phrase “Do not be in dread or afraid of them (**אֶל־תִּירָא וְאֶל־תַּחַת**) (1:29) becomes a command using the negative particle **אַל** in Hebrew with the second person imperfect. The purpose of the grammatical change is to give a firm command to let go of their fearfulness and see the power of God who has fought on their behalf and who has cared for them in the vast and terrible wilderness (1:30-32). The repetition of the command, not to fear, underscores that ‘fear’ is the underlying cause of disobedience. The tension in the narrative underscores the great fear and lack of trust which Israel displayed in this dangerous memory and therefore acts as a significant warning which must be remembered, for the future of a united people.

Yet again the narrative impetus to enter the promised land (v.21) is broken by a change in narrative direction. Instead of marching on, the chosen elders (vv.9-18) prefer instead to send spies (vv.22-25) whose report conforms to the divine discourse: “it is a good land that the Lord our God is giving to us” (1:25). “Yet *you* would not go up and rebelled against the command” (v.26), seems a shocking response from the people juxtaposed with the confirmation of the ‘good land’ in the previous verse. Moses now rhetorically distances himself from a rebellious Israel whom he reports in the second person until (v.46) at the end of the chapter. The significance of the rhetorical change from the first person to the second person pronoun may be a device of the narrator to signal firstly the disobedient character of Israel and then to sign

¹¹⁷ Jerry Hwang, *The Rhetoric of Remembrance: An Investigation of the “Fathers” in Deuteronomy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 43.

post the event as a dangerous memory from which lessons must be learned in the future. The characterisation of Israel continues as Moses quotes the excuses of the people in direct speech and the speech of the kinsmen: “Our brothers have made our hearts melt saying, the people are bigger and taller than we are, the cities are larger and fortified to heaven and besides we saw sons of Anakim there” (1:28), which underscores Israel’s intransigence in disobeying Yahweh’s command.¹¹⁸ In fact, Moses appears to lay the blame for intransigence at each individual’s door by quoting the speech of “all of you” who “came near him” (v.22) but that also includes himself who thought the plan “seemed good to me” (v.23). The use of the two subunits (vv.9-18, 22-25), breaks the narrative impetus by introducing a change of narrative direction at the point of entering into the promised land and shows how the narrator foreshadows the character of Israel as faithless and changeable.

Despite the command: “do not be in dread or afraid of them” (1:29), and the persuasion which appealed to past experience, in the visual language of the power of God in Egypt: “before your eyes” and care in the wilderness “where you have *seen*” (vv.29-31), the people still refused to “trust in the Lord” (v.32). So, Moses reports the words of anger and punishment from God in direct speech to make the greatest impact on the audience: “not one of these men of this evil generation shall *see* the good land” (v. 35) and Moses even shares the punishment: “The Lord was angry with me also on your account (vv.37-38), and instead commands him to encourage the appointment of Joshua. This generation, because of lack of faith, will *not see* the fulfilment of the promise to the fathers (1:35). Only Caleb will *see* the land, and that is because of his fidelity (1:36) and Joshua who will lead the people into the land (v.38).¹¹⁹ The children of the Horeb generation would receive the land, those “who this day have no knowledge of good or evil” (v.39). ‘This day’, forty years later will see these children grown up and Moses will put before them the words and the laws in the plains of Moab.¹²⁰ The narrator’s purpose, through the retelling of the rebellion at Kadesh by Moses, seems to be highlighting the past failures of Israel in order to instruct and guide the present generation in Moab. And the performative force of Moses’ recollection, especially the second person address “yet *you* would not go up” (1:26), imaginatively places the Moab generation with the Horeb generation in the narrative past so

¹¹⁸ Timothy Lenchak, *Choose Life: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Deuteronomy* 28,69-30,20 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 113-114.

¹¹⁹ Miller, “Wilderness Journey in Deuteronomy,” 572-592.

¹²⁰ Dominik Markl, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Paulist Biblical Commentary*, eds. J. E. Aguilar J.E Chiu (New York: 2018), 157.

that the Moab and implied future generations will identify with and learn the lessons revealed in the dangerous memory.

The motif of the journey within the narrative structure of command – execution had seen progress towards the land up to v.25 with provision for life there (vv.9-18) and confirmation that it is indeed a good land (v.25), but now the journey is in retreat: “turn and journey into the wilderness” (v.40). Moses reports the conversations between himself and the people: “Then you answered me” (v.41): then between God and Moses: “And the Lord said to me, say to them....so I spoke to you” (vv.42,43), which seems to highlight Israel’s failure to listen either to Moses or to God which results in their disobedience. “For I am not in the midst of you; lest you be defeated before your enemies” (v.42) foreshadows the shift in 2:1 to successful progress with God in their midst. The stalling of the journey, for now, is reflected in Moses’ language, following repentance (v.45), with the verb ‘remained’ and the chiasm “*you* remained at Kadesh many days, the days that *you* remained there” (v.46).

Moses’ recollection marks a significant change, in the shift from “*you* remained” (1:46), to “*we* turned and journeyed” (2:1) signifying that all the people are united on the remembered journey, only when they obey the commands of God. Moses positions himself with the people again, which is signified by the use of “*we*” (cf.1:19) as the journey resumes. The use of the first-person pronoun here rhetorically indicates the formation of the imagined community of Israel when they act in accordance with the words of God (2:1; 1:40). The journey continues with obedience to the commands of God (v.5) which is characterized by positive verbs: “to cross” and “to approach” instead of aimless wandering: “for many days *we* went about” (2:1). The continued use of the first-person pronouns ‘*we/us*’ signifies the unity of the people with Moses during the peaceful march through the land of Edom (2:8). The unity of the people is also reflected in the kinship relations. The relatively peaceful nature of the march may be linked to kinship relations because the identification of the אָחִיכֶם in Hebrew ‘brother/sister’ places a moral responsibility upon each person. The moral category of the solidarity of all the people is introduced here but it will be more evident in later chapters on the law. It is significant that in making land provision for other communities, Moses presents the character of God as being fair and just with all God’s people. And to Israel, God says “these 40 years the Lord your God has been with you, you have lacked nothing” (v.7) indicating his faithfulness to them.

The narrator interrupts the flow of divine instructions in (2:10) to give an ironic comparison of Israel's failure at Kadesh, with the success of other nations, their kinsmen especially, in taking possession of God's gift to them. This is emphasized in the parentheses of verses 10-12 and 20-23¹²¹ as their 'brothers' the Moabites can overthrow "a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim" with the help of the Lord: "the Lord destroyed them before them" (v.21). The narrator's purpose in the parentheses is to highlight the painful memory of the fear of "the sons of the Anakim" (1:28) and to remind the implied audience of the consequences of disobedience.¹²²

When the narrator speaks directly to the implied audience in the parentheses of vv.10-12, 20-23 to give additional details, the effect is to stop narrated time. This suggests that no great progress in the plot is taking place, specifically because this is a time in the wilderness, lacking precise direction: "we went *in the direction of* the wilderness of Moab" (v.8). A hint of plot movement comes in v.12 when the narrator gives the privileged information that Israel will enter the promised land. This is a plot spoiler for the implied audience but it introduces a future perspective which leads into the plot progression at the brook of Zered. The parentheses frame a significant v.14 when Moses reports that 38 years has passed in narrated time from their leaving Kadesh to this point at the brook Zered (v.14). This very long expanse of narrated time has been reported in just one verse of narration time. The narrator has set up an indication of a major theme of Deuteronomy which is highlighted in "the first day of the eleventh month" (1:3).

Moses continues to report the divine instructions in direct speech in 2:13 which are followed immediately with obedience and completion of the command. The contrast with the disobedience and failure of Kadesh is suggested in "we crossed over the brook Zered" (v.14) as obedience and unity now seem to characterize the movement of the journey.¹²³ The explanation for the change is given in the passing of time in the narrative memory of 38 years, in which time, 'the entire generation', 'the men of war' at Horeb have died (v.14), just as the Lord had said (1:35). Brueggemann suggests that verses 2:14-18, "create a hiatus between the old faithless generation and the new generation who trusts and obeys. The gap in generations

¹²¹ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, 28.

¹²² McConville and Millar, 28.

¹²³ McConville and Millar, 27.

imagined by the narrative permits a new generation to emerge from ‘your little ones’ that is unburdened by old failures and free of old fears (1:39).”¹²⁴ A new beginning is suggested in the temporal marker ‘This day’ (v.18) as Moses reports the words of God which repeat the instruction to cross over into Moab, which was first delivered in the wilderness (vv. 9-10). Now with a new generation, there is a new certainty and urgency in the words: “This day you are to pass over the boundary of Moab at Ar” (v.18). This new certainty is reinforced by the narrator who reminds the audiences that the power and authority of God is active for all nations in the land.

The narrator interrupts the direct speech in vv.20-23 to highlight the character of God as almighty and powerful, in the light of the death of the “men of war” (v.16): “the Lord destroyed” (v.21) and “as he did (the Lord) for the sons of Esau”, “when he (the Lord) destroyed the Horites” (vv.22-23), and to highlight the success of other nations in taking over the land. By recounting the previous successful acquisitions of the land in v.21, the narrator makes clear that the ultimate power and authority to give the land rests with almighty God and God has supreme authority in the land which has significance for the Torah in the developing narrative of the book. Also, Markl observes that the narrator thus gives confidence to the implied audience that the power of God is working at all times, in different places¹²⁵ which contributes to the relevance of the lesson for future generations.

Moses details his request to the king of Heshbon “with words of peace” (v.26), with frequent use of the first- person pronoun in vv.26-29 which must rhetorically include ‘All Israel’ because Moses knows (1:37) that he will not enter the promised land: “until I go over the Jordan into the land which the Lord our God gives to us” (2:29). The Israelites had success in taking the land from Sihon (v.33) and Moses emphasizes the unity of the people by including himself, the Lord and the people in the success through his use of ‘we and us,’ “and we captured all his cities” (v.34), “the Lord our God gave all into our hands” (v.36), which is indicative of ‘All Israel.” Moses rhetorically positions himself with Israel when there is obedience to the commands, indicating the unity of the people in a pacifying memory of success in the Transjordan. Only the lands which they were forbidden to take, remained (v.37).

¹²⁴ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 38.

¹²⁵ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 157.

The remembered journey continues moving the plot forward in the narrative in 3:1 signaled by the unity of purpose and obedience to God's word: "then we turned and went up" in 2:1,8; 3:1. Moses continues to report the instructions from God in direct speech: "do not fear him" (v.2) which echoes the assurance and command to 'not fear' given in 1:21,29. The victory over King Og was great (vv.3-8) and their obedience metaphorically reverses the disobedience caused by fear in chapter 1. Moses describes the great victory and the unity of all the people including himself: "we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we did not take" (v.4), which is highlighted in the chiasmic structure. The phrase "at that time" (3:4,8,12,18,21,23) now refers to the time of the new generation who have experienced this memory, as they listen in the plain of Moab (1:5). The temporal markers 'at that time' act as sign-posts of the change of setting in the narrative from Horeb to Moab and yet Moses' use of 'we' and 'us' has not changed between the two different generations of Horeb and Moab. In this way the two generations have been conflated together as if both were present at every narrated event and the effect is to create one collective memory of the dangerous and pacifying memories for all the generations of Israel, who are imagined as one united community.

The detailed description of cities (3:5-8), "fortified with high walls, gates and bars" (v.5) echoes the narrative setting given in 1:28 "the cities are great and fortified up to heaven" which was the cause of fear and rebellion for the Horeb generation.¹²⁶ Now in 3:5 the obedience of the second generation leads to success in battle which is expressed in the text using the third person pronoun to build the feeling of the enormous joint success between all the people, Moses and God. The recollection of the memory in Moab should encourage the people to obey in the future in the light of such success. The narrator contributes to the theme with the detail of the huge bedstead of iron (v. 11) belonging to the now vanquished king Og. This detail adds to the enormity of Israel's success in defeating so great an adversary and in addressing the implied audience, the narrator may be offering the bed of Og as a visual relic, a trophy of war which could be seen in the present time of the implied audience.¹²⁷ The narrator includes brief geographical details (3:9,11,13-14), and puts a question directly to the implied audience in v.11 which along with the use of "as it is to this day" (v.14) serves to situate the narrative in a time

¹²⁶ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, 27.

¹²⁷ Maria Lindquist, "King Og's Iron Bed," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 73 (2011): 492.

other than the narrator's time. This echoes the same effect in 1:3 which opens up the narrative to future generations for appropriation of the lessons.

Moses recounts how he distributed the land among the tribes (vv.12-18), following their successes, demonstrating the fulfilment and faithfulness of God to his promise to prepare the people to cross over and conquer the land (1:7-8). The newly conquered land will act as a refuge for families left behind when warriors cross over to conquer the land. In vv.18-22, the change from 'we' (v.12) to the second person 'you' signals that Moses distances himself from the people, since he will not go into the promised land (cf.1:37). Recalling the collective memory with the temporary marker "at that time" (v.18). Moses gives assurance to Joshua and the people by reminding them once more that the land has been given (v.18), and assures them of the presence of God "who fights for them and not to fear them" (v.22).

The narrator concludes the recollection of the journey with Moses giving the reason for his disqualification from the land as due to the disobedience of the people (3:26-28 cf.1:37), "but the Lord was angry with me on your account" (v.26), and the appointment of Joshua who will distribute the land (v.28; cf. also 1:38). However, in the narrative at this point, Moses has been speaking to the second generation who were not there at the rebellion in Kadesh. The theme of collective responsibility among "All Israel" is being raised here and it is shown that Moses accepts responsibility for the acts of the rebellious generation through his use of "we" (v.29), as he remains with the people in the valley. Also, in placing this discourse at the end of the imagined review of Israel's journey from Horeb to Moab, the narrator reminds the implied audience about the information that Moses will not cross over the Jordan into the land (3:27; 1:37). This is significant because the implied audience will now realise that 'the words' of Moses must be delivered in the narrated time of 'today' before Israel crosses over without him. Moses' recollection now concludes by stating the narrative setting as "in the valley opposite Beth-peor" (v.29) which refers to the plains of Moab. This sentence frames all of the collective memory with "Beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab" (1:5), which Moses has recounted by re-actualising the events through the direct speech of all the characters and his own inclusive use of I/you, we/us. The narrative and implied audience has been taken imaginatively on the journey from Horeb to Moab in order to inculcate this memory of events in their minds, without moving from the plain of Moab which is where the narrative began. The narration time of 3 chapters gives the illusion of much happening on this imagined journey which aids the creation

of this memory but the narrated time of the audience in Moab has stayed the same and the implied audience now sees that it is all happening in the one day of the story.

The significant use of time by the narrator may now be understood by the reader to explain the importance of time in the narrative. The short-narrated time of one day is the “first day of the eleventh month” (1:3), the day of decision, whether Israel will obey the command of God and move into the promised land and when Moses will speak “all that the Lord had given him in commandment” (v.3). Moses has been told that he will not cross over into the land which drives the dramatic tension as Moses must speak all “the words” (1:1) on the first day of the eleventh month (1:3). The long narration time of the whole book of Deuteronomy contains all the words of Moses, which will sustain the decision of a day, for a lifetime of living in obedience. This is mirrored in the long 38 years of narrated time in the narrative which is revealed conversely in one verse of narration time in 2:14. Moses has also remembered and retold the past events on the journey from Horeb to Moab, covering a narrated time of 38 years, in such a way as to imaginatively include the Moab generation in their ancestors’ rebellion at Kadesh, in order to create one collective memory for all of Israel. The narrator has contributed to the effect of conflating the generations¹²⁸ into the recalled events by interrupting the narrative flow to address the reader in his present, using “even to this day” (2:22) to bring the reader from the imagined past of the narrative back to his present. The complementary nature of the narrator’s interpolations to conflate the generations with the rhetorical technique of Moses, shows that the creation of one people with one collective memory is a major theme of Deuteronomy.

3.2.3 An exhortation to observe the Lord’s instructions (4:1-43)

Moses marks a change in rhetorical emphasis with “And now” (4:1)¹²⁹ which denotes a pause in the subject matter in order to introduce new details, the “statutes and ordinances.” As a

¹²⁸ Gerhard von Rad in *Old Testament Theology*, refers to “emphatic contemporaneity” when the rhetoric of Deuteronomy creates in the present generation the feeling that they are one with the exodus generation and thus views the generations as one. And in so doing, it brings the ancient promises to bear upon the current people and enlivens their commitment to the covenant. (Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1, trans. D. M. G Stalker. Harper & Row, 1962), 225.

¹²⁹ There is a debate amongst scholars about chapter 4. Some scholars, like Martin North see no link between Chapters 1-3, with the Deuteronomical law, but that it serves as the introduction to Deuteronomical History. Thus chapter 4:1-40 is an independent literary unit, not flowing from 1-3. Scholars like Lohfink and Braulik argue for an authorial unity. Mayes makes the point that ‘And now’, performs a transitional function and is frequently used to mark the transition

temporal and spatial form device “And now” interrupts the narrated time and focuses on the day of the narrative audience when Moses will explain the law to all Israel (4:8). “And now” also acts as a spatial marker to highlight the imagined change of setting for the audience from the imagined recollections of Horeb to the narrated plains of Moab. The implication of the change of setting is that the past will have an effect on the present as Hwang observes that “And now” heralds “a timeless conception of Israel’s history in which the distant past is brought to bear in the present audience.”¹³⁰ The narrator holds the implied audience in suspense as the significance of the remembered events will become clear in the narrated present of this day. This chapter is framed by reference to the “statutes and ordinances” which must be obeyed so that the promise of the gift of the land may be realised (4:1) and it concludes with the same references to keep the laws so that life in the land may continue for many generations (4:40). Thus, the new details which were signaled by ‘And now’ will concern Moses’ exposition of the statutes and ordinances which are essential for life in the land.

Moses names “Israel” (4:1) for the first time in Deuteronomy signifying that her identity as a unified imagined community has been established through the remembering of her collective memory. These memories of Israel’s past, concern the pacifying memories of the powerful saving acts of God and the covenant relationship, and the dangerous memory of Israel’s failure to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea which all act to constitute the identity of ‘All Israel’. During the time of the foundational events, Moses received his divine mandate to teach the laws and statutes (4:14) and the positioning of this verse between the accounts of Horeb (v.10) and the deliverance from Egypt (v.20) suggests that the memory of the foundational events is crucial to Moses’ teaching. The implications of “give heed to the statutes and ordinances” (4:1) which have not yet been expounded, are that Moab is the point at which Israel is to live in the future while remembering the mighty acts of God and responding with obedience.¹³¹ Thus Moses emphasizes the urgency concerning the decision to be made at Moab, in the repetition of the word “today” (vv.4,8,26,39,40) and “as at this day” (vv.20,38) as Israel will cross over today

from history to lessons to be drawn from history, as laws governing present behaviour (Exodus 19:5; Joshua 24:14). This view also finds support from Brevard Childs, *Introduction to Old Testaments as Scripture* (London: SCM, 1953). See also Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 199. This has encouraged the view that the relationship between 4:1-40 and the preceding chapters should be seen as an original connection.

¹³⁰ Hwang, *The Rhetoric of Remembrance*, 188.

¹³¹ Christopher J. H Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 33.

(2:18) and must remain obedient to the laws “that you should do them in the land which you are entering to take possession of it” (4:5).

Moses’ rhetoric continues to use the second person pronoun in direct address, concerning his teaching and commands to listen *שמע* to and obey/keep *שמר* the statutes and ordinances (vv.1-6) in order to enhance the exhortation to obedience which follows from an imagined personal and direct appeal to the audiences. In the rhetorical questions of vv.7-8 the phrase “what great nation is there” is used to connect the covenant relationship, “has a God so near to it...” with the righteousness of the law “has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law...” to indicate that the memory of the covenant relationship, revealed at the theophany at Horeb (4:10), is closely connected with obedience to the laws. The two-fold warning in 4:9, “Take heed and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things” and in 4:15, “take great care what you do” *שמר* frames the recollection of the revelation at Horeb. The use of the key phrase “lest you forget” (4:9) clearly marks out the event to be remembered: “how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb” (v.10) and the importance of the memory is signified in the need to teach it to the children and grandchildren in 4:9 to pass on the knowledge of God. The event is described with a visual clarity: “the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven...darkness, cloud and gloom” (v.11), which implies the awesome transcendence of God who cannot be seen but only heard. The visual descriptions of the theophany expound the character of God for the people as being beyond normal human experience and therefore divine in nature. Therefore, Israel must be faithful in her worship of one God and the warning follows that if Israel, “*saw* *ראה* no form” but only *heard* *שמע* a voice, during the theophany in Horeb (v.15), then by this reasoning, she is not permitted to act corruptly by making a graven image or take something in the created universe and make it divine and the subject of worship in the narrated present (vv.16-19). The action of envisioning the events at Horeb brings the past event into the narrated present and includes the Moab and implied audience in the covenant relationship with God, which remains constant “as at this day” (v.20). The characterisation of God is developed further to reveal the almighty power of God in his action of taking Israel out of her oppression in Egypt and making her “a people of his own possession” (v.20). Thus, Moses expounds the pacifying memory of divine deliverance to reveal the almighty power and authority of God over all other powers in the land which will motivate trust and faithfulness to the covenant relationship when the people enter the land.

In 4:21, Moses' recollection of Horeb continues, but now he emphatically recalls how he will not cross over into the land and once again he blames the people (v.21 cf.3:26). The repetition of "I must not cross the Jordan" (vv.21a) with "I should not enter the good land" (v.21b), frames "for I must die in this land" (v.22), and makes it quite clear to the narrative audience that without Moses, they must remember and internalize the law, and teach the new generations. Moses uses himself as an example of God's anger alongside a severe description of God as "a devouring fire" and "a jealous God" (v.24), to urge Israel to remember the covenant relationship, "lest you forget.... and make a graven image" (v.23), which follows when Israel forgets the Lord God. Moses now imagines a future scenario when Israel has committed idolatry and provoked God who will scatter them and they will perish (4:27). However, if Israel repents and seeks God "with all your heart and all your soul" (v.29), then God will save them because of the covenant with the fathers and "for the Lord your God is a merciful God" (v.31). The divine quality of mercy should inspire faithfulness in the people so Moses begins a recollection of the evidence from the pacifying memories of the foundational events.

The remembered evidence of *hearing* the voice of God and *seeing* the fire is repeated in the rhetorical question (vv.32-33), in such a way as to highlight the wonderful and previously unknown actions of God which make Israel a privileged and chosen nation. The power and supreme authority of God are stressed again using rhetorical questions to voice the extraordinary details (vv.33-34), as the foundational memories of the theophany and deliverance from Egypt are repeated to increase the persuasive force for trust in the one God. Moses makes a personal appeal to the people: "to *you* it was shown, that *you* might know" to have faith in the one God: "the Lord is God; there is no other besides him" (v.35). The pattern of sensory evidence from the foundational memories with the exhortations from heaven and earth in v.36 which emphasize the mighty power and strength of God over all other nations (v.38), is repeated again to make the final climactic appeal for faith and trust in the one God of Israel (v.39). The repetition of the phrase "as at this day" (v.38), brings the relevance of the message to the implied audience for the appropriation of the lesson in any setting. The persuasive rhetoric concludes with the use of the word "therefore" (v.40) to make the argument that obedience to the statutes and commandments should logically follow on from the remembered experience of the pacifying memories. Thus, the covenant relationship would be realised through remembering and the action of obedience in the present time of successive generations. And so, Israel's decision to obey must be made "this day" (vv.39-40), to ensure that successive generations may have a long life in the land: "which the Lord your God gives

you forever” (v.40). With faith and trust in the character of God, the people may cross the Jordan confidently, knowing that although the Lord God is supreme in heaven, he is present with them on earth.¹³²

4:1-40 works as a transitional sub-unit between the remembered past of chapters 1-3 and the exposition of the Torah in 5-11. By introducing the topic of the Torah in this sub-unit (4:1,5), Moses can draw on the collective memory of the past to motivate obedience in the future. As many of the laws which Moses will expound have their roots in the experiences of life in Egypt and the Wilderness experiences, it is vital that the memories are fresh and clear in the minds of the narrative and implied audiences, whether they experienced these events or not.

In 4:41 the narrator reports how Moses set apart 3 cities as places of asylum (v.42). The three tribes mentioned are those to whom Moses allocated land in 3:12-17. This action begins to establish the juridical infrastructure which will be developed further in the exposition of the Torah and so acts as an introduction to what follows. It could be suggested that the cities of refuge served as memorials to the faithfulness of God who goes before the other tribes in their acquisition of land. It is significant that the narrator has previously interrupted the narrative with geographical details relating to other tribes dispossessing the land (2:10-12,20-23). Therefore, the cities of refuge could be used to encourage Israel in her campaign across the Jordan, just as she fought the Kings of Sihon and Og whose land now stands as memorials to God’s faithfulness and to keep alive the memory of God’s actions on Israel’s behalf and to motivate them to obey the laws.¹³³

3.2.4 Summary of the first speech of Moses (1:1-4:43)

In the first speech of Moses the narrator has united the imagined community of Israel in a collective memory of past events, through the rhetorical skills of the main story teller Moses. The performative speech of Moses has conflated the Horeb and Moab generations by the inclusive use of personal pronouns in direct speech which gives the illusion that speech and actions are happening in the times of the narrative and implied audiences. The story is told, and imaginatively re-actualized through the rhetorical use of ‘you’ and ‘today’ which merges the generations of Horeb and Moab imaginatively in the same experience. In this way the memory

¹³² Block, *Deuteronomy*, 134.

¹³³ Block, 134.

is inculcated in the minds of the audiences, to construct an imagined community based on the conflation of the generations: past, present and future. In this first speech of Moses, the unity of all Israel is formed in her imagined collective memory of the pacifying memories of divine deliverance, the divine care for the people in the wilderness (1:30-31) and the covenant relationship established at the Horeb theophany (4:10-13). To this is added the newer pacifying memories of the second generation, of divine guidance that negotiated a path through lands God had given to others (2:1-23), memories of past victories that inspired future courage (2:24-3:11), and memories of commitment to unity and solidarity in the struggles of God's people (3:12-22).¹³⁴ But the identity of the imagined community would not be complete without the dangerous memory of failure to obey the commands of God at Kadesh-Barnea and the experience of slavery in Egypt. From these dangerous memories Israel will learn the lessons of the past, as demonstrated in her success in the Transjordan. The rhetorical inclusion of an implied audience in the narrative telling shows how the lessons may be appropriated by future audiences. In the closing unit of the first speech (4:9-40), Moses prepares the people for the exposition of the laws by revealing the sovereign power and authority of God through the divine actions at the theophany in Horeb and the divine deliverance from Egypt. These foundational memories expound the knowledge of the nature of God and will inspire the faith and worship of the people for God and obedience to all the commandments.

3.3 The Second Speech of Moses: This is the law (4:44-28:68)

3.3.1 Introduction

The second speech of Moses can structurally be divided into three parts. 1) The first narrative unit (4:44-11:32), contains exhortations to remember the mighty actions of God in Egypt, at Horeb and in the Wilderness to create a collective memory of the characteristics of God which will shape and give authority to the ethical laws. Obedience to the laws will be motivated by remembering the pacifying and dangerous memories, for the guidance and continuity of the imagined political community in the land. 2) The second unit (12:1-25:19), contains the exposition of the laws in which the memory of slavery in Egypt is used emphatically to motivate obedience to the social justice of the laws. Obedience to the laws will create a community of mutual care where every member can live and prosper. 3) The final unit (26:1-28:69), closes the motivational frame around the laws with a heightened exhortation to

¹³⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 33.

remember the foundational memories of deliverance and oppression to motivate the decision to renew the covenant agreement and to achieve a life of blessings and peace in the land.

3.3.2 The exhortations to remember the mighty actions of God (4:44-11:32)

The first narrative unit (4:44-11:32), in the second speech of Moses can be divided into six subunits which will reveal how the different memories of the mighty actions of God in Egypt, at Horeb and in the Wilderness are used to create a foundation of knowledge of the character of God which will shape the lives of the people in the land.

The six subunits are as follows: 1) In 4:44-6:25, the authority of God as the giver of freedom is asserted in the decalogue which must be taught for the survival of the imagined community. 2) Israel is exhorted to protect her covenant identity by avoiding the customs and gods of other nations (7:1-11). The imagined community will survive if it remembers and trusts the memory of the power of the Lord God (7:12-26). 3) Israel must remember the Wilderness wanderings in order to achieve the blessings in the land (8:1-10). Moses warns of the consequences of forgetting (8:11-20). 4) In 9:1-10:11, Moses remembers all the failures of Israel in the past in order to show a way forward for the new generation. 5) In 10:12-11:25, the exhortation of Moses sums up all the remembered knowledge of God to persuade Israel to make a commitment to a lifetime of obedience in the land. 6) In 11:26-32, Moses concludes his exhortation with the choice between blessings and curses.

3.3.2.1 Moses affirms the authority of God as the giver of freedom (4:44-6:25)

I have subdivided this narrative unit into three parts: 1) The contemporary relevance of the covenant (4:44-5:5). 2) The confirmation of the authority of God as the giver of freedom and the role of Moses as the approved interpreter of the Torah (5:6-33). 3) The presentation of the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which Moses will teach for the continuity of the imagined community (6:1-25).

3.3.2.1.1 The contemporary relevance of the Covenant (4:44-5:5)

The narrator gives his solemn introduction: “this is the law” in 4:44 with the “testimonies, the statutes and the ordinances” which will connect the collective memory of Israel with ethical foundations which are rooted in the past experiences. The temporal and spatial markers in

vv.46-49 form an *inclusio* with the setting in 1:1-5 thus framing the intervening chapters to focus on their purpose of conflating the generations into one imagined community. The narrator merges the sense of time in 4:44-49 by his use of the term: “children of Israel” (4:45) which may suggest the second generation but when linked to the temporal marker “when they came out of Egypt” (vv.45-46), the Horeb generation is indicated. The spatial setting: “beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon,” however suggests the Moab generation again, so the narrator creates the effect of conflating the two generations to create the collective identity across generations and to reveal God’s constant faithfulness in Israel’s collective remembrance of the past.

The narrator has indicated the one nation of Israel by imaginatively bringing together the collective memory of several generations and he repeats this in 5:1 when he introduces the second speech of Moses which now concerns the exposition of the laws. The *inclusio* phrase which he repeats exactly in 29:1 “And Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them,”¹³⁵ draws attention to the importance of the chapters in between the markers, in particular the laws and the fact that the laws are addressed to ‘All Israel’ collectively which suggests the unity and collective responsibility of Israel in her response to the laws. Similarly, the phrase “statutes and ordinances” is used in 5:1; 6:1; 8:1; 11:1 and then again in 27:2; 28:1,15 to create a framework around chapters 12-25 which contain the law code, in order to emphasize all the teaching and exhortation of Moses towards obedience to the laws.

The direct speech of Moses frequently exhorts the people to obedience (5:1,32,33) using the verbs to hear שמע, to learn/teach למד and to do שמר “the statutes and ordinances” in v.1 which will be expounded “this day” and to the decalogue in vv.32-33 for “as the Lord your God has commanded you.” According to Markl, the imperative verbs express a theory of pedagogy which looks to the future in the land when Moses will not be with the people and they will be responsible for passing on the teachings to their children.¹³⁶ The motif “you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (5:32, cf.2:27), also looks to the future by “walking in all the way which the Lord has commanded” (v.33). The swift changes in personal pronoun address: “I-you” (v.1), “we” (vv.2-3), “you” in v.4 and “I-you” (v.5), have a rhetorical function to highlight the immediacy of the present generation’s responsibility but also the crucial role of

¹³⁵ This observation follows the Masoretic Text.

¹³⁶ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 161.

Moses and the Torah for the mediation of the laws.¹³⁷ The juxtaposition of the command to heed the “statutes and ordinances” followed almost immediately by the giving of the law on Horeb, suggests that the ten words of God addressed to Israel must be expounded as Torah into everyday life in the future of Israel.¹³⁸ Thus, “not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant but with all of us, who are here alive this day” (v.3) suggests that the Moab generation and any future audience may identify themselves as integrated into the covenant.¹³⁹ Similarly this verse is used for rhetorical effect to show that the covenant directly affects the narrative audience, ‘today’ and by Moses’ re-actualisation of the event, through direct address to ‘you’ and ‘us’ (vv.1-5), he includes any future audience.¹⁴⁰ Millar affirms “The correspondence between Horeb and Moab is made totally explicit-the current generation is not to think of the covenant at Horeb as mere memory, but as a memory which is actualised in the present at Moab.”¹⁴¹ Polzin further adds, “The story, the commandments and the covenant of the past become the readers’ story of today and must be acted upon today.”¹⁴²

Moses’ recollection of the theophany at Horeb (5:4-5) constructs the imagined community of Israel by rhetorically conflating the generations of Horeb and Moab with the implied audience “the Lord spoke with you face to face” (v.4).¹⁴³ The direct address to ‘you’ and the implication of ‘seeing’ in ‘face to face’ inculcate the memory for the audience through imagined visualisation and acts to realise the application of the covenant for the Moab and future generations. Markl comments on the parallels with 29:12 “Moses re-actualises the covenant of Horeb in 5:4-5, whereas in 29-30 he makes the covenant at Moab. This parallel becomes most obvious when Moses emphasises the actual moment, in which “this covenant” is becoming relevant, “here” and “today” (5:3; 29:14-15)¹⁴⁴ and so the imagined community will remember the covenant at Horeb which will act as motivation for the renewal of the covenant in Moab.

¹³⁷ Gordon J. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2002), 125.

¹³⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 119-120.

¹³⁹ Dominik Markl, “The Decalogue and Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy,” *Journal for Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Law* 25 (2019): 303.

¹⁴⁰ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 161.

¹⁴¹ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, 58.

¹⁴² Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of Deuteronomistic History* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 40.

¹⁴³ Hwang, *The Rhetoric of Remembrance*, 192.

¹⁴⁴ Dominik Markl, “Deuteronomy’s Frameworks in Service of the Law. Deut. 1-11; 26-34,” in *Deuteronomium-Tora für eine Generation*, Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte 17 (Wiesbaden, 2011): 273.

3.3.2.1.2 Confirmation of the authority of God as the giver of the commandments and the role of Moses as teacher (5:5-33)

After Moses has explained the contemporary relevance of the covenant for every generation (4:44-5:5), he now begins to expound the teaching of the decalogue. In vv.6-21, Moses now quotes the decalogue in direct speech from God, giving the awe-inspiring effect of direct communication of God. Three times Moses reminds the people that he is quoting God: “as the Lord your God commanded you” (vv.12,15,16). As Moses' speech is merged with the words of God, the audience is unsure of who is speaking which gives greater importance to the speech of Moses so that all his teaching and exposition of the laws can be completely trusted.

Moses expounds the laws based on the memory of the one God: “who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage” (5:6), and therefore Israel shall worship the one God who delivered her from slavery (5:7). The supreme authority and power of God are established in the claim of divine deliverance from Egypt and in the giving of freedom “out of the house of bondage” (5:6). The juxtaposition of Egypt as ‘the house of bondage’ and the laws given by God, shows strikingly that this law will not be enslaving because of the nature of its giver, as the deliverer from slavery. Thus, the decalogue is a law for a people already redeemed. The principles of freedom are at the heart of the laws that follow. The Sabbath becomes a symbol of the rights of all people to humane treatment from the head of the household.¹⁴⁵ The dangerous memory of slavery and of being a stranger: “You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt” (5:15), forms the basis for the ethical and social concerns of the laws and the freedom gained from Israel’s departure from Egypt must also be passed on to all the household including women, servants, animals and the sojourner (5:14), on the Sabbath. Also, through the liturgical act of keeping the Sabbath holy, Israel acts in order to remember. The divine command in 5:15, “You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt..” is followed by “*therefore*-*לָכֵן*...God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” thus the liturgical act of keeping the Sabbath brings the memory of deliverance to mind and renews it for successive generations of participants.¹⁴⁶ God’s second self-characterization as a “Jealous God” (v.9, cf.4:24), implies God’s justice but also abundant faithfulness “to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments” (v.10) which is crucial for the covenant

¹⁴⁵ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 132.

¹⁴⁶ Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1953), 78.

relationship with each generation. It is significant that the danger of apostasy and violation of the covenant in vv.6-15 receives longer narration time than in vv.16-21 which cover the social concerns of the laws. The longer narration time suggests the very great importance of the covenant relationship between God and his people upon which the social concerns of justice are based.

The narrator draws attention once again to the supreme authority and power of the one God in the memory of the theophany at Horeb, by means of a longer narration time in 5:1-31 than in 4:10-14. This longer detailed account builds a foundation of the knowledge of God which will form the motivation for obedience to the laws in the land. The people's sovereign political role for life in the land depends upon their remembered knowledge of God and subsequent obedience which is expressed in "all your assembly" (5:22), heard *all* the words of God and as a result of the people's righteous fear of the Lord, they act in obedience "and we will hear and do" (v.27). Thus, the characteristics of God are repeatedly described in the foundational memories of the Horeb theophany to give the strongest motivation for a covenant life in the land. The re-actualisation of the scene is created through a repeated parallel structure of what was seen and heard: "fire, cloud, thick darkness, loud voice" which combined with the verbs to "hear שמע, see ראה and do שמר (vv. 23-24,27), frames the theme of righteous fear of the Lord (v.26). This visually dramatic remembering works to inculcate the pacifying memory for the narrative and implied audiences and gives the rationale for the commandments to be expounded. The importance of this memory is indicated in Moses' divine mandate to teach: "all the commandments and the statutes and the ordinances which you shall *teach/ לומר* them, that they may שמר keep them in the land which I give them to possess" (v.31). It is important that the authority of Moses is established so that the audience will trust the teachings that follow and obey the commandments. The culmination of this foundational memory of Horeb with the three-fold goal of life, well-being, and length of days in the land (vv.31-33), echoes 4:1-40, and concludes with the motivation of a long life in the land which leads up to the revelation of "all the commandments" of God in (6:1).

3.3.2.1.3 The presentation of the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which Moses will teach, for the continuity of the imagined community (6:1-25)

Moses has affirmed the contemporary relevance of the covenant through inculcating the memory of the theophany at Horeb and he has asserted the authority of God as the giver of

freedom in the decalogue which must be taught for the survival of the imagined community. Moses introduces his teaching in direct speech with the temporary marker: “*Now* this is the commandment, the statutes and ordinances which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you....” (6:1) to present the exposition of the commandment in the time of the narrative audience. The command to obey the statutes requires that all generations will fear the Lord and therefore live a long life in the land (v.2). The implication here is that obedience to the covenantal commands is the condition for life in the land for all generations and the motivation is given in the goodness of the land: “a land flowing with milk and honey” (v.3). The imperative to “Hear therefore, O Israel” (v.3), places emphasis on the verb by the placement of ‘therefore’ to indicate that the covenant relationship is one where God speaks and Israel listens. In this defining relationship the people will live freely under the sphere of God’s purpose and will, always subordinate to God.¹⁴⁷ The command: “Hear O Israel” is repeated in v.4 to call all Israel as a covenant community to the central profession of faith: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (6:4,5). The imperative “Hear O Israel” (vv.3,4 cf.5:1), emphasizes the relationship of singular loyalty which Israel has with the Lord God and through which her identity is defined. The theme of fear of the Lord (6:2,13,24), is echoed in the call to “love the Lord your God” with “heart, soul and might” (v.5), indicating the complete loyalty and commitment required from Israel to the covenant relationship. Israel’s commitment is realised in the need to teach by speaking and remembering (v.7), and to write down the commandments where they could be frequently seen and internalized (vv.8-9) in individual, “doorposts” and collective living spaces, “gates” (v.9).¹⁴⁸ The written word in private and public living spaces creates a permanent memorial of the commandments so that they will not be forgotten but might be internalised and taken to heart (v.6). so that the entire family and community become identified as the people of God.¹⁴⁹ Braulik affirms: “The process is one of internalisation and meditation, speaking and remembering and passing on in order to bring about the complete internalisation of the Deuteronomic model in society.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 90.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas W. Mann, *The Book of the Torah* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013), 184.

¹⁴⁹ In the psychology of the Old Testament the heart does not concern an emotional response but is the seat of the intellect or rational side of mankind. To be upon the heart is to be in one’s constant, conscious reflection.

¹⁵⁰ Georg Braulik, “Conservative Reform: Deuteronomy from the Perspective of the Sociology of Knowledge,” *Old Testament Essays* 12, no.1 (1999): 20.

In order to highlight the two focal points of “This commandment” (6:1) and the Torah (6:4-5), the exhortation moves to address the future in the land and the dangers that lie ahead which will threaten the people’s commitment to the covenant relationship. The encouragement to remain faithful to the Lord God alone is highlighted in the antithesis of blessings contrasted with the negative phrase “which you did not” (work to create, is the implication) (v.10-12). “Great and goodly cities...houses full of good things...vineyards and olive trees” are all coupled with the negative “which you did not build, fill or plant.” The imagined bountiful blessings of the land are brought to an end with the imperative: “take heed lest you forget the Lord” whose power gave Israel her freedom (v.12). Prosperity and abundance can lead to a level of satisfaction with life in the land that there seems no need to remember the God who saves or the dangerous memory of slavery, for those times are gone. But forgetting is a great danger to a community whose identity is founded on her memory of the past. Then to highlight the danger to the covenant relationship, the rhetorical emphasis of a double negative command is employed “*you shall not go after other gods*” (v14), “*You shall not put the Lord to the test*” (v16). The danger of forgetting God because of prosperity (vv.10-13); the danger of abandoning God because of idolatry from surrounding nations (paganism) (v.14), and the danger of disobedience to the “commandments and his testimonies and his statutes” (v.17), threaten the move into the land which is dependent on keeping the commandments (v.18).

The framing passages of vv.4-9, 20-25 are concerned with the teaching and passing on of the Torah to future generations which acts as the answer to the warnings of future dangers in the land in vv.10-19. Moses returns to the theme of learning which has been developed since 5:1 in which God tells Moses what he must teach the people, so that they can teach subsequent generations (5:1,31; 6:1; cf.4:5).¹⁵¹ Moses gives the model answer for a parent to answer their child who asks about the meaning of the covenant stipulations: “when *your* son asks *you*, what is the meaning of the stipulations?” (6:20-24). In the answer, Moses identifies the Moab generation with the Horeb generation who came out of Egypt, using the pronoun “we” (6:21) to narrate the collective memory of the gracious works of God, the deliverance from Egyptian slavery (6:21-23; cf. also 4:32-34), and the gift of land and the patriarchal promise (6:23). Thus, the generations are conflated to create the imagined community of Israel with one collective memory which is transmitted to their children for the continuity of the people. The significance of retelling and teaching this foundational event “with signs and wonders...before our eyes”

¹⁵¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 13.

(v.22), is to create a memory for the future generations who may receive as real, what they did not experience¹⁵² and thereby continue the unity of all the people for successive generations.

3.3.2.1.4 Summary of the use of memory in 4:44-6:25

The remembered account of the Horeb theophany in 5:2-4,22-23, has established the covenant identity of the new generation as the chosen people of God because they have imaginatively “seen” the awe-inspiring fire and cloud which characterise the Lord’s “glory and greatness” (5:24). Therefore, they will be inspired to obey all the commands of the one all-powerful God. In a similar way the memory of deliverance from Egyptian slavery reveals the divine authority of God over every aspect of life through the evidence of “mighty hand” and “signs and wonders, great and grievous against Egypt...before our eyes” (6:21,22). The almighty power of Israel’s God is incomparable and therefore “The Lord our God is one Lord” (6:4) and all the people are united and conformed to act in accordance with the will of God through their remembrance of the acts of God. The link between the memory of deliverance and obedience to all the commandments is made in 6:21 in response to the child’s question about the meaning of the statutes and ordinances. The parent’s declaration of freedom is to be met with obedience to all the laws which is considered righteous behaviour in response to the Lord’s gracious acts towards Israel. In this way the memory of the foundational event explains the cultic practices for the child and belief is grounded in remembrance and understanding of the identity of all Israel.

Chapter 6 has used a frame of teaching the children in vv.1-9 and in vv.20-25 to highlight a warning not to forget the God who delivered them and their experience of oppression in Egypt (vv.10-19). Only a constant practise of teaching the children will enable the younger generation to remember so that the imagined community will survive over time. The blessings and prosperity of the land are awaiting the new generation who are to cross over but so are the dangers of such prosperity. It is therefore the younger generation who must “take care lest you forget...” (v.12) in the distractions and cares of their present times.¹⁵³ The theme of the disastrous consequences of forgetting, is continued as Moses further expounds his teaching with an exhortation to protect her covenant identity (7:1-26) and the inculcation of the wilderness memory (8:1-20).

¹⁵² Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 109.

¹⁵³ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 92.

3.3.2.2 Israel is exhorted to protect her covenant identity (7:1-26)

Israel is exhorted to protect her covenant identity by avoiding the customs and gods of other nations (7:1-11). The imagined community will survive if it remembers and trusts the memory of the power of the Lord God (7:12-26).

3.3.2.2.1 The danger from other nations (7:1-11)

The narrator's concern to build a foundation of remembered knowledge of the character of God continues as Moses considers the future life in the land. The use of the temporal clause "when..." (7:1,2), rhetorically sets the scene for the presentation of the test of Israel's love for God and for Israel's future in the land when God will "clear away" the great and mighty seven nations which are listed by name to highlight the greatness of God's power and to build up the narrative tension to the mighty response of Israel which is expected by God: "you must utterly destroy them" (v.2). The demand to utterly destroy the Canaanite nations forms an inclusio (vv.2,26), with their cultic objects (vv.5,25), which frames the main theme of this narrative unit, God's love for Israel: "set his love upon you" (v.7), and the Lord's faithfulness to the covenant (vv.9-10). Israel must respond to God's love by avoiding all the dangers which would break the covenant such as idolatry. The theme of life in the land (6:10), is linked and expanded in (7:1), by the command to eschew relations with the conquered people (7:4 cf.6:14) but now instead of the threat of God's wrath (6:15), the warnings against idolatry are because of Israel's special relationship with the Lord, they are a people set apart which is expressed in the chiasm of (v.6). And to warn against pride among the people, Moses calls Israel: "the fewest of all peoples" (v.7), lest they think that greatness consists of numbers.¹⁵⁴ The warning may also imply that God is compassionate towards the least or minority groups and will save them from annihilation. This develops the foundation of remembered knowledge of God for all the people.

The characterisation of God as all powerful and sovereign is made in the use of the phrase: "the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand" and "from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (v.8). The might of God is seen to be all conquering over the might of the fearful ruler of Egypt and Israel by contrast is "the fewest of all peoples" (v.7) who is placed by the author, structurally and theologically at the centre of God's powerful and loving compassion "and redeemed you from the house of bondage" (v.8). Based on this knowledge of God, Israel is to

¹⁵⁴ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 164.

“know therefore” (v.9 cf.6:4) and trust in the faithful covenant love of God. The logical conclusion is drawn that based on knowledge which inspires trust, Israel will then keep the commandments and stipulations of the law (v.11).

3.3.2.2.2 The imagined community will survive if it remembers and trusts the memory of the power of the Lord God (7:12-26).

The exhortation to obey the statutes and ordinances is characterised by the verbs *to listen* שָׁמַע, *keep* and *do* שָׁמַר in 4:1, 5:1 and Moses uses these verbs again in 7:12 in the context that they have been carried out by Israel, so now God will *keep* the covenant with “you” and he will *do* many blessings in the lives of Israel in the land (vv.13-14). Fruitfulness and good health will characterise life in the land which is made more powerfully appealing when contrasted with the remembered “evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew” (v.15). However, before Israel can enjoy the blessings in the land, she must follow the command to “destroy all the peoples” (v.16), their graven images and cultic materials (v.25) which would bring their own fate on Israel if not destroyed (v.26). Moses indirectly reveals the character of Israel: “If you say in your heart” and then quotes her fears in direct speech: “These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?” (v.17), thus voicing her fears aloud for rhetorical emphasis. So, Moses answers the people with the exhortation, not to fear to carry out the command of God, to dispossess the other nations: “You shall not be afraid יִרָא of them” (7:17) which echoes back to (1:29-32) and (3:2) in terms of trusting the power of God.

The motivation of blessings is supported by the repeated evidence of the memory of divine power in Egypt. Now Israel is exhorted to remember the characterisation of the almighty power of God which is increased in this repetition to further the inculcation of the memory as a powerful means of motivation to trust in God. The pacifying memory of God’s actions are foremost in the recollection, listing all that was done to Pharaoh, all of Egypt, what was seen in the great trials, signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm (vv.18-19). Israel is shown to be completely dependent upon the Lord God: “by which the Lord your God brought you out” (v.19). Therefore, Moses exhorts the people to “remember what the Lord God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt” which emphatically stresses the evidence which Israel is to bring to mind in order to give confidence when they go into the land to dispossess it. The memory of the past foundational event is actualised in the narrated present of dispossessing the land and expressed in the narrative as “so will the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are

afraid” (v.19).¹⁵⁵ Israel’s memory gives her the knowledge of God’s saving acts which can establish a continuity with her present for the purpose of effecting change. Moses characterizes God as “a great and terrible God” (v.21) to emphasize the divine power and might which will certainly bring about success and give confidence to Israel: “And he will give their kings into your hand.....not a man shall be able to stand against you” (v.24). The theme of Israel as a holy people (7:6) is framed by the commands to utterly destroy the nations and their gods in the land (7:1-5) and (7:23-26) and in so doing Israel will not be distracted from her worship of the one God: “For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods” (7:4). However, according to Block, the destruction would have negative and positive effects on the identity of Israel: “Thus, on the positive side detestable things were antithetical to the nature of Israel as an elect and separated nation, on the negative side they would inevitably obliterate that distinct uniqueness and make God’s people like any other.”¹⁵⁶

Moses has instructed Israel about the conquest of the land, by inculcating and arousing their memories of the might and power of God’s deliverance in Egypt. Now his exhortation turns to address the challenges to the covenantal relationship that the Israelites will encounter in the promised land.

3.3.2.3 Moses inculcates the memory of the wandering in the wilderness (8:1-20)

Israel must remember the Wilderness wanderings in order to achieve the blessings in the land (8:1-10). Moses warns of the consequences of forgetting (8:11-20).

3.3.2.3.1 Israel must remember the Wilderness wanderings (8:1-10)

Moses commands Israel to “remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness” (8:2). The narrated purpose of remembering the wilderness experience is to “keep the commandments of the Lord your God” (8:1, 6). God’s purpose in leading the people through the desert was to teach them to trust and rely on God: “man does not live on bread alone, but by everything that proceeds from the mouth of God” (v.3) and therefore to obey the commandments. Trust is a quality which comes from the heart “to know what was in your heart” (v.2) so the Lord cared for Israel with all they needed for life: “fed you with manna” (v.3) and “your clothing did not wear out” (v.4), like a father who teaches a son

¹⁵⁵ Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 51.

¹⁵⁶ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 190.

through his actions so that the son will know the loving care of God: “know then in your heart...the Lord God disciplines you” (v.5) and respond with trust and obedience. The divine care suggests a relationship of a caring parent and child between God and his people built on loving obedience, not forced coercion. The repetition of “in your heart” (vv.2,5,17 cf. 7:17) suggests the requirement of faithfulness on Israel’s part so that by “keeping שמר the commandments” she will “walk in his ways and fear ירא him” (v.6).

The consequence of obedience to all the commandments is that Israel will “go in and possess the land” (v.1) which is juxtaposed with forgetting the Lord your God in v.11. Moses’ exhortation to obedience builds in the chiasmic structure of one long chain of blessings covering (vv.7-10) which gives exuberant details of the bountiful blessings of the land and frames the lesson in “Take heed lest you *forget* שכח the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments” (v.11), with further rhetorical emphasis of a second long chain of ideas over (vv.12-16) where all the material goods are multiplied (v.13).

3.3.2.3.2 Moses warns of the consequences of forgetting (8:11-20)

“Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God” (8:11) specifically refers to “by not keeping his commandments” (v.11) as the reason for forgetting the Lord. The abundance of a good life in the land makes the people sated which is suggested in “when you have eaten and are *full*” (v.12) and leads to the forgetting of God as the giver of all good. The rhetorical link of ‘forgetting’ with ‘disobedience’ highlights the very great significance of memory for the life of the people in the land and this is emphasised by the contrasting examples of the bountiful blessings in the land which would be lost if the people “forget the Lord your God” (8:11). However, a solution is implied in the two-way logic of the memory which motivates the action of obedience, while the act of obedience sustains the memory. Thus, an understanding of the character of God which underpins the commandments is crucial for memory to be maintained through the actions of the laws. So, Moses now remembers the account of the deliverance from Egypt and the divine care in the wilderness (vv.14-16), to teach and remind Israel that God is the giver of freedom and the giver of life in the form of manna in the desert. Therefore, obedience to God’s laws will bring life in abundance. But prosperity in the land brings the danger of forgetting the divine giver of gifts and of imagining that “my power and the might of my hand” (v.17) has gained all this abundance. Pride has led to an attitude of self-sufficiency. In this scenario remembering is the answer: “You shall *remember* זכר the Lord your God” (v.18) who in contrast to Israel, is faithful to the covenant made with the patriarchs. This exhortation has

close links to 6:10-12 in that prosperity might lead to pride and boasting that Israel has achieved this by her own power and so she must remember that her prosperity is a gift from God (6:11-12). This exhortation expounds on the dangers of prosperity in as much as success was confirmation of God's favour, but it could also be the source of her fall. The exhortation concludes with a solemn warning which is repeated to maximise the appeal to the audience: "that you shall surely perish" (v.19-20) as a result of forgetting God and not obeying "the voice of the Lord your God" (v.20). The use of "voice of God" suggests a right relationship with God where God speaks and Israel listens in loving trust and dependence on God.

The primacy of God in the life of Israel is revealed in the Covenant relationship and gives Israel her identity as one people who worship one God. While Israel remembers God and his saving acts and obeys the commandments, she will remain united as an imagined political community and will prosper in the land. The recurring theme of remembering the faithfulness and providential care of God shows how the foundational collective memory is used to motivate obedience to God and the covenant relationship which builds up to the exposition of the law.

3.3.2.4 The exhortation to remember the failures of the past (9:1-10:11)

Having motivated obedience to God and the covenantal relationship, Moses gives further details of his recollections of the events at Horeb. He now admonishes the people not to assume their own righteousness, but to remember their stubbornness and their need for divine care. In 9:1-10:12, Moses remembers all the failures of Israel in the past in order to show a way forward for the new generation and to intensify the exhortation to obey the law.

Moses immediately follows the warning in 8:20 concerning not obeying the "voice" of God, with the exhortation in 9:1 to "hear" שמע and take to heart the lessons of their fathers who failed to possess the land because of their fear of the giant Anakim (1:28). In facing their imagined fears about "the sons of the Anakim whom you know" (9:2) Moses encourages Israel in the narrative present of "this day" (9:3) by using the dangerous memory of fear in the past, to inform the present, in order to trust and "know" that the Lord your God goes ahead of you as "a devouring fire" (9:3). The phrase "devouring fire" is repeated from (4:24), where it was part of a warning against idolatry, but here in contrast, it stresses how God's enemies cannot stand against him. Israel's success seems sure in "you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly" (9:3).

Anticipating success in battle, Moses also foresees mistaken pride: “in your heart” (9:4) in that Israel will think the victory is due to justice or virtue on her part (v.5), but it is in fact because of the conquered nations’ wickedness. Indeed, Israel herself is “a stubborn people” (v.6). “Know therefore” (vv.3,6) is repeated to highlight the message that God is trustworthy: “he who goes over before you” (v.3) and faithful: “that he might confirm the word which he swore to your fathers” (v.5) but that Israel is very far from righteous.

“Remember זכר and do not forget שכח” (9:7) refers to all Israel’s past transgressions since they came out of Egypt, however the culpability for sins committed seems to collectively include the Israelites in Moab: “from the day you came out of the land of Egypt, *until you came to this place*, you have been rebellious” (v.7). In order to engage with the memory there must be a sense of collective responsibility which will be fostered in the keeping of the laws. Moses now consolidates the foundational memory of Horeb (cf. 4:10-14; 5:22-28) by re-imagining it with the addition of a dangerous memory in order to continue the characterisation of Israel as a rebellious and stubborn people which began in chapter 8:11. This is a second important example of Israel’s failure to obey the commandments which she must remember and not forget (9:7-8) so as to change her behaviour in the future. The first example of rebellion was Israel’s failure to obey the command of the Lord to take the land at Kadesh-Barnea (9:23). As the generation in the narrated present of Moab did not experience either event, the accounts are told using dramatic showing and in particular the use of the second person address to the narrative audience which gives the illusion that they are present at the recounted events.

The parallel structure in 9:9 and 10:3 is used by the narrator to mirror two occasions in the remembered account of the molten calf idolatry, when Moses ascends the mountain to receive the tablets of stone and on both occasions spends 40 days and nights in repentance: “I neither ate bread nor drank water” (9:9,18; 10:10). The occasion of Israel’s idolatry is described by Moses in great detail using visual imagery, the tablets were “written with the finger of God” (v.10) which contained the words at Horeb: “out of the midst of the fire” (v.10) and the two tablets were held “in my two hands” (v.15). This incident has not been recited for the current generation in Moab, so Moses enhances their inculcated memory of Horeb with a visually detailed and emotive account. The act of repentance by Moses for 40 days and nights is in response to the: “anger and hot displeasure” (v.18) of the Lord and is an important part of the mediation on behalf of a disobedient people. It suggests that the divine righteous sense of injustice must be met firstly with acknowledgement and repentance for the wrong done. In

contrast to the indirect speech of Moses, the only direct speech is from God which highlights the seriousness of Israel's actions and is reflected in the Lord's response who disowns the people: "*your* people whom *you* have brought from Egypt" (v.12) and "let me alone that I might destroy them" (v.14). The rhetorical distancing from the people which comes from the mouth of God (v.12) echoes the same usage by Moses in 1:46 but now it carries much greater significance for the danger to the covenant relationship, especially with the themes of sin and destruction (vv.8-21) and the repetition of Moses' act of repentance (vv.9,18). The enormity of the danger of idolatry is brought home in the detail given to this dangerous memory which must be emphatically "remembered and not forgotten" for the survival of the entire imagined people of God (9:14).

The account of the golden calf is broken in v.22 by a summary of Israel's other sins which leads to a summing up of the character of Israel as "you have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you" (v.24). The theme of Israel's sinfulness in the past is the turning point of this remembered account while the intercession of Moses for the people (v.25) is given as the way forwards and hope of redemption (vv.19,26). Moses' intercessory prayer now uses the very same call to remember: "*your* people who *you* brought out of Egypt" (v.26), reversing the disavowal of (v.12). By recalling the promise to the patriarchs (v.27 cf.4:31) and the people as God's "heritage" (v.29), Moses' prayer is framed by the recollection of the greatness of God.

At the end of chapter 9 the outcome of Moses' intercession is not clear. An intentional pause is created by the narrator for the narrative and implied audiences to consider this dangerous moment and the consequences of a lack of trust and obedience towards God. Only the intercession and repentance of Moses is presented as the model of a way forward at this point in the narrative.

Moses continues his remembrance of the past but the topic has moved on to new "tables of stone like the first" (10:1) thus suggesting progress from a broken covenant to a new covenant.¹⁵⁷ The mirrored structure from (9:9) now contrasts the past sin and destruction with renewal and building as Moses repeats his journey up the mountain to receive a new set of tablets which will be held in an ark (10:1-5). Moses completes the task exactly as he was commanded and brings the narrative audience imaginatively back to the narrated present through his use of the present tense, referring to the tablets "and there they are" (v.5). Following

¹⁵⁷ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 125.

immediately on from the shift from narrative past to narrative present (10:5), the narrator interrupts to halt the narrated time in order to address the implied audience or reader with extra details about the tribe of Levi who minister to the Lord: “to this day” v.8. By addressing the implied audience directly, the narrator continues the theme of the relevance of the message for future generations and the continued construction of the imagined community of Israel through a collective memory, into the future. The parallel structure concludes with the second occasion of 40 days and 40 nights (v.10), where Moses’ intercession is successful “and the Lord heard me that time also.” The repentance and prayer of Moses indirectly characterizes God as a forgiving God which is signaled in the double command of “Arise, go on your journey” (10:11). The journey may resume and progress into the land (v.11). The reminder of the promise of land to the ancestors provides concrete proof that the covenant relationship is restored.

The memory of the past failures of Israel, the fear of the Anakim (9:2), the rebellion at Horeb (9:8ff) and the failure to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea (9:23) is used as a model for moving from what is old and failed, through repentance and forgiveness to newness and the future. Moses’ account of the past conveys lessons for the present to shape the future. As Moses draws towards the conclusion of his exhortation, the remembered past intensifies the exhortation and motivates the people to accept the laws that follow and prepares them for the renewal of the covenant in 29:1.

3.3.2.5 The exhortation of Moses sums up all the remembered knowledge of God (10:12-11:25)

Having reminded the people of their past failures and assured the people of the validity of the covenant relationship, Moses now solemnly sets out what is expected of them in the future. In his exhortation, Moses sums up all the remembered knowledge of God to persuade Israel to make a commitment to a lifetime of obedience in the land

“And now Israel” 10:12 acts as a temporal marker to bring the audiences back from the remembered past to the narrated present and it also parallels (4:1) which also formed a transition between Moses’ account of Israel’s sin in the past (1:6-2:16) and Moses’ exhortation to obedience of the laws (4:1-40).¹⁵⁸ The divine command to “go on your journey” (10:11, cf.1:6) also characterizes both accounts and may give a sense of urgency to the parenthesis as

¹⁵⁸ Markl, *Deuteronomy*,167.

this is a second chance for Israel through God's forgiveness. The narrator's purpose in this repeated narrative structure is to highlight the dangerous memories which will guide Israel's behaviour in the future. The narrator has presented the character of God as the supreme authority who gives the law (9:10) but the characteristics also include the mercy and justice of God 10:11 which are traits Israel must emulate in the land, in her collective identity as a covenant people. The opening rhetorical question (10:12) and its response summarises all of Moses' exhortations, the attitudes of fear and love towards God which must be followed by "walking in his ways and serving the Lord your God" (v.12). The exhortation to love God and keep his commandments (10:12-13; 11:1) frames the motif of the supremacy of God "to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens" (10:14) who is "God of gods and Lord of lords the great, the mighty, and the terrible God" (10:17). The supremacy of God is also evidenced in his justice which excludes no-one from the community and provides for everyone in equality (10:18). The use of "therefore" (v.19) gives the justification for Israel to emulate the justice of God in her care for the poor, through the dangerous memory of "for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt" (v.19). The life-giving characteristics of God and the dangerous memories of the experience of slavery and oppression give guidance to Israel for promoting life for all in the land, which will be structured around all the laws and commandments of God (11:1).

The call to love and obey the Lord and all his commandments (11:1,8), frames Moses' recollections of what God has done so that Israel might have faith and trust in "his greatness, his mighty hand and outstretched arm, his signs and his deeds" (vv.2-3). These key phrases are used frequently in Moses' exhortation in relation to the pacifying memory of deliverance from Egypt (11:2,3 cf. 4:34, 5:15, 6:21, 7:8,19, 9:26, 26:8) to highlight the almighty power and authority of God who gives freedom to all the people. The description of Pharaoh King of Egypt, his army, horses and chariots, and the Red Sea overflowing (11:3,4) shows the might of Egypt but it also serves to enhance the victory of God. The characteristics of the mighty power of God are being stressed as omnipotent in comparison to the might of Egypt to show that the Lord God is all powerful and his authority is the highest in the land. Israel must obey the Lord for she remembers the proof which she has seen "for your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord which he did" (v.7). Thus, the memory of the past is used to effect a change in the narrative present of "this day" (11:2,4,8,13).¹⁵⁹ The constant care and provision of God is

¹⁵⁹ Lenchak, *Now Choose Life*, 104-15.

remembered in the wilderness experience (v.5) which Moses echoes in his description of the “land flowing with milk and honey” which is a “land which the Lord your God cares for” (vv.9,12). This is given in the text as a comparison with the remembered hardship of life in Egypt: “where you sowed your seed and watered it with your feet, like a garden of vegetables” (v.10). The remembered experience of deliverance from Egypt: “these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen” (v.21), the deliverance at the Red Sea and the wilderness period (11:2-7), and ending with the good land to be settled (11:10-12) are all recalled by Moses to give a strong motivation for obedience to the commandments of God (11:8) in order to achieve the future blessings of the promised land.¹⁶⁰

Moses’ exhortation is persuasive through remembering the pacifying and dangerous memories of the past and now the force of the persuasion is increased by the overt motivations of blessings and curses which are expressed as “If you obey my commandments...and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (11:13,18-20), which echoes the authority of the Shema (6:5-9), then blessings will flow in the land (vv.14-15), except in the case of idolatry when the blessings will cease and Israel will lose the land (vv.16-18). This threat is mentioned in 4:26; 7:4; 8:19-20 each time in connection with the promise of the good land and the tendency towards idolatry which the benefits of the land would encourage if the people become sated (4:21,25; 7:1-3; 8:7-10,14).

As the imagined character of all Israel has been shown to be forgetful (9:7-24), Moses must exhort a method of remembering his words which becomes part of life and which will transmit easily to the next generation to preserve the unity of the imagined community of Israel. To conclude his exhortation Moses exhorts Israel to remember the pacifying and dangerous memories in order to preserve the lessons for future generations by teaching their children in the everyday situations of life (v.19) and by writing the words down and posting them in prominent places (v.20).

¹⁶⁰ Andrew D. H Mayes, “Deuteronomy 4 and the Literary Criticism of Deuteronomy,” in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*, ed. Duane L Christensen (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns,1993), 39-41.

3.3.2.6 Moses concludes his exhortation with the choice between blessings and curses (11:26-32)

The narrative tempo builds as Moses now calls attention to the decision to be taken “this day” with a climactic appeal:¹⁶¹ “Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse” (v.26) which refers to the previously stated blessings (vv.14-17) which are dependent upon “if you obey the commandments” (v.13,27). As motivation, Moses positively imagines the future in the land when the blessings will be set upon Mount Gerizim and the curses on Mount Ebal (v.29). The rhetorical question containing geographical details uses the spatial marker to visualize the goal of the journey to be taken today (v.31) as Moses reminds the people that they are on the edge of this goal: “for you are to pass over the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land...” (v.31). The commands to “love the Lord your God” 11:1 and “to do all the statutes and ordinances” (11:32), frame the chapter and reply to the rhetorical question of (10:12) “what does the Lord require of you?” which sums up the exhortation of Moses in chapters 5-11.

3.3.2.7 Summary of 4:4-11:32

The literary structure of Deuteronomy has moved from inculcating the narrative memory of the past, which spans several generations of Israelites in 1-4:43, to form the imagined community of Israel, to the present imperatives of the Moab generation (4:44-11:32). In the first subunit of the second speech (4:44-5:5), Moses is concerned with transmitting the transgenerational nature of the covenant relationship so that the new generation in Moab and future generations will understand their identity as a chosen people who worship one God. Understanding the covenant identity comes from ‘remembering’ the first covenant at Horeb. The visual signs of the theophany at Horeb inculcate the remembered account by Moses, as a ‘real’ memory for the audience (5:2-4,22-23). Secondly the authority of God as the giver of freedom is asserted in the decalogue (5:6) and instituted into the Sabbath observance (5:15). Moses begins to build a foundation of the knowledge of God through remembering the actions of God in the past, in order to motivate obedience to all the commands of God. In preparation for all the teaching which Moses will give, he remembers the words of God spoken to him at Horeb which give Moses a divine mandate to teach the people (5:31).

¹⁶¹ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 254.

A frame of teaching the next generation is used in 6:1-9, 20-25 to highlight a warning not to forget the God who delivered the people from oppression in Egypt (6:12). Only a constant practise of teaching the children will enable the younger generation to remember so that the imagined community will survive over time. The blessings and prosperity of the land are awaiting the new generation who are to cross over but so are the dangers of such prosperity. It is therefore the younger generation who must “take care lest you forget...” (6:12) in the distractions and cares of their present times.¹⁶²

Moses continues to build a foundation of remembered knowledge of the character of God with an exhortation to remember the almighty power and authority of the Lord God (7:8, 18-19) so that Israel will worship the one God and obey all his commands. Worship and obedience to God is expressed in the central theme of the chapters as “fear of the Lord” which is evident in 5:29; 6:13; 8:6; 10:12,20. Israel’s identity as a covenant people is marked out by her worship of one God and her obedience to the commandments and statutes which is motivated by her remembered knowledge of God.

Moses now turns to the theme of the disastrous consequences of forgetting in the inculcation of the wilderness memory (8:1-20). Despite the failures of Israel which led to the Wilderness experience, God is shown as just and merciful in his compassionate care for the basic needs of the people. The people are not abandoned by God but are kept safe and alive (8:15). This teaching is developed in 9:1-10:11, where Moses conflates the new generation with all the failures of Israel in the past in order to show a way forward for the new generation. The justice and mercy of God frame the failures of the past (8:2-5,15-16; 10:18) and Moses stirs his audiences at the close of his second speech (10:12-11:25) with a summation of all the remembered knowledge of God to persuade Israel to make a commitment to a lifetime of obedience in the land. In 11:26-32, Moses concludes his exhortation with the stark choice between blessings and curses to make the greatest impact on the audience for obedience to all the laws for life in the land.

The parenetic framework of chapters (4:44-11:32) have built up to the delivery of the law in 12:1-28:69 and prepared Israel for its wholehearted reception of them by a life of remembering

¹⁶² Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 92.

the acts of God (11:3-6) and responding to them (11:22), and a life of perpetually choosing the way of obedience (11:18-21, 32).¹⁶³

3.3.3 The exposition of the laws for life in the land (Deut.12:1 - 25:19)

This unit can be divided into four subunits. The subunits are: 1) 12:1-14:21 expounds the vertical dimension of the Covenant relationship. 2) 14:21-16:17 expounds the horizontal dimension of the Covenant relationship. 3) 16:18-18:22 concerns the appointment of administrative roles and offices. 4) 19:1-25:19 concerns the administration of justice in the land.

The foundational pacifying and dangerous memories now become the justification for the laws based on the knowledge of God's actions and Israel's own remembered experience of slavery which will inspire justice, equality, unity and fraternity among all the people as they live the covenant relationship through obedience to the laws in the land. The faithless and forgetful character of all Israel as revealed in the dangerous memories, remains a danger to the covenant relationship with God and therefore endangers the future life in the land. So, the concern of the laws in 12:1-14:21 focuses on remembering the supreme power and authority of God as revealed in his actions, to avoid the dangers to the special election of Israel as the people of God, and maintaining the unity of the people.

3.3.3.1 The vertical dimension of the covenant relationship (12:1-14:21)

Moses begins the exposition of the "statutes and ordinances" (12:1) giving a solemn introduction in direct speech with reference to the divine promise of the land to the patriarchs which "the Lord, the God of your fathers has given to you" (12:1), and to the laws which will contain all that is required for covenantal life in the land "all the days that you shall live upon the earth" (v.1). The continued frequent use of the second person 'you' transcends the narrative setting to indicate that the laws may be applied in any generation. "These are the statutes and ordinances" אלה ההקים והמשפיים (12:1) repeats the expression in (11:31-32) highlighting the reference to the gift of land which establishes the spatial setting for the keeping of the laws, by the rhetorical link of "law" and "land." The keeping of the laws in the land is highly dependent upon Israel's covenant relationship with God and so the exhortation of Moses highlights the

¹⁶³ Gary J. Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (Leicester: Apollos, 1988), 88.

importance of faithfulness to the Covenant relationship for life in the land through the warnings against idolatry (12:2-3,30).

The use of the phrase “you shall *surely* destroy” (12:2), recalls (7:5) when the reason given for destroying the altars was “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God” (7:6). Further, Moses has invited Israel to remember the signs and deeds of God in Egypt: “for your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord which he did” (11:7) as motivation for keeping all the commandments. Therefore in (12:2) Moses uses the word “surely” to emphasize to the people that they have all the remembered knowledge of God in the collective memory, in order to make the right decision and avoid all practises which would damage the covenant relationship and lead them away from God.

The stern command “*You shall not* do so to the Lord your God” (12:4) refers to the command to forget the gods of foreign nations “and destroy their name out of that place” (12:3). Instead, all Israel must worship together “at the place which God will choose to put his name” (12:5-7) which will remind the people of their allegiance to the one God and their unity as one people worshipping together. The exposition of the laws now marks a change in emphasis to correct practises which will preserve the collective memories for the future life in the land. Future practise in the land is contrasted with the way “all that we are doing here this day, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes” (v.8). The Horeb covenant which is valid for, “us who are all here alive this day” (5:3), will require a change of behaviour in obedience to the laws. For example, the people are to bring and offer produce of the land at the chosen place, first fruits, tithes and offer votive offerings before God (vv. 6-11, 13-16) and finally “to eat” and “rejoice” in the presence of Yahweh (vv.7,12,18-19). This same language of rejoicing will form a central motif to the pilgrimage festivals (cf. 16:11,14,15). The list of the participants who shall worship and celebrate include “you, son, daughter, men and women servants and the Levite” (vv.12,18), which creates bonds of unity and also introduces a concern for the most vulnerable (v.19). The justification for care of the poor was given in (10:17, 18), when God was characterised as just and merciful: “who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing” (10:17,18). Therefore, the justice of God demands the fair treatment of all people. Israel is commanded to worship and celebrate her festivals as one people, with no-one excluded (12:12,18), which promotes the unity of the imagined community. The prescriptions for worship set out the important characteristics that shape the covenantal relationship, Israel

worships one God, in one chosen place, as one people, defining the identity of the people and the ideology of the nation.¹⁶⁴

In 12:29-13:18, Moses returns to the theme of idolatry to frame the examples of correct practices with a warning against the seduction of the gods of other nations. The correct response is issued with an appeal in 12:32 “Everything that I command you, *you must be careful to do*, you shall not add to it or take from it.” The challenge is to keep every word that he is commanding them (cf.5:1) and to heed the severity of failing to obey.

The danger to the covenant relationship through the worship of other gods continues in 13:3,7,14 where Moses identifies three sources of danger: “the prophet or dreamer of dreams” (vv.1-5), a close family member (vv. 6-11) and finally “a base fellow in one of your cities” (vv.12-18). Each time Moses quotes the direct speech of the evil doers “let us go after other gods” (vv.2,6,13), he is rhetorically imagining new dangerous memories for the future. By imagining the potential future scenario, the narrative signifies the great threat to Israel’s status as God’s chosen people, if she were to listen to the dangerous voices and thereby forget the pacifying memories of divine care and protection in her past. The expressed dangers frame the correct response of listening to God: “And all Israel shall *hear and fear...*” (v.11) thus highlighting covenantal faithfulness to God. In the case of each danger the rhetorical “If-you” clause is used in vv.1,6,12 to present a warning and advise a course of action: “you shall not listen” (vv. 3,8). The purpose of this construction is rhetorically to join the lawgiver and the addressees in the application of the law and thus confirm the covenant relationship.¹⁶⁵ The hypothetical nature of the if-you clauses in their general meaning of “in the case where,” also suggests the omnitemporality of the law, which is applicable to any time.¹⁶⁶

The covenantal allegiance to the Lord must be total and radical and is reflected in the dramatic verbs, to “kill” the offender (13:5,13) and “burn” the city with fire (v.16). Just as Israel must not forget the memory of divine deliverance, so the fate of someone who causes her to forget the memory is therefore severe. The repetition of the phrase “god you have not known” (vv. 2,6,13) emphasises the absurdity of “going behind” other gods, when it was the Lord who

¹⁶⁴ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 279.

¹⁶⁵ Jean-Pierre Sonnet, “The Fifth Book of the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy in Its Narrative Dynamic,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 4 (2015): 222.

¹⁶⁶ Sonnet, *The Fifth Book of the Pentateuch*, 222.

redeemed Israel from Egypt (vv. 5,10) and who has been going before the people (cf.1:30,33; 31:8).¹⁶⁷ The memory of divine deliverance is used here to remind Israel not to be distracted or forgetful: “you shall not listen to the words of that prophet” (v.3). The verb “to turn away/lead astray” (vv. 5,10,13) connects to the metaphor of walking in God’s ways (cf.5:33) and amounts to apostasy and faithlessness, and so must be removed from among the people (v.5). The memory of deliverance from Egypt is used to highlight the way that Israel has already been taken and put on the right path “the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (vv.5,10) and she must not be made to leave God’s way through apostasy. The narrative reminder of the memory of deliverance at this point in the text, signals that remembering is the method of avoiding occasions of disobedience in the future. Similarly, the ash heap that remains is to be preserved as a permanent memorial, reminding all who see it of the consequences of those who “go after other gods” (v.17). Moses concludes by reminding the people of the essence of the covenantal relationship, to obey the voice of God in all circumstances, do what is right in the sight of God, and keep all the commandments (v.18). This sums up the essence of her relationship with God, Israel’s devotion must be directed to God alone, and her love for him demonstrated in unreserved and unqualified obedience (v.4), which is built on the remembered foundations of God’s care and deliverance from slavery in Egypt (v.5,10).

Moses in 14:1-21 shifts from highlighting the specific dangers to the covenantal relationship to a general rejection of the ways of other nations in order to consolidate the imagined community of Israel as one people. The importance of the covenant relationship is now highlighted by means of the memory of the special election of Israel as the chosen people of God (14:2). Moses has spoken of Israel’s special election in 7:6 in relation to their complete separation from the cults of other nations, now this motif of “a holy people” (14:2,21) frames the regulations on the eating of certain foods which sets Israel apart from other nations by certain customs. In vv. 3-21, Moses gives prescriptions that highlight the distinction between clean or unclean animals which implies a difference between Israel and other people as certain animals are considered unclean, just “for you” (vv.7,8,10,19). The difference between Israel and others such as the alien or foreigner is made explicit in v.21. But the unity of all Israel is maintained by these prescriptions which Moses expresses in familial terms: “You are the sons of the Lord your God” (14:1), implying that Israel is one family with God as their father

¹⁶⁷ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 171.

(cf.32:6). This is positioned in stark contrast to 13:6 where a “brother” or a “son” or “daughter” would seduce another Israelite to follow other gods.¹⁶⁸ The importance of Israel’s faithfulness to God is underlined by such a shocking comparison.

3.3.3.2 The horizontal dimension of the covenant relationship (14:21-16:17)

The exposition of the laws to this point 12:1-14:21, has been to preserve the vertical dimension of the Covenant relationship through the practise of worship as one people, at the chosen place and to demolish all places of worship to other gods. In this way Moses begins to institute liturgical practises which will act to preserve the foundational collective memory through the obedient actions of all the people. By worshiping the one God, Israel trusts in the supreme authority of God as revealed at Horeb and the divine deliverance in Egypt and must therefore obey the laws which are inspired and given by God.

The laws which Moses now expounds in 14:22–16:17 concern the institution of justice and equality in the land for the preservation of the imagined community as one people. Thus, the horizontal dimension of the covenant relationship is addressed based on the nature of God (8:3-4.14), the justice of God (10:18) and Israel’s own remembered experience of slavery in Egypt (15:15; 16:12). The understanding of the character of God motivates the social justice of the laws and motivates all Israel to have a spirit of generosity in her obedience to the laws based on her own understanding of the experience of oppression. The social concerns of these laws and cultic celebrations (14:22–16:17) will further promote unity among the people through care for all its members and will serve to preserve the memory of the providential care of the Lord for his chosen people and the dangerous memory of slavery.

Moses gives the prescriptions for the annual (14:22-27) and triennial tithes (14:28-29) which act as a commemoration of the memory of God’s providential care in the land (cf.12:6,11,17). Israel is commanded to set one tenth of all that the fields produce (v.22) “at a place which God will choose” (vv.23,24,25), and to eat “before the presence of the Lord your God” (v.23). This echoes the experience of the elders in Horeb (4:10), as the elders learnt to fear God in his presence, so too will the people. In every 3rd and 6th year, in the 7-year cycle, the tithe is to be presented “within your towns” for the benefit of the poor, namely, the Levite (14:27,29), the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow (vv. 28-29). Enjoyment of the produce of the land, in

¹⁶⁸ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 171.

the central sanctuary also means including the socially disadvantaged, who lack direct access to the blessings of God, through the crops of the field and the herds and flocks. The true worship of God as Moses expounded in cf.10:12-22, imitates God and commits the people to an ethic of imitation of God, in showing compassion to and solidarity with the poor (cf.10:17-19). The memory of the mercy and justice of God presented in the foundational events is reflected in the ethical dimension of the laws, and through obedience, Israel can “walk after the Lord your God” (13:4).

The theme of ethical concern and solidarity with every member of the community of Israel is further developed through the theme of kinship, expressed repeatedly in the text as “brother” (15:2,3,4,7,9,11).¹⁶⁹ The special election of Israel as “sons of the Lord your God” (cf.14:1) is the basis for the ethical concerns for the Israelite debtor (15:3), the poor (vv.7,9,11) and the slave (v.12). All are called “your brother” signifying a solidarity with the poor and vulnerable which promotes unity within the imagined community of Israel. This is realised in the seven-year remission of debts when Moses imagines a time when all is going well for the people and they have been blessed by God due to their obedience to the voice of the Lord (vv.4-6). An attitude of generosity of heart is suggested in the motifs of *hand*, *heart* and *eye* which should be “open handed” (v.8). This also reflects the attitude of God in his generous blessings on Israel in the land which enables Israel to act in accordance with the ways of God. The warning is made with a contrast “You shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother” (v.7) and your heart must not be “grudging” (v.9) to avoid the guilt of “he will cry to the Lord against you and it be sin in you” (v.9). So as Israel has received the divine blessings in the land, she must also deal justly and generously with others so that “The Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all you undertake” (v.10). The frequent use of the familial language of “brother” (v. 2,3,4,7,9,11x2), defines Israel as a community of brothers and sisters which must not be compromised by economic inequalities. However, “the poor will never cease out of the land” (v.11) is the justification for the command to be generous: “open wide your hand” to your brother, the poor and the needy and for the earlier command to imitate God who has a preferential care for the poor (cf.10:18).

¹⁶⁹ The use of the metaphor of brotherhood is not gender specific. In Deuteronomy the metaphor of brotherhood reinforces the solidarity of the people. The use of brothers as a constitutive element of the people also equalizes: brothers stand on the same level; they have the same rights and duties and are responsible to one another (McConville 2006:92-93; Haber 1999:133).

The use of the memory of slavery and deliverance “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you” (15:15) is motivation for the favourable treatment of slaves both male and female who on their release must not go empty handed but should have a generous share in the fruits of the land “as the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give to him” (v.14). The memory of being a slave is motivational and stirs an empathy with those who are disadvantaged.¹⁷⁰ Thus the freedom which Israel has gained must be passed onto others equally. And the spirit of generosity motivates her to share the fruits of the land with those who have none. The motivation from the foundational memory is expressed in the text when the commandment is juxtaposed with the word “therefore” following the recollection of the memory, giving a logical reason for obedience to the command “*therefore* I command you this *today*” (v.15). The use of ‘today’ brings the past of the foundational act of God into the present and future of successive generations to indicate that the lesson remains true for all times and places. The land and the people must be marked by freedom and equality which has its roots in the memory of Israel’s exodus experience.¹⁷¹ Thus Israel is commanded in v.15 to have an attitude of care towards all members of the community which promotes life and basic human necessities, motivated by the divine act of deliverance from a life of slavery.

Remembering the divine source of Israel’s freedom in thanksgiving is the subject of 15:19-23. Moses returns to the vertical dimensions of the covenant relationship which framed the instruction regarding the poor (14:22-15:18), thus signifying the divine authority of God which inspires obedience to the laws and thanksgiving for the blessings of freedom (15:20). First born males of the herd and flock were considered most apt for sacrifice as they represented the power of fertility as given by God.¹⁷² So, it was in reverence and thanksgiving to God that it was offered and eaten at the chosen place and the equality between the people is shown in their worship as one people: “You shall eat it, you and your household, before the Lord your God” (15:20). In the specification that *all the household* should worship before God, it is clear that

¹⁷⁰ Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 157. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 222.

¹⁷¹ Mann, *The Book of the Torah*, 192.

¹⁷² Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 172.

there are no definitions between male or female, the slave or the free person. All are equal before God which is enshrined in the social laws and the liturgical celebrations.

Moses addresses the preservation of the foundational memories in the liturgical commemorations in order to maintain the knowledge and the motivation for the obedience to the ethical laws in the land. Moses gives the prescriptions for celebrating three pilgrimage festivals, the Passover (16:1-8) in the month of Abib, the festival of Weeks (vv.9-12) and Booths (vv.13-17) which will actualise the past foundational memories in the present through cultic actions and commemorations. The prescriptive actions for celebrating the pilgrimage festival of Passover (16:1-8) specify the month of celebration “for in the *month of Abib*, the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night” (16:1) and the time of day “in the evening at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt” (16:6). This re-enactment of the setting of the narrative memory gives a sense of identification with the past in which the cultic acts actualise and sustain the memory. The command to eat “no leavened bread...the bread of affliction” (16:3) suggests that the bitterness of slavery is understood in the word, “affliction” and the fact of hurried deliverance is understood in “unleavened bread” which are to be remembered through the act of eating the bread: “that all the days of your life, you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt” (16:3). Thus, the liturgical act preserves the memory of slavery and deliverance through actualising the past in the present. The liturgy of the cultic festival thus gives shape to the narrative memory and preserves it as an act of commemoration for all the generations who will celebrate it.

The Pilgrimage festivals are celebrated “at the place which the Lord will choose” (16:2,6,7,11,15), in order to remember that God is the source of their freedom and all blessings. In this way the covenant relationship is remembered and celebrated by directing the commemorative action firstly towards God and then between all the people. In the festivals of Weeks and Booths (vv.9-17), the action of commemoration focuses on the equality of all the people as they share the offerings with the entire community at the feasts: “you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you” (16:11,14). The produce of the land must be shared with the entire community, most especially the vulnerable so that the freedom to live and prosper may be available to all. Generosity towards both the needy and slaves is motivated by divine blessing (cf.15:4,6,10,14,18; 16:10,15,17) and the memory of slavery “you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt” (16:12 also cf.15:15)

which immediately follows the stipulation that the whole and entire community should worship together (16:11). The positioning of the dangerous memory alone in 16:12 and before the memory of deliverance in 15:15, with the stipulation in the text, shows that the dangerous memory has greater motivational force by encouraging feelings of solidarity with the suffering of others, to act in accordance with the social cares of the laws.

The similarities between the cultic regulations and the social laws show how the Torah fosters an egalitarian social structure for life in the land “no one shall appear before the Lord empty handed” (16:16). The ethical concerns of equality in freedom between all people are institutionalized in the laws and commemorated in the festivals. The collective memory of Israel’s foundational events is the bedrock of the social laws and cultic regulations, while the actions of commemoration in the liturgical festivals sustain the memories for future generations.

3.3.3.3 The appointment of administrative roles and offices (16:18-18:22)

The theme of ethical concern and solidarity with every member of the community of Israel has been expounded by Moses in the social laws and commemorative festivals (14:22–16:17) which acts to preserve the imagined community as one people. The ethical values of the social laws must now be formalised into the administration of the people in the land to ensure a continuity for all the people as they spread out in the land.

The theme of equality between the people is now developed into the judiciary through the common responsibility of the people and the subsidiary role of offices and administration in 16:18–18:22. It is significant that the narrator presented the concern for the poor and needy and for slaves (15:1-18) *before* the organisation for people in public offices (16:18-18:22). This suggests that while the social cohesion of the people of God is the responsibility of all its members, the offices have a subsidiary role which must not undermine the ideas of equality. Thus, the unity of the people precedes the institution of offices following the egalitarian concept of the people as children of God (cf.14:1) and is seen in particular, in the king’s humility (17:20).¹⁷³ The concern of the narrator suggests the great importance of the ethical value of equality between all the people which is to be institutionalised into the

¹⁷³ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 171.

administration of the law. In 16:18-20, Moses expounds the ethic of equality into the structure of the law by commanding that the people themselves should appoint judges and officers (v.18) The direct address using the second person singular ‘you’ (vv.18, 20-22; 17:1-5, 7-9,10-11,12) seeks to engage the whole community in the promotion of justice while faithfulness to God and the covenant will be demonstrated in righteous behaviour (16:20).

The appointment of judges and officials (16:18), echoes the appointment of elders in 1:9-18. The judicial system in the land is seen as a continuation of the arrangement in relation to Moses (cf.1:17) and therefore the Levitical priest or judge will be continuing the Mosaic office.¹⁷⁴ Justice is the main concern of the offices instituted in all local towns (v.18) which is emphasised by three commands: “you shall not pervert justice, you must not show partiality, you shall not take bribes” (v.19), leading emphatically to the exclamatory command “justice and only justice you shall pursue” (v.20). The reason for the command to justice is rhetorically poetic like a proverb: “a bribe blinds wise men’s eyes and jeopardises the cause of the just” (v.19) which may be linked to the characterisation of God himself as the great impartial judge (cf.10:17).¹⁷⁵ The poetic reminder of the characteristics of God at this point, serve to remind the audiences of the supreme authority of God and his impartiality as judge (10:17) which are the rationale for the command. As the Levitical priest or judge will be continuing the Mosaic office, then their decisions are to be respected by the people. The implication of the call for justice (v.20) is that the leaders will practise it while the people respect the rule of law and those who administer it.

Moses follows the declaration of the principle of justice, by warning against the dangers that violate the principle of justice and only justice. He resumes the theme he had left earlier in chapter 13, the maintenance of covenant fidelity. A series of parallel structures begins in 16:21-17:13, “a pillar/Asherah...which the Lord your God hates” (16:22), and any blemished sacrifice “that is an abomination to the Lord your God” (17:1), in order to emphasize the theme of idolatry as the greatest threat to the covenant and life in the land. Moses outlines two cases (vv.3,12) where a person might “do what is evil in the sight of God...in transgressing his covenant” (17:2). In both cases the proscribed action is “you shall purge the evil from the midst of you” (vv.7,12) which suggests that worshipping other gods or the sun or the moon (v.3) is

¹⁷⁴ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 281.

¹⁷⁵ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 175.

equal in consequence to not obeying the decision of a Levitical priest or judge (vv.10-12) who continues the Mosaic office and who “stands to minister there before the Lord your God” (v.12). The repetitions of ‘you shall do’ the ‘instructions’ and ‘decisions’ (vv.10-11) given by the priest or judge and “shall not turn aside...either to the right hand or to the left” (v.11,20 cf.5:32) which echoes walking in the ways of God, all build rhetorically to the climax “And all the people shall *hear* and *fear*, and not act presumptuously again” (v.13 cf. 13:11) in the context of warning against idolatry. Thus, the harsh penalties against idolatry were designed to enforce the decision given by the priest and the judge and to create reverence and respect in the people thus deterring them from committing a crime.¹⁷⁶

The supreme authority of God which is reflected in the role of the Levitical priests has highlighted the respect for the rule of law and those who administer it in the land. Now continuing the theme of equality and justice among the people, Moses develops the theme of equality which includes those whom the people have elected “from among your brethren” (17:15). The people’s right to elect a leader is given a voice: “I will set a king over me...” (v.14) whom the Lord will choose from “one from among your brethren” (v.15). The king must be fair and not greedy: “not multiply horses...wives.....silver and gold” (vv.16,17). The king will also receive a copy of the law from the Levitical priests and he must meditate on it all the days of his life (v.19). Daily meditation on the Torah suggests that the King will also share the collective memory of foundational events in the life of all the people as he is subject to the law in the same way as the people. Moses uses the same wording for the king as he has addressed to all Israel “learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them” (v.19) which suggests that the king is neither above the law, nor above his fellow Israelites, but a brother, subject to the law, whose life and reign depend on faithfulness (v.20). This implies that this Torah, through which the king will learn to “fear the Lord his God” and keep all the laws and statutes (v.19), is the highest authority, exceeding the highest authority of the state.¹⁷⁷

Just as the king might be a paradigm of faithfulness “by keeping all the words of this law...and doing them” (cf.17:19), so should Israel *do* the commandments by providing a share of the food offered to God (18:1) for the Levitical priests. The authority of the priests has been

¹⁷⁶ Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 223.

¹⁷⁷ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 346.

highlighted by the severe penalty for not obeying the priest (cf.17:12) and their authority is repeated in “chosen him out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of the Lord” (18:5). Therefore, neglecting the Levites who “have no portion or inheritance” (18:1), is a sign of disobedience. The egalitarian nature of the laws, which requires the king and all the people to obey the laws as brothers (cf.17:20), is also reflected in the laws for the Levites “They shall have no inheritance among their brethren” (18:2) and between the Levites themselves “fellow Levites...have equal portions to eat” (v.8).

The exposition of the social laws and their administration for life in the land is concluded at 18:8 and Moses now addresses the dangers of different practises in the land which Israel may be tempted to follow. The abominable ways of other nations must be met with the righteous practises of listening to the words of Moses and obeying the commandments (v.19). The central theme of “You shall be blameless before the Lord your God” (18:13 cf.6:25) is framed in a chiasmic structure by the examples of *doing* the commandments by providing for the priests and *hearing* the word of God through “a prophet like me” (v.15). The call to be blameless is framed as the ideal for righteousness, within the warning against the ‘abominations’ of the nations (vv.9,12) rhetorically building up to a stern warning: “The Lord your God has not allowed you so to do” (v.14). Moses reminds the people that the abominations are the reason why God is expelling the Canaanite nations from the land (v.12 cf. also 7:26; 12:31) and if Israel will remain faithful and blameless in heeding and doing the commandments, she will have a long life in the land (cf.4:40), just as in the case of the king, he and his children, in Israel (cf.17:20).

Whereas other nations may ‘give heed’ to fortune tellers and to diviners (18:14), Israel shall *heed* a prophet like Moses (v.15) for “he shall speak to them all that I command him” (v.18). Moses recalls the memory of the Covenant made at Horeb and quotes the people’s reaction at the assembly at Horeb, in the direct speech of Israel and God, to remind the audiences of the paradigm of authentic prophecy (vv.16-20). During the remembered assembly at Horeb, the people showed a righteous fear of the Lord: “If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die” (cf.5:25) so Moses recalls the memory to demonstrate the faithful covenant relationship between Israel and God which was reflected in the mediation of Moses. The mediation of another prophet like Moses is thus a direct continuation of the Mosaic mediation “and I will put my words in his mouth” (v.18). The legislation is founded upon the memory of the Covenant relationship and also draws attention to the importance of listening to the Word of God as the legitimate means of God’s revelation.

3.3.3.4 The administration of justice in the land (19:1-25:19)

In setting up the juridical structure for life in the land (16:18-18:22), Moses has expounded the needs of justice which demand obedience to those whom God appoints as leaders, such as the Levitical priests and those whom the people elect such as the judges. Thus, a foundation of equality is created in the governing structure to preserve a fair administration of justice in the land. The attributes of justice and mercy which characterise God are now instituted into the civic laws which are expanded to cover all areas of life in the land from private matters to corporate warfare. The ethical theme of preserving life whenever possible as an act of justice is incorporated into the legal framework of the land while the focus on the poor in the community is maintained with special provision for the marginalised and socially endangered persons who will be protected in law (19:1- 25:19).

Moses begins by setting up the spatial and temporal setting of the law, when the Lord your God “cuts off the nations,” and “you dispossess them” and when you “dwell in their cities” (19:1-2), with the repeated phrase “the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess” (vv.1,2,3,8,10) to emphasize the divine gift of the land and the memory of the divine promise to the patriarchs and their descendants (v.8). In this regulation, the land must be protected from the shedding of innocent blood in order to preserve justice and freedom in the land (v.10) which is founded on the memory of deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

Moses instructs the people themselves: “*you* shall set apart three cities of refuge” (19:2), just as the portions of the Transjordan previously conquered by Israel were also set apart (4:41) although the narrator tells us that Moses himself set apart three cities in the east, beyond the Jordan at that time. The principles of equality and collective responsibility are revealed in the fact that the promised land will be organised by the people to make justice available to all people, to be a place of refuge and to preserve the life of an innocent person (vv. 4-6). Giving refuge to the manslayer prevents the blood avenger from shedding innocent blood, which would bring blood guilt on the community (v.10 cf. also 21:8-9).¹⁷⁸ However, if the manslayer is guilty (vv.11-12), the elders must find him and hand him over to the avenger of blood. The cities of refuge provide protection for the innocent but not for the guilty. The themes of equality

¹⁷⁸ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 178.

and collective responsibility are expressed in the rhetoric through “you shall set apart” (v.2) and justice “lest innocent blood be shed in your land” (v.10) and are enshrined in the law.

In 19:15-21, Moses sets out the criteria for a just conviction in a trial in order to avoid perjury, building on 17:2-13. The repetition of the phrases “so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you” (v.19 cf.17:7) and “the rest shall hear and fear and shall never again commit any such evil among you” (v.20 cf.17:13) suggests that the crimes of idolatry (17:3) and perjury (19:16) both damage the relationship between God and the people, by bearing false witness. If perjury is committed in court, then they are to suffer whatever penalty would have been inflicted on the accused, which is emphasised with great rhetorical effect in 19:21 “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” Perjury defiles the land, jeopardizes Israel’s relationship with God (v.9) and undermines the principles of justice in 16:18-20. The plurality of witnesses was meant to protect the accused, especially the weaker members of society and to make sure everyone gets a fair trial, by the impartiality of judges and the integrity of witnesses.¹⁷⁹ Moses presents a model for life in Israel characterized by justice. Justice demands that the guilty be punished and the innocent be protected.

Moses develops the theme of justice to make provision for the disadvantaged, moving from private matters to corporate warfare in 20:5-8. Just as he encouraged Israel to take possession of the land in 1:29 so Moses uses the same words of assurance now (20:1) for Israel to trust in God against an enemy larger than themselves because they remember God’s power against the Egyptians: “the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt” (20:1). As Moses will not be present when they cross over into the land, Moses imagines the scene for the narrative audience by quoting the priest in direct speech who speaks the words of Moses (20:3,4 cf.9:1-3), signifying the equality between Moses the prophet and the priests. The theme of preserving life whenever possible as an act of justice now begins when the officers speak to the people just before they go forth to war. Moses lets the officers tell of an exemption from national service to those who have not had the opportunity to enjoy God’s provisions, so anyone who has built a new house (v.5), planted a new vineyard (v.6), the recently married (v.7), one who is fearful and fainthearted (v.8), is to be excused from military service. The

¹⁷⁹ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 194.

policies granting military exemptions also compassionately affirm family and domestic values and the right to enjoy the blessings of life.¹⁸⁰

The directives for justice in warfare are framed by the inclusio in 20:10,19 which suggests that Israel's conduct should be governed by justice and a desire to preserve life where possible. Thus, if Israel goes to war against a town, they are required to offer terms of peace (v.10). If the town accepts peace, the lives of the population are spared as justice requires, however Israel will impose forced labour (v.11). If peace is not accepted, the town is subdued and the men killed as they are more likely to rebel, echoing 13:15, claiming livestock as booty and women and children as spoils of war (v.14). In vv.16-18, the captured city must be destroyed completely in line with God's directives against the Canaanites (cf.7:25-26), avoiding the influence of teaching the Israelites abominable practices (cf.18:9 cf.12:30-31;13:1-18). By removing the entire population, Israel's fidelity to the covenant is ensured and her identity as a holy people is preserved (cf.14:1-2).

As God's provision of the land gives life, so the fruiting trees symbolize life and should not be destroyed (v.19). Justice also extends to the balance of the ecosystem. The possibility of life for a people must not be removed forever.¹⁸¹

The concept of God's gift of the land to Israel, for life and well-being continues in 21:1-9, 22-23 which form an inclusion on the theme of the danger of defiling the land by unburied corpses which might cause the danger "of innocent blood" (21:8 cf.19:10,13). Up to this point the laws pertaining to homicide involved the presence of witnesses, (19:1-13). Now Moses gives a prescription to deal with corpses where there is no witness to act or none willing to testify. It is significant that "all the elders of that city" (v.6) must perform the ritual to deal with the crime as an act of collective responsibility to spare the community as a whole from the consequences of blood guilt. Similarly, the people are responsible for burying a corpse the same day so that "you do not defile *your* land..." (v.23). They must take collective responsibility for the land with righteous behaviour, just as God takes special care of the land (cf.11:11-12).

¹⁸⁰ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 402.

¹⁸¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 322.

Care of the land includes those who live in it and the proper treatment of the helpless and innocent is further developed in the prescriptions for the more humane treatment of women and first-born sons. A captive woman taken as a wife is to be integrated into the household and allowed to mourn her parents for a month (vv.12,13). She also cannot be sold as a slave (v.14) as Israel remembers that she was once a slave (cf. 5:15). The right of the firstborn to receive a double portion of the inheritance is ensured (v.17) through the law. The laws promote the concept of God's gift of the land to Israel, for life and well-being, along with the need to uphold justice and human dignity.¹⁸²

The regulations for righteous behaviour (21:1-17) and (vv.22-23) frame a warning for Israel in the case of the rebellious son (v.18) which is a metaphor for Israel as "the sons of the Lord your God" (cf.14:1) who refuses to change his ways (cf.9:22-24). The punishment is to be made public "at the gate of the place where he lives" (21:19) to be an example to everyone to "*hear and fear*" (v.21) the warning so that evil may be purged and not prevail in the land. With this metaphorical example, Moses warns Israel to change her rebellious ways and obey the laws in line with the justice expressed in the laws.

Moses' exhortation draws on the spirit of brotherhood (22:1) in order to show care for the poor, the helpless and the marginalised which echoes the attitude of care expressed in cf.15:11. Moses outlines a series of apodictic laws which appeal to the people to assist each other as a "brother" Israelite (22:1,2,3,4). The language of brotherhood is motivational even if "you do not know him" (v.2) and recalls their obligation to one another in looking after his neighbour's property ranging from ox, sheep and donkey (vv.1,3,4), house or vineyard (vv.2,8) and garment (vv.3,5). The motivation of kindness to a neighbour appeal to an inner motive from the heart (cf.15:9), and encourages solidarity and mutual cohesion between people. The theme of common responsibility is emphasised not only through the directive "you shall help" (v.4) but also by the specific command to "not withhold your help" (v.3).

Care should also be extended to wild animals and birds. On finding a nest, the young birds may be taken for food, but the mother must be left free (22:6-7), in order to promote sustainability "in order that it may go well for you and you may live long" (v.7 cf. 5:16). The scope of righteous living extends to respect for all forms of life and helpless creatures. The

¹⁸² McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 333.

need to build “a parapet for your roof” (v.8) also highlights the collective responsibility of the owners of the building for the security of those who use them: “that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone fall from it” (v.8).

Moses has presented the laws, highlighting a sense of care for the gift of the land and those who live in it, by exhorting a fraternity and unity between the people and by identifying with the attributes of God through concern for your neighbour, the poor and marginalised. The memory of deliverance from Egyptian oppression should especially motivate Israel to make provision for the vulnerable as the laws in 22:13-30 act to stop the exploitation of the vulnerable, especially women in the family and to maintain the holiness of the people as a whole. The regulations set out the requirements of justice in the cases of sexual infidelity (22:13-20) and sexual misconduct (22:20-21), illegitimate sexual intercourse and rape (22:22-30). It is significant that the case of an innocent woman against a man is upheld by the law (22:26) to demonstrate that justice applies to all Israel’s citizens.

The holiness of the people is also the concern regarding those who are included or excluded in the assembly of the Lord and shows how Israel’s identity is open to the gradual integration of foreigners (23:2-8). Moses uses the memory of Israel’s past and the fact of kinship, to prescribe on those allowed into the assembly of the Lord. No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter as they were inhospitable to Israel when she travelled through their land and because they hired Balaam “to curse you” (23:3-6). But Edomites are allowed because “he is your brother” (v.7) and similarly Egyptians because “you were a sojourner in his land” (v.7). The third generation of foreigners may enter.

Israel’s special position as a chosen people of God also needs care and attention to her customs. The immanence of God to all Israel “as the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to save you and to give up your enemies before you” (23:14) is used to justify cleanliness practises in the camp, so that God may not “turn away from you” (v.14).

The principles of brotherhood and the past experience of slavery (23:7,15) underlines and motivates the basic ethic that compassion must be shown to the disadvantaged such as strangers and slaves. The three examples given by Moses in 23:2-16 all suggest a remembrance of Israel’s special calling to be a people of God in a Covenant relationship with the Lord which must be maintained through the ethical terms of the laws in the land. The community is

therefore given clear measures whereby it can protect its religious identity and purity. Verses 2-16 are framed by regulations against idolatry, suggested by the Canaanite cult practises in v.1, and vv.17-18 which are “an abomination to the Lord your God.” Idolatry being the greatest threat to the covenant relationship, is presented as the frame within which other regulations must be obeyed.

The ethical focus of the laws now turns to the protection of the poor in the land (23:19-24:7). The prohibition on taking interest on a loan or on anything is to protect fellow Israelites who may be in need or threatened with impoverishment. The motivation is given in the blessings which Israel will receive in the land: “that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land” (v.20). Honesty in all dealings is reflected in keeping any vows made to the Lord (v.23). And so “when you go into your neighbour’s vineyard” (v.24) you may take only what can be eaten straight away which is a concession to the poor and sojourners and should not therefore be abused or taken advantage of.

The theme of protecting the poor and marginalised shows the divine characteristics of mercy and justice in 24:1-22 and contains elements of the right attitude of care and generosity (cf.15:7-8) which Israel should demonstrate because she receives the same through the blessings in the land. The reckless use of divorce (24:1-4) could leave women in a state of poverty so the rights of a woman who is divorced for a second time are protected in this law. Items necessary for survival such as millstones shall not be taken as a pledge (24:6) and the prohibition against entering the house to fetch the pledge (v.10) shows respect for the disadvantaged person. The pledge should be returned if it is a basic necessity for life: “that he may sleep in his cloak” (v.13). Respect and mercy are balanced with the practical needs of justice so, “you shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy whether he is a kinsman or not...” (v.14) and he must be paid ‘before the sun goes down’ or it will be considered ‘sin in you’ (v.15). The injustice of actions which damage life most, are emphasised with “you shall purge the evil from the midst of you” (v.7) and includes the kidnap of a person to enslave and sell them. In contrast Moses gives an example of a law which encourages and preserves life when a newly married man is exempt from the army for a year so that he may “be free at home one year” (v.5).

The foundational dangerous memory of Egyptian slavery is clearly used as the justification for the protection of vulnerable people in the laws. The use of the phrase “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt” in 24:18,22 (cf.15:15; 16:12) is the basis for justice,

solidarity and equitable treatment for the vulnerable, the widow, the orphan and the stranger as the people are commanded to deal justly with the under-privileged. The word “therefore”-*לָכֵן* (24:22) is a key word here indicating that the memory should inspire empathy with others and thus obedience to the law. When the commandment is based on Israel’s remembered experience, her responsive action must be righteous. Israel’s generosity is motivated by the dangerous memory of being a former slave and also by the pacifying memory of her redemption “and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this” (24:18). By remembering God’s faithfulness, Israel is motivated towards care of the poor through obedience to the laws. And conversely “when Israel forgot its history, it forgot its poor.”¹⁸³

The divine characteristics of mercy and justice revealed in the foundational memories are found in all the laws which protect the vulnerable members of the community, and must also be included in judicial matters such as the case of corporal punishment (25:1-4). Forty lashes are the maximum allowed for an offence, otherwise “your brother be degraded in your eyes” (v.3). It is significant that the language of kinship is still employed here to acknowledge the possibility of an attitude of reconciliation between the people in the light of their own rebelliousness against God (cf.9:24). Just as Israel received forgiveness by the mediation of Moses, so she must exercise forgiveness in the community. The issue of respect and family honour is preserved in the case of a levirate marriage, where the rights of the deceased brother’s wife are to be guaranteed (vv.5-10). The woman is given the right to appeal to the elders and use the good reputation of Israel as motivation for her cause “My husband’s brother refuses to perpetuate his brother’s name in Israel” (v.7).

Verses 25:13-16 present the need for just weights and measurements as a matter of principle. Honesty in business transactions may link back to the laws protecting the poor (cf.24:6-11), who are most damaged by dishonest dealings. But in conclusion to all the laws, Moses gives final emphasis to the need for justice and only justice in every aspect of life in the land: “in your bag...in your house” (vv.13,14). The proverbial nature of the repeated phrases: “A full and just weight you shall have, a full and just measure you shall have; that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (v.15) suggests a life lived in full obedience to God will be the correct or just measure of your life in the land.

¹⁸³ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 229.

Moses concludes his exposition of the laws with the command to “remember” (25:17) and “not forget” (v.19) which frames the memory of “what Amalek did to you on your journey out of Egypt” (v.17) and “to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (v.19). The Amalekites mistreated others to satiate their own desires, which is the antithesis of justice and only justice which should define life in Israel. Moses reminds the people of this dangerous memory as a warning against such behaviour while appealing to their feelings of injustice at that time “when you were faint and weary” (v.18) and that Amalek “did not fear God” which was also a failing of Israel (cf.1:32). If Israel lives a righteous life in the land, then they will blot out this memory of injustice suffered and the dangerous memory will have served its purpose by effecting a change for the better in the present.

The laws which God gives to Israel reflect the life-giving characteristics of God and Israel must emulate these characteristics by obedience to the commandments to maintain her covenant relationship with God. Therefore, it is imperative that Israel should remember the foundational events in her past which reveal all her knowledge of God. By concluding his exposition of the laws with the phrases “Remember” (25:17) and “you shall not forget” (25:19) Moses draws attention to all that Israel must remember which not only forms her identity and unity as the chosen people of God, but also provides the motivation and justification for obedience to all the commandments. Israel’s unity as a nation and distinctiveness from all other nations is established in law by her customs of eating, her worship in one place, and her identification with the attributes of God through concern for her neighbour, the poor and the marginalised. Remembrance of the foundational events is fundamental for her life in the land and the continuity of the imagined community of Israel through living in obedience to all the covenant laws and stipulations.

3.3.4 The final covenant exhortation (26:1- 28:68)

The conclusion of the second speech of Moses may be divided into three narrative units with sub units: 1) A liturgical proclamation of faith and a declaration of covenant commitments (26:1-11, 12-19). 2) Moses gives instructions for the visible publication of the covenant in the land and the blessings and curses are given to support and enforce the covenant (27:1-10, 11-26). 3) A recital of blessings and curses to act as motivation for obedience to the covenant stipulations (28:1-68).

3.3.4.1 A liturgical proclamation of faith (26:1-11)

The narrative tension now builds up to the point of decision to renew the covenant agreement. The exhortation of Moses to bring the people to agree to ratify the covenant, focuses on two examples of proclamations of faith which contain the collective memory of the imagined political community. The verbal professions of faith are only found in 6:21-25 and 26:5-10, 13-15 and they connect the parenetical speeches of chapters 6-11 and 26-28 which frame the Law Code¹⁸⁴ thus emphasising the great importance of the collective memory for the life of the imagined political community. Remembering the past to effect changes in the present will motivate obedience to the laws and the freely given agreement to the covenant relationship.

In both professions of faith, the same wording is used for the deliverance from Egypt: “the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand” (6:21; 26:8) which signals the foundational importance of this memory for the life of the people in the land. The profession of the parents in 6:21 motivates children to obey the Torah (6:25), whereas the adult professes in 26:13-15 to have acted according to the Torah. Thus, the foundational memory is intended to influence the whole life of generations of Israelites through teaching and cultic practices and celebrations (v.11).

Throughout the law code Moses has spoken about the time: “when you enter the land” (17:14; 18:9; 26:1) and about the laws that need to be observed “in the land” (4:14; 5:31; 6:1; 12:1). Now Moses envisions that time when Israel is living in the land and has “taken possession of it” (26:1), then each Israelite must bring a portion of the first fruits of the cultivated land to the chosen place (v.2), and declare to the priest: “I have come into the land” (26:3) which shows the fulfilment of the land promise and the end of the journey. 26:1-2 forms an inclusio with 12:5-7, by virtue of the instruction to the people to go to the chosen place and bring offerings. The inclusio frames the detailed exposition of the law by Moses and concludes the exposition.

The declaration of faith by the individual who has come into the land (26:3), marks a change from Moses’ intercession between God and the people, to the people’s direct relationship with God in the land. The individual must proclaim the history of deliverance to the priest: “A wandering Aramaean was my father” (v.5) to show how the journey from Egypt reached its

¹⁸⁴ Markl, “Deuteronomy’s Frameworks,” 273.

goal when “he brought us into this place” (v.9), and so they offer the first fruits of the ground as a grateful prayer (v.10). The first-person singular pronoun “I declare...that I have come...” (v.3) changes to first person plural in v.7 ‘We cried’ to the Lord who heard ‘our voice’, saw ‘our affliction’ and ‘our toil’ and ‘our oppression’ which combines each individual experience with Israel’s collective memory and identity. In each aspect of the retold narrative of Egypt (vv.5-9), the individual places himself into the story and tells the story as if the events happened to him personally: “my father” (v.5). The people’s memory of suffering is collective: “treated *us* harshly,” “afflicted *us*” and “laid upon *us* hard bondage” (v.6), and is matched by the response: “the Lord brought *us* out” of Egypt (v.8). The themes of injustice and slavery: “our affliction, our toil and our oppression” (v.7) that marked the laws (15:9; 24:16-18) are being remembered here in the cultic ritual proclamation which acts to reinforce the memory and collective identity of the people of Israel.

3.3.4.2 A declaration of covenant commitments (26:12-19)

The collective memory makes Israel aware of the marginalized and the poor through her own past experience (cf.5:15) and thus she is obliged to share the fruits of her blessings and celebrate with the Levite and the stranger (v.11). The presentation of the first fruits is treated as a ritual with the tithing every 3 years which also serves to reinforce the memory of God’s saving actions in cultic ritual remembrances. Once again Moses quotes the direct speech of the people to rhetorically demonstrate what must be said and to highlight the importance of the event through dramatic showing. Israel will profess her obedience to the commandment (v.13), and that she has done “all that you commanded me” (v.14) so that the Torah has been fulfilled. A prayer for blessing on the land may now follow (v.15) as all the stipulations have been fulfilled.

The phrase “This day” (26:16) draws attention back to the narrated present in Moab (cf.4:1) where Moses states that “*the Lord your God* commands you to do these statutes and ordinances” (v.16) rather than Moses himself. This change lays emphasis on the fact that Moses will not be with the people for much longer but most importantly it highlights the people’s relationship with God in the land which will be determined by the choice to renew the covenant in vv.17-18. The laws have been expounded, now each party makes a declaration: “You have declared this day” (v.17) and “the Lord has declared this day” (v.18) which expresses the double-sided relationship between God and Israel and confirms the basic commitment of the two parties to upholding the covenant. That Israel is a treasured and holy people (v.19) echoes

(4:6) “This great nation is a wise and discerning people,” the nations will praise Israel for her Torah (cf. 4:6). The formation of Israel’s collective identity as a holy, chosen people (v.19), is an important psychological means of encouraging her obedience to the Torah.¹⁸⁵ Moses has envisioned the words of the Covenant renewal ceremony so that the importance of the act may be apparent to the people and so that they can enter into it: “with all your heart and with all your soul” (v.16) and not dishonour the words of the Lord God: “as he has spoken” (v.19).

3.3.4.3 Moses gives instructions for the visible publication of the covenant in the land (27:1-10)

The narrator now introduces Moses’ direct speech with other characters in 27:1,9 which may suggest the coming to the end of Moses’ role as spokesperson for the word of God and his command to “set up large stones...and *write upon them* all the words of this law” (vv.2-3) would seem to confirm this idea as the written word will preserve the teaching of Moses into the future. The narrator tells the implied audience that Moses and the elders “commanded the people saying...” (v.1) as if the characters spoke in unison which suggests a handing over of duties by Moses to the elders (v.1) and the Levitical priests (v.9) and it also rhetorically emphasises the need for the whole community to answer the Lord’s command in a decisive way “this day” (v.1).

Moses and the elders now command the setting up of stones inscribed with “all the words of this law” (27:3,8) and “very plainly” (v.8) which echoes an earlier imperative “you shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it” (4:2). The act of writing has been prescribed to the people before: “write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (cf. 6:9; 11:20) in the context of teaching children (cuff 6:7; 11:19), but 27:3 is particularly significant as the people stand ready to enter the promised land because Moses will not cross over with them. There is therefore an urgency in the instruction: “*on the day* you pass over to enter the land” (v.2) and again: “when you have passed over” (v.4) to create a lasting record in the space where the Torah will be enforced, on that same day, and to preserve the words for the lifetime of future generations. Thus, the command is repeated “and you shall write upon

¹⁸⁵ Markl, “Deuteronomy's Frameworks,” 277.

the stones all the words of this law very plainly” (vv.3,8) to highlight the very great importance of the words both oral and written.

The narrator introduces Moses and the Levitical priests (27:9) who solemnly declare the proclamation of the Covenant which is emphasized by the exhortation to all Israel by name: “Keep silence and hear, O Israel” (v.9), and reminds the people of their relationship with God who speaks while Israel listens in obedient trust. The role of the Levites who speak in unison with Moses shows their special responsibility for the Covenant between the people and God: “this day you have become the people of the Lord your God” (v.9) which also includes a command to obey “the *voice* of the Lord your God” (v.10). The ‘voice’ of the Lord emphasises the closeness of the Covenant relationship between God and the people, particularly at this moment of renewal of the Covenant, and echoes 26:16-17 to encourage obedience to the commands of God.

3.3.4.4 The blessings and curses are given to support and enforce the covenant (27:11-26)

The narrator introduces the speech of Moses for a third time (27:11) which has the effect of interrupting the flow of narrated actions in the narrated time. This prepares the implied audience for a change in the narrative as the plot comes closer to completion and the tension builds in anticipation of the predicted death of the main character of Moses (cf.4:22). The narrator quotes Moses speaking in direct speech giving instructions that the blessings will be performed on Mount Gerizim by six tribes (v.12) and the curses on mount Ebal by another six tribes (v.13), fulfilling 11:29. The ratification by twelve tribes means that *all* the people will listen to and respond to the blessings and curses, fostering a collective sense of responsibility. This is emphasised in “And the Levites shall declare to *all the men of Israel* with a *loud voice*” (v.14). The curses are framed by prohibitions of idolatry (v.15) and the requirement to obey the Torah (v.26). The curses echo the social concerns of the laws, the dishonour of parents (cf. also 21:8-21), perversion of justice, property boundaries, infringement of the rights of widows and orphans (vv.16-19, cf. also 24:17) and sexual concerns (vv.20-23) and are contained within the frame of idolatry which is considered the most serious threat to the covenant relationship. Twelve times *all* the people shall say “Amen” (vv.15-26) highlighting that the people take

collective responsibility and it also highlights the theme of unity with one nation responding with one voice on the entry into the land.

3.3.5 A recital of blessings and curses to act as motivation for obedience to the covenant stipulations (28:1-68)

28:1-68 divides structurally into two units, consisting respectively of blessings awaiting the Israelites if they are faithful to the covenant (vv.1-14) and curses if they persist in rebellion against him (vv.15-68).¹⁸⁶

3.3.5.1 The blessings (28:1-14)

The curses in 27:15-26, have highlighted the importance of justice and a preferential concern for the poor and disadvantaged by placing these curses first, because such concerns mark out Israel as the chosen people of God: “this day you have become the people of the Lord your God” (27:9), who worship the one God (27:15). If the people agree to the terms of the laws, by means of the Amen then, the blessings in the land will follow which are framed by the call to obedience (28:1,14). Following obedience, the blessings will be a completion of the divine gift of the land (v.8). Israel’s role among the nations will be great (v.1), in warfare (v.7), in prosperity (vv.11,12), and as a holy people (vv.9-10). But the many blessings are dependent upon obedience which is urged repeatedly: “if you obey the *voice* of the Lord your God” (vv.1,2) suggesting a more personal call to obedience and “if you keep the commandments” (vv.9,13,14), followed by a warning against idolatry. Israel’s role among the nations (v.1) forms a central theme in the blessings and the curses and forms an *inclusio* for the blessings in the metaphor “And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail” (v.13). Attention to Israel’s role among the nations brings into focus the importance of the Covenant relationship.

3.3.5.2 The curses (28:15-68)

After the blessings, Moses issues a dramatic set of curses (28:15-68), which are a literary expression of trauma for the purpose of transforming the destructive force of that trauma into a motivation for adhering to the Torah as Israel’s ethical foundation.¹⁸⁷ The subversive power

¹⁸⁶ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 537.

¹⁸⁷ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 185.

of the dangerous memories of suffering and oppression to bring about ethical change for the better is clearly presented in the curses. The previous blessings are now reversed: “Blessed shall you be” (vv.3,4) becomes “cursed shall you shall be” (vv.16-19). Everything in the land that was a blessing is now cursed, diseases both physical and mental, echoing the experience of Egypt, will afflict the people (vv.20-22, 27, 35, 28-29, 34). The reason given for these curses is “because you have forsaken me” (v.20) which heightens the exhortation by the use of the divine first person singular to personalise the appeal. The effects of the curses on the people will be extreme: “until you perish” (v.22) and “until you are destroyed” (v.24). Instead of other nations being in awe of Israel, “you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth (v.25). Israel will be defeated in war (vv.25-26) and suffer the diseases of Egypt (v.27), the memories of which will be strong motivations to avoid these consequences. Everything that she hopes for in the promised land will be lost to her: “a wife, house, vineyard, fruit, ox, children shall be given to other people” (vv.30-32,38-42). Israel will be exploited (v.33), commit idolatry, including the king whom she chose (v.36) and so become a “horror...among all the peoples” (v.37). The sojourner will now lend to Israel in a reversal of the metaphor “he shall be the head and you shall be the tail” (v.44) and the reason for all these catastrophes is “you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments” (v.45). Moses describes the complete reversal of the covenant relationship as expressed in the blessings, the acclaim of v.10 is totally reversed in v.25 which is intended to act as intense motivation for obedience to the laws.

In the following imagined scenario, all the terrors take place as a result of forgetting the divine gift of the land and having a self-sufficient complacency (v.47). As Israel did not worship God through cultic celebration remembrances: “serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart” (v.47), which would have kept the memory of her collective identity alive, so she must “serve your enemies who the Lord will send against you” (v.48). Moses envisions Israel living under siege where she is the foreigner (v.49) and her own ethical laws do not exist (v.50,51). As a result, she is subject to famine (v.51), cannibalism (vv. 53-57), and utter mental anguish which is indicated in the repeated use of “shall distress you” (vv.55,57). The extreme descriptive detail of the threatened afflictions (vv.22,26,28-30), and horrific details (vv.53-57) underscore the desperate urgency to exhort compliance to the commandments of the Lord for life in the land.

Moses draws to a close with a severe warning: “if you are not careful to do all the words of this law which are written in this book” (v.58), giving oral and written proof of the warnings, then the consequences will be ‘extraordinary’ (v.58, which indeed describes the afflictions and sicknesses as “severe, grievous and lasting” (v.59). The fearful memory of sickness in Egypt is also called upon to enhance the warning and motivate obedience (v.60). Blessings are now coupled with curses for effect (vv.62-63). The madness of oppression that “your eyes shall see” (v.34), is expanded to the utmost in vv.65-67. The danger of serving other gods is used only once in the blessings (v.14), but twice as a culmination of the curses vv.36,64 to show the great dangers expounded in the curses. The curses culminate in the anti-exodus motif, the return to Egypt (v.68), and the final indignity of becoming a useless slave male and female, who are not able to serve any master (v.68).

3.3.5.3 Summary

The extreme nature of these curses, parents eating their own children (v.53) and “every sickness also and every affliction which is not recorded in the book of this law, until you are destroyed” (v.61), serve as threats to attempt to bring about obedience to the laws. However, they are also descriptions of traumatic experiences which are expressed in their full horror and psychological devastation.¹⁸⁸ As such, they express in words, the experience of horrific suffering which may have been the experience of the Israelites and thus make a powerful means of motivation through memory, for the future.

3.3.6. Summary of the second speech (4:44-28:69)

In the second speech of Moses, the rhetorical exhortation is directed towards the present imperatives of the Moab generation in 4:44-28:69 who stand on the edge of the land, awaiting the blessing to enter in. The narrator sets the scene in 4:44 by repeating the pacifying memory of the successful conquest in the Transjordan and the repetition of the unity of “Moses and the children of Israel” (4:44,45,46) is used by the narrator to give encouragement for the move into the land. The emphasis on the successes of the second generation: “when *they* came out of Egypt” (4:46) links the memory of the past with the Moab generation to unify the imagined community and to give encouragement for their positive response to the renewal of the covenant and subsequent move into the land.

¹⁸⁸ Markl, “Deuteronomy's Frameworks,” 277.

In preparation for a long life in the land (5:33), Moses delivers an exhortatory speech which uses the memories of the theophany at Horeb, the divine deliverance from slavery in Egypt and the care in the wilderness, to reveal the sovereign power and authority of God over every aspect of life in the land. The supreme authority of God motivates Israel to worship the one God and to obey all the commandments of the Torah. The dangerous memory of slavery is used to motivate Israel to obey the social cares of the laws and to practise justice in the political administration of the land.

Memory is also the means by which Israel preserves her knowledge of God in the foundational events, through teaching and regular liturgies and commemorative festivals. The emphasis on teaching the next generation is repeated throughout Moses' exhortation and focus is given to the memory of deliverance from slavery in Egypt (6:20-25), as the foundation for the ethical and moral dimension of the laws. The particular commemorative acts of the liturgical celebrations remind and teach the collective memory to future generations and thereby promote obedience to the covenant and the commandments. The call to "lay up these words of mine in your heart" (11:18 cf.5:33), as the commandments are expounded by Moses to the narrative and implied audience, suggests an internalisation of the ethical dimension to the laws, in order that concern for all members of a community, including an empathy with the poor and marginalised should become the basis for the organisation of a community in any setting or time.

The blessings and curses create an intense form of motivation to urge obedience to all the commandments. The blessings will highlight the status of Israel as the chosen people of God to show her greatness among the nations if she will be obedient but the curses draw on the memory of oppression in Egypt to visualise the terrible consequences of disobedience. It is significant that the curses are directed firstly to those who commit idolatry and those who pervert justice towards the disadvantaged among the people (27:15-19). This highlights the importance of the covenant and the ethical foundation of the laws, and Israel as a nation will be marked out by her attitude of care and provision for the marginalised. The power of the dramatic curses which draw on every experience of suffering, intensifies the dramatic tension towards the climax of the narrative, the declaration of the new covenant and the decision which is to be made today by Israel.

3.4 The Third speech of Moses. These are the words of the Covenant (29:1-32:52)

The third speech of Moses has been divided into 2 narrative units. 1) The purpose of Moses' exhortation is to offer a new covenant to the people of Israel and to help them enter into this new covenant with the Lord. The decision that is now before the people is a stark contrast between blessing and curse, life and death. The collective memory of the people and the curses are used to persuade the people to make this decision (29:1-30:20). 2) The second narrative unit (31:1-32:52) brings the role of Moses to a conclusion. In preparation for the future in the land, Moses has written the Torah and taught the Song to the people to maintain the collective memory for the unity of successive generations. Israel is now ready to proceed into the land.

3.4.1 The purpose of Moses' exhortation is to offer a new covenant to the people of Israel and to help them enter into this new covenant with the Lord (29:1-30:20)

The use of the collective memory to exhort obedience to the commandments has culminated in a dangerous memory, recalling the horror of the reality of slavery imagined for Israel in the curses, if she chooses to reject God and all the commandments (4:44-28:69). But in this third speech, the narrative focuses on the positive pacifying memories of "the signs and great wonders" (29:3), the divine care in the wilderness (v.5) and the successes in the Transjordan (vv.7-8) so that the people will have confidence and faith in the Lord God, that they might "enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God" (v.12).

The narrator introduces the words of the covenant (29:1), which will build up the final exhortation to the ratification of the Covenant. It is quite clear that this is a second covenant between God and the people of Israel, to be ratified in Moab which is distinct from the first covenant which was made in Horeb (v.1). This interruption by the narrator stresses again that the narrated time is situated in Moab, as in 1:1 and 4:44 despite the readers' previously imagined involvement with the narrative and therefore the unity of the imagined political community is stressed. The emphasis on the narrative setting in Moab confirms that this is a new covenant which will be ratified in the 'today' of the narrative and thus Israel needs to make a decision 'today' to obey all the covenant stipulations.

Moses immediately addresses the narrative and implied audiences as if they had been present in Egypt: “You have seen all that the Lord did...in Egypt” (29:2) and personally witnessed the events: “before your eyes in the land of Egypt” (v.2). As this is a retelling of the foundational story, the challenge to the audiences now, is to remember the details of “the great trials which your eyes saw...” (v.3) and therefore to know and have faith in the Lord your God, that they might “enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God” (v.12). Moses is remembering and retelling the now established foundational memories (vv.2-3,5-6,7-8), to remind the audiences of the sovereignty of God and their collective covenant identity as the chosen people of God which is highlighted in the centre of the chiasmic structure: “that you may know that I am the Lord your God” (v.6). “But to *this day*” (v.4) brings the narrative back to the narrated present in Moab where the people have not been granted the understanding of the great events they have ‘witnessed’. So, Moses rhetorically reinforces the motivational effect of the pacifying memories by positioning himself with the people as a witness to the 40 years in the wilderness: “I have led you forty years in the wilderness” (v.5), when their clothes and sandals did not wear out (v.5) to show the power of God to preserve life. By using the first person “I have led you forty years” (v.5) and “that you may know that I am the Lord your God” (v.6), Moses merges his voice, as the mouthpiece of God, with that of the Lord to create the motivational effect of a direct vocal appeal from God to the people. The memory of the victories in the Transjordan, signaled by “And when you came to this place,” (v.7) is recalled to show the power of faith and obedience in the Lord which continues to the present narrated time in Moab. The use of “we defeated them; we took their land” (29:7,8) could still be referring to Moses or God with the people, in order to rhetorically exhort trust in the Lord who goes before Israel in battle (cf.2:24; 3:2). The pacifying memories are used here to give assurance and confidence to the people in their freedom to choose to agree to the renewal of the covenant. The call is to act in the present and future in accordance with the Lord’s actions of the past and this is expressed in the text as “do the words of this covenant that you may prosper *in all that you do*” (v.9), which forms an inclusio with “*all that the Lord did before your eyes*” (v.2) to frame and highlight the exhortation to “enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God” (29:12) and to show that success is possible if Israel can be faithful.

The utter equality of all people before God is solemnly pronounced by Moses: “*You stand this day all of you*, before the Lord your God” (29:10), stressed in the repetition of *you* and the list of all those included from tribal leaders to “he who draws your water” (v.11) as being included in the “sworn covenant of the Lord your God” (v.12). The mutuality of the relationship is

expressed in “he may establish you this day as his people and that he may be your God” (v.13) and this includes not only those present but also future generations: “Nor is it with you only that I make this sworn covenant” (v.14). The transgenerational relevance of the Moab covenant for the future life in the land is suggested in “with him who is not here with us” (v.15), and Moses has implied this through frequent use of the second person you.¹⁸⁹ In verse 14 Moses appears to merge his voice with that of the Lord “...that *I* make this sworn covenant...” to make real the effect of hearing the word of God to intensify the solemnity of the occasion.

Moses continues to give assurance to the people by positioning himself rhetorically with the people even when he gives a warning against idol worship which they witnessed in Egypt and the Transjordan (29:16,17). By using the pacifying memory of the successful movement through the Transjordan and the inclusive pronoun “we” (v.16) the exhortation gives an assurance and confidence that the people can avoid “the detestable things, their idols of wood and stone” (v.17) which might lead to the swearing a false oath in the covenant ceremony (v.19). The rhetorical motivation increases now with warnings expressed in the metaphor: “a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit” (v.18) which forms an *inclusio* with v.28 and echoes the previous expressions to “purge the evil from among you” (cf.13:5;17:7,12;19:19) which the Lord will do in this case as his “anger” and “jealousy would smoke against the man” (v.20) and the guilty would be subject to “all the curses of the *covenant* written in this book of the *law*” (v.21), emphasising the crime against the covenant and the law. Moses now increases the impact of the warning by imagining the future: “your children who rise up after you” (v.22) and strangers will come to the land to ask what has caused this divine wrath (v.24). The reason for the destruction of the land like that of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.23) is given as “it is because they forsook the covenant of the Lord” (vv.24-27). The intensity of the destruction reflects the impact of the curses that are written in “this Torah book” (vv.20,21,27). Thus, the people are “uprooted from their land” and “cast into another land” (v.28) as Moses dramatically links the narrative of the future to the narrative present in the plains of Moab, “as at this day” (v.28) making the greatest emphatic appeal for Israel to make the right decision today.

The people as a collective group, now appear to make a solemn declaration which is indicated in “to *us* and to *our children*, that *we* may do all the words of this law” (v.29), indicating their commitment to their special election as the people of God: “the things that are revealed belong

¹⁸⁹ Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 187.

to us” and their obedience to the laws which have been revealed to them “that we may do all the words of this law” (v.29). The fact that neither the narrator nor any other character introduces this short speech may suggest it is a silent prayer said in the heart of the people and as it is placed in the centre of Moses’ covenant speeches it is the ideal response to all his exhortation. Lenchak affirms: “The audience at this point, especially after hearing about the dire consequences of the apostasy can only recognise that it cannot escape the responsibilities demanded of it by the Torah or the covenant revealed by our God.”¹⁹⁰

Against the background of the catastrophe referred to in 29:22-28 and summarised in the key word “curse” (30:1), Moses now considers Israel “among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you” (30:1). Moses imagines Israel’s repentance and return to God as she thinks on the blessings and curses which Moses has presented. The exhortation of Moses is focused on the covenant relationship with God, for life in the land and this is expressed in “loving the Lord your God,” “obeying his voice in all that I command you with all your heart and all your soul” (30:2,6,10,16,20), with variations including “to keep his commandments and statutes which are written in this book of the law” (v.10). This frames the exhortation to be faithful to God around the central message, a confession of faith, “so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (v.6 cf. 6:5).

The pattern of returning to God (30:2,6), is met with a similar turning back by God who will “restore your fortunes and have compassion on you...he will gather you...from where he has scattered you” (v.3). The compassion and mercy of God is revealed in the verbs “he will gather you” (vv.3,4), “fetch you” (v.4), “bring you into the land” (v.5) which suggests a compassionate seeking out even to “the uttermost parts of heaven” (vv.4,12,14). Following Israel’s change of heart, the blessings will be beyond even those of their fathers (v.5). And like a loving father “the Lord will circumcise your heart...*that you may live*” (v.6) which is repeated in vv.19,20 to frame all the exhortation towards making the right decision, in the urgency of “this day,” which is repeated for effect (vv.2,8,11,15,16,18,19). The parallel pattern of returning to God (v.6) continues with the curses now falling on Israel’s enemies (v.7) and every blessing in the land falling on Israel (30:9) which is framed with the warning “if you obey the voice of the Lord” and turn to the Lord with all your heart and soul (vv.2,6,8,10). The final exhortation to obedience in v.10 contains a summary of all the assurance and commands that

¹⁹⁰ Lenchak, *Choose Life*, 196.

Moses has given, to obey the voice, the commandments and his statutes which are written, to return to God when they fail, with all your heart and with all your soul which echoes the declaration of faith in the Shema (6:5) and is the reason and motivation for Israel's obedience.

Moses rhetorically assures Israel that obedience to the commandment "is not too hard for you" (v.11), with the rhetorical questions "who will go up to heaven?" or "who will cross the seas?" (vv.12-13), to bring the words of the law to them. The rhetorical question "Who will go up to heaven" suggests a divine task which has already been reassuringly answered in (v.4), forming an *inclusio* to highlight the faithfulness of God. The closeness of a compassionate God is indicated in "But the word is very near to you" (v.14) and the earlier command of Moses in 6:6,7 is echoed in "it is in your mouth and in your heart" (v.14) so that the internalisation of the law should become a way of life and should be preserved through teaching and cultic remembrances: "so that you can do it" (v.14).

An extreme sense of urgency is now created (vv.15-18) in the diametrically opposite choices presented to Israel as Moses reaches the end of his covenant exhortation. "Life" and "death" (vv.15,19) form an *inclusio* around the options of "loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, keeping his commandments" (v.16) which lead to life and blessings, or "turning away, worshiping other gods" for which "you shall perish, you shall not live long in the land" (v.18). Moses rhetorically builds the dramatic tension through his solemn prefacing statements: "I declare to you this day" (v.18) and "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today..." (v.19).

The brevity of the language now focuses and summarises the message: "life and death, blessing and curse; therefore, choose life" (v.19), giving the impression that time is running out. "That you and your descendants *may live*" (v.19) forms an *inclusio* with "that you *may live*" (v.6) to emphasize that the exhortation to love God first and obey all his commands will lead to the life of the nation for generations to come. Moses has expounded the laws and exhorted the people to obedience to the covenant obligations by remembering the foundational acts of God and now he concludes with the great significance of all of his teaching, that Israel's life is dependent upon her "loving, obeying... the Lord your God," "for that means life to you" and "that you may live in the land" (v.20). Moses concludes his covenant exhortation by solemnly invoking

heaven and earth (v.19) as witnesses to the covenant which the Lord is making with his people, in order to fulfil the ancient promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (v.20).¹⁹¹

The intention of this covenant exhortation has been to offer a new covenant to the people of Israel and to help them enter into this new covenant with the Lord. The decision that is before the people is a stark contrast between blessing and curse, life and death. The collective memory of the people and the curses are used to persuade the people to make this decision. This decision has to be made ‘today’ that is, on the very day of the transmission of the commandments: “that I am commanding you today” (30:16). On this very day, Israel is expected to make the decisive choice between life and death, thus highlighting the urgency of the decision to be made.

Having finished his covenant speech, revealing the new covenant in Moab (29:1), its stipulations offered to and accepted by the people and its blessings and curses invoked as testimony to their pledge to obey it, Moses now prepares to leave the scene.

3.4.2 Moses writes the Torah and teaches the Song to maintain the collective memory for the unity of the generations (31:1-32:52)

The voice of the narrator interrupts Moses (31:1,2), signaling a transition from the Covenant exhortation to narrative which looks to the imminent death of Moses and the transfer of his leadership to Joshua (vv.2-3). The narrator continues to introduce all of the direct speech to signal the resolution of the narrative and the conclusion of the teaching of Moses. Moses looks to the future and uses the pacifying memory of the successful conquest of the Transjordan (vv.4-6) as a positive paradigm for the future conquest of the land and he gives the same encouraging assurance now: “do not fear or be in dread of them” (v.6) to urge Israel to trust in God: “it is the Lord God who goes with you” (v.6 cf.3:22).

The narrator now introduces the next event, the commissioning of Joshua (31:7), which suggests the idea of remembering “these words” (v.1) through the written book (v.9). Moses now commissions Joshua with the same words of assurance which he spoke to the people (v.8 cf.3:22) which fulfils the earlier divine word in 3:28. The fact that Moses uses the same formula of words for assurance which the Lord had spoken to him in 3:2, shows his constancy and faithfulness as the mediator of God’s words to the people.

¹⁹¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 340.

The concern to preserve all the teaching of Moses for the future continues as the narrator tells the implied audience that Moses “wrote this law” (31:9) and “gave it to the Levitical priests... and to all the elders of Israel” (v.9) which suggests that the responsibility for its tradition is not exclusively conferred on those in religious office but also on the laity among the people (cf.6:6-9,20-25).¹⁹² The transmission of the teaching among the people is addressed as Moses commands the reading and teaching of the Torah (vv.10-13), every seventh year, the year of remission of debts (cf.15:1-3), when slaves are released (cf.15:12-15) and the celebration of the harvest at the feast of Booths (cf.16:13-15). Thus, having carried out the stipulations of the Torah, “all Israel” (v.11) would be ready to “hear and learn to fear the Lord” so that they would “do all the words of this law” (v.12). Thus, all the people, men, women and the sojourner are reminded of the collective memory of their history and the laws which give meaning to the social concerns and cultic celebrations which they have kept. Even the children “who have not known it” (v.13) are taught to “hear and fear the Lord” so that “as long as you live in the land” (v.13) the people will fear the Lord. The reading of the Torah every 7th year also means that no child will be left behind or reach adulthood without having heard the Torah at least twice.¹⁹³ Thus the collective memory of the group is inculcated into the life of the children and the unity and identity of all the people will be maintained for successive generations.

Having established the continuity of the teaching for the life of the imagined community of Israel, the narrator introduces the resolution of the role of the character of Moses. The Lord announces the death of Moses in vv.14,16, which frames the theophany: “And the Lord appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood at the door by the tent” (v.15) which is expressed in a chiasm to emphasize this highly significant moment while also recalling the theophany at Horeb (4:11). Once Moses and Joshua have presented themselves at the tent for the commissioning as a sign of the handing on of Moses’ leadership, the divine speech is spoken to Moses (v.16).

The narrator continues to drive the plot towards its resolution through his introduction of each character’s speech. The divine speech (31:16-21) begins immediately after the announcements of the imminent death of Moses (vv.14,16) which suggest that this is a final divine exhortation to obedience, through Moses, the mouthpiece of God. The parallel structure of the Lord’s

¹⁹² Markl, *Deuteronomy*, 190.

¹⁹³ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 591; McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 439.

speech highlights and emphasizes the prediction of idolatry (vv.16,18,20) and the repetition of “they will forsake me and break my covenant” (vv.16,20) and “hide my face from them” (vv.17,18), frames the people’s question “...because our God is not among us?” (v.17) which shows the intimacy of the covenant relationship, put at risk through “they have turned to other gods” (vv.18,20). As a witness against the people when they apostatize, after becoming complacent in the land (v.20) and provoking the Lord to impose his curse on them (v.21), Moses is commanded to write down the song which he must teach to the people (v.19), combining written transcription with oral recitation.¹⁹⁴ The Lord also predicts that the song “will live *unforgotten* in the mouths of their descendants” (v.21) and therefore will be a lasting memory for the purpose of bringing the people back to the Lord for many generations. The narrator tells the implied audience that Moses wrote out the song “the same day” and taught it to the people (v.22).

The commissioning of Joshua is used by the narrator to indirectly give due praise to Moses by reporting that Moses’ words of encouragement to Joshua in (vv.7-8) are repeated by the Lord himself in (v.23) which underlines God’s approval of Moses and Joshua. The narrative tension is building towards the climactic conclusion of Moses’ death and the echo of Moses’ words here, keeps this main character in mind for the reader. Moses completes “writing the words of this law in a book, *to the very end*” (v.24) suggesting completion of the task of transmitting all that the Lord commanded him (cf.1:3). Moses commands the Levites to place the book beside the ark of the covenant, as a sign of its divine authority, but precisely “that it may be there as a witness against you” (v.26) just as the song will be a witness against the people (v.19) in the event of their rebelliousness (vv.27,29).¹⁹⁵

The narrator introduces Moses’ address to “all the assembly of Israel” (v.30) as he speaks “the words of this song” echoing 1:1 to bring to completion the role of God’s mediator. As God taught Moses the Song in 31:19, now Moses teaches it to all the people (32:1) in his last act as God’s mouthpiece which will preserve the memory of God’s saving acts as the foundation of Israel’s identity and unity as a people. Moses proclaims the greatness of God and so heaven and earth are called to listen and witness to the impending charge (32:1,3), as previously used in Deuteronomy (cf.4:26; 30:19; 31:28). In poetic language Moses hopes that his teaching will

¹⁹⁴ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 399.

¹⁹⁵ Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses*, 130.

be effective, in the metaphors: “dropping as rain” and “distil as the dew” (v.2) which is gentle and tender evoking the sense that it is beneficial, and leads to his proclamation of the Lord’s greatness (v.3).

God’s faithfulness is expressed in the metaphor: “The Rock” (32:4,15,18,30-31), implying strength and justice (v.4) and as a father “who created you” (v.6), which is given in contrast to Israel: “they are no longer his children” (v.5), “a perverse and crooked generation” (v.5).¹⁹⁶ The rhetorical question in v.6, makes Israel face up to her apostasy: “Do you thus requite the Lord?” and the answer is to be found in her collective memory. In order to protect the collective memory of God’s saving acts with Israel, the Song commands Israel to remember “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations” (32:7). The almighty saving power and strength of the one God who delivered Israel from slavery is expressed in “The Rock of his salvation” (32:4,15,18,30). The special election of Israel as a chosen people is echoed in “For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage” (32:9 cf.7:6) and the providential care of God and the time of testing in the wilderness is expressed in the loving care of a parent, in the imagery of an eagle caring for its young: “he kept him as the apple of his eye” (32:10-12). These pacifying memories serve to unite the people in a glorious remembrance of the past in which the love and care of God should give confidence and faith in the actions of the future, if they walk in the ways of God.

The people’s self-satisfied rejection of God beginning in 32:15 leads them to be forgetful of “the God who gave you birth” (v.18). As a result, “the Lord saw it and spurned them” (v.19), he is provoked into forceful actions, leading to natural disasters, hunger, pestilence and war (vv.19-25), which echo the curses in 28:20-22,25,48. The wisdom of God as the “rock” is demonstrated in his control of the punitive action (v.26) for the sake of his name (v.27) and is contrasted with the foolishness of Israel who lack counsel, understanding and wisdom (vv.28-29) and who take refuge in false gods, ridiculed by the name “the rock in which they took refuge” (v.37,38). By recalling the dangerous memories of Israel’s failure to walk in God’s ways, the Song helps the lessons of the past to be used to shape the future for the better.

The rhetorical question spoken by God (v.34) marks a change in Israel’s fortunes as the compassion of God now prevails (v.36) and God’s self-revelation: “See now that I, even I, am

¹⁹⁶ Anthony J. Culp, *Memoirs of Moses: The Literary Creation of Covenantal Memory in Deuteronomy* (London: Lexington Books, 2020), 219.

he, and there is no God beside me” (v.39) builds to a proclamation of his eternal power to save (vv.39-42). The song closes with a call for the nations to praise the Lord as he has restored the covenant relationship (v.43). The characterisation of God as all powerful and merciful in his justice gives hope for the future as Israel can turn around and learn from her mistakes, while trusting in the faithfulness of God.

The song gives a poetic account of the remembered events of Israel’s relationship with God (vv.6-27) and its presentation as poetry and song makes it easy to recite and teach to future generations for the purpose of preserving the memory of Israel's identity and unity as the chosen people of God. Just as the Torah will be recited every seven years, so the song will also function through frequent recitation (cf.31:19,21) as a memorial of the covenant relationship upon which the laws are founded.

The narrator’s voice indicates that the song is complete by reporting that Moses spoke with Joshua to all the people (v.44) and then he quotes Moses’ exhortation in direct speech: “lay to heart all the words” (v.46) and “command them to your children” because obedience to the law “is your life and thereby you shall live long in the land” (v.47). The connection between keeping the Torah and life in the land is emphasised in “which *you* are going over to possess” (v.47). The use of the second person here instead of ‘we’ indicates that Moses’ death is imminent and the narrator follows immediately with the Lord’s instructions to Moses: “that very day” to ascend the mountain “which is in the land of Moab” (v.49), and to view the land of Canaan “which I give to the people”. Moses therefore does not cross over into the promised land: “because you broke faith with me...because you did not revere me as holy” (v.51). By adding the explanation of Moses' death before entering the land, in the direct speech of God, the narrator seems to present Moses as an example and as a warning so that Israel will faithfully: “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (cf.6:5).

3.4.3 Summary

In this third speech of Moses, the exhortation has focused on persuading the imagined community of Israel to renew the second covenant with the Lord God in Moab. Moses has used the pacifying memories of the signs and wonders in Egypt, the divine care in the wilderness and the successes in the Transjordan to give encouragement and assurance to the people so that

they will continue to trust in the mighty power and justice of God and therefore give their acceptance to the terms of the covenant. Moses has positioned himself with the people in the recollection of these experiences: “you know how *we* dwelt in the land of Egypt and how *we* came through the midst of the nations” (29:16), to not only unite the generations but also to give assurance that the people were being righteous in these examples and so they should have confidence to continue walking in the ways of God. Thus, Moses has given the people the knowledge to trust in God and to enter into the second covenant in Moab. The covenant exhortation of chapters 29 and 30 focuses primarily on the words of Moses, rather than the peoples’ words of acceptance and obedience in 29:29, which are placed in the centre of Moses’ exhortation and not directly introduced, which possibly suggests that the words are a thought or prayer. This may be explained by the fact that the narrator wants to keep the dramatic question of whether Israel will cross over into the land to the very end of the narrative. The narrator’s purpose for Deuteronomy, to give all the teaching of the Torah for life in the land, requires that the question of whether Moses’ words and teaching have been effective will be revealed as the conclusion to the story.

In preparation for the future in the land, Moses has written the Torah so that it may be read aloud, to teach all the people at the Feast of Booths (31:10-11) and to maintain the collective memory for the unity of successive generations. The recitation of the Song (32:1-43) will also act as a memorial for the saving acts of God and also the rebellious character of Israel. Thus, the Song acts as a witness against Israel if she fails to obey all the commandments. With the written and oral means of preserving all the teaching and collective memory which Moses has given, Israel is now ready to proceed into the land, without Moses to guide them, as he obeys the command of God to “ascend this mountain...and be gathered to your people” (32:50).

3.5 The Fourth Speech of Moses: This is the blessing (33:1-34:12)

The final speech of Moses is structured into two narrative units. 1) The blessings of Moses on all the people (33:1-29). 2) The death of Moses and Joshua leads the people according to the commands of God (34:1-12).

3.5.1 The blessings of Moses on all the people (33:1-29)

As the imagined political community of Israel has been constructed and all the teaching of Moses has been given to sustain the people’s sovereign role in the land, the final words from

Moses are of blessing that the unity of the imagined community will be established in the hearts of all the people: “all the tribes of Israel together” (33:5).

As a sign that Moses is about to part from the “*children* of Israel” (33:1) Moses gives his blessings to all the tribes which reflects his many years as the *father* of the nation. The narrator’s direct description of “Moses the man of God” (v.1) seems to suggest a shift to a more positive portrayal of the character who has only been outlined indirectly by his discourse with God and the people (3:23-26; 9:24) but which accords with the encouragement contained in his blessings on the people.

In the light of the imminent death of Moses, the blessings in 33:2-29 serve to turn attention to the immediate future, to a life without Moses, serving as a word of encouragement and an anticipation of the victories that would soon be won as the Israelites begin their conquest of the promised land.¹⁹⁷ The blessings on the tribes (vv.6-25) are framed by two poems (vv.1-5) and (vv.26-29), which celebrate the uniqueness of the Lord’s power as guide, king and protector of Israel as his chosen people.¹⁹⁸

Moses describes God in a metaphor of the sun: “dawned” and “shone forth” (v.2) in the theophany at Sinai, revealing the glory and transcendent power of God as he comes with thousands of “holy ones” and “with flaming fire” (v.2). The status of the people is “loved” in the covenant relationship and “in his hand” (v.3), to justify the Lord’s actions on their behalf and to assure them of his protection. It is the sovereignty of God that gives efficacy to the promised blessings about to be articulated to the tribes.¹⁹⁹ The covenantal relationship is one of committed love from the Lord and reciprocal obedience from Israel (v.3). In the theophany at Sinai (vv.2-3), and through the gift of the Torah: “as a possession for the assembly of Jacob” (v.4), the Lord’s sovereignty is established *in the hearts* of Israel. This is expressed in the narrative as: “The Lord became king *in Jeshurun*” (v.5) and by using the affectionate term for Israel: “Jeshurun” (v.5), God reinforces his love for the people (v.3). Thus, the covenant relationship is established in the hearts of all the people: “all the tribes of Israel together” (v.5).

¹⁹⁷ Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 348.

¹⁹⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 467.

¹⁹⁹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of the Holy Scripture* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1994), 504.

The individual names of the tribes are now introduced by the narrator (vv.6-24), possibly to draw attention to the personal nature of the blessings which seem linked to the attributes of each brother leader. Particular attention is given to Joseph with blessings on the fruits of his land: “prince among his brothers” (v.16), and Levi who is guardian of the covenant (v.9) and teacher of the Torah (v.10). As the blessings reflect the attributes of the tribes so Moses’ role as a father figure who knows the skills of his children is enhanced to give assurance, praise and confidence to the people on the edge of the promised land.

Finally, Moses presents God to the people again but now as a warrior God: “who rides through the heavens to your help” (v.26), whose protection allows Israel to live in a land that is secure, bearing fruit richly where “his heavens drop down dew” (v.28: cf.7:13; 11:10-12). Israel is “saved by the Lord” and she need not fear her enemies as the Lord is “shield of your help” and “sword of your triumph” (v.29) so her success is sure “you shall tread upon their high places” (v.29).²⁰⁰ Under the blessing and providential care of the Lord, the divine Warrior, with the written Torah and Song (31:9,19), the people are now ready to cross over into the land.

3.5.2 The death of Moses and Joshua leads the people according to the commands of God (34:1-12)

The final words of Moses have been of blessing and encouragement in accordance with his mandate from God (1:3) and in faithfulness and complete obedience to God, Moses climbs Mount Nebo (34:1). The narrator describes all the land in view, in an expansive list which envisions the greatness of God’s gift to the fathers and their descendants (v.4). The Lord is quoted in direct speech to enhance the effect of his closeness to Moses which is reflected in the motif of seeing with your own eyes in (v.4). In showing the land to Moses, God assures him that he is fulfilling his promise to the patriarchs but “you shall not go over there” (v.4) creates great pathos over the death of Moses. As “the servant of the Lord” in his death, Moses was faithful: “according to the word of the Lord” (v.5), and “he buried him in the valley...” (v.6) seems to show that God himself buried Moses, which suggests the prohibition against entering the land had not separated him from God’s presence. Indeed, the mention of Moses’ great age

²⁰⁰ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 646.

and good health: “his eye was not dim” (v.7) suggests that Moses died by order of divine will alone (v.5) and so he was faithful to the end.

The narrator repeats that Moses died in the land of Moab (vv.5,6), adding extra geographical details in v.6 to draw the reader's attention to the fate of Israel in Moab, who are on the edge of the land. The pathos in the description of Moses’ death and the people’s mourning for 30 days: “in the plains of Moab” (v.8), is used by the narrator as a powerful painful memory of the consequences of disobedience and as a reminder of the decision to be made that day. The events of one day which the narrator has presented in the whole book of Deuteronomy is mirrored now in the 30 days of mourning which is presented in just one verse 34:8 and echoes back to 2:14 where 38 years was presented in one verse of the book to frame the importance of *the one day of the narrative* in which Israel is to make a decision for obedience which will last them the rest of their lives in the land. The narrator indicates that the narrated moment of decision has arrived for Israel with the words “then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses *were ended*” (v.8).

And so, the narrator now turns to Joshua, the worthy successor to Moses: “for Moses had laid his hands on him” (v.9), whom the people *obeyed* and “*did* as the Lord had commanded Moses” (v.9). The act of communication from the start of the narrative when Moses had spoken to the people, is complete: “according to everything that the Lord had commanded him” (1:3). The narrator gives Moses a fitting epitaph for one “whom the Lord knew face to face” reminding us of the Horeb theophany. The “signs and wonders” (v.11) in Egypt and the “great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel” (v.12) which are usually attributed to God (cf.4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 26:8; 29:3), are now attributed to Moses as there has been “none like him” in his role as mediator for God in Israel. “And there has not arisen a prophet *since* in Israel like Moses” (v.10) draws the reader back to their present time with the signs and wonders, the great and terrible deeds in Egypt, recalled to mind at the very end of this book. The collective memory lives on to the present day of all readers, thus proving a very powerful means of creating and preserving the identity of a nation.

3.5.3 Summary

The blessings of Moses on the “children of Israel” (v.1) gathers together all the tribes of Israel as one people, emphasising their unity and their relationship with God. The remembered

freedom giving actions of God give assurance and encouragement for the new life in the land. And so, Moses the leader and teacher of Israel dies in accordance with the word of God. The new generation of Israelites with a new leader, Joshua, are shown to be ready for the promised life of peace and justice in the land.

3.6 Summary

In this conclusion I summarise the use of memory in the narrative to construct the imagined political community and the sovereign role of the people in the land

The first speech 1:1-4:43 sets the scene and the purpose of the narrative to shape the people into the imagined political community of ‘All Israel’ and to serve as a warning about the consequences of choosing a pathway of failure or success, to guide their decision on the last day of Moses’ life. The exposition reveals the context of the narrative in which the first generation of Israelites who were delivered from Egyptian slavery have been excluded from entry into the land, because of their refusal and incapacity to possess the land: “not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land which I swore to give to your fathers” (1:20-35). The whole rebellious group was thus excluded (2:16). The narrator thus creates the narrative setting in which Moses is now an old man who has arrived in the plains of Moab *with the second generation* who have proved themselves obedient to the word of God (1:4) but who have not experienced the foundational events of Israel’s past, as they stand on the edge of the land. The purpose of the narrative is to expound the foundation of Israel’s relationship with God for those who “have not known or seen it” (11:2), both in the narrative present and in the future. In so doing, the character of Moses will unite and shape the identity of all Israel spanning many generations, to construct an imagined political community.

The literary tension of the book plays out between the emphasis on the narrative setting at the border of the promised land and the performative force by which it projects Moses' message into the “here” and “now” of “you” listeners and readers. The almost omnipresent use of the second person pronoun “you” in the direct speech of Moses, appears to address each and every character in the narrative simultaneously and encourages the reader of the book to feel that they are being directly addressed too. Culp affirms this unifying rhetorical device in (4:10-13,35,36) “Knowing that the “you” in view did not experience these things, it seems clear that Moses is intentionally blurring the generational gap. The current audience did not actually encounter the Lord God at Horeb, but Moses wants them to feel as if they did and to identify themselves with

it.”²⁰¹ The frequent use of the word “today” has a similar function in bridging the gap between the distant narrated past of Horeb, Moab and the present of the reader of the book. Millar also argues that Moses repeatedly uses “today” in order to drive home the reality of the decision now facing Israel. The setting of the book is in the plain of Moab but Millar argues that “today” occurs in such a way as to “harness the past, present and future in all manner of places to the decision faced by Israel today at Moab.” Thus the “today” of Moab becomes the “today” of the present, always challenging its audience in their present.²⁰²

The narrator also uses this device to break the narrative flow and situate the setting in the readers present with his use of “to this day” (2:22; 3:14; 34:6). The purpose of these rhetorical devices is to conflate the generations by narrating the narrative memory as if it was experienced by every audience of the book. This conflation of generations is found in Moses’ inclusive use of ‘we/us’ “The Lord God said to *us in Horeb*” (1:6) and “*we went over the brook Zered*” (2:13). It is clear that Moses intends to unite the generations into one nation, through the inculcation of one collective memory of the foundational events in Israel’s past. The performative force of Moses’ retelling of these past events, allows the narrative audience and the reader to feel as though they are actually witnessing the events for themselves and so the imagined community is constructed on the basis of a shared collective memory.

By conflating the generations in the narration of the dangerous memory of Kadesh Barnea and the pacifying memory of success in the Transjordan, the narrator indicates the great importance of both memories for the construction of the imagined political community. Both memories act as guidance for the future about the consequences of rebellion or faithful trust in the Lord for a pathway of failure or success.

The narrator uses the second speech of Moses (4:44-28:69) to present a rhetorical exhortation to obedience of the covenant obligations through the remembered accounts of the pacifying and dangerous memories of the foundational events, over the past 40 years. The characteristics of the almighty power and authority of God are revealed in the pacifying memories of the theophany of Horeb and the divine deliverance from Egypt to expound the foundation of the laws for the exhortation to obedience which will follow. The repeated use of the phrase: “mighty hand and outstretched arm” and “the Lord God who redeemed you from the house of

²⁰¹ Culp, *Memoirs of Moses*, 52.

²⁰² McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, 43.

bondage” (7:8,19) serves to emphasize the mighty power and sovereignty of Almighty God who delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery. The command to remember this foundational event entails a response motivated by the evidence of past events which the word “therefore” indicates in “Know *therefore* that the Lord your God is God” (7:9) and “you shall *therefore* be careful to do the commandment, the statutes and ordinances which I command you this day” (7:11). According to Miller as chapters 1–3 have linked Kadesh and Moab, so 4:9-43 links Moab and Horeb: “to relate the theophany at Horeb to the Mosaic preaching of the Torah at Moab to conflate the forty years between Horeb and Moab into one moment, the narrated present, in which Israel again encounters its Covenant Lord.”²⁰³

The pacifying memories also reveal the character of God as merciful, faithful and just as Moses commands Israel to “remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness” (8:2), with care and provision for life. And the divine justice and care includes all people without exception: “He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner” (10:18). Thus, Israel is urged to emulate the ethical characteristics of God in her dealings with others and to remember the dangerous memory of her own oppression as a strong motivation for righteous action in the future (10:19). The narrator provides further strong motivation for obedience by including the dangerous memory of the molten calf in the narrative of the wilderness wanderings. By taking all the words of Moses to heart (6:6), and reflecting on the contrast between the attributes of father and rebellious child (8:5), Israel will learn the lessons for the future and be motivated to respond with gratitude to God and love for her neighbour.

Israel is exhorted frequently, to remember and not forget the foundational events, as the memories become not only the motivation for unity and faithfulness to God and the covenant relationship but also the justification for the concerns of the laws. The purpose of the laws in 12:1-14:21, is to preserve the vertical dimension of the Covenant relationship so that Israel, as one people, will worship and be faithful to the Lord God alone and obey all his commandments and stipulations of the Torah (6:6). This is realised through ritual prescriptions on eating and cleanliness and the avoidance of temptations to idolatry (12:2-25). And because Israel worships one God, she must imitate God’s mercy and care towards her fellow brothers in the social and moral concerns of the laws in 14:22–25:16. Moses expounds the horizontal dimension of the covenant relationship based on the nature of God (8:3-4; 8:14), the justice of God (10:18) and

²⁰³ McConville and Millar, *Time and Place*, 36.

the dangerous memory of Israel's own remembered experience of slavery in Egypt (15:15, 16:12, 24:18-22). The justice and mercy of God demand that Israel should feel empathy for the oppressed, as she was a slave and a stranger, which forms the justification for the ethical concerns of the laws, both in a social setting and in judicial matters where provision is made for disadvantaged and marginalised members of the community. The social concerns of the laws and cultic celebrations (14:22 – 16:17) will further promote unity among the people through care for all its members and will serve to preserve the memory of the providential care of the Lord for his chosen people.

The call to “lay up these words of mine in your heart” (11:18 cf.5:33) as the commandments are expounded by Moses, suggests an internalisation of the ethical dimension to the laws, in order that concern for all members of a community, including an empathy with the poor and marginalised should become a way of life, motivating every action for individuals and for nations in any setting or time. Justice and mercy are the guiding principles of the laws based on the supreme authority of God, which cover all areas of life, emphasising basic human rights in 24:10-22 and built upon the ethic of generosity to the poor based upon the memory of a lack of all human rights (24:18,22).

The role of public offices and leadership is also to reflect the ethical dimension of the laws in the practise of justice and only justice. The election of judges and officers by the people, “You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns” (16:18), encourages accountability through elected representatives at a local level and “righteous judgement” (16:18) is the main requirement of the officers which will institute a civic duty to protect the poor. The role of the king (17:14-20) is also subject to covenant commands in his use of public power. The king will be instructed through a daily reading of the Torah: “that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren and that he may not turn aside from the commandment” (17:20). The repeated use of the phrase “brethren” (17:15,20) indicates that the king is neither above the law, nor above his fellow Israelites, but a brother, who is subject to the law. The implication of this provision is that the monarchy is never autonomous, it is subordinate to the Torah and the regulations of God.

The remembrance of the collective memory for the continuity of the imagined political community is established through teaching and regular liturgies and commemorative festivals. The emphasis on teaching the next generation is repeated throughout Moses' exhortation and focus is given to the pacifying memory of divine deliverance and the dangerous memory of

slavery in Egypt (6:20-25) as the foundation for the authority of the laws and the moral dimension of the laws. The commemorative acts in the liturgical celebrations remind and teach the collective memory to future generations and thereby sustain the collective memory and the unity of the people. The stipulation to keep the Sabbath holy acts to both motivate care for all members of the community who must rest on the Sabbath day and to preserve the memory of deliverance from slavery (5:15). Similarly, the commemoration of the Passover (16:1-6) re-enacts the pacifying and dangerous memories of deliverance from Egyptian slavery while the Presentation of first fruits (26:1-11) commemorates the whole of Israel's foundation in a formal declaration of faith, which preserves the memory and teaches the next generation. In this way the liturgical actions and declarations give shape to the narrative memory and preserve the identity and unity of the imagined community for all the generations who will celebrate them.

The memory of the terrible suffering of slavery both physical and mental is most graphically used as motivation and a threat in the curses 28:27, 60, 68, at the end of Moses' exhortation to covenant obedience, to highlight in the strongest terms the seriousness of the decision to be made today. Obedience to the commandments is stressed repeatedly throughout Moses' second speech and especially during the curses where the consequences of disobedience amount to death (28:15, 45, 58).

In the second speech of Moses, memory has been used to motivate faithfulness to God and obedience to all the commandments. The memory of a life of servitude and the freedom gained by divine power gives the justification for Israel's care and provision of the disadvantaged and the poor in the community. Israel's identity and unity is also preserved through her acts of commemoration which renew and teach the collective memory to present and future generations. Israel's identity will be confirmed in the 'today' of the narrative if the people will commit to the second covenant and "do all the words of this law" (29:29).

The third speech of Moses (29:1-32:52) and his final exhortation to covenant faithfulness draws on all the foundational memories through which Israel may know the one God so that "he may establish you this day as his people, and that he may be your God" (29:13). Just as the collective memory and the laws are addressed to the narrative and implied audiences, so the second covenant is explicitly to include future generations: "Nor is it with you only that I make this sworn covenant, but with him who is not here with us this day" (29:14-15).

Moses remembers and retells the now established pacifying memories (29:2-3,5-6, 7-8), to give confidence and assurance to the people as the narrative approaches the renewal of the covenant at Moab. The unity of the people is signaled by the positioning of Moses with the people as a witness to the 40 years in the wilderness: “*I have led you forty years in the wilderness*” (29:5) and the memory of the victories in the Transjordan are remembered to show the power of faith and obedience in the Lord and to give hope for the future. Moses has written the Torah so that it may be read aloud to all the people at the Feast of Booths (31:10-11), to teach and maintain the collective memory for successive generations. The recitation of the Song (32:1-43) will also keep alive the memory of the character of God who is revealed in his saving acts and also the rebellious character of Israel which reveals the mercy of God. Through the use of oral and written traditions and the re-enactment of the narrative memory in liturgical commemorations, Israel’s imagined community is set to continue for successive generations.

In the final speech of Moses (33:1-34:12), the narrator brings the narrative to a close with the death of Moses, but his teaching will continue for future generations in the commemorations and oral and written traditions which he has established. The narrative structure of Deuteronomy has used memory in order to strengthen Israel’s relationship with God and then with each other through the ethical laws and commemorative practises. Israel has been formed as a nation through her memory of a common past which motivates her common responsibility and obedience to the laws, through which she is sustained as a nation.

The narrator’s use of time in the narrative has created the effect of bringing the remembered events of the past to bear on the narrated present and in a sense, the past is brought into the present understanding for the purpose of affecting a change in the future. The speeches of Moses have purposefully been directed not only at the narrative audience but also to every reader of the book in any century so that the message of unity and equality may be relevant in any age.

The collective memory of Israel’s foundational events includes memories of injustice and oppression for the purpose of affecting a change in the present and future, through just and equal treatment through the law. The deliverance from Egypt is a message of freedom for Israel to live in equality with one another, which gives the reason and justification for the ethical dimensions of the laws. The moral laws outline basic human rights and as such, they have a validity across the centuries, and can be used as a measure of a society in the way it treats the weakest members of their community. Similarly, the shared memory of the past can only lead

to unity of the people if all the memories of the people are included. This is realised in the commemorative practises which must remember the pacifying and dangerous memories in oral, written and acted traditions. Thus, the freedom gained must be realised in justice, equality and freedom to live and prosper, for all in the land.

The following chapter will use a rhetorical analysis of the specific use of pacifying and dangerous memories in Deuteronomy to persuade the narrative and implied audiences to identify with one collective memory of liberation which will supply the foundational roots of the imagined political community. This chapter will also examine how the collective memory establishes the divine authority of the laws which shape the framework of liberty instituted in the laws of the land. We will show how the dangerous memory specifically motivates the remembered liberationist categories of justice, equality and freedom which are to be lived out between all the people.

Chapter 4 The role of memory in nation-building in Deuteronomy

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the rhetorical argumentation of Moses uses the pacifying and dangerous memories of Egypt to appeal to the audience in order for them to make a decision to obey the covenant commandments. If the appeals of Moses are successful, he will have constructed the nation as a people who are ready to live their sovereign role in the land.

The definition given by Timothy Lenchak, *Choose Life, A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Deuteronomy 28:69-30:20*, on argumentation is especially useful for this work. He states:

It (argumentation) is a process which aims to elicit or increase the adherence of an audience to the conclusions offered by the speaker or writer. In this process the audience must not only be persuaded to accept certain ideas or theses, but it must also be dissuaded from other convictions as well.²⁰⁴

Lenchak emphasises the importance of the audience in the communication act, for they must make a judgement about whether to accept the argument or claim. Therefore, the aims of the speaker whose argumentation is based on the memory of liberation should be to persuade rather than to coerce the audience to agreement. According to Lenchak, in classical rhetoric the speaker must therefore begin the discourse with premises which are acceptable to the audience.²⁰⁵ In Deuteronomy these might include the narrated recollection of ‘facts’ concerning the experience of slavery in Egypt and the deliverance from slavery by the actions of God. Secondly the premises of the argument might suggest the preferable values of blessings which will achieve a good life in the land in contrast with disobedience which leads to the loss of the good land.²⁰⁶ The argument must then attempt to persuade the audience to connect the accepted premises with the preferable values which are to be achieved.

The mode of persuasion in the argument is classically based on the logical, emotional and ethical arguments within the texts. The three traditional modes of argumentation as identified

²⁰⁴ Lenchak, *Choose Life*, 57.

²⁰⁵ Lenchak, 119-121.

²⁰⁶ Lenchak, 119-121.

by Aristotle²⁰⁷ are logos which is associated with logical or rational argumentation, and pathos and ethos which are associated with emotions to create persuasive argumentation.

Logos is rational argumentation which uses the processes of association and dissociation to persuade the audience to accept the speaker's point of view.²⁰⁸ For example a rational argument would suggest that disobedience to the covenant laws results in punishment and conversely obedience brings rewards in the form of a good life in the land.

The second mode of argumentation uses pathos to appeal to an emotional response in the audience. One major technique for producing an emotional response is what Lenchak terms "concreteness or presence."²⁰⁹ In this case the speaker appeals to the imagination of the audience with vivid descriptions of the event so that the audience may 'see' or 'hear' the action and feel connected with it. In terms of new rhetoric Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca use the term "presence" to describe the emotional connection an audience may feel with the vividly described events: "Such presence acts directly on our sensibility, for what is foremost in our minds tends to become important to us, at least for the moment."²¹⁰

There are several techniques for focusing the emotional response of the audience on a particular situation and these include the use of repetition, amplification and accentuation which may involve the continual use of the second person pronoun to directly address the audience. In a similar way the use of the imperative makes a direct appeal to the audience who must respond positively or negatively to the command.

The third mode of argumentation is ethos which relates to the credibility of the speaker from the viewpoint of the audience. Ethos is therefore used to persuade an audience, as the authority of the speaker convinces the audience of the reliability of his argument. Lenchak explains that new rhetoric understands the concept of ethos as "a complex of relationships."²¹¹ Every speaker must establish a relationship with the audience, an attitude towards the subject matter and a sense of the character of the speaker. In this way the speaker establishes a connection with the

²⁰⁷ George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 15-16.

²⁰⁸ Lenchak, *Choose Life*, 168.

²⁰⁹ Lenchak, 129.

²¹⁰ Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca quoted in Timothy Lenchak, *Choose Life: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Deuteronomy 28:69-30:20* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 129.

²¹¹ Lenchak, *Choose Life*, 59.

audience which should reduce the chance of opposition from the listener and improve the chance of persuading the audience to accept the speaker's argument. The ethos of the argument is to be found in the words of Moses who received the divine mandate to teach in the remembered account of the Theophany at Horeb. Thus, when Moses issues a command to obey the covenant stipulations, his words have authority as they derive from the authority of God's command to teach.

It is Lenchak's emphasis on the importance of the audience in the process of argumentation which is useful for the tripolar approach of this work on the liberation memory. A tripolar analysis brings the text and context into dialogue with the ideo-theological orientation of the reader. Thus, the perspective of the reader or audience gains importance in the rhetorical interpretation. Taking into account the perspective of the audience means that any given text is open to a variety of interpretations that reflect the ideology of the reader. This is what Dennis T Olson, *Literary and Rhetorical Criticism*, refers to as the "deconstructionist method" for reading a text.²¹²

The deconstructionist orientation for reading a text involves highlighting "those details of the text which promote meanings and commitments that are in fundamental conflict with meanings and commitments that may appear at the surface of the text."²¹³ In using a tripolar approach Gerald West refers to this as the tension between having an 'accountability' to the context/audience and a 'responsibility' to the detail of the text.²¹⁴ Thus a text is open to a variety of interpretations in the "back and forth" movement between text and context.²¹⁵ The extent to which the audience is persuaded by the text will be in tension with the freedom of the audience to resist the message of the text if it conflicts with their own experiences and knowledge. Thus, a deconstructive reading of the rhetoric of Mugabe will be of particular use in this analysis of the use of pacifying and dangerous memories of liberation.

Olson also points out the potential dangers of a deconstructionist interpretation in that authoritative texts may be used by the powerful to silence or oppress the less powerful, using the claim of privileged knowledge of the one true meaning of a text. This work takes a

²¹² Olson, *Literary and Rhetorical Criticism*, 19.

²¹³ Olson, 20.

²¹⁴ Gerald O. West, "Do two Walk together? Walking with the Other through Contextual Bible Study," *Anglican Theological Review* 93, no.3 (2011): 431–449; West, "Interpreting 'The Exile' in African Biblical Scholarship: An Ideo-Theological Dilemma in Post-Colonial South Africa," 247–267.

²¹⁵ Draper, "African Contextual Hermeneutics," 9.

liberationist perspective as well as my ideo-theological orientation to “hear the challenging voice of the other”²¹⁶ in authoritative texts such as the Bible. Therefore, a deconstructionist reading of the text will be most appropriate for the purposes of this work.

In this chapter I will begin with an outline of the narrative context of the different yet complementary uses of the pacifying memory of divine deliverance and the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt. I will argue that the pacifying memory of divine deliverance is used to motivate the acceptance of the divine authority of God and the ethical values found in the characteristics of God. The dangerous memory of slavery supports this argument by motivating an ethical response to the suffering of others through remembrance of a personal experience of oppression. This ethical response is shaped by the example of God and by obedience to all the laws of the Torah.

The use of both the dangerous and pacifying memories is especially important for this work as it relates to the contrast between nation-building in Deuteronomy and post-colonial Zimbabwe. The rhetorical approach is also suited to the comparative analysis in chapter 6 based on the speeches of Mugabe and Moses in the construction of the imagined communities. Therefore, for the purposes of this work I intend to offer a rhetorical deconstructionist analysis of 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 which both contain the pacifying and dangerous memories of Egypt as the means of motivation for obedience to the covenant stipulations. I will use the divisions recognised by classical rhetoric for the arrangement of the discourse a) the introduction; b) the thesis or statement of fact; c) the rationale; d) the confirmation of rationale; e) the conclusion.²¹⁷ I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the results of the rhetorical analysis of (5:12-15) and (24:18,22) and give a final summary.

4.2 The narrative context of the rhetorical use of the pacifying and dangerous memories of Egypt in (5:12-15) and (24:18,22)

It is important to understand the narrative context of the units chosen for rhetorical analysis in 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 to recognise that the use of the pacifying memory of divine deliverance and the dangerous memory of slavery serve different yet complimentary rhetorical purposes. I will argue that both memories draw the listener’s attention towards God and his divine action

²¹⁶ Olson, *Literary and Rhetorical Criticism*, 20.

²¹⁷ Martin J. Oosthuizen, “Deuteronomy 15:1-18 in Socio Rhetorical Perspective,” *Journal for Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Law* 3 (1997): 65-90.

in the lives of the people. But the predominance of the pacifying memory in the exhortation before the law code, indicates its importance for establishing the authority and justice of God in his action of defeating Pharaoh and in giving freedom to the people. The authority of God will be mediated through the ethical laws and motivation for obedience will rest on the appeal to the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt.

The use of the dangerous memory of slavery appears most frequently in the law code to appeal by pathos for feelings of empathy based on identification with the suffering in Egypt. Such empathy should motivate ethical action in the present by following the freedom giving action of God.

The literary narrative analysis in chapter 3 has highlighted the rhetorical force of Moses' first speech in which he tells all the memories of the past, in order to persuade the second generation of the unity of their imagined community across the generations. The successes of the second generation (2:34-3:11) and failures of the first generation of Israelites (1:19-46) have been linked to obedience and disobedience of the commands of God. Therefore, the collective memory of events across the generations shows that the authority of God is known to all Israel.

In the second speech of Moses, the pacifying memory of divine deliverance has been predominantly used to motivate faithfulness to God through knowledge of the characteristics of God. The pacifying memory of divine deliverance has been repeated to emphasise the almighty power and authority of God who has freed all the people: "with a mighty hand and outstretched arm" (4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 11:2-4). This appeal uses both the pathos and logos of 'seeing' these actions, the "signs and wonders" (4:34; 7:19; 11:3) so that the people will accept and have faith in the divine authority of God.

In this framework of exhortation before the law code, the memory of divine deliverance has been the main focus of the persuasive rhetoric of Moses, with very little reference to the memory of oppression. The importance of establishing the authority of God who has freed all the people will translate into obedience to the ethical laws which are founded on the characteristics of God. The authority of the words of Moses is also established following the divine mandate to teach after the Theophany at Horeb. Thus, the persuasive force of Moses' teaching will be strengthened by the ethos of the mediated authority of God.

It is in the exposition of the law code that the use of the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt becomes more frequent in the persuasive rhetoric. In the laws which express care for the poor in the imagined community (15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22), the rhetorical appeal uses the pathos of

the memory of slavery to empower action for change in the present, in solidarity with the suffering of others. In conjunction with the pacifying memory of the ethical freedom given by God, the dangerous memory inspires an ethical response to present situations of oppression. The laws address the situation of poverty amongst the people and the pacifying and dangerous memories motivate an attempt to change the situation for the better, in line with the emancipatory example of God.

The intergenerational unity of Israel indicates that their shared foundational memory of divine deliverance from Egyptian slavery has given freedom to all the community without exclusions. Furthermore, the freedom gained brings a responsibility upon the people to establish a sovereign role for the community where every member can live and prosper. The new imagined community will be formed and united by obedience to the Torah which preserves an egalitarian way of life for all the people. The divine deliverance has abolished the domination and exploitation of Egypt and instead offered a system of justice and equality and accountability for all, especially the poor and marginalised, through obeying the Torah.²¹⁸ It is the call to remember the dangerous memory of oppression that motivates and persuades the audience to realise the categories of freedom in the land, based on the pacifying memory of the authority of God which is mediated through ethical laws.

The units chosen for rhetorical analysis are 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 as they appear in the text, at the start and conclusion of Moses' second speech. The fourth commandment concerning the Sabbath observance is the first call to remember the pacifying and dangerous memories of Egypt and 24:22 is the final call to remember before the ratification of the covenant. The frequency of the call to remember the liberation memory (5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22) builds up the persuasive force of the parenthesis as the narrative draws closer to the ratification of the covenant in chapter 29 and the moment of decision for the people. Deuteronomy 24:10-22 occurs in the text at the closest point to the moment of decision for the people and it uniquely repeats the call to remember the dangerous memory of oppression in Egypt. Chapter 5:15 is part of the exhortation which frames the laws so it contains both the memories of divine deliverance and of slavery to persuade Israel to trust God and to obey the ethical laws. The stipulations in both units emphasize the emancipatory ethics of the laws through remembering

²¹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Fortress, 1980), 16-17.

the authority and justice of God and the experience of slavery in Egypt as motivation for the just use of power and the affirmation of the intrinsic value of every individual.

The narrative context of 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 shows that prior to the laws the authority and ethical characteristics of God were established through the recounted pacifying memory of the actions of God in defeating the might of Egypt and in freeing all the people. The occurrence of the dangerous memory of slavery in the law code suggests its motivational force for inspiring ethical action to help the poor and oppressed through obedience to the laws. Having established the narrative context, I will in the following section offer a rhetorical deconstructionist analysis of 5:12-15 and 24:18,22.

4.3 A rhetorical deconstructive analysis of Deuteronomy 5:12-15

4.3.1 The narrative context of 5:12-15

The rhetorical unit 5:12-15 appears within the context of 4:44-5:33 which asserts the contemporary relevance of the Covenant for all generations (5:1-5), expounds the teaching of the decalogue (5:6-21) and confirms the role of Moses as the divinely appointed mediator and teacher of the Torah (5:22-33). It is important that the authority of Moses is established so that the audience will trust the teachings that follow and will be persuaded by the force of his argument.

The exposition of the decalogue indicates that the principles of freedom are at the heart of the laws that follow. According to Braulik the ten words of God are an expression of freedom and the phrase “out of the house of bondage” (5:6) might not only refer to the particular condition of the people but to the nature of the Egyptian state as enslaving. The juxtaposition of Egypt as “the house of bondage” (5:6) and the laws given by God, shows strikingly that this law will not be enslaving because of the nature of its giver, as the deliverer from slavery. Thus, the decalogue was a law for a people already redeemed. The exposition of the laws aims to persuade the people to follow the example of God in his characteristics of justice and equality for all and to act in solidarity with the suffering of others.

The laws are addressed collectively to the people “Hear O Israel” (5:1) which is expressed in the second person “you” in each of the laws. There appears to be no distinction made between the people in this second person address in terms of social class or gender on the surface of the text. In fact, the stipulations of the Sabbath give great detail to include all members of the

household, both male and female. Thus, the Sabbath appears as a symbol of freedom by establishing the rights of all people to humane treatment from the head of the household.²¹⁹

The importance of 5:12-15 for this work is that the Sabbath rest is used to proclaim the equality and freedom of every person and the intrinsic value of every living thing before God. The command to observe the Sabbath may be read deconstructively as being directed not only at all Israel but also at those in positions of power who are urged to remember the dangerous memory of slavery and the pacifying memory of deliverance in order to mitigate against the corruption which power may bring. Thus, the principles of freedom for all the people are maintained on a regular basis.

4.3.2. Analysis of the text

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 may be divided into the following parts: a) Introduction (v.12); b) Thesis (vv.13-14); c) Rationale and Conclusion (vv.14-15).

4.3.2.1 The Introduction (v.12)

The command to observe the Sabbath day is given the authority of God himself as he commands it and it is implied in the stated purpose: “to keep it holy.” Thus, the Sabbath is kept holy by separating it from the other six days as a day of rest. The word שַׁבָּת sabbath derives from a root meaning “to cease, stop,” indicating that it was not a day for assembly but of quiet, when all work associated with everyday life must cease.²²⁰ The motivation to keep the Sabbath is indicated in the use of the conjunction כִּאֲשֶׁר “as” and supported by the ethos and logos of deductive reasoning following a command from God. Further persuasion is evoked through pathos in the direct appeal to the audience using the second person pronoun. The speech of Moses may be termed deliberative as it seeks to persuade the audience to take some action in the future which will be beneficial to them.²²¹

4.3.2.2 The thesis (vv. 13-14)

The statement of facts gives the stipulations for observance of the Sabbath. Emphasis is placed on the cessation of all work by the amplification of details for the working six days of the week. Effort and diligent practice is suggested in six days of “labour” and “all your work” כָּל-מַעֲשֶׂיךָ

²¹⁹ Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 132.

²²⁰ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 150.

²²¹ Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 19.

ועשית (v.13) but this must cease completely on the seventh day which is indicated in “you shall not do *any* work” כל-מלאכה לא תעשה (v.14). The contrasting use of the pronouns כל “all” and “any” כל-מלאכה²²² emphasises the completeness of the command to stop work so that absolutely every person and working creature would be included in the freedom to rest. The continued use of the second person addresses up to v.13 in the exposition of the Sabbath observance, suggests that the laws are to be kept by all the people. Those who must cease all work on the Sabbath are representative of all the people in the community from master to slave, family member to stranger, male and female, even the animals. A day of rest when no work is done suggests the equality of all the people which is indicated in: “that your maidservant may rest *as well as you*” (v.14). The implications of these stipulations are that the normal social distinctions of ‘haves and have nots’ are suspended on a regular basis and a new community emerges where the master and slave share a common identity²²³ and the same purpose, to keep the Sabbath holy by observing the divine principles of freedom for all

4.3.2.3 The rationale and conclusion (vv.14-15)

A surface reading of the text suggests that the reason for keeping the Sabbath day is implied in the servant and master taking equal rest from work: “your maidservant may rest *as well as you*” (v.14), so that on the Sabbath all are free men and women. God’s people will remember that they have all been freed by God and that they must also practise the freedom giving principles within the community in their everyday lives.

However, a deconstructionist reading suggests that the use of אתה the second person masculine independent pronoun, in an emphatic position and the repetition of the possessive pronoun in v.14, which is used ten times in one verse, succinctly but emphatically addresses the stipulation of the law to the head of the household: “*your* manservant, *your* ox, within *your* gate” (v.14). The final juxtaposition of כַּמֹּדֶךָ “just like *you*” in v.14 with the initial אתה “you” in v.15 suggests logically that it is the homeowner who must remember the experience of slavery and divine deliverance in order to practise the freedom giving characteristics of God: “and the Lord your God brought you out” (v.15). The sudden change from the all-inclusive use of “you” to

²²² The negative particle לֹא stands in an emphatic position. This may be translated as “you may certainly not do any work.”

²²³ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 74.

the direct address of the homeowner highlights the particular need for those in positions of power to obey those laws which act to protect the freedom of all the people.

The conclusion of v.15 “therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” forms an *inclusio* with v.12 in a reversed structure to summarise the central message of the command which is to remember the dangerous and pacifying memories of liberation. The use of עַל־כֵּן “therefore” indicates the deductive *logos* of keeping the Sabbath observances in order to preserve the memory of liberation. The final address to “you” may concern all Israel collectively but its position in continuance after v.14 may suggest a focused address to all those in positions of power to avoid the abuse of power by a regular practise of remembering their roots in slavery and their experience of divine deliverance.

4.3.2.4 Summary

A surface reading of the text might suggest that all Israel is persuaded by the pathos of the dangerous memory to empathize with the disadvantaged and to include all members of the household in the Sabbath rest. The subversive nature of the memory of slavery indicates the equality of all the people as free men and women, by removing all class distinctions in the stipulation for the Sabbath.²²⁴

But a deconstructionist reading of the text may suggest that it is the homeowner, as the only person with authority to grant rest to servants, who is encouraged to act with justice towards all the household. The stipulation acts as a curb on the unjust use of power by commanding that those in positions of power should remember the dangerous and pacifying memory of liberation. By remembering the supreme authority of God who grants freedom to all and their own remembered experience of slavery, the master of the household is motivated to preserve the justice and equality established by God. The liberation memory may even act as a curb on those who have abused their positions of power. The great importance of the liberation memory for the survival of the imagined community is suggested in a liturgical observance which aims to preserve the memory.

²²⁴ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 73-74.

4.4 A rhetorical deconstructive analysis of Deuteronomy 24:10-22

4.4.1 The narrative context of 24:10-22

The rhetorical unit 24:10-22 falls within the wider context of 24:1-25:19. These chapters give a series of statutes that are designed to protect persons from economic oppression that would keep them from securing the basic needs for life. They particularly prohibit injustice and oppression of the vulnerable and less secure members of the community, specifically the widow, orphan, sojourner and poor person. Further, these laws may be seen as an attempt to warn Israel against the excesses of power and authority, or the grasping for power which one does not have. They forbid the individual or community to exercise oppressive power over one another.²²⁵ The importance of 24:10-22 for this work is that those in power are urged to remember the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt in order to mitigate against the corruption which power may bring.

The rhetorical unit 24:10-22 contains a cluster of statutes which aim to maintain justice by obedience to the social justice of the laws through the use of memory as an emotive appeal. The speech of Moses appeals to the self-interest of the audiences in advocating a course of action which is most expedient²²⁶ in this case, obedience to the laws in order to enable an equitable life in the land. As such they may be described as deliberative discourse²²⁷ in purpose.

4.4.2 The analysis of the text

Deuteronomy 24:10-22 may be divided into the following parts: a) Introduction (v.10); b) Thesis (vv.11-12); c) Rationale (v.13); d) The Second thesis (v.14-15a); e) Rationale (v.15); f) Confirmation of Rationale (vv.16-18); g) Conclusion (vv.19-22).

4.4.2.1 The introduction (v.10)

The introduction asserts the institution of social justice between neighbours as the topic which will follow in the ensuing discourse. The use of the negative imperative phrase, לֹא-תבוא the negative particle לֹא “You shall not” will be repeated six times throughout this series of prohibitions to stir the audience to obedience through the pathos of the repetition. The negative imperative echoes the decalogue (5:6-21) which established a moral code for life in the land.

²²⁵ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 172.

²²⁶ Lenchak, *Choose Life*, 54.

²²⁷ Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 19.

Thus, the repeated use of the same phrase in the exposition of the laws indicates that the theme of moral justice is a central message in the law code. The speech can be described as deliberative as obedience to the laws is argued to be the best course of action for the future.

4.4.2.2 The thesis (v. 11)

The second person direct address would appear to indicate that all Israel is exhorted to obey these stipulations. The motivation to obey the laws is supported by the pathos of the direct address to the audience. The statement of facts indicates that the actions between a lender and a borrower must be just and compassionate so that the lender does not take advantage of the indebted person and commit an injustice. The imperative to stand outside in v.11 implies that the act of collecting the pledge is just but any further imposition on the borrower would be unjust.

4.4.2.3 The rationale (vv.12-13)

The inclusion of “the poor” (v.12) uses pathos to appeal for compliance to the stipulation and reinforces the message that every person is equal before the law. The conditional clause serves to give an example of just behaviour and the visual temporal setting of “when the sun goes down” (v.13) adds pathos to the motivation to obey.

The rationale given for obedience to this law uses the appeal by logos in order to achieve a blessing as a result of just actions towards the poor. The verse is deliberative by presenting the protasis in (v.13a) and the apodosis in (v.13b) so that the blessing is conditional upon adherence to the law. The reference to “righteousness” reflects the use of pathos to direct a personal (second person pronoun) appeal to the audience’s self-interest. The appeal by ethos to the authority of God “before the Lord your God” legitimates the proposed actions in terms of the divine will. The conclusion of the appeal is reached through the deductive reasoning that neighbours should have an inner disposition of compassion towards each other as such virtues are reflected in the characteristics of God and are therefore understood as righteous.²²⁸

4.4.2.4 The rationale (v.15)

The appeal by pathos for just remuneration rests on the vulnerability of the worker “for he is poor” and the word “heart” suggests the seriousness of the need for payment. The contextual setting is repeated with a slight change from כְּבוֹיָא “when the sun goes down” in v.13 which

²²⁸ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 479.

gave the example of just behaviour to לא־כבוא על השמש The sun shall not go down before... v.15.²²⁹ The particle על “before” the sun goes down in v.15 acts as a warning of the consequences of failing to deal justly with the poor. The prohibition is justified by the conditional clause which uses the ethos of an appeal to God and by the deductive reasoning of acting with justice to avoid the occasion of sin: “and it be sin in you.”

The deliberative speech has used pathos to persuade the audience of the advantage of a fair and compassionate attitude towards each other in situations where there might seem to be an advantage to an employer to be unjust. As there appears to be no material benefit to the employer in this stipulation, the self-interest of the employer must rest on the virtue of righteousness before God which is achieved by obeying the ethical spirit of generosity contained in the laws. The dignity of the poor and disadvantaged is affirmed in the law and unjust actions are curbed.²³⁰

4.4.2.5 Confirmation of the rationale (vv.16-18)

The syntactical arrangement of v.16 draws attention to the central argument concerning the egalitarian nature of the law. The subject and object of the verse are repeated in reverse order to highlight the principle of individual responsibility which is summarised in the last line of the verse. Each person will be judged by God according to his own faults. The central position of v.16 in the rhetorical unit indicates its significance for emphasising the personal responsibility which each must have for his own actions. This message aligns with a deconstructionist reading of these laws which understands the motivation of the laws being directed not only at all Israel but also specifically at those individuals in positions of authority.

Verse 17 serves as a summary of the message which includes all the poor and vulnerable people and links back to the ethical reasoning of vv.13,15. The initial negative command משפט גר יתום לא תטה “You shall not” (v.17) which refers to all acts of injustice against poor and vulnerable people is placed in contrast to the positive command in v.18 using the conjunction יהוה במצרים כי עבד “but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt.” The appeal to remember the dangerous memory of slavery uses the pathos of the experience of oppression to inspire empathetic feelings towards others who are also suffering oppression. By also remembering the pacifying memory “and the Lord your God redeemed you from there” obedience to the law

²²⁹ This is my personal translation of the text.

²³⁰ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 238.

is justified by the ethos of the appeal to the authority of God, whose freedom giving actions inspire a similar ethical response. Thus, the audience is motivated to act in accordance with the ethical laws when they remember both the pacifying and dangerous memories of liberation.

The close positioning in the text of the prohibition before the command to remember the liberation memory suggests by deductive logic that the memory counteracts the opportunity for injustice against the poor. The causal relationship between remembering the pacifying and dangerous memories and the avoidance of injustices is confirmed in the final command by the use of על-כן “therefore” (v.18).

A deconstructionist reading of these verses might suggest that the subject of all the prohibitions in this unit has been the person holding power, the lender, the landowner, the farmer so that he should act with justice in his dealings with those dependent on him. Therefore, the repeated call to remember both the experience of slavery in Egypt and the divine deliverance from slavery in v.18 can be argued to be addressed directly to the powerful in the community. The significance of placing the dangerous memory of slavery before the pacifying memory of deliverance may suggest the greater power of appeal by pathos to the experience of suffering, especially where the experience of power may be causing the foundational memory to be forgotten. The text may be suggesting that it is the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt that is essential for those in power to remember, to avoid the corruption which power may bring. The appeal to remember the pacifying memory of deliverance (v.18) ויפדך יהוה אלהיך “and the Lord your God redeemed you from there” appeals directly to “you” the landowner as the object of God’s gift of freedom, so that by remembering the change in personal status from slave to master, those in power are motivated to follow the example of God in exercising their power. The contrast of prohibitions and the affirmative command to remember suggests that remembering the memory of liberation is the key principle in constructing a community based on justice and equality for all the people. It is the dangerous memory of oppression which persuades those in power to act justly and generously and in solidarity with those who are vulnerable to injustice and this compassionate action constitutes righteousness before God. This memory of liberation containing both pacifying and dangerous memories acts as a very strong motivation for obedience to the law which is indicated by the logical positioning of the command to obedience following the command to remember.

4.4.2.6 Conclusion (vv.19-22)

A series of parallel prohibitions sums up the argument for just and generous dealings between members of an imagined community which must include those most in need. The use of the spatial marker כִּי “when” before each prohibition, with the use of the second person address (vv.19,20,21) imaginatively creates the scene at harvest time, using the pathos of an imagined good life in the land to motivate obedience to the stipulations.

The repeated use of the possessive pronoun “when you reap *your* harvest in *your* field” (v.19) indicates that the prohibition is directed towards the landowner so that he will leave sufficient excess produce for the poor of the community. The persuasive force of the exhortation is built up in the repetition of the triad of the poor “the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow” (vv.19,20,21) so that charitable giving is the objective of the laws rather than economic gain. However as only the gleanings are reserved for the poor it is clear that the landowner may still benefit from the harvest so as to offer support to those without access to the land. In this sense the stipulation proposes an ethical balance between market purposes and the needs of a community.²³¹ Verse 19 may be described as deliberative as the motivation for obedience to the stipulation appeals by logos to gain the blessing of the Lord on “all the work of your hands” (v.19). Thus, the blessing will result in bountiful harvests for the future.

Two further examples of opportunities for allowing the poor to glean at harvest time are given in vv.20,21 with the same repeated structure as in v.19. The repeated parallel structure of the verses has a cumulative effect on the pathos of the exhortation to stir the audience towards obedience of the laws. The persuasive force of the repeated rhetoric now builds to the strongest ethical motivation for obedience by remembering the experience of slavery in the land of Egypt, so that generous obedience to the stipulation will be established in the land. The use of עַל־כֵּן “therefore” (v.22) indicates logically that the dangerous memory is the motivation for obedience to the stipulations of the laws.

The call to remember the dangerous memory of slavery alone without the pacifying memory of deliverance as in v.18 may be to appeal to the memory of life in the land of Egypt which is now contrasted with the imagined abundance of the promised land. The addition of the phrase “in the land of...” (v.22) which was omitted in v.18 increases the pathos of this appeal to those in power to remember the experience of slavery which is now so different from their present

²³¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 364.

circumstances as a landowner or lender. The addition of “land of Egypt” (v.22) highlights the very different circumstances ‘in the land’ which those in power now enjoy but they must remember their roots in the collective memory in order to act with righteousness. It is significant that the dangerous memory of slavery is given the prominent position at the very end of this exhortation for maximum persuasive effect. As the final and ultimate appeal by pathos in this unit, the use of the dangerous memory alone indicates that personal, empathetic experience is the best motivation for just action taken in solidarity with a community where the needs of every person, without exclusion are met.

4.4.2.7 Summary

The exhortation of Moses uses both the pacifying and dangerous memories of the liberation from Egypt to motivate and persuade the people to obey the social cares of the laws in a spirit of generosity and compassion for the poor and marginalised. A deconstructive reading of the text suggests that the focus of the laws is aimed at the landowners and those who are in positions of power. The direct address to the all-inclusive “you” in 24:19 who has fields, olive groves and vineyards infers that this is a person of means who has the option to help the poor and vulnerable or to act solely for his own economic benefit. The exhortation calls on those who are privileged to remember the dangerous memory of their own experience of oppression so that they will act in solidarity with those who are now oppressed. In support of this motivation the pacifying memory of divine deliverance establishes the authority of God through the laws and inspires an ethical response to the social care for all in the community. Remembering the pacifying and dangerous memories of liberation are the key principles in constructing a community based on freedom, equality and justice.

4.5 A discussion of the use of the dangerous and pacifying memory of Egypt in Deuteronomy 5:12-15 and 24:10-22

A common feature of both units is that they both concern a relationship with God and the people’s relationships with each other.²³² Both are put in danger by the unjust use of power of one person over another. Therefore, the exhortation for obedience to the ethical laws appeals to the divine authority and characteristics of justice which are exemplified in the pacifying memory of deliverance. Remembrance of God and the divine actions of freedom orients an

²³² Edward J. Woods, *Deuteronomy. An Introduction and Commentary* (Nottingham: Inter-
Varsity Press, 2011), 125.

ethical response by the people built upon faith and trust in God. The people are further persuaded to establish an ethical way of life with each other by remembering the dangerous memory of slavery in order to act in solidarity with every member of the community.

The laws establish an ideal model for life but the authors of Deuteronomy realise that there are inequalities in communities just as there are poor and disadvantaged people. Therefore, a deconstructionist reading suggests that not only Israel as a collective is addressed in the laws but more specifically, those in privileged positions who may become forgetful of the divine authority and their roots in oppression. The stipulations in both units are rhetorically aimed at the landowner or head of the household who holds the power to cease the normal cycle of work in order to permit a day of rest or cease harvesting to leave gleanings for the poor. The stoppage of work brings the powerful and the powerless into an equality of rest on the Sabbath and an equality in the right to be fed and nourished in the land. As Brueggemann states: “The Sabbath is an act of free men and women whose freedom is ensured by God.”²³³

Obedience to these laws will promote the wellbeing of every individual, on an equal basis as a principle of freedom. Thus, the principles of freedom and equality are re-established on a regular basis in these laws. The pacifying and dangerous memories which promote freedom and egalitarian justice brings into relief the protection of the dignity of the individual. The consistent witness in the two texts and the entire law of Deuteronomy is that whether male or female, child or adult, native born or sojourner, land owner or slave, all must be treated with dignity as life is infinitely precious.²³⁴

The motivation for obedience comes from the memory of divine deliverance which marks the laws with the authority of God as the almighty giver of freedom. But most significantly here, the prominent positioning and repetition of the dangerous memory of slavery in the text, emphasises its great motivational power to persuade the leaders to act with justice. By remembering that they were once slaves and that they were freed, the householder or landowner is persuaded to follow the example of God towards the poor and disadvantaged in their communities. The ethical vision of freedom instituted in the laws gives rise to a new social community that has to devise patterns of governance, norms of right and wrong and sanctions of accountability that are discontinuous with the oppressive tendencies of Egypt, “the house of

²³³ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 73.

²³⁴ Dean S. McBride, “Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy,” *Interpretation* 41 (1987): 242-43.

bondage” (5:6). The implication of these statutes is that in a just society, it is in the interests of the community to foster unity and equality through compassionate dealings with the poor and marginalised. Therefore, in the wider context of maintaining the unity of the imagined community in the land, it is vital that the sovereign role of the people is based on the just and compassionate spirit of the laws. To this end, the pacifying and dangerous memories are a powerful means of stirring the audience towards an ethical way of life in line with the freedom given by God.

Previously in this work we have examined the definition of dangerous memory from Johann Baptist Metz which would serve as a useful reminder here. Metz states: “dangerous memories are constructed around memories of failure, pain and suffering, oppression, dehumanization, death and marginalization which are mediated through dangerous liberating stories.”²³⁵ The dangerous memory resists and protests in the present situations of the degradation of the human subject and it exerts an influence on those who remember, reminding and exhorting them to protest about what happened to them and to prevent it from happening again. It empowers action for change in the present, a solidarity with the suffering of others, a lifestyle expressive of sympathy for and identification with the victimized.²³⁶

In order to imagine a community built on justice and equality for all the members, Deuteronomy recognises that an active solidarity with the suffering of others based on the remembered experience of suffering, will motivate action for change in the present and work to eliminate future suffering. Such action in the present must be based on a moral code for life which promotes a freedom giving care for all. Thus, the pacifying memory of divine deliverance from Egyptian oppression is vital for an ethical foundation of just action in the future. It may be concluded that remembrance of the pacifying and dangerous memories for all members of the imagined community is a vital resource in the nation-building of a just and fair community.

4.6 Conclusion

The rhetorical analysis of 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 has focused on the use of memory to motivate obedience to the stipulations of the laws. The dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt has taken a prominent role in the motivational clauses either by its solitary use or by its primary position

²³⁵ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 106.

²³⁶ Metz and Moltmann, *Faith and the Future*, 11.

before the memory of deliverance. The prominent position of the dangerous memory in the text suggests the importance of its role to empower action for change in the present, in solidarity with the suffering of others. Therefore, it acts as a powerful motivator for obedience to the social cares of the laws. The pacifying memory is crucial to build an ethical foundation of the justice and compassion of God which will guide the people's response to the suffering of others.

In a deconstructionist reading, the narrative audience in 5:12-15 and 24:18,22 may be specified as the master of the household, the landowner or money lender, always a person in a position of power. Deuteronomy has warned many times of the dangers of prosperity in the land which leads to forgetfulness concerning the liberation memory (6:10-12; 8:11-18). Prosperity and abundance can lead to such a level of satisfaction with life in the land that there seems no need to remember the God who saves or the experience of slavery and oppression. In this scenario of forgetfulness, it may happen that corruption and oppression have become the way of life. Therefore, these particular laws act to preserve the pacifying and dangerous memories in the Sabbath observance. They also act to curb the tendency to put economic benefits before the care and rights of individuals. The dangerous memory inspires action which will remind those in power of their roots in oppression so that corruption of that power does not occur and the pacifying memory inspires a humane use of their authority for transformative ethics based on the values of freedom, justice, equality and solidarity with the other.

It is the teaching of the collective memory of pacifying and dangerous memories for future generations (4:9-10; 6:1-2), which indicates the future application of the God given principles of freedom and justice in the role of nation-building. Thus, comparisons can be made between ancient and present-day nation states, in the construction of a national collective memory, founded on the rights of justice, freedom and equality and the evidence of those rights in the lives of the imagined community. In order to make comparisons between the model of nation-building in Deuteronomy and the modern post-colonial state of Zimbabwe, the following chapter will give an outline of the construction of a collective memory for the unity of the imagined political community in Zimbabwe and how this memory was used in the political administration of the lives of the people, from the time of gaining independence to the present day.

Chapter 5 An analysis of the use of memory in nation-building in postcolonial Zimbabwe

5.1 Introduction

Our framework for analysis is based upon the role of memory in the construction of the imagined political community and the sovereign role of the people in the land. In the context of post-colonial Zimbabwe, it is necessary to first outline the colonial aims in Africa which led to the post-colonial state at independence. I will argue that the colonial state in Africa served the imperial interests and its public policies. It was fueled by racism and the policies of divide and rule and enforced by violence which did not create an African national consciousness. The liberation struggles grew from a desire for self-determination and human agency, which galvanised and united the people in their struggle for independence. In the postcolonial state, this anticolonial struggle was sedimented into the collective memory of the nation and thus became the nodal point for nation building. However, “The reduction of nationalism to a mere anticolonial phenomenon produced wrong assumptions about the process of making a people and making the nation.”²³⁷ The results of the failure to construct a nation-as-people in the National African Project²³⁸ will be examined as a context for a discussion of the problems experienced in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

I will argue that the re-articulation of the liberation memory in Zimbabwe after independence was insufficient to unite the nation-as-people²³⁹ and did not serve the ends of building an imagined political community in the postcolonial state. Under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, the memory of liberation was turned into a narrative of continuous war against the perceived western threat to re-colonize Zimbabwe which was supported by the rhetoric of hate and ‘othering’ and by military force as a threat to any opposition to Mugabe’s ZANU-PF party.

²³⁷ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and the Crisis in a Postcolonial State* (Oxford: Peter Land, 2009), 47.

²³⁸ The most celebrated phase of the African national project is decolonisation. The key objective was to secure liberation from foreign domination and its slogan was self-determination. The African nationalist imaginary sought to achieve decolonisation, nation-building, development, democracy and regional integration. Ndlovu-Gatsheni defines the complex process of making ‘the African people’ in the context of the struggle against colonialism and imperialism into a sovereign common collectivity in pursuit of cultural and political ends in general.

²³⁹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 54.

As maintaining the status quo of a one-party state was the primary aim, Mugabe constructed the pacifying memory of a patriotic war as the dominant national narrative. The dominance of this pacifying memory was used to dull the impact of the dangerous memories of some groups of the population who were excluded from the narrative of patriotic unity.

In this chapter I will present a narrative analysis of the rearticulation of the liberation struggle into a pacifying memory of patriotic war which suppressed the dangerous memory of some groups of the population. The evidence will be taken from the direct speech and memorialised narratives of Robert Mugabe and cultural commemorations in the form of the commemorative site and music galas. The narrative analysis will be presented in chronological order within the three historical contexts of Independence Day 1980, the Gukurahundi atrocities 1981-1987 and the Chimurenga narrative 2000-2008. A deconstructive reading of the speeches of Mugabe and the cultural artifacts will facilitate a discussion on the intentions of Mugabe's rhetoric to build and maintain the status quo of a one-party state in a pacifying memory of narrated events and to deliberately suppress the dangerous memories and subjugated knowledge of the people. The use of Mugabe's speeches is especially useful in the tripolar approach of this work as it enables a dialogue between the speeches of Moses and Mugabe to reveal areas of difference in the use of a liberation memory.

I will discuss how the events of the Gukurahundi and the third Chimurenga were a product of the re-articulation of the liberation memory which resisted the call for ethical change and reconciliation by blocking the dangerous memory of oppression. Thus, Mugabe denied the people a voice to demand justice for the suffering which continued in the dangerous memories and to have a free and fair role in the governance of the country

I will conclude this chapter by arguing that a sustainable renewal and reconstruction of Zimbabwe's national project requires an honest audit of the past which must include both the pacifying and dangerous memories in order to maintain the unity and sovereign role of the people in the land.

5.1.1 Background: The Colonial legacy of Africa

In Africa the nation-state is seen as an offshoot of imperialist expansion. In order to understand contemporary Africa, one needs to understand the complex and combative histories of colonialism and nationalism. It is therefore necessary to locate the current political conflicts in

Africa within the history of colonialism which constitutes a dominant memory within African politics.²⁴⁰ The aim of European imperialism on the continent has always been about economies of extraction requiring access to cheap labour and raw materials and not about creating an African people. Thus, upon the arbitrary creation of the boundaries the colonialist did little or nothing to institutionalize national consciousness into colonial peoples.

The nation-states in Africa, which were formed under colonial rule, have been labelled a curse because they share an alienation between the arbitrary geographical entities they represent and the people who supposedly imagine themselves as subjects of these nation-states. The majority of the inhabitants did not identify with the states and did not have any say in their governance. The European imperialists, in the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885, relied on maps which were inaccurate in order to carve Africa.²⁴¹ The map of the conference included large sections of the territory simply designated as *terra incognita*, with boundaries between territories being decreed by geometric lines and the tracing of rivers, while tearing clans, communities and nations asunder.²⁴² The divisions were made without regard to kith, kin, tribe, ethnicities, monarchies, chiefdoms, religions or cultures. In many instances, diverse and separate groups each with its own hierarchy of rulers and devoid of a common history, culture, language, or religion were compelled to live within common colonial boundaries.²⁴³ The colonial borders would divide one people or break the historically established regional systems of economic and cultural ties no less infrequently. For example, the Bakongo were divided between French Congo, Belgian Congo and Portuguese Angola.²⁴⁴ Some kingdoms such as Loziland in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) were merged into larger colonial units. Kingdoms that had been historically antagonistic to one another, such as Buganda and Bunyoro in Uganda, were linked into the same colony.²⁴⁵ These groups had to live within the same colonial boundaries despite the hostilities and they were expected to find a common destiny.

Socially, colonialism introduced race as a major factor in the definition of belonging and citizenship in Africa. Mahmood Mamdani (1996), described the colonial states as bifurcated

²⁴⁰ Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Walk with us and Listen: Political Reconciliation in Africa* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 19.

²⁴¹ Meredith, *The State of Africa* 1.

²⁴² Meredith, 1.

²⁴³ Villa-Vicencio, *Walk with Us and Listen*, 19.

²⁴⁴ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 1.

²⁴⁵ Meredith, 1.

social formations inhabited by 'subjects' and 'citizens' (whites). To prevent the coalescence of colonized peoples into nations, colonialists used cartography, census and law to classify the population into races and tribes, civilized and uncivilized people as well as citizens and subjects. The colonial state governed citizens and subjects differently. Citizens were governed through urban civil power, in order to inculcate the European values of civility and modernity and this enabled them to enjoy all the fruits of civil and political freedoms and liberties.²⁴⁶ Races on the other hand were governed under single civil law that harmonised the differences, whereas tribes were administered under customary law that reinforced cultural differences.²⁴⁷ The subjects (black Africans/ natives), were governed through decentralised despotism permeated by tradition and customary order overseen by rural chief authority as the lowest ranking and salaried colonial authority.²⁴⁸ The colonial state enforced political and legal identities via issuing of identity cards. Colonialism transformed fluid and accommodative pre-colonial cultural identities into rigid, impermeable, singular, non-consensual and exclusionary political identities as part of technologies of colonial governance. In all this, races were said to have a common future as citizens whereas tribes as subjects, were said to be lacking a common future. Colonial governments went further to deny African people the space to coalesce into a majority identity, through fracturing them into different and competing tribes and minorities. When the natives crossed the social boundaries from rural areas to the urban environment, they were racially excluded from becoming citizens in the city.²⁴⁹

Colonialism thus politicized the racial and cultural differences turning it into a basis of discrimination. In the case of Rhodesian colonialism, the population was racially classified into European (White), black, coloured, Negro, Indian etc. and also through the binaries and dichotomies of inferior-superior, irrational-rational, primitive-civilized, traditional-modern.²⁵⁰ In Rwanda colonialism drilled into the natives and settlers, Tutsis and Hutu identities by emphasizing their differences and even going to concretize those differences by issuing identity cards along identity/ethnic fault lines. The Belgian colonialists racialized the identities of the Hutu and the Tutsis. The Hutu were reconstructed as indigenous and the Tutsis as aliens. In

²⁴⁶ Samuel Kobia, *The Courage to Hope. The Roots for a New Vision and the Calling of the Church in Africa* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003), 54.

²⁴⁷ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist*, 198.

²⁴⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 99.

²⁴⁹ Kobia, *The Courage to Hope*, 54.

²⁵⁰ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization* (Oxford: Cordesia African Books Collective, 2013), 17

addition, they also created a segregated school system that amplified these reconstructed Hutu-Tutsi racial distinctions. The colonialist even went further to exclude the Hutu from priesthood and local government and in the process, built a historic grievance among the excluded and marginalised communities.²⁵¹ Thus, from these examples it is clear that colonialism never intended creating nations in Africa based on a common national identity. Consequently, colonialism produced a nation-state but did not create a nation.²⁵²

As the colonial boundaries had thrown people together without considering their histories, ethnic conflicts were inevitable and various European administrations deliberately played off ethnic groups against one another.²⁵³ Thus the colonial state thrived through the policies of divide and rule and this generated hostilities between different ethnic groups, which continue to haunt many states in Africa. Many post-colonial African countries have witnessed a litany of conflicts which pitted tribe against tribe, people against people. In Rwanda for example, the colonially crafted, racialized citizenship caused animosity between colonialists and the Hutu-Tutsi but also between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Hutu nationalism became opposed to both colonialism and Tutsi domination, culminating in the revolution of 1959 where the majority Hutu overthrew the Tutsi monarchy and sent thousands of Tutsis into exile. This reinforced the perception of Tutsi as aliens. When the Tutsi tried to come back in 1990 through military invasion, a can of worms broke open as the Hutu mobilized to eliminate the Tutsi 'race'. The overall result was a deadly genocide that left the world puzzled and the people deeply wounded.²⁵⁴

Politically, colonial governance assumed the character of a hybrid mixed, military-civilian model where violence became a governmental norm. The colonial state was highly reliant on force, and military power was used to enforce its policies and to unleash violence on the African people. Para-military authoritarianism was a core component of colonial governance, with disciplining those categorized as natives as the order of the day. According to Samuel Kobia, *The Courage to Hope*, colonialism inculcated a system in which the colonial state entrenched its hegemonic project, utilizing its authoritarian structures and introducing new modes of

²⁵¹ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 154-155.

²⁵² Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 54-55.

²⁵³ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 154-155.

²⁵⁴ Meredith, 494-512.

tyranny that classified communities and peoples into subordinate identities.²⁵⁵ Three forms of violence underpinned colonial governance: 'foundational violence', which was unilateral and authorized the right of conquest and had an 'instituting function' of creating Africans as its targets; 'legitimizing violence', which was used after conquest to construct colonial order and to routinize colonial reality; and 'maintenance violence' used to ensure the permanence of colonialism and its dispersal into colonial institutions and cultures.²⁵⁶ The sheer brutality and the gun of the colonialists inculcated fear of the Europeans.

The authoritarianism and violence within the structures of the colonial states denied the Africans their basic citizenship rights. The participation of Africans in elections also became scarce. By and large, the colonial state became an institution of exploitation of black labour and of repression. Coercion rather than consent formed the DNA of colonial governance. Through its social, economic and political engineering processes it created a complex 'native-settler' question that was permeated by white supremacist ideas and prevented the formation of multi-racial nation states from colonial encounters.²⁵⁷

In summation, we can state that during the period of colonialism, the African people were put together on the same boat, but not at all sharing the same vision for a postcolonial imagination of the state. The use of race as criterion for belonging and citizenship left the populations deeply fragmented. The authoritarian character of the state, inculcated violence and marginalization of the African people. The desire of the African people in the colonies was to seek autonomy and be self-governing, where they would be in charge of their destiny as Africans and establish an order that was based on freedom, justice, equality and participation in the affairs of their country.

5.1.2 Postcolonial nation building in Africa

The colonial state failed to forge national consciousness among the African people and to build a community of horizontal comradeship. The challenges facing the newly independent countries were not only of rectifying the structural deformities that had been caused by

²⁵⁵ Kobia, *The Courage to Hope*, 54.

²⁵⁶ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 6-7.

²⁵⁷ Mahmoud Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 12-17.

colonialism, but more importantly of nation-building, that is, creating a polity that was united and progressive. Thus the National African Project arose as a nationalist inspired imagination of a postcolonial future.²⁵⁸ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni succinctly articulates the challenges: Firstly the primary challenge for African nation builders was the construction of a common identity from the diverse races, ethnicities, genders, and generations.²⁵⁹ This is evident from various political statements such as “diverse people unite” to the politics of autochthony, nativism and xenophobia.²⁶⁰ In the second place, it set out, as its goal, to eradicate colonial autocracy and repression so as to build accountability, legitimacy, transparency and ensure the popular participation of ordinary citizens in governance (otherwise known as democratization).²⁶¹ The goal was to imagine a society based on universal values such as freedom, equality and justice in order to build a better future for the people.

The following analysis will explore how the elite went about implementing the project of nation-building in Africa. For some countries the liberation memory was manipulated for party political purposes and to the detriment of the unity and sovereign role of the people. This example directly connects to Zimbabwe. We shall argue that the liberation paradigm was an insufficient base for nation building as it resulted in the politics of liberation entitlement, which failed to eradicate the colonial inequalities and further fragmented the people.

5.1.3 The selective use of collective memory in postcolonial nation building

Our study of nationhood has established the importance of collective memory in the process of making nations and forging national identities. In the imagination of a postcolonial nation-state, the African elite sought continuity with a suitable historical past, namely, the memories of anti-colonial struggles of African resistance and national liberation struggles. Richard

²⁵⁸ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 208.

²⁵⁹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 346-347.

²⁶⁰ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity*, 209.

²⁶¹ Paul T. Zeleza, “What Happened to the African Renaissance? The Challenges of Development in the Twenty-First Century,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 2 (2009): 155-170.

Werbner sums it up when he affirms “In virtually all nation-states which are young, the political origin myths usually imagine the founding of the nation in decolonisation.”²⁶²

Beginning from the 1960s the duty of the African elite in the post-colonial states was to rediscover and re-interpret elements of myth, memories and symbols in the process of contributing to the making of modern national identities.²⁶³ In Southern Africa (Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola), the sequel of the struggle against colonialism and the guerrilla warfare directed against white settlers was adopted as the foundation myth for nation building. The narration of the liberation struggle defined the power relations and provided symbolic support for the existing power structures of the nation-state. It became the basis for defining who belongs to the nation and for inspiring the population to unity and dedication to the ideals of freedom and equality for all.²⁶⁴

The use of the liberation war memory in postcolonial nation-building has been selective and open to various appropriations leading to a wide horizon of imagined nationhood.²⁶⁵ For some nationalists the people’s war of liberation is the basis of a homogenous nation, with the nation diffused throughout the country and dedicated to the liberation ideals of freedom and equality for all.²⁶⁶ Other nationalists manipulated the liberation memory in order to forge the heroics of the political leaders, advancing a triumphalist version of this memory of the liberation struggle in order to maintain their hold on power.²⁶⁷ Their imagination of the nation is centred on the Politics of Liberation Entitlement (PLE). The liberation movements in government have been driven by the politics of liberation entitlement. According to Onslow:

“The Politics of Liberation Entitlement is centred on the following: the importance of personality and ethnic and clan politics which helped to shape the liberation movement during the struggle for independence. There is also the important legacy of emphasis on solidarity and lack of internal discussion and debate. Furthermore, the role of ‘armed struggle’ and the associated use of violence have left lasting influences. These

²⁶² Richard Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power* (London: Zed books, 1998), 75.

²⁶³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 47.

²⁶⁴ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 75.

²⁶⁵ Werbner, 75.

²⁶⁶ Werbner, 75.

²⁶⁷ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 353.

formative attitudes and experiences forged political cultures which have continued to play out in the domestic political arena post-independence.”²⁶⁸

Basing themselves on selective narratives and memories relating to their liberation wars, they constructed or invented a new set of traditions to establish an exclusive postcolonial legitimacy under the sole authority of one particular agency of social forces. A group of nationalists who participated in the liberation struggles leading to the decolonisation of countries in Southern Africa established themselves as the privileged liberators and guarantors of sovereignty of the country. The former liberators created an identity narrative that gave them entitlement to the state, power and resources. Thus, the sole purpose of the narrated memory was to consolidate power within the one-party state which a democratic role for the people would work against.

This liberation entitlement forged the former liberators into the narrative myths and gave them a privileged status in the governing structures. In fact, those who led the nationalist liberation struggle canonised themselves into becoming the fathers of the nations they led. Ndlovu-Gatsheni writes “They elevated themselves to mini-gods, saints and angels and their names were inscribed on public buildings, roads and airports. In this way they became inscribed into the core of the national project and also into public memory.”²⁶⁹ Because of their participation in the liberation, the elite expect to be hero worshiped as the founding fathers of the nation. Such examples included Mobutu Sese Seko’s Authenticite and Robert Mugabe’s third *Chimurenga*.

The politics of liberation entitlement has given way to a politically-correct identity form defined by those in power along narrow ‘we-they’ or ‘with-us-against-us’ lines, leading to the fragmentation of the imagined community. This is more observable in Zimbabwe with the ideology of Chimurenga which was mobilized to fragment the people of Zimbabwe into patriots, war veterans, puppets, traitors, sell-outs, born-frees and enemies of the nation. These political identities have resulted in a polarization of the nation. The titles of patriots and veterans are reserved for those who participated in the liberation struggle (Second Chimurenga) in general and all members of ZANU-PF specifically. These are the national ‘we/us’ and ‘they’

²⁶⁸ Sue Onslow, “Zimbabwe and Political Transition,” *The London School of Economics and Political Science* (March 2011): 2.

²⁶⁹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 349.

are Members of MDC political formations who are categorized as traitors, sell-outs and puppets, who deserve to die if the Zimbabwean nation is to live.

The liberation movements have claimed the legitimacy to govern from the struggle itself. For this reason, liberation regimes strive to keep the pacifying memory of the struggle alive, in fact to merge it with the country's past and its future. The elite forged the heroics of the political leaders and advanced the triumphalist version of this pacifying memory of the liberation struggle in order to maintain their hold on power.²⁷⁰ In the construction of this memory, liberation movements have merged the history of the party into the history of the postcolonial state. For example, in Angola the history of the MPLA was taught in Angolan schools and the country's flag and national anthem represent the MPLA. The autobiography of Sam Nujoma, long-time leader of SWAPO, is treated as the official history of Namibia. In Zimbabwe, the chimurenga narrative was to become the official history. The selective reconstruction of the narratives and pacifying memories of the wars of liberation, led to the reinvention of new traditions that established the nationalist party's exclusive postcolonial legitimacy to rule.

This had serious consequences on the governmentality of the imagined postcolonial states. These liberation movements have set themselves as governing elites leading to the blurring of the boundaries between the party and government, resulting in a growing equation of party and government. Even though they inherited multi-party democracies, they have tended to create one-party states. Because of this, any political alternative that does not emerge from within them is not acceptable. Opposition or dissent has come increasingly to be considered as hostile and the dissenter sometimes branded as an 'enemy of the people'. Thus, the dangerous memories of opposition leaders which do not align with the narrative of the one-party state are deliberately omitted from the national discourse. The opposition is one way or another neutralized sometimes in fierce and bloody confrontations, so that their dangerous memories of events become the subjugated knowledge which is ignored in the pacifying memory of the national narrative. There were tensions amongst liberations as witnessed by the bloody civil wars between rival movements, which had become opposition parties in Mozambique,

²⁷⁰ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 353.

Zimbabwe and Angola. These internecine conflicts were eventually won by the more powerful movement that captured state power, but did not quite eliminate its rivals or their claims.²⁷¹

In this state of affairs, many postcolonial African states degenerated into single party regimes and became critical of democracy and its base in civil society because democracy and civil multiparty projects threatened their rurally based hegemony. According to Fanon in his political manifesto *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), the single party policies of the nationalist groups constituted a modern form of bourgeois dictatorship, representing a continuation of colonial governmental rationale and techniques of power.²⁷² The one-party structures failed to create a post liberation environment conducive to political and economic spaces for citizen participation. The failure to enhance the freedom denied during colonialism led to the entrenchment of authoritarianism and dictatorship and violence.

In summation, in postcolonial Africa the imagination of the nation-state has been eschewed by nationalist politics or ideologies which misrepresented independence to mean resistance to colonialism, and which was driven by the politics of patronage, thereby ignoring the fundamental national question of making the nation-as-people. They have failed to transform their militaristic, top-down command structures in order to establish robust, open and egalitarian structures and practices. Further, the postcolonial states have manipulated the citizens' historical memory by denying the people's contested dangerous memories of the past for the sake of achieving their own goals through a narrow pacifying memory of resistance to colonialism. For many postcolonial African states, nation-building still remains the greatest challenge. Melber speaks of this reality when he says, "Sadly to varying degrees, those revolutionary liberation parties have transformed into new conservative elites often becoming the postcolonial enemies of democracy and freedom."²⁷³

²⁷¹ John Markakis, "Liberation Movements and the 'democratic deficit' in *National Liberation Movements as Government in Africa*, ed. Redie Bereketeab (New York: Routledge, 2018), 36.

²⁷² Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 1963), 132.

²⁷³ Henning Melber, *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The Unfinished Business of Democratic Consolidation* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2003), 11-14.

5.2 Imagining postcolonial Zimbabwe

5.2.1 Introduction

In the light of the nation-building problems for many postcolonial African states, I will now offer a rhetorical analysis of the use of the liberation memory in Zimbabwe based on the rhetorical evidence of direct quotes from Robert Mugabe, memorialised narratives and commemorations. The memorialised narratives and commemorations anchor and legitimize the Chimurenga foundational myth as the key pacifying memory for national identity formation. The commemorative site is seen as the moral high ground because it preserves a link between the past and the present. Therefore, Mugabe has used the site and the commemorations to deliver speeches in order to emotionally appeal to the people to accept the pacifying memory of patriotic war, a narrow version of citizenship and a self-serving narrative that helps preserve his personal power interests. Such pacifying memories tend to play into narratives of continuity and satisfaction with the way things are. This dominant pacifying memory maintains the status quo while claiming that the way things are, is the only way things should be. The dominant narrative dulls the impact of truly interruptive experiences of injustice which remain with the victims as dangerous memories.²⁷⁴

Zimbabwe attained its independence on the 18th April 1980, after decades of colonial oppression and a period sustained by a long-armed struggle which was called the 2nd Chimurenga. The victory was received with euphoria and was seen as victory for the African people. Zimbabwe was a country that caught the eyes of the world as a beacon of hope in the African countries, many of which were experiencing degradation after the many years of independence. In the eyes of many, Zimbabwe was ‘the Jewel of Africa’. Zimbabwe was a nation that had a chance to be an example of multi-racialism, an engine of economic growth, a promising multi-party democracy and a pillar of strength against the vestiges of white minority rule (Baker 1984:164). The spirit of comradeship and reconciliation was captured in the speech of Robert Mugabe on the eve of independence:

Surely this is now the time to beat our swords into ploughshares so we can attend to the problems of developing our economy and society ... I urge you, whether you are black or white, to join me in a new pledge to forget our grim past, forgive others and forget, join hands in a new amity, and together, as Zimbabweans, trample upon racialism,

²⁷⁴ Metz, *Faith in History*, 109.

tribalism and regionalism, and work hard to reconstruct and rehabilitate our society as we reinvigorate our economic machinery.

The biblical reference to “*now is the time to beat our swords into ploughshares*” (Isaiah 2:4; Joel 3:12; Micah 4:3), gave great authority to the exhortation for unity between races and ethnicities and he appealed collectively as a leader to the people: ‘*we can attend*’ ‘*our economy and society*’. The biblical reference reflects ethical characteristics onto Mugabe which appeals to the audience to trust his speech. The somatic imagery in ‘join hands and the use of the first-person plural ‘*we/our*’ appeals to the emotions of the audience to come together and to work for the future. Surely this inclusive language suggests the democratic sharing of power in order to ‘work hard to reconstruct our economic machinery?’ It is the call to ‘forget’ which foreshadows the dangers to unity in the future, suggesting a lack of acknowledgement or accountability for ‘our grim past’.

With the attainment of independence, the new black government embarked on the course of nation building. The challenges facing the newly independent nation included post war reconstruction, restructuring of the colonial political economy, especially redressing its racialized imbalances and democratising the authoritarian and colonial state institutions.²⁷⁵ The first task in nation building was the construction of a myth of foundation, a national identity and national history.²⁷⁶ For Zimbabwe, the anti-colonial struggle that gave birth to Zimbabwe was adopted as the myth of foundation because it helped to define the set of issues and core values that would continue to shape Zimbabweans’ present and future struggles for an inclusive citizenship. The second task was in uniting the nation, that is, building a new united nation, from the ashes of colonial and racial subjugation and oppression²⁷⁷ in order to build a community based on citizenship and horizontal comradeship. The third challenge was democratization. The anti-colonial struggle was not just to defeat colonialism and construct an independent Zimbabwe, but also very much a struggle for democracy and human rights, and the values of freedom, equality and social justice that were denied by the colonial state. On the agenda was entrenching the sovereignty of the people, by ensuring the greater involvement of

²⁷⁵ James Muzondidya, “From Buoyancy to Crisis 1980-1997,” in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, eds. Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (Harare: Weaver Press, 2014), 167.

²⁷⁶ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*, 203.

²⁷⁷ Eldred V. Masunungure, “Nation-building, State Building and Power Configuration in Zimbabwe,” *Conflict Trends Magazine* 1 (2006): 4.

the masses of the people in the system of governance that was denied under settler colonialism.²⁷⁸

In this chapter we shall argue that in spite of the good will expressed at independence to imagine the unity and sovereignty of the nation, the ideology of the Chimurenga narrative led to the development of a pacifying memory of patriotic history which mythologised the heroes of ZANU-PF and glorified the war against colonialism over and above the emancipatory agenda for the freedom and democratic future of the people. This pacifying memory of patriotic history was narrated not only through speeches but through the medium of song, national holidays and memorialised inscriptions. This selective use of memory was set in stone at the commemorative site of Heroes Acre in order to inculcate the chimurenga narrative into the public collective memory. But the contentious nature of the site led to further divisions among the people. The rise of authoritarianism and the use of military power further divided the people particularly after the Gukurahundi massacre where violence was inflicted with impunity. The strategy of using violence to control the people's democratic freedoms continued with the third chimurenga, ostensibly to return the land to the people as a completion of the colonial struggle. But the use of racism and human rights abuses continued the state subjugation of the people, just as experienced during colonial times. These examples from history can only lead to the conclusion that unless the dangerous memories of oppression are aroused to motivate the ethical liberation categories of freedom, equality, solidarity and justice for the imagined political community, then only division and the continued subjugation of the people will be the reality of the nation state.

The pacifying memory for national identity formation is inculcated in the minds of the general public through the speeches of Mugabe, music galas, national holidays and memorialised inscriptions and the commemorative site. I will offer a deconstructive reading of these representations which highlight those details of a text which are in fundamental conflict with those meanings on the surface of the text.²⁷⁹ This method of reading will facilitate a discussion on the purpose of the pacifying memory to promote unity while also obstructing the voice of the dangerous memories of the people. Therefore, the narrative quotes will be situated within a particular speech context, when Mugabe's hegemony was being challenged. The direct quotes will then be analysed in the context of the historical events of the time focusing on the use of

²⁷⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power*, 203.

²⁷⁹ Olson, *Literary and Rhetorical Criticism*, 19.

commemoration, the adoption of a strategy of Gukurahundi and a continuous state of chimurenga war which became the means to self-serving party-political ends rather than the construction of a sovereign political community for all.

5.2.2 The construction of the collective memory for the imagined political community

In order to achieve national cohesion, the political elite imagined the post-colonial nation by recalling the usable narrative memory of liberation and the anticolonial nationalist struggle that gave birth to Zimbabwe and constructed a Zimbabwean identity. In this section, we will examine the use of the narrative of Chimurenga and the use of commemoration and tradition to form the collective memory of the people. Secondly, we will explore the effects of the national narrative of chimurenga on the unity of the people and their sovereign role in terms of democracy and human rights. The sovereign role of the people should be motivated by the dangerous memory of colonial oppression which inspires the categories of justice, equality and freedom for all the imagined political community. It is by these standards that we will assess the success of the selective use of the memory of the liberation struggle as the foundation for nation building.

5.2.2.1 The pacifying memory of glorious war as depicted at the national commemorative site

The scope of the analysis of nation building in Zimbabwe is from the time of independence to the present in this work. Therefore, in the context of the first two Chimurenga we will analyse commemorations of the second Chimurenga and the effects of this national narrative on the unity and sovereign role of the people.

With independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, came the moment that was at once celebratory, triumphal and monumental.²⁸⁰ At the heart of both the first and second chimurenga were two contentious issues: the land question and the quest for civil liberties, that is, the treatment of the black people as equal human beings who deserved fair and equal and unfettered access to

²⁸⁰ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 77.

their ancestral land.²⁸¹ The national agenda for the anti-colonial struggle was not just to defeat colonialism and construct an independent Zimbabwe, but also very much a struggle for democracy and human rights that were denied by the colonial state. These liberation wars or Chimurenga, therefore served as the main foundation myth of the imagined postcolonial nation at independence.

In order to imagine the postcolonial state of Zimbabwe, the ZANU-PF government harnessed the memory of the liberation struggles known as *chimurengas/ umvukela*.²⁸² The word Chimurenga comes from the Shona language and refers to the nationwide uprising or revolt especially against a racist, discriminatory or oppressive social, political or economic system.²⁸³ This term will be used in this work to capture a series of social and economic political movements that were captured by the desire or will to liberate and emancipate and empower the black indigenous people. The genealogy of this movement dates back to the wars of resistance beginning in 1890 against the British occupation, then through the nationalist liberation movements in the 1960-70, up to the FastTrack Land Redistribution Programme (FTLRP) in 2000. The Chimurenga is thus not a one-off episode but a series of social and political movements that were characterised by anti-colonial and anti-western rhetoric.²⁸⁴

In the ideology of *Chimurenga*, the nation was born as a result of two violent revolutions. The first uprising can be historically traced to the Ndebele/ Shona uprisings in 1896/1897. The first Chimurenga was met with brutality and the *impis* (Ndebele warriors) could not match the fire power of the Europeans. The defeat marked the beginning of British colonial rule in what was known as Southern Rhodesia. The catastrophic consequence was the introduction of legalised racism, oppression and dispossession of the peoples' land in order to pave the way for colonial white settlers. The indigenous people were displaced onto the poorest, driest land where it was most difficult to make a living. The subsequent revolts were fundamentally a struggle for the recovery of the lost land and the dignity of the indigenous people of Zimbabwe. The leaders

²⁸¹ Finex Ndhlovu, *Language, Vernacular Discourse and Nationalism: Uncovering the Myths of Transnational Worlds* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 139.

²⁸² Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*, 203.

²⁸³ Ndhlovu, *Language, Vernacular Discourse and Nationalism*, 137.

²⁸⁴ Terence Ranger "Rule by Historiography: The Struggle over the Past in Contemporary Zimbabwe," in *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*, eds. Robert Muponde and Ranka Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), 215.

were spirit mediums who were executed by the colonial regime for encouraging the people to fight and resist colonialism. The spirit mediums were elevated to the level of national heroes and articulated as forerunners of the liberation struggle which was called the second Chimurenga in the 1970's to 1980's. The armed struggle led to negotiations for a political settlement at the Lancaster House talks which ushered in political independence and majority rule in 1980.

In order to cement the Chimurenga ideology into the collective memory of the people, the commemorative site of Heroes Acre was built soon after independence. The memory of the liberation struggle was captured and centralised in the construction of the national monument, the Heroes Acre and the proclamation of two public holidays on 11th and 12th August to celebrate Heroes Day.

An aerial view of the monument reflects a design akin to an AK-47 rifle which is split in two along its length from the barrel to the butt. This rifle was very popular with the liberation fighters. The terraces which people sit on resemble the butt of the gun. The murals resemble the handle and the terraced graves resemble the magazine. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier stands for the trigger, while the steps to the tower are the nozzle barrel and the tower pictures the bayonet or the knife. The visuality of the National Heroes' Acre manifests itself as a symbol of resistance against colonialism and 'undisputed heroism'. The tomb of the unknown soldier is marked by a colossal statue of three heroic soldiers, two males and one female, carrying a flag, a rocket launcher and an AK 47 assault rifle. The Unknown Soldier is venerated by everyone as "the very lack of an individual identity permits almost everyone to claim the Unknown Soldier as his or her own."²⁸⁵ It represents those unaccounted for, men and women who left their homes to fight in the liberation struggle. These heroes fell in battle, but whose remains are unburied. This is a reminder to the nation that even as it commemorates the day of the fallen heroes, there remains many fighters killed in battle in various parts of the country who have not been given a decent burial. The panel on the Heroes Acre depicts six historical stages of the war of liberation that culminated in the independence of the nation in 1980. These murals depict the brutalities of the colonial period. Racial opposition dominates the murals,

²⁸⁵ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 83-84.

and the liberation struggle is presented as a simple racial conflict, fighting on the heroic side of good are blacks only, whites with their black henchmen and dogs, attack on the other side.²⁸⁶

The Heroes Acre official brochure presents the nation's monument as:

An expression as well as a symbol of the indefatigable collective will of Zimbabweans to be makers of their own history, and to be their own liberators by participating in the protracted, arduous and bitter struggle for self-determination.....Heroes Acre arouses national consciousness, forges national unity and identity....it is a symbol of the masses' struggle for freedom that transcends tribalism, ethnicism, regionalism and racism" (Ministry of information 1996:2).²⁸⁷

These noble aims are considerably distanced from the reality of experience. Heroes Acre reflects the struggle over the identity of the 'national hero' by drawing demarcations between those deserving of certain levels of sacralisation in the name of national history and those who are forgotten. The brochure states that those eligible for burial at the site will have "laid down their lives for Zimbabwe to be born and for the masses to be liberated. They subordinated their individual interests to the collective interests of Zimbabwe as a whole ... Theirs was an unwavering support for the cause of freedom and justice for which they accepted and endured suffering and brutality with fortitude" (Ministry of Information 1996: 5). However, this became an act of self-memorialisation for the governing elite, as only members of the inner-circle of those nationalist figures who formed the first government of Zimbabwe were buried at the site.²⁸⁸ Their families receive state pensions and grants and the heroes' funerals are entirely state sponsored. Former guerrillas and lesser party members are restricted to Provincial or Local hero status and in many cases are expected to finance the funerals themselves. No state memorial records all their names. The remembrance of their individuality is left to their kin, communities and fellow veterans.²⁸⁹ Heroes Acre thus reflects a grading system of heroes, a ranked set of distinctions in which nationhood or national value is distributed unequally. The

²⁸⁶ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 84.

²⁸⁷ Werbner, 84.

²⁸⁸ Norma J. Kriger, "The Politics of Creating National Heroes: The Search for Political Legitimacy and National Identity," in *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, eds. Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger (London: James Currey: 1995), 145-146. Richard Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power* (London: Zed books, 1998), 84.

²⁸⁹ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 73.

construction and burial of those who were declared provincial and district heroes in different burial sites further entrenches class division.

Thus, the history of the liberation struggle was selectively re-articulated to cement the role of Mugabe as the true liberator and ZANU-PF as the authentic party. For example, the bronze murals at the Heroes Acre present a heroic narrative of the liberation struggle around the figure of Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party. The towering figure of Mugabe above the heads of all the other heroes who are not clearly defined, puts Mugabe as the leader, determined, youthful and forward looking as the indisputable leader of the liberation struggle and of the nation. This imposing portrayal has immortalised Mugabe, making him an embodiment of the liberation struggle and the grand teller of the liberation struggle narrative. The narrative memory is selective and it glorifies the individuality of one hero at the expense of other nationalists like Joshua Nkomo commonly known as 'Father Zimbabwe' the founder of nationalism in Zimbabwe in 1953.²⁹⁰ Many other nationalists have been left out thus selectively highlighting Mugabe and his claim to the ultimate right to lead the party and the country. Retelling the patriotic history from Mugabe's point of view, asserts the revolutionary tradition along the ZANU-PF ideology. This selective retelling of the liberation narrative has entrenched exclusive nationalism in postcolonial Zimbabwe and further deepened the divisions in the nation.

The state memorial of the figure of the Tomb of the Unknown soldier is contentious. Instead of it being a symbol of unity across different people, it entrenches a classist imagination of the postcolonial community. The Tomb of the unknown soldier, which is anonymous and empty, stands for all without distinction. Here nationality and citizenship are represented for all the people and equality in society endures.²⁹¹ Against this is the differentiated representation of the heroic dead in the individualised tombstones. What is memorialised is the distinction of the select few, the national elite. Evidence suggests that two thirds of the heroes buried at the shrine

²⁹⁰ Joshua Nkomo was the founder of the first nationalist party in Zimbabwe in 1962. The party became a victim of tribal and ethnic divisions especially between the Shona and Ndebele, resulting in the split. In the early years of independence, he was referred to as 'Father of dissidents' requiring purging from the land hence the jingles such as *Huya uone zvaita Nkomo, warembera pamuchinjikwa* (Come and witness what has happened to Nkomo), he is hanging on the cross. His part in the history of liberation was not fully recognised until after his death when he earned the title "Father Zimbabwe".

²⁹¹ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 81.

are ZANU-PF or ZANLA members with many worthy candidates being ignored. This has led to the contestation of space and the definition of a hero.

Contrary to its official intent as a symbol of unity, it runs as a source of differentiation and disaffection between what Zimbabweans call the *chefs* and the *povo*- the leaders and the masses. The politics of the election and burial of the heroes is classist. This memorialization entrenches and justifies inequalities amongst the population. This has sown the seeds of polarization that would later haunt the nation building project with respect to the unity of the people. Richard Werbner writes:

The Heroes Acre as a postcolonial form of modern memorial complex has failed to advance the notion of a single identity. Instead, the very construction of the nation centred on its own liberation war memorial as the moral high ground for all the people is problematic. Such political and moral construction is in the infancy of the postcolonial regime's nation-building project, fragile, fraught with contradictions and open to explosive moments subversive of the state sanctioned idea of one indivisible nation.²⁹²

ZANU-PF as the authentic liberation party, directly chooses who belongs to the postcolonial community and with what collective memory. This means that from the very beginning the nation building project has been fraught with difficulties leading to fragmentation and tensions within the imagined community.

In summation, it can be concluded that the Heroes acre commemorates the pacifying memory of the liberation struggle for ZANU-PF members, while blocking the dangerous memories of non-party members. It is clear from the design of the site that the narrative of patriotic history was to be remembered and the party of ZANU-PF was the great liberator to be commemorated. The aim of the political leadership was to imagine the unity of the nation on the pacifying memory of the political party as the great liberator so that support for a powerful liberator would be the logical conclusion. Now we turn to examine the effects of blocking the dangerous memory of the people with a pacifying memory which excludes and suppresses them.

²⁹² Werbner, 73.

5.2.2.2 The dangerous memories of the people are to be forgotten

Heroes Acre portrayed a pacifying memory which undermined the sovereign role of the people on the grounds of ethnicity. Further divisions within the imagined political community became manifest in the early years of independence with the exclusion of Joshua Nkomo and the contribution or role of PF-ZAPU in the liberation memory. The consequences of excluding Joshua Nkomo from the national narrative had far reaching consequences for the Ndebele people since most of the supporters of PF-ZAPU were from the Matabeleland. Nkomo, ZAPU and the Ndebele people were thus written out of the liberation war history as enemies of the Zimbabwean revolution.

The discovery of an arms cache in 1982 on land owned by ZAPU prompted ZANU to end the alliance by dismissing all ZAPU ministers from the cabinet. According to Mugabe this was clear evidence that they were planning a coup d'etat: "These people were planning to overthrow and take over the government"²⁹³ and then he went on to liken Nkomo's role to a cobra in the house: "The only way to deal effectively with a snake is to strike and destroy its head."²⁹⁴ Mugabe appears to condemn the use of force in constitutional matters by the opposition yet his use of the dangerous imagery of a poisonous snake for the opposition leader is threatening and it is clear in the metaphor 'to strike and destroy' its head, that he intends to use military force to remove a constitutionally elected opposition leader. This is a clear example of a policy of one-party politics where the party with power can use any means to achieve his ends. The use of aggressive verbs 'strike and destroy' shows that the rule of law and human rights appear to have no influence on governance. The pacifying memory of war gives justification for the use of military force against dissenters who threaten the status quo of the ruling party.

This threatening rhetoric of violence was a stark change from the message of reconciliation at independence and it suggests the rise of authoritarianism as a government policy to remove all potential rivals to its hegemony. In order to deal with ZAPU and its supporters, Mugabe unleashed the Fifth Brigade which had been trained by North Koreans in 1981, into the areas of the Midlands and Matabeleland in order to deal with the enemies of the state. This operation

²⁹³ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 261

²⁹⁴ Meredith, 621.

is commonly known as the Gukurahundi.²⁹⁵ Members of the newly created national army that had been part of the former Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the armed wing of ZAPU, deserted and started dissident activity in Matabeleland against the government, which responded by sending the army against them.

The 5th brigade operations resulted in executions, kidnappings, detention and torture between 1983 and 1986 (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1986). Stringent curfews were imposed and they banned all forms of transport, closed shops and blocked drought relief supplies for villagers starving to death. An army officer explained the food policy at a meeting with local chiefs: "First you will eat your chickens, then your goats, then your cattle, then your donkeys. Then you will eat your children and finally you will eat the dissidents."²⁹⁶ The threatening rhetoric was employed by the army and in fact by all branches of the party state.

Mugabe goes further in a speech in April 1983 "Where men and women provide food for the dissidents, when we get there, we eradicate them. We don't differentiate when we fight, because we can't tell who is a dissident and who is not".²⁹⁷ The use of the word *eradicate* dehumanises the 'men and women' which overtly puts the general population in fear of their lives if they even provide humanitarian support for an opposition party. A state of war is suggested in the use of 'when we fight' which conforms with the national narrative of chimurenga and the portrayal of the party leaders as war heroes at Heroes Acre. The language of 'othering' can be inferred in 'who is a dissident and who is not' as identity is confined to either ZANU-PF patriots or 'enemies of the state'. The frequent use of 'we' constructs an image of unity between the political party and the military which bolsters the authority of the party and delivers a forceful threat to the electorate not to vote against the ruling party. The inclusive language no longer appeals for the people of all tribes, classes and ethnicities to come together for the good of the nation. Now the collective use of 'we' identifies the political party

²⁹⁵ The Gukurahundi comes from the Shona word which means 'early spring rains. This had been used by ZANU in their electoral campaign under the slogan "the year of the people's storm" or "Gore Gukurahundi." This was now used by Mugabe in relation to a campaign in Matabeleland and was taken to mean, sweep out the rubbish. This was in reference to the ex-ZIPRA guerrillas who were deserting the joint Zimbabwe army citing tribalism and marginalisation. Mugabe interpreted the dissension as a military uprising and thus instigated Gukurahundi in Matabeleland, through the deployment of the Korean-trained fifth brigade.

²⁹⁶ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 623.

²⁹⁷ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 93.

which threatens all those who oppose it. Unity is understood as support for the ruling elite and their means of constructing this narrative of unity is by the gun. The language of Mugabe is violent and threatening which reinforces the national narrative of Chimurenga.

In the course of these years 1982-1987, Joshua Nkomo the leader of PF-ZAPU and commander of ZIPRA and then Minister of home affairs had to flee the country. The rhetoric of 'othering' even applied to leaders as Nkomo became labelled as the 'Father of Dissidents' in the first years of independence. Such a role required purging from the land hence the jingles such as *Huya uone zvaita Nkomo, warembera pamuchinjikwa* (Come and witness what has happened to Nkomo, he is hanging on the cross) which was intended to humiliate and show the powerlessness of Nkomo. Joshua Nkomo's part in the history of the liberation was never fully recognised until after his death.

Political violence spilled over into the run-up to the 1985 elections. Dissidents were reported to have killed three ZANU party officials in separate incidents in 1984. In response, ZANU party supporters, especially party youth, went on rampages in several communities, attacking those thought to be ZAPU members. Deaths were reported, and houses and cars burnt, while the police reportedly looked on. With these bizarre tactics, the hope was that the people of Matabeleland would submit to the one-party state which Mugabe had always wanted. However, in spite of the intimidation the people still voted for PF-ZAPU taking all the 15 parliamentary seats in Matabeleland. This was followed by more brutality, raiding the opposition's houses and the closure of PF-ZAPU offices and district councils that were run by ZAPU. This action made it clear that the issue was no longer about the arms caches and the elimination of dissidents, it was to crush PF-ZAPU as Mugabe had intended all along.²⁹⁸ According to the Catholic Justice and Peace commission report *Breaking the Silence*, more than 20 000 civilians were killed. (*Breaking the Silence*). This period came to an end only in 1987 with the Unity Accord, resulting in ZAPU joining ZANU-PF, bringing several ZAPU leaders into the cabinet and making ZAPU president and long-time liberation fighter, Joshua Nkomo, one of the country's two vice-presidents. According to Kriger, ZANU PF's brutal counter insurgency campaign against ZAPU/ZIPRA had ended with an agreement to absorb ZAPU into ZANU-PF in December 1987. In theory at least, the Ndebele people became part of the Zimbabwean

²⁹⁸ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 625.

people once more, as unity was now the signifier of the post-colonial national identity.²⁹⁹ However this unity was only on paper, deep down the animosity continued to exist.

The Gukurahundi episode is a dent in the history of the nation-building project of Zimbabwe, showing the fragile nation-building process and the challenges of building a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society. The nation-building project was from the very beginning characterized by intolerance of the 'other'. Mugabe and ZANU-PF were intolerant to any opposition. The word Gukurahundi which means wind that sweeps away the chaff before the rains shows in its use of the word 'chaff' for a minority ethnic group in opposition, a degradation and dehumanisation of this group of people who have all the same human rights as other citizens. Such language indicates a political attitude which was diametrically opposed to the policy of reconciliation. Masunungure makes the point that whereas reconciliation sought to resolve differences and bring together diverse groups, the strategy of Gukurahundi sought to eliminate the differences and their sources. This atrocity highlighted intolerance towards the ethnic 'other' and the brutality that could be inflicted on the 'other' with impunity.³⁰⁰ The victims to date have not been compensated and there has not been any commission of enquiry into what happened. The brutality of the *Gukurahundi* campaign in suppressing the rebels, left deep scars and festering wounds among the victims and also intensified regionalism. This event made clear that the policy of ZANU-PF was based on the subordination and control of other political parties and civil society. In this way the postcolonial state was slowly developing into a one-party state which was characterised by intolerance and authoritarianism.

The significance of the pacifying memory of the chimurenga narrative, as commemorated at Heroes Acre is to cement the primary role of ZANU-PF and its leaders in the liberation struggle while at the same time forgetting its role in human rights atrocities. The dangerous memories such as the Gukurahundi disrupt the pacifying memory of a glorious liberation war and therefore those subversive elements of history must be forgotten and suppressed by the dominant pacifying memory. In the eyes of ZANU-PF, the Gukurahundi atrocity has been

²⁹⁹ Lene-Bull Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004), 57.

³⁰⁰ Masunungure, "Nation-building," 3-8.

dismissed as “an act of madness”³⁰¹ and is classified as the opposite of patriotic history. The policy of forgetting the dangerous memories of the people was exemplified in the actions of Mugabe when a Roman Catholic delegation provided Mugabe with a dossier listing atrocity committed by the Fifth Brigade. Mugabe refuted all its allegations and accused the clergy of being disloyal to Zimbabwe.³⁰² He then had the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe suppressed. It goes without saying that the suppression of the cause for Justice and Peace represented by the Catholic clergy shows how profoundly Mugabe had moved from the liberation memory of justice and peace for all, to a patriotic narrative where the party leadership and hegemony outweigh the rights of the people.

Thus, for ZANU-PF, the unity agreement signed between the two parties was a sign by which memories of the violent past could be turned into the obligation to forget.³⁰³ Those who call for justice for the victims of *Gukurahundi*, in the form of official commemoration and compensation for the victims are dismissed as internal ‘enemies of the state’ who are not obeying the obligation to forget and bury the past.

The ZANU-PF elite failed to learn from the past and to begin to include and acknowledge the dangerous memories in the imagination of Zimbabwe. This was the case at the beginning of 2000 when faced with a stronger opposition and growing dissent due to the mismanagement of the economy, the *Chimurenga* discourse was revived in order to maintain their hold on power. In the next section, we will further explore the misappropriation of the liberation war memory, in the context of the third Chimurenga and its effects on the unity and sovereign role of the people.

5.2.3 The emergence of the third Chimurenga ideology

In this section we will argue that the chimurenga ideology worked to support the pacifying memory of patriotic war for the consolidation of the one-party state. The past glories of the liberation war were re-articulated to cement the role of Mugabe and ZANU-PF as true liberators and patriots which continued against the threat of re-colonialism from western

³⁰¹ Martin Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 74.

³⁰² Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns*, 67-68.

³⁰³ Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation*, 55.

powers. This pacifying memory was inculcated into the public domain through training schemes, music galas and annual commemorations.

Zimbabwe was led to a third *Chimurenga* at the beginning of 2000, in pursuit of the unfinished business of the two preceding *Chimurengas* that were dubbed *Impi Yamasimu* in Ndebele language and *Hondo Yeminda* in Shona language meaning ‘the war for land’. The background to the third *Chimurenga* is what scholars have termed the ‘Zimbabwe crisis’ which unfolded between the late 1990’s and 2000. This period was characterised by the increased decline of the economy, high unemployment and the high cost of living as a result of the ESAP. This caused great grievances among the people. In the midst of these the government worsened the situation by getting involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war at the cost of Zimbabweans and by awarding gratuities, in order to appease the war veterans who were beginning to turn against the government. All these measures led to anger against the government and resulted in the civil society, the university students and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade union (ZCTU) coming together to demand a new constitution and the formation of a new political party called the MDC. In a referendum for a new constitution the government for the first time lost the vote. For ZANU-PF, the loss was attributed to the whites and the western powers since for the first time, the whites were seen participating in the vote. The participation angered ZANU-PF who attributed this to western powers who were using the opposition party to remove it from power. Thus, in order to hold on to power ZANU-PF, abandoned its model of reconciliation that was adopted at independence and adopted an exclusive ideology by elevating the pacifying memory of *Chimurenga/Umvukela* to the role of national narrative in order to pursue and justify its ideology and actions.

In order to prop up its waning popularity, especially among peasants and other landless constituencies, the ZANU-PF elite then adopted the FastTrack land Redistribution programme and encouraged its supporters to occupy the land. The war veterans and armed gangs with axes and machetes were mobilised to invade the white owned farms across the country to reclaim the lost land.³⁰⁴ The land reform policy faced international and national criticism which pivoted on the abuse of property rights, rule of law and human rights. In the face of international criticism from the international community, ZANU-PF gave the justification that this was a

³⁰⁴ Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006), 191.

completion of Zimbabwe's unfinished business, that of restoring the land and their rights to the black people which were denied in the colonial era. Consequently, ZANU-PF engaged in a discourse of renewed liberation struggle, code-named Third *Chimurenga* (third liberation struggle) or *Hondo Yeminda* (War for the land) claiming historical continuities with the wars of primary resistance against colonialism in the 1890s (the "First *Chimurenga*"), and the war for liberation of the 1960s and 1970s (the "Second *Chimurenga*"). The third *Chimurenga* was thus described as a continuation and the final stage of decolonisation.³⁰⁵

According to the *Chimurenga* ideology, the colonial occupation was a recurrent threat to Zimbabwe's identity and the sovereignty of the nation state. Terence Ranger (2004)³⁰⁶, has termed this a 'patriotic history' which developed through the selective mobilisation of the memory of the liberation struggle while appealing to an earlier glorious past. This selective articulation of the liberation history was the only event that every Zimbabwean should remember on a daily basis and was deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate.³⁰⁷ The past glories of the liberation war were also re-articulated to cement the role of Mugabe and ZANU-PF as true liberators and patriots and the stigmatization of those not belonging to it as dangerous traitors or enemies of the state. The land issue was revived to become the key signifier of true Zimbabwean identity because it is the link between the past, present and future as an anti-colonial symbol of continued struggle for freedom from oppression.³⁰⁸ In line with the *Chimurenga* oriented ideas of the nation, Zimbabwe is thus celebrated as a product of violent nationalist revolutions that has to be defended through the spilling of the blood of those considered to be opposed to the revolutionary project or the party ZANU-PF, which is taken to be a symbol of Zimbabwe.

³⁰⁵ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 195-197.

³⁰⁶ Terence Ranger, "The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe," in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, eds. Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos & Stig Jensen (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), 217-242.

³⁰⁷ Brian Raftopoulos, "Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics," in *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*, eds. S. Dorman, D. Hammet and P. Nugent, (Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishers), 101.

³⁰⁸ Christine Sylvester, "Remembering and Forgetting 'Zimbabwe': Towards a Third Transition," in *Political Transition: Politics and Cultures*, ed. Paul Gready (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 29-52.

Over time there was a continued need for teaching and commemoration to preserve the pacifying memory of the liberation struggle in the collective memory of the younger generation. Thus, at the beginning of 2000 when the party was losing popularity, a new teaching programme was introduced in order to re-educate the masses and to foster ‘patriotism’ as founded on the memories of the liberation struggle, especially among the youth who had not experienced the war.

A National Youth Training Service Programme was introduced to reproduce the traditions of the national liberation struggle through forcible and intensive inculcation on the youth of a very partisan narrative of the national history of liberation. In 2002, in teacher training and polytechnic programmes, National Strategic Studies were introduced in order to educate the younger generation about the history of the liberation struggle, the importance of the land for economic development, and to inculcate a national ethos.³⁰⁹ These programmes claimed to be designed to impress in the minds of young Zimbabwean citizens the basic human rights and democratic principles of equality, justice and individual freedom. Under the disguise of re-educating the young Zimbabweans to appreciate the importance of the liberation struggle, they were being taught a false understanding of independence which supported the aims of a one-party state. While the government denied that the programme was a partisan project that served to further ZANU-PF’s political agenda, the programme provided the party with a trained youth militia – popularly known as ‘green bombers’ that has been deployed on a number of occasions to serve the ruling party, for example in government elections and in the distribution of food.³¹⁰

A new cultural component was also introduced into the commemorations involving music galas, annual commemorations of departed heroes, a re-definition of national days such as independence and heroes’ days. These galas and commemorations were televised and they commemorated a number of historical events, national days or politicians who had played an important role in the liberation struggle.³¹¹ The galas served to popularise the celebration of national days such as Independence Day, Heroes Day and Unity Day. They also sought to commemorate and mark the contribution of crucial ‘national heroes’ such as Joshua Nkomo.

³⁰⁹ Independent, 29 November 2002.

³¹⁰ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Wendy Willems, “Making Sense of Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Commemoration under the Third Chimurenga in Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (2009): 954-955.

³¹¹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, “Making Sense of Cultural Nationalism,” 954-955.

After his death Nkomo, who in the 1980s was represented as the 'Father of dissidents' and who was even forced into exile in 1983, finally gained the status of 'Father of the nation'. A special form of commemoration of Nkomo known as '*Umdala Wethu Gala*' (Our dear old man gala) was introduced in 2001.³¹² Its celebrations emphasized national unity as Nkomo was now presented as a symbol of national unity because he signed the Unity Accord of 22 December 1987. The Unity Accord had enabled ZANU-PF to swallow PF-ZAPU, making it possible for Mugabe to pursue the objective of establishing a one-party state, unencumbered by any oppositional force. In this way the political message of the galas was more subtle and served to indirectly back up ZANU-PF's agenda.³¹³

These music festivals, which were broadcast live on television and radio, constituted an important part of ZANU-PF's mediation of what Ranger has called 'patriotic history', and sought to popularise a particular version of national identity. While they were strongly associated with the government and the ruling party, the galas did not tend to make explicit references to ZANU-PF nor were they always used by government politicians to make speeches. As compared to the official, annual commemoration of national days such as Independence Day and Heroes' Day, the political message of the galas was more subtle and served to indirectly back up ZANU-PF's agenda. They sought to complement the more formal commemorative ceremonies of national days, which had been introduced in the 1980s in order to forge national consciousness. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Wendy Willems write: "The national imaginary that was promoted through the music gala was by no means an inclusive definition of the nation, but should be seen as the mediation of a party nation."³¹⁴

The narrow selective version of history was also taught in the periods following the elections at *pungwes* which were night time political (re) education meetings.³¹⁵ These *pungwes* were orientation or education meetings that evoked memories of similar meetings called by the ZANLA guerrillas in the 1970s when the people were kept awake by singing old Chimurenga

³¹² Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 963.

³¹³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 962-963.

³¹⁴ Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 964.

³¹⁵ Tinashe L. Chimedza, "Bulldozers Always Come, 'Maggots', Citizens and Governance in Contemporary Zimbabwe" in *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*, ed. Maurice Vambe (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), 100.

songs and listening to speakers denounce whites and sell outs.³¹⁶ While the pungwe of the 1970s sought to convince the youth to join the liberation struggle, the music gala of the early 2000s was aimed at hailing young Zimbabweans as patriotic supporters of the ruling party. The incorporation of popular ‘urban grooves’ musicians into galas would guarantee a young audience who during the gala would not only be subjected to ‘urban grooves’ but also to the revived *Chimurenga* songs of the liberation war. These cultural events help construct a hegemonic identity that seeks to entrench the ZANU-PF constructed notions of the nation and are an attempt to stave off controversies about ZANU-PF use of independence celebrations to cobble a narrow and politically limited national identity.

The teaching and commemorations focus only on the pacifying memory of the liberation struggle while mythologizing one party and one leader in the roles of liberators. The aim is to unite the nation on this common foundation and give legitimacy to the state. But as the party has become the state, the unity of all the people is imagined as support for the one-party leadership in their pacifying memory of the liberation. This definition of national unity excludes those who do not support ZANU-PF so that differences and dangerous memories will not divide the consolidated power structure of the elite. The dangerous memory which arouses the categories of freedom, justice and equality has no place here. The pacifying memory of continuous chimurenga was promoted to maintain the elite’s hold on power which continued into the new millennium.

In summation, we have discussed the revival of the Chimurenga narrative at the beginning of 2000 which aimed to arouse the pacifying memory in order to consolidate ZANU-PF’s hold on power and to support and justify its haphazard land reform programme. Consequently, all the cultural programmes were geared towards cementing and re-inculcating this narrow version of patriotic history. What is clearly missing in this are the dangerous memories of suppression and human rights atrocities which entrench and deepen the divisions between groups of the population. In spite of imagining the unity of the people in national narratives and commemorations, the leadership was in fact entrenching the divisions in society.

³¹⁶ Sylvester, “Remembering and Forgetting Zimbabwe,” 43.

5.3 The significance of the effects of the third Chimurenga

5.3.1 Introduction

At the heart of the third *Chimurenga* (which is still ongoing) are issues around land acquisition, land redistribution and economic empowerment of indigenous Zimbabweans who were victims of colonial injustices motivated by the quest for inclusivity, equity, fairness and social justice. The moral and social justice imperatives of the Third *Chimurenga* are very clear and not subject to much contestation. They involve redressing the colonial legacy of social and economic policies that were skewed against the black people. However, the point over which opinion is vast and varied is one around the modalities of executing the Third *Chimurenga* and the selective use of the memory of liberation to justify the ZANU-PF hold on power. My intention is to discuss ZANU-PF's misappropriation of time, the significance of the exclusionary, discriminatory and racist aspects and also the militaristic and authoritarian aspects of the selective memory which together undermine the unity and sovereign role of the people.

5.3.2 The third Chimurenga as a pacifying memory of continuous war excludes the dangerous memories of the people

In the events of the third chimurenga, ZANU-PF appropriated the memory of the liberation struggle to hide its own failures and misdeeds to scapegoat the white commercial farmers who were represented as the symbol of continued colonial oppression. According to Lene-Bull Christiansen and Christine Sylvester, this strategy of ZANU-PF was based on wrong and narrow and partisan articulation of the time. The articulation of the third chimurenga discourse as the 'conquest of the conquest' is based on a notion of time that is both linear and teleological, in which the nation is being seen as in a permanent anti-colonial war.³¹⁷ According to Primorac, "Zimbabwe's rulers are seeking to artificially maintain an image of a society permanently engulfed by a certain kind of conflict-that is to say, society constantly threatened by hostile outsiders and their internal allies-so that its very identity as an independent entity is at stake."³¹⁸ This is a misappropriation and a misrepresentation of the current situation in Zimbabwe, to

³¹⁷ Quoted in Ranka Primorac, Ranka Primorac, "The Poetics of State Terror in Twenty-First Century Zimbabwe," *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9, no. 3 (2007): 440.

³¹⁸ Ranka Primorac, "The Poetics of State Terror in Twenty-First Century Zimbabwe," *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9, no. 3 (2007): 443.

state the country is in a transition, to claim that there was an attempt to re-enact the original colonial occupation.³¹⁹ The third *Chimurenga* thus defines the ‘present’ as a state of emergency which is signified by the war against neo-colonial forces that threaten the Zimbabwean nation with aggression into a colonial state.

For ZANU-PF, the present situation or the ‘now’ which is the mismanagement of the country and the dangerous memories of gross human rights violations, are irrelevant to the political discourse. This was surely the cry when Mugabe said, ‘we are ready to suspend the constitution when it comes to the issues of land’. Thus, democracy is a non-issue and the issues of human rights are non-issues, because the identity of the nation is at stake. It is the duty of the ruling elite to defend the sovereignty of the state against the sell-outs and enemies of the state. The calls from civil society for democratization and the voices of the opposition were interpreted as external interference in the unity of the Zimbabwean people. These are counter-memories which challenge the hegemonic status of ZANU-PF in national history and are dismissed as attempts to divide the nation. The external interference is seen not just as a reversal to the colonial times but is a re-enactment of the first colonial occupation.

The temporal schema which is at the heart of the third *Chimurenga* narrative seeks to blot out the historical present, the national now in which the government inflicts pain and death on its people on a daily basis. By looking backward as a way of managing the unpopular present, ZANU-PF hopes to write a ticket to the future and to do so with the everyday failings of a government in full public view.³²⁰ The temporal schema, which is at the heart of the third *Chimurenga* narrative, wipes away responsibility and accountability.

5.3.3 The imagination of the nation on a pacifying memory of patriotic war

In order to justify the FTLRP, Robert Mugabe adopted a persuasive rhetoric to unite the people in support of his selective use of the liberation memory:

We knew and still know that land was the prime goal for King Lobengula as he fought the British encroachment in 1893; we knew and still know that the land was the principal grievance for our heroes of the first *Chimurenga*, led by Nehanda and Kaguvi.

³¹⁹ Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation*, 80.

³²⁰ Sylvester, “Remembering and Forgetting Zimbabwe,” 30.

We knew and still know it to be a fundamental premise of the second *Chimurenga* and thus the principal definer of the succeeding new nation and state of Zimbabwe. Indeed, we know it to be the core issue and imperative of the third *chimurenga* which you and I are fighting for, for which we continue to make such enormous sacrifices.³²¹

The repetition of the past and present tense ‘We knew and still know’ with the first-person plural, offers what Mugabe tries to impose as the collective pacifying memory of a glorious struggle. The repeated phrase and inclusive use of ‘we’ appeals to the emotions of the audience to adopt this narrative as a collective memory and thereby to support ZANU-PF. Mugabe infers that this patriotic history is continuous into the present and therefore he rhetorically unites the leadership with the people in a current third *Chimurenga*. The rhetorical unification of the people with the leadership in the fight: ‘you and I are fighting for’, suggests a patriotism which unites the people in a shared valiant struggle and which translates into support for the leadership. Shepherd Mpofo, *Toxification of national holidays and national identity in Zimbabwe's post-2000 nationalism* states, “Appealing to people as a generic ‘we’ erases especially ethnic boundaries that define Zimbabwean politics, helping consolidate national affections pivoted by land and the economy.”³²² By seemingly to forget differences of ethnicity or class in the common struggle to regain the land, Mugabe creates a new narrative of ‘us’ and ‘them’ which works to support his power base. The rhetorical use of the first-person plural weaves a narrative of unity between the leadership and the people which will be consolidated by the ‘othering’ of those who hold a different viewpoint and have dangerous memories, as dangerous traitors or enemies of the state.

Mugabe further explained:

We are now talking about the conquest of conquest, the prevailing sovereignty of the people of Zimbabwe over settler minority rule and all it stood for including the possession of our land...Power to the people must now be followed by land to the people.³²³

³²¹ Robert Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga* (Harare: Government of Zimbabwe Printers, 2001), 92-93.

³²² Shepherd Mpofo, “Toxification of National holidays and National Identity in Zimbabwe's Post-2000 nationalism” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (March 2016): 28-48.

³²³ The Herald 6 December, 1997.

The use of the phrases ‘the prevailing sovereignty of the people’ and ‘Power to the people’ gives the impression that power lies with the people despite the top-down structure of power with the ruling party. This type of pacifying narrated version of events inculcates itself into the national consciousness when it is repeated at emotive patriotic commemorative events such as Independence Day and ultimately strengthens the power base of the ruling elite. This patriotic narrative excludes other issues which may concern the audience such as human rights or the economy so that the dangerous memories of the people remain subjugated and unacknowledged by the leadership. It is significant that the interests of the people are rhetorically aligned with the leadership interests when the leadership needs the people to act in a situation of war-like activity by forcibly retaking the land. Previously when the people have exercised their democratic rights to vote or voice opposition to the one-party state, it has been met with the hate speech of ‘othering’ and human rights abuses. However, the rhetoric of discrimination and intolerance continued through the events of the third *Chimurenga*, further dividing a people and encouraging violence and human rights abuses.

5.3.4 The third chimurenga undermines the sovereign role of the people through racism

In this section we will contend that the pacifying narrative of the unity of the people with their heroic liberators was used by the elite to maintain the status quo of the one-party state and to build the power base. The method of exclusion was the threatening rhetoric of ‘othering’ which incites violence and suppresses the voicing of contrary viewpoints from dangerous memories. This threatening rhetoric was reflected in the use of military force to coerce the people particularly at election times.

The re-interpretation of the memory of liberation into an anti-colonial discourse with such slogans as: Africa for Africans and Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans resulted in the obsession with race and bifurcation of citizens. At a ZANU-PF conference in December 2000, in a speech laden with crude rhetoric Mugabe denounced the white landowners as ‘white devils’, vowing to take all they owned:

This is our country...and this is our land...they think that because they are white, they have a divine right to our resources. Not here. The white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa is for Africans and Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans.³²⁴

This emotive speech aimed to arouse a patriotic spirit to gain support for the controversial policy of land seizures. Racism is the emotive factor here in the structured repetition of ‘Africa is for Africans’ where the ideology of ‘othering’ encourages violence and exclusion towards a person or group based on their race or beliefs. The use of repetition here from the first line ‘This is our country; this is our land’ creates a threatening rhetoric aimed at the white man and intended to rouse the war veterans to expedite the policy of land grabs. Racism clearly became a central part of this version of economic nationalism, as the land reform exercise clearly targeted white farmers who were reclassified as foreigners and enemies of Zimbabwe, even though they were descendants of commercial farmers.

With the employment of racism and a consistent anti-colonial rhetoric, the language of Othering further polarized the imagined community. The language of ‘othering’ resulted in the dehumanizing of the ‘other’ who was regarded as dirt to be cleaned up or as chaff to be washed away.³²⁵ In 2005 the politically motivated operation *Murambatsvina* (meaning to drive out the rubbish) was instituted by Mugabe as a project of forced slum clearance. The inhabitants of the shantytowns overwhelmingly voted for the MDC and a UN report estimated that 700,000 were left homeless.³²⁶ The policy of using the rhetoric of hate to undermine and target groups for abuse was evident here in the words of the police commissioner Augustine Chihuri who described the purpose of this exercise as “*to clean the country of the crawling mass of maggots bent on destroying the economy.*”³²⁷ The narrative of war which classifies all opposition as the enemy was evident in the government, the police and the military. The people’s political freedom of choice was non-existent under this narrative of *Chimurenga*. Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos write “Anyone seen as opposing the regime becomes a non-citizen, an enemy, subject to violent attack and beyond the protection of the state.”³²⁸ A whole range of

³²⁴ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 641.

³²⁵ David Kaulemu, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Sable Press, 2011), 5.

³²⁶ Maurice Vambe, *The Hidden Operations of Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), 84.

³²⁷ Vambe, *The Hidden Operations*, 84.

³²⁸ Hammar and Raftopoulos, *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business*, 24-29.

different oppositional groups were regarded as the ‘other’, termed as enemies of the ‘third *Chimurenga*’ and thus excluded from ‘the national we’. Included in this list would be the whites, immigrants-farm workers, and foreigners. These groups were regarded as fronts for re-colonisation of the country.³²⁹ An anti-colonial trope was developed that identified internal opposition forces as unpatriotic³³⁰ enemies of the state and therefore beyond the pale of the rule of law. Such people were arbitrarily stripped of their citizenship, their right to vote in elections, protection by the state and denied access to land and economic resources.

The imagined post-colonial state of Zimbabwe had embraced the whites as citizens via the policy of reconciliation in 1980 as enunciated by Mugabe's speech on the eve of independence. In the Lancaster House Constitution (1979) the new constitution reserved uncontested parliamentary seats for the white people for five years in an effort to unite the blacks and the whites and foster inclusivity. In the 1985 elections, when the constitutional provision expired, Mugabe expected the whites to vote for ZANU PF. But when they did not, they were denounced and accused of not accepting the government's generous offer of reconciliation, and so did not deserve any special consideration in the future.³³¹ Consequently, some of the white people left the country. It is estimated that by the 1990's about two thousand white people had left the country and resettled in South Africa and abroad. The majority of those who remained did not actively participate in the politics of the country. The white Zimbabweans re-emerged into the political scene, with the formation of the MDC. They were shown on television actively supporting the MDC, to the anger and disgust of Mugabe, who at that time was protecting the farms by sending the police to protect the property rights of the white farmers. Support for the MDC was considered by then, support for the enemy of the country. The white Zimbabweans became the first objects of the party's anger and racist politics. Speaking about the loss of the referendum and in reference to the whites, Mugabe once declared on state radio, “For them (whites) to have banded together in opposition to the government, and for that matter, to have gone much further in mobilising, and actually coercing their labour forces on the farms to

³²⁹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*, 223-28; Ndhlovu, *Language, Vernacular Discourse and Nationalism*, 152-157.

³³⁰ Brian Raftopoulos, “The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe,” in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, eds. Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos & Stig Jensen (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), 231.

³³¹ Sylvester, “Remembering and Forgetting Zimbabwe,” 80.

support the one position opposed to the government, has exposed them not as our friends but our enemies.”³³²Addressing a ZANU-PF congress in December 2009, Mugabe declared that:

“This is your country and not for whites. They are settlers even if they were born here, they are offspring of settlers.... Our party must continue to strike fear into the hearts of the white man, our real enemy. They must tremble.” (Zimbabwe Independent, 4 September 2009).³³³

Here Mugabe again uses ‘othering’ to divide the population into the exclusive binaries of ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’ thereby making the ZANU-PF party equivalent to and taking the place of the whole nation, to whom the entire population must give its allegiance. Mugabe appeals through pathos in the use of ‘your country’ to give the impression that the people hold power so that the audience will support his call to turn against the ‘white man’. The pacifying narrative of unity of the people with their heroic liberators maintains the status quo of the one-party state and builds the power base by excluding opposition and by threats of war rhetoric ‘strike fear into the hearts of the white man’ and ‘they must tremble’. The use of rhetoric to divide and conquer was often supported by the action of armed gangs known as ‘war veterans’ by the government.

The majority of whites were second, third or even fourth generation white immigrants who held valid and legitimate citizenship in terms of the country’s constitution. Because of the racialized, nativist and exclusionary practises of the third Chimurenga, they now found themselves being dehumanized as foreigners and stripped of citizenship and subject to gross human right violations. The white owned factories became places of intimidation, as the ZANU-PF party gangs stormed the places of work, abducting and assaulting managers and staff and seizing equipment. Their farms were targeted and they could not be protected by the police against the violent invaders. This was in repudiation of the national policy of reconciliation adopted at independence. Colonial memory here is used to divide the nation into the White and Black nations making Zimbabwean national identity ... meaningful only through the contrast with others. Citizenship was thus narrowed and referred to in *nativist* terms that excluded the white race as foreigners.³³⁴

³³² Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 638.

³³³ Cited from Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 352.

³³⁴ Nativism advances the notion that whites are foreigners, thieves and do not belong to Zimbabwe or Africa.

Another category of Zimbabweans who bore the brunt of this insidious onslaught on citizenship is that of the descendants of people originally from Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique who came as migrant workers to work in the farms and mines because the local people were opposed to working in these places. Because of their foreign origins, the farmer workers and miners were kept out of all the institutional arrangements that were part and parcel of nation-building and were never imagined as belonging to Zimbabwe but were imagined as outsiders. Rutherford explains, “In terms of belonging immigrant farm workers and mineworkers did not easily fit into the postcolonial nation, and have never done so and so have been largely excluded in the development and its associated arrangement.”³³⁵ Thus, their lives were completely dependent and controlled by the white farmers and they had to follow what the farmer workers called *mitemo yemurungu*, (the laws of the farmer).³³⁶

In the third Chimurenga most of them were marginalized and stripped of their Zimbabwean citizenship, because of their association with the commercial farmers, they were subjected to the same racial slur as the whites. West and Rutherford captured the marginalization of the farm workers with the words:

They are citizens whose claim to belong to Zimbabwe have been treated with suspicion by the government and many other Zimbabweans because of the history of labour migrations and more importantly, the form of administration under which they fell. The former meant that many farm workers in the colonial period were foreign born, while the latter has meant that they have been closely linked to white farmers and not necessarily the postcolonial nation.³³⁷

The farm workers were assaulted, kicked and whipped; men were abducted, women raped, their homes destroyed, their possessions looted.³³⁸ They became the victims of the FLRP and they lost their jobs and subsequently became homeless. It is estimated that approximately 600,000 farm labourers and miners of Malawian, Mozambican or Zambian ancestry became victims of the exclusive ideology of the third Chimurenga.

³³⁵ Blair Rutherford, “Belonging to the Farm(er): Farm Workers, Farmers and the Shifting Politics of Citizenship” in *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, eds. Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), 203.

³³⁶ Rutherford, “Belonging to the Farm(er),” 203-204.

³³⁷ Chimedza, “Bulldozers Always Come,” 95.

³³⁸ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 637-638.

The farm workers who had lost their livelihoods on the farms moved into the cities in search of employment but because of their association with the farms and the whites they continued to be regarded as part of the enemy camp and were subjected to the same violence.³³⁹ In 2005, it was the farm workers who became the target of the *Murambatsvina* (clean up) operation.³⁴⁰ The police commissioner Augustine Chihuri described the purpose of this exercise as, “to clean the country of the crawling mass of maggots bent on destroying the economy.”³⁴¹ This ‘crawling mass of maggots’ referred to the economically poor people like the women, children, recent migrants from the farm workers who were made jobless and landless, and those who had resided in towns after migrating from other countries. This operation was meant to punish them, discipline, dispossess and displace them as they were suspected of being the support base of the opposition. Effectively, what this meant was that the descendants of migrants were not full or equal citizens of Zimbabwe, by virtue of their myths of origin, in spite of the fact that they were born in Zimbabwe and were second or fourth generation.

Besides people of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian descent, Zimbabwe has a considerable coloured and Indian population who have not been treated as citizens since 1980 under the ideology of *chimurenga*. Shepherd Mpfu cites one critical event in the treatment of Indians and Coloured as outsiders in Zimbabwe. The IDs of the rest of the local black population have district codes and ‘CIT’ which denote districts of origin and that they are Citizens. In the case of Indians and Coloureds, their IDs are written ‘00 CIT’ which denotes that they do not have a district of origin and are non-citizens.³⁴² Indians and Coloureds have been excluded from participating in the nation and economic nationalism through the government's deployment of race and ethnicity. It is no surprise that in 2000-2003 the Coloureds and Indians were excluded from the land reform programme. Muzondidya cites one interviewee in *The Sunday Mail* (04.04.2001) saying about the land reform: some Coloureds have tried to register and be allocated pieces of land like our black counterparts but have been told that they should register

³³⁹ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 637.

³⁴⁰ Chimedza, “Bulldozers Always Come,” 89.

³⁴¹ Chimedza, 89.

³⁴² Shepherd Mpfu, “Public and Diasporic Online Media in the Discursive Construction of National Identity: A Case of Zimbabwe” (PhD diss., University of Witwatersrand, 2014), 166-167.

with their village headman. Everybody knows we do not have a village head man. Is that not a subtle way of discriminating against us?³⁴³ Only the deeply rural, that is those who adhere to their traditional roots in the village and who are still in possession of their totems, can be considered true citizens of Zimbabwe.³⁴⁴ The above illustrates that *race* rather than citizenship is the main basis that ZANU-PF has used to define the national insiders and outsiders to be included and excluded respectively.

In Summation the Chimurenga discourse in itself led to the emergence and entrenchment of hierarchies of citizenship within the Zimbabwean body politic, the very same hierarchies of citizenship that all the chimurenga sought to eliminate. We have a situation whereby members and supporters are de facto first-class citizens of Zimbabwe, in their language chiefs of ZANU-PF who are the only true, authentic and patriotic Zimbabweans. Everyone else occupies the lower rank as second-class citizens. This classification mimics the colonial situation in which societies were bifurcated along racial lines where white people enjoyed the privileged position of first-class citizens with the black people/indigenous people bifurcated to inferior subjects. The denial of citizenship to those classified as unpatriotic and enemies of the state has entrenched inequalities and intolerance of the other in the imagined community. The foundation myth of *chimurenga* as articulated by the state leader and his henchmen has failed to unite the nation's various racial, class and ethnic groups. Instead of the memory of liberation, they promote the continuous memory of war and division to maintain their hold on power and the continued subjugation of the people.

³⁴³James Muzondidya, "Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans. Invisible subject minorities and the quest for justice and reconciliation in post-colonial Zimbabwe" in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, eds. Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), 228.

³⁴⁴Amanda Hammar, "The Making and (Un)masking of Local Government in Zimbabwe," in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* eds. Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), 125-126.

5.3.5 Authoritarianism and militarism in government denies a sovereign role to the people

In this section we shall argue that the pacifying memory of patriotic war was used to justify the use of military style force as a means of preserving the power base of the ruling elite. Any other dangerous memories which contradict the dominant narrative are considered unpatriotic and must be othered through racist and other derogatory language.

After independence the elite became preoccupied with state power and clung to power by all means, leading to the valorisation of violence which degenerated into authoritarianism, dictatorship and militarism. This led to a disregard for the rule of law, perversion of the judiciary and human rights abuses. The values of freedom and the sovereign rights of citizenship which had been fought for were denied to the people of Zimbabwe. The liberation narrative was taken and used for party political purposes while the emancipatory agenda for the people and their sovereign role in an independent nation was forgotten.

Underlying the *Chimurenga* narrative is a power narrative. At independence the elite positioned themselves as the legitimate leaders and protectors of the nation based on their liberation war credentials. Norma Kriger has argued that immediately after independence, the symbolic status of the liberation war became an important emotional symbol and source of legitimacy for the governing elite and that the way in which the regime constructed symbols of national identity out of the liberation war was a testament to their commitment to hierarchy, bureaucratic control, and top down decision making.³⁴⁵ The commemorative site of Heroes Acre very clearly constructed the narrative of heroic leadership belonging to ZANU-PF members by the selection of those heroes who could be buried there. This choice was made unilaterally by the party. Underlying this narrative was also the use and glorification of violence as the modus operandi for the destruction of opponents and enemies.

For ZANU, the gun was celebrated as a tool of restoring order and ‘cleaning up the rot’. The strategy of Gukurahundi demonstrated a key feature of chimurenga ideology, that is the use of military force to support political aims as the memory of the military struggle for liberation was appropriated for the party-political agenda. The ZANU Departments of Defence and

³⁴⁵ Kriger, “*The Politics of Creating National Heroes*,” 145-146.

Commissariat promoted ideas of the supremacy of the military within ZANU and enforced violent disciplinary measures that included outright elimination of those considered to be failing to adhere to the party line. According to Meredith, Mugabe had never subscribed to electoral democracy as he stated in 1976 in a radio broadcast from Mozambique.

Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer-its guarantor. The people's votes and the people's guns are always inseparable twins.³⁴⁶

By rhetorically linking 'gun' and 'vote' in a process, Mugabe makes clear that in his Chimurenga ideology, the gun rules supreme over the vote (democracy) and that the militarization of the state is the best way to sustain support: 'should remain its security officer' for the party. This was the creed to which he held fast and once in office he continued to use violence to achieve his political objectives. The elections in Zimbabwe have been marked by violence during and after elections and every time the party faces a formidable opposition force, it has tendentiously reminded people that 'Zimbabwe *ndeyeropa*' (Zimbabwe came after a violent war of liberation) and that it would go back to the bush to fight another Chimurenga if defeated in an election.³⁴⁷

Mugabe made the party strategy very clear that any protest against the government would be dealt with by an iron fist:

"We will not brook any protests, any attempt to cause problems. Those who want to rebel and to cause lawlessness will be beaten to the ground like they have never been beaten."³⁴⁸

The use of 'we' here suggests a collective power base of military might which is rhetorically contrasted with 'those' the 'other' whose rebellion is seen as unlawful. It is ironic that Mugabe then advocates the sanctioning of human rights abuses: 'beaten to the ground like they have never been beaten' as a solution to his problem. Mugabe instigates a level of lawlessness by a political leader which goes against all principles of humanity and the ideals of the liberation memory. Mugabe went on to brag about having degrees in violence and then demonstrated this by punching in the air at political rallies to emphasise the agenda of violence as a solution to

³⁴⁶ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 625.

³⁴⁷ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 184.

³⁴⁸ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 644.

the political situation in Zimbabwe.³⁴⁹ Mugabe's cabinet minister, Nathan Shamuyarira noted publicly "The area of violence is an area where ZANU-PF has a very strong, long and successful history. Violence and terror have certainly paid off for the party in the past."³⁵⁰ Thus in postcolonial Zimbabwe, violence has continued to be used to build party support, to deal with those who were opponents and also to win elections. By using force in action and in threatening language to facilitate the aims of the elite, the freedom of the people is removed and they are subjugated to the role of the oppressed as in colonial times.

The emergence of a new political party in the beginning of 2000 was threatening to change the balance of power. The emergence of the MDC as a viable party that was challenging the legacy and rule of ZANU-PF for the first time since independence, meant that a new set of rules for defining politics and the practise of government had to be reconstructed.³⁵¹ The emergence of the MDC as the opposition party was too great a threat for ZANU-PF to ignore, a threat not only to its authority and its persistent one-party state project, but to its control over the very terms and mechanisms of governance that could revive it and its fortunes.³⁵² For its survival ZANU-PF decided to recede to the strategy of Gukurahundi, which authorized a culture of violence as the *modus operandi* in order to ensure compliance among the citizenry. The previously paraded rhetoric of reconciliation and unity and encouragement of justice collapsed under their fear of losing power.³⁵³

Under the third *Chimurenga*, 2000-2009, a situation of war against the opposition and the West was declared in which the enemy must be defeated. In order to achieve its objectives, the ZANU-PF government turned to the military and the military personnel in order to strengthen its hold on power and achieve its political objectives. The military began to overtly manifest an interest in the leadership of the country. This was publicly made clear by the army generals, when they revealed that they would not honour or recognise a leader who did not have liberation war credentials. The senior military figures viewed themselves as part of the state establishment, as well as part of a political hierarchy whose major qualification was

³⁴⁹ Meredith, 617-646.

³⁵⁰ Hammar, "The Making and Unmasking of Local Government in Zimbabwe," 26.

³⁵¹ Hammar, 125.

³⁵² Hammar, 30.

³⁵³ Kaulemu, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe*, 130.

participation in the liberation struggle.³⁵⁴ The retired military figures were appointed to key government positions and the paramilitary forces were drawn from war veterans and the youth militia. The military directly and indirectly became in charge of the electoral system and this made it very difficult for anyone not aligned with it to win the presidential office. The party's loyalists, the war veterans, would provide the vanguard for the third *Chimurenga* which was bolstered by the party youth militia and the national security services.³⁵⁵ This eventually led to a shift in state practice and various modes of rule.

Key centres of power within the Zimbabwean state, especially the security forces, the judiciary and major parts of the civil service were turned into ZANU-PF fiefdoms. The Public order and Security act, the access to information and Protection of Privacy Act were passed in order to intercept communications, prohibiting basic freedoms of associations. In the rural districts, teachers, health workers and local government officials were unceremoniously relieved of their duties in order to pave the way for those sympathetic to the ruling party and could be subject to the party structures.³⁵⁶ The governing party with all these measures lost its façade of tolerance and unleashed its repressive party and state machinery.³⁵⁷ Militia bases were set up across the country to hunt down opposition supporters and enforce the ZANU-PF party policies in order to ensure ZANU-PF success. Military-style operations such as Operation *Murambatsvina* (operation clean-up in 2005), Operation *mavoterapapi* 2008³⁵⁸ (where did you put up your vote?) and *chimumumu*, which involved abductions of members of the opposition, civil society and other figures, testified to the consistent use of the strategy of *Gukurahundi* by ZANU-PF against those identified as threatening its hegemony.³⁵⁹ These were the clearest examples of the gun being used to protect the vote. ZANU-PF has continued to use the strategy of *Gukurahundi* each time its hegemony is threatened. The country degenerated into authoritarian and militaristic rule and democracy was to suffer. The violence in Zimbabwe

³⁵⁴ Sachikonye, *Zimbabwe's Lost Decade*, 23.

³⁵⁵ Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, "Rethinking Land, State and Nation," in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, eds. Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen (Weaver Press Harare. 2003), 30.

³⁵⁶ Raftopoulos, *The State in Crisis*, 233.

³⁵⁷ Raftopoulos, 234.

³⁵⁸ Post 29 March 2009 the presidential election runoff. People were being punished for voting for the opposition MDC. The code name *mavoterapapi*, how did you vote or where did you vote captured the official mind behind the atrocities.

³⁵⁹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 200.

beginning with the *Gukurahundi* atrocities is a clear indictment on the presumed successes of Zimbabwean nationalism to produce a stable national identity.

The militaristic and authoritarian tendencies and the use of violence had a profound effect on the rule of law. The former liberators were not used to defeat and taking decisions that were unfavourable to them. As a military, the former liberators were used to giving top-down decisions. In order for them to win, they needed to reform the structures that gave these decisions. The first structure to undergo reform was the judiciary.

The Fast-Track Land Reform Programme necessitated the reform of the judiciary, for when land invasions were on the rise, the white commercial farmers sought the help of the courts for protection. The courts gave orders declaring the farm invasions illegal and militating against the rule of law. The Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay stated “Wicked things have been done and continue to be done. They must be stopped.”³⁶⁰ However, these court decisions angered Mugabe and led to a campaign to vilify the judges, especially the Chief Justice of the time, Anthony Gubbay who was pressured into resigning. Using anti-white rhetoric, Mugabe blamed the white judges for constantly blocking the land reform programme through judiciary decisions that always favoured the white commercial farmers. Mugabe and ZANU-PF openly encouraged their supporters and the law enforcement agents to disregard the constitution on the issue of land. At the ZANU-PF conference he labelled whites as the “white devil” stating:

The courts can do whatever they want, but no judicial decision will stand in our way... where was the constitution when they confiscated our land? My own position is that we should not even be defending our position in the courts. This is our country...and this is our land...they think they are white they have a divine right to our resources. Not here. The white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa is for Africans and Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans.³⁶¹

Mugabe couples racist language white devil with threats of violence “Our party must continue to strike fear into the hearts of the white man, our real enemy”³⁶² as racism leads to aggression towards the other group. As the judicial process was now preventing Mugabe’s aims for land redistribution, he aimed his divisive and threatening rhetoric at the constitution by inferring

³⁶⁰ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 641.

³⁶¹ Meredith, 641.

³⁶² Meredith, 642.

that unconstitutional practise occurred in the past “where was the constitution when they confiscated our land?”. His intention to ignore the constitution is inferred in ‘no judicial decision will stand in our way’ which also emphasises the power of the leadership. The following repeated use of the possessive pronoun ‘*our* country, *our* land’ rhetorically unites the people with the leadership to give the impression that the party acts with the agreement of the people. The reference to country and land is emotive for the people and can be used by Mugabe to create a narrative of national unity which is contrary to the view of white Zimbabweans. The dangerous memories of subjugated groups are ignored and deliberately omitted from the narrated dominant pacifying memory.

The racist rhetoric of Mugabe reveals his imagination of the political community which he wishes to construct. The pacifying memory of patriotic war is used to justify the use of force so that democracy and judicial decisions can be overcome in his will to power.³⁶³ Thus, the constitution was suspended regarding the FastTrack Land Programme. The white judges were forced to resign and then the party loyalists were appointed. One of their first actions was to declare the land reform programme lawful. Thus, under the third Chimurenga the judiciary became captured and lost credibility in public opinion

With deliberate disregard for the constitution, the legitimisation of violence and breaking the rule of law, gross human rights violations and abuses including torture, rape, kidnapping, intimidation and sometimes murder and sexual violence, became normalised as the everyday mode of rule. The questions of human rights and liberties, in the third Chimurenga were dismissed and depicted as irrelevant and counter revolutionary. Violence thus became canonised and celebrated as a virtue and a sign of heroism rather than being condemned.³⁶⁴ The perpetrators of violence were thus given impunity from prosecution and presidential pardons as long as their acts were deemed to be political and in broad support of ZANU-PF and in defence of national sovereignty.³⁶⁵ Because the perpetrators enjoy impunity, some of them have committed the same acts against opposition organisers and supporters over and over again. Impunity is a violation of the principles of sovereignty and the equality of all citizens before the law.

³⁶³ William J. Mpfu, *Robert Mugabe and the Will to Power in an African Postcolony* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 235.

³⁶⁴ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 191.

³⁶⁵ Sachikonye, *Zimbabwe's Lost Decade*, 42.

The now militarized and authoritarian party, tolerated rather than allowed the opposition to its hegemony. Fanon captures the travails of the opposition parties in postcolonial Africa when he says: “The opposition groups were thus labelled as the other and enemy of the state that were being sponsored by the neo-colonial powers.”³⁶⁶ After the defeat in the referendum in 2000 and the narrow victory of the elections of 2002, ZANU-PF consistently worked to delegitimize all those political formations and civil society forces that threatened Mugabe’s power. Thus, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) became the face of all those political formations and forces that were identified not only as constituted by enemies of the nation and the state but as inauthentic parties that “give a perverted and false expression of the national will” (Luxemburg 1976: 141).

Throughout the election campaign Mugabe kept up his angry tirades against his opponents, effectively licensing violence against them. In Mugabe’s estimation the MDC was a not an ordinary opposition party, but a manifestation of “the resurgence of white power, a counter revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday.”³⁶⁷ Mugabe rhetorically attacks any political opposition by equating them with the old colonial oppressors to frighten the voting public “inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people” and he carefully excludes or ‘others’ the MDC from the national identity by positioning himself with the people ‘our people’. Thus, Mugabe used dramatic speech to inspire his listeners to hold a similar viewpoint to his own: “The MDC will never form the government of this country, never ever, not even in my lifetime or even after I die.”³⁶⁸ Morgan Tsvangirai was personally attacked in derogatory terms: “Tsvangirai is just an empty vessel, a bucket, a miserable figure. The intellectual level of our country will not allow the ignoramuses of our country to rule.”³⁶⁹ He was branded a traitor and a puppet serving the interests of Britain and White settlers: “No self-respecting black man must ever support the MDC because it is just a front for the white man,”³⁷⁰ and so a declaration of war was issued against the opposition.³⁷¹ MDC candidates, officials and supporters were attacked and

³⁶⁶ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 135-136.

³⁶⁷ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 640.

³⁶⁸ Meredith, 639.

³⁶⁹ Meredith, 639.

³⁷⁰ Meredith, 639.

³⁷¹ Meredith, 639.

assaulted, while the police stood by watching. Very often, the police did not investigate reported cases especially if they were against MDC supporters. On the contrary, they were heavy-handed in dealing with complaints against the MDC supporters. The partisan police force often refused the MDC permission to hold campaign rallies or public meetings or broke them up. Opposition officials and supporters were frequently detained on spurious charges. Tsvangirai and two of his top officials were charged with treason just months before the 2002 presidential election for attempting to remove Mugabe from power unconstitutionally. Because the police could not assist them, many MDC supporters were forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in urban areas. This one-party state, based on the chimurenga ideology, was narrowly exclusive and intolerant to opposition parties.

In Summation, we have observed that the third Chimurenga, led to the party becoming more and more authoritarian in response to the threat to its hegemony posed by the opposition party and as a result, the rule of law, impartiality before the law and the separation of powers increasingly came under threat. The politicisation and co-optation of the army, police and intelligence officers into the governing structures led to the militarization of the state in order to serve narrow partisan ends. The undermining of the independence of the judiciary and the normalization of violence led to the break in the rule of law and curtailed the freedom of the people to participate in the election and to exercise their citizenship. The culture of impunity has led to a rejection of accountability and justice where there is no equality for the people who live in fear of the threat of human rights abuses. These factors meant for sure that such a heavily militarized state which was intolerant to opposition could not build a united free and democratic Zimbabwe. The speech of the state leader, Robert Mugabe has driven the pacifying memory of patriotic war instead of freedom in order to strengthen the position of the one-party state. The use of the pacifying memory to maintain the status quo for the ruling elite has justified the use of violence towards individuals and groups through hate speech and ‘othering’ thus increasing the divisions among the people. The threatening rhetoric which overtly promotes violence in democratic procedures removes the basic rights and freedoms of the people to take part in the governance of their country. These factors have thwarted the opportunity to build a united, democratic and human rights sensitive society.³⁷² The noble ideals of the dangerous memory of liberation such as solidarity with the other, equality and justice were overtaken by chaos and impunity and by the narrow, racist party constructs of Patriotism and loyalty.

³⁷² Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 191.

5.4 Summary and Conclusions for the future

The selective re-articulation of the memory of the liberation struggle set in stone only the pacifying memory of a heroic war, which was attributed to one political party and its leader. The commemorative site of Heroes Acre narrated this message in the heroic mural of Mugabe and the use of an automatic weapon for the design of the whole site. Such a narrow version of history was contested by all those with dangerous memories which were not remembered. Thus, the commemorative site did not serve to unite the people in one collective memory but rather to impose a partisan version of history into the public domain. All opposition to this narrative was crushed by the rhetoric of war as evident from such statements as ‘degrees in violence’ and ‘*Tinotema nedemo*’, (we kill with axes). In this war culture, all opponents were seen as enemies and enemies cannot become fellow citizens in the same country. The aim of war is to vanquish all adversaries at whatever cost. Thus, the liberation war machinery including ideology, institutions, strategies, personnel and practices were geared towards eliminating those identified as enemies and all their collaborators.³⁷³ Thus, intolerance, violence and authoritarianism has been part and parcel of the liberation struggle as interpreted by the elite in power.

The challenge of transforming the various ethnicities into one nation and building a just and equitable society was not achieved, nor was reconciliation achieved. The cultural, ethical and social aspects of the memory of the liberation struggle have been subordinated to its violent military aspect.³⁷⁴ The liberation struggle was fought not for the sake of struggle. There was a moral value for people to take up arms in the cause of freedom. This motivation is based on the dangerous memory of suffering oppression which brings about a solidarity with the suffering of the ‘other’ in order to bring about a future that is different. Veterans of the liberation went into politics and they had been ready to leave their professions and risk their lives as teachers, doctors, nurses in order to fight the unjust system of racism, exploitation, inequality in access to national resources, poverty, cruelty and inhuman treatment at the hands of the colonial government. These were the values of the liberation struggle. These are the values that should undergird the liberation war memory.

³⁷³ Kaulemu, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe*, 133.

³⁷⁴ Kaulemu, 21.

The true liberation memory is a dangerous memory. It calls for accountability both to the past and to the dead. The nationalists have rather used the liberation memory and misappropriated it in order to hide their mismanagement of the country. This memory has been abused and privatized to keep the ruling party in power. And hence there is no regard for the people who are suffering under the current regime, with gross human rights violations. In this way the elite have sacrificed the citizens in order to remain in power. Zimbabwe's leaders need to transcend the rhetoric of victimhood in order to realise the sovereign role of the people in democracy. Though the issue of democracy was at the heart of the fight for liberation, when it came to the actual practice there was a tendency to a one-party system of governance. The *modus operandi* of violence in politics, intolerance to different viewpoints and a system of othering is a sign that the nationalist project has lost its way. What is suffering in the project of constructing the nation-as-people is the issue of democracy and human rights and ethical leadership.

The elitist use of the memories of liberation have proven to be inadequate as a foundational myth of the postcolonial nation. There needs to be an honest audit of the past in which the memories of subjugation and abuses are acknowledged, for progress towards healing the suffering of the past can begin to take place. Such an acknowledgement of the subversive memories would lead to greater unity of the imagined community if this new collective memory was formally commemorated in the national consciousness. Also, the ethical categories of the dangerous memory of colonial oppression should be used to motivate the application of freedom, justice and equality in the sovereign political lives of the people. The dangerous memory leads to equitable distribution of resources for all, justice through the law, accountability in leadership and the right of citizens to take a part in the government of their land.

There is a need to develop a solidarity that cuts across social, political, economic and cultural divides. Zimbabwe needs to broaden its imaginations of the nation and to move away from the politics of 'othering', excluding and wanting to eliminate those who do not share the ideology of ZANU-PF in order to develop a more inclusive and tolerant citizenry. We need to take the humanity of others seriously. We need to develop people who see each other as equal partners and to be in solidarity with each other. We need to feel for the other, those who suffered imprisonment, torture and cruelty and the inhumanity of the colonial regime, feel for the people who are brutalised and abducted since they too had the same experience. We need to abandon an essentialist, purist, exclusivist strategy of nation building.

Zimbabwe is not a homogenous cultural population but a multi-ethnic community. There is a need to develop an ethic, a way of thinking and a way of doing things that encourages all Zimbabweans to recognize and respect one another as members of a moral community and to develop national policies that take a multicultural multi party approach. There is a need to accommodate all Zimbabweans and all groups so that there is no competition or contradiction between being local and being national. This requires developing social solidarity that cuts across ethnicity, race, gender, age and culture.³⁷⁵ All social groups should feel accommodated and have a sense of belonging. The language of comradeship overcomes differences and promotes solidarity and is entirely contrary to the language of ‘othering’ which dehumanizes and divides.

In the final chapter I will make a comparison of the rhetorical use of the pacifying and dangerous memories of liberation in Deuteronomy with the use in postcolonial Zimbabwe, based on the evidence of the analysis of the speech of Moses and that of Robert Mugabe to construct the imagined political community and the sovereign role of the people. The biblical model of nation-building will be compared to Zimbabwe in the specific areas of commemoration and the use of the liberation memory to motivate the people to a course of action which benefits the whole community. In comparison with the use of pacifying memories in Zimbabwe and the deliberate policy of forgetting the dangerous memories, the biblical model should suggest ways of using the memory of liberation for the benefit of the nation-as-people as a way forward for post-colonial states.

³⁷⁵ Kaulemu, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe*, 45.

Chapter 6 Making connections between the nation-building model in Deuteronomy and post-colonial Zimbabwe

6.1 Introduction

The narrative and rhetorical analyses in this work have found that the ancient people of Israel and the modern post-colonial state of Zimbabwe have a common foundation of a liberation struggle which was used by their leaders as the foundation of the people's collective memory for nation-building. In Deuteronomy the liberation memory was used to construct a model of a united people with a sovereign role in the land. The fact that this same liberation memory has not resulted in the construction of a nation as a people in post-colonial Zimbabwe is the context for discussion in this chapter.

It is difficult to make a direct comparison of the ancient community of Israel with the modern post-colonial state in Zimbabwe. Over three millennia separate the two communities and the march of time has brought social and historical development which would seem astonishing to the ancient peoples. Norman Gottwald comments on the ethical force of the Bible on issues of economics which indicate grounds for comparison: "Notwithstanding the very real differences and the distance between the economic systems of the ancient Near East and our world, what connects the two is a common thread of economic inequity and oppression and a common thread of struggle against needless economic suffering."³⁷⁶

One area of similarity for both ancient and modern peoples is that at the time of independence for Zimbabwe and the narrative setting of Moab for Israel, both communities stood on the edge of a new beginning for nation-building with the hope of freedom and social justice for all. The fundamental issues of freedom and justice for the people bring to light different areas of oppression, inequality and the use of power which are grounds for comparison between the two communities. It could be argued that the issues stay the same over time but only the content of the issues differs. So, on these general issues of freedom and justice, a comparison can be made between the ancient and modern peoples.

³⁷⁶ Norman K Gottwald, "How Does Social Scientific Criticism Shape Our Understanding of the Bible as a Resource for Economic Ethics?" in *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and in Ours*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 346.

The structure of this chapter will firstly outline and contrast the use of pacifying and dangerous memories for the construction of a nation as a people, in the rhetoric of the leaders Moses and Robert Mugabe. This will make clear the differences in the realisation of a united imagined political community and the people's sovereign role in the land, between the model of Deuteronomy and the present state in Zimbabwe. Secondly, I will bring the model of nation-building in Deuteronomy into dialogue with the context of Zimbabwe in a tripolar analysis to reveal the key issues for reconstruction of the nation for the future. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the results of the tripolar analysis as a vision for nation-building in the future of post-colonial countries.

6.2 The use of the memory of liberation for the construction of the nation as a people, in the rhetoric of the leaders Moses and Robert Mugabe.

In this section I will outline three different ways in which Moses uses the liberation memory to construct the unity and sovereign role of the people. I will present the three rhetorical aims of Moses in the light of the rhetoric of Robert Mugabe, in the context of post-colonial Zimbabwe. This will reveal the different realisations of the use of the liberation memory.

The character of Moses rhetorically exhorts the people to remember both the pacifying and dangerous memories of all the events in Israel's past, to construct a united people with a sovereign role in the land. In order to achieve this, the rhetorical use of memory by Moses has three aims. Firstly, to motivate acceptance of the authority and justice of God by remembering the pacifying memory of the divine deliverance, through which Israel has been freed. The authority and justice of God is mediated through the ethical laws which Israel is motivated to obey by remembering the authority of God as her deliverer and by remembering her experience of slavery.

Secondly, Moses constructs the unity of all the people by inculcating one collective memory which contains the pacifying and dangerous memories of the past. Thus, Israel as one people is constructed and unified as an imagined community with a shared collective memory. This unity is protected from a return to oppression by remembrance of the dangerous memory of slavery. Moses exhorts the audience most emphatically to remember the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt to motivate obedience to the laws which protect the unity and freedom of the people by curbing the oppressive use of power over others. The third aim of the rhetorical use

of pacifying and dangerous memories is to establish the sovereign role of the people through an ethical way of life which enhances a shared humanity for all.

6.2.1 Contrasting uses of the pacifying memory of liberation

Israel is motivated to accept the authority and justice of God by remembering the pacifying memory of the divine deliverance, through which Israel has been freed. In the exhortation which precedes the law code, Moses has conferred the knowledge of the authority of God to Israel through his remembered account of the divine deliverance from Egyptian oppression. The memory of the mighty act of divine deliverance is used to persuade the audience of the supreme power and authority of God. Moses has supported his argument with the evidence of the actions of God: “the mighty hand and outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out” (7:19 cf.11:2-4) which “your eyes saw” (7:19). The logic of this argument is that only God is almighty and sovereign as his power has freed Israel from slavery and therefore in the land, the exercise of his sovereign powers is mediated through the Torah. God has transformed Israel’s life from slavery to freedom and as a consequence of this freedom, Israel is exhorted to commit to covenantal ethics in obedience to the social cares of the laws.

Robert Mugabe has positioned himself and his political party as the liberator of the people through the visual imagery at the Heroes Acre commemorative site. The narrative memory of liberation is inculcated for the visitors in the visual imagery of Mugabe, pictured in a large mural towering over the people as he leads them to freedom. The political party is linked to this narrative of liberation by the select practise of burying ‘heroes’ who are mostly ZANU-PF members at the site. This projects one political party and their leader as the chief liberator of the people. This pacifying memory of military power and patriotism centres all authority on Mugabe and therefore demands the allegiance of the people to his party.

6.2.2 The importance of the pacifying and dangerous memories for the unity of the people

Secondly, Moses constructs the unity of all the people by inculcating one collective memory which contains the pacifying and dangerous memories of the past. Israel is exhorted to remember not only the mighty deeds of God in her deliverance but also the dangerous memory of her oppression in Egypt. She is also exhorted to “remember and do not forget” (9:7-12) the dangerous memories of all her failures to follow God’s ways, especially in her faithless act of

worshipping the golden calf (9:12). All generations are inculcated into the one collective memory and therefore united in continuity with the remembrances of the past.

The rhetorical purpose of Robert Mugabe is found in the pacifying memory of a glorious war narrative which deliberately excludes the dangerous memories of the people in order to construct the elitist version of the narrated past. The narrative memory of war is not used to unite and reconcile the people but to threaten and coerce. Despite his early claims for the liberation ideals of unity and national co-operation, his rhetoric became divisive and threatening towards all groups of the population who opposed his government in order to coerce the free will of the people to his point of view. At the time of independence in 1980 Robert Mugabe gave a speech which exhorted the people to unite through the collective memory of the liberation struggle in order to act as motivation for a life of justice and solidarity in the land. However, a deviation from the liberation category of unity came in the call to 'forget our grim past' suggesting a lack of acknowledgement or accountability for the dangerous memories of the past. The human rights atrocities of Gukurahundi were dismissed by Mugabe as 'a moment of madness' which suggests that they should be forgotten. But forgetting does not bring justice or atonement for the victims. Forgetting the past implies that justice will not happen in acknowledging crimes and reparation being given, therefore the people will continue to be divided and alienated by differing memories of the past and by the injustice received. For Mugabe the unity of the people only exists when they support his political party, therefore all those in opposition are to be 'othered' or forgotten.

Moses also aims to protect the unity of Israel as an imagined community through laws which promote freedom for all by curbing the oppressive use of power over others. The motivation given as persuasion to obey these laws is a frequent remembrance of the dangerous memory of slavery in Egypt. In the laws (5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22), the call to remember the dangerous memory of slavery is directed at those in positions of power so that by obeying the law they will suspend the normal social distinctions between 'haves and have nots' on a regular basis and allow a new community to emerge where the master and slave share a common identity of freedom.³⁷⁷ By remembering the experience of slavery the master or landowner is encouraged to act in solidarity with those dependent on him and the motivation is strengthened by the appeal to the authority and example of God in the pacifying memory of divine deliverance. These stipulations curb the excessive use of power over others by granting occasions of

³⁷⁷ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 74.

freedom to those who are dependent. They are motivated by remembering the former status as slaves but also by following the example of God. Obedience to these laws by remembering one's roots as a slave, mitigates against corruption which power may bring.

Mugabe has used military power to coerce and oppress the people, especially at election times, for the purpose of consolidating his power in the ZANU-PF party. The threatening rhetoric and language of hate used by Mugabe causes divisions and often incites violence towards a particular group of people. The derogatory and threatening rhetoric of the ruling party reflected the political strategy of using state force to eliminate the opposition rather than seek reconciliation and bring diverse groups together. The brutality of the Gukurahundi campaign was one such example. Again, the language of 'othering' resulted in the dehumanizing of the 'other' who was regarded as dirt to be cleaned up or as chaff to be washed away.³⁷⁸ In 2005 the politically motivated operation *Murambatsvina* (meaning to drive out the rubbish) was instituted by Mugabe as a project of forced slum clearance. The othering in this instance, 'crawling mass of maggots' referred to the economically poor people like the women, children, recent migrants from the farm workers who were made jobless and landless, and those who had resided in towns after migrating from other countries. This operation was meant to punish them, discipline, dispossess and displace them and the rhetoric of 'othering' would justify the inhumane actions.

The situation of impunity for these crimes indicates that there is no curb on the use of power by the leaders against the people. The lack of respect for the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary puts the sovereign role of the people in danger due to the lack of justice and equality in the governance of the land.

6.2.3 The importance of the pacifying and dangerous memories for the sovereign role of the people

Thirdly, in order to establish the sovereign role of the people through an ethical way of life, the liberation memory is directed not only at those in positions of power but to all Israel. As all the people were freed by God so all the people have a responsibility to maintain that freedom through justice and equality for every person. In the group of stipulations which are motivated by memory (5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22), I have argued that a person of power or privilege is the subject of the command in order that the law may curb the power of the individual over

³⁷⁸ Kaulemu, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe*, 5.

those dependent on him. The supporting appeal to the divine example of deliverance as well as the dangerous memory of slavery marks these laws out as 5:15; 15:15; 24:18. Therefore in 16:12 and 24:22 where only the memory of slavery is used as motivation for obedience, I would like to argue that all Israel is the subject of the command. The motivation in this case is an ethical response to the plight of the poor which is within the spirit of the laws of Deuteronomy. In these two laws the stipulation is to share the bounty of the land with those who have no access to the land in keeping with divine justice and the intrinsic value of every human person (10:18,19). The strongest motivation for obedience to these stipulations is to remember your own experience of being poor, a stranger and oppressed and to therefore act in solidarity with others who are oppressed. Israel's dangerous memory of slavery will shape the people's response to the laws and institute the ethical foundation of the laws of the land that "protects and enhances a shared humanity."³⁷⁹ Thus Israel is united as she acts with justice for every person in her sovereign role in the land.

Moses quite specifically includes the role of leaders in the teaching of justice and equality as part of the sovereign role of the people. The equality of all members of the community before the law extends to the role of leaders which falls within the provision of covenantal justice because the fundamental equality established by the redemption of God must not be undermined.³⁸⁰ The importance of the collective memory of pacifying and dangerous memories is clear in the provision of the monarchy (17:14-20), which appeals for a leader who is inculcated with the collective memory and who is committed to a covenantal vision of the imagined community (17:18-19), one who remembers and does not forget and will not imagine the importance of his own might and power (17:20 cf.8:17,18).³⁸¹ The provision that the king is chosen by the people and 'one from among your brethren' (17:15), implies that such a person will be committed to the covenant and the collective memory as an equal with every member of the imagined community. In order to guard against self-serving power and aggrandisement the life and reign of the king depend on faithful commitment to the Torah, "that he may not turn aside from the commandment" (17:20), which also implies that the Torah, through which the king will learn to 'fear the Lord his God' and keep all the laws and statutes, is the highest authority in the land, exceeding the highest authority of the state.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 59.

³⁸⁰ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, 26-27.

³⁸¹ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 184.

³⁸² Block, *Deuteronomy*, 346.

The project of constructing the nation-as-people in Zimbabwe with a sovereign role in the land still remains as it did at the time of independence. The threatening rhetoric and authoritarian actions of Mugabe have continued the oppression of the people by creating a narrative of continued struggle against a colonial oppressor. The pacifying memory of the liberation struggle against colonialism was developed in the national narrative in order to continue the idea of a continuous or unfinished war in the third Chimurenga in 2000. The threatening rhetoric of hate was a clear indicator of a continuing state of war in which the subjugation of the people continues as they are imagined as victims living in fear of colonial power arising again. The fear of victimhood translates into support for a strong ruling elite who can annihilate any possible resurgence of western influence. Thus, the dangerous memory of oppression was misappropriated to build the power base of ZANU-PF instead of motivating the realisation of freedom for the people. The narrative of victimhood denies freedom to the community as the will to power outweighs the political will of the people.³⁸³

Mugabe used the rhetoric of ‘othering’ to divide and subjugate the population into the exclusive binaries of ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’ and used racist speech to denote the ‘real enemy’ as the whites. All those who were thought to be unsympathetic to ZANU-PF were subjected to the language of ‘othering’ which resulted in the fragmentation of the people into patriots, war veterans, puppets, traitors, sell-outs, born-frees and enemies of the nation. In the events of the third chimurenga, the rhetoric of ‘othering’ was aimed at white Zimbabweans who became the objects of the party’s anger and racist politics. The re-interpretation of the memory of liberation into an anti-colonial discourse with such slogans as “Africa for Africans and Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans”³⁸⁴ resulted in the obsession with race and the bifurcation of citizens. The majority of whites were second, third or even fourth generation white immigrants who held valid and legitimate citizenship in terms of the country’s constitution. Because of the racialized, nativist and exclusionary practises of the third chimurenga, they now found themselves being dehumanized as foreigners and stripped of citizenship and subject to gross human rights violations.

³⁸³ Everisto Benyera and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Towards a Framework for Resolving the Justice and Reconciliation Question in Zimbabwe,” *Africa Journal on Conflict Resolution* 13, no. 2 (2015): 15.

³⁸⁴ Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 641.

The denial of citizenship to those classified as unpatriotic and enemies of the state has entrenched inequalities and intolerance of the other. Members and supporters of the ruling party are de facto first-class citizens of Zimbabwe, in their language chefs of ZANU-PF who are the only true, authentic and patriotic Zimbabweans and they constitute the imagined political community of the ZANU-PF narrative. Everyone else occupies the lower rank as second-class citizens. This classification mimics the colonial situation in which societies were bifurcated along racial lines where white people enjoyed the privileged position of first-class citizens with the black people/indigenous people bifurcated to inferior subjects. This narrow narrative of patriotic history is based upon a mis-use of the liberation memory, solely to support the maintenance of power with ZANU-PF who are framed as the sole liberators of the nation. All narratives which oppose this agenda such as the dangerous memory of human rights abuses and the liberation categories of justice and equality for all the people are to be forgotten.

The freedom of the people to exercise their sovereign role in the land is controlled and manipulated by threats and force so that there is no freedom to choose or elect or take part in the governance of the land. There is no equality between the people before the law when the state can sanction abuses with impunity.

In summary, where Moses uses the persuasion of remembering to encourage the realisation of the principles of freedom in the land, Mugabe uses coercive rhetoric that reflects the use of violence against civilians and the abuse of human rights. The war-like rhetoric corresponds to the narrow version of the struggle for freedom and ignores the dangerous memory of oppression which calls for freedom for the people. As a result, the people do not imagine themselves as a united political community with shared memories of the past. The elite have narrated a definition of citizenship which corresponds to membership of the ruling political party and where violence and coercion deny any freedom to hold a different political opinion.

6.3 A comparison of commemorative traditions

As further evidence of the contrasting realisations of the memory of liberation, I shall compare the commemorative traditions in Deuteronomy with those in Zimbabwe.

Commemorations act to preserve and teach the collective memory of a nation and in so doing, they sustain the unity of the nation. Thus, I will offer a comparison of the commemorative

traditions of Passover and the Feasts of Weeks and First Fruits in the book of Deuteronomy with the commemorative site of Heroes Acre in Zimbabwe. In this way, I intend to show how the collective memory of liberation was remembered in both nations and to compare the effect of each memory on the unity and sovereign role of the people. This will draw together the previous discussions on the rhetorical use of memory to construct the imagined communities.

Deuteronomy remembers her freedom from slavery in the Passover and the Feasts of Weeks and First Fruits celebration. In the commemorations the pacifying memory of divine deliverance and the dangerous memory of slavery are remembered in the symbolic actions of the people. In the Passover the people eat the unleavened bread to remind them of the hurried departure and deliverance from Egypt. But the bread is also referred to as the “bread of affliction” (16:3), to represent the remembered experience of slavery and oppression. Similarly in the tradition of First Fruits it is the action of the people in celebrating their freedom which is the focus of the commemoration. The action of bringing the “first of all the fruit of the ground” (26:2), demonstrates the reality of freedom for the people in that they can live and prosper in the land. Then the declaration of the memory of deliverance and suffering is collective, “And the Egyptians treated *us* harshly and afflicted *us* and laid upon *us* hard bondage” but “the Lord brought *us* out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (26:6-8). The ethical categories of freedom and equality for all the people are remembered in the communal feasting at Weeks (16:9-12), and First Fruits with all members of the community, where the produce of the land is shared between landowners and those without such means to provide for themselves.

In each of these commemorative practises the pacifying and dangerous memories are equally present in the collective memory which is then realised in the freedom to live in the land and to take a part in its governance. Both the collective memory of liberation and the freedom which it brings are commemorated in the traditions of Deuteronomy and therefore it is the action of all the people which features most prominently in these traditions. In Deuteronomy the commemoration of the memory of liberation is people centred and therefore it creates an imagined political community of people and leaders who are united in the horizontal comradeship of a collective memory and equal under the justice of the laws in their sovereign roles in the land.

The national commemorative site of Heroes Acre in Zimbabwe is structured in the image of an assault rifle, the AK47. This visual design immediately narrates the dominant memory of the war which is portrayed for the nation to learn and remember. The pacifying memory of the courageous battle for freedom is portrayed in the implements of war, and the bronze murals present a heroic narrative of the liberation struggle around the figure of Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party. The representation of the heroic dead in the individualized tombstones is divisive as two thirds of the heroes buried at the shrine are ZANU-PF or ZANLA members. Only members of the inner-circle of those nationalist figures who formed the first government of Zimbabwe were buried at the site.³⁸⁵ Their families receive state pensions and grants and the heroes' funerals are entirely state sponsored. Former guerrillas and lesser party members are restricted to Provincial or Local hero status and in many cases are expected to finance the funerals themselves. No state memorial records all their names. The remembrance of their individuality is left to their kin, communities and fellow veterans.³⁸⁶ Heroes Acre thus reflects a grading system of heroes, a ranked set of distinctions in which nationhood or national value is distributed unequally. Contrary to the intent of the Heroes Acre official brochure that the site is a symbol of unity, Heroes Acre runs as a source of differentiation and disaffection between the leaders and the masses. The politics of the election and burial of the heroes is classist and this memorialization entrenches and justifies inequalities amongst the population.

In Deuteronomy the imagined political community is united across the generations by sharing in a collective memory of the pacifying and dangerous memories of their narrated past. They commemorate both types of memory equally in the traditions of unleavened bread of affliction and the liturgical actions of the feast of Weeks. The people are united in equality and justice in the social care contained in the Torah and they freely take part in the governance of the land through their election of the leaders. Their sovereign role in the land is guided by the ethical foundation of the laws which is rooted in the collective memory of the people.

In contrast, the modern state of Zimbabwe commemorates only the pacifying memory of military power and glory at the Heroes Acre. The narrative portrayed at the site focuses the glory and power on the ruling elite in a patriotic history which excludes anyone not belonging

³⁸⁵ Norma J. Kriger, "The Politics of Creating National Heroes: The Search for Political Legitimacy and National Identity," in *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, eds. Ngwabi Bhebhe and Terence O. Ranger (London: James Currey, 1995), 84.

³⁸⁶ Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, 73.

to the ruling political party. Those who are excluded from the national narrative cannot imagine themselves as part of the nation or take part in the governance of the land. In Zimbabwe the sovereign role of the people is subjugated to the 'superior' role of the ruling party in the commemorative tradition.

The sovereign role of Israel in the land gives freedom to act with justice towards the poor and marginalised in the equitable distribution of resources as seen in The Feast of Weeks and First Fruits where landowners must share a tithe of their produce with the widows and strangers and feast with all the community. Corruption is rife in Zimbabwe and people's entitlements and access to resources are based on race and origin and on political affiliation.³⁸⁷ This was evident for the farm workers who were harassed, beaten and driven out of the white commercial farms. This left them with no means of making a livelihood. Having been stripped of citizenship, they could not get access to land and so they were economically disadvantaged. Those marginalized by the party elite suffered further injustice when their means of living in the towns were destroyed through operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005.

And so, in conclusion we can say that where Deuteronomy's commemorations celebrate the unified political community enjoying the fruits of freedom in the produce of the land, Heroes Acre celebrates the glory of the war and divides the people by presenting a contested view of the past in memorialising a selective group of war heroes, the political leaders and their power structure of military might. By monopolizing the role of chief liberators for ZANU-PF, the memories of excluded groups of liberation fighters were turned into dangerous memories which did not realise the freedom values for which they fought. These dangerous memories of subjugated groups in Zimbabwe are not recognised in the commemorations and therefore the divisions continue among the people. Zimbabwe's commemorations at Heroes Acre are designed to promote the political power of a one-party state, to gather support for this power base and to act as a threat to potential political rivals by inculcating a narrow pacifying memory into the national consciousness. Thus, the dangerous memory of oppression which motivates

³⁸⁷ James Muzondidya, "Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans. Invisible Subject Minorities and the Quest for Justice and Reconciliation in Post-colonial Zimbabwe," in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, eds. Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), 228.

the ethical categories of freedom in the lives of all the people and their leaders, is clearly absent from the Heroes Acre commemorations.

6.4 A tripolar analysis of nation-building in Deuteronomy in dialogue with nation-building in post-colonial Zimbabwe

In Deuteronomy the liberation memory was used to construct a model of a united people with a sovereign role in the land. The model for a life of peace and justice under the authority of the divine giver of freedom was established through the words of Moses. It would therefore be interesting to imagine Moses with his written account of the paradigm for nation-building, paying a visit to post-colonial Zimbabwe with the purpose of looking for the signs of the freedom of the people from his liberationist perspective.

A visit to any post-colonial state must surely start with their national commemorative site to examine how they remember their liberation journey from oppression to freedom. Moses is met by the tour guide of the Heroes Acre site who directs him to the museum bearing an impressive mural of the liberating hero with all the people he has freed. Moses notes that the towering figure of the liberator is a man, 'this must be their leader' he thinks. Moses asks the tour guide if this is their Pharaoh due to the prominent position and adulation of the mural.

Walking around the site the guide proudly indicates to Moses the special design in the form of an automatic weapon, celebrating the glory of war, strength and power which is held by the leader depicted in the mural. Moses thinks alarmingly that the similarity to Pharaoh is increasing. He turns to the guide to enquire that if this leader is so powerful: 'you must have thousands of visitors to the site, how do you cope with the numbers?' Ah well, the guide replies, 'we get plenty of ZANU-PF party supporters because their members are buried here but if you support a different political party, then your freedom fighters are buried elsewhere.'

Moses is astonished to hear that some groups do not support their leader, 'were not all the people freed at the time of independence and do they not enjoy the fruits of freedom now?'

The guide looks embarrassed, 'Yes, all the people were freed but our leader wanted to construct a strong mode of governance so he had to crush any opposition to his rule and threaten any other leaders and their supporters with violence. As you can see from the design of our national site, our leader is very experienced in the area of military coercion to achieve his aims.'

Moses leaves the National Heroes Acre with a very strong impression of a Pharaoh and his military power. He now travels south to the area of Matabeleland which seems to have been forgotten on the official list of places to visit, but the locals said he should go there. In Nkulumane Provincial Heroes Acre Moses talks to the locals about their past and how life is now. Some are reluctant to talk, they seem afraid, they are the ‘enemies of the state’ the ‘chaff’ who have to be careful of voicing their opinions in public. But others speak of Gukurahundi and the continued abuse and torture used by the authorities especially at election times to threaten and coerce the free vote of the people. The people speak of a suffering that continues because the gross injustices against humanity are not addressed or justice given. The perpetrators receive impunity and the victims get nothing while the official policy of forgetting exists. ‘It was a moment of madness’ according to Mugabe and his successor leader Mnangagwa continues to forget with the dismissive ‘let bygones be bygones.’ Moses hears the cry of the people, oppressed by violence and victimhood in a chimurenga which never ends. Sadly, Moses recognises the subjugation and oppression of the people in an authoritarian regime as being very close to that of ancient Egypt.

On the final journey of his tour, Moses travels to Mashonaland Central province to see the famous commercial farms which were once the breadbasket of Africa. Surely there will be signs of rejoicing here with all the people together as they thank God for the bounty of the land? He meets a man sitting on a broken harvester as its parts have been stolen for cash. His farm is small and he is only just surviving to produce enough for his family. The white farmers have been driven out because of their race and the best farms have been taken by the party elites who run them by cell phone from their apartments in the city.

What is Moses to conclude? The desire to hold onto power and corruption have clouded the minds of those in power so that they do not remember the God who gave them their freedom. The powerful have forgotten their own experiences of oppression under colonial rule and do not stand in solidarity with the poor and oppressed of their own nation. This modern-day situation is comparable to a return to Egypt (Deut. 28:68), and the results of forgetting in the biblical sense are death: “I have set before you, life and death, blessing and curse; therefore, choose life that you and your descendants may live” (Deut. 30:19).

The visit of such a significant figure in the lives of a people would not end without Moses giving a speech to all the people of Zimbabwe and their leaders. What would Moses say to all the people of Zimbabwe and their leaders? Perhaps he would interrogate the leadership on their years in power since independence based on the laws of Deuteronomy which espouse the principles of freedom?

Using the analysis of Deuteronomy 5:12-15 and 24:10-22 in chapter 4 of this work, I suggest that Moses might ask the leading elite: “Do you see yourselves as an equal with your fellow free men and women? Do you remember your experience of oppression so that you will remember the Lord your God, the giver of all freedom?” (Deut. 5:15). The narrative portrayed at Heroes Acre suggests that you, Mugabe, are the giver of freedom and your derogatory rhetoric suggests that you consider yourself greater than the people. You have forgotten the divine authority of God which gives freedom to all the people without exception.

Moses continues: “Do you use unjust oppression against the people for your own advantage?” (Deut. 24:14-15). The generations of families in Matabeleland cry out: *Gukurahundi*, the people of the shanty towns cry out: *Murambatsvina*, the victims of the violent presidential run-off cry out: *Mavoterapapi*. The people remember and do not forget while these atrocities remain unaddressed and unreconciled.

“Do you pervert the justice due to the widows and the poor?” (Deut. 24:17). Widows and families of lesser party members cry out that they receive no state pension or grants for the funerals of their war dead which is restricted to political party elites. The white farmers cry out that they have received no compensation after their farms were taken illegally from them. The farm workers and immigrants cry out that they are denied citizenship and so they suffer poverty as a result.

“Do you share the resources of the land with all the people?” (Deut. 24:19). The party elite are silent as they have grabbed the best land from the white farmers for themselves and they live in sumptuous mansions with ostentatious wealth while the ordinary people struggle to find a job to provide for the basic needs of life. Corruption is immoral because it takes from the poor and the disadvantaged.

Moses concludes his address to the leaders in the presence of all the people: Do you remember that you were oppressed so that you may act in solidarity with those who are oppressed now? This is the key message of the laws of Deuteronomy, that in remembering the divine giver of ethical freedom and the dangerous memory of slavery, all the people are motivated to make a moral response which gives rise to the unity of shared values. A shared moral code for life cuts across race, ethnicity and gender because we all share a common humanity.

In summation, the tripolar analysis has brought the ethical laws of Deuteronomy into an imaginary dialogue with the context of Zimbabwe and the people have cried out with the titles of the atrocities and oppression which they have suffered. The injustice of oppression which has been inflicted by the leaders is clear and it is even represented in the threatening titles given to some operations *Mavoterapapi* (How did you vote?). The leaders have fallen far short of the ethical values engendered in the liberation memory and the result has been a return to Egypt as Moses imaginatively discovered on his visit to Heroes Acre. As Moses concludes, the leaders must have forgotten both the pacifying and dangerous memories of the liberation memory, to have made such an amoral response to the construction of the nation.

Moses might also conclude that in a religious nation which bases its ideological and spiritual positions on the Bible, the sovereignty of God would be fundamental to the moral code of a shared humanity. Post-colonial countries who share memories of a liberation struggle should use the dangerous memory of oppression to motivate an objective morality which enhances a shared humanity with all members of the freed imagined community. On this foundation of ethical remembering, a way forward may be suggested for post-colonial nation-building.

6.5. Reconstruction for the future. Finding true freedom

6.5.1 Introduction

In this section I will discuss the potential role of the dangerous memory of oppression to act as the moral motivation for action in three key areas of nation-building in Zimbabwe.

At the start of the exposition of the decalogue in Dt 5:6 the Lord God identifies himself as the giver of freedom to 'you' the audience, a freedom from slavery and oppression. The decalogue which follows sets out a core set of values which help us to live a good life. These fundamental human values are shared because we all share a common humanity. The authors of

Deuteronomy recognise that human nature needs motivations to help us to live a good life, so the character of Moses uses the dangerous memory of slavery to motivate an ethical response in solidarity with the oppression of others. As all Israel is exhorted to remember the dangerous memory, especially her leaders, the people should be united in a common set of shared values which are realised in a good life in the land.

It is clear in this work that the pacifying memory of liberation has been selectively used and manipulated in order to serve the power interests of Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party. This memory of a patriotic war has dominated the national narrated identity and subjugated the dangerous memories of the people whose suffering continues while truth and reparation are denied. As Cochrane and West make clear, there can be no healing in society “if there is no accountability towards the memories of its past victims.”³⁸⁸ The political rhetoric of forgetting the dangerous memories is deeply insufficient as, “it sets aside the causes of alienation and estrangement, sidestepping the fundamental need for repentance with reparation.”³⁸⁹ In order to work towards reconstruction, it is clear that the pacifying memory of liberation alone is insufficient while it subjugates the dangerous memories of suffering in order to maintain the elitist hold on power.

As the moral code of freedom, justice and equality have played no part in the agenda of the ruling elite, the people have suffered oppression in the forms of violence, intolerance of the other, economic injustice and inequality in the rights of a sovereign role in the land. The sovereign role of the people was not established in the land but was held as subordinate to the aims of the political leaders. Therefore, it is in redressing these issues which oppress the people, that we find key aims for reconstruction in the future.

It is the proposal of this work to apply the moral motivation of the dangerous memory of oppression to work to remove the oppression of the people in three key areas of nation-building in Zimbabwe. The three key areas of nation-building in Zimbabwe are: 1. To listen to all groups of people and to include their stories and dangerous memories in the national narrative in order to encourage reconciliation and cultivate a truly inclusive social solidarity. 2. To promote

³⁸⁸ James R Cochrane and Gerald O. West, “War, Remembrance and Reconstruction,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 84, (1993): 26.

³⁸⁹ Cochrane & West, “War, Remembrance and Reconstruction,” 32.

solidarity with the suffering other in economic justice. 3. To promote equality for the sovereign role of the people

6.5.2 The dangerous memory and the unity of the imagined community

The important ethical category embedded in the dangerous memory is solidarity with the suffering of another person which motivates action to improve the life of another. We truly cannot imagine ourselves to be free when others are suffering. The truth about the postcolonial nation of Zimbabwe is the leaders of Zimbabwe and a major part of the population did indeed experience the brutality of the colonial era, slavery (*chibaro*- forced labour), torture and incarceration during the time of colonialism. Mugabe acknowledges this when he asserts:

I lost seven years of my life in the jail of a white man, whose freedom and well-being I have assured from the first day of Zimbabwe's independence.... I bear the scars of colonial tyranny.³⁹⁰

The people were victims of colonial injustice. Such experiences should generate compassion and empathy towards the victims of political violence, the marginalised farm workers and the aliens. We need to develop a moral ethos that feels for others suffering and translates into action to improve the situation. Their scars and their wounds are festering and their cry is for action to be taken, in order to remedy their situation. The cries of the poor should remind us of the words of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops conference, "God hears the cry of the poor" and should lead us to make a "preferential option for the poor."³⁹¹ It is only when we stand and advocate for the oppressed and when their rights are respected, that we can call ourselves free. As Metz states "Our freedom degenerates when the suffering and oppression of others is not acknowledged."³⁹²

In this section we will argue that Zimbabwe needs to take an honest audit of its past in relation to the acknowledgment of the dangerous memories of subjugated groups for the unity of the nation. As Kaulemu affirms:

The fundamental challenge for nation building in Zimbabwe is that the country is yet to appreciate and develop an all-inclusive historical account that positively and publicly

³⁹⁰ Shepherd Mpfu, "Toxification of National holidays and National Identity in Zimbabwe's Post-2000 nationalism" *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (March 2016): 28-48.

³⁹¹ Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, *God hears the Cry of the Oppressed*.

³⁹² Metz, *Faith in History*, 75.

acknowledges the contribution to its history by all its constituent members in order to develop and cultivate all-inclusive social solidarity that could inspire the desired national development.³⁹³

A starting point for a reform agenda of a post-colonial government would be to recognise the part played by all the people in the liberation struggle as a process of unification for the people. In order to achieve this, it means that we need to recognise and take seriously the fact that Zimbabwe is a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-racial society. The binaries of ‘them’ and ‘us’ white and black, insiders/outside, indigenous/aliens and sell-outs/patriots are dangerous as they can easily reignite past animosity and violence in post conflict situations.³⁹⁴ Hateful and dehumanising language has been used to describe other people, who do not support or oppose the ZANU-PF party. It is sad to have leaders who speak derogatively of other people as maggots, chaff and cockroaches. The only people who matter become those who are politically connected. It clearly repeats the situation of colonial times in disregarding the humanity and equality of other fellow human beings. They don’t matter, they cannot be protected and cannot get access to justice and material resources.³⁹⁵ This is a narrow way of imagining Zimbabwe. Many different cultural, social and political communities see themselves as separate from others, even though they are Zimbabweans. Many such communities feel marginalized, ignored and sometimes persecuted. For example, the Ndebele feel marginalised and look for a way of developing Mthwakazi State.

There is a need to develop a broad sense of what it means to be Zimbabwean and to accommodate all people and all groups so that there is no contradiction or competition between being local and being national. There is a need to develop social solidarity that cuts across ethnicity, race, gender, culture and political affiliation.³⁹⁶ The political leadership in Zimbabwe needs to listen to all groups of people and to include their stories and memories in the national narrative in order to encourage and cultivate this kind of wide social and truly inclusive solidarity.

³⁹³ David Kaulemu, *Reflecting on Zimbabwe at 40: Values, Institutions and Development*. (Weaver Press. Harare, 2021), 19-20.

³⁹⁴ Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Walk with Us and Listen: Political Reconciliation in Africa*, (Washington, Georgetown University Press, 2009), 170.

³⁹⁵ Kaulemu, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe*, 45.

³⁹⁶ Kaulemu, 45.

The biblical values of the memory of liberation must be harnessed to the national narrative to develop a moral ethic, a way of thinking and a way of doing things that encourages all the people to recognise and respect one another as members of one moral community and to develop national policies that take a multicultural multi party approach. The experience of oppression under colonial rule is one which could unite the people regardless of race or ethnicity. The memory of this shared experience in conjunction with the biblical values of the memory of liberation may unite while celebrating the multicultural nature of the people. The findings of the UNDP support the notion of celebrating diversity in the nation:

Nation building has been a dominant objective of the 20th century, and most states have aimed to build culturally homogeneous states with singular identities. Sometimes they succeed but at the cost of repression and persecution. If the history of the 20th century showed anything, it is that the attempt either to exterminate cultural groups or to wish them away elicits a stubborn resilience. By contrast, recognising cultural identities has resolved never ending tensions. For both practical and moral reasons, then, it is far better to accommodate cultural groups than to try to eliminate them or to pretend that they do not exist.³⁹⁷

The ethical values of the liberation struggle are built on the dangerous memory of oppression which has the potential to unite the people in a culture of solidarity. A fundamental challenge for development in Zimbabwe is that the country is yet to appreciate and develop an all-inclusive historical account that positively and publicly acknowledges the contribution to its history by all its constituent members.

A second area where deep seated divisions are still contributing to the disunity of the people is in the lack of acknowledgment of the dangerous memories of recent times. Zimbabwe is still dominated by the politics of the colonial past and a culture of suppressing the recent past through amnesties and pardons to perpetrators of political violence. The militaristic and violent operations like *Gukurahundi*, operation *mavoterapapi*, the violent farm seizures have left people with deep seated and festering wounds. The people who have been caught in this cycle of violence, terror and war cannot return to a prior tranquil state as the dangerous memories are repressed and justice cannot be found. In the absence of justice, the victors continue with

³⁹⁷ UNDP, Human Development Report 2004, 3.

business as usual while the victims have to live with the anger and pain of suffering gross injustices. Further, unresolved resentment and unresolved memories wait to be avenged when the occasion is seen to be opportune. This engenders a culture of suspicion, in which the victors and victims are constantly in conflict with each other. Such a community will forever remain divided. A move to a new order cannot simply be made by ignoring or repressing the memory of that violent past.

A new narrative for Zimbabwe requires us to face the truth about our past, finding justice and encouraging national healing and reconciliation. The first step to finding justice for the victims of violence is the arousal and acknowledgement of the truth about the injustices, the pain and the suffering of the victims. The call to forget or overlook the suffering is in fact continuing the oppressive situation by saying that the experiences of those who suffered are unimportant to the process.³⁹⁸ The failure to acknowledge the dangerous painful memories means that the victims are non-persons, thus not taking their humanity seriously. By forgetting the suffering, the victim is forgotten and the causes of suffering are never uncovered and confronted. Robert Schreiter observes: “To trivialise and ignore memory is to trivialise and ignore human identity, and to ignore human identity is to trivialize and ignore human dignity.”³⁹⁹ Suffering continues if the causes of suffering are ignored and the wheel of suffering keeps turning.

Reconciliation is not about forgetting or letting bygones be bygones. It is trying to remember in a constructive kind of way. We need to acknowledge the wrongs that have happened in which the dangerous memories of atrocities are acknowledged. Then justice for the victims must be secured, for progress towards healing the suffering of the past can begin to take place and the prospect of a united people with shared goals and aspirations can evolve.⁴⁰⁰

Secondly, justice requires us to listen to the voices of the victims and those on the margins. The political elite have implemented a top-down approach in its peace and reconciliation agenda and in that exclusivist and elitist posture, left out the actual victims of the violence.

³⁹⁸ Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in Changing Social Order* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 19.

³⁹⁹ Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 19.

⁴⁰⁰ Rudo Gaidzanwa, “The Political Culture of Zimbabwe: Continuities and Discontinuities,” in *The History and Political Transition of Zimbabwe: From Mugabe to Mnangagwa*, eds. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Pedzisai Ruhanya (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 38.

Extensive consultation with the communities and their leaders about ways of memorialising their dangerous memories of suffering would extend some partial sense of justice to the victims.

⁴⁰¹ A commemoration of the memory of the victims into national consciousness leads to closure and justice is partially achieved. In Deuteronomy, the commemoration and the command to teach ensured that the dangerous memories were not forgotten but were kept in the consciousness of the people in order to motivate them to seek justice in all areas of life. Zimbabwe might also through educational programmes facilitate the telling of the dangerous memories through regional museums which would record the history of their region, as told by the communities themselves.⁴⁰²

6.5.3 The dangerous memory as solidarity with the suffering other in economic justice

Solidarity enables one to listen to the voices from the margins and to seek reform and redress the injustices that the marginalised suffer. In Deuteronomy the concept of solidarity translates into a partnership between the haves and have nots for the benefit of the latter. This solidarity results in generous giving and compensation for the poor in order to achieve equality. In Deuteronomy the people are urged to give generously and compensate the victims of debt slavery. On the year of release the freed man or woman is given sufficient means to rebuild their lives. The immigrant has access to the means of production. The Levite who has no land is provided for by the community.

The cheap reconciliation of 1980 was only reconciliation on the surface. It did not assist in the process of nation-building because it was reconciliation without justice. The granting of political and social rights to the previously disenfranchised black majority was not accompanied by granting of economic rights in the form of access to national resources like the land, mines and factories. This is why the issue of control over and access to the land continued to shape and influence post-white settler colonial, political contestations and imaginations of the freedom of the nation, decades into independence.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ Shari Eppel, "Gukurahundi: The need for Truth and Reparation," in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, eds. Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), 58.

⁴⁰² Eppel, "Gukurahundi," 58.

⁴⁰³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*, 195.

In the third Chimurenga, ZANU-PF, exploited the memory of the liberation struggle in order to gain support for its haphazard land reform programme. ZANU-PF'S desire for economic justice to redress the wrongs of the past through the FastTrack Land Reform Programme, failed to achieve economic justice. The FTLRP only merely served to disenfranchise the white minority and the migrant workers who were left landless and in need of economic means for survival. This has been a great act of economic injustice to these people. This was further worsened by Operation *Murambatsvina*, which destroyed the livelihoods of those migrant former farmers who moved to town in order to make a living. The eviction of white farmers and violence against migrants has been a great act of economic injustice to these people.

Economic justice is an essential element for unifying the people in nation-building. The economic justice that needs to be developed is the one that cuts across ethnic and racial and class divides. It needs to ensure that the economy holds for all people otherwise it may lead to violence and desperation. The land issue in Zimbabwe stands out as a dangerous memory of injustice which must be addressed in terms of equality for every person and restitution which must go hand-in-hand with reconciliation. Then there is a need to build a robust economy which is capable of supporting the needs of the poor and marginalised, for example the commercial farmers and farm workers who lost their lives and livelihoods in the land reform agreements.

6.5.4 Dangerous memory and equality in the sovereign role of the people

The dangerous memory of Egyptian slavery operates against and rejects authoritarianism and liberates the subjects so that they can enjoy freedom and live-in equality. Freedom and equality demand that the people obey God's law and treat other fellow human beings with the same dignity and love. Metz affirms, "our freedom degenerates when others are treated as a helpless clique in society."⁴⁰⁴ The people must live out the ethical concerns of justice in the community by obedience to the laws, motivated by the memory of their own experience of oppression and thereby foster unity and solidarity between all members of the imagined political community.

Postcolonial leaders in Zimbabwe have misappropriated the liberation memory into a patriotic memory in which the leaders have entrenched themselves on the top of the ladder with a culture

⁴⁰⁴ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 75.

of entitlement. This culture has resulted in authoritarianism and excluded the citizens in shaping the way they are governed. The elite make decisions without consulting the people and the elections do not bring meaningful change as they are not free or fair but are characterised by violence and intimidation. At every election time the citizens are subjected to a narrow or patriotic version of the liberation war memory, where citizens are bombarded with numerous reminders of how ZANU-PF fought for the liberation of the country from colonial rule and how it remains ready to fight another war, this time against the people if they decide to vote against it. The constant threats to go back to war and to resort to violence and intolerance of any opposition clearly militates against the sovereign role of the people and their freedom to participate freely in shaping the way in which they are governed. In this case ZANU-PF and their leaders run the country without accountability to the people as they are only accountable to themselves. This Zimbabwean situation is aptly captured by Ndlovu-Gatsheni:

Our crisis is compounded by the fact that at no time have the people who today carry the identity of Zimbabweans been given an opportunity to participate in any open debate on what type of nation they aspire to live in. The subject and project of nation-state building has remained a truly elite project characterised by executive and problematic decisions such as a policy of reconciliation, national unity, and power sharing arrangements.⁴⁰⁵

The violence which has been inflicted on communities means that they are unwilling to assume leadership roles or participate in democracy or stand up for human rights. The task of speaking out is made harder for survivors when impunity exists. In Zimbabwe, perpetrators of violence are still in powerful positions, and survivors are often silenced and afraid. Many civilians in affected areas believe the massacres could happen again.⁴⁰⁶ In this situation of fear and intimidation, the politics of exclusion and ‘othering’ add further deep divisions among the population. Democratic and accountable leadership is vital for the sovereign role of the imagined political community. When a ruling elite uses their power for personal and political gain then they endanger every member of the community.

⁴⁰⁵ Muzondidya, “Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans,” 228.

⁴⁰⁶ Eppel, “Gukurahundi,” 51.

The test for the renewal of the Zimbabwean project is for the inclusion and equal participation of all those excluded and marginalized by the currently narrated pacifying memory of liberation. The dangerous memory of oppression would motivate solidarity for working together in pursuit of the shared sovereign role of all the people. But solidarity must be based on the ethical category of the equality of every person before the law so that inclusivity may lead to a just outcome. A discourse of rights and justice is needed which is inclusive and allows for the building of a social and political system in which all citizens, those of foreign origin, farm workers, whites, opposition members stand in the same relation to the state and feel equally included in the structures of both political power and economic power. Such a conception would use the dangerous memory of exploitation which all groups have experienced, to build a sovereign role for all the community in which race and origin and political affiliation have no significance in the roles played.

In summation, the biblical nation-building model of Deuteronomy shows that the shared collective memory of the liberation struggle united the people and motivated them to live in solidarity with each other by establishing justice and equality for all. The biblical model inspires the use of the dangerous memory in post-colonial states to develop a moral solidarity that cuts across social, political, economic and cultural divides. Zimbabwe needs to broaden its imagination of the nation and to move away from the politics of ‘othering’, excluding and wanting to eliminate those who do not share the ideology of ZANU-PF in order to develop a more inclusive and tolerant citizenry. By remembering the biblical values of the equality of each person before God we need to take the humanity of others seriously. By remembering the dangerous memory of oppression, we should be motivated to see each other as equal partners and work for the benefit of each other in the spirit of horizontal comradeship. The dangerous memory of suffering inspires action to protect the freedom of all, to bring reconciliation to victims and to establish the practise of justice and equality for the continued freedom and peace of all in the land. The inclusion of the leadership in remembering the dangerous memory is essential for the development of all the people. As the Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe affirm: “When a leadership is focused on the well-being and development of their communities they will act authentically and share power.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference. The March is not ended. Pastoral Letter of the Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference on the current situation in Zimbabwe, 14 August 2020. Harare. <https://www.google.com.www.zcbc.co.zw>.

Leaders of nations should heed the words of Moses to remember and not forget that our freedom comes from God and God frees all the people. When all the people with their leaders act in ethical solidarity, motivated by their remembrance of oppression, then there will be hope for a united people who live and prosper in their land.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I established the crucial difference in the use of the liberation memory by the leaders Moses and Robert Mugabe. The tripolar analysis made clear that the authority of God and the shared moral values for life were missing from the national narrative of Zimbabwe due to a misappropriation of the liberation memory by the leadership. The misuse of the pacifying and dangerous memory of liberation has led to the failure to realise a united imagined political community with a sovereign role in the land. As a result of the tripolar analysis, I have discussed a way forward for the future based on ethical categories which are motivated by the dangerous memory of oppression. The dangerous memory is one which all the people share and it motivates action to end the situation of oppression and build a better future guided by the moral code of fundamental human values that all people have in common.

Chapter 7 General Conclusion

7.1 Summarized overview of the research project

In the first chapter, I stated the aims and objectives of this thesis to explore the nation-building aspects in the book of Deuteronomy and to examine the interconnections for nation-building in Zimbabwe in the period from 1980 to the present.

In order to analyse nation-building in both the book of Deuteronomy and the post-colonial state of Zimbabwe, we have drawn on Benedict Anderson's theory of a nation as an imagined political community with a sovereign role in the land. The nation is imagined as a political community through shared stories of the past, thus forming cultural roots in a shared collective memory. Anderson's theory of a nation highlights the role of the people in the construction of their unity through storytelling and commemorative traditions. Also, the formation of deep horizontal comradeship is fostered through shared memories of the past and the people's sovereign role in the land.

In order to inform our understanding of the notion of collective memory this work followed the views of scholars Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann who established the importance of collective memory in nation-building and in the preservation of the historical continuity of the nation. We then undertook a narrative analysis of the book of Deuteronomy and a similar analysis of the scholarly literature on the construction of the post-colonial state of Zimbabwe which revealed a common foundational memory of a liberation struggle. This liberation memory was used by the leaders of the ancient and modern communities as the foundation of the people's collective memory. Given the theological foundation of this work, we have chosen to analyse the biblical text of Deuteronomy before the contemporary context of post-colonial Zimbabwe in order to hold aloft the biblical model of nation-building for the purpose of comparison.

The emphasis of this work is influenced both by the ideo-theological perspective to read the Bible from the perspective of the poor and from a liberationist perspective which privileges the dangerous memories of the subjected communities in order to work for a future that is better. Within this framework it is possible to bring the use of memory in the ancient and modern communities into dialogue.

The work of Johann Baptist Metz was used to inform our understanding of the pacifying and dangerous memories. In a theological context Metz distinguishes between the pacifying and subversive dangerous memories which create tensions between contested versions of the past. The pacifying memories are promoted by the powerful to create narratives of continuity and satisfaction with the way things are. In this narrative of the past the victims of history are forgotten. This dominant narrative actively forgets the unacceptability of real situations and narratives that are disturbing and demand acknowledgement and repentance. On the other hand, the dangerous memories are subversive memories, they are seeds of resistance and change for the marginalised. They inspire change and motivate a solidarity with the suffering other, namely the dead, the oppressed, the weak and the poor to work for a just and better future. The dangerous memory of those who went before us inspires action in the present. These memories are kept alive by the narrative retelling of communities who witnessed the lives, struggles and deaths of the victims of history. When we remember them and tell their stories, we are transformed by the stories we tell, establishing a solidarity between the living and the dead in order to motivate a responsibility to build a just and better future.

The methodology of this work was motivated by a selective articulation and misuse of the memory of the war of liberation struggle (*Chimurenga*) by ZANU-PF as a paradigm for nation-building. In the post-colonial state of Zimbabwe, the pacifying memories of the liberation struggle are used as the dominant narrative to maintain the status quo and dull the impact of the dangerous memories of injustices in history. In order to make a comparison between the use of memory for nation-building in the book of Deuteronomy and in the post-colonial state of Zimbabwe, rhetorical analysis was used to compare the use of a liberation memory in the rhetorical arguments of each of the leaders of the people.

The rhetorical analysis of the persuasive speech of the character of Moses revealed how the pacifying and dangerous memory of divine deliverance from Egyptian slavery was used to argue that freedom is available to all generations, to those who remember the actions of God and the oppression of the people, living and dead. The rhetorical force of the speech of the character of Moses appeals to not only the narrative audience but to every reader and listener of the book of Deuteronomy to hear the message and act accordingly. Thus, the appeal is made to the second generation who did not experience the deliverance from or oppression of slavery,

to identify with their forefathers in solidarity with their experiences and to use the dangerous memory of oppression to motivate and build a better, just future for many generations.

The pacifying memory of the power and sovereignty of God inspires the authority, justice and social concerns of the Torah in the administration of a just life in the land. Equally the dangerous memory of suffering motivates Israel to compassionate obedience to the laws in justice and equality which engenders a deep horizontal comradeship and solidarity between members of the imagined political community. The collective memory of Israel's foundational events includes the dangerous memories of injustice and oppression for the purpose of affecting a change in the present and future, through just and equal treatment in the ethical laws. The laws therefore promote unity and solidarity where the rights of all members of the community are respected. The deliverance from Egypt is a message of freedom for Israel to live in equality and solidarity with one another including the most vulnerable members of the society. The sovereign role of the people is motivated by the pacifying and dangerous memories in order to establish justice, freedom and equality for the people and their leaders. The role of the people is indicated in the responsibility for the application of the laws which lies with the people (Deut. 16:18-20), and the people appoint the king. All institutions, including the king are subject to the law (Deut.17:14-20). In Deuteronomy, true leadership is restricted and limited by accountability. According to Frank Crusemann, the sovereignty of the people underlying the law, compels us to speak of something like a democracy.

It was concluded that the rhetorical purpose of the character of Moses was to persuade and motivate the people to remember the collective memory, both the pacifying memory of deliverance and the dangerous memory of their oppression in order to realise the liberation categories of freedom, justice and equality in the sovereign role of the imagined political community.

In order to contrast the use of memory in post-colonial Zimbabwe with the biblical model of nation-building, a rhetorical analysis of political quotations from Robert Mugabe was made. Commemorations, music galas and memorial narratives were also used to identify the use of memory in the national narrative. The analysis of the rhetoric used by Mugabe after independence showed that it was characterised by othering and racism towards the whites as former colonial oppressors and any group who opposed the ruling elite and their political party. The pacifying memory of a selective group of war heroes, the political leaders and their power

structure of military might be promoted as the dominant memory of liberation which must be maintained by the rhetorical annihilation of all opposition to this narrative memory. Such a narrative of remembering that fosters only hate, revenge and the perpetuation of violence- the inversion of one unjust situation for another, in which the victim becomes the victimizer, ultimately means only more violence without lasting change or hope for those who have been wronged. The continued use of the chimurenga narrative of continuous war, keeps the people in a state of victimhood and fear where intimidation prevents their participation in the sovereign role of the people in the land.

In this sense the dangerous memory of oppression had in fact not ended when independence was gained in 1980 and the liberation categories of freedom, justice and equality have not been realised, as the marginalisation of groups of the population continued through human rights abuses and the rhetoric of hate. The derogatory speech used against minority groups extended to exhortations to forget the more recent dangerous memories of human rights atrocities committed in the years after independence. By insisting that minority groups forget or disregard the memories which are incompatible with the dominant narrative, the elite have suppressed the dialogue necessary for the production of reconciliation and unity. The therapeutic agency of remembering was not permitted and this has caused deep ongoing divisions among the population who cannot imagine themselves as a united political community.

A tripolar analysis brought the text of Deuteronomy into dialogue with the context of Zimbabwe to highlight the different appropriations of the liberation memory. The results revealed that the unity and sovereign role of the people were held as subordinate to the political aims of the ruling party through a national dominant narrative of pacifying memory of continuous war. The dangerous memories of the people were suppressed by the dominant pacifying memory of the elite which led to the further division and oppression of the people. It was concluded that the authority of God and the shared moral values for life which were modelled in Deuteronomy were missing from the national narrative of Zimbabwe due to a misappropriation of the liberation memory by the leadership. The misuse of the pacifying and dangerous memory of liberation has led to the failure to realise a united imagined political community with a sovereign role in the land.

Resources for the future were discussed based on ethical categories which are motivated by the dangerous memory of oppression. The dangerous memory is one which all the people share

and it motivates action to end the situation of oppression and build a better future guided by the moral code of fundamental human values that all people have in common. The Bible forms a significant part of the personal, cultural and religious reality of the poor and oppressed people who look for social transformation. The resources of nation-building in Deuteronomy have the power to orient life in a meaningful, truthful and powerful way by advocating the liberationist ideals of justice, equality, human rights and good governance. By standing in solidarity with our oppressed brothers and sisters and making a reasoned appeal for remembrance of the pacifying and dangerous memories of liberation, our faith in almighty God brings hope for the future that the justice and mercy of God will prevail in the lives of all the people.

7.2 Major achievements of this work

I believe that bringing biblical hermeneutics into the post-colonial Zimbabwean situation and allowing the text and context to have a voice through the tri polar approach has been a major achievement of this work. The resulting evidence, possibly the greatest achievement in this work, highlighted the different uses of the pacifying and dangerous memory of liberation. As these two memories are both crucial for the collective memory of the people, they are fundamental to the construction of a nation-as-people that could be a unifying factor for post-colonial countries. This work hopes to make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate and programmes on nation-building in Zimbabwe.

The importance of pacifying and dangerous memories for the unity of the people, the sovereign role of the people, the solidarity of the people, for justice and equality has been shown to apply to nation-building projects in an African context. But the ethical foundation of the Biblical model of nation-building has a validity across the centuries and should be applied in a worldwide context for the human community in general. As such it constitutes the originality of this work and is a major achievement.

This work also makes an important contribution in African biblical hermeneutics, especially as it tackles the question of land appropriation, human rights, equality, politics, and biblical hermeneutics. More and more, politicians and some Christians plead for the withdrawal of the church from political issues. But this work makes it clear that the church has insightful tools to help Africa and Zimbabwe deal with contemporary burning questions.

The thesis has engaged with the book of Deuteronomy as the biblical model of nation-building. Many works on nation-building and reconstruction have engaged with the book of Exodus, Nehemiah, Ezra and Habakkuk. I consider this work as having successfully demonstrated that the book of Deuteronomy can be used as an important paradigm for nation building.

7.3 Challenges in the work

Firstly, I acknowledge the difficulty of bringing the ancient biblical text into contemporary problems with the aim of making a difference in the modern setting. Scholarly honesty requires that we admit the challenges of reading any biblical text. There are limits constructed by the systematic analysis of the Bible, bringing the text and context into dialogue and the limits of ethics. Surely, we cannot provide a detailed blueprint for a charter of nationhood? This is the task of political scientists and politicians. The nation-building model analysed in this work is only perspectival and motivational. Norman Gottwald writing about the challenges of appropriating the biblical economic system of ancient Israel writes, “given the reality that economic systems cannot be imported from the bible to meet our needs,” he says, “the ethical force of the Bible on issues of economics would have to be perspectival and motivational rather than prescriptive and technical.”⁴⁰⁸ He however notes that this kind of ethical force is considerable. What he says of the economic theory is true also for nation-building. Notwithstanding the very real differences and the distance between the nation-building in ancient Israel and nation-building in Zimbabwe, what connects the two is a common thread of oppression and struggle: the use of the dangerous memory of liberation in order to imagine the nation.

A second challenge of this work is to make a response to those readers who would point out the divisive rhetoric of Deuteronomy. In the Bible there are texts which will scandalize the modern reader, which are identified by Phillis Tribble as ‘Texts of Terror.’ The book of Deuteronomy can surprise and at times scandalize the modern reader. In this book we come across some texts that advocate for religious fanaticism and nationalism, leading to violence

⁴⁰⁸ Norman K. Gottwald, "How Does Social Scientific Criticism Shape Our Understanding of the Bible as a Resource for Economic Ethics?" in *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and in Ours*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

and exclusivism. There are texts in Deuteronomy which would astound the reader concerning the total destruction of the enemy as in Deut. 2:26-3:11; 7:1-5, 14-16; 20:10-18. These texts seem to militate against the ideology of one people and the unity of the people and God being on the side of the oppressed and marginalised. The text can be read to justify violence and othering, silencing the voice of the other and repudiating diversity. To the ordinary reader, the book of Deuteronomy must surely be unpromising material for nation building.

This work answers the challenge of such divisive rhetoric as **הרם** 'herem' the Hebrew term for the total annihilation of the enemy, by reading the text from a liberationist perspective. This perspective seeks out the dangerous memories of the poor and oppressed and examines how the narrative describes the actions of God towards the poor and oppressed. In the narrative context of Deuteronomy, the people have been rescued from a life of slavery in Egypt, slavery at the hands of an all-powerful oppressive ruler. God has given the people freedom but they have not reached the promised land and could still be at the mercy of other systems of power which threaten the oppressed. The first characteristic of God who commands the progress of the journey in Dt 2:26-3:11 is to offer peace to the nations whose land they pass through. Only when peace is rejected as in the case of Sihon Dt 2:30 does battle commence in order to remove the unjust system of power which threatens the oppressed people of Israel. The sharing of the booty Dt 2:35; 3:7 can also be read from the liberationist perspective as a sharing of economic resources between the haves and the have nots. The narrative of Deuteronomy depicts the character of God as powerfully protecting the poor and oppressed, instituting justice and equality for all people, depicted in the tribes of Esau, Moab and Ammon Dt 2:1-25 and All Israel. This understanding may still pose a challenge depending on the reader's interpretive interests. The biblical story must be read carefully as what it is, and not made to conform to some pre-conceived critique.⁴⁰⁹

Finally, I will address the challenge of making a difference in a modern context. I have stated that an achievement of this paper is its contribution to African biblical hermeneutics. The goal of liberation hermeneutics is praxis and social transformation. West also affirms this when he writes, "African (and other) liberation hermeneutics, should not in the first instance be

⁴⁰⁹ McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 20.

evaluated by its biblical interpretation but by the effects of the praxis that biblical interpretation plays a part in producing.”⁴¹⁰ The liberation hermeneutics, “understands itself as an unfinished process”⁴¹¹ which needs to be evaluated in relation to praxis. In line with this goal, I have been struggling with this question in writing this thesis, Will the political elite listen to the voice of Moses? The country has been hit with sanctions, strikes and international isolation and the churches have spoken. When will they listen to the voice of Moses? In the continued spaces where the people continue to face marginalisation the church is still called to be the voice of the voiceless. The strong political reaction to the church when it speaks, is a sign that the prophetic voice of the church continues to be heard and continues in a subversive manner to keep the political elite in check. They are listening and so *Aluta Continua* and *The march is not ended*.

7.4 Areas for future research

The narrative and rhetorical analysis on Zimbabwe in the post-colonial period through the speeches and deeds of its leaders, especially Robert Mugabe, clarified the discrepancy between Moses' speeches in Deuteronomy and the failure in nation-building, in the context of Zimbabwe with Robert Mugabe as its leader. In fact, the *Chimurenga*, *Murambatsvina* operation, the strategy of *Gukurahundi* and operation *mavoterapapi*, *Impi Yamasimu/ Hondo yeminda* undermine as well as do not match the model of nation-building in Deuteronomy. These discrepancies and the failures of the nation-building projects under Robert Mugabe's rule, open up future possibilities for more detailed research into each of the nation-building programmes in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Throughout this work, it has been implicitly understood that women are integral in our understanding of the imagined political community in both ancient and modern contexts. It is clear in Deuteronomy that Moses addresses 'All Israel' in all generations as he expounds the laws and exhorts the people collectively to remember the past. Families must teach children the remembered past which involves families and communities alike. Similarly in the modern

⁴¹⁰ Gerald O. West, “Africa’s Liberation Theologies: An Historical-Hermeneutical Analysis” in *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred places, Identities, Practices and Politics*, ed. S.D. Brunn (Springer, Dordrecht, 2015): 1971–1985.

⁴¹¹ Per Frostin, quoted from Gerald O. West, “Africa’s Liberation Theologies: An Historical-Hermeneutical analysis” in *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred places, Identities, Practices and Politics*, ed. S.D. Brunn (Springer, Dordrecht, 2015): 1971–1985.

context of Zimbabwe, women are an integral part of the imagined community. On the commemorative sight of the Heroes acre, the tomb of the Unknown soldier shows three heroic figures: two men and one woman, all armed with an of them having an AK 47. Mbuya Nehanda is highly regarded as the protagonist of the first *chimurenga*. Her spirit is regarded as the driving force behind the second and third *chimurenga*. The graphics at the Heroes acre show the white Rhodesian forces attacking helpless blacks, with dog being unleashed on a poor woman. Women thus, bear the painful memory of oppression and of the struggle for liberation. The ideology and the dominant narrative behind the third *chimurenga* promoted the spirit of *dodaism*. The spirit of *dodaism* involved standing up against colonialism and imperialism.⁴¹² At the end of 2000 Mugabe named what he called a war cabinet, that was meant to be made up of *amadoda sibili* (real man) dedicated to fight in the third *chimurenga* to the bitter end. According to Sabelo Ndlovu, the marks of *dodaism* included sacrifice, courage, ability to take risks, ability to fight, valorisation of war, manifestation of anger, preparedness to shed blood, and defiance to the west.⁴¹³ Among the key characteristics of *indoda sibili* was having participated in the war of liberation and bearing the marks of war or at least flea bites of exile and incarceration. This was seen as a task for men and not women. This is androcentric bias repudiating the policy of equality. The *chimurenga* narrative which was used by the elite, excluded women and promoted a gendered nationalism.

Although women have not been accorded an equal opportunity in the imagined political community, they share equally with men in remembering the dangerous memories of the past events such as *Gukurahundi*, *Murambatsvina* and *Mavoterapapi* operations. They are part of the imagined political community in postcolonial Zimbabwe. However, further work may be required on the specific experiences of women in the imagined political community which will add to the equality and solidarity of the nation-as-people.

⁴¹² Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist?* 280.

⁴¹³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 280.

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