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Voices of Hope in the Book of Kings: Reading from the Margins in Northeast India

By:

Wungtei Buchem

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Abstract

In the literature dealing with theological interpretations of the Deuteronomistic History (DH), interpretations that relate to final judgement and doom have tended to prevail. A seminal reading along those lines is that provided by Martin Noth. However, such readings conceal the voices of the marginalized protagonists within those texts. In turn, optimistic messages are rendered lost to marginalized readers of those texts.

This thesis addresses the hermeneutical question of the possibility of identifying the marginalized voices in the texts and using their voices as tools to counter-read the currently dominant viewpoint(s). Within this approach, I propose a Deuteronomistic hope hypothesis as a framework for hermeneutics from the perspective of the marginalized people.

In particular, the thesis takes as its example the tribes in Northeast India (NEI) who embraced Christianity in the face of oppression by the Hindu majority in India as well as the legacy of colonisation by Western powers. For them, the Bible has become a source of hope and communal identity. However, this has eventually led to increasing tensions over the place of NEI identity in a post-colonial India where the ideology of Hindutva has marginalized the tribal peoples and views Christianity as an alien legacy of the colonizers. Thus, the Bible is an intrinsic part of the current situation both as a problem and as a resource for liberation. This thesis looks for voices in the text that might speak on behalf of the Christian tribes in NEI in a way that provides them with resource for resistance.

This thesis offers suggestions for developing a contextual hermeneutics through the critical reading of 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, passages which usually read as reflecting a high imperial and dynastic ideology, to find even there the voices of the oppressed which express their hopes and aspirations in the face of imperial domination.

Abbreviations

ABD: Anchor Bible Dictionary

AFSPA: Armed Force (Special Powers) Act

AnBib: Annotated Bibliography

AJBA: Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology

ANE: Ancient Near East

ABM: American Baptist Mission

AJBA: Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

BHS: Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

BMS: Baptist Missionary Society

BEIC: British East India Company

BTESSC: Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College

Bib: Biblica

Bib. Int.: Biblical Interpretation

BSac: Bibliotheca Sacra

CBCNEI: Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India

CBQ: Catholic Biblical Quarterly

CBR: Currents in Biblical Research

CLC: Christian Literature Centre

CH: Chronicler History

CTS: Chafer Theological Seminary

Deut.: Deuteronomy

DH: Deuteronomistic History

Dtr: Deuteronomist

Dtr$_1$: The Deuteronomist (First Redactor)

Dtr$_2$: The Deuteronomist (Second Redactor)

DtrH: Deuteronomistic Historian

D. Sc: Doctor of Science

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FGN: Federal Government of Nagaland

FOIM: Fellowship of Indian Missiologists

HAT: Hand buch zum Alten Testament

HUCA: Hebrew Union College Annual

IEJ: Israel Exploration Society Journal

ILP: Inner Line Permit

Int.: Interpretation

JBL: Journal of Biblical Literature

JSOT: Journal for the Study of Old Testament

JSOTSupp: Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement

JAOS: Journal of the American Oriental Society

JHS: Journal of Hebrew Scripture

JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies

LXX: Septuagint (The Greek Old Testament)

LXX^L: Lucianic Manuscripts

LXX^B: Codex Vaticanus

MT (𝔐): Masoretic Text

MTC: Mizoram Theological Conference

NARC: Naga Archive and Research Centre

NCCI: National Council of Churches in India

NEI: North East India/Northeast India

NEISBS: Northeast India Society for Biblical Studies

NE: North East or Northeast

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version

NNC: Naga National Council

NSCN: National Socialist Council of Nagaland

NNM: Naga National Movement

OTE: Old Testament Essays

R^{I}: The First Redactor

R^{II}: The Second Redactor

R^{III}: The Third Redactor

RevExp: Review and Expositor

RSS: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

SATHRI: South Asia Theological Research Institute

SCM: Student Christian Movement

SBL: Society for Biblical Literature

SPCK: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge

SPG: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

ST: Schedule Tribe

TNN: Times News Network

ThR: Theologische Rundschau

ThSt: Theological Studies

ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam

VT: VetusTestamentum

VTSupp:Vetus Testamentum Supplement

UF: University of Florida

WBM: Welsh Presbyterian Mission

WBC: Word Biblical Commentary

ZAW: Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

ZDPV: Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

Introduction

Question

In the literature dealing with theological interpretations of the DH, a redactional theme/viewpoint that reads the DH in terms of final judgement and a catastrophic end has been dominant (Martin Noth, 1943). However, the contention of this thesis is that such a reading conceals the voices of the marginalized in those texts. As a result, optimistic messages are rendered lost to marginalized readers. In this thesis, my particular focus will be on readers from the Christian tribes of Northeast India.

In the interpretive experience of marginalized peoples such as the Christian tribes in Northeast India (NEI),[1] the hegemonic theological perspective seems to only intensify the motif of dominant ideologies and their biblical interpretation. The Book of Kings and in fact the entire DH concentrates on stories of the affluent in the Israelite society, and their use of political, economic, and religious resources. The Deuteronomist (Dtr) becomes a particular issue in this regard. This thesis will study 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 as examples of stories, which, in their differing circumstances portray a dichotomy between the ruling elite and the marginalized people. Reading these passages from a marginal perspective may enable us to counter-read the theme of final judgement and catastrophe in the DH, and instead propose a contextual mode of interpretation of the DH by applying the hermeneutics that emerges from the reader's location.

To do this, ways are needed to detect the voices of these marginalized peoples in the texts so readers can identify with these voices in their pursuit of liberation from contemporary suppressive hegemonies. Once identified, these voices can be a tool to counter-read the dominant viewpoints in the study of the DH. from the marginalized reader's perspective, such voices from the margins can become a pivotal strategy for resistance to the contemporary dominant ideologies.

[1]The encounter of some Northeast Indian (NEI) tribes and the Western Christian missionaries began in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. However, much of the Christian expansion in NEI occurred in the twentieth century. Tribes in NEI speak different tribal languages and inhabits in a vast mountainous range sharing international borders with Myanmar, Bhutan, China, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Swarajya Staff, "Demography Watch: How Northeast India was Christianized in the Last 100 years," in https://swarajyamag.com/culture/how-northeast-india-was-christianised-in-the-last-100-years, accesssed on 21st August 2018. The tribes in NEI, though oppressed by the Hindu majority in India, while living with the overarching legacy of the Eurocentric religious polities and social system, responded by adopting Christianity and their religiosity has become part of their lives. Therefore, the Bible is looked upon as a source of hope and as a collective/communal identity.

I will show how the Eurocentric perspective on theological interpretations of the Bible contributes to and confirms the suppressive and subjective themes of the biblical texts. I will assert that the ideology of the Dtr's historiography and subsequently the interpretation by Noth has led to the neglect of the optimistic elements in the text. Contrary to Noth'sidea on Dtr'srendition of the DH themes, I will justify the claim that the theme of hope exists in the DH. The approach to the text represented by Noth among others does not meet the needs of marginalized readers because it is complicit with the text's marginalisation of resistant voices, just as the Eurocentric theology that was presented to them by missionary groups prove to be irrelevant to the lived experience of indigenous readers.

Tribal biblical interpretation of the selected narratives of the DH presented in this thesis follows a process of conversation between the marginalized peoples' worldview and the texts. Such a method animates the texts for the marginalized reader and makes the biblical narrative not only intelligible but allows the text to speak directly to the marginalized context.

The Importance of the Question

The prevailing mode of biblical interpretation among missionaries during their Christianizing period in NEI meant that the Bible was interpreted in accordance with a theology and hermeneutic developed in Europe which ratified imperial ambitions rather than being critically contextual. The world of the Bible became the domain of the interpreters, who used the imperialistic and conquest motifs in the texts for their own advantage. This ideological interpretation portrayed the NEI subjects of the British Empire and Christian missions as opposed to God.[2] In the wake of tribal resistance to British rule and Christian evangelization, "the colonizers portrayed themselves as sufferers at the hands of their enemy."[3] Westerners interpreted the Bible to justify a theory of legitimate colonialization/westernization of the tribal communities. In their pursuit of seeking religious influence, the Westerners misrepresented the stories of the

[2] Relevant readings in R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 175-200. P. Richard, "Biblical Interpretation from the Perspective of Indigenous Cultures of Latin America: Mayas, Kunas, and Quechuas," in Mark G. Brett (eds.), *Ethnicity and the Bible* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), pp. 308-314.

[3] Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, pp. 61-73. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 92-93. Also M. Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 177-184.

indigenous peoples. These left the NEI tribes to a cultural space not of their own, but to one of someone else's creation.

It is important to confront colonial assumptions, [4] which, according to Sugirtharajah have posited as a conceptual opposition between the "scientific and rational west" and the "instinctive and spiritual east"[5] and therefore have been pejorative about tribal cultures. In addition to this, tribes in India today suffer the stigma of being "untouchables"[6] and regarded as foreigners within independent India. The ambivalent status of tribes in NEI[7] is because of their religious identification as Christians that has resulted in their marginalization by the dominant Hindu group.

NEI tribes experience what to Homi Bhabha is the reality of "unhomeliness."[8] Describing a similar situation for Asian Americans, Kim uses the term "an interstitial space," a space of marginality, which he also called "in-between-ness."[9] The Christian tribes of NEI are caught between the demarcated landscape of colonial rule *and* present day mainstream Indian *cultural* and *identity* politics of Hindutva.[10] Thus, to the Christian tribes in NEI the Bible becomes both a tool of their oppression and a resource for their identity. The Bible is oppressive because the mode of Western interpretation endorsed hegemony that ignored the voices of the margins both in the text and in the natives' contexts. On the other hand, the Bible is a resource for identity because it has become a

[4] Assumptions here refers to as an ascribed and applied notion of the colonial rule over the NEI tribals' cultural, political, ideological, linguistic, religious aspects of life.
[5] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 134.
[6] A. Wati Longchar, "Teaching Third World Contextual Theologies from Ecumenical Perspective: Tribal-Indigenous Peoples' Theology," *Indian Journal of Theology* 44/1 & 2 (2002): pp. 9-19 (11).
[7] I am aware of the extremely diverse and complex tribal identities and traditions. In my selective argument over certain stories, events and traditions I do not claim to represent the tribal voice of the region in its entirety. However, one thing is certain that the British colonial invaders colonized the region causing socio-religious identity chaos; the American Baptist Mission (ABM) and the Welsh Presbyterian Mission (WPM) evangelized the natives. The tribes in NEI today live as a Christian tribal community as one of the minority groups in India. Considering these certainties, I identify that the Christian tribes in NEI live in the state of liminality, and that my hypotheses of the voice of resistance come from the justified claim that tribal Christian are discriminated and there is a need for liberation from the colonial past and from a neo-imperialism such as Hindutva.
[8] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 9
[9] Uriah Y. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah: Towards a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), p. 38.
[10] Christian tribes of NEI will be simultaneously used as tribes of NEI. For an extensive reading of the social stratification in Indian society see, Sathianathan Clarke, "Viewing the Bible through the Eyes and Ears of Subalterns in India," *Bib. Int.* 10/3 (2002): pp. 245-266. Basically, the Northeast Indian tribes have originated from the ethnic groups of Tibeto-Burmese, proto Austrioloids and some groups of Indo-Mongoloids (Sino-Tibetan). Sailen D. Das, "Ethnic and Cultural ties between Northeast India and China: Insights from the Past," *International Research Journal of Social Sciences* 4/1 (2015): pp. 44-47 (44).

cultural refuge, and read from the marginalized perspective, the NEI people can identify their voice with the marginal voices of the text.

Marginal hermeneutics entails reading biblical stories through the lens of the victims in the text.[11] My critical reading is given more on the account of victimization and the elements of "ideological tools"[12] in the texts. Therefore, the reader-response over the text and the positioning of a dichotomised contexts between the text and the reader becomes a necessity.

The Rationales for the Hypothesis of Interpretation from the Margins (NEI)

Besides many issues to do with history, political machinations of various sorts and simmering discontent over the failure of justice and rationality of the Westerners, I will assert four rationales for my claim of the importance in looking at the texts from the location of the NEI. I will set out the marginalized scenario of tribal Christian identity, and appeal to the imagination to ask if the dominant perspective of the Western mode of biblical interpretation demonstrated in the likeness of the Dtr's theology and ideology.

(i) Dialectics of Adventure Writing: A (mis)representation of the (noble) Savage

I quote Mary Mead:

> I don't want the goat! I don't want it! I will not have it! Take it away, take it away! was reiterated again and again; yet these strange, uncivilized men, down from the mountain fastnesses, still persisted in dragging up the steps of the veranda of the bungalow a large, long-horned hill goat. Thus, I was introduced to the stalwart, robust warriors, dressed mostly in war metals, each man draping his spear decorated with goat's hair, dyed red and yellow, and also fringed with the long black hair of a woman, telling the story of bloody deeds.[13]

These lines are extracted from the memoir of Mary Mead, wife of the well-known American Missionary E. W. Clark who accompanied her husband in their missionary journey to Nagaland. Mead's book portrays Nagas as culturally primitive, with outright

[11]Zhodi Angami, "Tribal Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of Tribal Studies* XVIII/1 (2013): pp. 25-43 (30-32).
[12]Angami, "Tribal Biblical Interpretation," pp. 25-43 (30-32).
[13] Mary Mead, *A Corner in India,* p. 1. This magisterial book was published by The American Baptist Publication Society Philadelphia in 1907 with 254 pages. https://archive.org/details/cornerinindia00clar, accessed on 9th May 2017. This publication is also notably important in the history of the Western initial footing at Tamlu Village, Nagaland in 1882. The same quote appears in M. Tianla, "The Colonial Mission and the Travelling Gaze: Revisiting Mary Mead Clark's *A Corner in India,"* in *Coldnoon: Travel Poetics* 3/2 (2014): pp. 129-152 (145).

denial of their validity, reality and rightness of the existing Naga social order. For example, she used the terms such as "mountain wilds,"[14] "savage tribes,"[15] "wilds of barbarism,"[16] "savage hills," "Naga wilds,"[17] "old time warriors,"[18] "old-time head cutters"[19]

Mead's *A Corner in India* is a transcript of her mission adventure that introduced the people of this region to a wider audience in the West. The Clarks were positively received by the locals and people admired the book because of their contribution to the spread of the gospel of Jesus among the tribes that begun among the Ao tribe (within Nagaland), which was befitting. However, critical reading of the book reveals their negative attitude to local culture, and to this day, tribals experience the legacy of such indifferent remarks on their identity. Post-independence Indian tribes especially in NEI felt the need to dismantle such an orientalist outlook on tribal lives and cultures.

This is not to deny the enormous contribution of the Clarks and others to the development of Christianity in NEI. However, from a postcolonial critical viewpoint, I see that there is an ideological element in Mead's writing which has stereotyped the natives. The gifting of a goat or a cockerel to someone whom people respected is significant and it is part of the *cultural texts* of the tribes (Nagas), not to be dismissed as 'savage.' Mead's acceptance of this culture would have been the primary way to show her solidarity but as it clearly shows us, the denial of the gift indicates misunderstanding of the native's act, but also little awareness of the possibility of her own cultural bias.

(ii) Dialectics of On-High Interpretation

Tianla[20] in her evaluation of Maid's memoir discusses the way in which biblical justifications were used to promote the authority of Westerners to evangelize/colonize through the claim that they authoritatively possess the Bible and the right to interpret it. Similarly, Tezenlo Thong critiques "the ideology of proselytization that was observed to be intertwined with Westernization."[21] He says that the Christianity which the Westerners

[14] Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India,* Reprint Edition (Guwahati: CLC, 1978), p. 2.
[15] Clark, *A Corner in India,* p. 3.
[16] Clark, *A Corner in India,* p. 15.
[17] Clark, *A Corner in India,* p. 16.
[18] Clark, *A Corner in India,* p. 146.
[19] Clark, *A Corner in India,* p. 148.
[20]Tianla, "The Colonial Mission and the Travelling Gaze," pp. 129-152 (145).
[21]Tezenlo Thong, *Colonization, Proselytization, and Identity: The Nagas and Westernization in Northeast India* (Colorado: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2016), p. 37. Thong in his fourth and fifth chapters of the book:

have brought to NEI is not merely the belief system, but a culture saturated with foreign worldviews to life, faith, religiosity that introduced a mandate to determine human actions.[22] Stereotypical elements have been the impulse for the occidental interlopers and missionary adventurers. For instances, biblical narratives such as Genesis 12: 2 (make you famous); Matthew 28: 19 (go to all nations); 1 Kings 12: 11 (power to suppress); 2 Kings 23: 27 (naming *the place*), could be used as a sanction and a tool by the Westerners in their mission "to civilize"[23] the native inhabitants, dismissing the stories of what Ernst Bloch would call *underground* realities. The British administration of the East India Company invited American Baptist Mission (ABM) to evangelize the peoples in the Naga Hills and other ethnic groups who they took were "sitting in gross darkness."[24]

Longchar says that in their pursuit to Christianize the native, "the missionaries were *often* blind to the values and beauty within the so-called primitive tribes," and they failed to see the "danger in their own civilization."[25] Therefore the powerful ideology of what we might call 'on-high religion' and a biblio-ideological interpretation of what it means to be cultured and civilized have made the tribes in NEI rootless.[26] Broadly construed in the way tribal theologians argue, any cultural traditions that do not conform to Western standards are of inferior culture, irrational, inhuman, backward, primitive, superstitious, and barbarous.

The tribes in NEI were animist and as a social entity had no written scriptures. But they have *cultural texts* in which the whole socio-religious ethos was embodied. In the theological terms of Patmury and Vashum, mythologies are rendition of forms through which the formless can be known; as such the tribes in their own way were deeply

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Progress and its Impact on the Nagas: A Clash of Worldviews (Ashgate: Farnham and Burlington, 2014), pp. 57-106 also talks about the issue of the superior West and the inferior East concerning the Western colonization and evangelization in NEI. In his writings he also deals a lot with how the British colonial powers and the American and Welsh missionaries have joined hands in colonizing the minds of the people both politically and religiously.

[22] Thong, *Colonization, Proselytization, and Identity*, p. 37.

[23] This is the term imbued with ideological and religious senses of the West against the Orients. One such book is Dana Albaugh, *Between Two Centuries: A study of the Four Baptist Mission Fields- Assam, South India, Bengal-Orissa and South China* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1935), p. 49. Tezenlo Thong, "To Raise the Savage to a Higher Level: The Westernization of Nagas and their Culture," in *Modern Asian Studies* 46/4 (2012): pp. 893-918 (894, 911).

[24] E. W. Clark, "Gospel Destitution About Assam," in *The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union: Papers and Discussions of the Jubilee Conference Held in Nowgong, December 18-29, 1886* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1887), pp. 224, 226.

[25] A. Wati Longchar, "The Need for Doing Tribal Theology," in A. Wati Longchar (eds.), *An Exploration of Tribal Theology* (Jorhat: Tribal Study Centre, 1997), p. 4.

[26]Longchar, "The Need," p. 4.

religious.[27] My claim here is that, besides theologization, there is a need for biblical interpretations that might emerge from the untold stories of the people themselves. Only then, one of the strengths in the biblical studies, which is the possibility of diverse interpretations, could be achieved in favour of the many *others*. Otherwise, there is a danger that the biblical interpretation remains foreign to the native readers.

(iii) Dialectics of Empire/Hindutva in the Post-colonial India

In addition to the ambivalent influence of the Bible on their identity, the Christian tribes in NEI have become vulnerable to the increasingly powerful ideology of Hindutva that seeks to consolidate a common Hinduized identity and policies. In 2014 the ideology of Hindutva lay behind the ruling party Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its far-right Hindu Nationalist claim to promote "one nation, one culture while rejecting other cultural values."[28] The secular mandate of the Indian Constitution was distorted. Shimray observes, "in India religion is used for the fulfilment of political ends and aspirations."[29] In a more subtle way, the neo-imperialistic phenomenon in India does not establish a no territorial centre of power like the former Western colonizers but instead operates through victimization of the minority religious ethnicities. What we see of the Hindutva today displays mimicry of the colonial past.[30]

Here are some extracts to show how minorities such as the tribes in India are forced into active protest and resistance against these centralizing and homogenizing policies. In this situation, the churches and the resources of the Bible become important in their pursuit to resist and restore. The following lines are extracted from the letter to the Prime Minister of India by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) after the Headquarters of Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC) Centre Church was attacked by Hindu religious fanatics on 17th December 2016. Basically, in its letter, the NCCI critiques the ideology of Hinduization that Hindutva politicizes. The letter states:

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[27] J. Patmury, "Tribal Spirituality and Christian Mission," in F. Hrangkhuma and Joy Thomas (eds.), *Christ among the Tribals* (Bangalore: FOIM, 2007), p. 216. YangkahaoVashum, "Sources for Developing Tribal Theology," in Longchar (eds.), *An Exploration,* p. 65.

[28]Shimreingam Shimray, "The Issue of Minority in North East India: An Ethical Response," in Razouselie Lasetso and Lovely Awomi James (eds.), *Voices from the North East: Postmodern Reflections on Issues Confronting the Tribals of North East India* (Jorhat: Eastern Theological College, 2018), p. 36. The 2014 slogan "Ghar Wapsi," "one nation, one culture/language" of the RSS was in fact a crafty move.

[29]Shimray, "The Issue of Minority in North East India," p. 36.

[30]Hardt and Negri in their *Empire* points out the notion of the primary hegemonic legacy in action. In their discussion about "British rule and Indian submission," they depict the power transition, the legacy and mimicry in the long run. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge/Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 119.

> We urgently appeal to the state and national authorities to: Protect the church, protect religious freedom and religious minorities in NEI, repeal the Bills that are against the interests of the tribal people in this area.[31]

In similar vein, the NCCI in its 2015 observance of the Tribal and Adivasi Sunday, borrowed the theme *Tribals and Adivasis: Custodians of God-given land and its ecosystems* from the United Nations' (UN) International Day of Indigenous People.[32] In the context where tribal Lands were confiscated, lives alienated from their land through lease, mortgage and downright unauthorized occupation by non-tribals, the NCCI theme of solidarity was centred on how the marginalized could reaffirm their rights and identities.[33]

Similarly, Ralte recalls the experiences of the Mizo tribes in post-colonial India. She cites explicit case scenario of human rights violation through and by the presence of Indian Army (AFSPA) and Inner Line Permit (ILP), which she thinks are tools introduced by the British later adopted by Indian government to exclude tribes from the other world. She critiques ILP as one of the means by which tribes and their stories remained unheard, and their suffering was silenced. She further recalls the cases of the 1980s and the 1990s of the cries of the tribes in Mizoram when their Bible and hymnbooks were torn to pieces and they were denied the rights to gather for worship by the Indian armies. It amounted to the total annihilation of their identity.[34]

The Christian tribes of NEI are one of the several minority groups in India that have begun to turn to the possibilities of using the Bible and the Christian culture of the church for the prospect of voice, hope and liberation even while coming to terms with the way in which the same Bible was used as a justification for the suppression of their culture under Western imperialism. In this thesis, I will place the reading of 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 in the perspective of contending with the Bible both as a source of victimization and a means for hope. The Bible, which was used to suppress NEI tribal identity, I shall argue,

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[31] Full access of the letter is found in http://ncci1914.com/2017/02/10/manipur-situation-appeal-letters-prime-minister-national-commission-minorities-india/, accessed on 14th May 2017. Roger Gaikwad, "Manipur Situation: Appeal letters to Prime Minister and National Commission for Minorities, India," (10th February 2017).

[32] Roger Gaikwad, "NCCI Tribal and Adivasi Sunday 2015," (9th July 2015), in http://ncci1914.com/2015/07/09/ncci-tribal-and-adivasi-sunday-2015/, accessed on 14th May 2017.

[33] M. K. George SJ, "Tribals in God's own Country: Neglected, Exploited and in Search of Liberation," in Hrangthan Chhungi (eds.), *Hearing the Voices of Tribals and Adivasis* (Delhi: NCCI, 2014), p.145.

[34] Lalrinawmi Ralte, "Telling a Story-Retelling Life," in Hrangthan Chhungi (eds.), *Hearing the Voices*, pp. 133-137.

can be a resource for liberation given a mode of reading and interpretation which identifies the voices of the marginalized within the text itself.

(iv) Dialectics of Voice for Hope in the DH

Noth's perspective on the Dtr's theology can be thought of as a normative marker, read from the perspective of biblical reception theories. Through the postcolonial approach to reading 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, I will counter-read both the historiographical subjectivism and the literary devices of the Dtr, that have shaped the destiny of the marginalized in the text. These texts will be taken for archetypical examples of hegemonic class struggle, in which the voices of the marginalized are overtly stigmatized and so associated with the pessimistic theme suggested by the Noth's Dtr. The present study of these narratives looks for these voices of resistance of the marginalized in the text that might speak on behalf of the marginalized readers (Christian tribes of NEI) in a way that provides resources for resistance. It offers suggestion for developing contextual hermeneutics.

I must make it clear that the nature of colonial and missionary enterprises in NEI do not necessarily demonstrate or consistently represent a link between colonial discourse and the way Noth establish his DH theology and the *other* in the texts. I substantiate with these two lines:

a) I am convinced like Kaj Baago a Danish theologian that the "Western colonialism and religious philosophy envisaged the way of God as undistinguishable with the way of colonization."[35]

b) In the light of what René Maunier thinks, my decolonizing approach asserts that text like DH are "the product of the multifaceted imperial situations of the specific world," and they in time and turn "emerges as partakers in mitigating socio-political evils over several eras."[36] This operates in both biblical interpretation and its legitimization of the content of the texts for the recipient of the interpretation.

As such, I do not mean to imply that Noth's interpretation made its way straight to the Christian tribes of NEI. However, in seeking to oppose imperialist hegemony both

[35]Kaj Baago, "Indigenization and Church History," in *Bulletin of the Church History Association of India,* Special edition (February 1976), p. 24.
[36] René Maunier, *The Sociology of the Colonies: An Introduction to the Study of Race,* vol. I (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 70.

past and present, any interpretation of the Bible in the likeness of Noth's theology on the DH can be used to reinforce universalizing dominant ideologies. My argument uses Noth to shed light on possible unintended implications in Western mode of biblical interpretation so that the counter-reading I apply here will speak on behalf of the marginal mode of biblical interpretation.

The key question to ask is: how do the stories in the DH conceptualize the *Other*? In its attitude to any opposition to the prevalent ideology of the text, the Dtr presents himself as an objective witness. This theological bias in the DH is reinforced by Noth's apparent espousal of the Dtr's vision so that it becomes the norm. As with the literary subjectivism, I will argue that the Dtr is biased, yet I will show that the element of hope exists in the DH in marginal voices which the text suppresses but does not silence. The counter-reading approach grounded on the voice of resistance of the margins in the texts can further show us that the elements of hope in the DH is prominent.

I must admit that there are many more obvious biblical narratives which have been used by both liberation theologians and the Third World Christian Churches to catalyse liberative-resistance reading (hermeneutics). However, my interest in DH in general and the book of Kings in particular is prompted by being introduced to Noth's ground-breaking book on the DH theology. The Christians of NEI have inherited the DH along with other biblical books which are easier to read as liberative. It is because 2 Kings 22-23, in Noth's interpretation, is such an unpromising source for resistant reading that I seek to show that this impression is due to the suppression of resistant voices both in the text and in the interpretative tradition. It is undeniable that Noth's rendition of the DH history and theology has shaped the work of subsequent modern DH scholarship. However, nobody from the NEI tribal context has attempted to read the DH to argue against Noth and to refer to the optimistic views of the modern scholars in order to defend a liberative reading. This is surprising considering the marginal context/situation of NEI scholarship. Therefore, I read the DH from the vantage point of NEI tribal Christians focussing on the suppressed voice in both text and context as a powerful element of resistance hermeneutics.

Methodology: Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

In contrast to the modes of biblical interpretation brought to NEI by Western interpreters which include the suppressive mode of reading the DH that reinforces the

hegemonic, subjective, and elitist dimensions of the text, I will build my argument upon postcolonial biblical criticism. Postcolonial reading has developed during the last quarter of the previous century as one of the powerful tools for decolonizing Western epistemology in biblical interpretation. It aims to construct the knowledge and consciousness of the Other or the Marginalized which has been suppressed and undermined in Western scholarship. It introduces a perspective and a model for the reader of the texts so that the Western legacies on biblical interpretation and patterns of lives are held up for question. Analytically, it is a process of re-reading the biblical texts which have been overlaid by the assumption of colonialism and its cultural quotations.

The effects of colonialism on the analysis of any cultural text, including the Bible have been examined by Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* in 1978. For Said, it is impossible to avoid the link between production of knowledge about what was designated as "the Orient" and the context of imperialism in the West. This is so because eco-political imperialism directs the entire understanding of texts and cultural patterns. Therefore, writings and interpretations are produced within the intellectual and imaginative domain of the Western eco-political and religious justification.[37] Said critiques the genesis and mechanisms of how the Orient was represented and stereotyped in the West. To him, the production of knowledge by the imaginative domain of the West was through authorizing their views, in order to impose the Western pattern on the natives.[38]

Therefore, Said understands the idea of the Orient as a construction by the West, rather than as a construction by the people who are discussed in these terms themselves. He challenges the tendency of the imperial West to distort the cultures and histories of the east. He argues against the stereotypical notion of the irrational and superstitious east as against the modern and rational Westerners. In Said's opinion, such a construction itself is colonization and reveals a chronic tendency of underestimation and subjugation of the other. Therefore, Western knowledge and imperial attitude has created racism, while ironically, their motives against the Orient were considered legitimate.[39] Said further claimed that Orientalism should be a discourse of knowledge, a discourse to counter an age-old Western hegemonic mode of interpretation. Postcolonial biblical

[37]Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House/Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 10-14.
[38]Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3.
[39]Said, *Orientalism*, p. 13.

studies in tune with Said is a discourse which seeks to understand these non-Western cultures in a way that is contrary to how colonial and missional imperialism have written and interpreted the life and the cultural texts of once subject peoples.

R.S. Sugirtharajah is one biblical scholar who has been influential in disseminating the essentials to employ postcolonialism in biblical studies. To him, biblical scholarship has got to the point where it is necessary to get rid of its preoccupation with explicit Western history, experiences and aspirations. He finds it frustrating that biblical scholarship has been reluctant to remark "the biblical scholarship contours have been shaped by imperialism."[40] However, Sugirtharajah opines that in postcolonial biblical studies, colonialism must be the centre of the discussion. It focuses on the contextual reality in the text and context, it includes issues of domination, frustration and liberation. It shares common tools of interpretation with feminist and other liberation hermeneutics. Sugirtharajah writes:

> The world of Bible interpretation is a calm and sedated world. To a great extent biblical interpretation is about taking refuge in the study of the biblical past, and occasionally it is about reassuring the faithful when their faith is rattled by new moral questions.[41]

In contrast to this, and put simply, the world of postcolonial interpretation is about battling for change and reconstruction through a struggle for liberation. It is about being conjectural and interventionist, as well as emancipatory. It seeks to relate life to work and facilitate a dialogue with the dominant forces that constructed the destiny of the oppressed. It denounces the claim to any universal mode of reading, writing, demarcating and theorising.[42] Postcolonial biblical study as a discourse emerged from the colonized peoples and one cannot lose sight of the truth that the colonized peoples or natives are the subject of postcolonial biblical discourse. It is an enquiry of the context and praxis as much as a textual critique.[43]

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[40]Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, pp. 25, 74. Sugirtharajah's work includes: (edited books) *Voices from the Margin* (London: Orbis Books, 1991; new edition 1995); *The Postcolonial Bible: The Bible and Postcolonialism,* 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); *Vernacular Hermeneutics: The Bible and Postcolonialism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[41]Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism,* p. 2.
[42]Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism,* pp. 2, 117, 201.
[43]Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism,* p. 13.

Roland Boer in the Australian postcolonial context challenges the concept of Cultural Hierarchy. He used the word "scaled inferiority" to mean that indigenous culture is devalued by the colonial misrepresentation of the natives. The original inhabitants wither away because of the dominant Western perception of the illegitimacy of their way of life, culture and its interpretations. Boer also detects "cultural cringe" among the marginalized, which to him is a response to compulsory coercion from the colonial dynamics.[44]

For Fernando F. Segovia, the rise of contextual theologies especially in the third world countries "is because of the irrefutable development in seeking freedom from colonization."[45] This methodological standpoint shows the possibility of an ideal shift from the established European supremacy over the theological and cultural domination to the voices towards the recuperation of the perspective of the margins. The stories of imperial and missional domination in the colonized context to Segovia are a socio-political reality. Therefore, there is a binary consisting of the centre and the periphery on the questions of power, ideology, conflict, space, and resistance.

For Kwok Pui-lan, Asian biblical hermeneutics is about doing "cross-textual" or "dialogical" readings of the text and context because it is method of conversation between realities of the Asian culture and the biblical tradition. She proposes a reading strategy that considers the Bible as a polyphonic text that requires reading it with a dialogical discourse and from a multiaxial approach. She argues that such a method encourages multifarious ways of seeing the meanings and voices in the text. Pui-lan writes:

> During the nineteenth century the Bible was introduced to many parts of Asia as an integral part of colonial discourse. It has been used to legitimate an ethno-centric belief in the inferiority of the Asian peoples and the deficiency of Asian

[44] Roland Boer, "Remembering Babylon: Postcolonial and Australian Biblical Studies," in Sugirtharajah (eds.), *The Postcolonial Bible: The Bible and Postcolonialism*, 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 31-37.

[45] Fernando F. Segovia, "Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies," in Sugirtharajah (eds.), *The Postcolonial Bible*, p. 53. Some of Segovia's works include: Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds.), *Reading from this Place-I. Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); Segovia and Tolbert (eds.), *Teaching the Bible: The Discourse and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998); Segovia (eds.), *Interpreting Beyond Borders* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000); Segovia and Eleazer S. Fernandez (eds.), *A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflections on America from the Margins* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001).

> cultures. But the same Bible has also been a resource for Christians struggling against oppression in Asia, especially in the Philippines and South Korea.[46]

These lines by Pui-lan also describe what the situation was and is in the colonial and missional NEI context. Similarly, Zhodi Angami thinks, "tribes in the East need not read the Bible in the theological assumptions of the West because their perceptions can be irrelevant as well as detrimental to the interest of the tribes."[47] As Pui-lan's model of reading in Asian context suggests, tribes in NEI may also need to do "a more in-depth digging of the historical and textual sites,"[48] and create a new hermeneutical paradigm in their struggle for liberation while forced to live in the state of the "Realpolitik of Liminality."[49] Uriah Y. Kim in his *Decolonizing Josiah* (2005) views DH as the classic Western history, describing the genesis of the Israelite's advancement that left the natives displaced. Reading the story of Josiah, who in Kim's reading is placed in the liminal position, he sees the situation as parallel to the experience of being Asian-American in America. Therefore, his thesis reads the story of Josiah intercontextually. Shigeyuki Nakanose in her *Josiah's Passover* (1993) establishes a conversation between the Brazilian experiences and critical reading of the texts from a reader-response approach.[50]

Drawing on these methodological standpoints, this thesis attempts to re-read the DH texts from the marginal viewpoint giving attention to the voice of resistance ideologies in both texts and contexts. It is an attempt to overturn and dismantle suppressive ways of reading the bible and the stereotypical identity it had labelled to the NEI tribes. Therefore, re-reading the texts becomes effective when the marginal voice in the text is put in conversation with the marginal voice of the NEI tribes.

The marginalized tribal mode of biblical interpretation is a developing area of study sprung out from the tribal theology following the theological concept of liberation theologies. Postcolonial Tribal biblical interpretation is a step forward from tribal theology within which the mode of reading the Bible intends to counter-read the hegemonic interpretation of texts and cultures. It is an approach that focusses on reader

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[46]Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (The Bible and the Liberation Series; Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 1.
[47]Angami, "Tribal Biblical Interpretation," pp. 30-32.
[48]Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible*, p. 3.
[49]Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, p. 41.
[50]Shigeyuki Nakanose, *Josiah's Passover: Sociology and the Liberating Bible* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 32, 93.

response. While there are many studies on reading the Bible from the reader's perspective, no comprehensive study that offers a coherent and substantive methodology for tribal biblical interpretation has been undertaken.

My thesis is limited to reading 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, keeping the mode of interpretation of the DH set by Noth as a point of reference for a postcolonial criticism. The primary case is an evaluation of marginalized tribal readers of NEI for whom the Bible was once a tool that suppressed them but is currently an anchor and a source of hope. I am interested in proposing viable hermeneutical insights in reading these texts, to endorse, empower and emancipate the marginalized readers' voice. The hermeneutical approaches will serve as purposes of evaluating the mechanisms of the comparative ideologies and theologies in the sociology of the texts and NEI context that they respectively appeal to.

There is no assumption in this thesis that liberation of the marginalized readers is an absolute possibility, through what this study posits; but the objective is to conceptualize the prospective interpretation of the Bible that might speak on behalf of the readers themselves. In summary, these are the working hypotheses that will underpin this study

(i) The Deuteronomist of the DH had elements of hope in its historiography, but interpretive perspectives over the years have neglected it. Optimistic interpretations in contrast to Noth have emerged, yet the reading of those narratives in the light of the voices of resistance of the marginalized in the texts and the reader response has yet to be fully investigated so that hope for the marginalized readers such as the Christian tribes of NEI is delivered in those texts.

(ii) The Bible for Christian tribes of NEI is both a tool that subjugates and a resource for liberation.

(iii) It is possible to find an ideological scheme in the Biblical texts corresponding to the contemporary situations occurring in NEI.

(iv) The *hermeneutics of voice* in the DH reveals marginalized perspectives that can be set against Noth's hermeneutics that envisage the catastrophic end of the search for an independent political entity.

(v) The life, role and reform of Jeroboam and Josiah embody figures of hope and resistance. The strategies in reading these protagonists matter to the sensibilities of the marginalized Christian tribes of NEI.

On this basis, the thesis will contribute to finding suggestive approaches to biblical interpretation (Hermeneutics) from the lens of the Christian tribes of NEI in contrast to the overwhelming legacy of the Western mode of interpretation in thought patterns, the Bible translation, and the definition of the Bible in itself.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 is a discussion of the marginal context of the Christian tribes of NEI and an introduction to *the place* of the Bible and the Christian identity for the tribes. Concentrating particular on 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, a conversational reading with the marginalized tribes will call for a challenge to the traditional interpretation of the DH narrative. While reflecting on the rationale for interpretive claims, the Western mode of biblical interpretation, it will be argued, needs to reflect on the subjectivism of the Nothian Dtr's theology. My position will say that Scripture can cause *conflict* as long as its logic bespeaks suppression by one voice over the other.

I will maintain that, in a changed theological climate represented by biblical liberation theologies and interpretations, the viewpoint of the *other,* which both the text and the interpretative tradition once silenced, is brought to the forefront again, both in the theological imagination, and as a means of emancipation for marginalized readers. In this light, a counter-reading approach is set, whereby, the dominant but ultimately subjective truth claims that were in operation in the kind of biblical teaching that went hand in hand with colonial enforcements in the NEI can be dismantled from all colonial legacies: political, ecclesiastical as well as academic.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 contains a literature review pertaining to the DH, its redactional and theological themes. My review mostly reads Martin Noth's (1943) evaluation of the DH theological themes, and further goes on to read what I call Noth's school of thought, which has a legacy of support within modern biblical scholarship as well as those that

read against Noth. Notably, the themes that Frank M. Cross suggested, which cut across two redactional elements in Kings, will be introduced for further re-reading. In order to posit a framework of hermeneutics from marginalized readership, the thematic proposals made by Hans W. Wolff and Gerhard von Rad will be studied as suggestions for counter-reading the dominant theme(s).

This chapter will then espouse the view that, for colonized and other marginalized readers like Christian tribes of NEI, the Dtr's central theological ideas, as interpreted by Noth and similar ideo-theological positions promulgated by Western bible teachers could only compound their suppression rather than bring about their liberation. Therefore, this chapter will look for ideological and theological messages of hope in the DH, which, I shall argue, runs side by side with the theme of final judgement and doom. I will exegete the texts 2 Sam. 7, 1 Kings 8: 48 and 53 and 2 Kings 25: 27-30, to demonstrate the theme of hope, which will be used to argue against Noth's interpretation of the Dtr. This will help me show how this interpretation of the theme of hope can be serviceable for the marginalized peoples' reading of 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23.

Chapter 3

Applying the hypothetical framework of hope, in this chapter, I will consider one of Cross's redactional themes, the Dtr_2, according to which Jeroboam is a symbol of *infidelity* and which takes Jeroboam in the DH to prefigure the fall of the kingdom and the invitation of God's judgement. I will provide a counter-reading of literary characteristics and characterization in 1 Kings 12.

The DH presents several stories of the affluent in Israelite society, concentrating on their use of resources and power. The marginalized people's stories are scarcely mentioned in the text, or if they are mentioned, in most cases, they are characterized as villains, sinners, or nonconformists. Jeroboam for one is scapegoated in the literary construction. I will argue that there are biased redactors of the DH and that the hegemonic Southern history of dominance and uprightness overshadows 1 Kings 12. My interest is to look for the voice of the marginalized Northerners.

I will highlight the possible construction of Jeroboam's implied character through the literary-dramatic genre of *Chiasm* and argue for a counter-reading and refiguring of the oft-neglected identity and role of Jeroboam. In the DH, the Dtr identifies the so-labelled

'sin of Jeroboam' as the immediate cause of division and consequently, doom for the Israelite community. A refiguring approach will then expose textual characterization that might produce a reader response to the text. Read in this way, the Jeroboam narrative will throw light on the representation of voice and hope for the marginalized in the text.

Chapter 4

From the perspective of the theological contrast between 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 that Cross draws, I will have presented a counter-reading approach to the character of Jeroboam and thrown a positive light on his role in chapter 3. While we can demonstrate that these narratives admit of such a contrast, they share common features, although they represent a diverse milieu: when looking at either, the voice of marginalized people, as well as the role of their resistance to suppression have significant similarities. I will show that Josiah represents the voice of a marginalized people just as much as Jeroboam did.

The primary element of Davidic promise (2 Sam 7, Cross's Dtr_1) in the figure of Josiah in 2 Kings 22-23 can be used as the point of reference for counter-reading the dominant mode of interpretation of the DH. In contrast to Noth's hypothesis I will posit that Josiah's undying spirit of reform and resistance forms the basis of an interpretation of hope. In my perspective on the Dtr's theology and historiography with regard to 2 Kings 22-23 I will look at the motif of the *discovered Book* and its implications on centralization reform policy of Josiah. Along with that, Josiah's unapologetic resistance to Necho-II will help formulate a reading paradigm for the subalterns.

Chapter 5

From the DH's ideological and theological points of view, the narratives in Kings represents the death of hope for the marginalized peoples. The Dtr draws a picture of authoritarian power as Jeroboam fights to remove the yoke imposed by Rehoboam and shows Josiah as a victim of the imperial force which signals catastrophe. This chapter will propose reading paradigms of these texts in favour of the marginalized and throw light on the possibility of finding these elements in these passages through what I shall call the *hermeneutics of voice*. The study will attempt to see how closely the realities of the text and the marginalized readers' context are intertwined. It is obvious that the two contexts and materials do not share every struggle and do not have the same voice. However, I will

look at the expression of human sensibilities and stories that prompts marginalized contemporary readers to reflect, highlight and posit the reality of these resonances, to enhance and motivate the hermeneutic potential of this approach.

Firstly, the interpretation of decentralization in 1 Kings 12 and the centralization and nationalistic reform measures in 2 Kings 22-23 will be analysed from the perspective that the double faceted thematic interpretations empower marginalized readers. Secondly, the Northerners' Shechem protest and Josiah's Megiddo battlefield discourses will be interpreted as a model for voices of resistance that can contribute to the socio-religious self-expression of marginalized readers. Thirdly, I will counter-read DH's portrayal of hopelessness, by advocating the perspective of optimism in the texts reading from the elements of voice.

This task will then develop in the direction of a dialogue split into two sections. The first attempts to show de-centralization in the Shechem slogan and the second points to Josiah's centralization reform and his confrontation with Necho-II. In both sections, my focus will be on proposing an approach to interpreting these themes in a way that empowers the subaltern readers such as NEI.

Chapter 6

This chapter will summarise the interpretive implications of the *hermeneutics of voice*. I will further shed light on detailing the situation of the marginalized Christian readers of NEI so that the interpretive approaches I have rendered in the chapters above can make clearer sense. I will then reiterate in one of the sections that that the theme of hope in the DH is justified by the elements of Yahweh's fidelity, grace and promise that I have ascertained in the study of the texts. In line with that, a decolonizing reading strategy for the readers such as tribes in NEI is suggested, such as re-writing their own stories, re-telling their own situations and reading their realities in the light of the stories in the Bible to which they anchor. Finally, I will show how Jeroboam and Josiah can be read as figures of hope and resistance for the Nagas. In order to show this, I shared the questions underlying this thesis with an informal reading group (basically Nagas) and asked them to read the narratives from *their context as NEI readers.* This demonstrates that such readers can see that these narratives are not just about doom and judgment when given encouragement to read even these texts from the Naga context, they find that the narratives contain hope and intelligible motives and measures that can be emulated for

resistance and reconstruction. It will then conclude by stating that it is only in the reading the Bible from the *place* that it can become a source of hope for the marginalized readers.

Chapter 1

Dynamics of Marginality in NEI: The Reader's Context

Introduction

This chapter will spell out the marginal context of the reader, in particular the case of the Christian tribes of NEI and will explore the significance of reading the Bible for such readers. It will also reflect on the rationales for the interpretive claims that I have offered in the introduction. The Western mode of biblical interpretation and its normativity that have been imposed to the indigenous people of NEI will be demonstrated in conversation with the subjectivism of the Dtr's theology. I will look at the Bible as a *site of struggle*[1] as long as its logic bespeaks suppression of one voice by the other. Let me begin with this statement by Sugirtharajah:

> In an earlier, combative missionary era, the Bible was used as a yardstick to evaluate other scriptural texts. But in a changed theological climate, where other religions tend to exert influence and no one text can claim exclusive possession of the truth, the task is not to be combative but to complement each other's textual resources.[2]

As such, in a changed socio-political scenario, especially in the post-colonial contexts, the understanding of the Bible is represented in the way liberative theological interpretations are taken seriously. Most importantly, the aspect of the *other,* their cultural and ethical codes/texts once silenced, are called for again, both in the theological imagination, as well as emancipation of the marginalized readers. In this light, it is essential that the dominant and subjective truth claims that were used in NEI in the biblical preaching and teaching and in colonial enforcements must be dismantled from all legacies: political, ecclesiastical as well as academic.

1.1 The Marginal Context of the Reader in the case of NEI

1.1.1 Identity that is at the Crossroad

"Tribal" is a term commonly used in India while referring to indigenous peoples in the country. People in the region of NEI are aware that the name "tribal" attaches to

[1] Gerald O. West, "Contending with the Bible: Biblical Interpretation as a Site of Struggle in South Africa," in C. B. Kittredge, E. B. Aitken, *et al.* (eds.), *The Bible in the Public Square: Reading the Signs of the Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), pp. 101-116.
[2] R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The Bible and its Asian Readers," *Bib. Int.* 1/1 (1993): pp. 54-66 (58).

itself a "negative connotation that carries the idea of primitive, unscientific, illiterate, animistic, pre-technological and so on."[3] The NEI tribes are a Mongoloid race and ever since the invasion of the West there is a high percentage of Christians, although there are some tribes that continue to practice their ancient religion called animism. Tribes in the region were never Hindus. They had their own principles of faith, community life, customary laws and value systems.

Prior to the European imperial invasions and the Christian influences, tribes in NEI lived a communitarian life centred on their socio-cultural environment.[4] Each tribal community maintained their ethnic identity through their adherence to customary laws. Traditions on norms, ethics, restrictions, and taboos in the society were precisely based on the customary law. In most tribes, customary laws are oral based and are sourced in folk wisdom. These practices incorporated both legal (secular) as well as religious (sacred) aspects. The two aspects were intertwined.

However, the coming of colonial imperialism and Christian evangelism represented a big blow for the cultural lives of the tribes. F. S. Downs writes, "The political movement became the background to the emergence of Christianization in the region, consolidated by the American Baptist Mission (ABM), the Welsh Presbyterian Mission (WPM), and the British funded Baptist Missionary Society (BMS)."[5] The Christian missionaries educated in Western culture, philosophy, theology and ecclesiology, introduced and legitimated not just the Bible, but what they considered to be the proper method for reading the Bible. Under the guise of Christianity, they introduced Western norms for social and cultural life. The yardstick for the tribes' identity began to take shape not by the tribes themselves but by others. This scenario, according to Down, spelled doom for the "mythological foundations of tribal life."[6] The

[3]Shimreingam Shimray, "Revisiting United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007): From Tribal Perspective of North East India," in *Clark Theological Journal* vol. VI/2 (2016): pp. 38-58 (39).

[4] Prolegomena to NEI Tribal traditional and culturally based identity/community is discussed in books written by two tribal theologians, K. Thanzauva, *Theology of Community: Tribal Theology in the Making* (Aizawl: MTC, 1997), A. Wati Longchar, *The Tribal Religious Traditions in Northeast India* (Jorhat: Author, 2000).

[5] Frederick S. Downs, *Religion in South Asia: Religious Conversion and Revival Movements in South Asia in Medieval and Modern Times,* edited by G. A. Oddie (New Delhi: A. J. Manohar, 1991), pp. 158-160.

[6] Colonial intrusion in the NEI begun as early as the 1820s, later a collaboration with the 'conversion movement' by the Christian missions in the 1870s. Downs, *Religion in South Asia,* pp. 158-160.

Westerners trashed the authority of cultural values and religious traditions of the tribal life.[7]

The tribes were obliged to sacrifice their religion in the process of assimilating Western worldviews. The Westerners privileged their own culture, language and the way they interpret truth about the divinity.[8] They determined the definition of sin and holiness based on the way they interpreted the Bible. The Westerners came with the Bible as though the Bible defines the ultimate culture. Moreover, many Westerners held the shared idea of civilizing responsibility over the natives. This shared "bonding of *imperialism* and *evangelism* was strong enough that both secular powers and the churches recognized them as a candid duty."[9] Therefore, the bonding would suggest a political and religious colonization as Vashum says that, "missionaries were equally imperial like the colonizers."[10]

For instance, the tattoos which were significant signals of identity in tribal culture were condemned as sinful with no regard for their cultural importance. Likewise, Roy Burman who looked at the Western invasion of NEI as a process of globalization says that the coming of Westerners to NEI accentuated Christian Missions, and "while establishing their moorings tried to remove all the traditional cultural traits and institutions of the converts, like the bachelor's dormitories (this is referring to Morung) and impressed people to wear western dresses."[11] Nadella writes, "the Western missionaries foregrounded culture and the power paradox."[12]

Consequently, the tribes in NEI were then confused as to whether to accept or reject their own culture. A greater proportion of people leaned towards admiring the cultures that were imposed. As they carried out this self-imposed responsibility and burden, the tribes came to the understanding that they were indeed inferior through their

[7]Limatula Longkumer, "Hermeneutical Issues in Using Traditional Sources- Where do We Draw Our Spiritual Sources for Our Liberation," *Journal of Tribal Studies* XIII/2 (2008): pp. 37-51.
[8] Raj Nadella, "Postcolonialism, Translation, and Colonial Mimicry," in Scott S. Elliot and Roland Boer (eds.), *Ideology, Culture, and Translation* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), p. 55.
[9]Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005), pp. 11-12.
[10]Yangkahao Vashum, "Colonialism, Christian Mission, and Indigenous: An Examination from Asian Indigenous," *Journal of Theologies and Cultures in Asia,* Vol. 7 & 8, Rethinking Mission in Asia (2008-2009): pp. 63-84 (64).
[11]J. J. Roy Burman, "Globalization, Christianity and Cultural Revivalism among the Tribes of North-East India," in S. N Chaudhary, *Globalization, National Development and Tribal Identity* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2013), p. 88.
[12] Nadella, "Postcolonialism," p. 53.

race, culture, and worldviews. They then sought to construct a new confidence and identity through adopting the colonizer's religion.

Today, in post-colonial India, the constructed identity of the tribes in NEI is predominantly a Christian identity. In the eyes of the dominant Indian religious fundamentalists (Hindutva), the Christian identity of the tribes, their religion and way of life are a foreign product intrinsically bound up with Western imperialism and so this becomes a vulnerable religion and identity in the context of independent India. For instance, Sahayadhas writes that "the Western missionary enterprise in India has to some extent collaborated with colonialism" which causes "the Hindus to be suspicious about the intention of the Church and culminating into a strong anti-Christian syndrome in the minds of the Hindu right."[13] The Bible, which had given the tribes self-worth, identity, and a source of hope comes into question, as a basis for identity, in contemporary ethno-religious conflicts, exacerbating the existing ideological tensions over tribal versus Indian identity. The totality of this then results in the risk of annihilation of the basis of the tribe's identity.

1.1.2 Mimicry that Repudiates Identity: Colonizer and Colonized

Another way to describe this process would be to say that postcolonial mimicry manifested itself in the process of identity construction and deconstruction during and after the colonial period in NEI. The distinction between two types of colonial mimicry as disseminated by Homi Bhabha and Frantz Fanon clarifies the context of NEI.

Bhabha's colonial mimicry is the act of self-reproduction that is carried out by the colonizers. The colonizers pursue their "subjective interest to recreate a perceptible other, a measure of difference yet almost similar."[14] A strategic example of what Bhabha means can be seen in the advocacy by Thomas Macaulay who "advocated for the promotion of a certain persons of class, innately Indian but English by sensitivity, in ideas, in ethics and in brain power."[15] Macaulay's idea is also known as "downward filtration theory," a theory which advocates those class(es) of persons educated in Western language and culture might become agents for disseminating ideas of the West

[13] R. Sahayadhas, *Hindu Nationalism and the Indian Church: Towards an Ecclesiology in Conversation with Martin Luther* (New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2013), p. 1.
[14] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 86.
[15] Thomas Macaulay, "Indian Education: Minute of the 2nd of February 1835 (pp. 719-730)," in *Macaulay, Prose and Poetry*, selected by G. M. Young (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,1952), p. 729.

to the wider society.[16] Spivak terms such a phenomenon as "subject-constitution,"[17] because it is a deliberate policy by which the colonized population is recruited to replicate the West.

Fanon's notion of mimicry is also colonial in its origins. But the point of departure from Bhabha is that this mimicry is not taken by the colonizers but by the formerly colonized peoples. The formerly colonized replicates or imitates the foreign dynamics of suppression.[18] In highlighting the effects of colonialism on the native mindset, Fanon astutely observed how colonial conditions have created a desire to emulate the culture and power of their colonizers in (the) colonized communities. In the context of the pluralistic regionalism and the development of so-called Hindu nationalism in India, Fanon's notion of mimicry is still in operation; in fact, it is a full-grown phenomenon in the Indian sub-continent. The NEI as a region with Christian identity, their unique culture and worldview has become a victim of such mimicry. Strategies learned from the colonialists are now employed by the structured Indian polity to enforce conformity.

I compare Fanon's mimicry with the contemporary Indian polity because the dominant ideology of Hinduizing the whole of the country is homegrown. Hindutva ignores diversity and insists that Indians must be the *identity-product* of Hindu communalism alone.[19] The Hindu ideology of cultural homogeneity leads to submerging identity of the tribes and other minorities living in the country, while the ideology privileges and serves the purposes of the homogenizers. In essence, homogenization/Hinduization fuels the process of identity erosion in NEI that was begun under the influence of Western colonialism.[20]

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[16] A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, repr. 2011 (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan Pvt., Ltd., 1948), p. 91.

[17] In the words of Spivak, the beneficiary of the "downward filtration theory" in practice are the invaders because those few who are trained in English language becomes clerks and officers of assistance to the colonizer themselves at a minimum wage. Gayatri Chakarvorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 13.

[18] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove, 1967), p. 221. Breathtaking literature on similar reading of social and cultural studies in Frantz Fanon (trans.), C. Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1963).

[19]Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 358.

[20]Sangtinuk talks about cultural erosion as one of the impacts of the homogenizing approach to biblical interpretation. Sangtinuk, "Story-Telling: A Means to Conserve Culture," *Journal of Tribal Studies* XIV/2 (2009): pp. 54-68.

1.2 Skimming Resistance History in NEI

1.2.1 The Politics of Non-Interference Policy

However, there was always resistance to the loss of tribal identity in the NEI. The initial impression of the Western invaders was that tribes were furious and violent.[21] History speaks that tribes in the hills were not easily approachable because they "would revolt violently even in the least interference within their territory."[22] It is said that although the colonial power have faced the tribes in 1820s, the natives were not entirely colonized within the administrative device of the colonial state.[23] Large section of the Northeast region were designated "as un-administered area by the *state*."[24]

So, for fear of revolt, they did not want to engage with the so-called hill tribes, the colonial administration introduced the *policy of non-interference* only for their benefit. The truth of the matter is that, although this was declared in the 1820s, the Western invaders still intruded in the land of the tribes despite occasional resistance. The British East India Company (BEIC) and the American Baptist Mission (ABM) tactically collaborated in their common pursuit to colonizing the hill tribes. Sajal Nag observes:

> The empire building project was not just an individual effort of the British colonisers; the rulers required services of the Christian missionaries to transform the colonised natives and render them suitable for colonial subjugation. At least this was the case in the tribal areas of NEI. Although the State and these agencies were autonomous, they were mutually interdependent for sustenance. While the Colonial State conquered natives, the missionaries rendered them conquerable. The administration governed them, and the missionaries made them governable. The colonialists subjugated people while the missionaries transformed them. One conquered them politically; the other consolidated it by conquering them morally and culturally. The former looked after peace, law and order, while the other

[21]Elaborately discussed in Sajal Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves: Colonial State, Missionary and Slavery Debate in Northeast India (1908-1920)," *Indian Historical Review* 39/1 (2012): pp. 57-71 (58).
[22]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 64.
[23]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 65. Although, according to James Johnstone, for the Nagas specifically, Westernization began with the invasion of the tribes by the British in 1832. James Johnstone, *My Experience in Manipur and the Naga Hills* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1896 [reprint, Elibron Classics, 2006]), p. 22.
[24]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 65.

> established new social and cultural institutions. They were not only complementary, they reinforced each other.[25]

As a further evidence to what Nag documented, a Naga historian Vimeno Lasetso also states that it was after the Treaty of Yandaboo (Anglo-Burmese war) of the 24th February 1826, that Christianity was introduced in the region of NEI. The treaty that led to the expansion of the British administration to NEI brought the entire area under the Western control. Thus, she says, "the history of Christian activities in NEI was accompanied by this administration."[26] Frederick Downs, who taught Divinity students at Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, exemplifies the fact that the Church of England normally appointed a Chaplain in the administrative colonies they set up. Such was Robert Brand who worked as Chaplain in 1844[27] supported by Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) for the benefit of the tea planters. To this day the then multiple Anglican dioceses now jointly functions with NCCI. Likewise, V. K. Nuh, a renowned church leader and activist states, "It was the Governor General Agent and Commissioner of Assam, Captain Francis Jenkins, who invited missionaries to this region. It was this Captain that volunteered Indian Rupees of 1000 if any missionaries so will to start evangelising in Sadiya, Assam."[28]

I could draw one closer example from my own village, Tamlu. To this day, the 86 years old Tamlu Village Baptist Church keeps the record of the white man's arrival to the village. According to the church's history, E. W. Clark, who first arrived among the Ao tribes in in 1872 set foot on Tamlu soil between 1881-1883 (some say April-May 1881).[29] Although the locals did not accept the gospel then, they welcomed him by the site of the *morung* and listened to what he had to say.[30]

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[25]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," pp. 57-58. Also see, Thong, "To Raise the Savage to a Higher Level," pp. 894, 896.
[26] Vimeno Lasetso, "An Appraisal of the Historiography of Christianity in North East India," in Razouselie Lasetso and Lovely Awomi James (eds.), *Voices from the North East: Postmodern Reflections on Issues Confronting the Tribals of North East India* (Jorhat: Eastern Theological College, 2018), p. 137.
[27]Downs, *History of Christianity in India* (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1992), p. 86.
[28] V. K. Nuh, *A Theological Refection on Naga Society* (Kohima: Council of Naga Baptist Churches, 1996), p. 49.
[29] Extracted from *Tamlu Ching Baptist Attoi: Platinum Jubilee 1934-2009* (Dimapur: Progressive Press, 2009), pp. 14-15.
[30] Extracted from *Tamlu Ching Baptist Attoi,* p. 15.

Prior to Mokokchung's inauguration as the sub-division in 1889, this town that belongs to the Ao tribe remained under the administration of the Naga Hills District of Assam. It was this administration that prompted the British to occupy Tamlu. The camp where the invaders settled is called *Gulag Shang* (meaning Camp Tower) to this day.[31] In an interview conducted with my village *Goan-bura* about the collaboration of the Christian mission with the later arrival of colonial imperialism at Tamlu, he responded in my native (Phom) language, "jomphong shahshentei-ei peipeih," which means, "they had prior information to collaborate."[32] As administration and Christian mission went hand in hand, while the Christian gospel was being given, the eyes of the colonizers were wide open to the natural resources in the region.

Tribes in NEI region paid taxes and submitted to forced labour although they were the indigenous landowners. In fact, though much later, the massive Kuki tribes' uprising and resistance in Manipur between 1917 and 1919 was a protest against forced labour.[33] The reality was that the BEIC "desired to keep the administrative sub-division of Lushai which they succeeded in doing so in 1898."[34] Particularly through the so-called *policy of non-interference*, the colonizers somehow associated themselves with the tribal chiefs for their governance, benefit and safety. Law and order remained responsibility of the chiefs because the colonial administration did not see it necessary to take control themselves at that point of time in the regime.[35] Meanwhile, "they did not bother about educational promotion as they thought missionaries were influential for the same."[36]

A close examination of the policy becomes key to disentangling the myth of non-interference. In fact, this policy was just another tool for the subjugation of the indigenous people. Also, in contrast to the common view that the missionary enterprise functioned independent of the colonial powers, the statement by Nag with an example from my own village mentioned above suggests the opposite.

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[31]Personal interview with D. Nyiami at Tamlu Village on 10th March 2020.
[32]Personal interview with D. Nyiami at Tamlu Village on 15th October 2019.
[33]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 65.
[34]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 65.
[35]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 65. Also see, Alexander MacKenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill tribes of North-East Frontier of Bengal* (Calcutta: 1884, repr. New Delhi: 2001), p. 340.
[36]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 65.

Importantly, the introduction of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) constructed an identity politics in the general perception of the people in post-colonial India. F. L. Nonglait writes:

> This is an offshoot of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873, which protected the Crown's interest in the tea, oil and elephant trade by prohibiting "British subjects" from entering into these "Protected Areas" (to prevent them from establishing any commercial venture that could rival the Crown's agents). The word "British subjects" was replaced by Citizen of India in 1950. Even though the ILP was originally created by the British to safeguard their commercial interests, it continues to be used in India, whether officially or alleged to protect tribal cultures in Northeastern India.[37]

Thus, the Indian state inherits a policy from the British administration which sets the peoples of NEI apart. A policy ostensibly designed for the protection of tribal peoples and their identities had very different effects in practice both under the British and after independence. Today, tribes in general and the Christian communities from NEI in particular are held back by chronic underdevelopment and separatist conflicts.[38] They are placed in a liminal space due to racial harassment, cultural derogations and religious intolerances. With the rationale that it was to protect the people, the Government of India introduced/authorized martial law in the policy named Armed Force (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) on 22nd May 1958. AFSPA still reigns in the region. This Act is part and parcel of the ironic legacy of the originally British *policy of non-interference* and the ongoing ILP. Sailajananda Saikia writes:

> The then Union Home Minister justified the Act as a temporary measure to contain the uprising in the Naga Hills. But six decades today, large part of the Northeast is still declared *disturbed* under the Act and the civilian population is still under grip of the military rule. Thousands of lives have been extinguished in enforced disappearances and

[37]Fenela Lyngdoh Nonglait, "Inner Line Permit: A Legal Paradox," *The Shillong Times* (3rd October 2013).
[38]Beyoyeta Das, "India's Northeast Speaks out against Racism: *Al Jazeera* Speaks to People from Seven States who say they are Discriminated against in the Rest of the Country," *Al Jazeera Media Network* (Bangladesh: 19th February 2014), available in http://www.aljazeera.com, accessed on 1st September 2016.

> extrajudicial executions. Torture, rape, arbitrary detention, forced migration and displacement has become part of life.[39]

Saikia argues from the perspective of human rights that AFSPA is "a draconian and xenophobic law applied to the mongoloid race that appear different than others in the country."[40] The ideologies of ILP and AFSPA were intended to provide security and to affirm human rights, but, paradoxically, they proved undemocratic and only to resonate with the contemporary hegemony of Hindutva.

1.2.2 Drain of Wealth, Resource and Power

It was in 1832, that, Francis Jenkins, one of the Majors and Governor General's Agent and Commissioner for the Provinces explored Assam over a six-month trip (18 October 1832 to 27 April 1833), and discussed settlements, land and natural resource explorations, the water navigability, native culture and language.[41] Despite *the non-interference policy*, the British legitimated their right to interfere and to discover for themselves what could be safely exploited by this expedition. The excerpt from the Viceroy's Council reads:

> If speculators are allowed to advance into the hills, to take advantage of the ignorance of the tribesmen, and, perhaps, even to buy up from them the right of collecting forest produce,' then 'the difficulties which have arisen from the unrestricted extension of tea planting on the frontier may be expected to recur in a new and even more dangerous form.'[42]

Since then the BEIC took the market monopoly that made unlawful tapping of rubber punishable for the natives in the territories the BEIC controlled. Apart from BEIC authorized dealers, anybody found trespassing could be penalized. The

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[39]Sailajananda Saikia, "9/11 of India: A Critical Review on Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), and Human Rights Violation in Northeast India," *Journal of Social Welfare and Human Rights* 2/1 (2014): pp. 265-279 (265).
[40]Saikia, "9/11 of India," p. 265.
[41] From the documents of Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI) 2011, "History of Baptist Mission in Northeast India: A Timeline (1836-2011)," in http://hozir.org/history-of-baptist-mission-in-northeast-india-a-timeline-1836.html. Accessed on 13th December 2017.
[42]Original Documents, *Resolution of the Viceroy-in-Council*, in "Memorandum on the Conservancy and Working of the Caoutchouc Forests of Assam' in 'Assam and Cachar India Rubber Trade," *Foreign Department, Revenue-A*, No. 13-26 (July 1872). Also, in Bodhisattva Kar, "Historia Elastica: A Note on the Rubber Hunt in the North-Eastern Frontier of British India," *Indian Historical Review* 36/1 (2009): pp. 131-150 (139).

subjugation was such that the extraction of rubber and tea were forced to operate between the cost of survival of the tribes and the supremacy of British protection. Whenever aggrieved rubber suppliers (tribes from Assam and Sarak Miri) gathered to claim the wage, it was often times taken as a "language of extraction, extortion and misconduct."[43] This amounts to saying that the natives who were then addressed as the savage were not given the right to claim their wage, unless receive it as and when the authority give them.

Also, concerning the British Land Revenue system, the indigenous tribal chiefs were encouraged to continue their customary administrative system under the new dispensation which is under the watchful eyes of the district administration, the British-India. In the British-India hegemony, tribal chiefs such as the Khasi *Sirdar,* the Naga *Goanbura,* the Mizo *Lal,* and the Garo *Nokma* assisted the British administration in collection of revenue particular the house tax from which they were paid their share. The gradual development of the British control over the hill tribes superseded the centuries old political autonomy of the hill people. The British control then introduced a pattern of administration that suited their imperial policy. In this process, several indigenous institutions and customs were made to become defunct.[44]

Modern scientific agricultural technology played a crucial role in impoverishing the native tribes because they demarcated certain areas of forests and hills as reserved. The original heirs of the land were deprived from utilising the reserved forests. Although the agricultural policies were presented as promoting the native cultivator's interest by making them productive labourers of the modern colonial state, the original inhabitants were marginalized, and stigmatized as primitive workers.

Besides the economic downfall, there was a collapse in religious life and traditional ways of life were endangered.[45] Adivasi tribes such as the Mundas, Ho, Santals and Oraons rose to mobilize an ideology of radical resistance. It took shape in the form of

[43]Kar, "Historia Elastica," pp. 148, 143.
[44] David R. Syiemlieh, "Introduction," in David R. Syiemlieh (eds.), *On the Edge of Empire: Four British Plan for Northeast India- 1941-1947* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2014), p. 4.
[45]Bhangya Bhukya, "Enclosing Land, Enclosing Adivasis: Colonial Agriculture and Adivasis in Central India (1853-1948)," *Indian Historical Review* 40/1 (2013): pp. 93-116.

Munda Movement (1894-1900) led by a tribal leader Birsa Munda, and occasional Oraon and Ho movements between 1870s and 1932. The slogan of the resistance reads:

> The Land is in the grip of a consuming fire, like dry bones, since wealth, customary honour and sovereignty had been snatched from us.[46]

The primary agenda of such resistance movement included reclaiming the independent political sovereignty of the tribes in place of the colonial state. Such resistance movements are typical of any marginalized who would aspire for the revaluation of their rights and traditions from such awful plight.

1.2.3 White Superiority: Imperial and Missional Ideology

Meanwhile, acting on the alleged pretext of civilizing the tribes, Christian missionaries intervened into the most intimate domains of the tribal way of life. Nag highlights the range of missionaries' involvement with the NEI tribes in this way:

> . . . [it] included the physical look of the tribal, dresses, their food habits, their architecture, their hygiene, their morality, their ethics, their marriage institution, their children's norms, labour of their women, their sexuality and sexual behaviour, their man-woman relationship, their drinks and beverages, their songs, their dances, their violence, their timidity and so on. It is wrong to assume that the missionaries only wanted to change the religion. In fact, there is no aspect of their intimate life which was not sought to be interfered with.[47]

Besides what is being quoted above, while the ethnic consciousness of *who they are* and *who we are* particularly for the Nagas is owed to the British, they are deeply saddened by the indirect policy of divide and rule in the Naga tribe's homeland. Nagas today are in two countries, India and Myanmar. Tribes in NEI see themselves placed in a location created by others. In the context of the illogical territorial division and deportation of one ethnic tribe into diaspora Kaka D. Iralu says it is "the greatest British Betrayal of the 20th Century."[48] The colonizers consciously exploited ethnic territories

[46] Cited in Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri, "Revaluation of Tradition in the Ideology of the Radical Adivasi Resistance in Colonial Eastern India: 1855-1932-Part I," *Indian Historical Review* 36/2 (2009): pp. 273-305 (286-287).
[47]Nag, "Rescuing Imagined Slaves," p. 66.
[48] Kaka D. Iralu, *Nagaland and India: The Blood and the Tears- A Historical Account of the Fifty-Two Year Indo-Naga War and the Story of Those Who Were Never Allowed to Tell* (Kohima: Author, 2003),

for administrative convenience, ignoring the plight of the indigenous inhabitants. Down the ages, from colonial policies to Indian policy of domination, the history of tribes in NEI is a history of pain, agony and vulnerability. In 1947, the pioneering political movement of the then Mizo Hills District that called for resistance to the imperial policies states:

> It is a great injustice that the Mizo having one and the same culture, speaking one and the same language, professing one and the same religion, and knit together by common customs and traditions should have been called and known by different names and thrown among different people with their homeland sliced out and given to others.[49]

The tribal people in NEI, having lately realized the damage that was done to them emerged as revolutionists. Because of the bitter memories and existential experiences, there are constant conflict between the tribal insurgency armies and the Indian army (AFSPA). In pursuit to fight for liberation, people have lost lives; communities live in fear under curfews. Acts of resistance, reformation and liberation have become prominent in the NEI region. Today, one of the reasons for revolutionary insurgencies such as the Naga National Council (NNC), and United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) are movements that strive to re-write their own history, re-demarcation of the fragmented territories, and a resistance to the neo-imperial policies of the Indian government.[50]

Later on, one such revolutionary contention was reflected in the Convention at Champhai (Mizoram) in 1988. Such revolts should be taken as witnessing to the tribes' "perpetual aspiration to disengage with the colonial legacy"[51] and liberation from the dominant clutches of contemporary Indian polity. These socio-historical interactions

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pp. 36-42. *Ref*. Mar Imlong, *God-Land-People: An Ethnic Naga Identity* (Dimapur: Heritage Publishing House, 2009).

[49]Pum Khan Pau, "Administrative Rivalries on a Frontier: Problem of the Chin-Lushai Hills," *Indian Historical Review* XXXIV/1 (2007): pp. 187-209 (188).

[50]A. N. M. Irshad Ali and Indranoshee Das, "Tribal Situation in Northeast India," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 1/2 (2003): pp. 141-148 (146).

[51] Pau, "Administrative Rivalries on a Frontier," p. 209.

have proven in most cases a curse for the tribes. Since then, the tribes in NEI resisted the dominant forces and aspire question *who they are* and *who we are*.[52]

1.3 Contending with the Bible-I: The Bible as a Suppressive Tool

In the following section, I will proceed to argue that biblical interpretation and eco-political control of the West among the tribes in NEI are suppressive and detrimental to the indigenous peoples. Drawing on the contextual knowledge of the painful marginalization and injustices meted out on the tribes of NEI then and now, I will draw parallel expressions of human sensibilities in 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23. The lived realities of both the contexts will then show how the message derivable from the texts can appeal to marginalized readers. Consequently, viable marginal hermeneutics will be sought.

1.3.1 An Apparatus to Interpretation

My perspective of reading the Deuteronomic theology attempts to negate the image of God as one who is full of wrath and powerful to destroy. Such a theology of God which is consistent with Noth's position on the DH, to me is the prototype of the Western mode of interpretation of divine, human and social affairs where whatever they preached and taught were to be normative. This resonates with me in the way I read the DH from the marginalized contexts of my own setting. The Bible and its interpretation in the colonial-missionary era in NEI was centred on the ideological subjectivity, a subjectivity in the similitude of the righteous West and the pagan native. The basic characteristic of the colonialist custodians' interpretation of the Bible is that their political, economic, culture and religious norms dictate the goals of human action and the means by which the goals are to be realized. Missionaries with an ideological commitment to 'converting the natives' upheld the Bible's authority and saw the *unevangelized as others* and inferior.[53] The stereotype is that the people of the *unevangelized world* can only be as fully human as Westerners are when they identify themselves with the Western thoughts and pattern to life; otherwise they are *others.*

[52]E. Theodore Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), p. 64.
[53] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 116. Italicized phrase *unevangelized world* is mine, as an emphasis to people and culture of the natives whom the Westerners met.

As the logic of this interpretive system works itself out, the custodians of the Bible claim the power to define the way that lives are to be lived and managed. They defined and marked the territories of spirituality, religiosity, life and work. Such authorizing claims of the biblical interpretation seem to have been triggered by the suppressive texts wherein the recipients are consciously or unconsciously shaped by the dominant claims.[54] What follows is the remarkably dangerous use of religious symbols and ideological legitimizations as part of a claim to their ownership of the Supreme-Being (God).[55] The subjective implementation of Western intellectuals and religious discourses demanded that the natives to comply with their authority. These Western ideological elements that evolved with the interpretation of the biblical texts suggest an uncompromising defence of their ideology, resulting in the exploitation of the natives. Religion and culture become vital means of ensuring the domination of the self-proclaimed Western beliefs and powers.

Hence, the colonial and missional enterprises collaborated in a religio-political imperialism. The consequences of these enterprises have proven much more doom than boon at least from the ideological point of view. As Fernando Segovia argues, "an omnipresent, inescapable and overwhelming" [56] presence of Western religious imperialism continues to shape and construct the natives. Hence, the Bible's presence and influence need to be contested.

According to Steven Holloway's definition:

> *Religious imperialism* is defined as deliberate, coercive involvement in the affairs of a foreign and subordinate polity with the intention of either manipulating the internal affairs of the foreign cult, or of imposing cultic dues and obligations consciously understood by both polities for the support of the cult(s) of the imperial polity, or both.[57]

As I have shown, this can be seen at work in the case of NEI, but it can also be seen in the DH. In applying Holloway's argument to 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, I will show that there are these scenarios where dominant forces subordinate the others. The

[54] Max A. Myers, "Hermeneutics in the American Empire: Towards an Anti-Imperialist Theology," in Kittredge, Aitken, *et al.* (eds.), *The Bible in the Public Square: Reading the Signs of the Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), p. 91.
[55] Pail Zanker, "The Power of Images," in Richard A. Horsley (eds.), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), pp. 47ff.
[56] Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies,* p. 125.
[57] Steven W. Holloway, *Ashur is King! Ashur is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 99.

dichotomy of the Southern hierarchical hegemony and the suppressed Northerners will be seen in 1 Kings 12. Similarly, the narrative in 2 Kings 22-23 will show the Assyrian hegemony exemplifies the placing of the cults of the colonized as subject to the religious system of the colonizers who clearly had divine approval for ruling over these assumed inferior systems. In the face of the international politics with Assyrian norms as a mandate in 2 Kings 22-23, 'all Israel' as a nation will be seen as located in the state of "ambivalence and ambiguity"[58] over identity and religiosity. In these directions, my study will show keen interest in specifying social class dichotomy in these texts, where, in both the narratives one is the superior empire and the other is the vulnerable *other*.

Gerhard West's statement will encapsulate what I will discuss about the class dichotomy in the texts and NEI context and the consequent neglect of the marginal voices. The subjective colonial and missional prerogatives in NEI are aptly reflected in an anecdote that Gerhard West cites in the context of South African postcolonial liberation theology. I quote:

> When the white man came to our country, he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us "let us pray." After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible.[59]

This appears like a caricature, but it reflects, the reality in many colonized countries. West highlights the insensitive treatment of the native culture and the underlying economic motives which we shall see in the texts to be studied. The giving of the Bible and the snatching of political, economic, cultural and inheritance rights by the Westerners of the nineteenth century NEI seems a story about a part that is long gone, but the truth is that contemporary tribes in NEI are a construction of the West.

1.3.2 Imperial Premises from the Lens of a Postcolonial Criticism

Primarily, the biased account of history and interpretations of the culture of the so-called 'natives' by the orientalising writers resonate with the biased historiography in the DH. Those who claim to be the custodians of the written Scripture and claim

[58] The concept of *ambivalence and ambiguity* in indemnity, religiosity, rights *vis-à-vis* the emergence of the issue of hybridity and the need to accommodate plurality of readers of the Bible and plurality in readings is elaborately written in Jacqueline M. Hidalgo, "Reading from no Place: Towards a Hybrid and Ambivalent Study of Scripture," in Francisco Lozado Jr and F. Segovia (eds.), *Latino/aa Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematics, Objectives, Strategies* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), pp. 165-170.
[59] Gerald O. West, *The Academy of the Poor: Towards a Dialogical Reading of the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 9.

intellectual control over the writing and teaching of history make of them an instrument to control others. Interestingly, Bhabha argues that the ignorant Indian mass embraced *this English Book (Bible)* as God, without the knowledge that *this book* is an instrument by which the colonizer controls their imagination and the aspirations.[60] This has to be set aside the claim that *this book* has in fact become an anchor in the contemporary lives of the Christian tribes of NEI; however, it is to say that *this book* was initially used as a force that compelled norms, cultures, identities and which acted as a yardstick for the integrity of life in the community.

I must agree with the perspective of David F. Ford who states that, "Christian history has many examples of Scripture being applied to public life in ways that have led to injustice, violence and misery."[61] Similarly, Mary Mead talks about her husband Clark who in his missionary tours in Nagaland, disproved "aspects of tribal belief systems, whereby, establishing his Western outlook to life as unbeatable by the gods who the native ascribe to."[62]

The backdrop of the texts' imperial ideology and theology and its suppressive interpretations, which is one of the premises in the postcolonial biblical studies, cannot be overlooked in the reading of texts in the DH. For instance, the aspect of characterizations I will argue in 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 are in both subjective and bias forms. "The orientalising"[63] writers and interpreters as Lasetso puts in the context of Mead's book, "the colonial text"[64] saw natives as an inferior race, gave names such as 'savages,' imposed "on-high culture," and rendered biased historical documentations.

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[60]Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," in Gareth Griffiths, *et al.* (eds.), *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 29-30.

[61] David F. Ford, "God and our Public Life: A Scriptural Wisdom," in Sebastian C. H. Kim and Jonathan Draper (eds.), *Liberating Texts? Sacred Scriptures in Public Life* (London: SPCK, 2008), p. 32.

[62] Mary Mead. *A Corner in India* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, Repr. 1978), p. 59. Discussion on the women missionaries' adventure narrative is deliberately written by Tianla, "The Colonial Mission and the Travelling Gaze," pp. 129-152. To many Christians in tribal areas of NEI especially in the state of Nagaland, the annihilation of tribal ways of life (superstitious, eco-cultural lives, prayers and sacrifices, animistic worships, feast, celebrant lullabies, food habits, tattoo of significance and identity) might be proof of a positive change (blessing). It is so thought, ever since the White foreign missionaries rejected these practices, because to the tribes then, Christianity is about being White, being obedient to what was taught to them from the Bible.

[63] Joan-Pau Rubies, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India ThroughEuropean Eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. xii-xiii.

[64]Lasetso, "An Appraisal of the Historiography of Christianity in North East India," p. 157.

1.3.3 The Biblical Interpretation that Eclipsed the Cultural Texts

As mentioned earlier the Christian missions have contributed immensely towards identity formation among the colonized tribes of NEI besides conversion. Kristopher Lakhra affirms, "Christian missions of the colonial times did not end with the giving of the gospel and conversion."[65] Most tribes acquiesced in the imposed identity: the identity that came from *above*. Since then, tribes in NEI faces what Kim calls *the state of liminality* while living in one's own indigenous land. This vulnerability was eventually intensified because of the religio-ideological politics in India that do not acknowledge the distinctive identity of the tribes in NEI.

What I meant by the phrase "eclipsed the cultural text" is that the truth claims of the colonizers incorporated what to them was powerful, as a result of which the natives had no access either by idea or actions to the way truth and power are interpreted. In my opinion, such interpretation and the legacy can be termed as the Eurocentric blindness. It makes a virtue of the fact that contextual sensibilities are ignored. Such is the case with the gun that Clark ordered to trigger in his encounter with the Tamlu people when he thought his security was threatened.[66] To me, this shows the centrality of the power claim to power in European engagements with the peoples of NEI and in the same way the ideology of hegemony existed in the way they read the Bible. The words, the power they possessed, and their thought patterns were made to confront with the people who lacked resources of the same kind. This is what I also argue as the *on-high* interpretation.

The ideological hegemony of the so-called superior race itself has the propensity to claim a monopoly on truth and the right to oversee and adjudicate on socio-political affairs. The application of such an ideology have caused the colonized to accept what is implied. This hegemony pretends to function as a benign form of control, but the notion of authority justifies the empire's compulsive yoke over the colonized. The powerful portray the weaker group in such a way that it seems inevitable that they should rule

[65]Of course, Kristopher Lakhra is not only negative with the identity formation of the tribes. He also talks about the positive emancipation that the Christian Missions have undertaken in the tribal region. Kristopher Lakhra, "Violation of Human Rights Against Tribals or Adivasis," in Hrangthan Chhungi (eds.), *Hearing the Voices*, p. 41.

[66]*One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Platinum Jubilee (1937-2012),* Documentation and Publication Committee of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (Kohima, 2012), p. 102.

over the weak.[67] Similar socio-political realities in NEI have largely created the condition of ambivalence in the tribes' identity (Bhabha: *hybridity*).

We will see similar rhetoric at work in the study of the context of the biblical texts. As history tells us, the Assyrian kings were venerated like gods and there were royal claims to divine knowledge. The Assyrians were depicted in most inscriptions, statues, gates, sculptures, temple walls and royal steles narrated as victors. They appear invincible. Perdue and Baker write:

> The Assyrian Empire sought to legitimize its rule in various ways: the divine commission to expand the imperial boundaries in order to establish order in the cosmos, the emphasis placed upon the superiority of Assyrian culture, and the xenophobic views expressed towards non-Assyrians.[68]

Such legitimization constructed the perception that the Assyrians were invincible. Western cultural ideology was portrayed in a similar way with similar results for the tribes in NEI. The invincibility was psychologically significant in colonizing the minds[69] of the subjects. Western Bible readers saw the Scripture as sanctioning invasion and evangelization at the cost of native's cultural and ethical norms. In the words of Sugirtharajah, the nature of this hierarchical and hegemonic regime has suppressed any liberative reading of the scripture.[70] Hence, it produced suppressive texts in a vicious circle of interpretation.[71]

To counter this, there is a need for the interpretation of the texts to begin from the readers' contexts and experiences. The God who is full of wrath and the theology that espouses God as a judge can disassociate marginalized readers and their experiences. Likewise, Segovia and Sugirtharajah assert that the missionary

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[67] Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 6-8. T. Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power," *Theory and Society* 19 (1990): pp. 545-577 (553).
[68] Leo G. Perdue and Warren Carter, *Israel and Empire: A Postcolonial History of Israel and Early Judaism* (London: T & T Clark, 2014), p. 40.
[69] Perdue and Carter, *Israel and Empire*, p. 41.
[70]Sugirtharajah sets a somewhat straightforward task for a postcolonial biblical studies reader. As far as the canonical text considered as legitimate by the early church, Sugirtharajah disagrees. He disagrees because biblical texts to him are not the sole conveyor of the biblical truth. There are many scriptures that are suppressed by the narrators and editors and in the process of the canonicity. Therefore, the task is to read the text from the paradigm of texts and stories that are concealed. Hence, counter-reading the existing, concentrated ideologies in favor of the possible hermeneutics that might speak on behalf of the post-colonial contextual bible readers. Sugirtharajah, *Troublesome Texts*, pp. 52-54.
[71] I also see texts such as Exod. 6 (Promise land *vis-à-vis* deliverance from Egypt), Genesis 12 (God called Abraham to go, a foreign land rhetoric, injunction that rest is assured to go, and possess that "unknown land.")

interpretation of the Bible/God in the third world contexts was "overly divinized."[72] Even in those cases where the Bible presented God as close to the peoples' movement, Western missionaries would have distanced the image of God for the marginalized people. I can cite for instance that for culturally marginalized communities, God can be better presented as embodied in their folk wisdom, identified with their ethos and in the context of lives lived.

In such a context of the apparently invincible forces, the subalterns such as the Christian tribes of NEI who anchors on to the Bible for hope, their ability and intelligibility to identify insights in the texts they read becomes important. I see these contexts as close to what Sugirtharajah has proposed for a remedial biblical interpretation which he called *cultural enrichment* contributing to *vernacular hermeneutics.* To Sugirtharajah, a counter-reading of the oppressive elements [textual and contemporary] must include aspects of the marginalized readers' own culture [stories] along with the narratives read, so as to relate to reader's search for a liberation.[73] Consequently, the readers' marginalized culture finds their voice in the texts as the Bible eventually grow with them as one of their own tools for identity revitalization and renaissance, or for complaint and resistance.[74]

Conclusion

For the marginalized Christian tribes of NEI, reading the Bible matters; for the engaged interpreter, the question becomes how liberating the implication of the texts are to the readers. What matters is the stories that are illuminating the readers' own experiences.[75] With my objective to uncover the marginalized voices from 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, in this chapter, I have outlined the contextual realities of historical as well as contemporary movements of resistances of the NEI tribes to the suppressive

[72] Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, *A Postcolonial Commentary of the New Testament Writings* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), p. 456.
[73] Similar patterns of reading ideas are drawn from David Jansen, "A Colonized People: Persian Hegemony, Hybridity, and Community Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah," *Bib. Int.* 24 (2016): pp. 27-47 (28).
[74] Bhabha, *The Location,* p. 112. Also see, Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics,* pp. 16-17. M. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), p. 122. J. L. Berquist, "Psalms, Colonialism, and the Construction of the Self," in J. L. Berquist (eds.), *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), pp. 196-197.
[75]BastiaanWielenga reflects few OT narratives in the Postcolonial perspective. He reads on Esau and Jacob conflict (Genesis 32: 3-21) and interprets from the parameter of the present day issues in the Netherland and Indonesia, in a village in Africa, Sri Lanka and in Indian context of Capitalism and campaigns against multinational companies (which is Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in India today). Bastiaan Wielenga, "Experiences with a Biblical Story," in Sugirtharajah, *The Postcolonial Bible,* pp. 189-198.

ideological and theological hegemonies. Most importantly, the nature of biblical interpretation where the Bible is posited as a suppressive tool in conversation with the imperial premises in the texts have been carried out. These then formulated the importance of the question, why the readers' experiential contexts and its dialogical reading of the Bible become essential from a marginalized context such as NEI.

The next chapter contains a literature review pertaining to the DH, its redactional and theological themes. My review mostly concentrates on Noth's hypothesis of the DH theology, and further go on to read modern scholarship on the thematic study of the DH. I will discuss and argue that just as the Dtr tended to ignore but could not entirely suppress the marginal voice in his historiography, the Western hegemony failed to recognize the voice of the native peoples' (NEI) resistance, but their stories remained. The essential fact is that, in both the contexts (the texts and NEI), these dominant cultural elitists have shaped the fate of the people in the margins.[76] Therefore, the re-reading of the text and an attempt to restore hope to the readers of the DH must begin from the marginal context. Read this way, the elements of voice plausible in the study of 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 can be a feasible framework from which a marginal approach to biblical interpretation can be established.

[76] Similar discussions in Vashum, "Colonialism, Christian Mission," pp. 72-73. George E. Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 4. Niharranjan Ray "Introductory Address," in K. Suresh Singh (eds.), *The Tribal Situation in India* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), p. 19.

Chapter 2

In Search of Hope: Redactional Interpretation of the Deuteronomistic History

Introduction

Since Martin Noth's magisterial work on the Deuteronomistic History and theology was published in 1943,[1] thematic studies of the Deuteronomistic[2] theology and ideology have been dominated by arguments that support the idea that this work predicts final judgement and doom for the Israelites. Consequently, the themes of hope in the text were overlooked. Later, Gerhard von Rad and Hans Walter Wolff both sought to counter this by examining the DH text in the light of YHWH's promise in 2 Sam. 7, Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8 and the release of Jehoiachin in 2 Kings 25 albeit with major disagreements over the way they approach its theological connectivity. This suggests that these texts have the potential for developing liberation hermeneutics as opposed to the theological perspective of Noth. Much later, modern scholars such as Marvin A. Sweeney, Antti Laato, Gary N. Knoppers, Thomas Römer and others have proposed several more optimistic views on the DH. However, reading hope elements in 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 from the ambiguous point where von Rad and Wolff have left is yet to be studied.

My approach comes from the readership of the marginalized tribes of NEI with sensibility for the subaltern voice in the DH texts. As far as the formerly colonized subaltern readers are concerned, the Dtr's central theological ideas, as interpreted by Noth could only compound their suppression rather than a message of hope. Therefore, in searching for theological messages of hope, this chapter will look at the fundamental

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[1] The first edition of the work appeared as *Schriften der Konigsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft,* 18(Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse, 1943), pp. 43-266.

[2] The writer will use DH for Deuteronomistic History, DtrH for Deuteronomistic Historian, Dtr for Deuteronomist. Before the classic work of Martin Noth (1943), the term "Deuteronomic" (*deuteronomisch*) was generally referred to the proposed Pentateuchal source D (Julius Wellhausen). Since Noth discerned both a D source and later redactional material in the book of Deuteronomy, he coined the term "Deuteronomistic" (*deuteronomistisch*) to refer to the later materials discovered in the book. See, Raymond F. Person, *The Deuteronomic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 4-5. The second German edition of Noth's 1943 appeared as, *Uberlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien Die Sammelnden und bearbeitendenGeschichtswerkeim Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1957), pp. 1-110, and third unaltered edition, 1967. The fourth edition Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, translated and edited by D. J. A. Clines, Philip R. Davies, and David M. Gunn (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 1-99. Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), p. 18.

affinities in the hypothetical arguments of Rad and Wolff for the significance of hope in the DH. Each of their arguments will be exegetically analysed to demonstrate the resonance in their treatments of the theme of hope from the passages they have taken into consideration. The optimistic interpretation rendered by modern scholars will contribute to my attempt to propose hermeneutics of voice reflected in 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 in the subaltern perspective.

2.1 The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis (Martin Noth: 1943)

2.1.1 Self-Contained Structure of the Deuteronomistic History

With his work proposing the DH Hypothesis, Noth has defined the territory of the Deuteronomistic corpus. In his wake, many scholars have drawn in the borders and colourings, to extend the metaphor. Noth's thesis about the Dtr's theological ideas is that the Deuteronomistic corpus was a compilation by an editor in the 6th Century BCE, whom he called the Deuteronomistic Editor (Deuteronomist). That, according to this proposition, the exilic editor produced the history, having collected and adapted pre-existing complex narratives, so as to highlight and determine the theological meaning in and of that period. Noth posits that the Dtr's linguistic details remain the most reliable evidence for attributing the work to a single editor (the Dtr), and that this Deuteronomistic element seems to be most conspicuous in Joshua and Kings.[3] The Dtr showed deep interest in the literary structure, thematic unity and unbroken chronology of the historical narration.[4] In the discussion by Knoppers and Greer we see that Noth hypothesis seems to have hinged on these key ideas and that in the study of Kings, Noth's Dtr says that the editor had firmly established the chronological link between the two phases of the Israelite monarchy.[5] Although I intend to cite just the key ideas, I must mention Noth's brief discussion of *Urdeuteronomium*. Knoppers's study concerning "the standard of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic work" points that

[3] Some narrative arrangement of the Deuteronomist can be seen in Joshua 1, 12, 23; 1 Sam. 12; 1 Kings 8: 14ff; Judge 2: 11ff; 2 Kings 17: 7ff. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 4-9, 79.

[4] An elaborate discussion and reviews of Noth's contention on linguistic and chronological idea of the DH is found in Percy S. F. van Keulen, *Manasseh Through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists: The Manasseh Account (2 Kings 21: 1-18) and the Final Chapters of the Deuteronomistic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 191-193. Alexander Rofé, "Ephraimaite Versus Deuteronomistic History," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), p. 464.

[5] Gary N. Knoppers and Jonathan S. Greer, "Deuteronomistic History," in http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393361/obo-9780195393361-0028.xml, accessed on 10th November 2017.

although Noth have engaged his arguments with *Urdeteronomium* (Deut. 4: 44-30: 20), he failed to "develop" or "demonstrate" more because of his concentration to a product based on the single editor of the DH. However, what he said about *Urdeteronomium* (the proto-Deuteronomy) cannot be denied as Knoppers said, for Noth, "the DH's inclusion of law (*Urdeuteronomium*). . . becomes a crucial role. . . because it sets a benchmark by which the conduct of God's people was judged."[6] Here, the importance of the Law of Deuteronomy becomes a prerequisite for monarchs and their royal authorities, and for the sustenance of Yahwism.

It is in this connection that modern scholars look on the discovered book in Kings as a pre-deuteronomic scroll which supported the royal role and reorganization of the Israelite society. This will be further seen in Na'aman's insistence on the existence of the pre-Deuteronomic history, apparently the stratum from which Na'aman looks at the Dtr introducing the event concerning the scroll. This Na'aman called the original Deuteronomy (*Urdeuteronomium*). [7] Early on, in his discussion, Knoppers also unapologetically states that:

> The Deuteronomist employed *Urdeuteronomium*in composing his writing, but he did this in a much more sophisticated and nuanced manner than many have supposed. The Deuteronomist is perfectly able to enlist *Urdeuteronomium* either to commend or to denounce the actions of certain figures in his history.[8]

I will leave this here with a thought to raise the question that if modern DH scholars override the idea of a single Dtr, or if what Noth suggests worked, the historical recourse to the writings have not received justice. Readings on the double-redaction and multiple redaction theories will further elaborate on this provocation.

2.1.2 Major Themes of the Deuteronomist in Noth's Hypothesis and its Critics

The overarching theme of the DH that Noth propounds is the destruction of Israel. He sees the DH predominantly as a certificate of judgement and condemnation. He regards the book as the result of exilic edition, evidenced in the elements of loss based on the Babylonian final deportation of 587 BCE. As such, the conclusion with the

[6]The above discussion by Knoppers is learned from his ideas discussed in Gary N. Knoppers, "Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy anf the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings," *CBQ* Vol. 63/3 (July 2001): pp. 393-415 (394).
[7] Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform," *JBL* 1 (2011): pp. 47-62 (48).
[8]Knoppers, "Rethinking the Relationship," pp. 412-413.

hopeless end of Jehoiachin in 2 Kings makes an ideal end to the corpus. According to him, with reference to historical sources such as "the Chronicles of the kings of Judah" and "the Chronicles of the kings of Israel," the Dtr showed interest in the national history from the time of occupation to the fall of the kingdom. Noth's Dtr had the idea that alluded to the old tradition of conquest and occupation which to him was the promise of God to their ancestor, just as the Exodus event was the evidence of a divine intervention. Noth's conviction is that the histories from which the Dtr "worked were based on the idea that YHWH was continually working to meet the hastening ethical failure with penalties, and once such warnings and penalties fail, a total obliteration was made inevitable."[9]

Noth also points out that the Dtr's theological ideas concentrated mostly on the Deuteronomistic tradition of a single place of worship as instituted by God for the people (Deut. 12), and that the Dtr presented this element as the traditional old religion that needed to be obeyed. To Noth, it is in view of this special relationship that the Dtr promulgated the Deuteronomic Law as an authentic divine exposition.[10] Moreover, the Dtr saw that the destruction of the nation is foreseen in the Deuteronomic Law of retribution; as such, the destruction will be an accomplished historical reality, a final judgement *per se*. The Dtr seemed also to envisage the divine hand of help to the people. However, Noth depreciates this idea and says:

> However, this idea does not take on any significance for the Dtr. In the casual statement of it he is merely imitating a manner of speaking popular in his time. In general, the Dtr saw the history of Israel as a self-contained process which began with specific manifestations of power and came to a definitive end with the destruction of Jerusalem.[11]

So, on the question of the future, despite peoples' expectation of the new order post-catastrophe, the Dtr did not "take up the opportunity to discuss the future goals of history."[12] The Nothian Dtr's concern is with the past history of the people, and the end as a result of the sins of the past but not with the present. The Dtr seems to show the divine judgement enacted in the fall of Israel and eventually Judah as something final and definitive. Therefore, the Dtr expresses "no hope for the future, not even in the very

[9]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), p. 89.
[10]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), p. 90.
[11]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), pp. 90-91.
[12]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), p. 97.

modest form of expectation that the deported people would be gathered together."[13] The Dtr's explicit verdict on this point is to be found in the last part of the temple dedicatory prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 8: 44-53):

> At this early stage Dtr makes Solomon look at the possibility of future dispersion but he is thinking only that the prayers of the dispersed people would then be directed towards the site of the Jerusalem temple; he makes Solomon wish that these prayers be heard but he makes the prayer contain nothing but the petition for forgiveness of past guilt without even suggesting that the nation might later be re-assembled and reconstructed.[14]

Under these circumstances, the Dtr did not find any change of fortune in Jehoiachin's release or regard Josiah as a figure of hope for the re-establishment of the Deuteronomic community. Instead of heralding a new age, the Nothian Dtr suggested Jehoiachin's placement at the Babylonian court as metaphor for captivity and a sign of the end of Israel as a nation.

Noth's theory gained acceptance from a wider scholarly fraternity, although his influence did not preclude critiques and counter readings up until recent times. Some central features of Noth's proposition have been questioned and are studied in modified forms, leading to the proliferation of newer theories and hypotheses. My take is on the Dtr's historiography, the editor *per se* where the DH text interpretations over the years have taken the shape of Noth's theology of judgement and doom thereby idealizing a biased historiography over hidden stories of the context.

Gerhard von Rad seems to have agreed with Noth's hypothesis as to a single redactor, but he is critical about the theme of final judgment. To critique Noth's hypothesis, von Rad emphasises on the theme of promise in 2 Sam. 7 where he argues that the actual DH theme at work is a *Messianic one* which appears to be yet unfulfilled. He further demonstrates the optimism in Jehoiachin's release as signalling the futuristic theme: "Yahweh can start over again."[15] In von Rad's view, the Dtr did not intend to teach that the exile was the end. To him, the Dtr wanted his audience to look beyond

[13]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), p. 97.
[14]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), pp. 97-98.
[15] *First publication in* Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 340-342.

their present circumstances, the reason being the promise of YHWH,[16] which would not go unfulfilled.

This argument by von Rad is countered by Wolff. Wolff argues that the notion of *hope* is inconsistent with Nathan's oracle. If the Dtr wanted to stimulate hope by emphasizing this oracle, then this is contradicted by the fact that the reference to the final year 561 BCE in 2 Kings 25: 27-30 contains no mention of Nathan's oracle. Instead, Wolff suggests that the Jerusalem catastrophe of the year 587 BCE is seen as significant in the DH, as cited in 2 Kings 24: 2, which to Wolff seems to fulfil the word of Yahweh. So, for Wolff, the fulfilment is invariably reliant on the word of Moses in Deuteronomy (1 Kings 2: 3-4; 9: 5-7). He says, "when Kings are subject to covenant, both the kingdoms are subjected. So also, when the covenant is abandoned, the Nathan oracle too is no more in potency."[17] Yet, with this argument, Wolff by no means agree with Noth either. Wolff suggests hope from a very different textual approach than von Rad.

Wolff focuses on the importance of the theme of שׁוּב (*shub*-to return or to turn) apparent in 1 Kings 8: 46-53. For Wolff, this passage gives a glimpse of "hope" in the Deuteronomistic corpus. Hence, he moves a step forward from von Rad's reliance on Nathan's oracle and Jehoiachin's release and disagrees with Noth on the theme of final judgement and catastrophe.[18] In this way, they counter-read the conceptual hypothesis laid by Noth, for looking at the theme of hope in the DH.

My interest here is a search for the fundamental theological affinities in these texts through the exegetical study. Consequently, I will counter-read Nothian Dtr's themes of final judgement and doom for hope hypothesis. Before I do that, I will look at some of

[16] Therefore, if condemnation and rejection of dynasties are taken in the light of Noth's thesis, then it contradicts with the promise element of the Davidides says Mark A. O'Brien in support of the hypothesis of Rad. Mark A. O'Brien, "The Deuteronomistic History' as a Story of Israel's Elders," *Australian Biblical Review* 37 (1989): pp. 14-34 (30). Here, I must affirm to the readers that in this thesis, Davidic monarchy which is discussed from 2 Sam. 7 and various texts from the book of Kings is interpreted in two perspectives depending on the characteristics of texts measured from the postcolonial imagination of Homi Bhabha's colonial mimicry. For instance, in looking at the marginalized in 1 Kings 12, I will suggest to reading Monarchy/Davidic dynasty as the oppressor, and that the Northern kingdom represents the voice of the marginalized. On the other hand, in re-reading 2 Kings 22-23 from the marginalized hermeneutical apparatus, I will project that Davidic dynasty is the victim of the oppressive international politics. I will use "state of liminality" following the hypothesis of Uriah Kim.

[17]Hans Walter Wolff, *The Old Testament: A Guide to Its Writings* (London: SPCK, 1974), Hans Walter Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work," in Knoppers and McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel*, pp. 65-66.

[18] Walter Brueggeman and Hans Walter Wolff, *The Vitality of the Old Testament Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), pp. 83-100.

the critiques and counter arguments on Noth's redactional/compositional hypothesis to further review some literatures concerning the issues in the Deuteronomistic redaction theories and theologies ideas.

2.2 Double Redaction Hypothesis (Frank M. Cross: 1973)

Noth's self-contained structure theory of the DH was challenged by Cross's who proposes the theory of the existence of a pre-exilic edition rather than the exilic alone, and Cross dates this to Josiah's regnal era.[19] While Noth sees the DH to be the history of judgement, Cross suggests it is "an invitation to transform to a new hope with Josiah."[20] Cross asserts that Josiah (2 Kings 22-23) is a figure of hope, in whose role the Exodus history (1 Kings 8: 53) can be re-experienced by the Israelites.[21] This theme is later largely emphasized by Römer. This indicates that the theology of doom in the DH as promulgated by Noth is by no means unquestionable as Cross points out:

> If there is a present consensus that Deuteronomy-2 Kings in its present form constitutes a unified "Deuteronomistic History," it is also true that scholars have not even been able to agree on such fundamental aspects of this Deuteronomistic editing as, for example, whether its basic thematic proclamation is one of "unrelieved and irreversible doom,"[22]

Cross argues for a first edition in Josiah's regnal period which is associated with the promise to David. Cross call this the Dtr_1. The second less extensive and more pessimistic edition was an offshoot from the period of the exile which he calls Dtr_2. The Dtr_2 is assumed to have relied on Dtr_1 as the basis for his work. Cross based this theological distinction between Dtr_1 on the promise to David whereas Dtr_2 focuses on Jeroboam's sin. Cross asserts that these two themes form the basis of the Josianic reform.

However, R. D. Nelson observes that Cross's basis for his distinction between Dtr_1 and Dtr_2 based on these two theological themes is without any thorough critical

[19] Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 274-289.
[20] Cited in Mark A. O'Brien, "The'Deuteronomistic History,'" p. 14.
[21] Unlike Cross's distinction of the DH, Römer supports the exilic edition of the DH. But on the theme of the DH, Römer like Cross contends that the patriarchal history is to be re-experienced by the Deuteronomic community and that it is an important element in reading the exilic redaction of the DH. To him, אב (father/ancestor) signifies a pivotal meaning for the Dtr. The notion of fathers and their promises appears in almost every theological theme in the DH. Thomas Römer, "Deuteronomy in Search of Origins," in Knoppers and McConville, (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel*, p. 112.
[22] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, p. 275.

text analysis. He did not offer further evidence for his statement that Dtr_2 uses a different editorial style from Dtr_1. Nelson tries to underpin his hypothesis through his literary analysis, essentially supporting the assumption of double redaction but with careful studies in four areas:

Firstly, structural and stylistic analysis of the regnal formulas[23] with introduction and conclusion in each reign; *secondly,* source, redactional and motival analyses of texts judged as critical to making cases for Dtr_1 and Dtr_2; *thirdly,* the expressed attitudes toward the Davidic dynasty; *fourthly,* theological differences which suggest redactional developments and shifting historical circumstances.[24]

Nelson asserts that the regnal formula of the Judaean kings reflect diversity and flexibility, while those written for the kings after Josiah are identical to one another and strictly limited in content. For Nelson, these might have derived from a post-Josianic imitator of an early source. Based on characteristic motifs and linguistic features revealed by redaction-source analysis, Nelson distinguishes the main edition (Dtr_1) and finds exilic supplements (Dtr_2) in the book of Judges and Kings.[25] Nelson suggests that the concept of an eternal and unconditional covenant with David was an essential conviction of the Dtr_1. To him, the Dtr_1 celebrated and legitimated Josianic policies in an age of nationalistic fervour, but the exilic Dtr_2 transformed the original history into a "doxology of judgment."[26] Nelson's contribution, as we may learn is an expansion of Cross's programmatic division of the two historians; the pre-exilic and exilic. It is technically a systematized classification of the two literary elements in the Deuteronomistic corpus.

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[23] Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History,* JSOTSupp., 18 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), p. 29. The regnal formulas are constructed from the following elements: i) The introductory formula: Synchronism, the king's age when ascension, period of reign in the capital and the name of the king's mother. ii) This introduction is immediately followed by a judgment comparing the king with his father, with another king, another person or group of people. iii) The closing formula is the same for the kings of Judah and Israel and mention the annals of the kings of Judah or Israel for more information, the king's demise, his burial in the city of David, and finally the succession. Eric Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah and the composition of the deuteronomistic history* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 33.
[24] Nelson, *The Double Redaction,* pp. 27, 43ff. Burke O. Long, reviewed Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, *JBL* 102/3 (Sept. 1983): pp. 454-456.
[25] Nelson, *The Double Redaction,* pp. 43ff.
[26] Nelson, *The Double Redaction,* 28. Long, reviewed, *The Double Redaction,* pp. 454-456. Further, Nelson sees the differences in the following ways: the Dtr_1 was keen on the aspect of the Ark of the Covenant while the Dtr_2 was not; the Dtr_1 viewed land as a positive gift whereas the Dtr_2 thought the gift something of a curse/destruction. The Dtr_1 glorified patriarchs and the kings as heroes modelled after his view of Josiah, whereas the Dtr_2 presents negative views about the last four Judaean kings. Dtr_1 saw the chastisement of Solomon's sin in the Northern uprising, whereas the Dtr_2 was negative toward the North. Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah* p. 34.

2.3 Multiple Redaction Hypothesis (Rudolph Smend: 1978)

According to Rudolph Smend there were three stages of Deuteronomistic activity.[27] They are the DtrH (Historiker) which he calls it the primary one that have been created during the exile and is characterized by a belief that the land is given, and the conquest as an established fact. The second redactor, the DtrP (Prophet) is believed to have multiplied prophetic materials as apparent in the book of Kings. The DtrP is characterized by unalleviated threats of judgments.[28] The third stage saw the activity of the DtrN (nomistic) which is a legalistic expansion of Deuteronomy.[29]

Smend suspects that the traces of these redactors could be scattered and discovered throughout the DH. As for instance, DtrN does not seem to appear in a coherent whole, which means that there could be multiple hands who contributed to the "nomistic style."[30] DtrN is interpreted to be more optimistic and its texts seem to have made a positive judgment on David and Josiah, and Jehoiachin's forgiveness.[31]

It is usually agreed that these threefold delimitations of the redactors were developed in 1953[32] in the work of Alfred Jepsen. But in Smend's opinion, although Jepsen seemed to have worked independently, his work is influenced by Noth's thesis, which Smend considers as a precursor to Jepsen. Jepsen traced pre-exilic redactors but still stressed exilic editorial work comprising parts of Judges, Samuel and Kings. He

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[27] It is noteworthy that Jepsen much earlier than Smend had proposed three redaction theory. He proposed: The *First Redactor* (R^{I}) was a priestly author writing during the exile. Jepsen called this the *Konigsgeschichte.* The *Second Redactor* (R^{II}) was influenced by prophets such as Hosea and Jeremiah and used Deuteronomy for elaborating the royal history. Jepsen identified this redactor with Noth's Deuteronomist. The *Third Redactor* (R^{III}) who, according to him was a Levitical redactor worked in the post-exilic period. Jepsen's work seems to have influenced the so-called Smend School of Thought. Alfred Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Konigsbuches* (Halle: Saale, 1953), pp. 26-102. Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah*, pp. 10-11.

[28]DtrP is notably understood as the work of Walter Dietrich and further taken by T. Veijola. Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (Gotingen: FRLANT, 1972), p. 39.

[29] Cited in Keulen, *Manasseh*, p. 14. Original Version in Rudolf Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (ThW 1), Stuttgart: 1978.

[30] Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah*, pp. 21-22.

[31] Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah*, p. 21.

[32] Jepsen's hypothesis suggests R^{I} to 580 BCE composition by a Jerusalemite priest. The composition intended to feature the cult-history of Israel. Later in about 550 BCE the redactor supplemented the work of his predecessor with prophetic materials such as, stories of election, worship and obedience to law. Jepsen's third redactor is ascribed to the 6th century BCE, proposed to be "Levitical." The distribution of these sources and redactions throughout the Kings is meticulously specified in Jepsen's work. One example: the alteration of R^{I} and R^{II} is apparent in 2 Kings 21: 1-18 he assigns vv. 1, 2a, 3, 5, 17-18 to R^{I}, and the remaining to R^{II}. Keulen, *Manasseh*, p. 15. Much of their works are elaborated in German version including Veijola and Dietrich but a necessary reading in English translation available with the work of Keulen (1996) and Eynikel (1996) both by the BRILL publications.

called them R^{I} and R^{II}. Keulen suggests that Jepsen's R^{I} could be assigned as Noth's Dtr but R^{II} can neither be compared with Noth's Dtr nor equated with Smend's DtrH.[33] Within this unresolved complication, Smend is known as the real father as far as the multiple redaction theories are concerned, a pioneer who made a clear distinction between DtrN and DtrH.

André Lemaire and Weippert advocated a thesis for *protodeuteronomistic* composition that considers several books being repetitively rationalized and lengthened over hundreds of years. Lemaire based his argument from "the variation in the regnal and judgment formulas of the Southern and Northern kingdoms."[34] Weippert's three redaction hypothesis of 1972 distinguishes three redactions specifically in 1 and 2 Kings and called them R^{I}, R^{II}, and R^{III}, of which the last two show similarities with Cross's Dtr_1 and Dtr_2.[35] The first redactor (R^{I}) who, in Weippert's view, was responsible for the period from Jehoshaphat/Jehoram to Ahaz/Pekah, must have been an Israelite and was perhaps influenced by Hezekiah's reform.[36] According to them, there is a redactor who can be considered *pre* or rather *protodeuteronomistic,* who was understood to have been at work from Hezekiah's religious reform period. An analysis of the formulas that were used to evaluate the kings of Judah and Israel appear to justify Weippert's thesis:

(i) First under Hezekiah- evaluates Southern Jehoshaphat to Ahaz and Northern Joram to Hoshea.

(ii) Second under Josiah- evaluates Judaean Rehoboam until Asa, then Hezekiah until Josiah and kings of Israel from Jeroboam-I to Ahaziah.

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[33]Keulen, *Manasseh,* p. 15.

[34]André Lemaire, "Toward a Redactional History of the Book of Kings," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel,* pp. 446-447.

[35]Helga Weippert, "Die 'deuteronomistischen' Beurteilungen der Konige von Israel und Juda und das Problem der Redaktion der Konigsbucher," *Bib* 53 (1972): pp. 301-339. Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah,* p. 34.

[36] According to John van Seters and others, Weippert's proposal for the first redactor is illogical since it is strange to say that the R^{I} begun with Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and that the historian could not be an Israelite. John van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 315ff. A. D. H. Mayes notably accepts Weippert's theory and links her last two redactions R^{II}, and R^{III} to Cross's $Dtr_{1/2}$. A. D. H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 106-114. Although Weippert accepts Cross's approach with alterations, she warns against links that transgress the division between Dtr_1 and Dtr_2 redactions. Weippert had no problem with such combination of blocks but she comments that the followers of the Cross school have the tendency to attribute ever more text to the Dtr_2. For her, this undermines the original blocks and it creates disturbances in the search for a solution. Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah,* pp. 18-19. Original Version Helga Weippert, "Das Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk: Sein Ziel und Ende in der neueren Forschung," *ThR* 50 (1985): pp. 213-249.

(iii) Third during the exile, would pose negative evaluations to bear on the last kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah (Jerusalem).[37]

Like Cross and Nelson, Lemaire and Weippert also assert on the theological emphasis of the Dtr_2 as an important redactional element of themes besides multiple ideas from the multiple redactors. They highlight the homogenous formula and the prevalent message of condemnation of the last four kings in these following verses:

Jehoahaz: (2 Kings 23: 32) וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתָיו Jehoiakim: (2 Kings 23: 37) וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתָיו Jehoiachin: (2 Kings 24: 9) וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אָבִיו Zedekiah: (2 Kings 24: 19) וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוֹיָקִים	He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his ancestors had done.[38]

Like the multiple redaction theories, Alexander Rofé views materials in Deuteronomy through to Kings as a composition in blocks by successions of at least three groups of authors:

(i) The original book of Deuteronomy

(ii) The second block from Joshua 24-1 Sam 12 (which are non-Deuteronomistic in character)

(iii) The third block with the rest of Samuel and Kings as an original work by the Dtr(s).[39]

Noth's theory would agree in distinguishing Rofé's first and third blocks but does not allow for the second because the source is attributed to a non-DH. This non-DH supposedly is relevant to Lemaire and Weippert's thesis of a *protodeuteronomistic* source. Interestingly, to Rofé, this *protodeuteronomistic* element in the second block consists of an Ephraimite (Northern Kingdom) settings and orientations. Rofé says that

[37] Cited in Lemaire, "Toward a Redactional History," p. 449.
[38] Lemaire, "Toward a Redactional History," p. 450.
[39] Rofé, "Ephraimaite Versus Deuteronomistic History," pp. 462, 466.

it was only later that this block was incorporated into the larger DH. To him, each block had and should be read from its unique theological platform.

2.4 Commentaries on the DH with Special Reference to the Book of Kings

After Noth, Cross, Smend, Weippert, Lemaire and others, many scholars have proceeded to develop models to explain the compositional formation of the DH.

Volkmar Fritz (2003) proposed two models: the "stages model" (*stufenmodel*) and the "strata model" (*Schichtenmodel*). He believed that the first edition called the "stages model" was completed by the end of the kingship that has subsequently been expanded during the exile. This model shares a common deliberation of Lemaire about the last four kings of Judah, where the edition served the purpose of initiating a national identity during monarchy. The supplemented editions which Fritz called the "strata model" was determined by a changed historical situation.[40] This model argues for a basic literary stratum that was systematically revised at least twice in a process during which extensive additions were made. It argues that the DH was an exilic composition and it was only later in the postexilic times that the redactor expanded into the work as apparent today. It assumes that the later editors added more narrations on historical plots.[41] Fritz's proposal appears to be like Cross's double redaction theory.

Claus Westermann (1994) questioned the fundamental assumption of Noth that the DH is a coherent whole. From a form-historical approach Westermann concludes that every book between Exodus to Kings must be taken as a separate component but not as part of a whole.[42] Likewise, for Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, the Dtr is not the compiler of the sources into a whole but an independent narrator. He also questions the unity of the DH and the handling of the traditions available to the Dtr.[43] Van Seters agrees with Hoffmann on the size of the Dtr's creative share in the reform history concerning the last chapters of Kings. To van Seters, the most important thematic element in the DH is "the author's rendering an account of the past in terms of articulating the peoples'

[40]Volkmar Fritz, *1 and 2 Kings: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), p. 2.
[41]Fritz, *1 and 2 Kings*, p. 3.
[42] Claus Westermann, *Die Geschichtsbucher des Alten Testaments: Gab es ein deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk?* (Gutersloh: 1994). Cited in Keulen, *Manasseh,* p. 8.
[43] Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1980). Cited in Keulen, *Manasseh,* pp. 9-10.

identity."[44] Students of the DH have discovered great inconsistencies in contents and linguistic styles within the DH, meaning that the hypothesis of the unity and coherence of the authors and sources proposed by Noth have always been disputed.

On the conjecture of Noth's hypothesis who suggests the Dtr's two primary compositional sources *viz* the Chronicles of both the kingdoms, Michael Avioz's proposal on the materials of the book of Kings is noteworthy. Avioz thinks that the Dtr has "extracted materials from other oral sources because it appears in a narrative form more than annalistic, and that the Dtr have used standard conventions and adapted them to his purpose"[45] to serve the historical audience. There are also opinions which posit that the inscriptions of the building dedication covering the period between Jehoash and Josiah was made used by the compiler of the book of Kings.[46] To S. B. Parker, the "common court ideology and language"[47] used Kings is one of the reasons that have caused to produce identical composition between the narrative and the inscriptions of the same period.

J. T. Barrera's study of recensions argue that the book of Kings had undergone multiple redactions. Barrera argues that the composition of Kings appears as a process in three stages; they are:

(i) A synchronic scheme of the reigns of Israel and Judah.

(ii) This scheme supplemented by integrated notices from the annals of both kingdoms. Narratives were gathered from oral, inscription, prophetic and historical sources and they have been incorporated into the framework of the respective reigns with which they were synchronized.

(iii) Finally, Deuteronomic comments were added at various stages.[48]

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[44]Seters, *In Search*, pp. 292, 320-321. Also cited in Keulen, *Manasseh,* p. 11.
[45]Avioz, "The Book of Kings in Recent Research-Part-I," p. 6.
[46] See, D. B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 228-233. V. A. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamia and Northwest Semitic Writing,* JSOTSupp., 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 232-337.
[47] S. B. Parker, "Did the Authors of the Books of Kings Make Use of Royal Inscriptions?" *VT* 50 (2000): pp. 357-378 (368, 376).
[48] Julio Trebolle Barrera, "Redaction, Recension, and Midrash in the Book of Kings," in Knoppers and McConville, (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel,* p. 483.

To Barrera, the study of the history of the recensions is pivotal in understanding the structure and edition of the book of Kings. This kind of analysis allows us to discover an earlier stage of composition in which distinct literary units maintain a greater degree of literary unity and integrity.[49] In other words, Barrera's model of analysis on recensions help reader to comprehend a certain degree of literary unity in the midst of its diverse nature. This amounts to say that such multiple editorial study informs a clearer theological and ideological take of each editorial phases. Such a study of recensions can, I would argue, dismantle the universalistic theology of the DH and hence it can open ways for discerning multiple theologies and histories of different periods. Therefore, I align with Westermann's argument, that Kings could be studied on its own, yet without undermining the wider theology of the DH.

On one hand, looking at the above hypotheses from a theological angle, we notice that the assessment of the Judahite kings during Jehoshaphat to Hezekiah is not only characterized by the reference to the במות or בָּמָה (*bamat/bamôt* meaning "high place") but also the use of the verb סוּר (*sur/shur*meaning "to turn away" or "to disappear"). These have negative connotations implied for those kings and thereby the final judgement upon them. The most common form of this negative judgement/evaluation culminates in 2 Kings 10: 29 and 2 Kings 17: 22:

רַק חַטָּאֵי יָרָבְעָם בֶּן־נְבָט אֲשֶׁר הֶחֱטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־סָר יֵהוּא מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם עֶגְלֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בֵּית־אֵל וַאֲשֶׁר בְּדָן	v. 29 But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he caused Israel to commit- the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.
וַיֵּלְכוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־חַטֹּאות יָרָבְעָם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לֹא־סָרוּ מִמֶּנָּה	v. 22 The people of Israel continued in all the sins that Jeroboam committed; they did not depart from them.

And as a result of which the consequences are cited in 2 Kings 17: 23a.

עַד אֲשֶׁר־הֵסִיר יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל פָּנָיו	v. 23a. until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight.

[49] Barrera, "Redaction, Recension" pp. 483-484.

On the other hand, we also see that the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18: 4-6), is characterized as a period of significant literary activity and an aspiration for "national reconciliation between the two Kingdoms."[50] Here, the positive verb formula אֲשֶׁר־שָׁב (who turned- 2 Kings 23: 25) describes the 'turning' to God which, for scholars like Wolff and Gray, serves as a Deuteronomistic theology of grace that is available in abundance if the people return to Yahweh.[51] Wolff's opinion is supported by the way that the destiny of King Jehoiachin was alleviated because it offered encouragement to the people that "security with honour was still possible."[52] The Deuteronomistic theology of grace portrayed in Jehoiachin episode also traces the promise of God to the ancestral Israel that safeguard the rights and place of the people. Joseph Robinson, for instance, shares a similar opinion that the book of Kings was not written out of despair but in confidence and hope.[53]

In the survey above, it is understood that the DH as a corpus and Kings in particular, are the products of multiple hands and revisions. Noth's hypothesis of a coherent whole of the DH has been met with more disagreement than approval.

2.5 The Deuteronomic Tradition and the Dtr's Social Location

Whilst building on previous scholarly works concerning the origin of the Deuteronomic tradition and the function of the Dtr in the rendition of its history, I will attempt to put forward some propositions to understand the social milieu of the Dtr. I will also argue that the Dtr's rendition of the DH is largely biased and its historiography favoured the South, whereby, conventionally the DH is thought to be the product of that location *per se*.

2.5.1 Proponents of the DH Origin in the North

R. E. Clements's hypothesis of 1965 posited the origin of the Deuteronomic tradition to Jerusalem where he suggested that Deuteronomy's covenant to the South was an unconditional one.[54] Clements proposed that the Deuteronomic tradition ties its origin to the Levitical priesthood. He identified Deuteronomy as a polemic composition

[50] Lemaire, "Toward a Redactional History," pp. 452-453.
[51] Bruegemann and Wolff, *The Vitality*, pp. 83-100. Also in Wolff, "Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks," *ZAW* LXXII (1961): pp. 171-186 (179ff).
[52] Wolff, "Das Kerygma," pp. 179ff.
[53] J. Robinson, *The Second Book of Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp.10-11.
[54] R. E. Clements, "Deuteronomy and Jerusalem Cult Tradition," *VT* 15 (1965): pp. 300-312 (301).

that attempted to reinterpret the cult at Jerusalem, and that cultic interpretation is one of the faces of the Deuteronomic theology.

In contrast to Clements, a theory by von Rad suggests that the Deuteronomic tradition is rooted in the Israelite religion dominantly practised in the North, later carried to the Judaean South, and inculcated the cultic laws by the rural priest of the Levites, "who devoted themselves to awaken the spirit of old religion of Yahweh."[55] In line with this theory by Rad, Dutcher-Walls cogently argues that it was the Levitical priestly circle that bent the Deuteronomic tradition and Deuteronomy during the reign of Josiah. Dutcher-Walls further says that this was in the intention to preserve the old tradition of the glorious North on which their identity rest, and to situate "these traditions relevant to the historical context of their own"[56] so as to see that the tradition is kept alive.

Later, Nicholson countered Clements and von Rad and maintained that it was the prophetic circle of Judah rather than priestly circle of the North that was tied to the origin of the Deuteronomic tradition.[57] Weinfeld added that the tradition represented an intention to let the "divine word act in all stages of history and that the literature was written in the Jerusalem court during the period of Hezekiah to Josiah."[58]

Early on Talmon suggests that the pre-monarchic fractional cultic practices can rightly be taken as the provenance of the tradition. His suggestion is that the "Jeroboam's time-honoured innovation of calf-cult for Yahweh in the North are peoples' social and religious places of worship established in Israel from ancient times."[59] In this discussion, I reckon that it is unreasonable to attribute the origin of the Deuteronomic tradition to a particular regional prophetic, scribal, or priestly circle. Traditions impact on each other and as a result syncretism took place in the socio-cultural mix in turn leading to its enormous popularity during the Jerusalamite centralization.

2.5.2 On Refuting the Deuteronomist as an Honest Broker

[55] Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 25.
[56] Patricia Dutcher-Walls, "The Sociological Location of the Deuteronomists: A Sociological Study of Factional Politics in Late Pre-exilic Judah," *JSOT* 52 (1991): pp. 77-94 (79).
[57] E. W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 69, 94.
[58] Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 16, 161.
[59] S. Talmon, "Divergences in Calendar Reckoning in Ephraim and Judah," *VT* 8 (1958): pp. 50.

Noth amplifies the idea that the Dtr presents the DH objectively, without bias or invested interest/characterization. To him, the Dtr is "like an honest broker."[60] Noth's contention is ambiguous because the Dtr, who, he deduces, is as a member of the elite society, hardly acknowledges the stories of subordinate groups. Therefore, subjectivity is undeniable in the Dtr's historiography. The literature, put together by the Dtr, contains a large amount of the hegemonic history that necessitated the hierarchy with which the Dtr is associated.

The historiography demonised the cultic sites Dan and Bethel in association with the alleged Jeroboam's heresy as though it led to the protest against the Southern Judah.[61] This is one example of the one-sided elitist stance of the DH relating to the city of Dan and Bethel. These sites have traditionally been interpreted "as condemned for sin" because the historiographical mandate is that the sites have nothing good to offer to the people but dissent Yahwism.[62] For that matter, the Northerners are the victims of such persuasive historical, religious and moral claims.[63] On this bias, I am keen to counter-interpret the aspect of curse that labelled the authentic voice of the margins represented by Jeroboam.

Victor H. Matthews suggests that, "multiple sites of importance in the Hebrew Bible go back to distant histories prior to monarchical period."[64] In fact, the memory of the original cult, "had never been forgotten and we can safely say that the tradition was put to a revival under Jeroboam."[65] Greer argues that the Northern cultic sites "were fundamentally situated for Yahwism and for the posterity of its traditions and preservation."[66] Geobey seems a little critical of Greer on the idea of a conservative cult,

[60]Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p. 84.
[61] Ronald Geobey, "The Jeroboam Story in the (Re)formation of Israelite Identity: Evaluating the Literary-Ideological Purposes in 1 Kings 11-14," *JHS* 16/2 (2016): pp. 2-42 (2).
[62] W. J. Dumbrell, "The Role of Bethel in the Biblical Narratives from Jacob to Jeroboam-I," *AJBA* 2/3 (1974-1975): pp. 65-76 (72).
[63] More discussion from Meir Sternberg will appear later in the thesis, Meir Sternberg, "Time and Space in Biblical (Hi)story Telling: The Grand Chronology," in Regina M. Schwartz (eds.), *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 96.
[64] Victor H. Matthews, "Back to Bethel: Geographical Reiteration in Biblical Narrative," *JBL* 128/1 (2009): pp. 149-165 (149).
[65]Dumbrell, "The Role of Bethel," p. 67.
[66] Jonathan S. Greer, *Was "Israelite" Sacrifice Practiced at Tel Dan?* (Michigan: Grand Rapids: 2014), pp. 2, 7-8. Geobey, "The Jeroboam Story," p. 21. Geobey sounds logical with is argument on the transition of the oral tradition. However, the substances of the Deuteronomic tradition remain true to the stories told. Therefore, practices of the times gone by can be illuminated in the contemporary times for want of retaining the culture. Hence, Greer is not wrong either.

but maintains that the "Jeroboamic narrative has the catalyst of Exodus element in it."[67] What the Northerners did was not a sinister counter to Yahwism. Jeroboam as a leader honoured the desires of the people by incorporating ancestral religion, that, from the perspective of the margins in the text, "the incorporation of this tradition is even more Yahwistic than the tribute-laden cultic Yahwism of the South"[68] (1 Kings 12: 31). So then, the Northern Jeroboam revocation of Dan and Bethel does not invite idolatry or deviant cult but Yahwistic religiosity as distinct from the then Canaanite deities. Ideologically, the measure of what Jeroboam reformed was to ensure religious correctness for the kingdom of the North through continuity, not through a radical innovation. Hence, a contrast outlook to the DH's biased view.

Finkelstein, Singer and Noll also argue that although Dan and Bethel became little more than ideological names for the biblical writers, the two cities are also the places chosen by the dissident to raise their voice.[69] Given what modern scholars read into these so-called insignificant places, the Dtr's biases are revealed. It is the Dtr's subjectivity that has failed to locate the voices and ideologies of the marginalized. What we see is that the social location of the Dtr is founded on the dominant dynastic apparatus which is at the centre of the power structure. Therefore, scribal biases and lop-sided historiography prompt a reader to look beyond the Dtr's remarks.

2.6 The Theological and Ideological Theme(s) in Kings

With some intertextual passages, I will limit my attempt to locate the DH's ideology and theology to the book of Kings. On which basis, in the following chapters I will attempt to interpret narratives in Kings for counter-arguing dominant themes in favour of the theme of hope in the DH. Keeping in mind the themes in Kings as the central theology within the larger DH framework, I will analyse them in relation to Cross's dual editions of the DH: the pre-exilic and exilic socio-ideological locations. I will conclude this section by drawing insights from the optimistic reading of the DH, specifically the reign and reform of Josiah, which, according to modern scholars such as Sweeney, Laato and others, consolidated Judaean hope despite the overarching theme of sin, doom and judgment in the DH.

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[67] Geobey, "The Jeroboam Story," p. 22.
[68] Norman K. Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies," *JBL* 112/1 (Spring 1993): pp. 3-22 (11-12).
[69] I. Finkelstein and L. Singer-Avitz, "Re-evaluating," *ZDPV* 125/1 (2009): pp. 33-48 (43). K. L. Noll, "The God who is Among the Danites," *JSOT* 80 (1998): pp. 3-23 (14).

2.6.1 Dtr$_1$: Two Themes of the Pre-Exilic Edition of the DH in Kings

In consistency with the theme of judgement and doom suggested by Noth, the peoples' violation of the central sanctuary comes to the fore in the era of Kings. This is outlined by Cross as apparent within two themes reverberating throughout Kings:

(i) Jeroboam as a symbol of infidelity (North) and,

(ii) The promise to David as a representation of God's faithfulness (South).

The latter finds its climax in Josiah (2 Kings 22: 2), who tries to re-establish the Davidic house to its former glory, restoring the society in the light of the Deuteronomic law. Therefore, Cross argues that the juxtaposition of Jeroboam's infidelity and the Davidic promise form the basis of the Josianic reform (Dtr$_1$) and these themes, in his view, belong to the DH.[70] Cross says that the oracles and judgements also make up the themes in Kings. He asserts that the Dtr reached its climax in Dtr$_1$ with the thematic transition to Jeroboam's sin that led to judgement in 2 Kings 17: 20-23:

בְּיַד־שֹׁסִים עַד אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלִיכָם מִפָּנָיו: וַיִּמְאַס יְהוָה בְּכָל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְעַנֵּם וַיִּתְּנֵם	v. 20 The LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel; he punished them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had banished them from his presence.
כִּי־קָרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל בֵּית דָּוִד וַיַּמְלִיכוּ אֶת־יָרָבְעָם בֶּן־נְבָט וידא יָרָבְעָם אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה וְהֶחֱטִיאָם חֲטָאָה גְדוֹלָה	v. 21 When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin.
וַיֵּלְכוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־חַטֹּאות יָרָבְעָם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לֹא־סָרוּ מִמֶּנָּה	v. 22 The people of Israel continued in all the sins that Jeroboam committed; they did not depart from them;
עַד אֲשֶׁר־הֵסִיר יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל פָּנָיו כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד כָּל־עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים וַיִּגֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל אַדְמָתוֹ אַשּׁוּרָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה	v. 23 until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had foretold through all his servants the prophets. So, Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

[70] Cross, "The Themes of the Book," pp. 79, 84.

On the one hand, in these passages we see that the charge of God is completed with a stern verdict and the covenant is broken. The prophecies against the sins of the kings throughout Israel's history appears to be sealed and the Deuteronomic law fulfilled. On the other hand, the prophetic components in the DH in the discussion of von Rad, which Cross also wishes to analyse, begin in 2 Sam. 7 and run throughout Kings (*cf.* 1 Kings 11: 12, 13, 32, 34, 36; 15: 4; 2 Kings 8: 19; 19: 34. For instance:

וּבֵית עַבְדְּךָ דָּוִד יִהְיֶה נָכוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ: עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִגְדַּל שִׁמְךָ עַד־עוֹלָם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהִים	2 Sam. 7: 26 Thus your name will be magnified forever in the saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel'; and the house of your servant David will be established before you.
לְבַנְךָ לְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי וּלְמַעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרְתִּי: רַק אֶת־כָּל־הַמַּמְלָכָה לֹא אֶקָּרַע שֵׁבֶט אֶחָד אֶתֵּן	1 Kings 11: 13 I will not, however, tear away the entire kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

David is the subject in these verses. David in the DH and in the book of Kings is a representation of fidelity. The theme apparent in the passages is that for the Dtr, 2 Sam. 7 and in Kings share the notion of the legacy of the Judaean monarchy (Psalms 89: 20-38). The prayer of David (2 Sam. 7: 18-29) himself, presented in wholly Deuteronomistic language, echoes parallel hopes and expectations for the permanence of the Davidic house. These thematic contrasts give an indication of the multiple hands in the theology of Kings, the DH *per se.*[71]

This is how Cross elaborates the study of the two themes of the DH:

> The two themes in the Deuteronomistic book of Kings appear to reflect two theological stances, one stemming from the old Deuteronomic covenant theology which regarded destruction of dynasty and people as tied necessarily to apostasy, and a second, drawn from the royal ideology in Judah: the eternal promise of David. In the second instance, while chastisement has regularly come upon Judah in her seasons of apostasy, hope remains in the Davidic house to which Yahweh has sworn fidelity for David's sake, and for

[71] Cross, "The Themes of the Book," pp. 89-90.

> Jerusalem, the city of God. A righteous scion of David has sprung from Judah.[72]

Cross contrasts Manasseh's narrative with the Josianic narrative where there is a lack of hope for the Davidic house and so the ultimate national salvation is futile. However, Cross's persistence of the theme of hope in the promise to David through the Nathan's oracle and the fulfilment of new David in Josiah becomes relevant to the original audience of the Dtr_1. This is not the same as Noth's version of the theology.

2.6.2 Dtr_2: Theme of the Exilic Edition of the DH in Kings

For the exilic redactor who is hypothetically the one who rewrote and retouched the Dtr_1, the expectations of the Josianic era were hopelessly gone. Therefore, the task to maintain the edition of the Jerusalem's disgrace and to rewrite the history in that light became vital. According to Cross, this theme is found voiced most clearly in the pericope dealing with Manasseh's sins of syncretism and idolatry (2 Kings 21: 2-15):

וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־פֶּסֶל הָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בַּבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־דָּוִד וְאֶל־שְׁלֹמֹה בְנוֹ בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּי מִכֹּל שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָשִׂים אֶת־שְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם	v. 7 The carved image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever;
וְלֹא אֹסִיף לְהָנִיד רֶגֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לַאֲבוֹתָם רַק אִם־יִשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִים וּלְכָל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה אֹתָם עַבְדִּי מֹשֶׁה	v. 8 I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land that I gave to their ancestors, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them."
וְלֹא שָׁמֵעוּ וַיַּתְעֵם מְנַשֶּׁה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הָרָע מִן־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	v. 9 But they did not listen; Manasseh misled them to do more evil than the nations had done that the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.
וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים לֵאמֹר	v. 10 The LORD said by his servants the

[72] Cross, "The Themes of the Book," pp. 90.

	prophets,
יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה הַתֹּעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הֵרַע מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר לְפָנָיו וַיַּחֲטֵא גַּם־אֶת־יְהוּדָה בְּגִלּוּלָיו	v. 11 "Because King Manasseh of Judah has committed these abominations, has done things more wicked than all that the Amorites did, who were before him, and has caused Judah also to sin with his idols;
לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מֵבִיא רָעָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וִיהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר כָּל־שֹׁמְעָיו תִּצַּלְנָה שְׁתֵּי אָזְנָיו	v. 12 therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such evil that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle.
וְנָטִיתִי עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם אֵת קָו שֹׁמְרוֹן וְאֶת־מִשְׁקֹלֶת בֵּית אַחְאָב וּמָחִיתִי אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם כֶּאֱשֶׁר־יִמְחֶה אֶת־הַצַּלַּחַת מָחָה וְהָפַךְ עַל־פָּנֶיהָ	v. 13 I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line for Samaria, and the plummet for the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.
וְנָטַשְׁתִּי אֵת שְׁאֵרִית נַחֲלָתִי וּנְתַתִּים בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וְהָיוּ לְבַז וְלִמְשִׁסָּה לְכָל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם	v. 14 I will cast off the remnant of my heritage, and give them into the hand of their enemies; they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies,
יַעַן, אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת-הָרַע בְּעֵינַי, וַיִּהְיוּ מַכְעִסִים, אֹתִי--מִן-הַיּוֹם, אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ אֲבוֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְעַד, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה	v. 15 because they have done what is evil in my sight and have provoked me to anger, since the day their ancestors came out of Egypt, even to this day."

The theme of the Dtr2, read through these passages by Cross can raise several questions for the readers. If syncretism was sinful in the Deuteronomic tradition, why was the punishment not meted out to Solomon in the earlier period of the monarchy? Throughout the prophetic recitations, nowhere in the earlier part of the DH did the prophets speak of Manasseh's sinfulness, followed by its resultant rejection by Yahweh. In fact, the promise to David dominated earlier histories. Hence, these passages are evidence that 2 Kings 21:2-15 were not integral parts of the structure in the DH, but additions by Dtr2.

In the framework of redaction by Dtr2, the threatening themes of defeat and captivity are dominant. In fact, for the Dtr2, the theme of hope is obscured while catastrophe and hierarchy (Jerusalem) are hugely emphasized, just as 2 Kings 23: 26-27

suggests the inevitable fate of Judah. These major themes in Dtr_1 and Dtr_2 indicate to the readers that the old Deuteronomic tradition is all about the sins of the past that decide for the future. It impinges in the reader's mind, a question, as to why God in the DH tradition did not bother to forgive.

However, one theme from the Dtr_1 that must give hope to the subaltern readers is the theme of the promise to David. The promise that can never be eliminated. Although the socio-political experiences of the exilic era are about the defeat, captivity, and the inevitable fate for Judah (2 Kings 23:25-27), readers cannot deny the hint of hope found in the Davidic promise (2 Sam 7). Moreover, this theological idea of hope can reflect the idea of the Deuteronomic tradition itself (Deuteronomy 4:27-31), whereby, the captives are reminded of the hope and assurance that Yahweh will not ignore the covenant, but the mercy of God will prevail. In fact, Deut. 30:1-10 which is the passage about the expected return from captivity could be read in conjunction with Deut. 4:27-31 from a paradigm of the Deuteronomistic theology of hope.[73]

Therefore, the theme of hope which also reflects the core message of the DH, can contradict with Noth's theme of final judgement and doom. In a way, the contributions of Rad and Wolff have shown a potential leap in the way the DH is looked at. Given the fact that there is a Davidic Promise for *all Israel* in the DH, my quest is also to find if this promise for future is understood within the Josianic reformation and Jehoiachin's release. If not, would the Solomonic prayer of dedication that invoked the Exodus God be repeated in the history of the Dtr? The challenge here is to see the fundamental affinities in the way redactors and biblical scholars have found hope in the DH. What comes even more imperative is on the question of the theological notions of Noth's Dtr whose exclusive perspective is a challenge to marginalized readers.

Given the way the DH portrays Josiah despite the themes of apostasy and catastrophe, it is apparent that there is a hope for an undying identity for Israelites and

[73] Relevant passages with the brief glosses are Deut. 28: 36f., 63-68; 29: 27; Josh. 23: 11-13, 15f.; 1 Sam. 12: 25; 1 Kings 2: 4; 6: 11-13; 8: 25b, 46-53; 9: 4-9; 2 Kings 17: 19; 20: 17f. Cross, "The Themes of the Book," p. 92. McConville's argument about the 'hope beyond exile' is purely through a tabular linguistic and stylistic comparison of 1 Kings 8: 46-53 with that of Deuteronomy 30: 1-10. He attempts to show Deuteronomist's theology of hope gained from the Solomon's prayer. He observes that this prayer shares affinity in motifs, and expression with parts of Deuteronomy 29 and 30. He states that this passage requires a self-conscious reading of the one by the other because the same framework is in operation in these texts concerning hope beyond exile. J. Gordon McConville, "1 Kings 8: 46-53 and the Deuteronomic Hope," in Knoppers and McConville, (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel,* pp. 358, 362-368.

the Davidic promise (Isa. 55: 3). In my opinion the theological messages in Kings can be fully addressed in the way the social-political location of the marginalized in the text are read in conversation with readers' own location. I will establish this contextual conversational reading when I study 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 in the chapters ahead. In the section below, I will look at the arguments of some modern scholars whose optimistic theology on the DH have influenced me to further substantiate the views of Rad and Wolff in arguing against Noth *vis-a-vis* for a particular sensibility of the DH texts to the subaltern readers such as the Christian tribes of NEI .

2.7 Deuteronomistic History towards Hope (Modern Scholarship in DH)

As I observed, the interpretation of the DH by Noth remains problematic for subalterns till this day. However, it is also problematic for many later scholars of the DH. I will review multiple points of disagreement with Noth's thesis by contemporary scholars of the DH specifically of those that have considered optimistic theology to the DH. This will help look at the elements of hope I intend to locate in 2 Sam. 7, 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 from the marginalized location.

2.7.1 Antti Laato

Laato's idea of messianic expectation in the study of the DH refers to the memory of the Davidic king Josiah whose ideal reign and reform have "significantly influenced exilic and postexilic predicaments and people's hope for a deliverer."[74] Laato bases his theory on textual evidence in the Josianic text itself along with his inter-textual readings from the CH, 1 Esdras and Ezra-Nehemiah. In his *Josiah and David Redivivus* Laato talks about Josiah as an ideal monarch in reference to David. For instance, he cites the book of Jeremiah (22: 15-16) where Josiah is portrayed as one king who acted in the ways of YHWH. It is in this perspective Laato points to the prophetic books that had the typical OT "royal ideological theme of doing righteousness and justice."[75] The task Laato takes then is to decipher, "how Josiah the *typos* of David fulfils the role for an eschatological expectation because that expectation he underscores blossom from the role of Josiah onwards."[76] Unlike Noth, Laato's writing touches upon texts like 2 Sam. 7 and 2 Kings 22-23 to argue that it is not a surprise to have Josiah as a new deliverer in

[74]Antti Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic Postexilic and Times* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1992), pp. 1, 363.
[75]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* p. 357.
[76]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* pp. 1, 356, 364.

the Davidide line. To Laato, "biblical texts can have no uncertainty that Josiah fulfils the ideal model for the coming messiah."[77]

Gwilym H. Jones rightly states that Laato "go beyond the theological examination to discern the reliability of the representation of Josiah in the historical books."[78] On a realistic note, Laato supposes the promise of YHWH is the basis on which the Josianic restoration emerged "for both the dynasty and the people."[79] So Laato concludes that Josiah's role is pro-dynastic, the Yahwistic redivivus and his death embodies the "notion of the wellbeing of the subjects as the outcome of a good kingship, as such the downfall of the dynasty would mean the predicaments of the subjects."[80]

2.7.2 Gary N. Knoppers

Gary N. Knoppers in his multiple works has contributed in various ways to the reading of the DH. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville's edited volume (2000) is a massive collection which Knoppers himself says is "built on the persuasive work of Noth, although not all biblical scholars agree to Noth's literary analysis and argumentation."[81] Their book calls attention to the need for advance in the study of the DH. One element from Knoppers's work that is relevant to the current discussion concerns the Temple dedicatory prayer (1 Kings 8) which according to him has a relation to the promise of YHWH.

Knoppers sets out his argument through a chiastic analysis on 1 Kings 8 to argue against what he saw as the "Dtr's devaluation of the Temple in the narrative."[82] To Knoppers, the royal prayer called for the monarch and the people to be centred in the temple, where the temple acts as a point of refuge.[83] The site of the temple where Solomon offered royal sacrifices and prayer is an epitome of the Davidide covenant with YHWH.[84] He looks at this event in relation to the right of the Davidides to rule in

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[77]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* p. 357.
[78] See the reviewed paper by Gwilym H. Jones, "Josiah and the David Redivivus," *The Journal of Theological Studies* vol. 44/1 (April 1993): pp. 200-201 (201).
[79]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* pp. 61-66
[80]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* p. 64.
[81] Gary N. Knoppers, "Introduction," in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel,* p. 3.
[82] Gary N. Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," *CBQ* vol. 57/2 (April 1995): pp. 229-254 (231, 234).
[83]Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda," p. 249.
[84]Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," in Knoppers and McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel,* pp. 373, 382, 385.

the light of Nathan's oracle in 2 Sam 7. Accordingly, the Dtr is assumed to have showed keen interest in portraying the "exodus history as well as the dawn of a new era of a king."[85] Knoppers's idea is in obvious contrast to the theological perspective of Noth.

Similarly, in his 1994 book Knoppers negates any literary and interpretive denials of the historical event of Josiah but suggests "Josiah as the real king of the real time, authentic in the reign and reform."[86] Also, in his 1993 book which appears as part-I to the successive book, Knoppers unapologetically assumes that the Solomonic-Davidic covenant with God is the prototype for the Jeroboamic promise to be the king of the North. He assumes so because for both Josiah and Jeroboam the covenant obligations for their cultic matters appear at the forefront despite tendencies of the heterodoxy in the cultic lives of their reign.[87]

2.7.3 Marvin A. Sweeney

As far as the role that Josiah and his connection with the rediscovered scroll played in his reform is concerned, Sweeney is of the opinion that the DH rendition of the narration depicts Josiah as a good king for the Judaeans. Slightly differing from Laato, Sweeney emphasizes the DH texts that indicate Josiah as "a king who betters even David. . . and that he alone is a royal covenant mediator."[88] He says this on the evidence of 2 Kings 22: 2 and 23: 25 where the Dtr already portrays Josiah as "the king like no other king." Even David failed to live up to the qualification of an ideal king because "he committed adultery with Bath Sheba, conspired for the murder of Uriah to cover up the affairs."[89] As such, Josiah's way of doing away with the sin of past monarchs, especially Manasseh's idolatry illustrates for Sweeney what Deuteronomy 6: 5 talks about: the "fundamental commandment to love YHWH."[90]

Methodologically, Sweeney incorporated a redactional-critical method that looks at the final form of the text. To him, the exilic and postexilic histories are

[85]Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," in Knoppers and McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel*, p. 374.
[86] Gary Knoppers, *Two Nations Under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies-II: The Reign of Jeroboam, the Fall of Israel, and the Reign of Josiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), p. 138.
[87] Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations Under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies- I: The Reign of Solomon and the Rise of Jeroboam* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), p. 200.
[88] Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 4, 26.
[89] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 27.
[90] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 4.

documented after the death of Josiah.[91] However, he assumes that there was an earlier precise version of the DH in Hezekiah's period, later improved in the Josianic era and completed in the postexilic times.[92] Based on his emphasis on the exilic editions, he argues that although "Judah was victimized by the Egyptians and the Babylonians, the reformation-mobilization has to be credited to Josiah."[93] This positive outlook of Sweeney comes in line with the thought about "expressions of self-definition" discussed by Edward F. Campbell.[94] This point challenges Noth's general idea of Josianic episode as written to record the ultimate downfall of Judah and Israel. Sweeney interestingly relates his optimism with Isaiah 28-32 that, "more than the record of the downfall, Josianic text is about hope and independence beyond punishment."[95] Therefore, contrary to Frost, Sweeney reckons Josianic text as a "historical reality."[96]

Sweeney does not agree with Stanley Brice Frost's theory of the "conspiracy of silence"[97] concerning Josiah's death. He comments: "Frost does not undertake the historical reality of Josiah's Judah in relation to the Deuteronomic edition and other related literatures of the HB."[98] The sudden death of Josiah to Sweeney is rather an "idyllic picture of Josiah whose reign is qualified by the DtrH."[99] To him, the action of Josiah at Megiddo is not actually ambiguous as many understand it, but it is a conscious political move of an ideal monarch. He is of the opinion that if earlier monarchs point to the abuse of royal power, then "Josiah's attempted on resolving the problems . . . in fact an ideal king of the DH era."[100]

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[91] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 315.
[92] Also see the reviewed paper by Otto Eckart, "King Josiah of Judah," *SHOFAR* vol. 21/3 (Spring 2003): pp. 154-165 (165).
[93] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, pp. 7-8.
[94] Edward F. Campbell, "A Land Divided: Judah and Israel from the Death of Solomon to the Fall of Samaria," in Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 277.
[95] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, pp. 8, 18, 23, 193, 236, 255.
[96] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 5.
[97]Stanley Brice Frost, "The Death of Josiah: A Conspiracy of Silence," *JBL* 87 (1968): pp. 369-382 (381). Further discussion in chapter 4.6.1.
[98] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 315.
[99] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 4.
[100] Sweeney, "The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 114/4 (Winter, 1995): pp. 607-622 (609).

Having said that, I am critical of Sweeney's opinion of the success of Josiah's reform because he argues that Josiah failed to establish the "full Neo-Davidic empire."[101] I quote Sweeney:

> Josiah apparently saw himself as the king or messiah of a reunited and restored kingdom of Israel centred around Jerusalem and the Temple, but his unexpected death . . . resulted in the loss of the grandiose vision. Nevertheless, the memory of this great monarch appears to have influenced exilic and postexilic visions of restoration . . . his impact was clearly felt during his lifetime and beyond.[102]

It appears paradoxical for Sweeney to say that the task of restoration is set, that Josiah's death is an idyllic picture whose reign is qualified by the DtrH as a great monarch and that Josiah is a king with "no other king like him," but his reform had failed. Basically, Sweeney looks at Josiah as a king who embodies hope (a messianic hope) so that the episode of the setback at Megiddo is by far the greatest loss for the dynasty. What is lacking here is that Sweeney did not go beyond the examination of the "historical reality" of the death episode. That is, he failed to appreciate the theological significance of the Judaean legacy built upon in the foundation of Josianic reformation. In this light, the death of Josiah will not be the loss of the vision, but as affirming the continuity of the legacy in the successive Judaean kings. The legacy outlasts even the greatest of kings.

Laato in 2002 alludes to Sweeney's contribution to the idea of messianic image in Josiah, but also comments on Sweeney's proposition that "Josiah's reform was an absolute failure."[103] Laato alleges, "after all, the DH does not lack the variant attitude to monarchy. . . hence different interpretations are possible."[104]

In the case of Jeroboam, commenting on 1 Kings 12, Sweeney is aware of the uniform DH phrase which forms the exilic editorial judgement on this monarch, "who did not turn away from evil ways." However, Sweeney sees that the brief account of Jeroboam's reign "holds utmost significance of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah."[105]

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[101] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 7.
[102] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 315.
[103] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, p. 317. Laato, reviewed Sweeney, "King Josiah of Judah," *Hebrew Studies* vol. 43 (2002): pp. 262-265 (264).
[104] He refers to 1 Samuel 7-12 as antimonarchic and in contrast 2 Sam 7 as prodynastic. See Laato, reviewed Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah* in *Hebrew Studies*, p. 264.
[105] Sweeney, *I & II Kings: A commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), p. 368.

Sweeney says so in line with Manahem Haran who also saw Jeroboam as a kingly figure who "restored and controlled the Judaean nation that was formerly controlled by Southern monarchs."[106] Their arguments throw positive light on Jeroboam in terms of "the many crises that were resolved faced by the populace during the Solomonic era."[107] In fact, Sweeney looks at Jeroboam's rise to power as enacting YHWH's purpose to free his people from the hands of the Omrides.

2.7.4 Thomas Römer

Römer, in his book *The So-called Deuteronomistic History* (2005), gives students the historical, literary and sociological parameters that pertains to the study of the DH with special attention given to Noth's theory. Römer's contribution is towards the understanding of the emergence of the Deuteronomistic school of thought, its sociological and ideological stances leading to the Assyrian regime. Hence, he studies the level of this historical evolution that might have influenced the identity reconstruction of the Second Temple period.

Römer's article 'The Case of the Book of Kings' appears to be concerned with the straightforward question of canonical authority concerning the book of Kings and its relations with the rest of the books in DH including the CH. What strikes me in this work is his argument that analyses the DH as being partial and restricting the history to Judah."[108] Furthermore, Römer says that the Dtr explains how the historical facts fit with YHWH's purpose for the Davidide, and so, unlike narrators in Pentateuch, the Dtr informs what is already known to the people.[109] As such, the "omniscient"[110] character of the Dtr is made obvious. He argues that the excessive emphasis on Jerusalem history means the characterization on the Northern cults and it is nothing less than "polemical and anti-Northern."[111] So, he purports to look at the history of the "condemnation of the Northern cults" from the perspective of the "Judaean audience during the Persian

[106] Menahem Haran, "The Empire of Jeroboam ben Joash," *VT* 17/3 (1967): pp. 267-324 (271).
[107]Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, p. 368.
[108] Thomas Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," in Diana V. Edelman (eds.), *Deuteronomy-Kings as Emerging Authorative Books* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), p. 189-190.
[109]Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," p. 190.
[110]Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," p. 190. Similar idea of *Omniscient* of narrator appear in Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 84.
[111]Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," p. 189.

period" in order to suggest that "the growth of Northern shrines is part of the mushrooming of shrines in Samaria."[112]

Römer is clear that Kings is a literary rendition where most kings are judged on two basic criteria of the Deuteronomic traditions: a) the only legitimate temple is at Jerusalem (centralization) b) that YHWH alone must be venerated (monotheism).[113] He states, "Kingship in the book of Kings (or DH for that matter) has always been in crisis from the inception of monarchy."[114] Yet, because of this authoritative mandate of the Dtr, Jeroboam's sin is pursued as the biggest of all sins.

Römer reflects on the question of the destiny of Jehoiachin where a "contradictory interpretations" have been offered so far. The ambiguity is over whether his fate represents the "end of the dynasty" or is Jehoiachin's story a "passage meant to foster messianic expectation for restoration?" [115] Römer opines that Jehoiachin's discharge must be able to relate readers to the concept of "transformation of the exile into diaspora-heroes," which further relates to the stories of Mordechai and Joseph in the Pentateuch, where the person who formerly was vulnerable becomes "second to the king."[116] The optimistic interpretation of Jehoiachin's last days by Römer throws light on the theology of the Deuteronomic tradition of the "return to the land of their fathers" (Deut. 4: 29-3; 30: 1-10) and interestingly, "of a good life in the land of deportation" (1 Kings 8: 46-53).[117] Römer brings this theological interpretation to argue against the interpretation of Jehoiachin's story as "YHWH's ultimate judgment."[118] In the similar vein, Donald F. Murray reads the narrative as "hope for the exile . . . and the fulfilment of Solomon's prayer."[119]

2.7.5 The Task

[112]Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," p. 189. For this argument, Römer seems to have relied extensively on Ephraim Stern and Yitzhak Magen, "Archaeological Evidence for the First Stage of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim," *IEJ* 52 (2002): pp. 49-57.
[113]Thomas Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 155-157.
[114]Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," p. 193.
[115]Römer, "The Case of the Book of Kings," p. 191.
[116] Thomas Römer, "Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On 'Book Finding' and Other Literary Strategies," *ZAW* 109 (1997): pp. 1-11 (11).
[117] Thomas Römer, "From Deuteronomistic History to Nebiim and Torah," in Susanne Bickel, T Thomas Römer, et. al (eds.), *Making the Biblical Text: Textual Studies in the Hebrew and the Greek Bible* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen: Academic Press Fribourg, 2015), p. 4.
[118]Römer, "From Deuteronomistic History to Nebiim and Torah," p. 4.
[119]Donald F. Murray, "Of all Years the Hope- or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kings 25: 27-30)," *JBL* 120 (2001): pp. 245-265 (264).

This series of studies on the DH's redactional and theological agendas show enormous contributions and expansions since Noth's hallmark work in 1943. The literatures reviewed above signposted a paradigm shift to the study of the historiographical viewpoints of the DH away from the theme of judgement and doom. What will distinguish my reading of Jeroboam and Josiah are these:

(i) **Reading from the place:** I will read DH narratives *from the place* in conversation with the colonial and post-colonial realities of the Christian tribes in NEI. The key idea is to unearth the hidden voice in the texts that is overshadowed by the biased hands of the Dtr in observable analogy to the subjective Western discourse of supremacy over the tribes in NEI. To take this task forward, I will study the interpretive myth associated with Jeroboam and Josiah. The task is then to promulgate acts of resistance whereby the optimistic delivery of the message can be emulated and become a resource for emancipating the contextual readership. Hence, the shift in the reading of these narratives is the reader's marginalized location.

(ii) **Deciphering message of hope:** The distinctive element in my thesis is that Jehoiachin's release, which historically appears after the death of Josiah has the potential to dismiss the idea that the death of Josiah "resulted in the loss of that grandiose vision" (Sweeney: 2001). To me the vision of the Judaeans does not end with the loss of a messianic figure in Josiah. This ambiguity prompts me to further read hope elements in the DH.

(iii) **Re-reading the textual interpretation and re-writing their stories:** Although Noth's thesis is the product of the context of his time, a counter-reading of Noth's interpretation of DH theology is reasonable at least by marginalized readers whose history and situations at hand are misrepresented. In addition to that, narratives in Kings appear to have contradicted this view in the studies done by von Rad and Wolff have not yet been dealt with collectively by any researcher so far. The task will take shape in the form of a counter-reading informed from the realities of the Christian tribes of NEI whose identity is suppressed. The obvious reason for such reading therefore is that the Bible message for them constitutes a collective identity formation and pursuit to freedom and for whom the

expression of self-worth, justice and vindication rest within the message derived from the reading of the Bible.

2.8 Deuteronomistic Hope Hypothesis

Based on the varied approaches of von Rad and Wolff in reading 2 Sam. 7: 1-17; 1 Kings 8: 48, 53; and 2 Kings 25: 27-30 of the DH, the Deuteronomistic hope hypothesis as I call it attempts to counter-read the Nothian Dtr's theology of judgement in favour of the subaltern readership for hope. The way von Rad and Wolff read these texts provides different approaches to interpretation, leading to a polarized position in their attempt to look for the theme of hope. Through further exegesis, I will show that the elements of hope in these texts are apparent, and that what was seen as contradictory between them can be re-read from the perspective of the texts' fundamental message with regard to hope. This will challenge the universalized mode of looking at the Deuteronomistic theme, because what is doom for the Dtr(s) as Noth would propose, might not be a catastrophic end for others. More so, for marginalized readers of the Bible, the message they seek from it must embody hope and liberation. This then challenges us to find methods by which previously suppressed elements of hope in the texts can be interpreted so that the message becomes intelligible for them. Hence, readers of the DH can enter a serious consideration of the viewpoint of the oppressed and explain the sources of hope or despair, and not simply submit to the theology of doom. In the next section, the key texts identified by von Rad and Wolff will be examined in this light in turn.

2.8.1 Dynastic Oracle of 2 Sam. 7: 1-17: Promise of Hope for the Davidic House

(i) Text and Interpretation

2 Sam. 7: 1-17[120] is a dynastic oracle addressed to "all Israel." The passage consists of two parts with three major characters: Nathan's oracle and Yahweh's verdict

[120] Since Yahweh is instituting a covenant here, the reader is naturally led to ask how this Davidic covenant is related to the Mosaic covenant. According to M. D. Guinan the Davidic covenant is subject to and complementary with the Mosaic covenant. Both covenants were accepted in Israel and appear in the canon of the HB. Responsible exegesis must do justice to these facts. It is better to view the two covenants not as contradictory but as complementary. See M. D. Guinan, "Davidic Covenant," in David Noel Freedman (eds.), *ABD*, D-G (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 69-71; D. F. Murray, *Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension: Pragmatics, Poetics, and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David (2 Samuel 5: 17-7: 29)*, JSOTSupp., 264 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1998), p. 179.

(vv. 1-17) and a responsive prayer by David (vv. 18-29). This text is known for its importance in determining the theological and ideological content of the DH.

Scholars like Rolf A. Carlson, Dennis J. McCarthy, John van Seters, Jan P. Fokkelman are of the opinion that "the entire oracle is the product of the Deuteronomistic redactor of the book of Samuel."[121] Others like Cross, Tryggve Mettinger, O'Brien and Campbell adopt the idea that the "the Jerusalem sanctuary and the Davidic dynasty are the two key themes in the oracle and are themselves pre-Deuteronomistic, therefore, they suggest selected verses to the Dtr."[122] Another approach led by Mayes and Henry Smith suggest, "Dividing the two themes between the pre-exilic and the exilic Deuteronomists or perhaps to the pre-Deuteronomistic scribe."[123] Similarly, to Sergi, Nathan's oracle underwent phases of redactions: "the pre-Deuteronomistic, Deuteronomistic and post- Deuteronomistic, which, according to him"replicates the development of the dynastic thought in the monarchical eras."[124] Therefore, Sergi asserts that the "royal ideology are dominant in the themes that deals with Jerusalem Temple and the Davidic house that situates the Nathan's oracle as the basis for the DH."[125] As such, it can be suggested in the light of Sergi's opinion that the two themes are, in all likelihood, apparent in all the three redactional approaches mentioned above.

Mettinger observes that the composition of 2 Sam. 7: 1-17 is from a pre-Deuteronomistic material with two visible layers: a) the Solomonic prophecy of Nathan

[121] Rolf A. Carlson, *David,the Chosen King: A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel* (trans.), Eric J. Sharpe and Stanley Rudman (Stockholm: Almqvist &Wiksell, 1964), pp. 97-118; Dennis J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History," *JBL* 84 (1965): pp. 131-138; Seters, *In Search*, pp. 271-275; Jan P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analysis*, Vol. 3 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), pp. 207-234.

[122] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 241-60; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: Gleerup, 1976), pp. 48-59; Antony F. Campbell, *Of Prophets and Kings: A Late Ninth-Century Document* (1 Samuel 1-2 Kings 10) (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1986), pp. 46-80; Mark A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp.132-137; Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 290.

[123] Henry P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1951), pp. 297-298; A. D. H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM, 1983), pp. 102-105.

[124] Omer Sergi, "The Composition of Nathan's Oracle to David (2 Samuel 7: 1-7) as a Reflection of Royal Judahite Ideology," *JBL* 2 (2010): pp. 261-279 (278).

[125]Sergi, "The Composition," pp. 268.

and b) the Davidic-dynasty layer.[126] Mettinger's opinion is that the first layer is exclusively concerned with Solomon as an individual and does not carry any connotations of a dynastic plan or promise of God. From the perspective of Mettinger's second layer, syntactically, vv. 1-3 seem to be an oblique proposal from David that he should build a splendid house of Yahweh and Nathan replies with unconditional divine approval and assurance (v. 3b) to David. This is followed by YHWH's own promise for a house. The passage as it appears in 2 Sam. 7 begins by reminding the reader of David flourishing as a king, his subsequent rest and the resultant land granted for the people.

For van Seters, 2 Sam. 7 is a unified prose narration with vv. 4-17 as a report of an oracle, and he calls it as the "salvation oracle" for the Davidic house, with a response by David. Van Seters then concludes that from the perspective of form criticism the whole chapter can be attributed to a single author i.e., the Deuteronomist.[127] Similarly, Brueggemann reads vv. 15-16 as "the interpretive pivot of messianism in Israel." He assumes that this narrative as a whole is about God's promise of abiding fidelity to the Davidic house and this utterance becomes the taproot for an enduring theological datum in Israel's life and history.[128] G. H. Jones also argues that Nathan's oracle, especially v. 16, is a foundation for our understanding of the Hebrew monarchy and the confidence attached to it. Therefore, Nathan's oracle can be regarded as a key text in any study of Israel's messianic thinking.[129]

We must also consider that the context of 2 Sam. 7: 1-17 is wider than it appears. The major theme reverberates throughout the text that the Davidic line is given the right to rule *forever* (v. 13), and Yahweh will not withdraw his unwavering love from David's descendants (v. 15).[130] In this sense, W. M. Schniedewind posits that the Davidic promise is the key ideological theme on which "the legitimacy of the Israel's rulers was based and that the socio-political framework of the developing dynasty has

[126]Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Lund: Gleerup, 1982), pp. 49, 53.
[127]Seters, *In Search*, pp. 272, 273, 280.
[128] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), pp. 170-171, 604-605.
[129] Gwilym H. Jones, *The Nathan Narrative*, JSOTSupp., 80 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), pp. 59-60. Also, similar argument is read in J. L. McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle: II Samuel 7," *ThSt* 8 (1947): pp. 188-189.
[130] Joyce G. Baldwin, *I and II Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: InverVarsity Press, 1988), p. 213.

become a background for the promise to David."[131] Such readings of the literature give impetus to the understanding that 2 Sam. 7 is a pre-exilic edition. Therefore, the promise is ideologically grounded and gives a hope for future of the Davidic house. I will show these wider theological and ideological contexts through the following exegetical study.

(ii) V. 13a: הוּא יִבְנֶה־בַּיִת (he will build a house)

Lyle Eslinger gives a rhetorical analysis of 2 Sam. 17 where he comments that the linchpin[132] of the dialogue is v. 13a. It is Yahweh who uttered this promise that the oracle would have a dynastic element in itself. In fact, the phrase מַמְלַכְתּוֹ, עַד-עוֹלָם (. . . his kingdom forever) that completes in v. 13c what is started in v. 13a gives light to the language of hope.

One element that modern readers of this text have found captivating is the paradox that if the promise is unconditional, it seems to conflict with the catastrophic end of the dynasty. The story unfolds with God's threat of exile to the Israelites, punishment to the David's own successors (1 Kings 9: 6-9) and even to David himself (2 Sam 12: 10). Nelson argues that this is a "conflict within the narration itself."[133] On the apparent paradox, Cross comments that the most common solution is to suppose that the Dtr of 2 Sam. 7 made it an unconditional promise and did not envision the catastrophic portrait with which the book of 2 Kings is concluded.[134] Here, my rationale is that the hands of the multiple redactors become clearer. The Deuteronomic theology of Yahweh's covenant with the אב (father/ancestor by Römer) which is conditional becomes essential in reading 2 Kings 25. So that, the essence of a similar theology and ideology of the paradoxical texts of the DH can be established, when, for instance, 2 Kings 25 is interpreted in the light of the promise (von Rad) and in the light of the peoples' return and perseverance of the law of Yahweh (Wolff). Let me add that Römer supports the idea of an exilic edition of the DH (not necessarily agreeing with Noth). Concerning the theme of the DH, Römer like Cross contends that the patriarchal history is to be re-experienced by the Deuteronomic community and that it is an important element in reading the exilic redaction of the DH. To him, "the key theological position

[131] W. M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7: 1-17* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 22, 30.
[132] Lyle Eslinger, *House of God or House of David* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), p. 3.
[133] Nelson, *The Double Redaction*, pp. 27-28.
[134] Cross, *Canaanite myth*, pp. 287-289.

in the Exodus history (1 Kings 8: 53) which is centred on the stories of the אב signifies a pivotal meaning for the Dtr."[135]

(iii) V. 13b: וְכוֹנַנְתִּי (and I will establish)

Anderson suggests that vv. 12-15 are very narrow considering the use of first- and second-person pronouns are concerned. They read as though Yahweh's words are addressed to an individual, probably Solomon. However, by implication these words are referred to the dynasty as a whole (*Cf.*, 1 Kings 5: 5).[136] Mettinger suggests that the language in this passage is typical of "name theology" (1 Kings 3: 2; 5: 3, 5) where the use of the name YHWH denotes the divine presence. He is to be symbolically present and his presence as the transcendent God confers invulnerability to any catastrophe which might conceivably affect his established house.[137] Moshe Weinfeld says that this transcendence implies his ownership of the Davidic house.[138] The inclusive dynamics of the name theology overall in the oracle suggest permanence and stability meant to last forever (לְעוֹלָם v. 16). Therefore, the verb וְכוֹנַנְתִּי denotes hope beyond the catastrophe.

(iv) V. 14: וְהוֹכַחְתִּיו (and I will chastise/correct him)

Theologically, chastisement is related with three coincidingideas: "adoption, covenant and royal grants."[139] The parent-son metaphor in vv. 14-15 can be looked as in relation to the above three ideas of lawful relations. The word covenant does not appear in Nathan's oracle, but it is indicated in v. 15. Since וְחַסְדִּי (but my lovingkindness) can be expressed as "good-will" or "covenant loyalty" it denotes the essence of covenant.[140] Although many scholars say that this oracle is without a condition,[141] יָכַח in v. 14 is conditional because the "if" (Pentateuchal formula for casuistic law) element is unmistakable in this verse, preceded by the father-son metaphor which makes sense that any punishment will be transitory parental discipline which is not designed to

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[135] Thomas Römer, "Deuteronomy in Search of Origins," in Knoppers and McConville, (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel,* p. 112.
[136] A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), p. 122. 1 Kings 5: 5: So I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD said to my father David, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name' (NRSV).
[137]Mettinger, *The Dethronement,* p. 50.
[138]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy,* p. 193.
[139] P. Kalluweettil, *Declaration and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982), p. 48.
[140]Kalluweettil, *Declaration,* p. 48.
[141] D. J. McCarthy's argument on "element of judgment" for vv. 14-15, to me is a conditional clause added with the metaphor of the love of father to a son in the perspective of disciplinary clause. D. J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Deuteronomic History," *JBL* LXXXIV (1965): pp. 131-138 (135).

annihilate. Another Hebrew term for "chastise" is יָסַר which means "to rebuke." From the verbal sense, יָסַר could also mean "instruction." Also, the verbs found parallel with יָסַר are "to teach, give insights, to inform, to counsel."[142] The connotations of יָסַר and יָכַח help us discern that chastisement will be an offer of a chance for the people to repent and be corrected. Hence, to be chastised signifies acceptance, chastisement, and a grant of an opportunity but not banishment.

(v) V. 16: עַד־עוֹלָם or לְעוֹלָם (forever)

In the Hebrew verbal and nominal clause, the term "forever/eternity" indicates a qualitative significance of durability, finality and inalterability. In many cases this is understood as a royal predicate in courtly language attributed in praise of Yahweh.[143] To Brueggemann, the concept of "messianism" and "forever" are intrinsically related in the theology concerning to Nathan's oracle. In fact, Brueggemann argues that hope for deliverance from any catastrophe cannot be detached from the history of Israel.[144]

2.8.2 Jehoachin's Release (2 Kings 25: 27-30): Counter-reading Captivity

(i) Text and Interpretation

The DH ends in 2 Kings 25: 27-30, the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (561/560 BCE) and the relaxation of the captivity was likely part of the amnesty marking Amel-Marduk's (some translates Evil-Merodach) enthronement.[145] Jehoiachin put off his prison garments and was given an upper seat over other exiled kings, dined at the royal table, and was granted an allowance for the rest of his life. Berridge believes that וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ טֹבוֹת ('and he was spoken with kindly,' *cf.* Jer. 52: 32) most significantly reflects the establishment of a treaty between the Babylonian king Amel-Marduk and

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[142] M. Saebo, "יָסַר*ysr*to Chastise," in Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (trans.), Mark E. Biddle, Vol., 2 (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), pp. 548-549.
[143] E. Jenni, "עוֹלָם *'Olam* eternity," in Jenni and Westermann, *Theological*, pp. 856-858.
[144] Brueggemann, *Theology*, pp. 616-617. Brueggemann is vehemently in support of the Messianic element in the text. The Promise to David is nothing but the future hope for release and justice from the then political reality. He goes on to read Isa. 11: 3b-9 where prophet Isaiah prophesied about the "stump of Jesse." In fact, unlike what I argue against, Brueggemann in his *Theology* has nothing to do with refuting Noth or the Deuteronomists in 2 Sam. 7 or for that matter even 2 Kings 25: 27-30. In other words, Brueggemann's monograph has just nothing to say on the redactional, ideological and editorial complexities of the Deuteronomistic corpus. However, citing Brueggemann in in this study highlights some theological bearings in support of my argument.
[145]*Cf.* 2 Kings 25: 27; Jer. 52: 31). J. D. Levenson, "The Last Four Verses in Kings," *JBL* 103 (1984): pp. 353-361 (357).

Judaean Jehoiachin. Amel-Marduk might have intended to restore Jehoiachin as one of the vassal kings but not long after Jehoiachin's discharge, he died in 560 BCE.[146]

This report of the final day of the history in Kings has prompted biblical scholars to ask why the DH had to end this way. It is evident that the Dtr in many instances portrays the helping hand of God to the people. However, in Noth's contention, the Dtr saw the deportation of 587 BCE as final and definitive. Perhaps, because the idea of the helping hand of God is undeniable, Noth cites that regardless of one's theory of authorship and redaction, "the question is what the final word would mean to the readers: of hopelessness and misery or of confidence and expectation."[147] This is an idea where the Dtr's theological elements that can be used to identify hope requires examination.

On that note, von Rad's suggestion that the dynastic promise which has not been annulled makes the Jehoiachin's narrative optimistic. In fact, von Rad contends that the Deuteronomist "leaves this question open" suggesting to a "possibility with which Yahweh can resume."[148] Likewise, for Begg, what happens to Jehoiachin here is a solemn affirmation that Yahweh still stands by his once given promise to David.[149] However, Begg was sceptical about the lack of the mention of the beneficiary who is supposed to be Jehoiachin's son. He also argues that neither is Yahweh seen as the initiator nor has Jehoiachin pleaded for the release, except for the nature of acceptance and agreement denoted by the word טוב (kind/kindly) in v. 28. Otherwise, the narrative to Begg is apparently sceptical, "limited and of ephemeral significance."[150] From the literary-syntactic perspective Begg is right. However, Begg does not seems to decipher the theology and ideology embedded behind the text. It is vital to consider the text from the ideological and theological contexts. The perception of Jehoiachin story in the light of the representation of hope for the exilic community resonates an undeniable Deuteronomistic idea of promise.

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[146] John M. Berridge, "Jehoiachin," *ABD,* H-J, pp. 661-663.
[147] Such vehement exemplification of the passage by Noth is rare. Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, p. 97.
[148] Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* p. 343.
[149] Christopher T. Begg in his short article in 1986 points to the complexities in the narration. He suggests that even prior to relying on the proposition of Noth and Rad, the text need to be argued. It is because unlike Manesseh's case in 2 Chron. 33: 13 and the Jews release under Cyrus (Ezra 1), the release of Jehoiachin was constricted to the Babylonian regime. Christopher T. Begg, "The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release: A New Proposal," *JSOT* 36 (1986): pp. 49-56 (50).
[150] Begg, "The Significance," pp. 49-56.

While developing a suggestion by Cross, Nelson also explains that the paradoxical end of the Davidic dynasty is the consequence of a double redaction. On one hand, Nelson argues that the purpose of the exilic editor's addition of the opposing material of 2 Kings 25 was to bring the narrative into agreement with the political reality of his time. However, on the other hand, Eslinger, does not see any redactional discrepancies between 2 Sam. 7 and 2 Kings 25: 27-30.[151] The proposition by Eslinger appears to be opposed to the theses of Cross and Nelson. However, although I agree on the multiple redaction, I do not deny that Eslinger's view adds to the positive outlook at the texts because his argument suggests that there are theological relevance and thematic unity in the two reflexive texts of Nathan and Jehoiachin.

(ii) V. 27: נָשָׂא (released/freed)

The extended meaning of נָשָׂא in Qal "to lift, to bear" is figuratively understood elsewhere in the HB. In Jer. 4: 6 and 50: 2 נָשָׂא is understood as "raise a standard," or "lift up a banner." Also, the verb נָשָׂא indicates a gesture that commonly accompanies oaths in references to Yahweh in an anthropomorphic sense.[152] Literally, the noun אֶת־רֹאשׁ (the head), and the verb נָשָׂא (to lift) signifies "lifting one's head," which can herald a positive note. In fact, this metaphor relates to a liberative hope given to Jehoiachin by Amel-Marduk and exalt him to a civil honour.[153] Such an etymological analysis justifies the notion that hope is rooted in Jehoiachin's release despite the contention that Jehoiachin signified a catastrophic end.

(iii) V. 28: וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ טֹבוֹת (and he spoke kindly to him)

Keil and Delitzsch comment that v. 28 should not be taken literally but must be read figuratively.[154] However, I reckon that the phrase in v. 28 is realistic that Amel-Marduk spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. It is realistic because this verse talks about the aftermath of releasing somebody from captivity out of kindness. The kindliness is represented by a friendly gesture, goodwill and acceptance. The word kind or kindness in Hebrew is also related with חֶסֶד, loosely translated "loyalty," "loyal love," and "mercy." It also expresses the criterion of hope or expectation. Therefore, טֹבוֹת

[151] Eslinger, *House of God,* p. 100.
[152] F. Stolz, "נָשָׂא *nasa'* to lift, bear," in Ernst and Westermann, *Theological,* pp. 770, 772.
[153] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes,* Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 521.
[154] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary,* p. 522.

underscores the idea of a promising loyalty, love in friendship and the goodness and hope that a friendship can share. Readers can imagine that the author had indicated an inkling of liberation for the exilic community who are ardently questioning their future.

(iv) V. 30: אֲרֻחַת (allowance)

In both Hebrew and English connotations, אֲרֻחַת appears to mean optimism, pointing to opportune circumstances. "Allowance" in this verse does not only mean "food" for daily rations and maintenances. In fact, many commentators infer that אֲרֻחַת is about the "portion," both monetary and in rations sanctioned for the maintenance of the prisoners. The text's interest here lies in Jehoiachin's share of preference Amel-Marduk had for him. Vv. 29-30 assumes the setting as relaxed and comfortable. Therefore, conceivably אֲרֻחַת is about a grant. וְשִׁנָּא אֵת בִּגְדֵי כִלְאֹו (puts off the prison clothes) and אֲרֻחַת (allowance) corresponds to the Hebrew word for נֶחָמַת (comfort). To be offered an allowance of comfort signifies "to restore (someone) to life." Therefore, in the broadest sense, אֲרֻחַת envisages optimism for the historical Israel in exile. As Provan notes, these closing verses represent a hint that one day the Davidic house will be delivered through Jehoiachin as one of its descendants, who would remain alive in Babylon.[155] Provan's perspective on this text counterparts with the theological perspective of 2 Sam. 7.

Provan's conclusion leads us to look back to Begg who questions the absence of the descendants of Jehoiachin as beneficiaries. We are given rather a limited historical account where the narrative does not go beyond the immediate beneficiary, except in the case of the legacy of the promise of Yahweh signified by the word נָשָׂא (released/freed). It must be noted that the text shows the general state of attitude of the Amel-Marduk/Babylonians towards Jehoiachin's ephemeral reign. As Long suggests, though Israel as a whole was robbed of its political identity, the treatment of Jehoiachin in the last chapter of Kings signifies the people were treated with honour and respect.[156] Thus, this hopeful release serves to counter-read the exilic message of captivity and a disastrous end suggested in Noth's hypothesis. Hence, Jehoiachin's narrative represents the chastisement of the Davidic monarchy which subsequently experienced a happy change in the circumstances represented by a peaceful death of Jehoiachin. Read in this

[155] Iain W. Provan, *I and II Kings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 89-90.
[156] Burke O. Long, *2 Kings* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p. 288.

way, a coherent theology and ideology in Nathan's oracle and Jehoiachin's story is established that also finds a way for the prospective Deuteronomistic theology of hope.

2.8.3 Solomon's Speech (1 Kings 8: 48, 50): Hope in the Repentance

(i) Text and Interpretation

The Temple dedication ceremony comprises of three lengthy speeches made by Solomon to Yahweh. 1 Kings 8: 23-53 is part of the second speech. The subject in this part is praise to Yahweh's fidelity in the past to his father David, to him in present and the future of his descendants. Jerome T. Walsh[157] comments that in the introductory part of the speech the culminating theme is a reflection of YHWH's promise in 2 Sam. 7. Walsh recalls the Mosaic and Davidic covenants with YHWH based on 2 Sam. 7: 6-8.

A step further away from Noth and von Rad, Wolff contends that, in the DH, there are patterns of remorse and forgiveness, suggesting that the storyteller is optimistic about the expected restoration.[158] He studies this theme as the Dtr's exhortation to the people in exile. Wolff denies that there are elements of hope in Nathan's oracle, which is why, to him, there is no mention of the dynastic element in the Jehoiachin's narrative, while the catastrophe seems compelling and fulfilled as Noth defined it. However, he further adds that the optimistic element is less obvious in Nathan's oracle than in Jehoiachin text, if at all, they are to be comparatively studied for looking at the optimistic theology of the DH. In this way, Wolff sees no thematic consistency between 2 Sam 7 and 2 Kings 25.

Wolff rather talks about the element of שׁוּב (return or repentance) in 1 Kings 8 as a relevant characteristic of the optimistic Deuteronomistic theology. However, it could be argued that as the notion of שׁוּב is characteristic of the Deuteronomistic theology in Solomon's prayer, שׁוּב is also a driving factor in the theologies in Nathan and Jehoiachin's narrative. I argue thus because, just as שׁוּב is a conditional element in Solomon's prayer, it is so in both Nathan and Jehoiachin's narratives. I will demonstrate this below.

(ii) V. 48: וְשָׁבוּ (if they repent/return)

[157] Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (eds.), David W. Cotter, Jerome T. Walsh and Chris Franke (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), pp. 108, 113. *cf.* Deuteronomy 4: 29-31; 30: 1-10
[158] Further readings in Brueggemann and Wolff, *The Vitality,* pp. 83-100.

For Gray, the overall phrase in v. 48 is a typical Deuteronomic phrase. The verse in all its detail denotes the activity of an enthusiastic and willing mind.[159] This idea of וְשָׁבוּ (if they repent/return) is an opportunity granted in the form of a condition placed so as to conserve the standing of the Davidic house, apparent also in 2 Sam. 7 and 2 Kings 25. The typical Deuteronomic language in this passage is incorporated possibly by "the exilic redactor" because the language resonates with "the deepest social crisis."[160]

(iii) V. 50: וּנְתַתָּם לְרַחֲמִים (and grant/give to them compassion)

In v. 50 רָחַם stands as the "conditional clause that begins in v. 49 and it gives voice to Solomon's petition concerning the function of the temple."[161] In contrast, Noth's Dtr showed divine judgement on the fall of Israel as something final and definitive.[162] However, the conditional theology of Yahweh in the accounts of the DH cannot be undermined. There are positive elements within the theology of repentance and return to the laws of Yahweh. Therefore, if Israel accepts "these" conditions, Yahweh will allow the captives to return and to restore their fortunes (שְׁבוּת) and gather the dispersed people from all nations. These verses are therefore purely the apodosis of a conditional construction.

To Simian-Yofre, vv. 49-50 exposes the inherent nature of Yahweh which is as constant as the love of parents for their children. The compassion shown to the people by their enemies itself is only the reflection of Yahweh's intervention for שׁוּב (return/repent).[163] שׁוּב therefore is a call for forgiveness and fortune because it is intrinsically related with Yahweh's conditional promise to the Davidic house. Wolff goes on to argue that it is not so much the total apostasy that makes the judgment final as the contemptuous disregard to the call to return. In fact, the "return" has the power to recreate the whole history differently.[164] Hence, as much as the judgment theme appears in the DH, there is also the theme of "repentance/return" attached with it.

2.9 Analysis

[159] Gray, *I and II Kings*, p. 228.
[160] Gray, *I and II Kings*, p. 228.
[161] Simian-Yofre, "רָחַם," in G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* Vol. XIII (trans.), David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), pp. 441-442.
[162]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), p. 97.
[163] Simian-Yofre, "רָחַם," pp. 441-442.
[164] Wolff, *The Kerygma*, p. 70.

I will now go on to justify that the elements of hope in all these three narratives are fundamentally related. One common feature that unites these passages is the notion of Yahweh's fidelity. The continued involvement of YHWH in the affairs of the people and peoples' obligation to YHWH are the characteristic features of these narratives. The similarity that I propose suggests that the theology of fidelity in these texts is apparent in the Dtr's use of terms such as *establish, kindness, allowance, release, thanksgiving prayers, compassion, chastise, repent* and *if*. This thematic homogeneity suggests that the theology of the DH can be read in a way that sees the history of Israel in the light of hope beyond despair. My hypothesis of hope specifies three parameters:

(i) Element of Promise

Gerhard von Rad	2 Samuel 7: 12-13 (Nathan's Oracle)	וְהֲקִימֹתִי (and I will raise) וְהֲכִינֹתִי (and I will establish) הוּא יִבְנֶה־בַּיִת (he shall build a house) אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה־לּוֹ לְאָב (I will be a father to him)
	2 Kings 25: 27 (Jehoiachin's Release)	נָשָׂא (to release/free)
Hans Walter Wolff	1 Kings 8: 50 (Solomon's Speech)	לְנַחֲלָה (to be inheritance)

These passages in unison speak of Yahweh's unending support and promise. Solomon's prayer in its entirety is about praise to Yahweh's fidelity. In the light of Solomon's thanksgiving, the release of Jehoiachin represents for readers the proof that Yahweh can start all over again. Jehoiachin's peaceful death connotes the promise to the Judaean community of a peaceful life thereafter. Read in this way, the narrative permits the nuance of promise in the DH rather than characterising the whole DH theology as pointing to the disastrous end that Noth envisages. Therefore, Jehoiachin's epilogue is optimistic if it is read as fulfilling in part the promise in the Nathan's oracle to establish the house of David forever (לְעוֹלָם).

(ii) Element of Grant

Gerhard von Rad	2 Samuel 7: 15 (Nathan's Oracle)	וְחַסְדִּי (but/and my lovingkindness)
	2 Kings 25: 28 (Jehoiachin's Release)	טֹבוֹת (kindly)
Hans Walter Wolff	1 Kings 8: 50 (Solomon's Speech)	לְרַחֲמִ֔ם (compassion)

Food-rationing is not something new to Jehoiachin. Babylonian kings practiced food rationing even prior to Jehoiachin's surrender. Interestingly, the Chronicler's account lists the sons of Jehoiachin as, "the Royal Line after the Exile" (*cf.,* 1 Chron. 3:17ff). The Chronicler tells us a story that points to a continuity after Jehoiachin's death. However, the lack of this list in the book of Kings could be attributed to the Dtr's bias; that is, the discontinuity in the genealogical historiography might indicate the final judgement on Jehoiachin. The title given to Jehoiachin also indicates that he was more of a ruler rather than a captive who celebrated the support of his captor. The elements of grant in Jehoiachin's narrative that has a common theme with the other two texts are moral and emancipative grants that anticipate hope for the Judaean community. Solomon's prayer in v. 50 invites Yahweh's continuous grant of forgiveness, compassion and deliverance. In fact, the virtue of Yahweh's fidelity itself is a generous endowment.

(iii) Element of Conditionality

Gerhard von Rad	2 Sam. 7: 14 (Nathan's Oracle)	וְהֹכַחְתִּיו (and I will chastise/correct him), "if" they disobey.
	2 Kings 25: 30 (Jehoiachin's Release)	אֲרֻחַת (allowance) allowance is granted only "if" Jehoiachin lived in the Babylonian court.
Hans Walter Wolff	1 Kings 8: 48 (Solomon's Speech)	וְשָׁבוּ (if they repent/return).

Jehoiachin's conditional providence served multiple purposes. "If" he remains in the Babylonian court, he gets his rations, receives hospitality and assures hope for the Judaeans. In the way the dynastic theology can be interpreted, Jehoiachin's final days

can also be construed as part of YHWH's plan for sustaining the promise, although tied to the condition of repentance. Nevertheless, this conditional promise points beyond the exegesis put forward by the Nothian School that saw Jehoiachin's narrative as marking the end of the dynastic hope. Likewise, Wolff's investigation of 1 Kings 8: 48- וְשָׁבוּ ("if" they repent/return) and Rad's conditionality in 2 Sam. 7: 14- וְהֹכַחְתִּיו (and I will chastise/correct him), "if" they disobey, complement one another. Hope for forgiveness, sustenance, and liberation are intrinsically linked with conditions in all three texts.

Crenshaw asserts, correctly in my view, that it is right for readers to recognize the "linguistic differences"[165] between texts which may appear ambiguous, but their essential relations must be ascertained. Due recognition must be given to the novelty and distinctiveness of each of the texts in question, because this should prompt readers to establish similarities in the message despite the variation in the linguistic styles.[166] Read in this way, the shortcomings of the Nothian hypothesis about one unified tradition and theology are displayed. The multifarious nature of the Dtr's theological language does not suggest that the DH is "the creation of a single "tradition," or was it produced by a unified redactional strategy."[167] Therefore, I propose to read that the Dtr's Jehoiachin's narrative, which is about the "release" and "liberation" theme, is a reminder of the Deuteronomistic theology in which YHWH establishes the kingdom hope.

Conclusion

We have found that many later critics agree that the theology and ideology of final judgement and doom in Noth's reading of the DH is overstated, while the theme of hope, ambiguous as it is, can be found consistently throughout the corpus. Readers from a marginalized community do not need to simply subscribe to what is presented as a universal message through a normative interpretation. They look for an alternative discourse in the text that might be serviceable to their lived realities. In the perspective of a marginalized readership of the Bible where the reading aim to gain resources for

[165] James L. Crenshaw, "The Deuteronomist and the writings," in L. S. Schearing and S. L. Mckenzie (eds.), *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*, JSOTSupp., 268 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 146.
[166] Concerning the linguistic characteristics of the DtrH Weinfeld states: ". . . what constitute the novelty of the Deuteronomic style therefore are not new idioms and new expressions, but a specific jargon reflecting the religious upheaval of this time." Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p. 1.
[167]K. L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deteronomic Debate? A Thought Experiment," *JSOT* 31/1 (2007): pp. 311-345 (323).

hope and emancipation, messages of doom and catastrophe do not add to their enlightenment but to despair. The message that resistance is futile, and that hope is unavailing can only serve the interest of the status quo and the hegemonic powers, whether in ancient Israel or modern NEI. It is in consideration of such a readership that the reader's social crisis and desire for liberation becomes a vantage point for a potential hermeneutical discourse. To get this task going, in this preliminary chapter, I have established the following:

Having examined the hypothetical disagreement between von Rad and Wolff over their interpretation of texts that seem to imply hope for Israel, I have sought to outline the fundamental affinities in the texts that establishes the possibility of looking at the theology of hope. On that basis, a counter-reading approach to the Nothian Dtr's notion of final judgment while espousing the elements of hope in the DH through these texts becomes possible. In other words, the central meaning and message of hope for the Davidic house remains throughout the text I have emphasized, and the same is carried within the overall framework of the DH.

Establishing the theme of hope against the dominant theme of final judgment will enable this research to read the Deuteronomistic narratives in the light of the voice of resistance, emancipation and liberation. Reading for the theme of hope, I seek to establish viable hermeneutics for subaltern readers such as the Christian tribes of NEI to facilitate their search for positive resources from the biblical message. With these possible hermeneutical components as the base, the chapters ahead look forward to a conversational reading of 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 with the marginalized human situations, depicting voices of the vulnerable in both texts and NEI context.

Chapter 3

Re-reading Jeroboam and the Shechem Revolt (1 Kings 12)

Introduction

Applying the hypothetical framework of hope established in Chapter 2, this chapter provides a counter-reading of literary characteristics and characterization in 1 Kings 12.

The book of Kings, and in fact the entire DH includes numerous stories of the affluent in Israelite society, concentrating on their use of power and resources. The stories of the peoples in the margins are scarcely mentioned in the text, or if they are mentioned, in most cases, the people are characterized as villains, sinners, or nonconformists. In particular, the stories of the people of the Northern Kingdom hardly figure in the narrative except in terms of condemnation and dismissal. My interest is to look for the voice of the marginalized Northerners in this narrative. I will argue that the Dtr's hegemonic historiography of dominance overshadows this in 1 Kings 12 but that this marginalized voice can be recovered from this chapter.

Israel's international relations, demographic developments and socio-political changes contributed to a dramatic transformation from what was one nation into Judah and Israel. In the Dtr's view of these socio-political revolutions, Jeroboam was scapegoated as the Northern representative who caused the division of the kingdom. On this pretext, I will highlight the possible construction of Jeroboam's implied character through the literary-dramatic device of *Chiasm* and argue through a counter-reading for the refiguring of the oft-neglected identity and role of Jeroboam. This exposition will lead to a reader response to the text. Proceeding this way, through "deconstruction and reconstruction"[1] a reading paradigm for the marginalized readers such as Christian tribes of NEI will be established.

[1] Perhaps, in following Slivniak, prior to deconstruction is the construction of the figures in the text which can be determined by the need in the process of interpretation. Slivniak, "The Golden Calf Story: Constructively and Deconstructively," *JSOT* 33/1 (2008): pp. 19-38.

3.1 Chiasmus

My interest in looking at the Jeroboam narrative with Chiasm in mind is mostly based on my critical attitude to the way the literary structure itself has been used to portray Jeroboam in the DH. The aim is also to make it clear to readers that it is in using such literary devices as chiasm and parallelism by the Dtr that this biased characterization is achieved. Although the narrative in the scholarly arguments has always been ambiguous, my argument will allege that the role of Rehoboam in v. 8 can be used to counter-read Jeroboam's characterization. As an initial statement in support my argument, I would cite Montgomery who argues that "Rehoboam's foolish political plunder is coolly narrated, and his and Solomon's despotism goes unchallenged by the writer."[2]

According to Brad McCoy *Chiasmus (or Chiasm*[3]*)* is a "vital literary stratagem frequently seen in prehistoric writings and rhetoric as well as eloquence in both religious and non-spiritual material."[4] Bailey and Vander Broek categorize chiasm this way:

> As a literary device when it functions on a micro-level between components in a single sentence. When it orders larger literary units at a macro-level, it becomes a literary form because an author has to develop an extended pattern of paralleled and inverted elements, often with a deliberate focus on the central segment.[5]

Norrman concisely explains that *chiasmus* is simply "the bilateral symmetry about a central axis."[6] Liddell and Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon,* says that the term *Chiasmus* has its origin in the classical Greek verb χιαζω (*ciazo*) meaning "to mark with two lines crossing like a χ [ci/chi].[7] This term was used in relation to "the dynamic of rhetorical development by means of a parallel inversion of thematic topics"[8] as early as the fourth century by Isocrates for a Greek monograph. Long before that, in the third

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[2]James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1951), p. 251.
[3] J. A. Bengel first introduced *Chiasmus* as a technical designation for inverted parallelism in *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (1742), reissued as *New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971). Brad McCoy, "Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature," *CTS Journal* 9 (Fall 2003): pp. 18-34 (19-20). Also see, Elisabeth Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment,* 2nd edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 176.
[4] McCoy, "Chiasmus," pp. 19-20.
[5] James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), pp. 181-182.
[6] Robert Norrman, *Samuel Butler and the Meaning of Chiasmus* (London: St. Martin's, 1986), p. 276.
[7] Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), p. 1991.
[8] W. Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13-17: A Chiastic Reading* (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), p. 23.

millennium BCE, *Chiasmus* as a literary tool was used in "Sumero-Akkadian and Ugaritic texts."[9]

Studies of chiasm as one of the literary devices in the literary approaches to biblical narrative have gained popularity as revealing the artistic skills of biblical authors and narrators. At both micro and macro levels and in both prose and poetry, *chiasmus* has been shown to be one of the elements "in the formal structure of biblical literature."[10] In the words of Ronald E. Man (1984), chiasm which "permeates reason and vocal arrangements finds its material spread in OT and NT."[11]

Grant R. Osborne in his *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (1991) describes chiasmus in biblical literature in this way:

> [A] technique that highlights major themes (in the Old Testament writings) is chiasm, which reverses words or events in successive parallel clauses or sections."[12]

Combined with this structure of parallels, there can also be points that stand out precisely because they lack any obvious parallels in the discourse. This may be a clue to the pericope with which conveys the most important message in the text. Likewise, Nils W. Lund asserts that in a chiastic structure the centre is "where the turning point takes place" and that "a shift in thought" in the centre is continued to the end of the system.[13]

It is important to recognize the rhetorical structure of the biblical text as an analysis of the literary construction can help understand the relative importance of the various elements of the passage. It is one of the essential exegetical tools for outlining "the progression of an author's general thought and specific emphasis." [14] Such recognition helps the exegetical task in three ways: *Firstly,* analysing *Chiasm* helps demarcate units of thoughts and establishing textual boundaries through identification of the individual sub-units. *Secondly,* it helps in identifying the central component or the turning point of the text. As Breck points out, due to its "emphasis on the centre,

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[9] John Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), p. 21.
[10] Mitchell Dahood, "Chiasmus," in K. Crim et al., (eds.), *TheInterpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 145.
[11] Ronald E. Man, "The Value of Chiasmus for New Testament Interpretation," *BSac*141 (April–June 1984): pp. 146–157 (146).
[12] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introductionto Biblical Interpretation* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), p. 39.
[13] Nils W. Lund *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942) reprinted under the title *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), pp. 40-41.
[14] John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), pp. 73–74.

chiasmus can highlight the narrator's central aim of the message meant for the readers."[15] For the *third* point, by examining the nature of the corresponding parallels, "either in a synonymous or an antithetical way,"[16] and determining the nature of the chiasm "a reader can compare and/or contrast"[17] the corresponding thematic paired unit of thoughts. With this in mind, I will go on to explore a macro-level chiastic analysis of 1 Kings 11: 26-14: 20, and then make a more precise study at micro-level of 12: 1-19 and show the significance of the thematic symmetrical alignment in shaping the characterization of Jeroboam.

3.1.1 Chiasm as a Literary Technique in the Artistic Characterization of Jeroboam

The pre-exilic and exilic themes reviewed in Chapter 2 showed that the dominant theme in the DH generally is taken to be one of unrelieved and irreversible doom. This is essentially blamed on the establishment of multiple shrines in opposition to the central sanctuary, a practice that comes to the fore in the era of Kings. However, there is another theme of hope. In relation to this, two motifs that echoes throughout Kings are:

(i) Jeroboam as a symbol of infidelity (North) and,
(ii) The promise to David as a symbol of faithfulness of God (South).

Although in specific portions of Kings these themes are developed in different ways, in broad terms, Cross uses this theological distinction to distinguish: Dtr_2's emphasis on the sin of Jeroboam and Manasseh and Dtr_1's emphasis on the promise to David. Cross asserts that these two themes come together to form the basis of the Josianic reform. I will discuss more on the theological and political divisions between the North and the South later in the chapter. Cross's view is that the thematic transition to Dtr_2, the sin of Jeroboam led to the Judgement in 2 Kings 17: 20-23. The basic form of DH adjudication comes in 2 Kings 17: 21 where the narrator states:

כִּי-קָרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, מֵעַל בֵּית דָּוִד, וַיַּמְלִיכוּ, אֶת-יָרָבְעָם בֶּן-נְבָט; וידא (וַיִּדַּח) יָרָבְעָם אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל
מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה, וְהֶחֱטִיאָם חֲטָאָה גְדוֹלָה

[15] Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language*, p. 19.
[16] Man, "The Value of Chiasmus," p. 148.
[17] Bailey and Broek, *Literary*, p. 51.

> V. 21 For He tore Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drew *and* drove Israel away from following the Lord and made them sin a great sin.

If both the themes from the DH culminate in the paramount role played by Josiah, one might suspect that there is an ideological motive for the way the Dtr darkens Jeroboam's image, because:

(i) Despite the history of the cult in the North, the Dtr obliterated any rediscovery of cultic sites for the alleged reason that Yahweh chose Jerusalem (Judah). The argument here is that, viewed from the perspective of the Northern kingdom, Jeroboam's role is surprisingly like Josiah's role once we strip away the literary ambiguities and one-sided judgements presented by the Dtr. Both the kings intrinsically represent the voice of the minority in their respective socio-political locations.

(ii) In 2 Kings 17: 21 Jeroboam is depicted as though he was the most unethical and irresponsible Yahwist. I would argue that, even if we adhere to the Dtr's view that Jerusalem is הַמָּקוֹם (the place), the reader could still give a negative response to what Rehoboam did and applaud to what Jeroboam did. In my reading, using *Chiasmus* as a critical tool, I will argue that casting Jeroboam as the villain is part of the literary construction of the scene. Once we analyse this further, the Judahite king Rehoboam's role comes to appear more unjust and unethical. The responsibility for the subsequent history lies as much with Rehoboam and he deserves the worse characterization.

Therefore, the proposition is that the emancipative role of Jeroboam is obscured by the Dtr's historiography in which the *voice* of the people represented by Jeroboam at the Shechem event is condemned as sin. Hence, the need to counter-read Jeroboam's characterization. This counter-reading will enable subaltern readers of the Jeroboam-Rehoboam narrative to create their own space where their voice could be heard.

(i) Chiasmus in the Rehoboam-Jeroboam Narrative

Robert L. Cohn argues that the book of Kings constitutes a less artistic work than Samuel or Joshua; nevertheless, he says that a literary approach can illuminate *chiasm* in any narration. I will mostly follow Cohn's proposal to reconstruct Jeroboam and his role. For Cohn, the account of Jeroboam's rise and fall (1 Kings 11: 26-14: 20) "shows a good illustration of chiastic creativity."[18] While the broad span of the story is variously supposed to be compiled from different sources, it also displays the signs of a creative compiler who, "by ordering, and editing"[19] these sources, has tried to show the integrity of the account. This appears to be structured in a general chiastic shape that outlines the rise and fall of Jeroboam.

Here below I will employ the symmetrical alignment drawn by Cohn (macro) and Walsh (micro) for Jeroboam narrative to posit my own analysis and critical review of how Jeroboam appears characterized and scapegoated. Let me take an excerpt from Cohn's own proposal for the macro-chiastic structure[20] of the Jeroboam narrative below:

A	Introductory exposition: Jeroboam and Solomon (11: 26-28)
B_1	Ahijah's prophecy (11: 29-40)
B_2	Fulfilment of Prophecy (11: 41-12: 24)
C	Jeroboam's sin (12: 25-33)
D	**Man of God interlude (13: 1-32)**
C'	Jeroboam's sin (13: 33-34)
B_2'	Fulfilment (partly) of prophecy (14: 17-18)
B_1'	Ahijah's prophecy (14: 1-16)
A'	Concluding Exposition: The death of Jeroboam (14: 19-20)

Although Cohn's structure above shows macro alignment, it further helps us to see Walsh's[21] micro-chiastic construction of 1 Kings 12: 1-20 in a clearer light and illuminates the story of Rehoboam specifically. Here below is an excerpt from Walsh's own microstructure in six parts:

A Narrative introduction (12: 1-3a)
  B The first interview with Rehoboam (12: 3b-5)
    C Rehoboam consults with the elders (12: 6-7)
    C' Rehoboam consults with the youngsters (12: 8-11)
  B' The second interview with Rehoboam (12: 12-17)

[18] Robert L. Cohn, "Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative," *ZAW* 97/1 (2009): pp. 23-35 (24)
[19] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 24.
[20] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 24.
[21] Walsh, *1 Kings*, p. 160.

A’ Narrative conclusion (12: 18-20)

The correspondences in the micro chiastic structure are precise as can be seen in Walsh’s classification, although what made Cohn’s proposal different from Walsh’s is his projection of the unparalleled point D in his macro-chiastic structure. This evidence of a climactic statement is missing in Walsh’s micro-chiastic structure. Walsh’s chiastic structure is sound in the way he looks at the parallel elements but my conclusion from looking at the micro chiasm is different. My perspective draws from the context of counter imaging the protagonists in this text.

So, in looking at the construction of the reader’s judgment of Jeroboam, my exegetical interest is in specifying the unparalleled element apparent in v. 8 which is the climactic point in the narrative and therefore the centre of attention. This then agrees with what Lund and Osbourne have suggested. Here is my micro chiastic structure showing the split of the narration into ten parts with E as the unparalleled theme:

A	Rehoboam flees to Shechem (v. 1)
B	Words of the Israelites (vv. 2-4)
C	Words of Rehoboam to the Israelites (v. 5)
D	Advice of the veterans/elders (vv. 6-7)
E	**The response (v. 8)**
D_1	Advice of the youth/young men (vv. 9-11)
C_1	Words of Rehoboam to the Israelites (vv. 12-15)
B_1	Words of Israelites (vv. 16-17)
A_1	Rehoboam flees to Jerusalem (vv. 18-19)

V. 8 is an unparalleled point (Lund: 1942; Osborne: 1991) in the chiastic symmetry that intersects as the most important message in the pericope.

In my micro-chiastic analysis ABCD**E**$D_1C_1B_1A_1$, the core of the structure is a dual composition of themes that envelope with a central segment: the folly of Rehoboam and the emotions expressed by Jeroboam and the Northerners. In what follows, the detailed implications of these similar structures will be examined.

(ii) Text Analysis of the Chiastic Structure (Macro-level)

(i) Introduction of Jeroboam

The story as it appears in the MT (𝔐) commences with an introductory note outlining Jeroboam’s genealogy and his association with Solomon. Ahijah’s prophecy

concerning the potential king Jeroboam is announced early on and it is seen to be fulfilled through the irrationality of Rehoboam in the later part of the story.

This is how Jeroboam is introduced in 1 Kings 12. Jeroboam represents the most difficult theological interlude in the Judahite history for the Deuteronomists. His reign is characterized as opposing the Judaean ideals of the role of Jerusalem, its temple and the Davidic monarchy. Bodner says that the narrator characterized "Jeroboam as Israel's 'fall guy.'" [22] Hedley Jones in reviewing Bodner's *Jeroboam's Royal Drama* cogently argues that:

> The tendency to tar Jeroboam's name with a single brushstroke has led interpreters to overlook his role as a divinely appointed adversary of Solomon who is offered, through Ahijah, a dynasty of Davidic proportions."[23]

In opposition to this denigration of Jeroboam, Cohn further states:

> Against the apostasy of Solomon and the stupidity of his son Rehoboam, Jeroboam is depicted as the right man in the right place.[24]

It is interesting to note that Ahijah's prophetic role appears in length in the narrative (1 Kings 11:31-39) which presumably serves to indicate that "YHWH's word drives throughout, as the power behind the rise of Jeroboam."[25] In fact, the statement by Cohn suggests that Jeroboam was God ordained and chosen (with conditions) to break the cycle of the heinous ungodliness of Solomon and Rehoboam. The story of Jeroboam which seems an interruption in the history of the Israel turns out to be becomes more appealing and creative and a crucial clue to the purpose and methods of Deuteronomistic historiography.

(ii) Ahijah's Prophecy

The advocacy of Ahijah in this narrative initially oscillates between supporting Jeroboam's move as a consequence of Solomon's sin and sometimes for supporting Rehoboam for seeking to maintain the Davidic line. This alteration in advocacy reflects

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[22] Keith Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 12.
[23] Paul Hedley Jones, reviews Keith Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), *Theology* 116/2 (2013): pp. 129-130 (130).
[24] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 25
[25] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 27.

the theological difficulty from the Judaean viewpoint in supporting the breakaway of the Northern kingdom.[26] However, Jeroboam's career is launched with God's conditional blessing (1 Kings 11: 30-33). Jeroboam does not seem to reply to Ahijah's prophecy, but Solomon does reply implicitly by conspiring to kill Jeroboam as he became his potential challenger (1 Kings 11: 40).

After Solomon's death means that the prophet Ahijah's interpretation of events wins out, the Dtr seems to have downplayed the importance of Jeroboam's success in winning over most of the tribes. The emphasis is on Rehoboam having forfeited the kingdom because of his own incompetence, rather than on Jeroboam's positive skill.[27] The extended treatment of Rehoboam's relations with the people in the text informs the reader about his continual insecurity and thirst for power in the assembly and beyond.

(iii) The Ascension of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12)

After the death of Solomon, the people assemble at Shechem for the coronation of Rehoboam, but events turned out in such a way that Rehoboam fled and Jeroboam was the one the people accepted as king. As far as the Northerners were concerned, the assembly was a platform for their voice, given the yoke of Solomon they bore throughout his reign. The Northerners were willing to remain under Southern kingship, if their yoke was lightened by Rehoboam; they did not outright deny Rehoboam's claim to kingship. However, the deferral of the response for three days, and Rehoboam's foolish decision (v.8) that had silenced the Northerners resulted in a landmark change in the polity. This verse forms the climax in the chiastic structure.

וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת-עֲצַת הַזְּקֵנִים אֲשֶׁר יְעָצֻהוּ; וַיִּוָּעַץ אֶת-הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר גְּדְלוּ אִתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר הָעֹמְדִים לְפָנָיו

> V. 8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him.

The micro-chiasm of 1 Kings 12: 1-19 that I have structured shows that v. 8 is the central point to the chiasmus in this passage. The underpinning rhetoric emphasize the folly of Rehoboam that is suggested by the verb וַיַּעֲזֹב (but he forsook). On this rhetoric, Bazalel Porten argues, "the folly of Rehoboam was detrimental to the fall of the

[26] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 27.
[27] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 28.

kingdom despite the most applauded Solomon's wisdom."[28] Rehoboam in this narrative explicitly moves from the wisdom of the elders to the folly of youth. Hence, the strategy of Rehoboam emerges as he turns away from the elders. Rehoboam's action in v. 8 shows that the time is ripe for the kingdom's downfall which is partly the fruit of the ferocious Solomonic era. Rather than acknowledging and repairing the damage done to the unity of Israel by Solomon's policies, Rehoboam proclaims that he will increase the yoke, thereby intensifying the policies that have led to the peoples' discontent. The phrasing of Rehoboam's dialogue exposes his foolishness (1 Kings 12: 10e-11):

וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו, הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוּ אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר כֹּה-תֹאמַר לָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבְּרוּ אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר אָבִיךָ
הִכְבִּיד אֶת-עֻלֵּנוּ, וְאַתָּה הָקֵל מֵעָלֵינוּ כֹּה תְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם **קָטָנִּי** עָבָה מִמָּתְנֵי אָבִי

v. 10e . . . my little finger is thicker than my father's loins.

According to Cohn, the קָטָנִּי (my little thing) is a reference to "youngsters that points to a bone of some contention."[29] However, some versions read *little finger*. Some translation reads *waist.* Cohn also uses Noth's emendation of the term קָטָנִּי as Glied (penis) who is of the opinion that the metaphor of a *little thing/finger* adjacent to the loins is penis.[30] So, for Cohn the "macho vulgarity fits the character of the disrespectful youth."[31] Whatever the translation, the chiasmus centres on the folly which becomes evident in the remark of Rehoboam.

The attitude of the Dtr to the younger advisors is conveyed by the way in which they are derogatorily called הַיְלָדִים, which means the children or the young ones. Their inappropriate counsel justifies the designation "children" and suggests Rehoboam's pride over his father's glory.[32] Malamat and Tadmor view הַיְלָדִים as simply a "literary expedient to differentiate the arrogant and inexperienced youth from the wisdom of the elders."[33] Long similarly views that there is no specific age in the use of הַיְלָדִים but it

[28] Bezalel Porten, "The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (1 Kings 3-11)," *HUCA* 38 (1967): pp. 93-128 (123-124).
[29] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 29.
[30]This is how Noth writes in his book concerning the emendation of קָטָנִּי: "dannaberdürfte es sich am ehestenumeine Umschreibungfür das männliche Gliedhandeln." My translation of this is, "but then it could most likely be a paraphrase for the male member." Noth, *Könige. 1.Teilband* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968), p. 267. Cited in Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 29.
[31] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 29.
[32] George Savron, "1 and 2 Kings," in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1987), p. 150.
[33]A. Malamat, "Kingship and Council in Israel and the Sumer," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 35 (1976): pp. 247-270 (249). Hayim Tadmor, *'The People' and the Kingship in Ancient Israel Political Institutions in the Biblical Period* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 58.

characterizes the "foolishness of the protagonists" who he thinks is are "types and not necessarily individuals."[34] It can also be a metaphor of Rehoboam's crafty and hasty state of mind.

וְעַתָּה אָבִי הֶעְמִיס עֲלֵיכֶם עֹל כָּבֵד וַאֲנִי אוֹסִיף עַל-עֻלְּכֶם אָבִי יִסַּר אֶתְכֶם בַּשּׁוֹטִים וַאֲנִי אֲיַסֵּר אֶתְכֶם בָּעַקְרַבִּים

V. 11 Now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.

Rehoboam attaches his speech to the might of his father Solomon. Appropriately, the people respond using a slogan in two-couplet lines of their own as their expression of dissent (v. 16).[35] It appears suitable that the narrator closes the assembly episode by highlighting the popular response to Rehoboam's inept diplomacy in these words:

וַיַּרְא כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לֹא-שָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲלֵהֶם וַיָּשִׁבוּ הָעָם אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר לֵאמֹר מַה-לָּנוּ חֵלֶק בְּדָוִד
וְלֹא-נַחֲלָה בְּבֶן-יִשַׁי לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַתָּה רְאֵה בֵיתְךָ דָּוִד וַיֵּלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֹהָלָיו

V. 16 when all Israel saw that the king would not listen to them, the people answered the king,

"What share do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Look now to your own house, O David."
So Israel went away to their tents.

Following Rehoboam's conspiracy with the הַיְלָדִים and declaration at the assembly came the outbreak of chaos. This passage completes the pinnacle of the chiasm that seems to have begun with v.8 וַיַּעֲזֹב (but he forsook). Having reached this point in the chiasm, the pericope finds its central segment where every component in the chiastic structure in 1 Kings 12: 1-19 revolves around this decisive outbreak. The slogan in v. 16 shifts from prose to verse and the exchange of the declaration and slogan becomes significant. By choosing to offer the people slogan over compassion, Rehoboam loses his people. The rejoinder of הָעָם (the people) is fundamentally "detrimental for the Davidic house."[36] The narrator places the episode in convincing and emphatic language that describes the irreversibility of the decision to resist.

[34] B. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature* (eds.), Rolf Knierim and Gene M. Tucker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), p. 135.
[35]Reference to such dissidents can be read in 2 Sam. 20: 1 during the succession struggle of David.
[36] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 29.

(iv) The Reign of Jeroboam

The reign of Jeroboam begins with resistance to the dominant ideology and later takes on reform measures that emancipate the marginalized North. However, Jeroboam's actions are challenged by the Dtr, suggesting to the readers that the religious and logistic innovations of Jeroboam only brought about his downfall. The reform measures ascribed to Jeroboam are:

(i) his resolve to prevent travel to Jerusalem (12: 26-27)

(ii) the fabrication and dedication of the golden calves (v. 28)[37]

From the quick move of Jeroboam to fortify Shechem and Penuel, the Dtr turns to present Jeroboam as a king whose reign begins in insecurity and uncertainty. Cohn reckons that the Dtr seems to suggest that Jeroboam's actions are motivated overall by "his distress of the peoples' defection (v. 27) and that his fear is reasonable and realistic."[38]

From this viewpoint, Jeroboam's cultic renovations could be read as a response to the peoples' plight. There is no explicitly stated intention on his part to remove them from Yahwism. Jeroboam's primary aim can be seen as the reversal of the increasing centralization of power and privileges under Solomon. It is the Dtr's use of the word וַיַּעַשׂ (and he made) in 1 Kings 12: 28-33, repeated nine times that makes it appear that Jeroboam is self-willed and self-serving and the personal creator of the new cult. Whether this reflects any historical reality is another question. The narrator claims a knowledge of Jeroboam's secret motive בְּלִבּוֹ (in his heart), but given the hostility of the text to Jeroboam, this gives rise to suspicion in the reader.[39] This suspicion then spreads to the narrator's polemic against these reforms:

(i) Procession to Dan (v. 30b)

(ii) New shrines (v. 31a)

(iii) New Priests (v. 31b)

(iv) A new festal calendar (v. 31aα)

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[37] DeVries, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 161.
[38] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 30.
[39] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 31.

(v) Sacrifice to Bethel calf/calves in v. 32aβ

(vi) New Priests at Bethel (v. 32b)[40]

The recollection of the Exodus history by Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12: 28 is noteworthy in our counter-reading. To depict deities as standing or sitting on animals were standard practice in ANE religions. It is in the similar vein that we can understand Jeroboam's calves as being put in place as pedestals for Yahweh, the recognized God of Israel, rather than being presented as rival deities. Walsh writes:

> Jeroboam's innovations, then, would not have been the introduction of the worship of other gods but the establishment of Yahweh worship at new sanctuaries. Also, it is plausible to consider that new sanctuaries were not completely new innovations since Bethel and Dan were traditional sites for YAHWEH worship long before Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem displaced them. Accordingly, the characterized portrayal of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12 is historically unreliable and is probably due to the narrator's pro-Judahite bias or, perhaps, to a generalized Judahite misunderstanding of the Israelite cult.[41]

The Dtr patterns the story as though the downfall of Jeroboam is due to his cultic sins (v. 34), and of rebelling against the Davidic house. However, from a reconstructive approach to the narrative, I propose to read Jeroboam's creative reforms not as a matter of self-gain, but as resistance and repair of the negligence of the Davidic rule. I will establish this argument in the later part of the chapter while I discuss the legitimacy of the Northern Jeroboam's leadership and his role.

(v) The Downfall of Jeroboam

The Dtr records Jeroboam's downfall in an elaborate manner. Traditionally, the Dtr takes the making of the golden calves as the constituent of the downfall of Jeroboam. The Dtr suggests that Jeroboam infuriated Yahweh, casting Yahweh behind his back in favour of the calves.[42] Contrary to what the Dtr would construe, Gottwald interprets the

[40]DeVeries, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 161.
[41] Walsh, *1 Kings*, p. 172.
[42]DeVeries, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 179.

calves as probably a symbolic throne for Yahweh and no more idolatrous than the cosmic imagery of Solomon's temple.[43]

My question is why was the voices of the people, which led Jeroboam to re-establish shrines in the North, did not matter to the Dtr? If the Dtr had not been dismissive of the uproar of the people that Jeroboam represents, the role of Jeroboam would have been seen more positively. The questions that I will pursue in my counter-reading, given that marginalized readers might have similar doubts in reading 1 Kings 12, are as follows:

(i) Did Jeroboam represent the voice of the oppressed mass?

(ii) Why is Rehoboam's negligence and defilement of the house of David not a characteristic report in the narration? Why would the Dtr characterize Jeroboam alone in this way and not Rehoboam?

(iii) Is Rehoboam not equally a culprit for the fall?

(iv) Can the voice of resistance in v. 16 indicate hope?

In the section below I will depict some features in the texts that a study through Chiasm can show.

3.2 Chiasmus as a Rhetorical Device

Trends in the narrative study of the OT give interest in the connection between "character to plot *and* the possible characterization by the narrator."[44] Van Dijk in 1972 suggested "prospects of labelling characterization beyond the possibility of seeing characterization in the text-grammar tools."[45] Van Dijk introduces the idea that an individual protagonist is invested with semantic features[46] for example, David is righteous, Solomon is a man of wisdom, and Elijah is courageous. Suggesting the characterization of Jeroboam as "sinner" in the way Dijk proposes is an actant imposed by the narrator. Both the semantic presupposition and actants are imposed by the narrator to suit the storyline.

[43] Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 343.
[44] James Garvey, "Characterization in Narrative," *Poetics* 7 (1978): pp. 63-78 (63).
[45] T. A. van Dijk, *Some Aspects of Text Grammar* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), p. 297.
[46] van Dijk calls this as Actants where in the literary theory, a person, creature, or object is described as playing a set of active roles in a narrative.

In a similar vein, James Garvey adds that "characterization invests an identified character with attributes in the text such as traits and qualities which adds descriptive material to a story."[47] He says that chiasmus in a character discourse or in the depiction of the character's role contributes to the characterization of the character's inner life. As outlined in the study of the micro-chiastic structure of Jeroboam text, chiasmus comes to play when the character is in a situation of pressure (the climax of the story). As a result, in cases where the reader might expect character's actual intention such as spontaneity or emotional, confusion, a rhetorical characterization comes as premeditated.[48]

In a rhetorical paradigm, we see that a major device of rhetoricians is the deployment of stylistic features to convince and influence readers/audiences.[49] In the similar way, when chiasmus is found in the discourse with the story at its emphatic point (though Assis says chiasmus is not zenith but a flow), the rhetorical element becomes much clearer to the readers. It is a schematic phenomenon that indicates the central agenda. Hence, chiasmus is a narrative device that leads us to understand the rhetorical characterization in the narrative.

Also, Seymour Chatman's (1972) proposal seems persuasive. He is of the opinion that a reader "should recognize the elements of quality and authenticity in the characters beyond the narration."[50] He emphasizes those personae "of the character must derive from the reality but not from the actions drawn by the narrator."[51] It thus amounts to saying that readers must attempt to see the life of a character beyond the characterized features in the text.

Chatman's view is relevant to Garvey's statement that "qualities attached to the character do not necessarily or solely designate the relationship of the person characterized."[52] Also, Garvey is careful enough to mention that both the qualities attached and the protagonist characterized constitute an integral part of the narration, even though the narrator himself and "readers can be variant in their information on

[47] Garvey, "Characterization in Narrative," p. 63.
[48] Elie Assis, "Chiasmus in Biblical Narrative: Rhetoric of Characterization," *Prooftexts* 22/3 (Fall 2002): pp. 273-304 (293).
[49] Assis, "Chiasmus in Biblical Narrative," pp. 293.
[50] Seymour Chatman, "On the Formalist-Structuralist Theory of Character," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 1 (1972): pp. 57-79 (73).
[51] Chatman, "On the Formalist-Structuralist," p. 76.
[52] Garvey, "Characterization in Narrative," p. 65.

actual lives of the characters that the story is about."[53] In the case of Jeroboam, the chiastic structure *per se* rhetorically characterizes Jeroboam as a deviant in the way the narrative merges towards the climax. The two constituent elements in Jeroboam's case following Garvey's proposition, are Jeroboam the sinner and Jeroboam the legitimate king.

Furthermore, from a critical look at the chiastic structure, Ahijah's role is supposedly to confirm the legitimacy of Jeroboam's rise to kingship, but the Dtr renders the message of Ahijah enigmatic. The message of Ahijah could have informed the reader more about the otherwise uncharacterised legitimate Jeroboam. That said, there remains a possibility of counter-reading Jeroboam from the parameters of virtue, legitimacy and hope. In this context, the refiguring of Jeroboam from the stereotypical mask imposed by the Dtr is potentially one way of counter-reading the subjective and suppressive elements of the Dtr. This refiguring can take place if we take the otherwise suppressed peoples' voice as the framework to reading the narrative.

Assis's thesis is that *Chiasmus as a rhetorical device produces a persuasive and influential*[54] dramatic display of textual structure. A chiastic text is constructed in such a way that the listeners/readers feel that the storyline is well-constructed and planned. Assis's proposition can be applied in the micro chiastic structure where for instance C (v. 5) and C_1 (v. 15) appears well structured.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם, לְכוּ-עַד שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים--וְשׁוּבוּ אֵלָי; וַיֵּלֶכוּ, הָעָם	v. 5: He said to them, "Go away for three days, then come again to me." So the people went away.
וְלֹא-שָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ, אֶל-הָעָם: כִּי-הָיְתָה סִבָּה מֵעִם יְהוָה, לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת-דְּבָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד אֲחִיָּה הַשִּׁילֹנִי אֶל-יָרָבְעָם בֶּן-נְבָט	v. 15 So the king did not listen to the people, because it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfil his word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

[53] Garvey, "Characterization in Narrative," p. 66.
[54] Assis, "Chiasmus in Biblical Narrative," pp. 286-287.

These two verses inform readers about the conditional allegiance of the Northerners after the ultimatum was urged to Rehoboam. The peoples' expectation appears to have remained as they departed in obedience (וַיֵּלְכוּ הָעָם) to Rehoboam. V. 15ab may seem perplexing as the narrator suddenly brings in a statement where the king did not listen to the peoples' voice, but, ironically, it justifies Rehoboam's foolish response as a fulfilment of Yahweh's intentions.

V. 15 stands out because Dtr's characterization of Rehoboam in the rest of the narrative depends on the allegation that what Jeroboam and his people conspire to do is anti-Yahwist. On the one hand, when Rehoboam negates the ultimatum in v. 15a, the narrator refers Rehoboam's action to the fulfilment of God's plan. This may seem to give legitimacy to Jeroboam, but, on the other hand, it can be read as an exoneration of the deaf ears of Rehoboam, relieving him, and therefore the Davidic dynasty, of some of the blame for the subsequent disaster. Such rhetoric, though it appears convincing, prompts suspicion over the narrator's bias, and this is one indication that a rhetorical artistry boosts persuasion and influence on the readers.

3.3 Chiasmus as Emotive Representation

Emotive literary analysts suggest investigating the conscious and report speeches besides chiastic rhetoric and characterization. In the words of Michelle J. Levine, "the vigorous reading of the narrative's plot, style, vocabularies and representation of the protagonists are prerequisite for a deeper historical and contextual biblical interpretation."[55] Levine's approach is not new in biblical studies, yet specifically in the study of a narrative like 1 Kings 12, Levine's idea of interpretation becomes even more important. In an interpretive attempt to critique the technique of characterization, it is important that a text must not be read as a series of self-contained literary and thematic units. In order to obtain plausible meaning it is imperative that the characters' speeches, the conscious emotions and variant themes are incorporated to find the framework for any argument in the interpretation sought. In fact, Laurel Brinton says, "a narrative

[55]Michelle J. Levine, "Character, Characterization, and Intertextuality in Nahmanides's Commentary on Biblical Narrative," *Hebrew Studies* 53 (2012): pp. 112-142 (112).

genre in an emotive style can represent the character realistically rather than just offer a report."[56]

That said, from an emotive analysis, Rehoboam's action can be interpreted as his inability to cope with tolerance, justice, and power and most likely as an unreasonable reaction of a perplexed man. After all, it is illogical on his part to turn away from the advisors whose advice his father Solomon has always sought. Also, Rehoboam's hasty decision suggests his residual emotions of pride in his father's glory. Rehoboam's strategies and speeches reach their climax in v. 8 וַיַּעֲזֹב (but he forsook) after he followed his wrong emotions. It turned out that what Rehoboam did on the pretext of a dynastic heroism is not what his subjects desired. Hence, his uncompromising response caused a great mayhem and his claim to kingship over most of the tribes failed.

It is in this chiastic climax that an unparalleled point (Lund: 1942; Osborne: 1991) intersects as the most important message, leading the chiastic structure to an emotional outbreak of the protagonists. This is where chiasmus becomes one of the effective tools by which emotions are made to play in the narrative. Otherwise, the absence of the chiastic climax (v. 8) would have a different twist in the narrative structure. The act of Rehoboam in v. 8 explicitly suggests that the zenith of *Rehoboam's conscious emotions* has contributed to the construction of chiasm.

Narrative chiasm can have an emotional impact on the readers too. It provides intellectual information on the identity formation of the character within the text: "Readers consume the dramatic message in the text with their own reality, an experiences they have had for instance a deep agony over a thing that have happened, which otherwise they have not expected from themselves or the hero in the text they read."[57] Therefore, the impact can provoke a reader's reaction when the twist in the story makes the villain positively characterized in the realistic delivery of the tale, but an innocent hero is invested with a negative characterization. Rolf A. Zwan and others have rightly pointed that:

[56] Laurel Brinton, "'Represented Perception:' A Study in Narrative Style," *Poetics* 9 (1980): pp. 363-381 (363).
[57]Rolf A. Swan, Katinka Dijkstra, *et al.*"Character and Reader Emotions in Literary Texts," *Poetics* 23 (1994): pp. 139-157 (139).

> Some of the emotions experienced by the readers are strongly related to those experienced by the main protagonist of the story, such as disappointment or anger when the protagonist does not succeed in reaching a major goal.[58]

Like Zwan, E. S. Tan also suggests that the reader's emotions are of two types: *fictional emotions* and *artefact emotions.*[59] The former pertains to the fictional world where readers commiserate with characters. It relates to the story with imagination and communicate themselves with the emotions of the character. The latter is a real correlation with experiences and situations of the readers with the narrative's character emotions.

The above lines are meant to suggest that emotions of the protagonist are mostly displayed in a situation where a desire is fulfilled or declined, and that the opposing results affect conflicting character. In Jeroboam and Rehoboam's case, the emotions of the Northerners are the immediate reaction to the verdict passed by the emotional folly of Rehoboam. Their emotions are of anger over the failure to achieve the goals which were described in 12: 16.

Reading from the perspective of a well-structured and skilful chiastic display, artefact emotions are relevant for analysing readers emotions over the text. The reader's reactional emotions[60] may not relate to the character of the narrative in all its entirety, but the character which is characterized in the narrative might speak to the reader's own experiences of characterization and discrimination.

3.4 Narrator's Characterization, Literary and Moral Judgment

The characterization of Jeroboam reflects the Dtr's subjective interpretation fuelled by an elite ideology. This leads to a possible problem that is summed up in Meir Sternberg's study of "the nature of omniscience of a biblical narrator."[61] In Sternberg's

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[58] Swan, Dijkstra, *et al.* "Character and Reader," p. 139.

[59] Rolf A. Zwan, *Aspects of Literary Comprehension: A Cognitive Approach* (Philadelphia and Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1993). E. S. Tan, "Story Processing as an emotion Episode," in H. van Oostendorp and Rolf A. Zwan (eds.), *Naturalistic Text Comprehension* (Norwood: Ablex, 1994), pp. 165-188.

[60] These statements on reader response are not an intention to say that every reader has the similar experience of the text read. The way this idea is emphasized here is to gauge on to the experiences of the marginal readers, as the research attempts to gauge the marginalized peoples' voices and emotions in the texts.

[61] Meir Sternberg opens his third chapter "Ideology of Narration and Narration of Ideology" with verse from the Bible. He cites 1 Sam. 16: 7 and I quote; "Man sees what meets the eye and God sees into the

view, the narrator's power is derived from his privileged knowledge that allows him the freedom to conceal or expose what is to be or not to be recounted. Sternberg says that the narrator seems to have an "unrestricted claim to his reasoning capabilities on the characters and understands God's mind too."[62] The narrator seems to enjoy the unrestricted association with time and space. Thereby, the narrator claims and speaks with the authority of omniscience and its effects.[63] The implications of this, however, appear when in this connection Walsh talks about the Dtr's lack of respect for the protagonists in 1 Kings 12.[64] Hence, the inference is that incongruities that appear when one studies narrated plot/context are at least conceivably, created or re-created by narrator. It is not simply the question of the truth value claimed for the discourse, but it is about the ideological or artistic inputs of a narrator. The result is that whatever the reader deduces from the text is in a sense a product of the created world of the text. Therefore, from a reader's vantage point, each reading calls for a different method of interpretation, one that could be oriented to the original context, another to the narrator's context and a third, more importantly, to the reader's own context.[65] The claim of the narrator to know all may act to conceal the fact that no narrator can tell all and that what the narrator chooses to tell reflects more about the ideology of the text than about the characters whose narrative is being told.

The stance of Jeroboam and the Northerners is simply judged by the narrator as constituting rebellion. No space is given to the voice of the periphery which might express the suffering that the hegemony has inflicted. Rehoboam's words of folly are not blamed despite his blatantly suppressive overtone that provoked the division. As such, the narrators' characterization, built on both explicit judgmental commentaries and skilful techniques employed in the text, needs to be countered. It appears clichéd but let me look at the kingdom's schism to examine whether it can legitimately be blamed principally on Jeroboam or whether we are the victims of ideologically driven allegations that the narrator justifies as historiography.

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heart," and from the Book of Tobit, "It is wise to keep a King's secret, but the works of God should be gloriously revealed." Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, p. 84.

[62]Stanberg refers to Genesis 6: 6-7. He attempts to be critical about the role of a narrator in reading biblical passages. To Sternberg, such passages seem as supplying the autonomy/omniscience of the narrator. Relevantly, this can be applied in measuring the aspect of moral judgement of the narrator in various texts.

[63] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 85, 99.

[64] Walsh, *1 Kings*, p. 168.

[65] Relevant reading see, Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, p. 99.

3.5 Development of Schism in the United Monarchy

The monarchical era and its socio-religious upheaval did not begin with Jeroboam and Rehoboam. The interrogation of the schism and its causes are a long-debated story. I will look at the duality in the corpus that is ambiguous especially concerning the nomenclature "greater Israel," "Israel," and "Judah." This ambiguity has led to both resistance and persistence in the power politics of Israel at large. I will largely argue that the revolt at Shechem is only the evidence for the immediate cause of the division, otherwise, the schism was an internal political/regional issue.

Whereas, traditionally, scholars, historians and readers perceive "Israel" as a name addressed inclusively for all tribes,[66] G. A. Danell in one of his pioneering works on the subject *The Name Israel* (1946) argues that "all Israel," specifically in 1 Kings 12, must have meant the North as a separate entity. Danell interestingly observes that it is the "majority" which claims rights to a collective name.[67] The issue of what is meant by the name "Israel" sets in when David is enthroned by the Judaeans as their king (2 Samuel 2). After the enthronement, the rest of the tribes who are under the rule of Ishbosheth take on the name "Israel" or even "all Israel." Apparently, the fact that Judah acted independently for economic, religious, political and ideological concentration in Judah was opposed. Otherwise, 1 Samuel depicts Davidic leadership נָגִיד (prince/leader) as beneficial for all the tribes. The passage 2 Sam. 2 suggests that David's attachment to Judah led to the emergence of "Israel" as a separate entity.[68]

2 Samuel 5 is a new twist in the storyline. It appears to recognise a concept of "greater Israel" with David as the monarch of "greater Israel" shepherding YHWH's people, centred at Hebron. In his later years as king, David becomes successful in winning a new capital, Jerusalem. Jerusalem in the South was then made the centre for the "greater Israel." The ideological significance of this is clear in 2 Sam. 7, where, in the context of the united monarchy, Yahweh himself promises that he will build a dynasty and not merely a temple. 2 Sam. 7 accords however a Davidic promise which is inclusive of greater Israel, but in the narrative, David's later concentration of activities and affairs in Jerusalem prompts questions from the peripheral Northerners. Perhaps on

[66] P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), p. 88.
[67] Danell, *Studies*, pp. 66-67.
[68] G. A. Danell, *Studies in the Name Israel in the Old Testament* (Uppsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri, 1946), pp. 75-79.

this basis, the idea that *Israel* in 1 Kings 12 refers specifically to the Northerners as suggested by Danell is plausible.

In addition, in 2 Sam. 24: 1, the story of a dichotomy in the monarchy is clearer. The census listing of Israel and Judah called by YHWH entailed the enforcement of a centralizing discipline which added to the bitterness of the marginalized Northerners. The duplicitous nature of YHWH in v. 1 is inexplicable, but what is understood in this text is that the theme does not end with what v. 1 declares. In fact, the pericope ends with David building an altar to appease Yahweh with sacrificed and fellowship offerings. Yahweh replies with a call for security for *all Israel* with the plague being lifted not from South or North but from "Israel" (v. 25). In Samuel, there are accounts of both the emergence of a central monarchy and of the uprising of regional autonomy.

Having said that, the background to the schism in the kingdom is intensified with Solomon. Solomon in the early years of his reign ruled over Judah (regionally) with due recognition of the heritage of a regional unity. In fact, Solomon in his temple dedicatory prayer (1 Kings 8) does not recognize the schism in the monarchy. He endorsed "Israel" as the people of Yahweh and, Yahweh as God of "Israel." In 1 Kings 8: 16, 21 Solomon recalls the common Exodus heritage and the promise to David in his prayer.[69] But, in the later years, the anomalous position of Solomon encapsulated the division.

In 1 Kings 1: 34, we see Solomon is anointed to be the king of the nation Israel. Consequently, in v. 35, Solomon is supposedly appointed as the *nagid* (נָגִיד) "over Israel *and Judah*."[70] The addition of "and Judah" in v. 35 is found in the LXX^L which De Vries considers is *a gloss*. To him, this reference to *and Judah* is not a primary importance since it is incoherently represented.[71] I would again suppose that the inconsistency over this semantic discrepancy could be the product of a narrator's autonomy over the residual environment that is concealed in the society mirrored thetext.

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[69] Provan notes that it is not at all likely at this stage of Solomon's reign he used a single "divisive" name Israel (v. 25) without some sort of explanation. In fact, the audience of the speech Provan says is the whole community (כָּל-קְהַל) of Israel (v. 22). Iain W. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Book of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1988), p. 107.

[70] James Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 124. Here, *nagid* (נָגִיד) is aptly understood as the synonym of ruler/king.

[71] S. J. De Vries, *1 Kings* (Waco: WBC, 1985), p. 5.

By and large, the dual nature of the united monarchy was always a political reality (*cf.,* 2 Sam. 2: 1-4; 5: 1-5). The kingdom is not really a single political entity but a union of two originally distinct territories, "Judah" and Israel." As we have seen, David himself acquired the crowns of the two territories on different occasions. He was initially enthroned in Hebron (2 Sam. 2: 1-4). Only later did the elders of the tribes asked him to be the king of Israel as well (2 Sam. 5: 1-5). In this context, peoples' ensemble at Shechem reminds us of the pre-existing historical importance of Shechem despite the centralising of the monarchy in Judah. Thus, the united monarchy may be depicted by the narrator as the royal aspiration but the tendency for the *felt otherness* for each region to re-emerge is something on which the narrator has to put a gloss.

Hence, the idea of "Israel" as associated with king David operates in two ways. *First,* "Israel" as inclusive of both North and South, and *Second,* "Israel" in a restricted sense of the Northern region. This reflects the development of the distinct thrones in Samuel which are then united. In Kings, however, the notion of "king" signifies Solomon's dominion over the undivided Israel. Ironically, Solomon was in this sense the only king of the united monarchy throughout his reign.[72] Solomon's reign and reputation are mostly characterized by the comprehensive use of the phrase "Israel" which denotes "greater Israel."[73] However, problematic passages such as 1 Kings 4-5 concerning the ideological dichotomy in the united monarchy cannot be ignored.

It is this underlying potential for schism which according to Linville made its way into the account in 1 Kings 12. To this end, it is arguable whether it is legitimate to say the division is caused by Jeroboam's apostasy. If Jeroboam is blamed, there is a need to re-read the Shechem revolt because the "deviant cult" which according to the Dtr is understood as against the "normative central cult,"[74] is not Jeroboam's innovation. It is quite as plausible to see the centralized royal cult in Jerusalem as the innovation in this case and Jeroboam as the defender of Israel's identity as understood by most of the people.

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[72] Linville, *Israel,* p. 125.

[73] Detailed study of the discrepancies concerning the use of a comprehensive terminology and an isolated term according to many scholars seem to be subsumed between MT (𝔐) and LXX. 𝔐 is optimistic in translating "all Israel" while in the LXX it is not found (*Cf.,* 2 Sam. 5: 5; 1 Kings 11: 42). To Linville, the differences between the 𝔐 and LXX in 1 Kings 1-11 may have been motivated by differing goals in portraying the character of Solomon. Linville, *Israel,* pp. 126-130, 136.

[74]Slivniak, "The Golden Calf Story," p. 19.

3.6 A reading paradigm from the Subaltern Context

In this section, I will list some points from the study of the texts concerning Jeroboam to show perspectives through which the narrative could be re-read in ways that might underpin a hermeneutical paradigm for marginalized Christian tribes of NEI.

3.6.1 The Legitimacy of Northern Rulership: Jeroboam as Nagid (נָגִיד)

Unlike Saul, David and Solomon, Jeroboam is presented to the readers as a failed *nagid* in his capacity as one of the *nagidim* נְגִידִים (1 Kings 14: 7; 16: 2). The deuteronomic tradition is certain that the נְגִידִים are appointed by Yahweh himself,[75] because the definition of the designation has more to do with national theocratic rule over both Israel and Judah (1 Kings 1: 35). Moreover, the fundamental idea in the conferring of this title is linked with Yahweh's choice for enthronement, initiated by coronation through the prophets. However, the Dtr by no means accepts the legitimacy of Jeroboam as *nagid* in his historiography. As we have seen, the Dtr's opinion observed through the chiastic element, depicts Jeroboam's ascension as that of a rebel. Cohn says that the narrator reduces the "incredibly industrious Jeroboam to a passive victim."[76] This one-sided historiography is expounded further in the way Noth's interpretation can be taken as endorsing a final judgement on the Northerners as dissident.

The question I will explore in this part of the chapter is on the legitimacy of Jeroboam as *nagid* (נָגִיד) and his role in order to show how Jeroboam as a kingly figure currently consigned to the margins might influence marginalized readers such as Christian tribes of NEI. What legitimates Jeroboam as the נָגִיד and how was this achieved? Was his kingship pro-Yahwistic or anti-Yahwistic? This exploration will help marginalised readers to counter-read the negative characterization of Jeroboam.

A subaltern reader who reads the suppressed character Jeroboam must be informed that Jeroboam is a *nagid* (נָגִיד), the title that represents authority. Traditionally, נָגִיד (a crown prince) is expected to be a military saviour for the nation. The idea is that Yahweh chose נְגִידִים for the role of shepherding, commandership and guardianship. They are not only rulers but responsible for the subjects. A נָגִיד is not an absolute ruler

[75] Linville, *Israel*, p. 141.
[76] Cohn, "Literary Technique," p. 32.

who rules on his own but is answerable to Yahweh.[77] Perhaps, this is what Eslinger deduces from the rhetorical strategy in 1 Sam. 1-2 and 1 Sam. 9: 16, that the people's demand for a king is for one who is expected to be a representative of YHWH himself. For instance, in 2 Sam. 5: 2 David replaces Saul as both king and *nagid.*[78] In modern political terminology, perhaps we could deduce the two functions united in David as that of the monarch as representative while the *nagid* is the executive element.

Another feature of a נָגִיד is the presence of the notion נַחֲלָה (inheritance/heir; MT (𝔐) נַחֲלָה inheritance; LXX ἄρχων[79] meaning ruler who Yahweh appoints fort the people).[80] A *Nagid* is understood most appropriately as a "leader," who leads the deity's people.[81] Linville says that most נָגִידִים are representative of new dynasties such as Saul, David, Jeroboam, Baasha.[82] Alt states that, despite their sinfulness or even a questionable legitimacy which is not accorded by Yahweh of a נָגִידִים, they were to represent Yahweh to/for the people of "Israel."[83]

Given the discussions above, I reiterate that several aspects of Jeroboam's story show that he deserves more positive attention than he received in the DH. This will allow subaltern readers to look at the figure of Jeroboam in the following two hermeneutical paradigms I suggest:

(i) The narrative rhetoric presents Jeroboam as the offender who in some sense is guilty of provoking the schism. Biographers and interpreters alike have disparaged him as a figure of apostasy and the one who caused the division of the monarchy. Yet, subalterns can recognize the aspect of persistent resistance that Jeroboam spearheaded.

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[77] While the DH used נָגִיד for a person destined to become king, the Chronicler used נָגִיד in a wide range of contexts (priestly, administration, judges, military, royal and so on). Linville, *Israel*, p. 142.
[78] Lyle Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985), pp. 307-309.
[79] In ancient Greece the chief magistrate in various Greek city states was called eponymous archon (ἐπώνυμοςἄρχων, eponymos archon). *Archon* (ἄρχων, pl. ἄρχοντες, *archontes*) here would mean, "one who has eminence in a ruling capacity, *ruler, lord, prince."* F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, *et al.* (eds.), *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature,* 3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 140.
[80] Linville, *Israel*, p. 143.
[81] *Ref.*, 1 Sam. 25: 30; 2 Sam. 5: 2; 1 Kings 1: 35.
[82] Linville, *Israel*, p. 143.
[83] A. Alt, "The Formation of the Israelite State in Palestine," in A. Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion,* (trans.), R. A. Wilson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), p. 233.

(ii) Secondly, an approach to Jeroboam's legitimacy from the perspective of the role he played can help subaltern readers recognize that the voice of the indigenous Northerners was represented and justified in Jeroboam. He is not a self-aggrandizing innovator but the defender of traditional culture and rights which are under attack. He can be read as the defender of the people's understanding of faith in YHWH in the face of hijacking of YHWH as the guarantor of dynastic power by the Davidic dynasty. This role *per se* exemplifies that the hope in YHWH had never failed.

The two consecutive headings below will elaborate detailed hermeneutical paradigms in studying the figure of Jeroboam.

3.6.2 Jeroboam Elevated as Yahweh's own Nagid (1 Kings 11)

Jeroboam's and Ahijah's encounter in 1 Kings 11 is the key event of transition leading to Jeroboam's kingly elevation. The account of Ahijah's prophecy to Jeroboam does two things in 1 Kings. It ends the Solomon story, and it opens the story of Jeroboam.

Contrary to the dominant theme of the apostasy of Jeroboam, in 1 Kings 11, the central message of Ahijah's prophecy is a conditional promise to Jeroboam. That, the reward *if* Jeroboam follows in the footsteps of David, YHWH will bless him a בַּיִת-נֶאֱמָן (sure house *cf.*, 1 Kings 11: 38; 2 Sam. 7: 16). In 2 Sam. 2: 35, the reference to בַּיִת-נֶאֱמָן is meant for a "true priest" that is supposed to replace Eli. Applying this reference to Jeroboam, he is unquestionably a potential new king (a new David).[84] Similarly, Mark Leuchter[85] and Knoppers, as discussed earlier, point out that the conditional promise element in the Solomonic-Davidic covenant is apparently the prototype for the promise to Jeroboam because both the covenants are guided by the same obligation (1 Kings 2: 3; 11: 33, 38). Furthermore, Knoppers argues that both Solomon and Jeroboam's covenants include cultic matters as a central responsibility yet they both had a heterodox cult introduced in their regnal dynasty.[86]

If the idea of נָגִיד is about a person chosen by Yahweh for a certain role on Yahweh's behalf, then the נָגִיד-ship of Jeroboam is not a conjecture. If Jeroboam's

[84] Linville, *Israel*, p. 163.
[85] Mark Leuchter, "Jeroboam the Ephratite," *JBL* 125/1 (2006): pp. 51-72 (56).
[86]Knoppers, *Two Nations Under God*, p. 200.

legitimacy is questioned because of his involvement in heterodox affairs, there is obviously a need to question Solomon in the first place on the same grounds. Knoppers's point of view in this regard becomes a message of empowerment for subaltern readers whose realities could relate to the character of Jeroboam as a legitimate leader who is defamed by those who have no better claim to power.

Cogan, Tadmor, and Linville assert that the role of a *nagid* is also closely associated with the response to a religio-political predicament of the people.[87] Eslinger also notices that monarchs in the history of Israel were called upon to become king/*nagid* when people needed a leader to alleviate crises (1 Samuel 8: 1-6, 19; 9: 16). In fact, Ahijah's words in 1 Kings 11: 31 makes it clear that Jeroboam who receives the blessing of the oracle for the kingship of the North has a relevant role to play amidst crises.[88]

In v. 31 the phrase קַח-לְךָ עֲשָׂרָה קְרָעִים (take for yourself ten pieces) is an acted-out-prophecy of Ahijah to Jeroboam. However, God would keep *one tribe* (v. 32) under the Southern regime, in faithfulness to his promise. This is true to the Deuteronomistic theological elements of promise indicated in chapter 2, that, the Southern legitimacy to rule can never be annihilated.

The background to this prophecy is Solomon's strategy to employ an efficient overseer for his ministerial projects around Jerusalem. Solomon observed Jeroboam who was still living at the Ephraimite hills to be very industrious (1 Kings 11: 28 גִּבּוֹר חָיִל). Montgomery translates גִּבּוֹר חָיִל as "a mighty man of valour."[89] Similarly, Keil-Delitzsch commentary translates גִּבּוֹר חָיִל as "very able and energetic man."[90] Therefore, Solomon gradually advanced him, until he was appointed the receiver-general for Ephraim and Manasseh. He was then given the task of fortifying Zederah, from where; he was brought to Jerusalem to work on the bulwarks of the City of David.[91] Montgomery says, "one may assume Jeroboam gained insight from this office about the

[87] Mordechai Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 163-164. Linville, *Israel*, p. 145.
[88] Jeroboam's role must also be seen from the perspective of his emphasis to rediscovering the glory of the Northern past rather than as an innovation to sin. For example, Shiloh, where Yahweh's ark resided in the pre-Davidic days was likely a symbol of Israel's former glory, which is now eclipsed by the Jerusalemite establishment, both royal and priestly. See further, Eslinger, *Kingship of God*, pp. 307-309. Mordechai Cogan, *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), p. 344.
[89] Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p. 243.
[90] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, p. 178.
[91] P. K. McCarter, "1 Kings," in James L. Mays, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *et al.* (eds.), *Harper's Bible Commentary* (New York: SBL, 1988), p. 314.

dissatisfaction of the people, which stirred his ambitions and made him a rebel."[92] In fact, Jeroboam whose upbringing as a "son of a widow, who had become not the subject of Solomon but an appointed officer"[93] himself had witnessed the groaning of a people subjected to his superior's imposition of forced labour, took a chance to rebel, exhorted by the prophecy of Ahijah in the field of Jerusalem. Keil-Delitzsch's commentary concludes that for Jeroboam to rebel, "it must have been while occupying this post that he attempted a rebellion against Solomon."[94]

The outcome of this revolt by Jeroboam is clearly to be read in 1 Kings 11: 40a: Solomon decides to kill Jeroboam (וַיְבַקֵּשׁ שְׁלֹמֹה, לְהָמִית אֶת-יָרָבְעָם). In a quick move, the ambitious Jeroboam whose desire was challenged by Solomon made his way to Shishak king of Egypt (1 Kings 11: 40b).[95] These eventualities are the background to the rebellion that was to come at the Shechem assembly. Notwithstanding this, Jeroboam, the *nagid,* is presented as a divinely appointed king of the North. Therefore, Jeroboam is neither a threat nor a challenge to the theocracy and Yahwistic covenant. For the subalterns such as the tribes in NEI, the princely character of Jeroboam and the role he played would be worth emulating. His role teaches the essence of constructive revolution through a collective voice against injustices and nepotisms.

3.6.3 Jeroboam Represents the Marginalized Voice of the Indigenous People

The second level of my observation is concerning the role Jeroboam played as a representative of the North.

Danell and Cogan reckon that the כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל (all Israel) in 1 Kings 12: 1 is not a comprehensive term but it only meant Northern tribes, unlike the case in 2 Sam. 5: 1 where *all the tribes* come to confirm David's kingship.[96] That being said, from the geopolitical situation, as Na'aman suggests, though the coronation happened at Shechem, it is likely that the assembly had both supporters and opponents from Israel and Judah, "including many descendants of the former Canaanite population."[97]

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[92]Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p. 243.
[93] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary,* p. 178.
[94] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary,* p. 179.
[95]A. Malamat, "The Kingdom of David and Solomon in its Contact with Egypt and Aram Naharaim," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 21/4 (1958): pp. 96-102 (96).
[96] Cogan, *I Kings,* p. 339.
[97] Nadav Na'aman, "The Israelite-Judahite Struggle for the Patrimony of Ancient Israel," *Biblica* 91/1 (2010): pp. 1-23 (15).

However, in all probability, the bulk of the injustices by the Judaean kings were inflicted on the North, one basic reason being that the majority at the receiving end of the rule were the Northerners. Therefore, in this perspective, we may also say that the כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, as the narrator puts it, could indicate the involvement of the marginalized from *all Israel* at least during the confirmation and coronation (*Ref.,* 1 Sam. 10: 24-25; 2 Sam. 5: 3; 19: 10-11, 42-44).

The reading paradigm I suggest for this element of the narrative is that Jeroboam's actions can best read as identification with the ethos and pathos of the people. In this way, he wins popular power rather than unilaterally seizing the throne. He builds his own position and identified himself with the mass in the way in which a *nagid* had to execute the role to alleviate people from crises. Consistent with the way I have looked at the biased hands of the Dtr, marginalized readers can construe that characterizing Jeroboam as the primary cause of the kingdom's fall is a product of the Dtr's subjective historiography. Rather, they can relate to the pivotal role played by Jeroboam in alleviating the situation of those who are otherwise unheard in the text with parallels to the experience of NEI readers faced with the ideological dominance of Hindutva. They are marginalized as innovative rebels who have adopted a foreign ideology whereas it is truer to say that it is the ideology of a relatively recent ruling class that is the innovation being imposed on the ancestral culture of the people.

Therefore, in the lens of the subaltern readers, Jeroboam justifiably represented the voice of the marginalized indigenous peoples. His rejection of Rehoboam's decree is an ideal episode of hope in the resistance for the subalterns who themselves are suppressed in many ways.

3.6.4 Re-reading Jeroboam as Reversal of the Hierarchy

The Southerner's hierarchical opposition to the so-named deviant Northern kingship/cult is worth further discussion. The fundamental ideology that rests with the affluent Dtr[98] is that the normative is prescribed and any deviant is proscribed. However, Yahweh's plan as seen in the Ahijah-Jeroboam encounter in proposing Jeroboam to be the Northern king provides a framework to re-read what to many readers is a shifting

[98] Chapter 2 discussed on the "Social Location of the Dtr" which should enhance the understanding of DH/text's ideology and theology. Dtr's social location itself seems to endorse the editorial work that seemingly support what was called norm of the society and proscribed anything that was deviant. Similar reading, Slivniak, "The Golden Calf Story," p. 21.

issue of what is normal and what is deviant. Also, from the perspective of the actual role played by Jeroboam in the socio-political and religious lives of the marginalized, it is worth "deconstructing and reconstructing the reversal of the hierarchy."[99] This mode of reading throws light on the aspect of justice and liberation within the deviant ethos, identity and space especially applicable to the readers from the marginalized Christian tribes of NEI whose voice in various forms offer resistance to the domination ideologies in contemporary India.

In reading any Bible story especially from the lens of the contemporary contexts, one must recognize *ideology*[100] as one of the prevalent elements in the identity of cultic and social groups. Likewise, I see that the *voice* in the text is one such ideological metaphor. Accordingly, the dichotomized ideological groups in 1 Kings 12 could be called "the voice of the normative South" represented by the Judaean kings and "the voice of the deviant North" represented by Jeroboam.[101] The spokespersons of the normativity in the historical texts are the narrator and the implied author. Those of the deviants or the separatists are protagonists like Jeroboam and the Northerners. As these ideologies contradict, the ideology of the dominant voice is legitimized leading to the negative image of the suppressed group taken to believe. Therefore, the biased hand of the Dtr is necessarily critiqued, in order that the optimum reading of the protagonists especially that of the concealed ones are realized.

Talmon critiques DH for the Dtr's negative presentation of Jeroboam's program. He argues that the allegedly innovative aspects of Jeroboam's role were in fact customary and were not creatively deviant. Talmon for instance says, that the bull shrine[102] is a common cultic feature in the pre-monarchic, Iron Age-I sites in the Ephraimite region. If Jeroboam was attempting reform in the North, then the practice of the worship at bull shrine is what Jeroboam must have encouraged for both cultic purity and unity of the tribes. A similar idea is also highlighted by Ziony Zevit who says that the practice of the bull icons was "popular even before the late Jerusalem historian i.e.

[99] Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans., Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 41.
[100] D. J. A. Clines, "Possibilitics and Prioritics of Biblical Interpretation in an International Perspective," *Bib. Int.* 1 (1993): pp. 67-87 (86).
[101] Slivniak, "The Golden Calf Story," p. 22.
[102] Bull shrine and golden calves are simultaneously used throughout the writing. Traditionally it is translated as golden calves. But scholars like Juha Pakkala prefer to use bulls. Talmon, "Divergences," pp. 52, 57.

the Dtr implies."[103] Zevit seems to support the nature of Jeroboam's involvement with the cult as legitimate and is opposed to the Dtr's notion of abuse of the royalty.[104]

Thus, the roles played by Jeroboam essentially fulfil his kingly duty towards his subjected people. The blame placed on Jeroboam and the negative interpretation of his motives in DH are a sheer injustice to the voice that represents the marginalized, also because to the Deuteronomic tradition *per se*, any separatist tendency from Jerusalem is forbidden. But what Jeroboam announced after he made the calves is the point of identification of his good-will. In fact, it is only a part of the Dtr's "historiosophic hypothesis"[105] and artistry, which is reinforced by Noth's exposition of the relevant theological themes, that Jeroboam is characterized as a deviant. Otherwise, it is more convincing to understand terms such as וַיַּעַשׂ in 12: 31-33 in the sense of, "to establish," "to emancipate," or "to enfranchise" instead of a "he made,"/"he ordained."

My re-reading from the marginalized lens poses questions such as what could Yahwism be without the voices of the people? Is not Yahwistic religiosity centred on the God-people relationship? When the yoke is doubled, the plight is heavier, will people not speak? Here, I shall point three constructive ways of looking at Jeroboam's image in v. 28 through which the re-reading of Jeroboam's role can empower subaltern readers as Christian tribes of NEI.

> וַיִּוָּעַץ הַמֶּלֶךְ--וַיַּעַשׂ, שְׁנֵי עֶגְלֵי זָהָב; וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם, רַב-לָכֶם מֵעֲלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם--הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם
>
> V. 28 So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. He said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

(i) וַיִּוָּעַץ הַמֶּלֶךְ--וַיַּעַשׂ (the king took counsel) suggests that Jeroboam did not do it for his own kingly benefit. He took advice and listened to the voices of the people.

[103]Ziony Zevit, "Deuteronomistic Historiography in 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17 and the Reinvestiture of the Israelian Cult," *JSOT* 32 (1985): pp. 57-73 (61).
[104]Zevit further relates the nature of an Assyrian king's role found in the Assyrian documents that it was part of the king's administration to see to the induction of certain observances, initiation of rites at shrines, compel priests to obey decrees, and controlled temple finances. Zevit, "Deuteronomistic Historiography," p. 62.
[105]Zevit's used the phrase "historiosophic hypothesis" to describe the historical, philosophical and ideological craftiness of the Dtr.

(ii) רַב-לָכֶם מֵעֲלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִַם (you have gone up to Jerusalem long enough) which echoes the actual desire of the people being heard and voiced by Jeroboam. A resistive connotation in this text is not to be understood as abhorrence to Davidic dynasty in the real sense. However, it seems to suggest the desire of the people was to have a place of worship nearby on the sites which have been recognized as sacred long before the conquest of Jerusalem.

(iii) הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt). הִנֵּה to have been translated as "behold," makes Jeroboam's expression affirmative. In fact, this expression seems to have been very liberating for the oppressed. Here, the identification of Northerner's ideology is made clearer. The gods addressed in the text replicate the ancient symbols of Yahweh (God of their fathers). Indeed, if it was not for the plural verb in this sentence, this would be a perfectly recognizable reference to Yahweh as the one who brought the people out of Egypt. We have only the Dtr's implication that the referent is the calves which, as we have seen, may be Yahweh's supporters rather than rival deities. Jeroboam linked his words to the Exodus which endorses the idea of a common history which is an ideological underpinning to the notion of Israel as a nation.

The re-reading of the message in v. 28 identifies to the representation of the aspirations of the people to be represented through Jeroboam. The cry of the people is not literally about their desire for other gods/God but a search for hope, dignity, the place of worship in their vicinity, and to access liberty in the duties and responsibilities as citizens of the nation. Therefore, to cause Jeroboam to represent them amounts to seeking justice from God's own *Nagid/king* of the South. However, having suffered a double burden, the voice of the marginalized emerges in what this research presents the *Shechem Slogan* (12: 16), a slogan aimed to freeing themselves from the unjust rule of the suppressive ideologies of the hegemonic South.

3.6.5 The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Jeroboam's Identity

Further questions can be asked as follows: What attributes has the Dtr given to Rehoboam for the role he played? Why would not the oppressors be characterized? Why would the covenanted Davidide kings be so adamant about the *hue and cry*? Was it not obvious (if not legitimate) that people would express resistance? In the context of 1

Kings 12, how can a narrator/interpreter blame the dissenters as anti-Yahwist? Did Jeroboam and the people not offer a chance to Rehoboam so that they remain undivided? A deconstructive rejoinder would be: was not the dynastic king responsible to the voices of the people?

This section intends to give inputs for marginalized readers in reading Jeroboam from their *place*. In developing a new paradigm of reading the text, marginalized readers are in a position to view Jeroboam as one of the most effective kings whose role has been suppressed in Israel's historiography through processes that parallel the way that their (marginalized NEI) histories and stories are misunderstood and unheard.

As discussed, Jeroboam in the popular imagination is a negative standard by which all other Northern potentates are measured. Such characterization comes synonymous with the message of doom for the Northerners suggested by Noth. However, a counter-reading of the narrative and its interpretive construct show subtle literary bias and a highly complex and unjust rendition of the themes.

Deconstruction and reconstruction as an approach to literary study can take sides with anti-characterization of the protagonists/contexts as well as re-reading of the trends in the interpretation. The basis of this approach is that the text's ideological antagonists and the possibilities of interpretation from their point of view are often neglected in reading approaches. Keeping this in mind, I approach reading Jeroboam's narrative with an attempt to consolidate the role-based paradigm rather than subscribing to a simplistic literary characterization. From the socio-religious perspective, I am convinced that it is in fact Rehoboam who demonstrates a character that is entirely in contrast to the principles of justice and righteousness. Consequently, it is Rehoboam who deserves a bad name rather than Jeroboam.

The Dtr, Noth, Cross and others have emphasized Jeroboam's *sin* as the recurrent subject that identified the cause of "doom for both the dynastic and non-dynastic kings of the North."[106] However, I would rather read that Jeroboam's role is in abjuring the unjust hierarchical systems centred on Jerusalem. Jansen also argues that Jeroboam's *sin* cannot be a *Leitmotif* in the whole of the DH. Jansen finds it an oddity that many

[106] Ref., 1 Kings 16: 26; 2 Kings 10: 29. David Jansen, "An Ambiguous Ending: Dynastic Punishment in Kings and the Fate of the Davidides in 2 Kings 25: 27-30," *JSOT* 33/1 (2008): pp. 39-58 (44).

kings and their sins are ascribed and traced back to Jeroboam's sin (1 Kings 16: 19).[107] Therefore, the expression עַל-חַטֹּאתָיו (for/because of his sin √חטא), which refers back to Jeroboam, is an identity construct, a characterization.

As such, 1 Kings 12 also shows the Dtr had a keen interest on the theme of retribution, despite the hope he builds on the prospective elevation of Jeroboam. The theology of sin and its retribution is recurrently attributed to Jeroboam based on what had emerged out of the confrontation between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (vv. 8, 16). Out of this, came the overarching theology in the DH, that dissidents will have no way to escape but must face the judgement of God. This theme portrays Yahweh as a God without mercy, a judge who simply annihilates.[108] It is on this ideo-theological pattern that the Dtr speaks about doom and catastrophe. However, as Steven L. McKenzie asserts, an alternative way of looking at such DH ideo-theology is to consider it as a Deuteronomic formula rather than as the words of Yahweh.[109] We see that the Dtr presents the sin of Jeroboam as a constant theme. Therefore, it is important to explain why through the study of redactional approaches.

Ironically, the Dtr's presentation of the theme of retribution when it comes to the Davidides is optimistic and is based on the covenant with David. Jansen argues that, "YHWH deputes the right to punish the Davidides but says that the divine חֶסֶד which is Yahweh's fidelity to the house, is not to be removed."[110] Given the knowledge of how the Dtr treats the non-dynastic kings and of what the Dtr says or does not say about the Davidides, it is clear that Dtr imagines Jehoiachin as the last Davidic king. Furthermore, the Dtr "prioritizes 2 Sam. 7 which suggests the covenant is never explicitly abrogated." [111] Also, given that the covenant once made with the patriarchs was for *all Israel,* I see no legitimacy in reading 1 Kings 12 from the paradigm of retribution for what had happened at Shechem and the text cannot stand to say that the covenant is secured only for the South.

[107] Jansen, "An Ambiguous Ending," p. 45.
[108]The punishments to be meted out to the sinning kings are prophesied for many other kings too. For instance, 1 Kings 14: 10-11 Jeroboam; 16: 3-4 Baasha; 21: 21-22 Ahab.
[109] Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 61-80.
[110] Jansen, "An Ambiguous Ending," p. 51.
[111] Jansen, "An Ambiguous Ending," p. 53.

The various readings we have just examined show that there are paradoxical features in the book of Kings that undermined the professed ideology of the biased redactor, certainly in the way this is usually interpreted in the wake of Noth's work. We can find evidence for a theology of hope beyond catastrophe, chastisement beyond retribution, which is for *all Israel*, North and South. Therefore, interpreters from marginalized contexts can investigate agendas and voices that were concealed in the literature and critique the ideology that is concealed in the claim to omniscience on the part of the biblical narrator.[112]

3.7 The Shechem Slogan is a Voice of Resistance from the Margins

The ensemble at Shechem sets the platform for what we might see as a socio-political drama. Our study so far has shown that the Jeroboam narrative certainly has elements of exaggeration and distortion in its construction of characterization in the narrative world.[113] So, I have considered "the recognition of qualitative elements of a character: its personae and the life information that are concealed in the text,"[114] as suggested by Chatman, although it might be difficult to fathom its depth for a modern reader. The nearest possibility is to read in a way that cuts across the implications that are set up by the narrative's chiastic flow. In light of the larger history of the partition of Israel, qualitative elements implying the emotions of the insurgents at the Shechem slogan can be analysed besides what I have looked at this dramatic chiastic. The Rehoboam-Jeroboam event as I look at it from the perspective of the oppressed in the text is an event where collective suppressed emotions conspire finally to give voice to long-standing protests against the dynastic prejudice with its centre of power in Jerusalem. The breakthrough occurred when the illogical Rehoboam rejected the conditions that the people demanded if they were to remain loyal.

The phrase כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל (all Israel), signifies the involvement of the common people in the religio-politics of the time, which also involved the citizens' responsibility over how they are being ruled. In fact, in this situation, the typical situation of כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל is being burdened by a yoke of cruelty and harsh labours. The coronation at Shechem

[112] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, p. 84.
[113] Mullen, *Narrative History*, pp. 10-16, 38-39.
[114] Chatman, "On the Formalist-Structuralist," p. 76.

became an ideal setting for the Northern majority to raise their voice in the cause of liberation through an ultimatum.[115]

Vv. 8, 14, and 16 in the micro-chiastic structure suggests the climax in the confrontation. A two-couplet lines of dissidents in v. 16 is a slogan:

וַיַּרְא כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לֹא-שָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲלֵהֶם, וַיָּשִׁבוּ הָעָם אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר לֵאמֹר מַה-לָּנוּ חֵלֶק בְּדָוִד
וְלֹא-נַחֲלָה בְּבֶן-יִשַׁי לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַתָּה רְאֵה בֵיתְךָ דָּוִד; וַיֵּלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְאֹהָלָיו

V. 16 when all Israel saw that the king would not listen to them, the people answered the king,

"What share do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Look now to your own house, O David."
So Israel went away to their tents.

The peoples' expectation that Rehoboam would lighten any form of yoke arises from their conviction that this is their intrinsic right. Their strategy of proposing an ultimatum gains its impetus from their sense of their right to speak out against their plight and for a hopeful future. The implication in v. 16 as a slogan is that when כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל voices its outrage at Rehoboam's rejection of the ultimatum, it is not *Judah* whom Jeroboam and the people reject in the qualitative sense of the term. What they reject is *David* the son of *Jesse* from whose linage Rehoboam was to be chosen, and whose dynastic heritage Rehoboam uses to legitimize himself to reject the ultimatum.

Thus, the unjust hierarchical dynasty is the real target of the slogan. V. 16e is most appropriate when read with v. 17 because v. 17 finally divides the two Monarchs ruling the two regions under a kingdom.

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה--וַיִּמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם רְחַבְעָם

V. 17 but Rehoboam reigned over the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah.

The MT reveals that "children of Israel" that dwelled in Judah was ruled by Rehoboam. Considering what Danell argues, it is likely that there was no strict demographic division between people, although the tribes by name were technically divided. In all probability, the revolt included people of any tribe who aspired for a

[115]Provan, *Kings,* pp. 103-105. De Vries, *1 Kings,* pp. 157-158. Proven argues to the extent that the demand for the rights is never a regional but the whole of Israel. It was only later that Judah themselves made an independent choice to retain the Davidic centred at Judah. Provan must have reckoned this sense from 12: 17.

hopeful future. How disgusted were "those Israelites" (v. 17) who formed *the marginalized* in Judah over Rehoboam is not further cited in the narration.

Similarly, Rehoboam's consultation with the הַזְּקֵנִים (the elders) and seeking the advice of the הַיְלָדִים (young men) does not mean that everyone in the South agreed with their policies. J. McKenzie[116] suggests that such an act is a way in tribal practice of consulting representative counsellors. What is suspicious is the subsequent reaction of Rehoboam. His negligence of the advice of his older counsellors confirms that the counsellors were not unanimously in favour of this policy. It may be that there were elders more attuned to the concerns of the masses, which is why Rehoboam turned to the more favourable party (הַיְלָדִים), who would reinforce his tendency to intensify hierarchical and imperial autocracy. Nili Fox argues that the emendation of הַיְלָדִים in this dramatic event refers to the naivety and recklessness of the youth.[117] So, it may well be that הַיְלָדִים had no specific tribal identity. All we know is that they reside in Judah, the south. They might have been the contemporaries highly favoured by the king for the advancement of his tasks, some of which could be from the Northern tribal diaspora.

In this intensely hierarchical and suppressive narrative, I argue that the voice in the slogan can give hope to the marginalized readers. The slogan is a voice of resistance to the yoke of all kinds experienced by the marginalized in *all Israel.* The reading of this narrative from the location of the suppressive voice of the narrator highlights the message of doom for the marginalized. However, reading from the location of subaltern groups such as the Christian tribes of NEI themselves can unveil the motivating message of hope and liberation within 1 Kings 12.

Conclusion

The readers of this chapter may ask, what would the chiastic study of Jeroboam narrative mean to the marginalized Christian readers of NEI? One straightforward response from the paradigm of my study is that revealing the chiastic structure in reading this text helps to locate an oppositional reading of the narrative hinged upon the liberative role played by Jeroboam. Looking by this paradigm, suppressed readers can

[116] John L. McKenzie, "The Elders in the Old Testament," *Biblica* 40/2 (1959): pp. 522-540 (523-524).
[117]Nili Fox brief argument about הַיְלָדִים conclude that it is of a high probability that הַיְלָדִים were sons of the officials and courtiers, both of the royal and non-royal descent. Fox, "Royal Officials and Count Families: A New Look at the יְלָדִים in 1 Kings 12," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 59/4 (1996): pp. 225-232 (229).

find the meaning in this text hopeful and liberating rather than receiving a message of defamation and devaluation of the subaltern's role. The overarching edification of the powerful does not provide an edifying message for the marginalized readers of NEI. Therefore, in the analysis of the text through chiasm as a tool for critical evaluation, the imbalance in characterization of the protagonists is opposed so that the text is re-read.

That said, this chapter concludes by agreeing that the Israelite monarchy is not the ultimate agent of suppression in the liberation struggle of the marginalized Israelites. Likewise, Jeroboam is also not the ultimate answer for hope and liberation. Nevertheless, Jeroboam becomes a means to an end. He is a figure that represent optimism for the marginalized both to the marginalized Israelites and the marginalized readers such as NEI. Also, the failure of the united monarchy is not to be interpreted as fatal for the re-emergence or re-creation of the Northern kingdom. Hope may be retained for a character like Jeroboam that upheld the obligations of the נָגִיד who embodies Yahweh's purpose as well as for the people who were loyal to him.

The next chapter will proceed to look at 2 Kings 22-23 where a similar socio-political scenario of hegemony and suppressed situations can be viewed. The *sitz-im-leben* of these two narratives may differ but there are many similarities in the way in which the mainstream interpretation of the hegemonic themes in them overshadows the voice of the people.

Chapter 4

Re-reading Josiah's Reform (2 Kings 22-23)

Introduction

In Chapter 2 we saw how Cross, in his redactional thematic study, juxtaposed two critical theologies in the narratives in Kings:

(i) Jeroboam as a symbol of *infidelity* (North) attributed mostly to the Dtr_2
(ii) The *promise* to David as God's *fidelity* (South) attributed to the Dtr_1

Noth asserts that this juxtaposition of these two theologies form the basis of the Josianic reform (Dtr_1). From the perspective of the theological contrast that Cross draws, I have re-read the character of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12, with a positive light on his role. In the case of Josiah and particularly 2 Kings 22-23, the situation seems rather different as he is held up as a positive role model by the text itself. While we can demonstrate that these narratives admit such a contrast, I will argue that these two narratives share common features, although they represent a diverse milieu: the voices of marginalized people, as well as the role of their resistance to suppression are represented similarly. I will show that Josiah serves to represent the voices of marginalized people just as Jeroboam did; this will serve as a counter-reading of the imperial motives in the texts and its hegemonic interpretation.

In line with Noth's hypothesis of judgement and doom, the peoples' violation of the central sanctuary comes to the fore in the era of Kings (1 Kings 12). However, the primary element of Davidic promise (2 Sam 7) I argue is the point of reference for counter-reading the message of doom and catastrophe. I will posit that Josiah's undying spirit of reform and resistance yield an interpretation of hope against doom. Emphasizing the epic death scenario of Josiah, I will offer arguments that support the proposition that there is paradigm of resistance in the kingly death of Josiah which has implications for the marginalized readers. The inconsistencies in between Huldah's prophecy and the account of the death of Josiah can then be seen in a new light especially if we consider what the Chronicler (2 Chron. 34-35) had to say.

Particularly important in this re-reading is the role of the discovered Book of the Law. Through its interpretation, Josiah is provoked to a reform which takes greater

significance when it is read as voicing the resistance to foreign suppression. This will enable me to formulate Josiah's theological and ideological outlook, which I argue is an unapologetic resistance to Necho-II. Considering the international politics of Josiah's regnal period, I will locate *all Israel* as the marginalized people in the context of the competing empires of the time, who therefore become the model for marginalized readers.

4.1 *The Book* - Archimedean Point of Reference for Josiah's Reform?

4.1.1 Traditional View (W. M. L. de Wette: 1805)

The discovered Book of the Law played a legitimizing function that explained the divine confirmation for the reform. The covenant in the sanctuary and the Passover feast (2 Kings 23:1-3) were also integral parts of the reform and its legitimizing text.[1]

Once the Book had been found in the Temple, received and read,[2] Josiah carried out a series of reforms based on the Book although there are ambiguities concerning his reform motive, and its geographical scope. Central to the traditional view is the premise that the discovered Book was a portion of Deuteronomy. Bernard M. Levinson throughout his article refer to the idea that the discovered Book was "the Law of the King,"[3] which most scholars refers to as the portion of Deuteronomy. This position was originally introduced to critical scholarship by de Wette (1805) based on a connection he observed between Josiah's reform and Deuteronomy which to Levinson is the legal book of the king. Therefore, de Wette argued, "the book had been composed not long before its discovery."[4] The proposal of de Wette was generally accepted among various scholars, as such, the Book of the Law is reckoned to have prompted Josiah to reform.[5]

On the use of the term "the Law of the King" by Levinson, Knoppers agrees that "there are scholars who engages with Deut 17: 14-20 as a hermeneutical code by which

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[1] Nadav Na'aman, "The Israelite Judahite Struggle for the Patrimony of Ancient Israel." *Biblica* 91 (2010): pp. 1-23 (20–21).
[2] J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), pp. 397-401. Noth, *The History of Israel* (trans.), P. R. Ackroyd, 2nd edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 274-277.
[3] Bernard M. Levinson, The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah, "*VT* 51/4 (2001): pp. 511-534 (524).
[4]Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wetti, *Beitrage zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament,* 2 Vols. (Halle: Schimmelpfennig, 1807), pp. 168-179 (repr. New York: G. Olms, 1971). De Wette's original copy of his dissertation published in 1805 in Jena was not available to the researcher. However, scholars through the ages have referred de Wette in various references both in English and in German.
[5] Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 47.

the Dtr's strategizes toward monarch's character is also determined in its histories."[6] However, Knoppers is critical with the unparalleled literary judgements made by the Dtr concerning King Solomon's character and other monarchs in Kings. According to him, although "the Law" is agreed upon, the application of the Law to most kings besides Solomon does not do justice to the law. So, we see that Knoppers in most writings portrays Josiah in the positive role regarding the reform as per the discovered book.

Coming back to De Wette, his thesis proceeded on the assumption that Moses did not write the whole of Pentateuch. Instead, he raised the speculation that "Deuteronomy reflects the reform of Josiah, a theory which was considered a great discovery and was used as a key to understand the process of the composition of the Pentateuch."[7] De Wette proposed that the central leitmotif of the Book was the cultic centralization in line with the Deuteronomic laws. To add to de Wette, Roger W. Utitti declared that Hilkiah was of the Josianic regnal era and he was the discoverer of the Law Book. The book then helped play a key role in Josiah's far-reaching reform movement and gave further impetus to the celebration of the Passover festival.[8]

4.1.2 Nothian Dtr's Contention about the Book

The events in Judah under king Josiah according to Noth's perspective of the Dtr was a period close to the fall of the kingdom and are crucial episodes in the Dtr's effort to present his take on the history of the monarchy. The Dtr accorded a special significance to the historical circumstances during Josiah and Jehoiachin's reign. These events determined his theological view of the history of Israel.

According to Noth, Dtr have assigned the "Deuteronomic law as a benchmark to judge human conduct"[9] and a norm by which people must abide in order to keep the covenant. This aspect of the Law played crucial role for Josiah and hence received attention from the Dtr, says Noth. One religious aspect that the Dtr gave specific importance is the demand of the Deuteronomic law concerning the הַמָּקוֹם (Deut. 12:

[6]Knoppers, "Rethinking the Relationship," p. 409.
[7] Moshe Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy: The Present State of Inquiry," *SBL* 86/3 (1967): pp. 249-262 (249).
[8]Utitti, "Hilkiah," *ABD*, H-J, p. 201. *Ref.*, 2 Kings 22: 8, 10, 12, 14; 23: 4, 24; 2 Chron. 34: 14, 15, 18, 20, 22; 2 Chron. 35: 8; 1 Esdras 1: 8.
[9]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic* (trans.,1981), pp. 80, 124. Cited in Gary N. Knoppers, "The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship," *ZAW* 108 (1996): pp. 329-346 (344).

13ff).[10] The Dtr also emphasises the legal aspects which have determined the course of history from the perspective of final judgement after the continual breach of the law by Israel.[11] The Dtr gave an unfavourable judgement on the history of Israel following any disobedience of the past or present. Noth is of the opinion that the Dtr's theology of retribution is for the nation but not with the individual king. This theology seems to have come from the older covenant tradition concerning David and Solomon on behalf of the nation Israel.

Noth unfortunately omitted to give a detailed account as to how Josiah might have established his foundation in the Law book. Noth's contention is like the traditional interpretation of the function of the book and Josiah's fulfilment of it in his reign. The book undeniably is represented as having prompted Josiah's reform. However, it must be remembered that Josiah who regards the essence of the Deuteronomic law binding through a covenant (2 Kings 23: 1-3) approached the discovered book in such a way that the interpretation of the book suits the context of his time. The Dtr's interpretation of the religious proscriptions of the book was considered Josiah's mandate, but there is a need to look at the portrayal of multiple facets of Josiah's reform policies which make Josiah a hero in his own right.

In the section below I will offer a brief analysis of some scholars who have expressed scepticism about the perspective of Noth on the Josianic narrative as a whole and the Book of the Law in particular. While there are many scholars, who believe that 2 Kings 22-23 can provide insights into the past as it happened, there are others who are sceptical up to the extent of arguing that the narrative is fiction.

4.1.3 A Departure from Traditional Interpretation

While the story of the discovered book in Kings is commonly understood as a historical account, scholars like A. D. H. Mayes, Philip R. Davies, E. W. Conrad and others challenge central assumptions that have shaped the readings of 2 Kings 22-23. I will give a brief account on what they had to say.

Mayes accepts the theory that the narrative is for the most part a literary invention of the Dtr. Mayes has no doubt about the authenticity of the history of

[10]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic* (trans.,1981), p. 80.
[11]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, (trans.,1981), pp. 80-81.

Josiah's reform. He believes that measures of Josiah's reform must have been recorded in the royal annals, and that these annals were the source for the Deuteronomistic Historian.[12] But Mayes says that to consider the discovered book as a real book identified with the early form of Deuteronomy is to question the forced possibility of an "immediate transfer from the literary to the historical level."[13]

Prominent in the scepticism about the reliability of the book and the narrative is Davies. In both of his writings, *In Search of Ancient Israel* and *Scribes and Schools*, he observes that traditionally readers of the DH have attached huge importance to the narrative. He says that since the narrative essentially forms the "linchpin"[14] in biblical studies upon which other theories depend, the historicity of the Book of the Law is worth examining. But, upon closer scrutiny, he contends that the historicity of the narrative cannot be sustained. He emphasizes that there is no extra-biblical evidence to confirm anything in this story took place. He argues that aspect of Josianic reform and the legal aspects are suspiciously "transparent,"[15] leading him to believe that the latter is designed to bolster rhetorically the credibility of the former. He thus concludes this narrative is a fictional "legend" designed to give "antique authority" to the book of Deuteronomy.[16]

E. W. Conrad[17] also expresses the view that the citation of a "book" as a foundation of the Hebrew Bible is rhetorically significant rather than historical. He challenges the traditional tendency to read this story referentially. In this context of diversion from the traditional mode of reading the story, Katherine Stott and Römer represent relatively new approaches. I will discuss them below in separate paragraphs.

4.1.4 Katherine Stott (2008): "Discovery" in Relation to Antiquity

Katherine Stott in her book *Why Did They Write This Way* (2008), observes the importance of the discovered book as a motif in classical literatures, citing parallel references in classical antiquity such as literature from Hellenistic and Roman periods.

[12] Mayes, "King and Covenant," p. 45.
[13] Mayes, "King and Covenant," p. 39.
[14] Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel': A Study in Biblical Origins* (London: T & T Clark, 1992), p. 39.
[15] Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel,'* p. 98
[16] Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel,'* pp. 38-40; Davies, *Scribes and Schools*, pp. 93-99.
[17] E. W. Conrad, "Heard but not Seen: The Representation of 'Books' in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 54 (1992): pp. 45-59 (45).

She looks at the writers' historiographic techniques and concentrates on the view of the Dtr as to the perspective from which he had narrated the story so that it appears the way it does. As such, Stott's interest is not in the historical reality of the discovered book *per se*, but in the way the book is presented in the narrative form. Stott's general idea is that Hilkiah's book implicitly or explicitly appears to endorse the actant of Josiah and his kingship which to her is in accordance with the Mosaic Law.

Stott further argues that, in ancient historiography, discovered documents act as rhetorical devices that serve to authenticate the work within which they appear. The discovered documents in both classical texts and Hebrew Bible are polemic in the sense that they support the ideological agenda of the movements with which they are associated. She takes Hilkiah's Book that supports the reform movement of King Josiah as one such instance. So Scott observes that the mention of the Book itself "underpins the reliability of the story within the context of the text."[18] As for her interest in looking at parallels with classical antiquity, Stott maintains that such an approach helps to contextualize the features of biblical narrative in relation to motifs and broader trends in other ancient literatures. She provides an alternative perspective to some of the assumptions and interpretations that have been circulated in modern scholarship regarding biblical source citations and other references to documents.[19]

4.1.5 Thomas Römer (2013): The Discovered Book in Relation to a Legendary Document

Römer posits that Hilkiah's Book reflects a legendary motif (*Buchauffindungslegende*) very popular since antiquity. He says that the literary function of the book-finding motif can equally be set in the context of royal inscriptions on sanctuary buildings, notably those of the Neo-Babylonian period. The Inscription of Nabonidus,[20] the great builder on behalf of gods Shamash and Sin, describes the rediscovery of the foundation stone that allowed the building to be reconstructed

[18] Stott, "Finding the Lost Book of the Law," pp. 154, 166. Also see, Stott, *Why Did They Write This Way: Reflections on References to Written Documents in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Literature* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), pp. 86-87.
[19] Stott, *Why Did They Write This Way*, pp, 1, 54, 121-122.
[20] Cylinders of Nabonidus. The Cylinders of Nabonidus refers to cuneiform inscriptions of king Nabonidus of Babylonia (556-539 BC). These inscriptions were made on clay cylinders. They include the Nabonidus Cylinder from Sippar, and the Nabonidus Cylinders from Ur, four in number. See, C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958): pp. 35-92.

according to the will of the gods. In the text of Nabonidus,[21] the discovery of the ancient foundation stone enabled a "reform," that is, the construction of a new sanctuary for Shamash. This motif, some suggest, is taken up and transformed in 2 Kings 22, where, instead of the foundation stone, a סֵפֶר (book) is found. The book becomes a substitute for the Temple. 2 Kings 23 records, in effect, that Josiah emptied the Temple and all the statues and other cultic objects in order to replace them with the reading of the book. The Temple thus becomes a "proto-synagogue," the book replacing the sanctuary.[22]

Römer's thesis reflects the theses of Conrad and Stott. They situate the book within its classical context. However, I submit that there is a theological aspect to the discovery of this book that is missing in their interpretations because their focus was on parallels. Stott's suggestion of *a discovered book as rhetorical device* and *a tool that supports ideological agendas* of a narrative needs detailed study. Simply because the classical narrative had the characteristic feature of bolstering rhetoric does not justify a theological agenda in 2 Kings 22-23, although the effect of the ideological investment of the narrator over the historicity of the text is apparent.

I do not intend to dismiss their hypotheses here. The comparison of the HB with the ANE literatures are a common feature in literary critical study. The elements that I am interested to read within this historical episode is the discovered book which the Dtr as a redactor of the text has used to bolster his ideological and theological agendas. As a critical note, I would argue that the way their hypotheses are put forward have failed to see the importance of the antecedent of Torah in the history and theology of the Israelite religion.

Consequently, the Dtr's mode of subjective explanation of the theological impact of Hilkiah's book in the HB needs attention. Also, the relevance of the parallelism they have referred to or compared with do not seem to produce any detailed evidence regarding theology of the author or redactor, except Stott, who opines Hilkiah's book as an endorsement from Josiah's reform. They have generally

[21] The text of Nabonidus appears in a cylinder: The Nabonidus Cylinder of Sippar on display in the British museum London mentions the following statistics: Material: Fired Clay; size 22.86 cm high and 9.2 cm diameter; created 555-540 BCE; Present location: British Museum, London; Regd. No. 1882,0714.1025. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=361998&partId=1, accessed on 1st May 2018.

[22] Thomas Römer, "From Prophet to Scribe: Jeremiah, Huldah and the Invention of the Book," in Philip R. Davies and Thomas Römer (eds.), *Writing the Bible: Scribes, Scribalism and Script* (Durham: Acumen, 2013), pp. 90-91.

established their arguments on the parallelism of objects that were found in the traditions but not on the theological stance of the book mentioned in the Josianic narrative of the HB. Although classical traditions conclude that the book-finding motif in the classical literatures are mythological, this does not preclude reading 2 Kings 22-23 in the literary and the theological distinctive point of view.

In this connection, Na'aman's thesis is interesting. He disclaims the mythical hypotheses in favour of reading 2 Kings 22-23 in its own theological right.

4.2 Nadav Na'aman: Real Artefact (2011)

The study by Knoppers (2001), concerning the substantial role of the monarch specifically in Kings denotes that reform such as cultic centralization is the mandate of the Deuteronomic law. In connection to this, central to Josiah's involvement with Hilkiah's book was a call to cultic purity, and it had become a driving force for Josiah to be delving into the "Law of the King" (Levinson: 2001). Apparently, for both the book finding event seems genuine and not a complicated story in any way. Likewise, Na'aman disclaims mythological parallels and offers a description of "Book of the Law," which to him is a pre-Deuteronomic document, also termed original Deuteronomy (Urdeuteronomium). [23] Na'aman disagrees with Stott and Conrad's arguments that the book appears "to bolster the rhetoric stratagem in the HB for the literary credibility."[24] To him, their idea only minimises the authenticity of the Torah. Let me quote Na'aman's idea that sharply contrasts with Stott's argument on the book as a *virtual artefact*:

> The narrator's emphasis is *on the reality of the scroll* that moved the sequence of events and its decisive role in the legitimation of the cult reform of Josiah.[25]

So, dismissing the claim of Stott, Na'aman argues that the book is a real artefact offering the Judaean intellectuals as well as the kings a programme to which they follow suit. In fact, if one has to refer to the classical antiquity, Na'aman says, scrolls/books and tablets, whether or not they were manipulated for subjective narrative forms and functions, are real artefacts displayed to the audience of the historical context.[26] His conclusion is that Josiah's reform that is based on the book was an event which is both

[23]Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 48.
[24]Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 48.
[25]Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 48.
[26]Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 48.

historically and theologically authentic and that the historical account of 2 Kings 22-23 is a reliable summary. In this light, the search for a parallel motif, location, object and implication among the different religio-political scenarios cannot make sense. Instead, Hilkiah's book in Josiah's reign, should be studied in its own theological and historical rights.

Earlier in 1978, Lohfink identified three narrative blocks in 2 Kings 22-23, where he attributed the work to Shaphan's family who are supposedly the eyewitnesses of the events. Lohfink's opinion on authorship of Shaphan's family that recorded the stories in Babylon exile post 597 BCE[27] is scanty, because the detailed description of the cultic reform of 2 Kings 22-23 cannot be the exilic product. However, the idea of a short historical account is attractive says Na'aman.[28] In fact, Na'aman identifies five short stories which are 2 Kings 22:3-11, 12-20; 23:1-3,4-15, 21-23, and says that, without the Deuteronomistic additions, these blocks of written stories are authentic historical events recorded during Josiah's reign for the purpose of legitimizing and in support the cultic reformation Josiah had conducted.[29]

Na'aman also suggests a parallel story concerning the authenticity of the book of the Law. Na'aman reads the Hittite story called the "second plague prayer of Mursili-II (ca. 1321-1285 BCE) to the Storm-god of Hatti"[30] in relation to the discovered book in Kings. According to Singer, this is the longest and the best-known plague prayer of Mursili, in which the discovery of two ancient tablets is reported, one is about the neglect of sacrifices due to the deified Mala River (Euphrates is known as the Mala in Hittite), the other with his father Suppiluliuma's breach of his treaty with the Egyptians and the dire consequences thereof.[31] Na'aman understands that Mursili established the

[27]Norbert Lohfink, "Die Gattung der 'historischen Kurzgeschichten' in den letzten Jahres von Juda und in der Zeit des Babylonischen Exil," *ZAW* 90 (1978): pp. 319-347.
[28]Nadav Na'aman, "New Light on Hezekiah's Second Prophetic Story (2 Kgs 19, 9b-35)," *Biblica* 81(2000): pp. 393-402 (399–402).
[29]Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 55. Na'aman, "The Israelite Judahite," pp. 1-23 (20–21).
[30]Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers: Writings from the Ancient World* (Atlanta: SBL, 2002), pp. 57–61.
[31] Let me narrate the story of the first tablet Mursili is said to have encountered. It is, however, not very clear in the way Singers writes as to how Mursili said an oracle prayer and how exactly he found the tablet. What is understood is that the discovered tablets and the discovered book functioned in both the stories as an oracle, because the king acted upon what was found. Mursili prays to God to remove the plague that has always been destructive for the past twenty years to his father and his family, and most importantly his people are dying. So, Mursili pleads to the Storm-god of Hatti by questioning if the plague can be eradicated from Hatti. To Mursili's agony, god did not heed his prayer. The endemic deteriorated Hatti even more. Hatti then has been severely oppressed by the plague. As Mursili continued to be troubled by the plague, he inquired about the fate to the god. In frustration, Mursili looked around in his archives and he found two old tablets. One was concerning Mala River and its related ritual, and the

genuineness of the tablets as prophecy in itself. It was upon *reading* the tablets that Mursili realized the instructions that were neglected by the people of Hatti. Then, there was a realization for the cause of the plague (*cf.*, 2 Sam. 21:1–2; 24:10–15). The storm-god of Hatti was then approached by Mursili for forgiveness over the negligence of the rites that must have been attributed to the Euphrates, and the requisites of the Kurustama treaty. Na'aman brings out this relevance to show the theological content that this parallelism display. He writes:

> It goes without saying that Mursili searched and found authentic old tablets, unlike the "discovery" of the scroll by the high priest in Jerusalem. Yet there is a close similarity between the discovery and confirmation of its authenticity by oracle in Hatti and . . . the Book and its prophecy in Jerusalem. Moreover, just as Mursili confessed the sins of his father (Suppiluliuma-I), repented, and asked forgiveness, so Josiah also repented . . . promised to fulfil the instructions of the book, and asked forgiveness for his predecessors' violations of its laws (2 Kings 22: 11-13). The similarity between the two episodes is self-evident.[32]

This makes us wonder if Na'aman, like Stott would argue for parallel plot and functions of the biblical narrative with the story of the ANE. One might even question Singer's approach in that the discovered scroll played the role as an oracle in the story. Basically, the discussions of Stott, Römer and others argued that the scenarios of the discovered book in various contexts must be comparatively investigated. No doubt, such investigations have helped look at the story of the HB in the broader light in our attempt to seek the authenticity of the accounts. However, such approaches lacked deeper understanding of the theological content, because one element that separates the book finding account in the DH is that it has an enormous connection to the Deuteronomic theology. Perhaps, if such parallelisms are to be noted at all, for Na'aman, it is the theological connectivity that he highlights in the Hittite prayers.

4.3 *The Book* legitimated Josiah's Reform

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other was about Kurustama treaty. This is how Singer writes about what Mursili finds in response to the prayers, I quote: "[I found] two old tablets: one dealt with [the ritual of the Mala river]. It is said that earlier, kings performed the ritual of the Mala River, but because people have been dying] in Hatti since the day of Mursili's father, they never performed the ritual of the Mala River." Singer, *Hittite Prayers,* pp. 57-58.

[32]Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book," p. 56.

Reform measures that have occurred before Josiah (Manasseh: 2 Kings 18) have no record that they received endorsement from external sources. But the book which holds a central place in Josianic account seems to have endorsed the reform of Josiah to a great extent. Josiah's reform is seen as an unprecedented event with no antecedent in the history of the DH. The book seems to have represented a divine authoritative execution for Josiah's reform initiative. In this context of the story, Na'aman asserts that, the book which has been presented before Huldah supplied the divine legitimation for Josiah's reform. This is clearly seen in 22: 13a and 15a:

v. 13a (Josiah seeks authentication)	**v. 15a (Huldah responds)**
לְכוּ דִרְשׁוּ אֶת-יְהוָה בַּעֲדִי וּבְעַד-הָעָם 'Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people. . .	וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם, כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל And she said unto them: 'Thus said the Lord . . .

With this divine legitimation, Josiah's reform had been based on the terms and references made in the book. As his envoys came back from the prophetess, the message from the book was authenticated as, "Josiah assembled all the people to the temple where he read the book to them."[33] Otherwise, prior to Huldah's response and the public reading, it might have meant almost nothing to them.

If Josiah's appraisal of the book was for public conscientization of the reform measures that were to follow, the point that makes a reader curious at this point is on the aspects of reformation. Lohfink in his article discusses how Josiah was concerned intensively with four themes: repentance, oracle of salvation, covenant renewal, and Passover festival.[34] For Lohfink, these four acts comprise a covenant renewal ceremony. We see these themes in the role Josiah played within the authority of the book, and of the theology that is directed in the Book of the Law. I would substantiate this by saying that Josiah's reforms were based on themes that fittingly conveyed an optimistic message for the audience of Josiah's era. The optimism in these themes arises from the fact that aspects of the reformation focussed on ethnic unity and identity reconstruction as much as cultic purity. In other words, Josiah took the book to mark revolution,

[33] Mayes, "King and Covenant," p. 35.
[34]Norbert Lohfink, "Die Bundesurkunde des Konigs Josias," *Biblica* 44 (1963): pp. 261-288.

justice, and security. Hence, the reformation motives of Josiah suggested by Seters's (1983) "peoples' identity," Römer's (2000) "fresh idea of intelligible identity," Lemaire's (2005) "national identity during monarchy," and Avioz's (2005) "defining an Israelite identity in exile" become relevant.

When the claims of king Josiah as reformer, and the Dtr as a writer of this claim, are read from the perspective of re-discovering forgotten glory, they become relevant to the subaltern readers who can relate them to their own forgotten past and the rewriting of their stories. Also, the transforming role of Josiah can become a model of representative resistance, for the marginalized readers. As a matter of fact, for the marginalized tribes in NEI, *the forgotten* applies to political and religious control that have caused them to be who they are today, and that *the discovery* implies a realization of *who they were* or be accepted for *who they are*.

4.4 Themes in 2 Kings 22-23

(i) Literary

In the light of Cross's double redaction hypothesis, I have looked at the theological themes in Kings where I have followed Cross's two major themes Dtr_1 and Dtr_2. Specifically, for the book of Kings, Cross stands with the idea that the Dtr_1 has two persistent themes i.e. the sin of Jeroboam and the Davidic promise. He specifies the sin of Manasseh and the fall of Judah as the theme of the Dtr_2 in the book of Kings. This reminds us of Nelson who also argued for the judgment theme in the exilic edition according to his hypothesis. Hence, the later edition in the book of Kings does not show optimistic thought about the Davidic promise but defeat and captivity.

Cross's theme of the Dtr_2 relates in all its aspect with Noth's theological standpoint. However, Cross's Dtr_1 can be further substantiated because it has the element of Davidic promise emphasized in the positive light. The Davidic promise is an element of hope that finds its climax[35] in Josiah (2 Kings 22: 2; 23: 5a). Yet, to most readers and writers, the sudden death of Josiah becomes a problem for the optimistic reading of Josianic narrative. The later part of this chapter will argue that God cannot nullify the Davidic promise and that the death of Josiah is not a theological conundrum.

[35] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 285-287.

With these background, I will approach to looking at the themes in 2 Kings 22-23 to substantiate the idea of Deuteronomistic hope. This then provides, the argument against Noth's perspective on the Dtr.

(i) On the one hand, the problem with the Dtr's account of the Josianic reformation is that it represents propaganda that summons the North to "recognize the Southern claims of the monarchy whereupon *all Israel* are to devote to YHWH's sanctuary in Jerusalem."[36] To the people of Judah, this propaganda conveys the message that restoration to ancient glory depends on the return of the nation to the covenant of Yhwh centred at Jerusalem.

(ii) However, on the other hand, to the people of the North, even prior to Josiah's reign and call for restoration, this theology was unwelcome. The definition of restoration for the Northerners would rather be justice for all. The literary emendation of the Dtr_2 then is construed to mean that the promise of God (2 Sam. 7) is an exclusive mandate for the South.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, with Nelson concurring with Cross's redactional proposition of the DH (Dtr_1 and Dtr_2), the concept of an eternal and unconditional covenant with David was an essential conviction of the Dtr_1. It can be discerned that the Dtr_1 celebrated and legitimated Josianic policies in an age of nationalistic fervour, but it appears as though the exilic Dtr_2 transformed the original history into a "doxology of judgment." [37] Following the hypotheses of Cross and Nelson, R. E. Friedman's contribution to the themes in 2 Kings 22-23 gives a wider picture of the redactional discrepancies. Basically, for Friedman, Moses and Josiah had an identical role in the evaluation of the Dtr_1 because the activities of Moses correspond with the activities fulfilled by Josiah. [38] The following points are suggested by the contribution of Friedman:

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[36] Keulen, *Manasseh,* p. 27.

[37] Long, *The Double Redaction,* reviewed, pp. 454-456. Further, Nelson sees the differences in the following ways- Dtr_1 was very interested in the Ark of the Covenant, Dtr_2 not at all; the Dtr_1 viewed land as a positive gift whereas the Dtr_2 thought the gift something of a curse containing the seeds of destruction. The Dtr_1 glorified heroes such as Moses, Joshua, David who were somewhat modelled after his view of Josiah, whereas the Dtr_2 presents negative views about Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Manasseh. Dtr_1 saw value in the Northern kingdom as punishment for Solomon's apostasy, whereas Dtr_2 was negative toward the North. Weippert, "Die 'deuteronomistischen'," pp. 301-339.

[38] 2 Kings 23: 25 with Deut. 6: 5; 34: 10 and *cf.* Deut. 9: 21 with 2 Kings 23: 15). R. E. Friedman says that Josiah is reportedly said to have carried out what Moses initially have commanded (*cf.* Deut. 17: 8-17 with 2 Kings 22: 13, 18 and also *cf.* Deut. 12: 3 with 2 Kings 23: 6, 15. Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt:

(i) In the last chapters of Kings concerning the last four Judaean kings the structure is drastically changed. References to the kings' policy toward the high places and reminiscences of David, which were frequent elements in the previous narratives, are completely absent.[39] The exilic editor of the Josianic narrative concentrated on the idea of the people and not the kings.[40]

(ii) If, for the Dtr_1 the Davidic promise is still a central theme, for the Dtr_2 it has lost all its relevance with Josiah whatsoever. This is evident from the narrative in the way the last Davidic kings as portrayed as those suffering the nation's fate. On this aspect, Keulen also says that Dtr_2 short-circuits Davidic ideology (2 Kings 21: 8-15). Interestingly then, it is not the Northern Jeroboam who is the sole villain here.

On the contrary, Halpern opines that there are no reliable grounds for differentiating the Dtr_1 and Dtr_2 within the Josianic narrative. He considers it unwise to identify the Dtr_1 solely based on contrasting literary style and theme with Dtr_2 (2 Kings 23: 25b-25:30). He argues that the followers of Cross's thesis have failed to explain why the theological stance of the Dtr_2 is distributed so unevenly over the DH. If the answers must assume the inconsistency of the Dtr_2, one may wonder whether there was a single Dtr_2 as editor at all. Halpern does not see the conditional dynastic promises to Solomon as a product of redactional intervention. To him, both conditional and unconditional promises formed part of the original Josianic DH.[41] Therefore, Halpern does not accept the idea of the Dtr_2 or the perspective of Noth's Dtr who is attributed with having transformed the original history into a doxology of judgment.

Weinfeld and Spieckermann observe a positive note on considering the regnal formulae in 2 Kings 22: 2, to compare Josiah with David. Weinfeld relied that this comparison is a common element in what he terms R_I and R_{II}.[42] God's judgment

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Dtr_1 and Dtr_2," in B. Halpern and J. D. Lavenson (eds.), *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (Winnona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp. 171-173.

[39] Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," p. 184.

[40] This statement is especially clear by the additions that this editor, Dtr_2 made into the work of the Dtr_1 (Deut. 28: 36f; 1 Kings 9: 6-9; 2 Kings 21: 8-15). The latter text (and 2 Kings 23: 26; 24: 3f.) merely blames Manasseh as a catalyst but the primary responsibility is with the people. Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt," p. 187-188.

[41] Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row 1988), p. 173.

[42] Weinfeld like Jepsen uses R_I and R_{II} which in my reading consider referring to Dtr_1 and Dtr_2 respectively.

formulae with the phrase "did not turn aside to the right or to the left" (22: 2b) occurs nowhere in Kings and is rare in the OT. Weinfeld says that this expression belongs to the Dtr and the wisdom literature and it means to follow the path of righteousness.[43] Similarly, Spieckermann attributes v. 2b to the Dtr who not only equates Josiah with David but also qualifies Josiah as the *only* Judaean king who "did not turn aside . . ." This phrase, in Spieckermann's view, could possibly mean "did not turn aside from the commandments in Deuteronomy."[44] Generally in the Josian pericope, Spieckermann's view of the DH is that the Dtr regarded Josiah's reform as the crucial event in the religious history of Judah as a nation. Hence, the Dtr has the message of hope for his audience, which apparently was overshadowed by the literary and thematic redactors of the DH over the years.

Consequently, given these phrases of praise and acceptance for Josiah as the most competent king and one who is after Yahweh's own heart, the question to which readers get no satisfactory answer is: why, then, is the judgment of God inevitable? Given that the Josianic text is read broadly from the two redactional layers, it reads this way:

> (i) The Dtr_1 marks the theme of *grace and hope for the Southern Kingdom* represented by the *good* king Josiah.
>
> (ii) The Dtr_2 marks the theme of *judgment for the Northern Kingdom* that runs from the infidelity of Jeroboam. As cited above, the Dtr_2 short circuits the Davidic promise, and that the history ends with the judgement for the sins.

The theme of the Dtr_1 which advocates the theme of *grace and hope,* can prompt readers to question the narrative in the following ways: Is the death of Josiah a signal of despair or hope? My subaltern reading of the judgement theme (Dtr_2/Noth's Dtr) in Josianic history is that one must not assume absence of the restoration theme. I will show this in detail when I substantiate Josiah's role and death episodes in my Chapter 5 on *hermeneutics of voice*.

At this point, I will leave interpretive scepticism to the monopoly of the redactors (Dtr_2/Noth's Dtr) that has led to a suppressive historiography and thematic stance of the DH. Subsequently, the DH cannot be conclusively interpreted as the literature of

[43]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy,* p. 304.
[44] Hermann Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur in den Sargoniedenzeit* (Gotingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982). Cited in Eynikel, *The reform of King Josiah,* p. 117.

judgement and catastrophe. Multiple perspectives and variant theologies must be analysed to enrich, garner resource and give readers a message hope in the text. The point I intend to make is that marginal readers may be able to see the textual literary ambiguities (redaction and thematic inconsistencies) more clearly than those readers from a privileged or dominant perspective.

(ii) Centralization: Josiah's Anti-Imperial Reform

My hermeneutics on both Josiah's centralization and Jeroboam's decentralization will be discussed in chapter 5 in a multifaceted approach with a motive of favouring the subaltern reading strategies. My hermeneutical interest on these two narratives of two different milieu opens these conjectures (decentralization as well as centralization) in order to see how a marginalized reader would read this multifaceted theological significance as a resource in these texts. This section reviews the theme of centralization in the Josianic narrative. I will include the review of Deuteronomy 12 as I attempt to decipher the theology of centralization.

Deuteronomy 12's insistence on the Jerusalem worship becomes a way of assessing whether other texts are earlier or later than this passage by examining whether they show cognizance of the impression that Jerusalem was the restricted site for any act of religiosity. Greenspahn for instance presumes that Exod. 20: 24 was composed prior to 621 BCE[45] because in this text sacrifices are not restricted to Jerusalem. Likewise, for Wellhausen, the priestly sourced Lev. 17: 1-9 talks about the centrality of the place for sacrifice and offering, and so he assumes this text is a later addition to Leviticus.[46] Such ambiguities draw attention to the motives for Josiah's centralization in reference to Deuteronomy 12.

In von Rad's view, it is the Northern Mount Ebal that is referred to in Deut. 27: 4 and this location implies that centralization had its origin in the North rather than the South.[47] In his view, book of Deuteronomy would never have named any particular place as the chosen place by God. Therefore, for him the issue of the centralization

[45] Frederick E. Greenspahn, "Deuteronomy and Centralization," *VT* 64 (2014): pp. 227-235 (228).
[46] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1957), p. 35.
[47]Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 94. Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (London: SCM Press, 1953), pp. 67-68. Juha Pakkala, "The Date of the Oldest Edition of Deuteronomy," *ZAW* 121 (2009): pp. 387-401 (390).

theme based in Deuteronomy is a vain quest. In the like manner, K. L. Noll asserts that the biblical evidence suggests, "that the historical Josiah was not concerned on temple centralization, but what we see of his mission is the impact of later editions."[48]

Noll seems to have followed the arguments made by Lisbeth Fried[49] and Na'aman[50] who have also re-evaluated the archaeological evidence. They independently concluded, "neither Josiah nor Hezekiah's reforms enforce *bamôt* or removed *bamôt*, so it cannot be considered historical."[51] Moreover, Manasseh was also not likely to have rebuilt the temple, since he had lost his domain over Judaean land due to the Shennacherib Crisis. Likewise, Fried suggests that the temple centralization did not happen until 587/6 BCE, so she asserts 701 BCE as the correct timeline for Deuteronomy 12. Their thesis received mixed responses from OT scholars.

In contrast, Joseph Blenkinsopp says that the author of Kings, in acknowledgement of the role played by Hezekiah, has portrayed "his enthusiasm for cultic purity and uprightness of the Israelite religion in guardianship with the theology of Deuteronomy."[52] In line with Blenkinsopp, Edelman argues that centralization is a Deuteronomic tradition. She cites Hezekiah's (2 Kings 18: 3) removal of the *bamôt* and altars and his leading the people worship to Jerusalem as the evidence that Hezekiah attempted in the upkeeping of the national security and traditional identity.[53] She further states that, the significance of "centralization became effective only after 701 BCE, after Hezekiah's sphere of influence remained within the vicinity of Jerusalem."[54]

Noll questions if there was a need for centralization at all. The crux of his argument is that the consolidation of worship in one temple "might have become

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[48] K. L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? A Thought Experiment," *JSOT* 31/1 (2007): pp. 331-345 (330).
[49] L. E. Fried, "The High Places (*bamot*) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation," *JAOS* 122 (2002): pp. 437-465 (460).
[50] Nadav Na'aman, "The Abandonment of the Cult Places in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah as Acts of Cult Reform," *UF* 34 (2002): pp. 585-602 (597).
[51] Fried, "The High Places," p. 460. Na'aman, "The Abandonment," p. 597.
[52] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Hezekiah and Babylonian Delegation: A Critical Reading of Isaiah 39: 1-8," in Y. Amit *et. al.* (eds.), *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), p. 121.
[53]Diana Edelman, "Hezekiah's Alleged Cultic Centralization," *JSOT* 32/4 (2008): pp. 395-434 (398).
[54] Edelman, "Hezekiah's Alleged," p. 400.

detrimental in confronting the international threat of the time."[55] Otherwise, he says, "to have shut any temple which is the principal location for income through taxation for any reasons would have lost the potential of controlling peripheral regions."[56] Similarly, G. W. Ahlstrom thinks "to have eliminated the temples would be to lose the control over the land in itself."[57] Knoppers also states that the "temples played an important economic and administrative functions in the Hezekiah and Josianic eras."[58] Let us conceptualize centralization policy in Josiah's reform through a detailed study of Deuteronomy 12.

(iii) Conceptualizing Centralization through Deuteronomy 12

Concerning the two phrases (מִכֹּל־שִׁבְטֵיכֶם and בְּאַחַד שְׁבָטֶיךָ) in vv. 5 and 14 as a later additions, Alexander Rofé suggests that the mention of הַמָּקוֹם in these verses, "would have meant one of the shrines in the North."[59] As for Rad, he assumes that "the reference is to *Shechem* in the North which was near Mount Ebal."[60] Also, Craigie's suggestion is worth pondering; in his view, the tradition required that the "*the place* of worship be rotational depending on the period in which *that place* appears central."[61]

In his literary-semantic study Halpern, like Edelman contends that centralization is a theological foundation of Deuteronomy. However, Halpern seems to suggest that the translation of הַמָּקוֹם in Deuteronomy as "the place" in the sense of one defined and unique place is unwarranted. Therefore the use of הַמָּקוֹם in Deuteronomy 12 could be a general reference rather than singular. That is, it does not designate Shechem or Southern Jerusalem uniquely as "the place." Rather, to Halpern, "the possibility of the distributive translation is undeniable."[62] So the translation of הַמָּקוֹם is reckoned by Halpern as indicating in one tribal location among the twelve at a time (v. 5, 14).

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[55]Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? p. 331.
[56]Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? p. 331.
[57]Gosta W. Ahlstrom, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSupp., 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 703.
[58]Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," in Knoppers and McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel*, p. 394.
[59] See Alexander Rofé, "The Strata of the Law about the Centralization of Worship in Deuteronomy and the History of the Deuteronomic Movement," *Congress Volume* (Uppsala, 1971), Published by *VTSupp.*, 22 (1972): pp. 221-226.
[60] Rad, *Deuteronomy*, p. 89.
[61]Peter Campbell Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 217. Rad, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 16, 90.
[62]Baruch Halpern, "The Centralization Formula in Deuteronomy," *VT* 31 (1981): pp. 20-38 (37).

However, this leads me to a further question over Josiah's centralization programme which according to some of the arguments is essential to his reform. Could this centralization reform be simply the interpretation of v. 5 and v. 14 of Deuteronomy? This might further lead readers to ask if Josiah's centralization policy itself is legitimate. Interestingly, Mullen's thesis seems to follow the view that Josiah completely relied on the principles of Deuteronomy. Mullen says:

> Deut. 12: 1-5 is a peculiar deuteronomistic ideal, that of the centralization of worship in one place, an ideal that will become extremely important in the development of the descriptions of Israel's national religion during the period of the monarchy.[63]

In my judgment, and in line with Rofé, von Rad and Craigie, Mullen's statement is an acceptable reading of Josiah's centralizing reform. Despite other conjectures reviewed above, I would suggest that, considering the context of the time, centralization as a reform theme necessitated statutes and perspective for the continuity of Israel's identity amidst foreign or national turmoil. In fact, centralization comes as part of a manifesto to preserve religious and indigenous identity for the Israelites as instituted in the Law. This is also relevant when one studies these passages from the perspective of the influences of the plurality of Canaanite worship. When Deuteronomy as well as Josiah enforces centrality, it stands to distinguish themselves *vis-à-vis* an attempt to preserve *who we are* in the perplexities of *who they are.*

Interestingly, there are also scholars who argue that centralization as a Deuteronomic tradition is not new to the people of God. As Shigeyuki Nakanose argues, this policy of centralization comes from the perspective of *Passover reinvention*. He says that Josiah's re-introduction of the Passover as set out in 2 Kings 23: 21-23 was in fact not intended to revive a lost tradition; it was already the practice of the tribal families. The issue is where that tradition is practiced. As such, in contrast to what Halpern stipulates about הַמָּקוֹם, Nakanose assert that the anti-imperial movement of Josiah's places the commoners at a disadvantage since the festival compels the rural peasants to travel to Jerusalem for offering sacrifices and worship. Consequently, "the

[63]Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries,* p. 64.

programme ultimately monitored the economy in in Judah."[64] In this regard, I see that Josiah's policy that was meant to be loyal to the tradition also resulted in the aggrandizement within Jerusalem.

Kong-hi Lo prefers to call this a pilgrimage festival rather than following Nakanose's lead in referring to is as the 'Josianic Passover.' Lo seemingly looks at cultic centralization as a method that fostered unity following the ethnic consciousness of Israelites where identity is anchored in monotheistic Yahwism.[65] Here he agrees with Nakanose who says that the Passover festival is strongly related to the "Exodus motive"[66] of the tradition history, where the festival itself is a platform for as a strategic voice that resisted the Egyptians. I quote Lo:

> The emphatically anti-Egyptian motif in Deuteronomy especially in the Deuteronomic rule of Passover, could be King Josiah's preparation of the people to resist the coming Egyptian imperialism. The Exodus event is presumably dramatized in annual Passover celebration . . . Egypt became a place where Israelites should not return.[67]

Therefore, what both Nakanose and Lo argue is that the traditional festive activities united the people and created ethnic sentiments of belonging to YHWH, and as they celebrated, the law was read to disseminate Josiah's policies. Lo says that the festive celebration became a platform for public conscientization against foreign cultic assimilations. I suggest that Josiah's policy of centralization as described by the Dtr is an ideological polemic designed to reconstruct a society which was threatened by foreign religious and cultural imperialism. Therefore, reading from the perspective of Josiah, a potential hermeneutical paradigm of a voice raised against the dominant imperialism can be developed. My interest here is then to hold these conjectures open to see how a marginalized reader would read this multifaceted theological significance for their own resource in these texts.

4.5 The Theological Conundrum in Huldah's Prophecy

[64]Nakanose, *Josiah's Passover*, pp. 64-65.
[65] Kong-hi Lo, *Cultic Centralization in the Deuteronomistic History: A Strategy of Dominance and Resistance* (PhD Dissertation, Chicago Theological Seminary, 2003), p. 280.
[66]Nakanose, *Josiah's Passover,* p. 110.
[67] Lo, *Cultic Centralization,* pp. 259, 264. 279.

A crucial element in understanding the role of the book of the Law and the nature of the claim to authority made on its behalf which in turn gives authority to Josiah and his reform is the role of Huldah (2 Kings 22:13-20). Her prophetic authority is relied upon to validate the rediscovered book. However, there is a conundrum here. Huldah also prophesies that Josiah will be 'gathered to you grave in peace' (2 Kings 22:20) whereas in 2 Kings 23: 29 he meets a violent death at the hand of Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo. The question arises as to whether this indicates that Huldah's prophecy is inaccurate, which would therefore seem to raise some doubts about her other pronouncements, especially her verdict on the rediscovered book.

There are contrasting elements in the historical records of the DH and the Chronicler's History (CH) concerning the prophetic role of Huldah.[68] One aspect in the DH is clear, that, Josiah sought authentication of the book from Huldah and that she assured him that he would die peacefully and escape the punishment about to befall the people. However, in the CH Josiah's violent death is blamed on his failure to recognize another word of the LORD through his defiance of the foreign king who, it turns out, is fulfilling Yahweh's purposes. As far as the Dtr's evaluation of Huldah's role and my theological interpretations are concerned, the prophetic role of Huldah over the confrontation with the foreign monarch and his death must be flagged up.

The first issue at stake is that the prophecy of Necho and Josiah's refusal to this word of God is unique in the Chronicler's account. The paradox nature of the prophecy prompts suspicion over the ideological context of the CH. From the Deuteronomistic theological point of view, the question would be: why would Josiah listen to the foreign monarch who is not of Yahweh? How could he be a prophet of YHWH and how would Josiah know this? Secondly, the prophecy of a peaceful death of Josiah did not happen, despite what Huldah is said to have prophesied (2 Kings 22: 20; 2 Chron. 34: 28).

I do not intend to conduct a detailed study of the CH in its entirety, but some reflections become necessary here. My interest is to investigate the role of Huldah's prophecies concerning Josiah's actions in resisting Necho-II and the nature and meaning of Josiah's death.

[68] Besides what we know of Huldah from 2 Kings 22: 14; 2 Chron. 34: 22 as the prophetess during Josiah's reign, not much is known of her but that she was the wife of Shallum, who is thought to be caretaker of the wardrobe of the king or the vestments of the priests in the temple; thus Huldah is not known as to if she was the wife of a court official or one of the temple personnel. She is interchangeably identified as a cult or court prophet. As per the role she played in 2 Kings, court prophet is most possible.

4.5.1 The Literary-theological Context of the Chronicler

The book of Chronicles like the DH is the product of a community for whom it was also written. The literary techniques of 2 Chron. 34-35 as well as the reformative reign of Josiah reflect the lived realities of the Chronicler's community. According to Ristau, "what is reflected are the loss of independence, the exilic experience and restoration, and the advent of Persian power."[69] Within this socio-political framework, Ristau claims, the Chronicler attempts "to resolve the literary-historical issue of "continuity and discontinuity" over the portrayal of Josiah."[70] The primary impulse for the Chronicler was not to attempt to clarify how history really was, but, "an ideological re-presentation of the community's historical traditions."[71] There were both intellectual and pragmatic motives behind this representation to make it relevant to its community.

Ristau notes that the way the Chronicler narrates the Josianic episode is a representation of his use of ideology to persuade the audience, and that the worldview it induces could determine the power of the text.[72] In a similar vein, Liverani argues that the persuasive and communicative intent of the texts are dependent on the accessibility of the texts to the audience. Liverani identifies "that there can be layers of audiences and ranges of understanding of the ancient texts depending on accessibility."[73] Relevantly, Levin depicts an "inner audience" a "wider audience" that he thinks is relevant in the reading of the CH.[74] The "inner audience," for instance, are the Chronicler's community and literate scribes that have received the text, and they have read and re-defined it. They had authority over the text and legitimated the norms or else were surreptitious when studied. The "wider audience" are the lay participants in the cultic life of the Yahwistic communities who accept the religious authority of the inner audience.

[69]Kenneth A. Ristau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: A Critical Study of Josiah in Chronicles," *Master of Arts in Religious thesis* (Alberta: University of Alberta, 2005), p. 83.
[70]Ristau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: A Critical Study," p. 83.
[71]Ristau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: A Critical Study," p. 83.
[72]Ristau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: A Critical Study," p. 83.
[73] Mario Liverani, "The Deeds of Ancient Mesopotamian Kings," in Jack M. Sasson (eds.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Scribner's, 1995 [Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006]): pp. 2352-2366 (2353).
[74] Yigal Levin, "Who was the Chronicler's Audience? A Hint from the Genealogies," *JBL* 122/2 (2003): pp. 229-245 (243).

Ritsau and Halpern also highlight that the central theological themes in Chronicles are "faith, joy in the worship and a willing service to God."[75] To them, these themes are likely to correspond with the characteristics of a good king (DH). However, praises for Josiah are strikingly missing in the CH. On further reflection, this may not be so surprising given that the Chronicler from the very beginning employs language that prefigures the exile.

The phrase וּמִכֹּל שְׁאֵרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל (and of all the remnant of Israel) in 34: 9 and אֶת-הַבָּתִּים, אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁחִיתוּ, מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה (the buildings that the kings of Judah destroyed) in v. 11 reflect and indicate the role played by Josiah and his predecessors in setting the conditions for the exile. These phrases rather "create a subtext"[76] that, while operating on one level to present Josiah as a good Judaean king, on the other level serves to undervalue and deny Josiah's recognition. In the discussion by Ristau, the Chronicler is keen on drawing Josiah and Judah into the exile discourse in his historiography, so that, the exilic feature of loss of freedom and the exilic experience of hopelessness is heightened in its message. As this view of history is set forth, Josiah is shown as though he is seeking Yahweh in order to alleviate a process of destruction which had already started.[77]

Furthermore, what is sometimes seen as the judgement paradigm in the Chronicler's ideology is more of a complex system of retribution. Although the idea of corresponding action and punishment is consistent in some cases, there are frequently inconsistent with each other, or at least in the scale of severity for the punishment. This idea of a counter-current is very clear in the Josianic narrative, especially in the discovered book of the Law as heralding blessing or an inexorable demise. There is a disproportional relationship between cause and consequence in so far as the CH places the death of Josiah as a punishment for infidelity to the law.[78] While my claim is that Josiah's confrontation with Necho-II in DH is a polemic stand for cultic purity and

[75] 1 Chron. 12: 41; 15: 16, 25; 16: 10, 31; 29: 9, 17, 22; 2 Chron. 6: 41; 7: 10; 15: 15; 20: 27; 23: 13, 18, 21; 24: 10; 29: 30, 36; 30: 21, 23, 25-26. Baruch Halpern, "Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure-Indications of an Earlier Source," in Friedman (eds.), *The Creation of Sacred Literature: Composition and Redaction of the Biblical Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 40-41.

[76] Kenneth Ritsau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation of Josiah for the Postexilic Community," in Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ritsau (eds.), *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspective* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), p. 226.

[77] Ritsau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation," pp. 226-227.

[78] Ristau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: A Critical Study," p. 89.

national security, the Chronicler perceives it as revealing Josiah's inability to discern the will of God which brings about his death. In this case, the CH theology idealizes the Necho-II, a foreign monarch, as a divine oracle, which is a problematic idea in the Dtr's theology. As a result, the Chronicler's theologies of *faithfulness* and *judgement* seems inconsistent. In this light, aptly, Williamson[79] and Begg[80] suggested that Josiah's death episode of the Chronicler can be better understood as the revised and expanded form of that in Kings or it may have represented Chronicler's own reworking of Kings to relate to the audience.

4.5.2 Death of Josiah: A Theological Conundrum?

Within the textual world of the Chronicles, the ironic death narrative of Josiah has a perplexing ideological nuance. The death seems to foreshadow the fall of the Davidic monarchy. Ristau argues that "the initial words in 2 Chron. 35: 20 of the death narrative אַחֲרֵי כָל-זֹאת (after all of this) are a significant literary and ideological construction." [81] To him, this "after-clause symbolises the king's functional discontinuity." [82] The death connotes God's judgement being made and that, after Josiah's death, hope for the kingdom is unthinkable. It only introduces tension and questions about the king's faithful deeds that preceded his death and the threat that is posed to the people by the sudden death.

On the warning made by Necho-II to Josiah, the Chronicler explicitly authorizes Necho-II's message in 35: 22 by accusing Josiah of not listening (שָׁמַעלֹא) to the one who represented God (מִפִּי אֱלֹהִים). The Chronicler accuses Josiah of ignoring the message of the foreign monarch as the genuine divine message.[83] However, according to the Deuteronomic tradition (Deut. 18: 14), Israelites are forbidden to listen to the soothsayers and diviners of the surrounding nations.[84]

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[79] H. G. M. Williamson, "The Death of Josiah and the Continuing Development of the Deuteronomic History," *VT* 32/2 (1982): pp. 242-248 (246).
[80] Christopher T. Begg, "The Death of Josiah in Chronicles: Another View," *VT* 37/1 (1987): pp. 1-8 (1).
[81]Ritsau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation," p. 228.
[82]Ritsau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation," p. 228.
[83]Similar rhetoric is apparent in the Joash and Amaziah narrative in Chronicles (2 Chron. 25:17–24).
[84] J. Gordon McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, 1984), p.13.

In this connection Ristau (2005) also remarks on the Chronicler's practice of legitimising speeches of foreign kings as a wider phenomenon.[85] However, the claim of the CH ideology only undermines the authority and legitimacy of the Judaean king.

On the same question, Christine Mitchell[86] observes that in 2 Chron. 36, the Chronicler supports the use of punishment when a king rebel against a (legitimate) overlord. However, nowhere in the text or in the Deuteronomic tradition is it stated that Necho-II or any foreign ruler is the overlord of the Judaean king. The Chronicler's narration seems to have been distorted in order to account for the prophecy of Huldah who promised a peaceful death for the righteous king. One divine word is superseded by another. However, if Necho's warning is a device invented by the Chronicler, the death of Josiah cannot be blamed either on Josiah's persistence in resisting the foreign monarch or Josiah's infidelity.

Based on the discussions above, it becomes necessary that we look at the prophecy of Huldah, its authenticity and if Josiah's death had fulfilled what she had claimed to foresee. Let me put Wetter's discussion about the case of biblical prophetic speech to start with:

> In the case of biblical prophetic speech, at least three different 'institutions' can be distinguished: *first,* a prophet's audience within the narrative, which may itself consist of individuals with political and religious authority. *Second,* the authors or editors of the text, and *third,* the reader, whether implied or real. Each of these groups may or may not recognize the speaker as an instance of the schema 'true prophet' and consequently grant or deny him/her a 'licence to speak.'[87]

Wetter's first and second criteria of prophetic institutions are identical to Huldah's prophetic accounts. *Firstly,* Huldah's prophetic account particularly in the CH centres on the Southern political and religious authority.[88] Otherwise, in both accounts,

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[85]Ristau, "Ritsau, "Reading and Re-reading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation," p. 232.Similar idea found in John W. Wright, "Beyond Transcendence and Immanence: The Characterization of the Presence and Activity of God in the Book of Chronicles," in David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies, *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), p. 258.
[86] Christine Mitchell, "The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles," *CBQ* 68 (2006): pp. 421-435 (427).
[87] Anne-Mareike Wetter, "The Prophet and the Kings: Is there Such a Thing as Free Speech?" in Bob Becking and Hans M. Barstad, (eds.), *Prophecy and Prophets in Stories* (Leiden/Boston: BRILL, 2015), p. 37.
[88]Schniedewind argues that the Chronicler's account favors the Southern Kingdom's bias since it is based on the post-exilic Southern Kingdom. W. M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From*

Huldah's prophecy has a mixed ideological audience, which makes it even more difficult to discern the authenticity of her words for Josiah's last days. As Frolov[89] also points out, the prophet's message is often ambiguous. In some cases, certain prophets may be the communicators of divine deception rather than the truth. Likewise, Freedman and Frey[90] convincingly discuss the way in which even a prophecy that comes true might raise the suspicion of the reader, probably through the conflict of ideologies, and the perspective in which the text is read becomes apparent.

So, one irony in the CH that I question is in the way the CH narrates and patterns the event of Josiah's death, which apparently is not in the battlefield but once he has returned to Jerusalem. This smack of a literary twist makes it possible to interpret Huldah's prophecy as fulfilled; at least Josiah dies at home and is 'gathered to his ancestor's' as she foretold (2 Chron. 34: 28; 35: 24). However, this raises a problem. In such a fierce war where the Pharaoh is said to have been escorted by fleets of armies and mercenaries, it is doubtful if Josiah could be safely brought alive to die peacefully in Jerusalem. Indeed, in 2 Kings 23: 10 it is explicitly stated that he died at Megiddo and was brought back to Jerusalem as a corpse.

The Chronicler's narrative strategy, as rightly stated by Mitchell,[91] Williamson and Ritsau is ironic. It appears to the Chronicler that dying neither in captivity nor in the battlefield is itself something honourable.[92] It could be because in the biblical historical tradition, in contradiction to modern times, does not regard martyrs in the battle as heroic, but rather took their defeat as a punishment from God. There does seem to be an inconsistency in the CH paradigm of cause and effect. Here below are some of the commentaries on the death of Josiah which offer different ways of accounting for this seeming anomaly.

Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period, JSOTSupp., 197 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), pp. 23-24.

[89] Serge Frolov, "1 Samuel 1-8: The Prophet as Agent Provocateur," in L. L. Grabbe and Martti Nissinen, eds., *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), pp. 77-85.

[90] D. N. Freedman and R. Frey, "False Prophecy is True," in J. Kaltner and L. Stulman (eds.), *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East- Essays in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon* (London: The Library of Hebrew Bible, 2004), pp. 82-87.

[91] Mitchell, "The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles," pp. 424-425.

[92] There are some who asserts that Saul's death is tragic as well as heroic. T. R. Preston, "The Heroism of Saul: Patterns of meaning in the Narrative of the Early Kingship," *JSOT* 7/24 (1982): pp. 27-46 (42-43). In contradistinction the writer reads arguments by W. Boyd Barrick, "Saul's Demise, David's Lament, and Custer's Last Stand," *JSOT* 22/73 (1997): pp. 25-41 (29).

4.6 Commentaries on the Death of Josiah

4.6.1 The Conspiracy of Silence (Stanley Brice Frost)

S. B. Frost in 1968 maintained that reading the Josianic narrative raises the suspicion of the "conspiracy of silence." [93] He states that no one could satisfactorily account for the death of Josiah theologically. In fact, he is of the opinion that the HB conceals the historio-theological reason for Josiah's death at Megiddo, fundamentally the sins of the past kings. Likewise, Nelson also argues that Kings does not provide any theoretical answer to the theological paradox the narrative creates.[94] According to Begg, the end of Josiah's life is presented in the DH as "bad luck" or as the consequence of a wrong decision to fight Necho-II.[95]

In contrast, Avioz's hypothesis denies the impression that sins could be concealed. Avioz thinks that the Hebrew Bible is explicitly open about sins, especially when it comes to kings.[96] For Avioz, the lack of the obvious mention of sin in the narrative does not imply that Yahweh concealed Josiah's sin or the sins of the past. In fact, Frost's allegation of a *conspiracy of silence* that seems to circle around the idea of retribution has a drawback. His theory about the *effect* searches for the *cause,* and he assumes that the cause, which is the sins, are hidden. I would rather suggest that the death of Josiah can be applauded as the price a king of his stature who is politically courageous and theologically correct paid for the security and identity of the deuteronomic community.

4.6.2 Manasseh is Josiah's Foil

Much of the deliberation condemns "the dark period of Manasseh's reign as the catalyst which brought on the catastrophe of Megiddo."[97] Antti Laato's claims that Manesseh is an "ill-fated precursor for the fall of Josiah."[98] The general theory is that despite Josiah's ultimate endeavour for the cause of the people, its cultic purity and

[93]S. B. Frost, "The Death of Josiah: A Conspiracy of Silence," *JBL* 87 (1968): pp. 369-382 (381).
[94] Richard D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings: Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1987), p. 260. Also compare Walter Brueggemann, *1 and 2 Kings* (Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), p. 561.
[95]Begg, "The Death of Josiah," pp. 1-8.
[96] Michael Avioz, "Josiah's Death in the Book of Kings: A New Solution to an old Theological Conundrum," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 83/4 (2007): pp. 359-366 (360).
[97]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* p. 356.
[98]Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus,* pp. 69-79. Also see, Baruch Halpern, "Why Manasseh is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition," *VT* 48/4 (1998): pp. 473-514. Steve Delamarter, "The Death of Josiah in Scripture and Tradition: Wrestling with the Problem of Evil," *VT* 54/1 (2004): pp. 29-60.

cultic unity, Manasseh's sins are not forgiven. The way the picture of Josiah is represented by the Dtr is supposedly to show a spiritual corrective for what Manasseh had done. Moreover, the doctrine of retribution in the theology of the DH is a cumulative retribution in most cases, unlike what is found in the CH. A kingdom can be destroyed because of the sins of many generations and the consequences are faced by the current subjects. It is hardly measured from a single king's sin/individual sin (2 Kings 22: 17; 24: 20). This theory supports the idea that the sins of the past generation and its consequences are faced by Josiah.[99]

4.6.3 Did Josiah Neglect to Consult Prophets?

It seems that the theological problem concerning Josiah's death must be explained differently. Avioz is of the opinion that it was the Dtr who found flaws in Josiah's behaviour prior to his confrontation with Necho-II, thereby, making Josiah vulnerable before the Pharaoh.[100] Fischer points to the speech in 2 Kings 17 with its emphasis on the cause of destruction in neglecting to consult and obey the prophets.[101] There is no mention that Josiah consulted prophets before deciding to oppose Pharaoh Necho, and it could be claimed that by choosing to defy him militarily he was choosing to ignore Huldah's predictions of disaster and defeat. Their fate might have been sealed because of the then socio-political turmoil, which in a way is clearer to the readers as the Dtr presents the objectified imperial powers surrounding the powerless Judaeans. One of the theological principles of the Deuteronomistic community is to make a covenant or start a war with foreign nations needs approval from God through the prophets.

In contrast, Hoffmann (1980), Provan (1988), Glatt-Gilad (1996) and others maintain that Josiah indeed consulted the prophetess Huldah. Such a pre-battle consultation to them is the tradition in Samuel and Kings (DH) and the prophetic books.[102] Looking from the perspective of the theology and tradition of the Israelites, Josiah might not have ignored consultation with the prophetess. However, these are

[99]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy,* p. 319. Also see, J. S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 42-47.
[100]Avioz, "Josiah's Death in the Book of Kings," pp. 362-365.
[101] G. Fischer, "The Relationship between 2 Kings 17 and the Book of Jeremiah," in M. Augustus and H. M. Niemann (eds.), *Basel und Bibel: Collected Communications to the XVIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament Basil 2001* (Frankfurt: Peer reviewed, 2004), pp. 313-321.
[102] See, M. K. George, "Yahweh's Own Heart," *CBQ* 64/3 (2002): pp. 442-459 (454). Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist,* pp. 182-183.

arguments from silence, and none comply with the Dtr's notion of cumulative retribution but concentrate on Josiah's failure which itself is an ambiguous allegation. The Dtr as a redactor may have found flaws with Josiah, but that does not mean that Dtr concludes that Josiah's actions in themselves cause his death.

4.7 A reading paradigm from the Subaltern Context

In this section, in conversation with the Josianic text I will list some points to show potential perspectives by which the hermeneutical paradigms of hope and motivation in reading the figure of Josiah and his role can enhance the marginalized readers such as Christian tribes of NEI.

4.7.1 The "Book of the Law" in Josiah's Timeline and its Significance

My hermeneutical interest in this section will seek the importance of the interpretation of the "book" to Josiah and the Israelites, and what would this convey to the marginalized readers. In the book of Kings, the Torah in the sense of Yahweh's law was the source of both religious and political identity, the source of collective strength to the people of the biblical Israel. It existed as a mediator and acted as a guiding principle in the relationship that was expected from the people and king toward Yahweh. Kings failed when they ignored Torah. Therefore, Israel's history was centred around Torah and the people. Josiah by virtue of being a good king represented this tradition, which became intense in his reform movement.

Josiah's determination to reform the laws and customs did not happen until Hilkiah found the Law Book in the eighteenth year though he became king in his eight year (2 Kings 22: 1). As the text represents it, Josiah took the discovered book as a yardstick for his reform movement. Josiah gave the "book" to be read and that his response took a dramatic act that connotes a realization of what he is ought to do (2 Kings 22: 13).

In arguing that the "book" is the timeline and a yardstick for Josiah's reform, we must consider the international socio-political situation of Josiah's period (Chapter 5 will exegete on Josiah's anti-imperial reform). The context of the political and religious crises in which Josiah is placed, and the role that the book played which affected Josiah's reform must be considered.

Thus, the reading paradigm I suggest argues that the book found in the Temple became the basis of a legitimate polemic for Josiah, an impetus for further reforms and consolidation of the Judaean society regardless of the challenges he had faced nationally and internationally. Josiah's renewed interpretation of the book communicates hope to the demoralized Judaeans for the revival of the ancient Israelite religio-cultural life. Taking Josiah's approach to the Law Book and his further reform as an indicative approach to reading hope and reformation in the society, the message for the marginalized for whom the word of God in the Bible is their ultimate source of hope and inspiration will make clearer sense. The hermeneutical insights from such historical narrative that a marginalised reader such as Christian tribes of NEI can generate is to look at the positive role played by Josiah through the Book as an anchor for change. The Bible as both Christian identity and its message they anchor can enhance space(s) to speak out for their own rights and liberty. Josiah's reinterpretation of the Law Book becomes an epitome for the marginalized people's need to reinterpret the Bible in defence of their security and posterity in the face of oppression and minoritization by outside forces.

4.7.2 Reader Response to Josiah's untimely Death

To begin the discussion, I must say that Huldah's prophecy of a peaceful death of Josiah is nothing less than an irony. What I seek in the reading of this episode in the narrative is to look for the message serviceable for the marginalized readers.

Methodological tactics in the critical reading of prophecy and its history by biblical scholars of the 20th century have "recognized that prophecy needs to be studied from the contexts of the practitioners from which prophesies originated."[103] In this light, Rooke suggested a primary reason being that the "disembodied predictions of the distant future" become ambiguous for the modern readers. She further says that the prophecy as well as its writings have often been "entertained uncritically as sources of historical information about the circumstances in which they were addressed."[104] It is also the case that "the relationship between the text *as* it appears and the reality that *was there* are in themselves complicated entities."[105] The prophetic texts may or may not embody the

[103] Deborah W. Rooke, "Prophecy," in J. W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 391.
[104] Rooke, "Prophecy," p. 391.
[105] Rooke, "Prophecy," p. 391.

truth but they are rather manipulated to enhance the reader's perception of it.[106] In this light, it can be suggested that highly rhetorical and poetic prophetic texts are not to be treated as objective given the propagandist nature of historicising literature.

Keeping these points in mind in relation to the Josianic texts, I would reiterate the proposals made by Rudolph,[107] Weinfeld, Ristau, Ben Zvi and others. They suggest that the reform occurred only in Josiah's eighteenth year, because if there were earlier reforms Huldah would not have ignored them. They argue this in order to support the claim that the account in Kings is narrated logically and not patently tendentious in the manner of the Chronicler's implausible "gradual reform sequence."[108] In the light of what Rooke and Ristau argue, summarising *for* or *against* the historicity of the Chronicler's text, it can be alleged that the Chronicler's text is seemingly ideologically expanded.

As we have seen, what raises scepticism is that Huldah's prophecy does not do justice to the narrative. Although Josiah died before the catastrophe, he did not die in peace; he died at the battlefield, succumbing to the powerful hand of the imperialistic Necho-II. We have seen that the Chronicler attempts to account for this by attributing prophetic authority to the problem with account in Kings, but the problem may be that the political ideology of the Dtr fails to understand how Josiah might have appeared to the marginalized in Israel at a time when imperial aggression threatened them from all sides.

In arguing for the serviceability of this episode for marginalized readers, I isolate the reading of the Deuteronomistic account based on its theology and the ideology of nationalism that Josiah showed. Looking from this paradigm, the apparently catastrophic end of Josiah can be seen in a positive light in which Josiah's confrontation with Pharaoh and his death at Megiddo reveals him to be a king full of courage, integrity and patriotism. Certainly, the liberative message a marginalized reader can extract from Josianic narrative is Josiah's passionate act of national resistance, voicing a charter of liberty and political rights, to the point where he gave his life. The characterization of Josiah as a *good king* sets example for the tribal Christian leaders of

[106] Rooke, "Prophecy," p. 391.
[107]W. Rudolph, *Chronikbucher, HAT* 21 (Tubingen: 1955), p. 319. Cited in Glatt-Gilad, "The Role of Huldah's Prophecy," p. 19.
[108] Moshe Weinfeld, *From Joshua to Josiah: Turning Points in the History of Israel from the Conquest of the Land Until the Fall of Judah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), pp. 166-167.

NEI to emulate in their commitment to leadership and safeguarding Christian identity in the face of dominant forces.

4.7.3 "Good King" is a Language of Hope

The trope of the "good king" in 2 Kings 23: 25 is of vital importance to support this reading from the context of the marginalized. Josiah is depicted not just as a good king, but as unparalleled in his faithfulness.

> וְכָמֹהוּ לֹא-הָיָה לְפָנָיו מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁב אֶל-יְהוָה בְּכָל-לִבָּבוֹ וּבְכָל-נַפְשׁוֹ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדוֹ--כְּכֹל תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא-קָם כָּמֹהוּ
>
> Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

Contrary to the CH, the Dtr portrays the image of a good king for Josiah. Weinfeld suggests that the expression אֲשֶׁר-שָׁב אֶל-יְהוָה (who turned to the Lord) is an expression basically from wisdom literature and exceptional in the Dtr.[109] To Spieckermann, v. 25 contains the formulae of "obedience to the commandments in Deuteronomy."[110] The idea of wisdom trait in v. 25 corresponds with Josiah who in the light of the Dtr is a *good king*. It suggests that Josiah lived a righteous life approved by God, and was a king accepted and acknowledged by the common people. Essentially, this passage illustrates my perspective of the Dtr who portrays hope because the image of Josiah whom the Dtr acclaims as an ideal king illuminates the idea of the continued promise of God to the Fathers.

Reading the upright character of Josiah can act as reassurance to marginalized readers that an undisputed ideal figure in the text can represent hope. The image of a good king in contrast to his apostate predecessors can be a frame of reference in the contemporary biblical hermeneutical apparatus that valorises change. Theologically and sociologically, a king that is just before God and responsive to the needs of the people can instil greater hope and expectation in the people. Josiah's agenda of justice, rights, peace, restoration, identification, stability and security are policies bringing about socio-

[109] In Proverbs 3: 16 "to turn to God" means to have long life, wealth, and honor. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, p. 304.
[110] Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur*, p. 42.

political and religio-cultural changes to ensure the continued existence of the distinctive culture and identity of the people of Israel in the face of imperial oppression.

There will be complexities involved in the use of the Bible as an ideological tool for marginalized groups to resist the loss of their identity in the complicated contemporary Indian context. But biblical figures like Josiah can be a means of inspiring resistance to the suppressive ideologies that readers themselves experience in each context. Re-reading biblical narrative such as this where class struggles postulate a shared lived experience, the complexities can be explained, and although not the ultimate, a relevant message found in the text does give hope. Josiah's death, which is usually read as anomaly given Huldah's prophecy and the expectation that a good king will be rewarded by a long life and a peaceful end, can be read as a culmination of his willingness to sacrifice himself in order to protect Israel's distinctive culture and identity.

Conclusion

One turning point in the Josianic text that I find holds potential for developing hermeneutics from the marginalized perspective is the importance that Josiah gave to the Deuteronomic laws accessed through the discovered Book of the Law. Only through this was the reform movement carried out, resisting oppression, and fostering justice for the marginalized Judaeans. Josiah's dramatic display of tearing his robe signifies a drastic realization of the need to abide by the Law, and that a new hope can be built on the condition that people return to acknowledging Yahweh's fidelity.

The Dtr's perspective, particularly in Noth's reading, draws an imaginative picture for the readers that for Josiah and his people the worst thing will happen in every situation and that there are no reasons to be hopeful. Therefore, the narrative portrays Josiah and *all Israel* in a vulnerable space and on the verge of downfall amid the powerful international politics. Nevertheless, from the marginalized hermeneutical point of view, we can go on to read Josianic narrative as justifying the claim that Josiah was the king after peoples' own heart. The possibilities that Josiah lived and acted as a "good king" in the context of the complex Mediterranean politics, power, religion and empires captivate the minds of marginalized readers.

The crux of the Josianic narrative like any other texts' mirrors "human actions and the interaction of the people and God."[111] My interest attempted to answer the questions: Can the reading of Josianic narrative give any positive implications to the marginalized readers? How would the message of either the disastrous end or the heroic death of Josiah communicates the idea of hope? If I read Josiah's act of such resistance to Necho-II as valid, how do I take the paradigm of resistance to counter-read the message of doom and destruction apparent in the narrative?

The next two chapters that follow will show aspects of the *hermeneutics of voice* that I am incorporating to bring about in the study of these two narratives. I will show how such narratives, or the Bible interpreted from the hegemonic and hierarchical approach have become a suppressive tool highlighting some cases of NEI. Keeping this interpretive approach as a plausible claim to counter-read suppressive biblical interpretation, I will then move to chapter 5 to propose hermeneutics of voice from the marginal perspective.

[111] P. J. Botha, "'No King Like Him: Royal Etiquette according to the Deuteronomistic Historian," in Johannes C. de Moor and Harry F. van Rooy (eds.), *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (Leiden: BRILL, 2000), p. 36.

Chapter 5

The Hermeneutics of Voice in Kings

"Hey, girl, quiet! . . . Be quiet! You woke everyone up!"[1]

Introduction

In the two narratives I have studied, my emphasis was on locating roles and voices that can be motivating for the marginalized readers. Further to underlining the reading paradigms I have posited earlier; this chapter will attempt to study some thematic concerns in these texts I feel needed attention from the subaltern perspective to engender voices of resistance for a context such as NEI.

The Dtr draws a believable picture of the authoritarian power as Jeroboam fights to remove the yoke imposed by Rehoboam, and Josiah as a victim of the imperial force as though it signalled catastrophe. Thereby, the readers of these texts notice the significance of the death of hope as dominant in the DH. I will propose the re-reading of these texts in favour of the subaltern readers and throw light on the possibility of finding in these passages the *hermeneutics of voice*. The study will attempt to see how closely the realities of the text and of the marginalized readers can be related. It is obvious that the two contexts and materials do not share the same struggle and voice. They do not have a shared milieu. However, the expression of human sensibilities and stories prompt marginalized contemporary readers to reflect, highlight and posit the reality of these resonances, to enhance the hermeneutic potential of this approach.

Firstly, interpretive approaches to the themes of decentralization in the Jeroboam narrative and the centralization/nationalistic reform in Josianic narrative will be analysed from both the facets to find that these themes empower NEI readers read from their location. Secondly, the Northerner's Shechem uproar and Josiah's Megiddo battlefield discourses will be interpreted as a model for voices of resistance that can contribute to the socio-religious tranquillity of the marginalized NEI. Thirdly, I will counter-read DH's portrayal of hopelessness, by advocating elements of optimism in the two narratives, reading them from the paradigm of the concealed voice. These hermeneutical paradigms will help in aligning the marginalized voice in the texts with the lived realities of marginalized readers of NEI.

[1] David Grossman, *To the End of the Land* (trans.), Jessica Cohen (London: Random House, 2010), p. 3.

Section-I

5.1 DH Literary Ideology versus Peoples' Story (1 Kings 12)

For scholars who read 'Bible as literature,' biblical stories are the product of the "human mind who lived in an actual historical time."[2] Like any other literature, biblical languages are native and time based, subjective in most cases, made available for self-expression and creative writing. Biblical literatures are like a "compendium of heterogeneous genres and artistries."[3] In other words, texts are subjective to time, narrator or author, language, context, and derivability of the meaning. Subjective elements are the narrator's consciousness, private whims, and fancies with lesser reference to objective reality. Hence, textual artistry is a wordplay.

J. Gabel, C. Wheeler and A. York in their edited book *The Bible as Literature* (1996) give a fine example of how a focus on the word-based artistry of the text emphasizes the subjectivity yet presents the irrelevance of objectivity for this form of enquiry. They ask:

> What do these words tell us? They do not necessarily report what the (Solomonic) temple was really like, although that may be their apparent purpose, but rather they tell us what the author thought about the Temple and wished readers to think about it. The appropriate questions now have nothing to do with whether the words correspond to an objective reality but with their purpose and effect as literary devices. What was the author trying to accomplish? How was this done? Were the means to adequate to this end? What can we learn from watching this author at work?[4]

These lines support the argument that literary devices are tools used to communicate ideologies reflecting scribal politics. They are "words" but not themselves "stones and mortars."[5] They may claim objectivity, but this is only ever a claim. Considering this approach to the role of the Dtr in Jeroboam-Rehoboam narrative, it is appropriate to argue that events narrated are subjected to the ideology of the authors/narrators in their political and social situation.

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[2] John B. Gabel, Charles B. Wheler and Anthony D. York, *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 3.
[3] Gabel, Wheler and York, *The Bible*, p. 4.
[4] Gabel, Wheler and York, *The Bible*, p. 6.
[5] Gabel, Wheler and York, *The Bible*, p. 6. Their study also considered an ambiguously canonized creation narratives (Genesis 1 and 2) and discern that the story's object is unknowable, but the duality of subjective source and authors are explicitly apparent.

In the words of Long, biblical literature is like art or a billboard; it expresses something anterior to itself. A literature can suggest idea, feeling, reflection and a controlling vision. The biblical narrative as read by different people in different space and time gets reoccupied and readers marvel over the literary culture in reception of the artistic form.[6] Similarly Alter writes:

> The telling has a shapeliness whose subtleties we are only beginning to understand, and it was undertaken by writers with the most brilliant gifts for intimidating character, defining scenes, fashioning dialogue, elaborating motifs, balancing near and distant episodes, just as the God-intoxicated poems of the psalmists and prophets evince a dazzling virtuosity in their arabesque of soundplay and syntax, wordplay and image.[7]

From what is being said, it can be posited that the Dtr is a historiographer who, with artistic talents, put together the chaotic oral history, gathered extracts from the annals of the kingdoms, and adapted pre-existing complex narratives into a well-knit storyline. Alter indicates in his argument that determining the meaning of the text is channelled through the "literary imagination"[8] embodied by a narrator in a dramatized form (Chiasm). Therefore, the final text and its precedence as the object that needs to be illuminated through the discipline of interpretation.

Let me note what Sternberg has to say about biblical literature, text, and the derivability of the meaning. Sternberg's interest is on the text's structural expression that envisions a two-party communication: the speaker and addressee associated with the historical situation. He maintains that, "to be able to read proficiently one has to give courtesy to the textual structure, so that the persuasion of the writer over the claims of the reader's moral and religious basis is understood."[9] He understands that the narrator displays an impressive complex of forces, pressures and motivations.[10] Sternberg seems to make way for the reader-oriented critical theory, because he argues that narratives are mimetic and that they belong to the represented world of the narrator.[11] He is also

[6] Burke O. Long, "The 'New' Biblical Poetics of Alter and Sternberg," *JSOT* 51 (1991): pp. 71-84 (77).
[7] Robert Alter, *The Guide* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 15.
[8] Cited in Long, "The 'New' Biblical Poetics," pp. 78-79.
[9] Sternberg, *The Poetics*, pp. 13-14.
[10] Sternberg, "Time and Space in Biblical (Hi)story Telling," p. 96.
[11] Sternberg, "Time and Space," p. 96.

cautious that there are limitations to discernment of the past by a modern reader.[12] Sternberg writes:

> The world they compose becomes a determinant and an indicator of meaning, a guide to the making of sense.[13]

At some point in the reading of Sternberg, his argument may resonate with the way Childs (1985) approaches OT theology. Sternberg like Childs understands "the realities within the face value of the text as a pattern of meaning and effect."[14] However, Sternberg is also opposed to excessive anti-historicism.[15] Therefore, arguing over the common bases and biases of the redactors of the biblical texts, Sternberg seems to ensure clarity in historicism because he reckons that determinants of meaning are historically situated through specific norm and directive. To him, the narrative text drives the simultaneity in the flow of the history. It operates suspense, thriving on conflict and polarities of themes in the text itself, such as, South vs. North, Chosen vs. Inflicted, Dynastic vs. Disposable/Doomed, Temple vs. Calf, and Eternity vs. Mutability.[16]

Balancing the thoughts of Alter and Sternberg, I suggest that narrative such as 1 Kings 12 cannot be studied only from the canonical face value of the text (structural), but with its *sitz-im-leben* because the artistic hand of the Dtr is implied and subjective, embodied with ideology and irony. On that note, I argued that behind the chiastic rhetoric in the narration of 1 Kings 12, readers are prompted to study the Dtr's socio-historical location so as to discern what I will call the *Peoples' Story.*[17] For a postcolonial reader, the linguistic and structural approach to the text is limited as a method. The provenance of a text is understood more widely through reading the historical context (peoples' story). Given this literary ideological background where the elements of peoples' story are concealed, my proposition is that the re-reading of the

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[12] Sternberg, *The Poetics*, pp. 13-14.
[13] Sternberg, *The Poetics*, pp. 15-16.
[14] Sternberg, *The Poetics*, p. 15. Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).
[15] Sternberg, *The Poetics*, p. 15.
[16] Sternberg, "Time and Space," p. 111.
[17] About 70 years now, reviews of the DH literature have had multiple perspective depending on the "perception of the text's origin, language and literary contents, various redaction theories and authorship, thematic theologies, historiography and interpretation." However, there has never met an absolute "approaches or theories in the contentions of these perspectives/ideas." All that writers and scholars rely to this day is by arging from the provenance of the Deuteronomist as the one who worked, reworked on the DH. See, Dutcher-Walls, "The Sociological Location," p. (77).

marginalized peoples' voice in these texts can espouse anterior lessons for a relevant interpretation.

5.2 Literary Power Politics and Social Class Struggle in 1 Kings 12

Keeping in mind that the Rehoboam-Jeroboam narrative is by default a "court history,"[18] at this point, we can turn to Girard's anthropological and socio-literary theory where he analyses aspects of "desire, rivalry, conflict," collective violence and solution "of conflicts by means of expulsion"[19] existent in human conduct and nature, and its depiction in the literary narrative. Put simply, Girard suggests that characteristically, texts can reflect rivalry, desire, and cross-cultural conflicts. As such, in his view, humans are basically *mimetic*.[20]

In a literary process, some characters may be scapegoated due to the political, cultural and ideological rivalries. In the similar vein, Gunn's theory succession narrative deliberates on conflict and mimesis in relation to the *tendency* of the succession conflict.[21] Hans Jansen also argues that in a wishful literary mimesis, suppression of the other cultures is easily built in.[22] Mimesis is therefore part of the literary origin, a precondition for culture and interpretation. An ideological mimicry shapes the fate of the written documents, creates the norm and cements the interpretation. Mimetism conditions the reader and belittles the culture and ideology of the *others*. Thus, literary-ideological structure foregrounds the rivalry in support or in opposition to one another.

Hypothetically, I posit the reading of Jeroboam-Rehoboam succession narrative as an example of Girardian mimesis constructed about desire for power (power politics),

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[18] J. Rosenberg, *King and Kin: Political Allegory in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 101.
[19]R. Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* (trans.), Y. Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), pp. 22, 39, 53.
[20]*Mimetism* in the study of biblical culture is introduced by Girard. Girard, *Deceit, Desire*, pp. 22, 39, 53.
[21] Gunn argues for *sex, intrigue and violence* concerning Succession Narrative in David-Bathsheba's story in 2 Sam. 11-12. Against Gunn, Jansen argues for *desire, rivalry and collective violence* triangular literary picture in the same passage. I look at the possibility of reading the Jeroboam-Rehoboam Succession Narrative literature in the shape of *desire, collective rivalry and liberation* based on Gunn and Jansen's framework. David M. Gunn, *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* (Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 1978), p. 23. Also see, Leo G. Perdue, "Is there Anyone Left of the House of Saul? Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative," *JSOT* 30 (1984): pp. 67-84 (68-69). Walter Brueggemann, *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 41.
[22]Hans J. L. Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry and Collective Violence in the 'Succession Narrative,'" *JSOT* 55 (1992): pp. 39-59 (39).

collective rivalry, and of mediator and liberation.[23] When Girard's methodological framework to the Jeroboam-Rehoboam narrative structure is applied, the functions of the character deduced by the Dtr becomes more clearer for the readers. In Girardian triangular dynamics, Jeroboam (marginalized) is the subject of desire, freedom from yoke is the object of desire, and *Rehoboam* is the obstacle for desire who claimed rightful possession of the objective. Rehoboam is the possessor of *desire* of Jeroboam, and as a possessor of the desire Rehoboam monopolizes and dominates the socio-political realm. Hence, the *tendency* (Gunn) of rivalry and the rivalry itself is inevitable. Jeroboam and the Northerners who were denied of the *desire* establish themselves to fight for liberation against the Judaean *coup d'état*. The literary artistry of the DH overlooked the possibility that dramatic mimetism of rivalry is consciously prompted by the dominant ideology imposed. The Dtr may or may not be conscious of mimetism, but the text shows mimetism at play, and mimetic elements opens the possibility of looking at the social class struggle in the text.

On the social history of the lived realities of the marginalized in the text, Gottwald sees the lack of *social historical account* in the HB. Gottwald states that, "historical nature of the texts must appropriate unveiling of social classes yet there is no uniformity . . . biases in narrative such as opposing social class perspectives are vividly evident."[24] To Gottwald, the DH's information is of great historical value, however, the "information is both unevenly distributed over the monarchy and that it is stamped with the DH's biased interpretation."[25] In a mimetic literary display, outlook of the conflicting classes are totally concealed.[26] In the case of Jeroboam-Rehoboam narrative, it is the plight of the confronting class to the hegemony that is concealed or if not, characterized as a villain, but the history of the winning hegemony dictates the story being told. Gottwald emphasises that there is a theoretical lag in studying sociology as a possible hermeneutical and exegetical tool despite much have been done on biblical texts and traditions. He argues that sociology is impartial to religious integrity that traditions would have emphasised. There is even more need to exegete the hegemonic ideology, religious and theological categories in the text. Hence, biblical studies cannot

[23]Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel,* pp. 22, 39, 53.
[24]Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic," p. 10.
[25] Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible,* p. 296.
[26] Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic," p. 10.

remain embedded and "be ruled by the elite capitalistic ideology which ignores the existing social classes and their ethos."[27]

David Jobling talks about the account of Solomonic hegemony in 1 Kings 4-10, offering the opinion that the texts are surrounded with an impression (mimesis) of benevolent wisdom that persuades the people to embrace harsh measures enthusiastically.[28] Likewise, Robert Coote suggests that the story of the rebellion of Jeroboam and "the Northerners as recorded in Kings highlights intelligible common sense concerning society, which stands to the disagreement on what was formerly understood about Solomon's wisdom and policies."[29] Precisely, these social realities were finally voiced at Shechem when the concession was demanded. The principal grievance of the Northern delegation centres on the "harsh labour" imposed by Solomon, after all the multiple projects in Jerusalem (temple, palace, fortifications) are primarily built at Northern expense.[30] In addition, the burdensome form of surplus extractions and heavy taxation in kind, had become a widespread frustration of the marginal majority.[31]The peoples' desire was for the relaxation of the corvée for the continued association with the house of David.[32]

Gerhard Lenski looks at the social stratification in agrarian societies in the late monarchic period. He underlines a "distinctive arrangement of societal interactions, roles, power relations and marked social inequalities in the agrarian-based cultures."[33] He locates the social inequality within the parameter of "power distribution, work forces and distribution of rights and honours, which to him is mostly because of the corrupted system."[34] Lenski argues that "power" in the late monarchic Israelite society is sanctioned by the hierarchical dynasty. Hence, the imperial dynamics of economic centralization made monarchic religion the affairs of the state, and the sacred temple a sanctuary for the dynasty. Such a system caused people in the periphery to lose honour,

[27] Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic," p. 3.
[28] David Jobling, "'Forced Labour': Solomon's Golden Age and the Question of Literary Representation," *Semeia* 54 (1992): pp. 57-76 (57).
[29] Robert B. Coote, *In Defence of Revolution: The Elohist History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 61ff.
[30] Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama,* p. 59.
[31] Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic," p. 11.
[32] Cogan, *1 Kings*, p. 351.
[33] Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 210-211. Similar work on the ancient Israelite sociological stratification is done by T. F. Chaney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975), pp. 252-255.
[34] Lenski, *Power and Privilege,* p. 210.

privilege and rights, and hence they submitted to acting as cheap labour for the advantage of the powerful. This hierarchy contributed to a social stratification. For instance, the Dtr's remark on the ideology of royal grants made to Jehoiachin by the Babylonian suggests that such practices in the ancient world rarely reached people in the margins. Otherwise, poor people would have inherited ancestral land for their primary cultivation and livelihood, which were usurped by the powerful elites (1 Kings 21).

In such a reality, most of the people in the margins of a text such as 1 Kings 12 are labourers and peasants. They constituted the support system of the hegemonic apparatus and the privileged few. They paid tributes and taxes and multiplied human services for livelihood without royal grant and favour for increase in productions. In fact, what Rehoboam demonstrated in 1 Kings 12 is patently the representation of the authoritarian-hierarchical class. Rehoboam's royal decree compounded the misery of the mass represented by Jeroboam.

For a postcolonial reader, the text is a place of struggle between an unrepentant dominant ideology and the voice of the mass. When postcolonial readers read texts such as 1 Kings 12, it is inevitable that the ideology of the biased narrator is critiqued, and they attempt to enhance the voice of those that were intentionally or unintentionally side-lined. As mentioned above, to many socio-scientific readers, the re-reading of the biblical stories needs to examine literary styles, narrative biases, and whims in the interpretation. Counter-reading tyrannical texts from an oppressed framework is to propose a reading perspective from the marginalized paradigm against the ideo-theological truth claims and universalistic interpretation. The peoples' stories, which are rooted in their social location, can be a prospective hermeneutical framework for the postcolonial biblical interpretation. 1 Kings 12 as a matter of problem I call for an interpretation from a postcolonial perspective is to counter-read the oppressive elements in the text, both in the literary structure and in the derivability of its meaning:

> (i) That, in this class stratified Israelite society, the call for centralization at Jerusalem turned out to be an unwelcome policy of the monarchy. Pursuing this theme for the marginalized readers like NEI can be suppressive when they see the parallel to the Hindutva policies in India. What matters then in my re-reading is to reverse its traditional hegemonic interpretation to a legitimated reading of the periphery i.e. Dan and Bethel where voices are represented.

(ii) The counter-reading sets a modular example for espousing marginal interpretation which I propose is the *hermeneutics of voice*.

(iii) It sets a perspective where a truth-claim-historiography is refuted.

(iv) It challenges a literary universality and dismantle a totalizing tendency of suppressive biblical interpretation.

(v) The DH elements of hope is projected in the marginalized voice of resistance.

5.3 Imperial Motifs in the 1 Kings 12: Language of Doom and Annihilation

Instead of upholding just rule by the monarch(y),[35] what Solomon and the hierarchy did to the people was dehumanizing. In such an interpretation, the use of the term 'yoke' (עֹל) is one[36] that illuminates the suppressive ideology of both king and text and seems to have also influenced and legitimized biblical interpretation in silencing the subordinates. Yet, despite the efforts of this ideological text, the voice of the suppressed is heard in the slogan at Shechem לְאׇהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (To your tents, O Israel!), I shall argue that this gives voice to the hope of the suppressed in the confrontation. Hence, in reading this text as an example of what Ernst Bloch calls the "underground Bible,"[37] a reading that proceeds from the suppressed paradigm, potential hermeneutics of voice can be espoused.

5.3.1 Text: 1 Kings 12: 14

וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם כַּעֲצַת הַיְלָדִים לֵאמֹר אָבִי הִכְבִּיד אֶת-עֻלְּכֶם וַאֲנִי אֹסִיף עַל-עֻלְּכֶם
אָבִי יִסַּר אֶתְכֶם בַּשּׁוֹטִים, וַאֲנִי אֲיַסֵּר אֶתְכֶם בָּעַקְרַבִּים

and spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, "My father made **your yoke heavy**, but I will add to **your yoke**; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."

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[35]In his comparative study on political theology of the ANE and biblical Israel, Launderville sets forth the ideal of the political cultures of kingship. Basically, he locates that part of the role of a king is to distribute "material and symbolic goods to the subjects" (Justice and Equality), as a symbol centralizing the community (Security and Representational), as responsible for attention to the divine world (Davidic Promise), and as a just ruler (People based Royalty). Dale Launderville, *Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing co., 2003), p. Introduction.

[36] Relevant Suppressive imperial languages apparent in the text are in v. 4 הִקְשָׁה (to make severe), כָּבֵד (heavy); in v. 10 קְטַנִּי (my little finger), עָבָה (to be thick); in v. 11 הֶעְמִיס (to load), יִסַּר (to chasten), בַּשּׁוֹטִים (with the whips, scourges), עַקְרָב (scorpion). Terry A. Armstrong, Douglas L. Busby and Cyril F. Carr, *A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), pp. 190-191.

[37] Ernst Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity: The Religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom* (London: Verso Press, 2009), p. xv. Original publication by New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.

(i) וְאָנִי אֹסִיף עַל-עֻלְּ (but I will add to/upon your yoke): The Decree Passed

A further study of the metaphor of the עֹל in v. 14 can show that suppressive language can universalize the meaning of the texts. Yoke in v. 14 is a continued metaphorical signifier of Solomon's corvée over the people. Solomon's ambition to make Jerusalem supreme, in the double aspect of political and religious capital, by using taxation and conscripted labour tended inevitably to the depreciation of the provincial cultic sites, to the political irritation of the local communities and to the tribes of the North.[38] Such policies were the ways by which Solomon victimized the people both economically and emotionally. Eventually, the trigger for revolt was the undiplomatic arrogance of Rehoboam.

Texts from Mesopotamia and Amarna-age Palestine used the terminology of 'yoke' as a metaphor for political and religious subordination and subjection. The king lays the 'yoke' of his overlordship on those he has subjected. In the context of ANE, to rebel against one's overlord is therefore to "break the עֹל."[39] These lines introduce the religio-political nuances of עֹל. Appearing 40 times in the OT, particularly 15 times in 1 Kings, עֹל appears in relation to certain imperial aspects. By and large, עֹל is a metaphor of power over the powerless; the *forced labour metaphor*[40] is one for instance. A metaphorical עֹל is a window into the element of power and the existence of marginality in the social location of the text.

In the Rehoboam-Jeroboam narrative, עֹל is a central focus of the negotiation that Jeroboam carries out on behalf of the oppressed. In fact, Rehoboam's עֹל is not absolutely rejected by the people, as a concession was sought to enable them to remain loyal to the king's authority.[41] The lexeme כָּבֵד (heavy) particularly describes the intensity of the subjection. The speech in 12: 4 gives voice to the reality of the experience of those at the margins:

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[38] Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p. 256.

[39] Since Mesopotamian kings considered their actions to be commanded by the gods, the deity was thought of as the agent who imposed עֹל on conquered peoples; to rebel was to shake the עֹל of the deity. One Babylonian myth recounts that Marduk created humans to "bear the עֹל" to serve Marduk instead of other gods. This religio-political metaphor is not found in Egypt, perhaps because, in the Egyptian view, the stability of the world depended not on the obedience from the subjects, and the obedience to gods by the monarchs, but on the presence of the king, who (himself) was also god. Norderstedt H. Schmoldt, "עֹל," in G. Johannes Botterweck, *et al*.(eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the OT*, p. 72.

[40]Schmoldt, "עֹל," p. 72.

[41] John Gray, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 304.

> Your father made our yoke grievous/hard (hiphil **הִקְשָׁה).** Now therefore **lighten/easy (hiphil הָקֵל)** the grievous service of thy father (מֵעֲבֹדַת אָבִיךָ הַקָּשָׁה) and his heavy (כָּבֵד) yoke that he placed (נָתַן) on us, **and we will serve you.**

The speech is respectful, firm and straightforward. It contrasts the past deeds of Solomon (אָבִיךָ) with Rehoboam's future policies from whom (וְאַתָּה *you*-emphatic pronoun)[42] the marginalized hoped-for deliverance. In return for the leniency of the yoke the Israelites pledge to serve the new king. However, Rehoboam rejects the appeal by intensifying the burden of the yoke.

(ii) וְאָנִי אֲיַסֵּר אֶתְכֶם בָּעַקְרַבִּים (but I will discipline you with scorpions)

In the OT עַקְרָב (scorpion) appears in four instances[43] in which all its contexts seem to signify poison, wicked and evil acts. Etymologically, עַקְרָב is deliberated from the perspective of the verb עָקַר signifying to "tear out by the roots." עֹקֶר which is also a noun masculine occurs frequently in the Sefire Inscriptions,[44] that is traced back to the eighth century is connected with the adjective עָקָר which is "barren," meaning to cease to have an offspring. The identification of this etymology establishes the notion that עָקַר is to cause something to annihilate or to extinct.

Rehoboam's use of the phrase *discipline you with scorpions* is nothing short of a threat for the marginalized Northerners. In a most literal sense, scorpions as predatory arachnids that normally dwells in the dark places of the ruin remains of objects and are hidden under stones and woods. They are flesh-eating (carnivorous) and cunningly move about in the night (nocturnal) and apparently threatening as it shows up in the movement of its tails. Scorpions themselves feed on the smaller living insects around them. The sting/venom imparted in their bite is dangerous and causes much suffering and various symptom within minutes of its bite.[45]

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[42] The NRSV ignores the emphatic pronoun, which is strongly emphasized in Hebrew by similar sounding "now" following it. "you, now lighten the hard service. . ." Also see, Walsh, *1 Kings*, p. 161.
[43] Deut. 8: 15 (fiery serpents, and scorpions); 2 Chron. 10: 11, 14 (I will chastise you with scorpions); Ezek. 2: 6 (thou dost dwell among scorpions); 1 Kings 12: 11, 14 (I will chastise you with scorpions). George V. Wigrane, *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the OT* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2001), p. 975.
[44] More readings on Sefire Inscription is found in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire I and II," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 81/3 (1961): pp. 178-222. A detail etymological derivation of עָקַר is also found in Bonn J. Fabry, "עָקַר," in G. Johannes Botterweck, *et al.*(eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the OT*, pp. 320-322.
[45]*Ref.*, 1 Kings 12: 1, 14; 2 Chron. 10: 11, 14.

G. S. Cansdale suggests that the reference of 'scorpion' in 12: 14 is the many-tailed whip, loaded with hooked knobs of metal ready to cast fire and stones (1 Macc. 6: 51).[46] In the words of Alexander Cruden, עַקְרָב (as a noun) or עָקַר (as a verb) in 12: 14 בָּעַקְרַבִּים (with the scorpions) refers to a pointed whip, or pointed thorns, apparently like the scorpion's tail. Rehoboam's response with the scorpion metaphor is equivalent to inflicting a scourge for the suffering mob.[47] In the NT scorpion is compared to a torment (Rev. 9: 5). Hence, עֹל and עָקַר by symbolic explanation becomes even more a threat for doom and hopelessness to the marginalized at the Shechem revolt. The movement of the plot appears straightforward as v. 16 resurrects all the bitter feeling of past generations that were meted out to the Northerners.

5.4 De-centralization: Hermeneutics of Voice (1 Kings 12)

5.4.1 Text: 1 Kings 12: 16

In the broader context of 1 Kings 1-12, Jeroboam's epic comeback from Egypt to Shechem protest functions as a critique of royal power and self-aggrandizing behaviour. Ironically, it is Solomon's attempted murder that drives Jeroboam into exile in the first place (1 Kings 11: 40), and then it is the corruption of the Solomonic regime that is initially culpable for the schism, because Solomon's oppressive policies were what created the climate of complaint that Jeroboam comes to represent.[48] Solomon's death notice in 1 Kings 11: 43 ushers in a new age. Most poignantly, readers of 1 Kings recalls the earlier divine words in 11: 11-13 that YHWH will sweep away the kingdom after Solomon and the accession of Rehoboam with one tribe remaining in the Davidic house. The fault line of this imminent political earthquake might not be hard to predict, since the distinction between the two kingdoms as reviewed is referred to in the book of Samuel.

However, what is interesting is Rehoboam's first journey to Shechem which is apparently the Northern city. The choice of Shechem is a curious one says Bodner.[49] The text 12: 1 laconically states that Rehoboam had to go to Shechem because he is to be

[46] G. S. Cansdale, "Scorpion," in J. D. Doughlas, F. F. Bruce, *et al.* (eds.), *The New Bible Dictionary* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1962), p. 1150.
[47] A. Cruden, *Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments: with Notes and Biblical Proper Names under One Alphabetical Arrangement* (eds.), C.H. Irwin (London: Lutterworth Press, 1951), p. 420.
[48] Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama,* p. 59.
[49] Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama,* p. 60.

hailed by *all Israel* as the king, but Bodner says, it is difficult to decide *who* chooses this site.[50] DeVries opines that Rehoboam found himself obliged to travel to Shechem since he had no other alternative.[51] By contrast, Choon Leong Seow believes that Rehoboam intentionally opts for Shechem because it is likely that his coronation at the Northern city was to assert his authority over the Northern tribes.[52] My opinion is that Shechem is a space for voice, discipline and most importantly governance especially when considering a couple of earlier historical events of Israel (Joshua 24 and Judges 9). In the event recorded in Joshua 24, it is conceived that the people protested Solomon's innovations and his favouritism toward the South. Shechem becomes an opportunity to represent voice and a platform for complaint against the king's abuse of power. A reading perspective where Northern site Shechem is legitimated historically and as a contemporary platform for raising the voice against the hegemony makes the Shechem slogan for de-centralization empowering for marginalized readers.

(i) לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (To your tents, O Israel): The Shechem Slogan

Appropriately in v. 16, in response to the humiliating ordeal, the mob reacted in a slogan incorporating two couplet lines as their expression of dissent to be yoked further by the centralized hegemony of the South. It is befitting that the narrator closes the assembly episode by highlighting the popular response to Rehoboam's inept statesmanship. Following Rehoboam's conspiracy with the הַיְלָדִים, the decree passed at the assembly invited chaos. As a result, Rehoboam loses his people.

וַיַּרְא כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לֹא-שָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲלֵהֶם, וַיָּשִׁבוּ הָעָם אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר לֵאמֹר מַה-לָּנוּ חֵלֶק בְּדָוִד
וְלֹא-נַחֲלָה בְּבֶן-יִשַׁי לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, עַתָּה רְאֵה בֵיתְךָ דָּוִד; וַיֵּלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְאֹהָלָיו

When all Israel saw that the king would not listen to them, the people answered the king,

"What share do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Look now to your own house, O David."
So Israel went away to their tents.

[50] Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama,* p. 60.
[51] S. J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (Waco: WBC, 1985), p. 157.
[52] Choon Leong Seow, "I & II Kings," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), p. 100.

It is plausible to base the interpretation of the phrase לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל on the immediate context which emphasizes the role played by הַיְלָדִים. This poetic slogan apparently is a concept that is politically loaded with both military and historic implications rather than sacral or ritual overtones. In fact, the slogan signifies absolute resistance to the clutches of the hegemony. The call to return to one's own 'tent' as a response to Rehoboam's decree reflects Northerner's desire in gaining rights and privileges by being de-centralized (Jer. 28: 11a).

As we see in the text, a key word in the peoples' slogan is 'tent.' Campbell comments that the cry, לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל appeals to the theme of resistance to the monarchy (2 Sam. 20: 1), and it "recalls the ancient ideal of autonomy and freedom from exploitation expressed in Israel's early self-definitions."[53] Walter Dietrich opines that, "although they no longer live in tents (except in war times) the slogan evokes ancient custom of the Northern Israel's past."[54] In the context of resistance to the yoke this expression "reports like a national anthem, the lyric outcry against the dynasty"[55] that declares, "let us mind our own business." The "tent" as a popular theme counters the elitist term "yoke," and it is this paradigm through which I read 1 Kings 12.

אֹהֶל (tent), which is also translated as tabernacle, is mostly regarded as a refuge point, a dwelling place such as the hearth in a home. According to Klaus Koch, in the literal sense אֹהֶל is a retiring shelter after a soldier concludes the war.[56] It is understood that אֹהֶל is seldom used for an individual house which might be called בַּיִת. Hence, אֹהֶל also signifies an expression of a polemic diatribe against unjust domination. Since אֹהֶל by its history is a "semi-nomadic lifestyle"[57] for security and safeguard, it can be filled with gestures both good as well as evil. Inside its sphere of activities, one's destiny can be unfolded. So, to Koch, alongside a literal pitching of tent is the tent as an ideology.[58] A tent can embody safety and the preservation of one's own identity as well as a refuge from a threat to one's destiny. Therefore, אֹהֶל embodies a force as well as a refuge.

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[53] Campbell, "A Land Divided: Judah and Israel from the Death of Solomon to the Fall of Samaria," in Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, p. 277.
[54] Walter Dietrich, "1 and 2 Kings," in John Barton and John Muddiman (eds.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 241.
[55] Montgomery, *A Criticaland Exegetical Commentary*, p. 250.
[56] Klaus Koch, "אֹהֶל," in G. Johannes Botterweck, *et al.*(eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the OT*, p. 120. Also see 2 Sam. 11: 11.
[57] Dietrich, "1 and 2 Kings," p. 241.
[58] Koch, "אֹהֶל," p. 120.

Reading the resistance elements in the narrative brings to light the depths of a soulful cry of the people. It concerns untold stories, pain and agony meted on them. It is a voice against the hegemony. There is where I see the *hermeneutics of voice* important for marginalized readers such as NEI. This prompts me to relate the voice of the tribes in NEI with Grossman's idea of a liberating voice imagined in his novel *To The End of the Land* (2010). Grossman's emphasis on *the voice* in his novel intrigued me. I summarize:

To the End of the Land is a story of motherhood, of parenthood, of family work, of a woman's (Ora) love for two men (Avram and Ilan), and of two men's love for her; a story of the birth and growing up of a boy who at the age of eighteen will turn into an Israeli soldier- a role that does not end even after his formal service is over. Hence, the novel is also the story of Israel's wars from 1967 until who knows when. Present in all these circumstances is the human voice, as though meant to express Israeli familial existence in the shadow of a war that has no end. This complex and multi-dimensional existence is expressed not in a "still, small voice," but through stories and confessions spoken into the ears of the people nearby at critical junctures in life. Without a doubt, the other side of the never-ending wordage rumbling through the novel is silence: things remaining unsaid, things whose story is held hidden because of their gravity, things that make their escape from the mouths of people who bottle their stories for years on end. These silenced things that come to light slowly, especially on account of Ora's humanist and enlightened nature, possess no less vocal power than the things spoken when they occur. For the novel begins with a call to Ora shouting out from the depths of her nightmare, "Hey, girl, quiet! . . . Be quiet! You woke everyone up!"

Grossman's focus is on the relation between the voices that were silenced and the voice that could release the silenced voices. The voice is represented by Ora whose hope is belittled in the dark space of the hospital room when warmongers oppress the poor on the outside. Accordingly, Ben-Dov says, Grossman "attempts to endow the voice with description, in order to make the voice visible and audible,"[59] which in other words, the voice is to be represented and emancipated. To substantiate what Ben-Dov has already explained, Grossman's idea of writing down the voice is also a mode of

[59] Ben-Dov "Voices of War, Illness, and Dream," p. 291.

listening to the stories of the anti-oppression slogans, and a window to understanding biased socio-political dynamics prevalent in the Israeli-Palestinian context.

Grossman tells the readers through Avram's war Speech that the voice is the voice of those who cling to life at a moment when any prospect of survival is obliterated. Likewise, the voice of the marginalized in 1 Kings 12, is one historic voice, the voice that distinctly carries in its stories of pain and agony, untold plight, and suffering. The *voice* specifically represented by the slogan in v. 16 explains the depths of a person's soul. The slogan is that of the voice of hope, principally founded on YHWH's justice for the North, the legitimacy of its kingship prophesied through Ahijah. Therefore, the slogan is raised on the objective truth of the promise of God for *all Israel* (2 Sam 7); read this way, we see elements of hope in the dissenting voice unveiled against the elements of yoke, relevantly, the Nothian Dtr's message of doom.

Spivak's challenging question, "Can the subaltern speak?"[60] and Grossman's stifling command, "Hey, girl, quiet! Be quiet! You woke everyone up!"[61] relate to the principal quest for liberation from epistemic violence such as in 1 Kings 12 and the marginalized tribes in NEI. Hope can be grounded and constructed on the freedom and ability to speak one's story. Stories of one's social location becomes a collective strength especially when oppressions are to be resisted. The oppressed peoples' outlook to the Bible reading must incorporate telling of *their Stories to Live*.[62] The voice of the suppressed in 1 Kings 12 is that of a voice that draws its strength from reality. The imperative לְאׇהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל is in fact a victory cry.

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[60] Gayatri Chakarvorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gareth Griffiths, et. al. (eds.), *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 25.

[61] Originally written in Hebrew title אשה בורחת מבשורה (*Isha Borachat Mi'bsora* translated, *a woman Escapes from a Message*) is a 2008 novel. Cohen (trans.), Grossman, *To the End of the Land,* p. 3. By genre, it is an anti-war literary fiction. This shout, to silence a young woman dreaming, who cries out and weeps in her sleep, opens the novel. In it, the human voice is given a central role in advancing the plot, in the characterization of its five protagonists, and in the reconstruction of their lives. In fact, the human voice in the novel is an image that at times stands alone, cut off from the semantics it is supposed to bear, and overshadows the scene. The exotic aspect of the novel contends with its visual aspect, and both the aural and the visual collaborate in capturing in a sweeping, complex way the Israeli reality, unparalleled anywhere else in the world. The hidden struggle between the two senses begins immediately, from the novel's opening chapter, which takes place in a hospital during the Six Day War, when a total blackout is imposed throughout Israel. "Turn on the light," the dreaming girl says to the youth who told her that she had shouted or sung in her sleep, "Are you crazy? ... They'll kill us if we do that." That is, the initial acquaintance between the two, which will develop into great love and bond, begins in a hospital, in wartime and under a blackout, connected only by the human. Nitza Ben-Dov, "Voices of War, Illness, and Dream," *Hebrew Studies* 54 (2013): pp. 287-298.

[62] Joan Didion, *We Tell Our Stories in Order to Live* (USA: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

Reading לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל in the light of voice that propagate de-centralization of power and appreciation of the predicaments of the peoples in the margin can facilitate hope. Placing the conversation of the marginalized Christian tribes in NEI with 1 Kings 12 in search of the *hermeneutics of voice* can throw light upon:

(i) Uncovering the backdrop of readers' lived experiences.
(ii) engendering equality, rights and appreciation of a marginal/minority identities.
(iii) Garnering indigenous resources of the native/marginalized.
(iv) Instilling suspicion of a skilled artistic historiography/narration.
(v) Counter-reading the inadmissible manipulation of the interpretation.
(vi) Attending to the voice that are allegedly characterized.

Section-II

5.5 International Politics and Colonial Dynamics in 2 Kings 22-23

During Josiah's reign, "Jerusalem developed greatly with the construction of Mishneh and Maktesh"[63] as a quarter in the western slopes of Jerusalem. These quarters are told to have served as industrial and commercial centres. Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 give accounts of the list of Judaean restoration and expansion. Without a doubt, these lists of territorial and popular expansions of Judah is attributed to the reign of Josiah (*Cf*., Joshua 15, 18, 19).[64]

These territorial expansions and reorganizations did not stand on its own but were associated with the revival of the Israelite religious traditions. These found expression in:

(i) The cultic purification in the worship life and the re-establishment of the Passover in Jerusalem (centralization).

[63] There was a rapid demographic growth during Josiah's time. They were basically new refugee settlers from the territories of North and West that had been annexed by Assyrian empire. The name of the two-city emerged are the Mishneh and Maktesh quarters. Mordechai Cogan, "Into Exile: From the Assyrian Conquest to Israel to the Fall of Babylon," in Michael David Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 325.
[64] Pertinent Ephraimite cities like Jericho and Bethel including Lydda/Lydea and Ona are considered part of Judah. This relevant discussion is also borrowed by the (unknown) author after 2004 in "Josiah," accessed in https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/josiah, on 19 May 2017. The author also seems to have largely depended on Mordechai Cogan's 1998 article.

(ii) The interpretation and authorization of the discovered Book became both as a religious and as a spiritual initiative. The possible decline of Assyrian power and the residual political imbroglio of the Judaean themselves prompted these reorganizations.

What was significant before and during Josiah's reign was the Assyrian force. The Assyrian power was already a great concern for the security of the Judaeans before Josiah. Tiglath-Pileser-III (745-727 BCE) who represented its political sway is said to have restructured the government and military expansions that would blanket the known world of the time.[65] The political situation changed when king Ahaz (732-716 BCE), a contemporary to Tiglath-Pileser-III reigned in Judah. The Assyrians territory is said to have come closer by twenty miles to Judah and its security was threatened. Ahaz had only made things worse by offering to subject himself to the Assyrians, in exchange for protection against the kings of Damascus and Northern Israel. Ahaz's clumsy diplomacy had serious socio-religious consequences for his people. Much of the Judaean territories were lost and a hefty slice of the royal revenue was squeezed.[66] In such a situation it was foreseeable that people would resort to any activities to look after themselves with no thought of the wider social and moral repercussions.

After Ahaz, Hezekiah (715-686 BCE) was still tempted to make his own bid.[67] He began by demolishing idols of the Assyrian gods and putting a stop to other alien forms of worship in Jerusalem (which were partly introduced by Ahaz). Knowing that many inhabitants of Jerusalem were from the old Israelite tribes, he made significant efforts to unify these tribes. Having also reorganized the army, his opportunity came in 705 BCE with the death of Sargon-II, and both the Babylonians and Egyptians attempted to form an alliance with him to help him overthrow Assyria. The Assyrian king Sennacherib (705-681 BCE) responded by marching through Palestine, causing Egypt and the Philistines to collapse at once, and subsequently moved against Judah, weakening Hezekiah's position. Instead of integrating the towns and villages of Judah

[65] James I. Packer, William White and Merrill C. Tenney (eds.), *The World of the Old Testament* (Alton: Window Books, 1982), p. 151. John Drane, *Old Testament Story: An Illustrated Documentary* (Herts: Lion Publishing, 1983), p. 118.
[66]Drane, *Old Testament Story*, p. 122.
[67]Drane, *Old Testament Story*, pp. 123ff.

into his empire, he handed them to various Philistine kings. Hezekiah was left with no supporters, and so Sennacherib moved him to Jerusalem to live like a bird in a cage.[68]

It is assumed that Sennacherib annexed Judah and the rest of the foreign nations by 701 BCE. Perhaps, this is so because Assyria saw its ambition achieved during Sennacherib's reign. He managed to crush Egypt, and captured its capital city, Thebes. In such a context, Hezekiah's successor, Manasseh (co-regency 697-687 BCE; sole reign; 687-643 BCE) had no room to exercise either his nationalistic motives or religious reforms. He was no match for Assyria's power (2 Kings 21: 1-18).[69] Things changed with the Assyrians because of the feud between Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE) and his brother Shamash-shum-ukin. [70] After Ashurbanipal (627 BCE) died, the Assyrians were fighting for survival against the Babylonians and the Medes. The Egyptians then emerged as a stronger force. The kingdom of Lydia and the Medes began to raid the territories of the Assyrians.[71]

In the wake of weakening Assyrian power and the mushrooming of the kingdoms, there emerged the revival of national hope in Judah. The international relations and politics were in fluidity when Josiah became king of Judah. The Assyrian Empire was not as strong as the past. The Neo-Babylonian Empire was on their verge of taking the lead in the international politics, although it was not an easy task. The Egyptians were recovering from the then Assyrian hegemony. For this short period, Jerusalem was governed by the Judaean themselves without an intervention from the outsider.

Josiah took charge in Judah after the death of his father Amon. He set about re-asserting his country's independence and identity. Archaeological evidence shows that he controlled as far as North of Galilee and his sway extended east of the River Jordan into Gilead. In an excavation conducted by David Ussishkin at Tell ed-Duweir, Lachish which according to 2 Kings 18: 14 was demolished during the Sennacherib crisis (701

[68] Donald John Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 33.
[69] Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, p. 31.
[70] See, Donald John Wiseman, "Ashurbanipal King of Assyria," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, available inhttps://www.britannica.com/biography/Ashurbanipal, accessed on 12th July 2016.
[71]Drane, *Old Testament Story*, p. 130.

BCE) and had become the vassal region of the Assyrians was rebuilt by Josiah.[72] Necho-II (610-595 BCE) was an Egyptian king when Josiah was on his religio-political mission in Judah.

According to Cogan, it was in "the spring of 609 BCE that Pharaoh Necho-II led an army up to the Euphrates River to aid the Assyrian against the Babylonians."[73] However, by the time they were crossing Jezreel valley, Josiah's army blocked their forthcoming leading to a fierce battle between the two at Megiddo.[74] Having killed Josiah in his encounter at Megiddo, it is said that Necho-II then appointed his candidate to replace Josiah and made the successor pay tribute on behalf of Judah.[75] From an optimistic view of the text, Sweeney is of the opinion that Huldah's prophecy of a peaceful death of Josiah contradicts with his sudden death at Megiddo and that Josiah's risk taking confrontation was to resist the progress of Necho-II which according to the CH is the disobedience of the word of God represented by Necho's warning.[76] Further exegetical study will be made on this element of the text later in the chapter.

The biblical accounts of the Judaean kings show that, even prior to Josiah's reign, kings had fervently risked their role to defend their power, land, rights and privileges of the kingdom and its people. We see that YHWH have secured lives and kingdom from a complete annihilation. Hope for the kingdom never failed. Similarly, the plan of YHWH for the exile remains itself a matter of deliberate discussions until the Judaeans return in 538 BCE under the Persian king Cyrus.

5.6 Two Parameters of Observations in Josianic Reformation

The Josianic period was intensively charged with ethnic consciousness, religious revivals and political resurgence. A study of the DH cannot ignore the discussions of the exiles' ethnic consciousness which contributed to the creation of the Deuteronomistic community and its history. In this section, I will highlight two parameters concerning Josiah's background and reform. Based on these, I will argue for an interpretation of his

[72] John R. Bartlett, "Archaeology," in J. W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook,* p. 64.
[73] Cogan, "Into Exile," p. 346.
[74] Cogan, "Into Exile," pp. 344-346.
[75] "Necho-II King of Egypt," in *Encyclopedia Britannica,* available in https://www.britannica.com/biography/Necho-II, accessed on 12th July 2016.
[76] Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah,* pp. 45-46.

confrontation with Necho-II within a hermeneutical paradigm of voice and show the potential of reading centralization from a marginalized context of NEI.

5.6.1 Cultic Purity or Ethnic Unity

Just as the ambiguities that might linger on the books of the HB, the redactional composition of DH is ambiguous. If what we have as the final product of the DH comes from the hand of the Dtr(s), then this form of the work itself must be placed during the period of exile, at the time when once again, Israel was stateless and in need of an identity that would outweigh the threat of cultural and religious assimilation. In this connection, the Dtr's notion of "Israel" lay on the centrality of covenant by which YHWH bound this people together.[77] Keeping the *covenant* to which the identity and uniqueness of Israel are attached with, Josiah's criterion of reformation can be argued in multi-faceted ways. Questions such as these can be asked: Does the reformation represent voice of the people to resist? Is the reformation purely religious? Is the reformation an attempt at reliving the past/remembrance? Or is it a fight for ethnic and cultural rights?

Two similar points can be noted from the arguments of John McKay, and Cogan whose commentaries on the Judaeans' cultic lives are apparently paradoxical:

> (i) The Assyrians did not force the Assyrian cult to be established in Judaean territories. Yet, as John McKay argues, the influence and the endorsement of "Ashur worship on the defeated territories cannot be denied."[78]
>
> (ii) Cogan talks about, "the non-coercive religious attitude of the Assyrians or for cultural uniformity among the subjects."[79] However, considering Assyria's intrusion, the impact on Judah's socio-religious life cannot be denied.

Oddly, after two decades, Cogan produced another article that seemingly contradicts his previous statements. This new phase in the argument was reached with an appraisal by H. Spieckermann[80] where Cogan is reported to have stated:

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[77]Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries,* p. 56
[78]John McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrian 732-609 BC* (London: SCM Press, 1973), pp. 67-68.
[79]Mordechai Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Israel and Judah in the Eight and Seventh Centuries BCE* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), pp. 85-88, 95.
[80]Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur,* pp. 371ff.

> There is no distinction between provinces and vassal states as far as religious practice is concerned; all areas under Assyrian hegemony were constrained to worship Assyria's gods.[81]

Furthermore, Cogan also mentions that Josiah's reform could be understood as a *coup d'état* against Assyrian imperial power.[82] Kim's thesis clarifies the nature of Assyrian imperialism and Josiah's reform in a more appropriate way:

> What is clear is that, whether Judah was affected by cultural imperialism or political coercion or both, Judah's history and culture had been over-written, erased, or ignored during the Assyrian domination. Therefore part of Josiah's reform was to recover the Judaean 'inscriptions' which had been forgotten during Assyrian domination . . . some of the writings of the Josiah's court also contained not only about the 'discovery of the book of Law' or Josiah's reform but much to do with the identity of the people living in Judah at that time.[83]

In studying the religio-political materials of Israel, one cannot deny the impact Assyrians had on the ethno-communal environment of the Israelites. Biblical Israel, unlike, other foreign nations of the time was a confederation of the ethno-tribal community. The conventional concept of ethnicity currently appears to be out of fashion, as it is now considered as a changing phenomenon involving the construction and reconstruction of social interaction. This is the result of a changed identity as groups encounter new environments and newer experiences.[84] This suggests that ethnicity is closely bound up with group identity. Interaction between groups involve hetero-cultural confrontations and, as it occurs, produce ideologies of similarities as well as of differences. S. Malesevic says, "Ethnicity is a social entity where social actors produce relations where each one perceives about themselves and others as a distinct cultural collectivities."[85] Biblical scholars define ethnicity in the Bible from the perspective of "groupness" or "group identity," where there is an obvious discrimination of one ethnic boundary by the other. Generally, in the socio-

[81]Mordechai Cogan, "Judah under Assyrian Hegemony: A Re-examination of Imperialism and Religion," *JBL* 112 (1993): pp. 403-414 (405).
[82]Spieckermann did this study by showing that the gods mentioned in 2 Kings 23: 4-14, especially those known as the Assyrian and demonstrated that Assyrian did imposed religious obligation on vassal states as well as province. Cited in Mordechai Cogan. "Judah under Assyrian Hegemony, pp. 403-414.
[83]Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, p. 227.
[84]James C. Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," *CBR* 6/2 (2008): pp. 170-213 (172).
[85] S. Malesevic, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: SAGE, 2004), p. 4.

anthropological studies, "ethnic groups" are mostly seen as a minority group or a certain racial group.[86] Such groups contend for their rights and justice, challenging the dominant social order in order to safeguard cultures, worldviews and traditions.

Deuteronomy 1: 1-18 introduces the notion that Israel's identity was formed in Moab before crossing the Jordan.[87] This passage recounts the formation of an ethnic identity based on *Torah*, an indication of an *ideal* nation under Yahweh. Perhaps, this has shaped an ideology that enhances social and political agendas thereafter. From this perspective, the Josianic discourse in 2 Kings 22-23 is befitting in that the *Israelite ethnic identity*[88] is traced back. Like Malesevic, James C. Miller opines that the intensity of ethnic sentiments is situational. Therefore, he says that the question about Israelite's identity can be answered in asking "to know how they understood themselves as well as others perception about them given a particular point of time and space."[89] K. L. Sparks thinks that in the monarchic era, ethnic sentiments were intensified in the context where *peripheral groups*[90] or the diaspora Israelites were subjected under domination by more powerful imperialistic nations and kingdoms. Apparently, the sentiments then were mostly aggressive and oppositional. Hence, the ethno-religious identity consciousness of Josiah's period is likely fostered because of two threats:

(i) Firstly, the fear of identity erosion came in a novel form of "ethnic indicia found primarily in the priestly writings for instance the Sabbath, circumcision and ritual purity."[91]
(ii) Secondly, the threat of unimaginable loss of ancestral inheritance in terms of land, autonomy and culture triggered apprehensions.[92]

In this disposition, Sparks reckons that prophet Isaiah's theology was founded on the hegemonic Assyrian context where the threat of universal rule over the weaker nation was the focal agenda of the former. This accord takes the form by which one

[86]Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible," pp. 170-213. Malesevic, *The Sociology of Ethnicity*, pp. 1-2. J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 47.
[87]Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, pp. 63-75.
[88]Hall, *Ethnic Identity,* p. 25.
[89]Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," pp. 170-213.
[90]K. L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), p. 21.
[91]Priestly writings from the Holiness Code of Lev. 17-26. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, p. 314.
[92]Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," pp. 170-213.

understands that the Israelite ethnic identity sentiments were a response to Assyrian's imperial rule.[93] Therefore, my reading is that the Josianic policy of cultic purity reformation was inclusive of ethno-cultic reassertion.

Prior to Miller, similar thoughts on ethnicity and identity of Israelites were propounded by Mullen who argued that the ethno-cultic consciousness of the Israelites emerged after the devastation of the Temple leading to the phases of the Babylonian deportation. After which, the indigenous Israelites were distanced from their traditions and homeland and their dynastic lines were obstructed. Miller in discussing common thoughts on ethnicity and identity with Mullen states:

> Within this scenario, Mullen contends that the DtrH presents the exile in Babylon with a host of 'memories' they can draw upon as part of the historical people. It presents the ideal, programmatic depiction of Israel's ethnic, religious and cultural distinctiveness, setting forth two key elements that serve as a basis for Israelite identity. *First*, in contrast to all other nations, Israel stands in a unique relationship with Yahweh. *Second*, Israel must maintain certain behavioural norms corresponding to their faith.[94]

Despite DH's ideological and theological points of view that seems to have a message representative of the death of hope for the marginalized peoples, my interest is in unveiling these voices of the lived realities in these historical contexts. Read this way, readers from the marginalized location such as NEI can comprehend and identify themselves with the elements of voice of the marginalized in the texts. Given the Assyrians as predator of the vulnerable nations, and taken Israel to be one, I would assume the role of Josiah symbolized voice of hope to the people. These aspects of roles for transformation, reassertion, realization, and self-consciousness would have intensified the cultic as well as ethnic unity and nation's prosperity.

5.6.2 Josianic Reformation Conditioned by the State of Liminality

In the light of the first parameter of the Josianic reformation discussed above, here in the second observation, I will look at the oppressive socio-political context that includes the pressure of assimilation. Mullen's idea of ethnic consciousness seems to

[93]Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," pp. 170-213.
[94]Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, pp. 56, 59-60, 72. Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," p. 196.

have set framework for Miller who says ethnic consciousness are situational. These evaluations are convincing because the sentiments of self-worth do not arise in a vacuum but are situational, and the situation in the Josianic era is one of multiple crises. In this light, Sparks looks further back from the exilic situation to the times when imperial power of Assyria controlled Judah for over 60 years prior to Josiah's reign.[95] Assyria saw Judah and its people as the *Other*. Hence, Josiah's period that suffered multiple blows during the Assyria's regime cannot be overlooked in the study of the formation of ethnic consciousness of the Judaeans.

Building on these discussions, Kim's *Realpolitik of Liminality* will help us to read Josiah's context as one of ethnic crisis as well as consciousness *vis-à-vis* the reformation. The *Realpolitik of Liminality* is a phrase Kim used to discuss the Judaean fate before and during Josianic era. In his view, even prior to exile, Judah was like a petty state wedged in the political, and commercial matrix shaped by the Assyrians,[96] who were driven by the ideology of expansion and assimilation. Judah was positioned at the margin of the Assyrian empire, generally as a victim or as witness of exploitation.[97] As a result, the uniqueness of Judaean ethnic identity was shattered. Judah had no control over her own resources, lacking in economic and political security. Fear and anxiety made the community miserable. The prime cause of this, then, is the Assyrian imperialism that compelled the Judaean community to live in the state of liminality.

The politico-ideological factor that formed the Neo-Assyrian empire's policy of expansion and subjugation implied that the prime task of a king was territorial expansion. The persistent idea which drove them was the motif of "heroic priority," in which "the king boasts that he had traversed a land none of his forefathers had heard

[95] Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, pp. 272-273, 281.
[96] The Neo-Assyrian dynasty's intrusion into the region west of Euphrates River referred to as "Hatti" in the inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian kings, began with Ashurnasirpal II's (883-859 BCE) desire for military expeditions across the Euphrates River. Shalmaneser III (858-824 BCE), son of Ashurnasirpal, not only continued his father's intrusions, but also conducted more systematic campaign designed to secure Assyrian commercial interests and territorial expansion until Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE). Finally, it was during Sargon II (721-705 BCE) and his dynasty that dominated and controlled the entire west for the next 100 years. Hayim Tadmor, "Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and its Aftermath," in Hans Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts (eds.), *Unity and Diversity: Essay in the History, Literature and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 36-48.
[97] Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, p. 206.

of."[98] Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) is said to be the king who did not put into practice the hierarchical motif of "heroic priority." However, he saw himself as a powerful king who devastated, destroyed and burned the cities of his enemies.[99] It is said that when vassal subjects rebelled against Sargon II (722–705 BCE), he practiced a policy of cooperation and solidarity with the subjects, but only to strengthen his hegemony over the provinces.[100] So he is known to have practiced a double-edged policy of terror and benevolence. On the Judaeans' state of liminality and the ruthlessness of Assyrians' violence K. L. Young writes:

> If we accept the royal inscriptions' descriptions of what the Assyrian did to their enemies at face value, it is truly terrifying: flaying alive, impalement, cutting or excising, burning alive, smashing, heaping up of corpses or of heads, and so on. The king conducted exemplary punishments on those enemies 'who have shown a stiffer resistance.'[101]

S. Gitin points out that Israel and Judah were primary victims of such policies, especially the Northern kingdom after Tiglath Pileser-II. Human beings became an economic commodity for the Assyrians who shifted the local people *en masse* to other provinces which could obtain more profit to the Assyrians. Judah was downgraded to a rather insignificant role in the broad economic policy of Assyria. As a result, Judah had to stand on its own while paying direct and crude means of taxation and tributes to Assyrian empire who had an unbalanced trade relationship with them.[102] These treatments prior to Josiah were ways by which the Assyrians instilled fear-psychosis over its subjects which particularly affected the vulnerable nation. These led to

[98]Hayim Tadmor, "World Dominion: The Expanding Horizon of the Assyrian Empire," in L. Milano, S. de Martino, *et al.*(eds.), *Landscape Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East* (Pedova: Sargon, 1999), pp. 55-62.
[99]Julian Reade, "Neo-Assyrian Monuments in their Historical Context," in Frederick M. Fales (eds.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis* (Rome: Instituto Per 1'Oriente, 1980), p. 163.
[100]Giovanni Lanfranchi, "Consensus to Empire: Some Aspects of Sargon II's Foreign Policy," in H. Waetzoldt and H. Hauptmann (eds.), *Assyrienim Wandel der Zeiten* (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1997), pp. 81-86.
[101]K. L. Young, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near East and Biblical History Writing* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), p. 76.
[102]S. Gitin, "The Neo-Assyrian Empire and its Western Periphery: The Levant, with Focus on Philistine Ekron," in Simo Parpola and R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), pp. 78, 82, 84.

deteriorating social and cultural conditions, shook economic security and compelled the populace to remain under the psychological control of the Assyrian empire.

This socio-political location of Josiah as one the two observations confirm that Judah as a nation was helpless and voiceless. Irrespective of the harsh lived experiences, Josiah's persistence in bringing about reform both in the religious and national life of Judah is the perspective of voice that I see in this narrative. In the discussions below I will consider these two parameters as the background to look at Josiah's motive in confronting Necho-II at Megiddo. This discussion will help me proceed to propose hermeneutics where Josiah's role is taken as a representative of voice, reading from the optic of a marginalized context of NEI.

5.7 Centralization Reform: Hermeneutics of Voice (2 Kings 22-23)

Besides what I have discussed on cultic unity and cultic purity concerning Josiah's centralization policies, I will give a brief discussion on Josiah's resistance to the foreign powers as a means of voice explainable using a preposition 'על. I am keen to looking specifically at 2 Kings 23: 29 with reference to 2 Chron. 35: 20 on the emendations and interpretation of 'על. There are similar translations of עָלָה , עַל and וַיַּעַל in 2 Kings 23: 29 and וַיֵּצֵא in 2 Chron. 35: 20, that is, Pharaoh Necho-II *went up to the king of Assyria* (NRSV) in 2 Kings 23: 29 and *went up to fight at Carchemish* (NRSV) in 2 Chron. 35: 20. Consequently, causing Josiah to act against the Pharaoh. But Cogan seems to have signified differently concerning Necho-II's expedition, which then makes the action of Josiah pitted for his own death. Cogan writes:

> These days of glory on the home front did not stand him well on his day of reckoning, for Josiah met a sorrowful end. . . Egyptian Pharaoh Neco II . . . was rushing north **with aid for** Assyria.[103]

To go by the phrase, "with aid for Assyria" which Cogan renders, the intentions of Pharaoh's expedition as well as Josiah's motive to confront the Pharaoh itself becomes paradoxically to the political context of the time. So, my quest is whether Necho-II march out *against* the Assyrians, or, as Cogan renders, *to aid* Assyria?

5.7.1 Texts: 2 Kings 23: 29

[103] Cogan, "Into Exile," pp. 246-247.

בְּיָמָיו **עָלָה** פַרְעֹה נְכֹה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם **עַל-מֶלֶךְ** אַשּׁוּר-עַל-נְהַר-פְּרָת וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ לִקְרָאתוֹ
וַיְמִיתֵהוּ בַּמְּגִדּוֹ כִּרְאֹתוֹ אֹתוֹ

> In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt **went up to the king** of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him; but when Pharaoh Neco met him at Megiddo, he killed him (NRSV).

I would argue that words such as[104] עֶזֶר which is a noun masculine for *help* or לַעֲזוֹר with ל *(to)-infinitive of* עָזַר which is a verb for *help* or to *assist* is nowhere found in v. 29 and v. 20 of both the accounts. Moreover, the common word סיוע in Hebrew for *aid* or *assistance* is out of view in these texts. Like Cogan's emendation, there are also some English Bible translations that associates these texts with the idea that Pharaoh's political expedition to Carchemish was to *aid* or *help* the Assyrians.

As it is shown, the translation and perspective of Josiah's action in both the accounts, however, is undisputed. With the same preposition being involved in these verses, it is clearly understood, Josiah *went* or *marched* to *fight against* Necho-II, that is, both Necho-II and Josiah march out 'על. In the case of Josiah, this is uniformly rendered 'against' the Pharaoh, but in the case of Necho-II, the preposition is apparently ambiguous. Since the translations of the prepositions are not uniform, the whole theo-political aspect of Josiah's death can be disputed. Contrary to Cogan, Cross and Freedman posit that since the destination is Carchemish, Necho-II's journey and his intention cannot be *to help* Assyrian king Ashur-Ubalit retake Haran, which lay across the Euphrates River.[105]

The translation of the preposition עַל in v. 29 which can either mean 'against' or 'for' becomes a determining factor here. My contention is that, considering my study of the context of Josiah's reign, the connotation of the preposition 'על can best be read as *against*. Although I do not intend to study Chronicler's emendation in detail, looking at the Pharaoh's words to Josiah in 35: 21b, it gives me an insight that the Pharaoh was on a move to *fight against* the Assyrians. The ill-fated animosity is clear among the kings as expressed through the ironic words of warning by Necho-II to Josiah. Necho-II's

[104] Henry Browne, *Triglot Dictionary of Scriptural Representative Words in Hebrew, Greek and English* (London: Samuel Bagster& Sons Ltd., 1901), pp. 7, 16, 185.
[105] Frank M. Cross and David Noel Freedman, "Josiah's Revolt against Assyria," *JNES* 13 (1953): pp. 56-58 (57).

words is ironical about what he has to say to Josiah but straight forwardly in the way he desired to become a superpower in the international politics of the time. Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon observe that a plan to restrain Josiah was voiced by Necho-II when he tried to convince Josiah not to interfere with his progress to "fight" the Assyrians (v. 21).[106] Hence, the translation *to aid* or *to help* rendered by Cogan and various other Bible translations prove a slender emendation.

5.7.2 עַל as a Hermeneutical Principle for Reading Centralization

The Pharaoh's intention was seemingly political. I will substantiate this in the light of Josiah's earnest resistance as a voice *against* the Pharaoh's imperial march and as a voice that endorsed centralization and security of the Judaeans.

Considering the national and international socio-political and religious dynamics of Josiah's period, Necho-II mirrors the imperial force and Josiah represents the rebellious and resistance voice. Josiah resisted the tendency of the international politics that had the potential as a single force or in collective forces to subjugate the Judaeans.

> (i) The context of the state of political affairs during Josiah's era brought about a change in ethnic consciousness for the Judaeans. Therefore, perspective of resistance can be best read as a voice *against* dominant forces of assimilation and subjugation.
> (ii) Both Necho-II and Josiah's gestures in the narrative can signify their ideologies of defence and a contest for power. Hence, the confrontation is a prove enough to be taken as the context in which Josiah who in his pursuit to defend the marginalized Judaeans had become the victim of that *liminal*[107] socio-political location.

In these frameworks, the discussions of Sparks, Miller and Mullen have merit. Their arguments suggest a multifaceted uprising of the Judaeans who under Josiah emerged to restore cultic purity as well as cultic unity. Judah's rise in self-awareness of its distinctive identity and the need to defend this is conditioned by and through the essential response to the Assyrian imperial rule.

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[106] Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles in the Bible* (London: Greenhill Books, 1978), p. 214.
[107] Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah,* p. 221.

It might appear that, in the two narratives I study, Josiah's centralization policy contradicts Jeroboam's policy of decentralization. My interest is on the plausibility of voices in the narratives for an interpretation that bespeaks for marginalized readers of NEI, irrespective of the chronology and thematic deviations. For instance, how will the theological themes such as centralization as well as decentralization be interpreted from a marginalized reader's perspective of NEI? There is where the significance of the textual message becomes known within the lived realities of marginalized readers. To me, biblical texts of varying eras are the product of socio-historical phases of the lives lived by the people of the biblical times. Given a motivation to garner hope for marginalized readers, approaching any text requires a perspective on how the texts might speak on their behalf. In theory, the themes contradict one another, but in a realistic interpretation that favours marginalized readers, it is essential to consider reader-response in both the narratives. Alter's statement can support my argument, "biblical narratives are approachable to contemporary readers in the way they relate characters and situations of the texts with their lived realities."[108] Similarly, Charlene van der Walt notes that, "readers of the texts can be involved with the stories within their specific reading strategies, irrespective of faith or non-faith."[109]

In Josiah's perspective the Megiddo battle is a battle of defence: a voice for rights and identity, a voice against injustice and against the threat to the land and its people. In this reading, to the Judaeans of that period, the actions of Josiah, both in his internal reform and in external resistance represented undying courage and hope. In a pursuit of a liberative reading of texts like 2 Kings 22-23, reading the Josianic approach as retrieving the formerly defeated heritage to bring about reassertion of communal distinctiveness amid an imperial catastrophe is pertinent. It seeks cultural rejuvenation against the decline caused by cultural proselytization on the part of the colonizers.

Identifying the pathos and ethos of the resistant Judaeans with the marginalized readers like NEI becomes empowering. When the "worldview that sustained peoples'

[108] Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. 39.
[109] Charlene van der Walt, "Hearing Tamar's Voice- How the Margin Hears Differently: Contextual Readings in 2 Samuel 13: 1-22," in Athalya Brenner-Idan and Archie Lee (eds.), *Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*, Vol. I (London: T & T Clark, 2017), p. 4.

identity"[110] is muted, it is time that the marginalized realize the possibility of destructing the colonial/hegemonic myth in the light of the Josianic model of resistive voice. Such a paradigm of an *underground*[111] or in other words, a counter-reading that proceeds from the suppressed paradigm, comes closer to the marginal reader. It is a reading paradigm that can encourage liberty rather than lowering hope. To me, being vulnerable must not be seen as an end of hope but that this vulnerability can be a means to hope. The *hermeneutics of voice* is one approach in the process to realizing this greater end.

While it is possible to appreciate the positive contributions[112] of the Westerners, their ideological reality is that, consciously or not, I observe, they drew on biblical motifs of occupation to defend their cultural assault on tribal identities. The voice of the tribes in NEI runs as a counter to the legacy of the stereotypes that the Westerners have imposed on them. In the same way as the suppressed Judaeans of Josiah's time, the tribes in NEI seek confidence in their distinctive socio-cultural identities from the rest of the country. Although tribes in NEI inhabit different regions, districts and villages, the common voice that they share is their aspiration to be who they are in their self-definition of identity, religion, rights, history and destiny, rather than living in a liminal state, suppressed by the ideology of Hinduization promulgated by the Indian policy makers. Just as with the subjective historiography of the Dtr that concealed the voice of the marginalized and privileged the elite in the texts, the worldview of the tribes in NEI was veiled by the Western hegemony both religiously and politically. In response to this, it is in the curiosity towards *who we are* and *what is ours*, which fed into the hidden voices of tribal resistance, that a mode of liberative reading of the Bible is sought.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have seen number of ways by which the interpretation of themes can be determined and examined *from the place* of the readers,

[110] A. Wati Longchar, "Trends in Tribal Theology in Northeast India," in Samson Prabhakar and Kinwan Kown (eds.), *Dalit and Minjung Theologies: A Dialogue* (Bangalore: BTESSC/SATHRI, 2006), p. 65.
[111] Ernst Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity: The Religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom* (London: Verso Press, 2009), p. xv. Original publication by New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.
[112] It is without a doubt that missionaries came to the NEI with good intentions to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ and they meant to be helpful and liberating. However, as Vashum concurs, "consciously" the Westerners preached the gospel in the pretext of the "White man's burden," and in the native's general assumption the White invaders were virtually immune from any wrongdoing and the Christian missionaries were uncritically acquiesced to as doers of good.

although the essence of the theme remains as it is. The *hermeneutics of voice* that I propose espouses the marginal mode of interpretation, for instance, through the native eyes of the Christian tribes in NEI. My argument went on to show the interpretive strategies identified with the aspirations, experiences, and lived realities of the marginalized against the backdrop of the interpretation by Western Christianity of the colonial era.[113] This then relates to Sugirtharajah's statement that "vernacular hermeneutics is about taking the text closer to the readers themselves."[114] Hence, the *hermeneutics of voice* depicted in my study counter-reads the Dtr's championing of the theme of doom, while placing the readers' experiences at the forefront of its interpretation.

In the way I have shown Rehoboam's suppressive language, not only informs how miserably the people might live under his rule but whether they could even live. Such metaphors when used in the interpretation claim the knowledge of God's inevitable judgement over the frail humankind. Likewise, the use of bible from the hegemonic paradigm itself has at times been insensitively imposed עַל on the indigenous peoples of NEI. A reading from *above*[115] i.e. one that implicitly accepts and endorses the claims of the interpreters, can lead to subjugation and annihilation of the native's worldview and their stories past and present. In this climate, a reading which endorses the imperial rhetoric in the texts may readily distort the possibility of a marginalized readership identifying the God of the text as their God. However, a reading from *below* in the text, and the stories told of the lived realities by the people themselves, could help relate the God of the Bible, and the themes of the texts that are read represented in the voice of the marginalized themselves.

Keeping this in context, the *hermeneutics of voice* negates Noth's perspective of the Dtr as his hypothesis engages with suppressive languages in the DH which has the risk of constructing the *other*. The final chapter then moves on to read the Bible as a source

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[113] Also see, Laura E. Donaldson, "The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth through Native Eyes," in Sugirtharajah (eds.), *Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 21.

[114] Sugirtharajah categorizes the "Third World biblical hermeneutics into two categories: *liberation-focused* and *culture sensitive*." While the aspect of *liberation-focus* privileges liberation as a crucial hermeneutical key, *culture sensitivity* mobilizes indigenous cultural nuances for theological enterprises. Detailed readings in Sugirtharajah, "Vernacular Resurrections," in Sugirtharajah (eds.), *Vernacular Hermeneutics*, pp. 11, 13.

[115] L. H. Rawsea, "Indigenous Spirituality and Modernity: A Theological Response," in HrangthanChhungi (eds.), *Hearing the Voices*, p. 253.

of hope for the marginalized given that the hermeneutical approach favours the lived realities of the readers themselves.

Chapter 6

The Bible as a Resource for Hope

Introduction

In chapter 1 (1.3) I have discussed how the Bible, at that point an English book, came as a powerful cultural force which turned out to be detrimental to the lives of the people in NEI. As Westerners the Bible and Christianity came, they imposed new norms in claiming truth and power. These were not a response to the existing tribal ethos and sentiments but had developed to meet Western cultures, aspirations, and ecclesial needs. Noth's interpretation of the DH shares elements that can consciously or unconsciously be used to reinforce the ideological manifestos of the imperial West and it remains an influential yardstick in biblical interpretation.

The NEI tribes came to embrace the claims of the Bible and it has become part of their lives and identity. As part of this process, interpretations inherited from Western sources are being re-examined and critiqued for their inadequacy in the local context by marginalized Christians in NEI who live with the threat of suppressive neo-imperial forces in India. I argue in this research that such readers can find hope even in the DH texts, as much in the stories can be paralleled in such reader's context.

As I went along, I drew parallel expressions of the voiceless in the study of the texts with the intention to seek viable hermeneutics. The tribes, as perplexed as they were, over the years have adapted themselves to the Bible-Christian culture. This paradigm shift, I observed, has also been prompted by the need for religious security from the hegemony of the Hindutva, the neo-imperialistic phenomenon in India (See Introduction*: Dialectics of Empire*). It is therefore not a surprise that the Christian tribes of NEI rely on this religious icon, *the Bible*, for hope and liberation, as a source of energy and force, and a space for solace.

However, the dominant school of biblical interpretation taking place in the Churches and seminaries in NEI reveal Western and imperial assumptions in its willingness to show the voice of the powerful on the winning side. Stories in the Bible often seem to have privileged the powerful. The fact is that for a marginalized

individual like me as representative of NEI, such a voice in the text only "creates a hopeless world for the people in the margins."[1] Hence, the *hermeneutics of voice* I have proposed is a reading strategy that claims another interpretive voice from the margins.

My interest in this chapter is to summarise the proposed hermeneutics within the interpretive element of a counter-reading approach. Yet, before doing so, I will add further information about the situation of the Christian tribes of NEI, so that we understand the relevance of counter-reading as a hermeneutical paradigm in the study of these texts. I will then juxtapose *the Bible as a site of struggle* with *the Bible as a site of hope and solace* while I establish a reader-oriented interpretation of the texts.

6.1 Atrocities by the Hindutva (AFSPA/RSS) Hegemony

The idea of a minority in India can vary depending on the caste, race, religion, and linguistic categorizations.[2] The Christian communities of NEI seems to fall in all these categories as far as the minority is viewed from the perspective of the Hindutva. Hence, the "growth of Hindu fundamentalism has affected the very security of the minorities granted by the Constitution of India, their rights, dignity, and status are questioned."[3]

Speaking from the historical point of view, the so-called Seven Sisters, i.e. the seven states of the region, were under the British administration of Assam but eventually separated into independent states. After Assam was annexed in 1826, the British consolidated the state administration and thereafter began to think of territorial defence and expansion. The Hill tribes, which are indigenous peoples of the region, encountered them over the tea plantation and land encroachments (*Ref.* 1.2.2 Drain of Wealth).

Within this situation, the BEIC had to come up with a new law in order to police the conflict between the people in the plain and the Hill tribes. Thus, the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations 1873 which has its link with the creation of ILP was developed (*Ref.* 1.2.1 Politics of Non-Interference Policy). As mentioned, NEI as the 'disturbed areas' (*Ref.* 1.2.1 hence the alleged AFSPA), the Hills to this day are categorized as the

[1] Walter Brueggemann, "Psalms 9-10: A Counter to Conventional Social Reality," in David Jobling, Peggy L. Day, and Gerald T. Sheppard (eds.), *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1991), pp. 12-13.
[2]Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights,* p. 258.
[3]Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights,* p. 258, 266.

"Excluded Area"[4] and this is most effective in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. According to Shimray, "one slogan that keeps reiterating is that 'we are excluded people' in an 'excluded area'."[5]

The origin of the AFSPA 1958 can be traced back to the Arm Ordinances of 15th Aug. 1942 that were propagated by the BEIC to overpower the Quit India movement that raged against their governance and policies by the Indians.[6] Now, this idea of political and religious highhandedness of the dominant Hindutva took the shape of AFSPA. The undemocratic and draconian law of AFSPA has created bitterness and anger since then in NEI (also in Kashmir in the North). Referring to the slogans of arms and draconian laws of AFSPA, Jamir says they create "psychological stress, physical and psychic torture and terror" for the people of the Hills.[7] This is one of the reasons why the tribes of NEI feel emotionally excluded from the rest of India. AFSPA has ignited wide scale public protests, criticized by various representatives of the UN and other Human Rights bodies.[8] Therefore, AFSPA has been hailed as a "symbol of oppression, an object of hate, and an instrument of discrimination and highhandedness."[9] These Special Powers give Indian armies a certain amount of freedom to control the so-called 'disturbed areas,' while the local insurgencies raise the voice of resistance to the law.

'Hindutva' is the umbrella term for such religiously and politically backed policies and Bills passed by the government both past and present. Hindutva does not have tolerance for minorities both religious and racial. It is an "aged organization that uses religion for political gain"[10] and control over land, history, and culture. Hindutva is a militant policy that emphasizes exclusivism claiming one nation, one religion and that the only true and rational way to be Indian is to be a Hindu.

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[4]Misra Udayon, *Northeast India Quest for Identity* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, 1988), p. 77.
[5]Shimray, "Revisiting United Nations," p. 40.
[6]Pushpita Das, "The History of Armed Forces Special Powers Act," in Vivek Chadha (eds.), *Armed Forces Special Powers Act* (New Delhi, Lancer's Books, 2013), p. 12.
[7]Imsutoshi Jamir, "AFSPA vis-à-vis Human Rights: Reimaging and Relocating Human Sexuality from a Liberative Lens," in *Clark Theological Journal* vol. VI/2 (2016): pp. 59-71 (59, 63).
[8] Jamir, "AFSPA vis-à-vis Human Rights," p. 61.
[9]Devyani Srivastana, "Rights-Based Critique of AFSPA," in Vivek Chadha (eds.), *Armed Forces Special Powers Act* (New Delhi, Lancer's Books, 2013), p. 65. On my visit to Naga Archive and Research Centre (NARC) in Dimapur on 15th March 2020 I have read the section "Atrocity Reports" that came under the archived file *The Document Collections of Atrocities-Book 3* and I have incorporated some of the cases in this section of my thesis.
[10]T. M. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights: A Christian Response* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2007), p. 155.

In the Introduction *(Dialectics of Empire)* I have cited instances of the tensions brought about by the AFSPA where its sweeping powers prosecuted the church, later causing the church bodies to appeal to the government of India in 2016. However, the evidence shows that Indian government does not care to take Hindutva/AFSPA away from the region. Six decades have passed since the imposition of this draconian law, "not withdrawn even after a framework agreement was signed on 3rd Aug. 2015 by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN),"[11] yet the extension of Section 3 of the AFSPA, 1958 (No. 28 of 1958) keeps going until nobody knows when it will cease to exist. Let me cite some cases of atrocities both past and present that happened in the face of the Hindutva ideology.

Mar Atsongchanger's book *Unforgettable Memories from Nagaland* (1994) has documented multiple stories of the tears and pain of the people while Indian armed forces patrolled and displayed power without question and warrant.

> On February 22, 1957, the army personnel arrested a few villagers including a woman from Ungma village and took them to the local church and after removing the clothes of that woman, the men folks were forced to rape her turn by turn inside the church by the Indian army and when the men refused, they were taken to the camp and were beaten and tortured. In the meantime, the woman was kept in the army camp for one month where they raped her turn by turn every night.[12]

> On July 11, 1971, the 1st Maratha Regiment, 8 Mountain Division entered the Lotha tribe area whence they forced the villager to divide the people into male and female group. The Commanding Officer of the Regiment picked up four teenage girls and took them to the local church where the army personnel raped all four of them turn by turn inside the church.[13]

Contemporary Indian theologian Sahayadhas writes:

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[11] Cited from *newsd*, "AFSPA extended in Nagaland for six more months," published on Monday 30th December 2019, in https://newsd.in/afspa-extended-in-nagaland-for-six-more-months/ accessed on 15th May 2020.

[12]Mar Atsongchanger, *Unforgettable Memories from Nagaland* (Mokokchung: Tribal Communication and Research Centre, 1994), pp. 58-59. Also, similar historical documents on the plight of the tribes, and the stories of resistance to dominant religious and political groups and its discrimination is recorded in Bendangangshi, *Glimpses of Naga History* (Mokokchung: Naga Patriots from Soyim, 1993), pp. 42-43, 84-85. Luingam Luithui and Nandita Haksar, *Nagaland File: A Question of Human Rights* (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1984), pp. 194-197, 200-201.

[13]Atsongchanger, *Unforgettable Memories*, pp. 58-59.

> The Indian church currently undergoes a crisis situation, perpetuated by the right-wing Hindu extremism, which came to make its veritable manifestation in terms of Hindu nationalism effectively scaffolded by the formidable Hindutva ideology.[14]

To Longchar, the tribals are culturally alienated and uprooted, socially oppressed and dehumanized, economically exploited, and theologically unheard and voiceless. Longchar looks at the history of the tribes as a defeated history, and the contemporary situations as situations where the poor tribals are humiliated in the hands of the few rich elites and the government of India refuses to constitutionally recognize the tribals as indigenous people. He sums up his observations and says that the tribals are "a defeated community in India."[15] Instances of both reported and unreported cases of sexual harassment, threat through curfews and blank gunshots, rape and physical abuse to both men and women are alarming in areas where AFSPA is enforced.

In one of the reports in Times News Network (TNN), Rumu Banerjee reports that, "between 2012 and 2016, the case of abuse by the Indian armies in the states where AFSPA is in force have a total of 186 complaints."[16] I cite one instance from the state of Manipur:

> Thangjam Manorama was brutally killed in 2004 after the Indian army (Assam Rifles) men shot on her private part to destroy evidence of the rape. However, there was an unmistakable evidence of rape, torture and murder. The case was reported in 2004 but was delivered to the Supreme Court only in 2014 after a ten year lapse.[17]

The house of one Ari Keyho a Christian missionary of Phek district in Nagaland was ransacked by Hindu activists on 23rd Sept. 2017. His official files and household utilities were soaked in the stagnant water tank. Renowned columnist Z. Lohe through the dailies *The Morung Express* condemns the act as inhuman and barbarian.[18]

In fact, with the solidarity shown to her by every walk of life in NEI, the so named Iron Lady of Manipur, Irom Sharmila went on hunger strike for sixteen years

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[14]Sahayadhas, *Hindu Nationalism and the Indian Church*, p. 1.
[15]Longchar, "The Need for Doing Tribal Theology," pp. 2-3.
[16]Rumu Banerjee, "186 cases of abuse in AFSPA enforced states in 4 years," *Times of India* (July 2017), accessed in https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/186-cases-of-abuse-in-afspa-enforced-states/articleshow/59603418.cms, 30 December 2019.
[17]K. R. Snitha, "Irrational Silence: Why AFSPA remains a challenge to India?" in *Young Bharatiya* (September 2019). Accessed in https://www.youngbhartiya.com/article/irrational-silence-why-afspa-remains-a-challenge-to-india, on 3rd January 2020.
[18] Z. Lohe, "A Naga Missionary's house ransacked" in *The Morung Express* (2nd October 2017).

(2000-2016) force fed through a tube in her nose for protesting against the controversial AFSPA.[19] In my own experiences over the years, safe travel within my own state, whether in private or public vehicles is a far-fetched dream. The patrolling of the Indian army masked in the power of AFSPA over towns and villages induce in travelers a psychological fear. The frowning faces armed with guns are free to frisk your luggage, insist on proof of identity, and travelers are at risk of physical and sexual harassment. The story of harassment in the church (Christian community) and of Thangjam Manorama (individual) are only a sample of such stories, many of which remain untold. It is ironical that personnel that are supposed to give security to the citizens are the ones I for one would not dare even to smile at, in case it was misunderstood.

6.2 Approaches to Interpreting the text in NEI context

(Case of Jeroboam and Josiah)

Keeping in mind a) the Western identity construct b) the context in which the tribals have come to this day and c) the contemporary situations in which they live, I will align the optimistic message of the DH and the elements to be included in the marginal hermeneutics against the backdrop of the Western mode of biblical interpretation.

Throughout the literature reviews that I have studied early in the thesis, Noth's thesis about the DtrH theological message is countered by many. To reiterate a few of these arguments, Laato reads Josiah as an ideal monarch, the typos of David who acted in the ways of YHWH executing justice and righteousness. Unlike Noth who saw that the Dtr's rendition of Josiah is the epitome of a great fall, Laato sees Josiah as *the deliverer*, which is similar to Sweeney who reads the episode of Josiah as the *historical reality* acted out by the *good king* who is concerned with hope and independence beyond punishment. Knoppers also reveals optimism in the Deuteronomistic texts in both his books (1993, 1994) where, for instance, he discusses Josiah as the authentic king and that the historical events of Josiah's reform and reign cannot be denied. He also asserts unapologetically that the patriarchal covenant with YHWH is the prototype for Jeroboam's promise.

[19]Appears in BBC news "Irom Sharmila: World's longest hunger strike ends," published on 9th August 2016, accessed in https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-37007494, 31st December 2019.

These elements of hope read by the Western scholars give me the impetus to read the text through the lens of the tribal readers such as the Nagas. My thesis that reads the DH from the NEI tribal Christian perspective is not contradicting biblical scholarship by making the voice of hope that they acknowledge in the text easier to hear as "I situate the text myself in context."[20] As I proposed to my fellow Naga Christians that we could read 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 from our context, we could see hope. We can relate ourselves to the voices that are hidden by the Dtr in the DH and compare the state of victimization we as minority NEI tribal Christian face then and now with theirs. As a Naga reader from NEI, I for one can hear that aspect of hope in a subaltern voice that Western writers have not been in a position to hear.

The *hermeneutics of voice* presented in the previous chapter counter-reads suppressive elements in the texts and in its interpretations, in favour of a viable theological message for marginalized readers. Besides what I have depicted as an optimistic theme of the Dtr in proposing the theme of hope, I have argued in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 (Dtr's social location) that the Dtr is not an *honest broker*. To me, the Dtr's biases are apparent in the textual rhetoric especially in the characterization of protagonists, and in the subjective concealing of the authentic voices of the vulnerable ones. Through what I called the Deuteronomistic Hope Hypothesis, the pessimism of the Dtr's historiography, ideology, theology and most importantly, the traditions in the interpretation of the DH texts are revealed.

With the hypothesis of hope as a framework of optimism in the Dtr's historiography I have espoused hermeneutics for the marginalized readership. Therefore, in both the narratives I have considered Sugirtharajah's "disobedient or an oppositional"[21] model of reading so as to counter-read doom for hope, and Bloch's perspective of the "underground Bible," and "on-high religion"[22] to which I would

[20] One relevant article by Marina Ngursangzeli Behera introduces her writing by locating/situating herself as pursuing Mission and Evangelism. She has written the article from a Mission perspective yet there is so much to gain for my own study in terms of a contextual Biblical interpretation. The question of who is reading the text and in what context and perspective came clear to me. I entirely agree with Marina as I ponder on the multifaceted reading of the DH, for one, myself on the reading of the DH in the NEI tribal Christian context. Marina Ngursangzeli Behera, "From South and North and East and West: Where are the Margins, where the center(s)? The Significance and Meaning of these Terms for our Understanding and Practice of Mission," in *Mizoram Journal of Theology,* vol. XI/1 (June 2020): pp. 17-27 (17).
[21] Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, p. 75.
[22] Bloch, *Atheism,* p. 252. In fact, Bloch's argument is extensive in this matter. He ends his book with reference to Karl Marx's "End of Alienation," where Bloch reckons that an attempt to restore the

collectively call is a decolonization approach. My arguments dispute the normalized tendencies of *the on-high religious* interpretation, in favour of instigating a *hermeneutics of voice*. The imperial motifs that I have depicted in the texts resonate with the intensities of forced culture and domination in the instance of NEI.

Biblical interpretation is not a static discourse, but a dynamic process. In the post-colonial era, readers can translate and read the Bible in their own terms, free from dogmatic interpretations and free from the language and assumptions of the imperialists. If we do not engage in such a counter-reading, or envision such methods for reading the Bible, it is likely that the presence of the Bible in the colonized Third World will continue to be contested. In other words, the Bible and its normative interpretation will remain a foreign import in the eyes of both its adherents and opponents. That will further lead to the emergence of further identity crises rather than providing any comfort in the situation in crisis. Most crucially, if the biblical interpretation does not identify its place with the marginalized readers, the Bible and its messages might continue to privilege the powerful elites.

Keeping these hypothetical scenarios in mind, in order to substantiate the elements of hope in the DH, I have classified the approach to reading the DH texts in favour of the subalterns such as Christian tribes of NEI into two broad categories. They are:

a. Decolonization: Counter-reading Historiography and Interpretation
b. Fundamental Elements of Hope in the DH.

6.2.1 Decolonization: Counter-reading Historiography and its Interpretation

Counter-reading historiography and its interpretation as one of the interpretative tools of a postcolonial discourse is a pursuit of change and struggle, investigating a possible conjecture, hesitation and intervention[ism].[23] Decolonization as approached

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alienated factors to the human concern should began with the critique to the suppressive interpretation of the text. He called such apparent tendencies *the on-high religion.*

[23]Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, p. 2. Many postcolonial readers have found decolonization as an ideal approach to counter-reading biblical texts and its universalistic interpretations. For example: David Joy, "Decolonizing the Bible, Church and Jesus: A Search for an Alternate Reading Space for the Postcolonial Context," in David Joy and Joseph F. Duggan (eds.), *Decolonizing the Body of Christ: Theology and Theory after Empire? Postcolonialsim and Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 3-24; Mark G. Brett, *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008); D. T. Adamo, *Decolonizing African Biblical Studies* (Abraka: Delta State University, 2004).

from the vantage point of the marginalized context is an attempt to disturb the conventional message derivable from the text. The process involves artistic and literary decolonisation, in fact, a radical dismantling of "the European blindness." [24] Decolonization looks for the meaning and voice of the text in the perspective of liberation rather than accepting the interpretation merely derivable from the implied protagonists of the texts.

This said, I also offer a critique that Western historiographers of the tribes of NEI who constructed tribals as the *others*, and then claimed to have provided the definitive account of them without making any allowances for that *otherness.* Clearly both written and oral histories/stories of the *others*, as they are found to be subsumed under the Eurocentric world history, need to be re-written from the point of view of those *others.* Decolonization calls for appreciating the diversity of histories and need to value the significance of the *other*. The counter-reading approach to the texts can be used to unmask marginalized voices that were suppressed. In continuation with the propositions I have offered in earlier chapters, elements of counter-reading can entail the following aspects:

(i) Subjective Storytelling

One aspect of Uriah Kim's thesis worth recalling is his statement that, "the West is the subject of DH."[25] He says this in the context of reading the DH from an Asian-American perspective. The observation runs throughout my thesis that the stories of NEI as told by Westerners appears to be written subjectively in the likeness of the Dtr writing the stories of the winning Southern Judaeans. The writers of 'adventure narratives'[26] involving the indigenous tribes of NEI were subject to their own emotional impressions and prejudices which is why objectivism is found lacking in their writings. These stories, however, also inform the current historiography of the area with their spurious claims to objectivity. Hence, I consider that it is in facilitating the natives to tell their own stories that they can put the myth of such subjective stories to question. As Ackermann explains, "the telling of the stories is essential to claim one's

[24] For related reading see, Helen Tiffin, "Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse," in Bill Ashcroft, *et al*.(eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* p. 95.
[25] Kim, *Decolonizing*, p. 49.
[26] 'Adventure narratives' are those stories, letters, bulletins or books written about the natives, places, peoples or cultures by adventurers such as missionaries, tourists, or writers.

distinctiveness, and in the speaking out of the stories one finds liberated."[27] The stories told by the people themselves can resonate with their realities and are themselves voices for a more liberative experience. In a similar vein, Charlene van der Walt opines that the "stories become an agent by which one achieve vision and be aware of realities."[28] The narrative which has a *sense-making function*[29] acts in making sense of dilemmas and situations of suffering and chaos in which the suppressed people wrestle to understand.

(ii) Monographic Monopoly

The histories written by the winners as shown in the study of these two biblical texts and in the case of NEI have unduly undermined the *others.* Such blatant monopolising and belittling the histories of the *others* demands scrutiny. These dynamics work in the way the Northern Israelites are conventionally viewed by many Bible readers till today. These monographs would speak about the subjects as deviant, non-conformist, irrational, and superstitious. Hence, the historiographer saw these *others* as the people for whom woe is inevitable. These biased elements in the historiography are products of the subjectivism of the historiographers. Hence, counter-reading these monographs from the paradigm of the stories behind the texts will allow the *others* to speak for themselves. Just as the Dtr has shaped the readers' understanding of the Deuteronomic community, 'adventure narratives' have also shaped the outlook of the colonizing authorities as to the culture of the tribes.

(iii) Western Mode of Biblical Interpretation

The myth of *on-high* religion which professes the theology that God is identified with some superior race, class or colour is addressed in a decolonizing approach. In the NEI context, this extends to the stereotype that God is imported into the situation and therefore God is still regarded as the most venerated *guest* and not as one of them. Decolonization of the Western biblical interpretation calls for the deconstruction of the idea that the biblical truth conforms with the Western definition and identification of God and with Western aspirations and experiences. The truth is, this idea taken as a

[27] D. M. Ackermann, *Tamar's Cry: Re-reading an Ancient Text in the Midst of an HIV/AIDS Pandemic* (Johannesburg: Ecumenical Foundation of South Africa, 2001), p. 39.
[28] Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature,* p. 39. Charlene van der Walt cites Alter in her article entitled, "Hearing Tamar's Voice: Contextual Readings of 2 Samuel 13: 1-22," *OTE* 25/1 (2012): pp. 182-206 (184).
[29]Van der Walt, "Hearing Tamar's Voice," p. 4.
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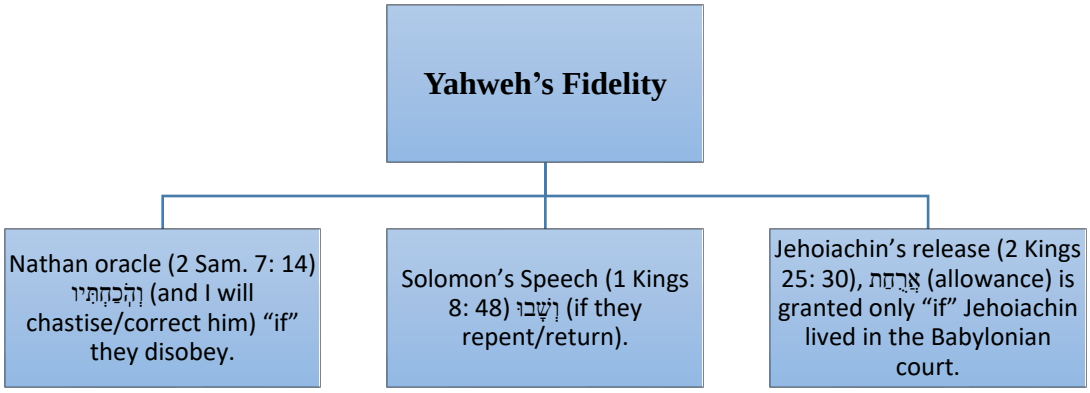
yardstick to interpreting the Bible becomes irrelevant to the non-Western readers and hearers.

Furthermore, it must be realized that our effort to decolonize the text must go in tandem with the need to decolonize our mindsets. This need requires self-discovery of ways and freedom to think, to act and to relate. When our mindsets as readers are decolonized, our emotions are counteractive, dialogical, conversant, emancipative and are alert to act and react. In each experiential reality for people like us in NEI, biblical text can be either emotionally denying or enlightening. In such a context, it becomes easy for a decolonized mind to approach the question of *who we are* and *who they are* in a new light. This in turn opens the question of how the biblical texts should be accepted as part of the answer to the questions of identity.

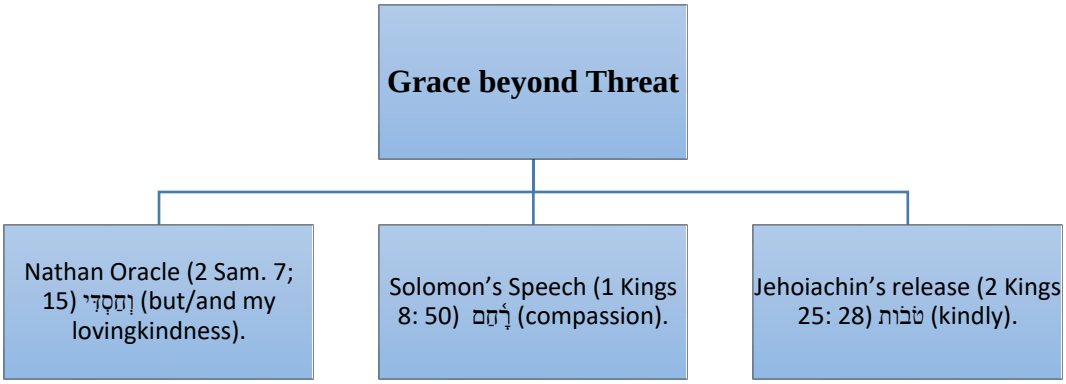
6.2.2 Fundamental Elements of Hope in the DH

In my counter-reading approach to reading the DH, I argued for the optimistic theologies in the DH texts as framework to interpreting texts such as Nathan's oracle, and the release of Jehoiachin. The optimistic interpretation is the primary reason why the Deuteronomistic hope apparent in the theodicy of Yahweh becomes a vantage point in counter-reading doom. The charts below replicate the detailed exegesis done in Chapter 2 which had the proposal for a rather fundamental affinity in the theologies of these texts than differences. Examination of these proposed affinities in the themes can be summarized in the following three rubrics: the language of Yahweh's fidelity, Grace beyond threat, and the promise to the patriarch. These three rubrics become quintessential to unravelling the Dtr's hope.

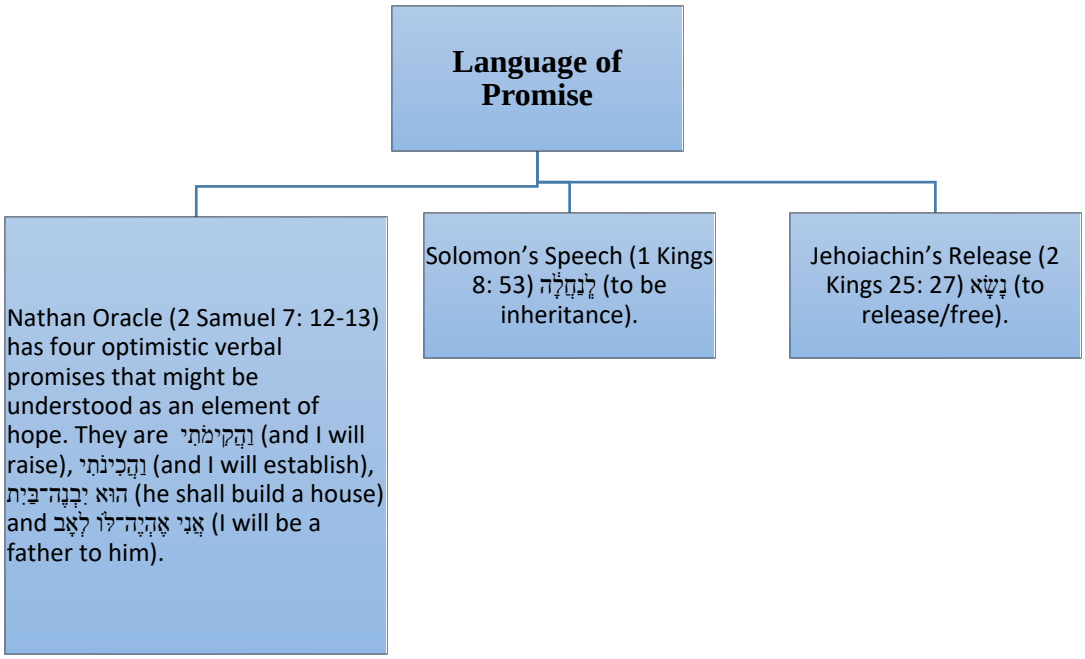
(i) Element of Yahweh's Fidelity



(ii) Grace beyond Threat



(iii) Language of Promise



Yahweh's fidelity that we see in these passages carries several simultaneous implications of hope. Despite the overarching themes of hopelessness that 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 might suggest to the marginalized reader, these elements can be read to understanding the Deuteronomistic hope in the light of decolonization. Following this basic paradigm, marginalized readers such as the Christian tribes of NEI can secure hopeful messages from the Bible as they also attempt to uncover the colonial tint in their theological and ecclesial outlook. Belittling optimistic messages in the Bible by a suppressive message, in its entirety, would be a monopolistic interpretation.

The Dtr according to Noth does not extend the intervention of God into the future. As such, the old traditional history has a timeframe. God acted in the past, and God will act without delay for a catastrophic end of the world but not for grace. Therefore, the Dtr's message according to Noth will evidently end in judgement, that shows no interest whatsoever for the aspect of עַד־עוֹלָם or לְעוֹלָם (forever) in the DH (2 Sam 7: 16). On the contrary, I observe that the Dtr used these references to patriarchal history as a basis to preserve the future of the people beyond the catastrophe. The elements of hope expressed in the language such as kindly, compassion, and lovingkindness are rich enough to reckon that Yahweh disciplines, but does not annihilate. These words and phrases can herald optimism for the marginalized readers to set its perspective for counter-reading the suppressive theology and ideology.

Noth argues that the covenantal tradition of the patriarchs, according to the Dtr, indicates "only to the partial world and not to affect the whole world."[30] Hypothetically, Noth wanted to present that the Dtr's message incorporated judgement over the world. However, when it comes to the benefactor of the covenantal promise, the *others* are specified and subject to conforming with the law of the covenant. The Dtr's mention of "foreigner" in 1 Kings 8: 41-43, 60, in contrast to Noth's idea, is optimistic about the inclusive nature of the promise. The Dtr clearly places the conditional clause in these passages. The members of other races, "if" they pray to the God of Israel, "who causes his name to dwell," in the temple of Jerusalem, and will "realize to know and revere" this God, the future is realised for "all the people of the earth."[31] Therefore, the Dtr prepares for the greater things to come. Similarly, the Deuteronomistic theology of hope is indivisible from the Dtr's languages of promise in all the three texts, despite the major propositions by von Rad, Wolff and Noth's which conflict with one another. These optimistic themes have fundamentally disrupted the theme of pessimism that has dominated the study of the DH.

6.3 Contending with the Bible-II: The Bible as a Resource for Hope

The eco-political and biblical interpretations of the West that resonate with the dominant theological interpretation of the DH have been shown in Chapter 1 within the sub-point "Contending with the Bible-I: *The Bible as a Suppressive Tool."* In this

[30]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, p. 91.
[31]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic*, p. 91.

section, I will discuss on *The Bible as a Resource for Hope* that concerns with looking at the Bible as a resource for hope having to identifying themselves with the Christian-Bible culture despite their liminal status. These two contentions then respond to the statement that the *Bible becomes both an oppressive tool and a resource for identity to the Christian tribes in NEI* that I have introduced early in my study.

Looking at *the place* of the Bible among the Christian tribes in NEI today, the Bible holds for them the power of a liberating force, the foundation of their identity, and a model that drives them (given a liminal status) to resist, to voice and to stand for who and what they are in the midst of the exertion of a dominant force such as the Hindutva (neo-imperialism). This contention also challenges Western legacies in both ecclesial and political systems and a contextual interpretation of the Bible is envisaged.

6.3.1 Interpretation-I: Placing Marginalized Readers as the Subjects of the Text

My critique suggested that, just as the historiography of the Dtr is subsumed under the theo-centrism of the Davidic South, so is the interpretation of the Bible dominated by Eurocentric[32] ideologies and theologies during the colonial and missionary period in NEI. The universalization and self-validating claims in the biblical interpretation or historiography are generally critiqued by most postcolonial scholars. Such interpretations privilege both interpreter and the elite in the text but eventually create the discipline of studying the *other*[33] in conversation with the *other* in the text.

I would like to take an extract from Kim's *Decolonizing Josiah* to highlight instances by which the DH when interpreted from the dominant theology and ideology could impact on the marginal readers such as NEI.

> Europe is the subject of history and Europe's identity, experience, aspirations, and destiny are narrated as the history of the world. Historical investigations in biblical studies are no exception; in searching for ancient Israel in the imagination of the

[32] Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, p. 48. Kim says, this mode of approach to the Bible interpretation is not an accident, by which he meant that it is intentional. However, in oral interviews with some pertinent writers in Nagaland, they say, Eurocentrism is a sorry episode in places such as NEI. Yet if Eurocentrism in Bible teaching has been prevalent, it must be both intentional and unintentional. This may appear ambiguous to a reader. However, it is true in both ways because biblical interpreters came to NEI at different times, place and sourced from different missionary policies and initiatives. Apparently Eurocentric interpretation features Neologism, colonial mimicry, cultural annihilation, dis-intercepted theology of the people and so forth. The Bible, European culture, theology and ideology were always placed as advantageous over the native contexts. Therefore, what to Kim is "no accident" in Asian-American context, is "not unintentional" in my research concerning tribes in NEI.

[33] Said, *Orientalism,* p. 22.

> West, biblical scholars inscribed the experience, aspirations, and destiny to the West. In relation to DH, biblical scholars imagined it in the likeness of Western modern historiography.[34]

If the West is taken as subject of the DH, any interpretation automatically is biased against the subject population in the colonial context. Most political as well as ecclesiastical interpretation of the Bible was subject to this bias in the late 19th and 20th century NEI, as I have also presented in the dialectics. Sugirtharajah offers a similar reflection in his 'The Bible and its Asian Readers':

> When the Bible reached these areas through the modern missionary movement, it did not come as a book echoing an Asian ethos and sentiments but as a book appropriated and interpreted by Western Christendom, using tools designed to meet its own Western cultural and ecclesiastical needs. But most importantly, it came as an ideological manifesto of the imperialists, denigrating Asian peoples' stories and sacred texts.[35]

Sugirtharajah's critique of Western interpretation can evoke parallels with the ideology and theology of Noth's Dtr that silenced the Northerners and of the Assyrians who have victimized *all Israel* as a nation. This idea can be aligned to the suppression of the culture and political aspirations of NEI by Eurocentric readings of the Bible. As it is with the shared ideology of the colonial rule and Western missionaries such as the "White man's burden," we see this aspect of interpretive justification of the superior and the underestimation of the native tribals. Although the gospel is well established in NEI, most Biblical translations and interpretations have failed to do justice to the tribal readers because of the overarching presence of the Western "colonial tint."[36] For instance, Angami says, "the words and stories of the Bible trigger Western images and viewpoints in the minds of the tribal Christians."[37] The biblical idea of "sheep" and "shepherding" are alien to the tribes in NEI. So also, the use of objects in the sacraments such "bread," or "wine" and the reference to Zion as the "city," which have its origin in ANE culture made its way in the European interpretation. On the theological vocabularies used in the reading of the Bible Angami writes:

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[34] Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah,* p. 48.
[35]Sugirtharajah, "The Bible and its Asian Readers," pp. 54-66 (55).
[36] Zhodi Angami, "Looking at Jesus from a Tribal Optic," in Takatemjen (eds.), *Bible Reading from the Northeast India Context* (Mokokchung: NEISBS, 2014), p. 28.
[37]Angami, "Looking at Jesus from a Tribal Optic," p. 28.

> For many years tribal Christians have been content to repeat the creedal formulas and doctrinal clichés imported from the West, although the abstract theologies inherent in them don't make much sense. Take the Nicene Creed for instance, 'We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the father.' The language is so thoroughly embedded in a culture alien to tribal culture that its translation, if that were possible, still would not render it intelligible to tribal people.[38]

Angami goes on to say that until recently, "tribal Christians have not bothered to question how Jesus came to be lean and tall with white skin, piercing blue eyes, long brownish blonde hair, pointed nose, and a broad straight forehead."[39] These legacies are seen indirectly involved in the liturgy that tribal Christians use today: the translations of the Bible into vernacular language are markedly imbued with Western terminological transliteration rather than words intelligible to the tribal readers.

In the paragraph that follows I will illustrate parallellisms between the Dtr's suppression of the Northern ideology and the use of the Bible to suppress cultural values of the tribes with specific reference to the tradition of the Naga *Morung.*[40] This analogy will also highlight Mary Mead and John Henry Hutton's view of the Naga *morung* which apparently is similar with the Dtr's view of Bethel and Dan. I will further give a note on the Northern shrines as legitimate sites for a representation of the voice of resistance when I talk about marginal *Perspective of Voice*.

Prior to the arrival of Christian missions in the tribal territories, the *morung* was a community house. It was a strategic office for safeguarding identity, rights and it endorsed community life. Enemies and culprits of any anti-social activities were punished at the *morung.* Like the modern-day church, public events and feasts were centred at the *morung.*

[38]Angami, "Looking at Jesus from a Tribal Optic," p. 29.
[39]Angami, "Looking at Jesus from a Tribal Optic," p. 29.
[40] In most tribal inhabited areas in NEI, the *morung* institution is called by different names in different tribes. The *morung* or which is popularly known as the bachelor's dormitory system was an essential part of Naga life. Apart from the immediate family, the educational center in Naga society was the *morung*. Much of the Naga cultures, its customs and tradition were delivered generations after generations through their cultural melodies such as songs, dances, tell-tales, lullabies in the oral and dramatic forms, carvings of figures on stones and wood, and designs on clothes. It was also used as a guardhouse during times of war. The *morung* was the institution where a virtuous and ethical life are nurtured, dignity of labour and culture were fostered for a vibrant society. It is observed that the *morung* acted as the guardian, a parent, police and the court of the community. This institution is considered as the mother of art and culture.

Despite the vital importance of the *morung* and contrary to what she and her husband had contributed to the erstwhile Naga Hills, Mary M. Clark uses an "evangelical rhetoric,"[41] of negative Biblical motifs to make references to the *morung* that are humiliating as natives look back from a post-colonial standpoint. The then Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills J. H. Hutton (for instance in the Diary of March 1935) himself used the expression "Golgotha" in a negative reference to the *morung* in almost all his Tour Diaries. In describing the nature of warring Nagas against the raiding enemies, Hutton translated a native legend with the title of "A Naga Judith."[42]

No wonder, then that the histories written by the initial invaders characterized the tribes as bloodthirsty, treacherous and murderers,[43] and failed to listen to the authenticity of the native's voice. A Similar style of historiography can be understood to lie behind the Dtr's defamation of Bethel and Dan. Any cults or patterns that do not conform to the customs of Southern Jerusalem (or its dominant ideology) were stereotyped as villainous irrespective of what they contribute to the people. Christoph von Furer Haimendorf as an anthropologist working in what were then known as the Naga Hills observed that the BEIC and the missionaries "unfortunately opposed the views of what is good for the Nagas . . ." and any administrative coalition with *Morung* by both foreign and local is decried as supporting to the "invention of evil spirits."[44]

So, with this background let us set the perspective as to how we can place the marginalized readers as the subject of the text. I begin with the citation from Sugirtharajah:

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[41] Mary M. Clark, *A Corner in India*, Repr. 1978 (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907). Repr. 1978.

[42] John Henry Hutton, *Angami Nagas: With Some Notes on Neighboring Tribes* (London: MacMillan, 1921), pp. 255-256. As Hutton was appointed in 1920 and the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, he gave his personal interest to the study of anthropology. Henry Balfour of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford gave him added encouragement to study anthropology of the Naga Hills tribes. Balfour paid his maiden visit to Hutton while he was administering the Naga tribes. As a result, there are number of books he had written on tribal culture since 1920 such as *The Angami Nagas* and *The Sema Nagas*. These researches have earned him D. Sc from the University of Oxford in 1921. Later, during his administrative power when talks on the formulation of the Government of India Act 1935 was on, Hutton contributed towards the protection of tribal minority's interest, although there were sharp oppositions from the Indian nationalists who suspected that it was a scheme intended to divide the country. The above lines are from "John Henry Hutton," in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Henry_Hutton, accessed on 29th May 2019.

[43] Kar, "Heads in the Naga Hills," p. 343.

[44]Christoph von Furer Haimendorf, *The Naked Nagas* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1939), p. 56.

> The kind of claim that Arthur Quiller-Couch used to make about the King James Bible being 'in everything we see, hear, feel, because it is in us, in our blood,' now seems to belong to a bygone era.[45]

Although, this reality appears to be long gone from the Western tradition, it is rather germane to the Christian tribes of NEI today. That which once was oppressive became an icon of hope. The real cultural force that consolidates the authority of the Bible as religious icon in NEI is that the Bible holds a significant place within their society beyond the churches. When I say this, I do not imply that every socio-political institution makes the Bible compulsory for the people in the same way as the Christian institutions would do. But interestingly, the reliability of the Bible and its liberative messages have been given importance by people of other disciplines outside the church at least in Nagaland.[46] Schools, public administrative offices, police personnel, traditional societies, and resistive liberation movements (insurgencies) attract public attention by the use of the Bible in their daily living.

Also, in most Christian states in NEI, it has been acknowledged that "the Bible has been their treasured guide."[47] The impress of the Bible and the authority claimed by reciting appropriate passages becomes a collective strength in their pursuit to fight/resist any forces that might distort their peace, social identity and status. It has been experienced that such a culture is made possible if the dominant religious authorities do not interrupt in the religiosity of institutions. There is an ongoing experience that the biblical precepts and the tribe's customary authorities are combined in the patterns of their belief and practises. Therefore, the Bible for the Christians tribes in NEI is that source which beholds trust, identity, liberation and reliance.

In such a scenario, it is essential that the biblical interpretation is sensitive to the stories of the people. For instance, the interpretation of Josiah's fate at Megiddo as the end of Judaean hope would be tantamount to universalizing its message to undermine efforts at self-determination, perhaps a "pitfall" in the words of Sentamu.[48] Similarly,

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[45] This citation is borrowed from Sugirtharajah's *Troublesome Texts,* p. 100. Originally quoted in *Like unto Heaven: A Popular Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for the Year 1923-24* (London: Bible House, 1924), p. 31.

[46] Z. Lohe, "The Chance to Replenish Nagaland," in *Nagaland Post* (Dimapur: Wednesday 20. 2019): p. 6.

[47] Jeremy Punt, "Re-writing to Re-reading the Bible in Post-Colonial Africa: Considering the Options and Implications," *Missionalia* 30/3 (2002): pp. 410-442 (425). Similar case of the *place* of the Bible in Post-colonial Africa is also found analyzed in many writings.

[48] Sentamu, "Uncovering the Purposes of God," in Kim and Draper (eds.), *Liberating Texts?* pp. 1-4.

justifying Jeroboam's characterization in Kings would only reinforce the injustice done to the historical context of the Northerners in the text and give a rationale for the suppression of tribal identities.

Therefore, I have maintained that these types of interpretations should lead to suspicion on the part of marginalized readers. Reading the suppressive texts where characters are misrepresented, and plots and stories are overly dramatized can result in a negative response from marginalized readers. Therefore, the marginalized in the texts must be the subject in the first place and the marginalized protagonists become be the key advocates and motivators for what the marginalized readers aspire to gain from reading these texts.

6.3.2 Interpretation-II: Democratizing Power to the People

One common element found in the Josianic and Jeroboamic texts is the prevalent social class structure where the dominant forces suppress the voices of the peoples in the margins. The dominant forces could be national or international, yet the nature of the voices of resistance are against hijacking of peoples' rights by forces inimical to their interest.

The hierarchical rhetoric in 1 Kings 12 and the vulnerable location of Judah in 2 Kings 22-23 catches the attention of marginalized readers in the way the texts inform elements of socio-structural injustices. Both the texts have the tendency to analyse the concept of the centrality of power (Judah in the former and Assur in the latter text). In these explicit displays of power politics between the centre *versus* margins, the Dtr's ideological commitments are detectable. For instance, in the context of Assyria, it is the city of Assur, as it is Jerusalem for the Southern hierarchy for the metropolization of power and wealth (palace), religious (Temple) and societal captivity (public life).

I see the imagery scenarios of these power politics in this way:

Scenario in 1 Kings 12 (930-909 BCE): From the united monarchy to the divided monarchy, until the fall of the Northern kingdom. Judah's Jerusalem (hierarchical metropole)	• Northern Israel as the victim of the hierarchical politics. • Jeroboam and the Northerners resorts to voice out their agony. • The emotions and realities of the Northerners unheeded by the Southern Kingdom. • The voice of resistance

	needs attention.

Scenario in 2 Kings 22-23 (c. 641/640-609 BCE): The divided monarchy until the fall of Judah and Israel. International predators e.g., Assyria centred at Assur (imperial metropole)	• Judah as the victim of the imperial international politics. • Josiah acts out to resist the force. • The depth of the voice of the marginalized *all Israel* unheard by the oppressors. • The story of the unsung hero Josiah needs attention.

We see that ever since the fateful division of Israel or in the words of Thiele,[49] the Northerners beginning from Jeroboam-I (930-909 BCE), had stories of pain and suffering at the oppressive hands of the centralized Judah. Throughout the history of the monarchy the Jerusalem metropole had the atavistic fear of being overtaken by the others that in fact includes the Northerners. Therefore, the Southern metropole underrepresented the North in every affair of the nation "Israel." Therefore, Jeroboam, the pioneer leader of the North resisted against Southern policies of oppression in 1 Kings 12. Since the Shechem Slogan, the North and the South existed distinctly uneasy over rights and privileges, and peace undeclared. Later in the history, Judaeans or *all Israel* as a nation were marginalized by the international politics until finally Josiah revolted against the international forces at Megiddo.

In the light of this uncomfortable history that existed between the North and the South, Noth's Dtr had narrowly straitjacketed its Northern history to make the North seem vulnerable. It is in these ordeals of subjection that the Dtr facilitated a text which is apparently serviceable to the elite in the society. For instance, to Noth's Dtr, the word הַמָּקוֹם is specifically Jerusalem.[50] Therefore, the Dtr is very categorical about the theology of Centralization, a theology which is inclusive of both sacred and secular affairs of the people.

The idea and the interpretation of centralization of power and hierarchy from the sole perspective of the privileged and of the "high-God"[51] emerged from what I called the Dtr's subjectivity. In this regard, I have pointed out the similarities between the

[49] Edwin R. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings: Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), p. 75.
[50]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, p.57.
[51]Rawsea, "Indigenous Spirituality," p. 253.

Dtr's historiographical approach and the theology and ideology of the Western theo-political machineries of the colonial era of NEI. Having said that, I must mention that the theology concerning centralization and its vitality in the two narratives takes on a multifaceted importance in looking at this interpretive approach. If the re-reading of the discovered book is about revitalization of הַמָּקוֹם according to the Nothian Dtr, how would marginalized readers interpreted this? Also, if the Northerners resisted the concentration of political, economic and religious rights centred at Jerusalem, what would that mean for marginalized readers? My inclination at this speculation proposes the hermeneutical possibilities from both these angles.[52] Therefore, my contention as substantiated in the previous chapters induce two pragmatic readings where the voice of the marginalized are emancipated in both the scenarios. This is purely to privilege the meanings of the texts intelligible to the marginalized readers as and when read from the perspective of their lived realities.

(i) On one hand, for the readers of the elements of centralization in 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23, this theme as an invincible (Deuteronomic) tradition proves a source of identity and strength. Centralization as a theology gives the marginalized readers a model of belonging amidst chaotic political and religious situations. This aspect in Josiah's propagation of a monotheistic reformation,[53] and an audacious socio-political revolution can also be read in the light of the representation of the vulnerable Judaeans. Hence, the DH theology of centralization becomes a polemic ideology against the annihilating foreign forces.

(ii) On the other hand, it must also be noted that for the marginalized readers, centralization when imposed by oppressive external forces, signals homogenization of cultures, and the concentration of powers in the elite hands. Any forces that call for privileging the powerful few cripples the *other* and puts justice at risk. Insofar as marginalized readers see centralization as a source of empowerment, refuge and identity, they subscribe to the idea that each culture is dynamic, distinct and deserve justice. This is clearly apparent within the marginalized in the texts and the NEI marginalized reader in the way they raise their voices against the hegemonic dominance of the ancient

[52] As briefly stated in the last part of Chapter 5, by *both angles*, I mean to posit that this research intends to set approaches to reading Centralization in two ways. One, in solidarity with the tradition of Centralization, and the other, from the perspective of decentralization (North). Hence, envisions the possibilities of multifaceted readings, depending on the way readers find it relevant to their respective context.

[53] Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, p. 300.

Assyrians and contemporary champions of Hindutva. Therefore, given the scenarios of these theological themes, a marginal reading perspective becomes important within such multifaceted approach.

The statement below made by Charles Kammer supports the necessity of such prospective interpretations. Kammer says, "all perspective. . . social structures must be first judged by the effects on the poor, the powerless and the minorities."[54] This statement is a call to discern that interpreters must take issues of the lived realities and of the social justice that will support greater good. The predicaments of the people in the periphery will then be represented, participate in the policies that give hope whereby their voice is heard.

From a pragmatic level, the interpretation of הַמָּקוֹם can also be related with the reformation of Jeroboam. Jeroboam's measure of supporting multiple shrines was to prevent the painstaking travel of worshippers to Jerusalem (12: 26-27). I have argued for the view that Jeroboam's restoration of these shrines does not amount to introducing polytheism inasmuch as Yahweh is acknowledged in the shrines. Disturbingly, in the DH the Northerners are alleged to be fabricators and worshippers of the golden calves (v. 28).[55] Perhaps Laughlin's assertion can be noted here:

> [I]t seems clear that the view from the south [or foreign empire] needs to be carefully re-assessed in light of both critical literary studies and . . . Dan and Bethel help even more to bring this important city back to life and rescue it from its very hostile and negative portrayal seen in the view of the south.[56]

The historiography of the Dtr explicitly denounces the Northern shrines and alleged that the sites were hot-beds of the dissidents. Laughlin's lines get connected with the way I envisage to get the message across for the marginalized readers. Laughlin highlights the hierarchical opposition and a negative attitude to the Northern shrines, which to Laughlin needs a careful textual analysis. In this light, I see the variation of roles by Jeroboam and Josiah as contextual retaliations to the oppressors, because such responses which emerges from the emotions of the lived experiences cannot be ignored either by the redactor or by the contemporary interpreters of the Bible.

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[54] C. L. Kammer, *Ethics and Liberation: An Introduction* (New York: Maryknoll, 1988), p. 156.
[55] DeVries, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 161.
[56] J. C. Laughlin, "To the God who is in Dan: The Archaeology and History of Biblical Dan," *RevExp* 106 (2009): pp. 323-359 (355).

If biblical interpretation is to be realistic for the marginalized readers, the interpreter must become aware of the problems of idealism and subjectivism and thereby acknowledging the limitations of any reading. In fact, even in introducing the liberating God of the Bible, the Christian missions have highlighted the godly power centred within the ones who *had* the God of the Bible at the first place. Then, supposedly, there emerges a notion of the indifferent God and the Bible. Therefore, in order to make the Bible and the God speak on behalf of the marginalized, the Biblical interpretation must begin with the language of the context to which the interpretation is delivered. As is also rightly pointed by James Cone, "the victim of power alone can suggest how the world ought to be."[57] It is important that the biblical interpretation, for instance, the theology of centralization is interpreted in the perspective, language, reality and implication identified with the marginalized readers themselves.

Simultaneously, I see that in order to locate the interpretation from the margins of the Christian tribes in NEI, *both* the scenario of suppression meted out to the resisting natives by the empowered AFSPA and the consequent Hindutva ideology they execute in the region must be understood. As I have cited in the previous point, the allegiance to the Bible by institutions outside of the church at least in Nagaland, is loud and clear. The pioneering history of the Naga National Movement (NNM), now called NSCN/FGN, continues to declare the Lordship of Jesus in their pursuit of freedom from the clutches of the GoI, and in retelling and rewriting their own past. They dedicated their movement to the glory of God since 1918.[58]

The AFSPA primarily focuses on crushing Nagas' nationalism that fights for independence (independence from political and historical suppression, and thus the expression of religious freedom). To the dismay of the tribes, the Indian army convoys that come patrolling even to the interior part of the state appear with the demand to feed them and give them shelter. All this must be financed by village councils, institutions that ordinarily serve to safeguard customary laws and the like. The Army with all their resources come to force poor unemployed village youths to carry their baggage to the next destination to which they are empowered to go (village to village connectivity by foot). The soldiers only speak Hindi which is not the language of the region. They possess the power to execute any civilians who showed disapproval of what they

[57] James H. Cone, *Black Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1970), p. 192.
[58] Lohe, "The Chance to Replenish Nagaland," in *Nagaland Post*, p. 6.

command. Anybody suspected of being a member of the NSCN is harassed, handcuffed and interrogated. The amount of fear-psychosis they create by their presence is intense.[59] History since 1958 tells us so much about rape and murder, burning of churches, violent baton charges, and killings of the civilians. The question of reaching the offices of the ombudsman can never be imagined because the power executed by the AFSPA cannot be put to question or complaint.

My interpretation of 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 imagines such voiceless peoples in the texts informed by my own context but also speaking to that context. I see parallels in the injustices and corruption that victimizes the poor. The experience of vulnerable Nagas becomes the basis on which even texts like these can be read according to a liberation model of reading the text.

6.3.3 Interpretation-III: Hermeneutical Perspective of Voice

One of the interpretive implications for the *hermeneutics of voice* is to pursue elements that strengthen the authority and appeal of the Bible for the marginalized readers. To do so, the perspective of voices in the texts that identifies with readers must be included in a dialogue to either resist or embrace depending on the lived realities of the readers. In contrast to the implication I seek, Noth's perspective of the Dtr is mostly concerned with the theology of occupation of the older tradition (Pentateuchal), of sin and retribution, monarchy and doom.[60] The Dtr's historiography seems quick to characterize any voice of resistance as disloyal and seditious. As a result, the predicaments of the people at the margins are not represented. It is imperative to keep in mind the historiographical biases and rhetoric elements in the historical narratives. Subsequently, such biases and rhetoric elements must not determine the substance of the texts lest it only objectify suppressive elements in the texts. The constituents of peoples' stories in the DH texts I considered are that of the collective voices for liberation represented by the roles played by both Jeroboam and Josiah. The plots are of the different settings, and of different milieu but the nature of their religio-political movements, and their theological elements are identical.

I have shown that the Northerners who marched to lend their voice in opposition to the structural injustices were politicised and characterized. In a similar vein, Josiah,

[59] Personal experiences of the reality seen and underwent by the researcher himself.
[60]Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans., 1981), pp. 30, 68.

who represented the marginalized Judaeans succumbed to death in the hands of Necho-II at Megiddo. In both cases, stories of the peoples' lived experiences are depicted as stigmatised, judged, doomed and victimized. Their lived experiences are unrepresented. Talking about the marginalized tribes in NEI, Longchar says that, "suppression of resistance movements, arrest, harassment and infliction of pain on those who raise their voices are the common strategy of the dominating powers." [61] The stories of dehumanization and coercion of powers in both biblical Israel and NEI by the burgeoning elites appeals to one another. My reading of voices of resistance in these texts speak on behalf of the marginalized readers in their similar aspiration for justice and liberation. Consequently, the serviceability of the Bible which is supposedly the embodiment of the liberating force and an agent of change for readers like the Christian tribes in NEI can become a source of hope.

Throughout my argument on texts and the Dtr's historiography, I have privileged the oft-neglected predicament of the powerless as a plausible aspect of the texts from which an interpretive tool for the *hermeneutics of voice* can be triggered. With such a focus, I have reaffirmed my stand with Geobey who says that "the two momentous *places* are detrimental in affirming Israelite uniqueness,"[62] and the optimistic reading by Keel and Uelinger that suggest, "such activities were part of the initiative that was to give expression and emancipation intended to free them from subjection."[63]

My argument also opines that for Jeroboam to have established himself as the *nagid* reinforces his (Northerners) exclusive right to the name "Israel." Similarly, Jeroboam's voice of resistance against Rehoboam and Josiah's decision to set out against Necho-II can be taken as an archetypical model of an "interventionist instrument"[64] of a postcolonial approach. The model of an interventionist instrument can be liaised with the understanding of a nativist outlook to the text, and it explicitly include a nature of liberative reading that can culminate in raising the voice against the unjust system. Hence, in the marginalized readers' optic, Jeroboam is not to be blamed for raising his voice against the hegemonic power. Likewise, Josiah's confrontation with Necho-II is not a disobedience to the warning of the Pharaoh, or negligence of the prophetess' blessing (Dtr), nor does his death represents the death of hope.

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[61]Longchar, "Theological Education and Just-Mission," pp. 232-233.
[62]Geobey, "The Jeroboam Story in the (Re)formation of Israelite Identity," p. 11.
[63] O. Keel and C. Uelinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God* (London: Tyndale Press, 1998), p. 191.
[64]Sugirtharajah, *Troublesome Texts,* p. 107.

I counter, the religio-political context of the time required both the kings to act in the way the king is expected by the people. Therefore, לְאֹהָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (What portion have we in David?) as a slogan lifted by the Northerners in response to Rehoboam's outrageous decree is a legitimate outcry. The essence of the Northerner's slogan comes from the fact that the inclusive justice of God extended to the nation "Israel" is denied to them, and this is what they claim they must receive. Similarly, Josiah's act of resistance and his socially engaged reformation at Jerusalem leading to his revolt at Megiddo bespeak his peoples' desire for freedom and liberation from their state of liminality (Uriah Kim). The essence of these actions is centred on the hope of recovering their history, ideology, identity and self-worth.[65]

In this likeness, the Christian tribes of NEI must realize that the Western mode of biblical interpretation is partial but can be adapted as a tool for colonial and evangelical pursuits. The perspective of the *hermeneutics of voice* I propose argues that any paradigm that claims a universal mandate in deriving a message from the texts and subsequently imposing that message to readers, regardless of differences in culture and political power is subjective. In the wake of the introduction of Tribal Theology in the discourse of theological education in NEI, Zhodi Angami says, "what is perceived as the authoritative meaning of the Bible is actually Western: The American-European interpretation."[66] It is the West's success to have characterized the tribal natives and their worldview as inferior to the West and to have induced tribal people to assent to such a view. Such assumptions to the authority of the Bible devastated and subjugated the minds of the native tribes to the Western viewpoint for years ever since the West took over tribes in NEI.

By this, I do not mean the Bible is of no validity for NEI Christian readers. I am arguing that the mode of its interpretation by the Westerners does not echo the sentiments and understanding of its tribal hearers. Given the interpretation to emerge from tribe's own experiences and languages that prospectively embodies liberation, the Bible is truly that one agent that can induce hope.

[65] This idea is broadly discussed by Randall C. Bailey, "The Danger of Ignoring One's own Cultural Bias in Interpreting the Text," in Sugirtharajah, *The Postcolonial Bible,* p. 67.
[66]Zhodi Angami, "Looking at Jesus from a Tribal Optic," in Tekatemjen (eds.), *Bible Readings from the Northeast India Context* (Mokokchung: Clark Theological College, 2014), p. 24.

A paradigm shift must take place from tribal theologization to the tribal mode of biblical interpretation. As the term *voice* signifies, the vantage point for a marginalized perspective of biblical interpretation considers the contextual approach to reading the Bible which is beyond just the theologization. Similarly, Angami calls for a *reading with new eyes* which to him is *reading with ordinary people.* The *hermeneutics of voice,* then, resists the dominant and suppressive mode of Biblical interpretations which does not seem to meet the aspirations of marginalized readers. As such, tribal theology must also incorporate biblical hermeneutics that calls for imagining God and the Bible in a way that goes beyond its Christianization. Therefore, the *hermeneutics of voice* is the interpretive opposite of what I have called the dominant viewpoint in the study of the DH, an *on-high* religion, and *on-high* interpretation. In theory, my argument is a response to the question of how a subaltern can benefit from reading the Bible, particularly the stories of Jeroboam and Josiah.

6.4 Reading Jeroboamic and Josianic Texts for Christian Tribes in NEI

Christian tribes of NEI need not read or interpret biblical texts as having a colonial tint, for such interpretations reflect imperial *clichés*. They must not cling to the understanding that narrative texts are simply the stories of the victors. There is no reason to believe that political and religious majoritarianism can prevail when Bible stories can entail so much hope and liberative voices for the marginalized readers when we read from the paradigm of the hidden messages. My call for reading Jeroboam and Josiah is to read from the *place,* the place that can be poor, victimized and silenced (refer 3.6 and 4.7). The interpretive approach to 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 which I have proposed suggest that the marginalized readers such as Christian tribes of NEI should pursue in their own pursuit to fight for their *place* in the larger Indian society is to consider the following ideals in the text:

> (i) The conflicting ideas "between the normative and the deviant cult"[67] is causative of Rehoboam's irrational imposition of his power to the marginalized Northerners.
>
> (ii) The invocation in the Northern shrines was to the worship of Yahweh (1 Kings 12: 28).

[67]Slivniak, "The Golden Calf Story," p. 33.

(iii) Jeroboam himself is a legitimate *nagid* God chose (1 Kings 11: 29-31).

(iv) The retelling of the hidden, suppressed, and untold stories in the text from the social location of the reader.

(v) Josiah's resistance to Necho can be an epitome to resist the hegemony of both the legacy of the imperial past and the neo-imperialism masked in the form of Hindutva.

(vi) To read the reign, role and death of Josiah within the theological light of resurgence to hope represented by the Promise (2 Sam. 7) and Jehoiachin's release (1 Kings 25).

(vii) The spearheading role by Jeroboam and the patriotic defence of Josiah are some deeper insights that Christian tribes of NEI can gain motivations in their fight against suppressive forces of Hindutva.

(viii) These perspectives of looking at the biblical stories, characters, and literary plots *from below* can truly introduce the Bible not as the foreign product any longer but as we anchor our identity, culture and security to it, the fundamental essence of hope will remain, and the voice will reverberate.

6.5 The Naga Christians Reading Jeroboam and Josiah

What we have in the last five chapters is my argument against the dominant theological interpretation of the DH. In it, the Nothian idea of doom and catastrophe was disputed as I took the foundational thoughts from scholars who found optimistic messages in the DH. Interpreted in this light, these biblical narratives can be read in the context of the suppressed and vulnerable Nagas to show the potential of such texts for a liberative reading.

With this focus, in order to test some of these conclusions in an informal but illuminating way, I invited a group of seminary teachers, students, ordained ministers and lay Bible readers to read the Josiah and Jeroboam texts with me. These sessions were conducted at Trinity Theological College twice (19th December 2020 and 21st January 2021), each session taking an hour and a half. The nature of the session was that I introduced the texts within selected scholar's theoretical and theological frameworks.

After this, discussion was opened to the participants (24 in total) who offered their insightful thoughts and points to ponder. I strategically prepared some points to

discuss and questions to ask from the perspective of interpretation from our (Naga) context. The hermeneutical conclusions drawn from their deliberation on the texts do not explicitly represent every marginalized readers, but as it appeared, at least for these Naga readers, the aspect of reading these narratives *from the place* tacitly shows the serviceability of the message to them.

This Bible study group addressed two concerns:

a) drawing a parallel between the voice of the marginalized subdued by the imperialist DtrH and the imposition of the Western reading of the Bible on the Nagas in NEI;

b) demonstrating that the Western Christianity which came as a suppressive force can now serves as a tool to resist Hindutva. The group concluded that these texts enable us to look at how interpretation from the vantage point of a marginalized reader can serve to reveal their liberating force, uplifting the weakened spirit and catalysing resistance.

a. Reading the text: In a brief introduction, the leader referred to the following points: The social stratification of the hierarchical Davidides and the tribes, the geo-political divides between the South and the North and the overarching presence of the Egyptians and the tribes of Israel as minority. This prompted multiple responses from the participants which are summarised as follows:

Participants' response:

One Manonglee Naga responded saying, "these texts portray the contemporary Naga crisis and that the interpretation of it must relate to our own struggle for liberation." Extended ideas that emerged from this response went on to discuss the need for conscientization in order to achieve disentanglement from the imperial reading of the text. Nagas have been used to reading biblical stories almost always as the stories of the winners. Our reading of texts like 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 must allow us to look at our own *place* and *space*, tell our stories of the unseen, unheard and identify the stories in the text for our own struggle.

b. Reading the text: The leader asked, can the foreign political powers that threatened Josiah and Josiah's resistance be read as a metaphor of hopelessness? Such notions of the relations between suzerain and vassal in the text only support the party that has power and domain over resources. Noth's explanation of the Dtr suggest likewise i.e. no hope for the marginalized Josiah.

Participants' response:

Naga readers of such ideological texts must realize that the ideological parameters implicit in the way texts, languages and interpretation have been brought to them during the colonial and Missionary era are potentially suppressive and detrimental. They make no space for the tribal voices to speak out. Such legacies of the Western mode of worship and preaching, liturgies and biblical interpretation must be done away with. Ideally, embracing who we are and what we hold to belief, we must speak against any form of neo-imperialistic forces.

c. The session leader asks: How do we read 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 as one of the many texts that might raise the flag of resistance and liberation?

Participants' response:

First, the issue of indigenous rights and privileges denied in the text becomes relevant to the Nagas whose socio-cultural and religious identity was minimized by the advent of the imperial West then and the neo-imperialistic Hindutva. *Secondly*, secularism is constitutional in India. Any unconstitutional treatment of people of other faiths besides Hindu must be resisted. Resistance to oppressive force is understood through the texts as legitimate and liberating. *Thirdly*, to the Nagas, Jehoiachin's rest and shelter with the foreign king can be taken in the way God remembers grace for the souls of the weak. The group realized the importance of *placing* the Bible in the midst of the reader's context for an intelligible interpretation.

d. The leader introduced a further point of discussion: The Dtr historical plots and narrations missed incorporating every voice. Could it be that the Northern reaction in 1 Kings 12 is not an attempt to do away with what they were imposed with but to claim what is due to them i.e. justice and reality and that the DtrH biased rendition of the history of Israel is an attack on the Rights of the citizen.

Participants' response:

Minorities like the Naga tribes in NEI are silenced in many ways. Our voices are unheard in the democracy ironically. We as a minority do not claim to obtain what the majority have, but we claim what is due to us: freedom to live and worship, freedom to own land and control our land, freedom of movement in the country without being questioned because of our belief, complexion and language. We need our stories to be told, heard, and written. Revealing the realities of the readers themselves and finding hope in the reading of the texts in the light of optimism creates hope for the suppressed voice.

e. The leader introduced a further point of discussion: Is it fair to say that the hegemony of the Southern powers and the unjust execution by the hierarchy are criticized by the Northerners in 1 Kings 12, but not what they as a nation professed to believe?

Participants' response:

Naga readers can relate to the situation of discrimination and the special military power endowed to AFSPA by the central government since 1958 until this day. The Naga insurgency movement in the state is not against any person, people or religious group but against this harsh reality of military discrimination and victimization. Likewise, in their attempt to contextualize biblical interpretation to secure their identity and posterity today, the Nagas must re-read biblical texts identifying the God of the Bible as their own and not as a foreign God as is the accusation of the followers of Hindutva.

f. The Leader introduced a further point to discuss: Jeroboam's and the Northerner's slogan is an epic example of the marginal voice raised against the unjust systems. Josiah's move to resist the Egyptian Pharoah can be read as resistance ideology put into action. In both cases, the king's adherence to YHWH is visible. Jeroboam is the prototype of God's covenant with the patriarchs (Knoppers) and Josiah consulted the prophet Huldah (Na'aman).

Participants' response:

One seminary New Testament teacher respond, "Frisking of my baggage even while I travel in my own state/land by the Indian army is both humiliating, my identity is put to trial, and my freedom is visibly seized. So, the presence of AFSPA in Nagaland can be multifaceted- political, religious, social and undemocratic." I asked the group, what about the ever-present fear? An ordained pastor replied, "We should not fear! Josiah was not laid back. Jeroboam's voice echoes much clearer to the Nagas today."

g. The leader asked: In light of this discussion, what exemplary role Josiah or Jeroboam gives you as a marginalized Naga Bible reader?

One seminary student responded, "We see very optimistic languages of hope and solidarity that Jeroboam had used for the marginalized Northerners specifically in v. 28 רַב-לָכֶם מֵעֲלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִַם (You have gone up long enough to Jerusalem). This identifies with our (Naga) people because it appears to us as a call to state formation and the

establishment of our own security like it was for the Northerners. This text is a reminder and hence it is empowering to know that biblical narrative is also about the story of the aspirants like us and not only about winners."

In line with that, another participant stated, "The liberative message a marginalized reader can extract from Josianic narrative is Josiah's passionate act of national resistance, voicing a charter of liberty and political rights, to the point where he gave his life."

Conclusion

The chapter has summarised the interpretive implications and has identified what a reading of the voice in the texts and the NEI reader's context can do. I have located the oppressed and the oppressor in both texts and readers' contexts, critiquing the suppressive dynamics of interpretation to counter-read in favour of the marginalized Christian tribes of NEI.

Keeping my own state of *liminality*, my approach to the postcolonial reading of these narratives that challenges Noth's position calls into question the authority of the Western interpretation of the Bible, which is suppressive rather than simply adding to the texts' intelligibility. As such, in this final chapter I have detailed the marginalized context of NEI, advocated approaches to interpreting elements of hope in the DH for *that* context and showed interpretive parameters by which the Bible can become a resource for hope.

My study with its unique reference to the DH texts, its theology and the traditions in its interpretation have attempted to critique and conceptualize the hidden voices in the texts resonated with the voice of the marginalized Christian tribes of NEI. This is done with the simple intention that marginalized readers such as the Christian tribes of NEI can find the message of their authoritative book relevant, emancipating, and liberating. Therefore, in specific, I suggest that for postcolonial readers, the Dtr's historical and ideological positions can only be adequately relevant when a text is interpreted from the paradigm of marginalized voices i.e. the lived realities. In fact, ". . . Be quiet! You woke everyone up!" by Grossman is an ironical call to raise one's voice even louder against policies and programmes of oppression. The voice, in a figurative sense puts forward a representation of the peoples' stories. I propose that the voices in the texts, which

speaks on behalf of the marginalized must become a whistle-blower in order to allow hope to be built from their experiences.

In a very preliminary and informal way, discussion with other Naga readers of the Bible shows that these unlikely stories in Kings can speak to those whose voices have been suppressed and encourage them to make their own stories heard.

General Conclusion

In order that the voice of the marginalized people in the texts are depicted, so as to privilege the marginalized readers of the Christian tribes of NEI I took up the task of counter-reading Noth's perspective of the Dtr and its suppressive theology, as exhibited by studying the theology of the DH, while reflecting on the Western mode of biblical interpretation in NEI. In doing so, I have looked at the optimistic facet of the DH within the interpretive framework of Gerhard von Rad and Hans Walter Wolff, whereby, I proposed a fundamental affinity in their diverted hypotheses, leading to a reading of the theme of hope in the DH. Sticking with the plausibility of hope in reading the DH narratives, following the thesis by Frank M. Cross, I have chosen 1 Kings 12 and 2 Kings 22-23 where there is a dichotomised theology between Jeroboam (as the figure of sin, hopelessness, and division) and Josiah (as a figure of hope and promise) in the traditional interpretation of the DH. This thesis has given a new look at the DH theme of hope from a paradigm of postcolonial criticism. In doing so, the decolonization and counter-reading methods of reading these two texts have been carried out.

The hermeneutical perspective from the marginalized context clearly contributes to the understanding of dichotomized class structures in the texts as well as among the interpreters and readers. This perspective gives major importance to the linguistic expression of human experiences of class struggle. The text's historical plots of words and responses, challenges and confrontations inevitably evoke specific emotional resonances within the readers. It is imperative that biblical interpreters acknowledge readers' personal or collective experiences and their worldviews, since these factors are pivotal in determining the meaning and reception of the texts. This, therefore, challenges any claims to a monopoly on biblical interpretation. Likewise, a biased historiography itself becomes a biased interpretation. These biases, intensified by subjectivism, become suppressive rather than a solution to the crises of marginalized readers.

As part of the exemplary argument for my interpretation, I have critiqued Noth's version of the Dtr, its theology and ideology, and the Western mode of biblical interpretation in the nineteenth and twentieth century colonial and missional era in NEI. I have argued that their methods of interpretation of the DH and the Bible can only justify the claims of the powerful class in the society. Therefore, I have shown in the archetypal analysis of the texts, that the monopolistic and subjective interpretation

deceive the readers of the message of the Bible and the image of God. In postcolonial biblical studies, the Bible that is interpreted in the light of the marginalized voice is acknowledged as liberating. Therefore, from a marginalized point of view, suppressed conditions should lead readers to look at suppressive biblical interpretations from a reverse paradigm, a paradigm that resist any form of overarching ideologies.

My perspective on the Dtr is mainly focused on the plausibility of looking at the theme of hope in the DH, which, I argue, is espoused in and through peoples' voices/stories in the texts. Therefore, my contention is that the DH is never short of the message of hope. For instance, in the marginal mode of reading the narratives where the dichotomized voices are positioned in the interpretive process as voices to be reasoned, it can help unmask the idea of the Deuteronomic hope and this hope finds its mandate in the peoples' voice. In accepting Rad and Wolff's theses to add to my perspective of the Dtr, I have built a framework in Chapter 2 so that a counter-reading of the dominant theme(s) in the DH in favour of the marginalized readers is established.

So, I have laid stress on optimistic themes of the Dtr where marginalized readers can claim a basis for their own mode of interpretation. Although the alleged honest broker (Noth's Dtr), or the pessimistic edition (Cross's Dtr_2) destines the whole DH to messages of apostasy, retribution, judgement, condemnation and doom, I see each king standing on God's *faithfulness* which operates as the Deuteronomic hope (Cross's $Dtr_{1,}$). This is a hope that is founded on the Davidic covenant for all (2 Sam. 7). A hope that is signified in the *return* (שׁוּב) to Yahweh (1 Kings 8: 48). A hope represented in Jehoiachin's release (2 Kings 25) and in Josiah's figure of a good king (2 Kings 22: 2). Most importantly, a realized hope is revealed or made apparent when listening to the voices of the peoples in the texts (1 Kings 8:53; 12: 28 claims of the history/stories of their fathers). So, as much as readers find it necessary to look at the theme of judgement and doom, it is also fundamental to look from the perspective of the everlasting (לְעוֹלָם) covenant of God. In encompassing this theme of hope, I understand that the God of the Deuteronomic community must not have disassociated from the meagre realities of lives then, or now, for the marginalized readers such as the Christian tribes of NEI.

The one attribute of God that the marginalized adherents of the Bible, for instance, Christian tribes of NEI, would aspire to read from the Christian scripture is God as the God of Hope. It is because the Bible as they have so embraced it, is the source and

solace to life, empowerment, and fulfilling destiny. In the pursuit to realize this God of Hope, it is quintessential that their spirituality and their lived experiences are addressed through a contextual biblical interpretation. The importance of the study of social locations in both the text and context of the readers are crucial in resisting the hegemony represented in the text as well as in those that are operational in the marginalized social location.

Overall, I have looked at the *serviceability* (Sugirtharajah, 2001: 117) of the biblical texts to the marginalized readers taking the case of the Christian tribes of NEI. I have established approaches for counter-reading biased historiography, as well as its imperial elements in the biblical narrative. The counter-reading of the dominant themes, as I called it, argues that the on-high interpretation adds to the despair, rather than the hope they aspired to. If the Deuteronomistic historiography interpreted through the lens of Noth's Dtr takes the West as the subject of the DH, then the narratives in the DH can be used to serve the interests of the West. In order to counter-read Western subjectivism and make the DH texts serviceable for marginalized readers, reading the marginalized as the subject of the DH is essential. This is possible when the texts' perspective is set *for* hope as *against* doom to favour the marginalized readers. So then, the Bible, which is contended for the identity of the Christian tribes in NEI, becomes a tool that can be identified with resistance and a voice of hope.

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