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DEUTERONOMY 20:19-20
A LESSON IN FRUGALITY

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by
Eletise Taauta Suluvale
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For my wife Rosa,
my children Roseti, Judith, Rosanna, Tile, Ana
and my grandchildren Nailama, Kapuana and Ruama.

Your patience and support has finally come into fruitition.

Faafetai tapua'i, Malo le lagolago

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To my wife Rosa, my children and grandchildren, this work will stand as a reminder of our struggles, our successes in life and as a proof of God's great love for our family. Life in Malua has indeed been a challenge but we endured because God was with us all the way. Let us return the glory to God for the strength and knowledge that guaranteed the successful completion of this paper.

"O e lulu saito ma loimata,
latou te seleseleina ma le alaga fiafia"
(Salamo 126:5)

Malo le tapua'i, fa'afetai tatalo.

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Holy war in Deuteronomy 20:16-20 is ambiguous since verses 16-18 and verses 19-20 arguably derive from incompatible traditions. A post-colonial reading reveals that Deuteronomy 16-20 is an attempt by the ancient editor(s) to maintain Israelite identity amidst Assyrian cultural dominance during the 7th century BCE. The placing of divergent traditions side by side effectively de-centered and exposed the dominant traditions of Holy war in Israel as hypothetical and impractical. In doing so, the ancient editor(s) cleared any allusions to a merciless and cruel God. This strategy of maintaining cultural integrity by embracing divergent traditions has analogies with the lifestyle Samoans are adopting today.

INTRODUCTION

In modern Western societies, politics is dominated by the economy and warfare is thinkable and justifiable if it can be argued that it is for the 'national interests'. This suggests that there is something of a campaign about these wars, a desire to defend a way of life, as well as to safeguard power.

Israel too, made war for a variety of reasons. The Old Testament (OT) refers to these as *wars of YHWH* (Ex 17:16; Num 21:14). Since the beginning of this century the term "holy war" has been used to describe those wars in which YHWH fought as a warrior.[1] The conclusion of these war exercises was the ban (*herem*), where humans and animals were put to death, but silver, gold and other possessions were declared sacred to YHWH (Josh 6: 18-19). Can a personal God deliberately set to the people a task which can only lower them in the scale of humanity – to brutalise them, in fact? The answer is definitely no, and a divine command to do such things would be rightly suspected. After all, one of the main themes of the Decalogue (Ex 20:2-17 and Deut 5:1:21) is the 'Do not kill' rationalization. While the Ten Commandments serve as principles and guidelines for the people of Israel, the laws of Deuteronomy 12-26 can be viewed as elaborations on these commandments.[2]

The *herem* of Deuteronomy 20:16-18 undermines the *bal tashhit* (thou shall not destroy) prohibition given in Deuteronomy 20:19 and vice versa. It may be argued that

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[1] Gwilym H. Jones. "The Concept of Holy War". in R. E. Clements, (ed). "*The World of Ancient Israel*", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.299.

[2] Ronald Clements. *The Book of Deuteronomy. A Preachers Commentary*. (London: Epwarth Press, 2001), p.xv

the *bal tashhit* is applied only to fruit trees. However, it is asserted that the fruit tree was created to prolong human life[3] and this purpose therefore may not be challenged by using the tree to make war and destroy life.[4] Is the *bal tashhit* simply a moral restraint? The approval to cut down other trees to make bulwarks undermines the *bal tashhit* prohibition. The reduction of resources is for short economic purposes. If the exercise was due to an abundance of trees at the time, then the cornucopian thought form is subtly evident here. Strangely though, the fate of trees seems to lie on their (in)ability to produce fruits. Ferdinand Deist (1994) probably has a point when he noted that perhaps Deuteronomy does contain dangerous ideologies and therefore might very well be a dangerous book.[5]

This paper aims to employ a post-colonial reading of Deuteronomy 20:16-18 and Deuteronomy 20:19-20 with the purpose of showing that there are essentially ambivalent aspects in these texts. Post-colonial reading of texts is a way of reading and rereading of colonial cultures to draw deliberate attention to the inescapable effects of colonisation on historical records and scientific writing.[6] The context is analogous with the deconstructive reading in that they both demonstrate the extent to which the text contradicts its underlying assumptions and reveals its colonial ideologies and processes. An important

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[3] J. J. Packer and M. C. Tenney (eds). *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible.* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p.256. According to these authors The Bible makes early reference to the tree of knowledge, and the pomegranate was long held in reverence by the Jews and Persians as the biblical forbidden fruit.

[4] Norman Lamm. "Ecology in Jewish Law and Theology" in *Faith and Doubt*. (KTAV Publishing House, 1971) in, http:// *www.shalom ctr.org/node/170,* p.2

[5] F. Deist. "The Dangers of Deuteronomy: A Page from the Reception History of the Book" in, F. Garcia Martinez., *et al* (eds), *Studies in Deuteronomy.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), p.38

[6] B. Ashcroft, G Griffiths and H Tifin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. (London: Routledge, 1998). p.12

term in post-colonial theory is mimicry[7] for it describes the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized.[8] When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is only a blurred copy of the colonizer.[9] Mimicry is further related to *hybridity* because a cross culture exchange has taken place resulting in the formation of a 'hybrid' society. More importantly in post-colonial study, hybridity has the potential to reverse the structures of domination in the colonial situation, just as ambivalence 'decentres' authority from its position of power.[10] Chapter Three of the paper will be devoted to the exposition of the post-colonial reading exercise.

Did Holy war really exist, and, if it existed, was it practiced in the way described? Was the *herem* a necessity in Holy war concept? These are two of the concerns that will be discussed in Chapter One. Special mention will be given to the *herem* and its actuality in the Holy war concept.

A look at the importance of Trees to humans will be given in Chapter Two, with particular reflection on fruit trees and their contribution to the survival of the population. A brief survey of biblical references to trees and their significance to the paper will also be explored. This scientific perspective will offer an environmental stand to the *bal tasshit* prohibition in the Deuteronomy 20:19-20.

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[7] The ancient Greek concept of *Mimesis* goes back to the Greek painter Zeuxis (5th BCE) who is said to have painted grapes which looked so real that the birds came to peck at them. Girard (1972) adopted this term to indicate that beyond mere imitation, human beings learn what to desire by acquisitively desiring what we percieve others to desire (cited in Brett (2004), p.7.

[8] B. Ashcroft, G Griffiths and H Tifin., p.120

[9] B. Ashcroft, G Griffiths and H Tifin, p.120

[10] Ibid., p.120

The paper concludes with a citation of some theological themes obtained from the investigation together with a brief contextualization of the text material to show that the 'hybrid' lifestyle of the Israelites during the time of Assyrian cultural dominance is alive and strong in modern day Samoa.

CHAPTER ONE

ISRAEL'S HOLY WAR CONCEPT IN PERSPECTIVE

It is common knowledge that war is more destructive to the environment – and to the persons living in it – than anything else. In the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites considered the environment a divine gift and a primary concern for YHWH's law. Indeed the vision of the Psalmist in Ps1:1-3 centres on the unity of the people, the land, and the law.

> Happy are those….(whose) delight is in the law of the Lord…
> They are like trees planted by streams of water,
> which yield their fruits in season
>
> (parts of Psalm 1:1-3).

This focus on the people, the land and the law stands behind the rules for, and limitations upon the conduct of war recounted in Deuteronomy 20.[11] It is evident that in every part of this chapter the presentation of war procedures is linked to the reality of YHWH. Violence against Israel's neighbours is assumed to be YHWH's authorisation. Military conquest was one of the key factors in the formation of Israel in the land of Canaan.[12] It was the means by which YHWH gave Israel the land at the beginning. In these conquest campaigns, Israel was ill prepared and ill armed, but with YHWH, Israel may be confident in victory.[13] There was a varied logic in Israel's war making. Likewise

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[11] W. Brueggemann. *Deuteronomy*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), p.207

[12] Two other theories of how the Israelites came into Canaan was 'Infiltration' – a longer peaceful process where the people migrated, infiltrated and became the dominant group; and the 'Revolutionary' declaration of independence from the oppressive Canaanites. See esp. Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (1979) and John Goldingay. *Old Testament Theology: Israel's* Gospel (2003), p.486-487

[13] W. Brueggemann, p.208

there is variation in the way YHWH is involved in war. To comprehend this more fully, we need to look at the transmission of the Holy war tradition in the history of Israel.

1.1 Holy War Concept: Early Tradition (Exodus – Joshua)

The essential part of Israel's Holy war concept was YHWH fighting for Israel as the 'divine warrior'. According to Norman Gottwald the basic outlines of the concept were formed well before Israel became a state.[14] But this whole issue has been the subject of debate. The Holy war concept itself is not peculiar to Israel.[15] While most ancient Near Eastern cultures interpreted national warfare as religious wars, it is difficult to establish satisfactorily those factors that distinguished the Israelite Holy war ideal.[16] Drawing on the early traditions of the Hebrew Bible Gerhad von Rad distinguished certain constant elements that constituted Holy war, which he described and placed in their *sitz im leben.*[17] These constant elements (summarized in Table 1.1) are not preserved together in any single battle, as the various campaigns differ quite markedly in both context and place.

For von Rad, Israel's Holy war both in theory and practice came to existence in the period of the *amphictyony* – a pre-monarchic institution comprising the confederacy of the twelve (12) tribes of Israel. The campaigns belonging to this period are defensive wars merely to secure the territory guaranteed to the Israelites by YHWH.

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[14] N. Gottwald. "Holy War" in, *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible – An Illustrated Encyclopaedia.* Supplementary Volume, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p.943

[15] Gwilym H. Jones., p.299. Since the beginning of this century the term Holy war has been used to describe these wars in which Yahweh fought as the divine warrior.

[16] Ibid., p.302

[17] Cited in G. W. Jones, p.302-303. von Rad based his theory on M. Noth's proposal that Israel's life in premonarchic times was based on a 'sacred confederacy of tribes'.

TABLE 1.1: Gerhard von Rad's Constant Elements of Holy war.[18]

Assembling of Troops. Holy War began with the sounding of a trumpet for the troops to assemble (Judges 6:34ff). Another solemn method of summoning troops was to send pieces of animal flesh among the people in the hands of messengers (I Samuel 11:7). These assembled forces formed the militia of Yahweh and were duly consecrated (Joshua 3:5).
Pre-battle preparations Sacrifices were offered and an oracle from YHWH is sought (Judges 20:23). The declaration of victory (from YHWH) was an important factor in holy war.
The battle proper. The battle itself opened with a loud battle cry (Judges 7:20) and YHWH went out before the troops in battle. This was YHWH's war. All through the fighting YHWH was active in creating panic and terror among the enemies (Joshua 10:10; Judges 4:15).
Conclusion of the battle. The war was brought to a conclusion with the ban *herem*; humans and animals were put to death, but silver, gold and other possessions were declared sacred to YHWH (Joshua 6:18-19). After this, the army is disbanded and the men returned to their tents.

This amphictyony theory has been refuted by Gottwald as an "erroneous over refinement of suggestive analogies between Greek/Italian and Israelite religious confederacy".[19] Scholarship has challenged this amphictyonic date of Holy war in two divergent directions.[20] Firstly, R. Smend argued that the wars in question were clearly a case of various tribal groups acting independently before they had become the people of Israel.[21] In addition, the war of YHWH existed in some form prior to the conquest and he

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[18] Adapted from G. W. Jones, p.302-303

[19] Norman K. Gottwald.. *The Tribes of YHWH: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE,.*(Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1979), p.347

[20] N. Gottwald. (1985), p.943

[21] R , Smend. 1970. *YHWH War and Tribal Confederation.* (Nashville: Eng tr of *Jahwekreig und Stammebund* (Gottingen, 1963) cited in G. W. Jones (1989). Jones elaborated on Smend's argument noting that some tribes did not participate in the wars of the Judges, notably Judah and Simeon. Smend found the home of Israel's war traditions among the Rachel tribes, while the Leah tribes represented the amphityonic element in Israel's traditions.

traced its roots back to the event of the Exodus the time when YHWH gave the Israelites their freedom and liberation from the Egyptians.[22] Moreover, wars waged by Saul and David in the expansion of the nation resemble very much those wars in the period of the Judges.

Secondly, F. M. Cross and P. D. Miller argued that von Rad did not account for the mythological aspects of Holy war.[23] For them, these motifs influenced the concept very much as YHWH, the divine warrior is seen as the leader of cosmic armies (Cross) and as the commander of the armies of heaven and earth (Miller).[24]

Instead of accepting that there was initially a theory that had then come to dominate Israel's later practices, it was suggested that the practice had preceded the theory. This led Jones to conclude that YHWH war became a technical term for the practice and Holy war for the theory. [25]

There was no indication in this period of any particular element that distinguishes Holy war from ordinary warfare. The set of regulations governing exemptions from war service in Deuteronomy 20: 1-9 provides a good example. In this text, there is nothing specifically Israelite about the list of four categories granting exemption: men who have built a new house, recently planted a vineyard, betrothed a wife or who are fainthearted.[26] Rather it reflects a generally accepted practice in warfare – these are the people with reasons that hinder their full commitment in battle and should have no part in wars. The

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[22] R., Smend, 1970, cited in Jones, p.305

[23]Gwilym H. Jones, p.306. See also N. Gottwald. "Holy War", (1985) p.943

[24]Ibid., p.306

[25] Gwilym H. Jones, p.308

[26] Ibid., p.309

custom in secular warfare therefore became acceptable, and it is only its setting within a Holy war formula that gives it a religious significance.[27] It appears that in defeating the enemy and taking possession of the land, there was no marked distinction between the so called YHWH wars and other warfare. Evidently, some of the wars in the book of Judges appear no more than just ordinary acts of warfare but in the course of time the heroes became saviour figures and their wars were considered as examples of Holy war.[28]

So far, it seems that a given formula for YHWH war cannot be established. But Carl von Clausewitz's philosophy of war may explain this inability to establish a war formula.[29] For von Clausewitz, the theory can never be practiced in the reality of war as certain factors arise (such as chance, the morale of troops, the weather) which could not be accounted for in theory. Still, YHWH's participation in Israel's wars in this tradition was understood rather loosely and vaguely. For Gottwald, the institutional uniformity of Holy war proposed by von Rad was a misreading of the more standardised mytho-historical language about divine warrior and fighting people.[30] It maybe those wars around this time were more of a 'mercenary' approach and outlook, in line with the type of society that existed at the time.

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[27] Gwilym H. Jones, p.309

[28] G. W. Jones noted the core of the Ehud story with no religious content whatsoever, and makes no mention of YHWH or his activity. By being set in a holy war framework, it has been transformed into an example of holy war. Similarly, the Gideon narrative (Judges 8: 4-21) and the account of Jephthah's war against the Ammonites. Jephthah himself was the warrior and the few references to YHWH do not imply that it was an ancient tradition of YHWH war.

[29] P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy,* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Erdmann, 1976), p.57. Craigie further noted that von Clausewitz's three principle objectives in war were achieved in the passage Deut. 20:16-18; the military power of the enemy is destroyed, the city state is restrained so that no new threat could emerge and the will of the enemy mortally subdued.

[30] N. Gottwald. (1985), p.943.

1.2 Holy War Concept: Later Tradition (Judges – Kings)

While the theory and concept of Holy war were vague in early Israel tradition, the Holy war theory of later tradition was clear. Stylized holy war schemes are evident in Judges 4: 4-16, Judges 6-8 and 1 Samuel 11.[31] These schemes are summarized in Table 1.2. During this time, the use of the handing over formula and the 'do not fear' theme has found space into the Holy war scheme.

TABLE 1.2: Holy War Schemes in Later Israelite Tradition.[32]

TEXT	HOLY WAR SCHEME
Judges 4: 4-16	1. The Handing Over Formula: "I will give him into your hand" (v6-7; 14) 2. Summoning Volunteers to Battle (v10) 3. Attributing Victory to YHWH (v14-15) 4. Defeat of the Enemy "by the Edge of the Sword" (v15-16) 5. A Form of executing the Ban so that not a man was left.
Judges 6 – 8	1. Summoning of troops (v6:33ff) 2. Rallying for battle (v7:1) 3. Notice of Victory (v7:22)
I Samuel 11	1. Description of the situation and the denunciation of the enemy. 2. The coming of the spirit. 3. Conscription of fighters. 4. Victory. 5. Total annihilation.
Established Holy War Theory	1. A situation of oppression and distress 2. The rise of a leader 3. Calling followers and their response 4. Engagement in battle 5. Climax with total victory over the enemy

The established Holy war theory that emerged consisted of five (5) distinct elements (Table 1.2). Holy war still exhibits a number of constant elements, but now with room for flexibility and variety in the presentation.

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[31] Gwilym H. Jones, p.311

[32] Adapted from G. W. Jones, p.311-312

The given schemes however have brought out one very important aspect of the Holy war theory – YHWH's participation. This facet was not clearly recognized in the ancient Israelite tradition, where it was frequently *assumed* without specifically expressed.

The references to the Spirit now belong to the Holy war scheme and together with the handing over formula emphasize YHWH's participation in the war.[33] Holy war regulations in Deuteronomy 20 (especially verses 1-4) make the same point. With such an emphasis on YHWH's participation, Israel's part is transformed into a secondary or even a minimum one.

The people of Israel are now entering the land of Canaan, and are exposed to a number of distractions. One of these is their worship of YHWH. This is now threatened of being corrupted with Canaanite religion. Every war victory is YHWH's victory and in this way, Israel's faith is unyielding. Inevitably, YHWH's activity in wars is all the more dominant.

1.3 Holy War Concept: Post-Monarchy - Exile

Early in the monarchy the issue was not so much whether wars were 'defensive' or 'aggressive'. The concern was more the constructive or destructive effects of wars on the internal well being of Israelite society.[34] There was growing concern over whether wars conducted under the conditions of political hierarchy were in fact wars of YHWH.[35]

Did the divine warrior chiefly operate through the entire people as a tribally articulated

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[33] Gwilym H. Jones, p.313

[34] N. Gottwald. (1985), p.944

[35] Ibid., p.944

covenant community or did he chiefly operate through his representative the king? The people were confused. They wanted a monarchy state with the expectation that this would bring them on par with other neighbouring nations (especially their rival the Philistines) but they were wrong. They still needed YHWH's presence to ensure success. The presence of the Ark in their wars gave them this assurance.

During the time of the monarchy, the responsibility for war seems to have passed over to the hands of professional soldiers.[36] This shift of emphasis provided the occasion and the momentum for underlining the essentials of the old YHWH war tradition. The old traditions were formalized to draw attention to this shift of emphasis, and it was from here that the Holy war ideal was born.[37]

Religious thought about war took a new turn with the appearance of prophets. They reversed the roles of Holy war by a full turn and declared that in the wars at hand YHWH will now fight against Israel. The principles of Holy war, formerly aimed at foreign powers were now turned against the internal oppressors – the Israelite ruling class.[38]

When the Babylonians invaded and took over Israel, Holy war assumed once more a hopeful prospect for the restoration of the Israel state. Just as YHWH freed them from Egypt, Holy war asserts the prospect that YHWH one day would liberate them again, somehow. Holy war imagery thus brought hope for the exiled community of Israel.

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[36] Gwilym H. Jones, p.314

[37] Ibid., p.314

[38] N. Gottwald. 1985, p.944

This hope was fused into Holy war language in apocalyptic writings which were instrumental in initiating the revolts against the Seleucids and Rome.[39]

It seems therefore that the Holy war concept developed in three fairly distinct stages.[40] Firstly, the YHWH war tradition in its simplest form asserted that YHWH was active in granting Israel success against its enemies. Secondly in circles critical to the monarchy it became necessary to emphasize once again that YHWH wars were God centred; tradition was now given a formula in order to make this point, and the theory emerged. Thirdly, this tradition was most acceptable to the Deuteronomistic redactors; it suited their emphasis on the possession of Canaan as a gift from YHWH and their overall scheme for interpreting history.

The rabbinic Jewish laws classify each biblical war according to 'category'. A war may be 'commanded and obligatory' (*milchemet mitzvah*), or 'permitted' (*milchemet reshut*) or contrary to divine law.[41] In the *milchemet mitzvah* the people are obliged to fight. On the other hand the soldiers are given a choice in *milchemet reshut*. Moreover, a defensive war justifies some of the severity in the early books of the Bible, while war not fought against an immediate threat demands additional limitations on combat. [42]

1.4 The Ban (*herem*)

The story of Israel's occupation of Palestine gives a significant place to the practice of *herem*, the annihilation of the human and animal population of a city (and the

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[39] Ibid., p. 944

[40] Gwilym H. Jones, p..314

[41] G, Wilkes, p.11

[42] G, Wilkes, p.18

surrender to God of its possessions) as an act of devotion.[43] This generally known custom may well have been modified by the Israelites, as indicated by the absence of offering a life to the God in gratitude for success in battle (the only example being in Judges 11: 30ff) [44]. There is ample evidence which points to the fact that practicing the *herem* was neither a necessary part of YHWH war nor practiced at all.

In two cases (Ex 17:8-16 and Deut 20:16) where the Bible commands war without quarter, rabbinic tradition recognized the *herem* as an exception no longer relevant because the people concerned had intermarried to the point that they were no longer distinguishable.[45] In earlier conquest tradition the *herem* appears as a vow and not as a law (Numbers 21: 2-3). Even the *herem* on the Canaanites was preceded by peace negotiations, a practice identified with all the wars of the patriarchs. In the first references to *herem* (Ex 22:20; Lev 27:21; Num 18:14) things that belong to God do not relate to war, so the application of *herem* to warfare may then be secondary. The first occasion when *herem* is applied to a defeated city (Numbers 21:1-3) happens on Israel's initiative, not YHWH, and the offer relates to cities rather than people.[46]

Modern scholarship also affirms this doubtful status of the *herem* in Holy wars. The views vary from the *herem* as non-applicable to the vast majority of biblical wars,

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[43] John Goldingay. *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel Volume One*. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003), p.481.

[44] Thomas. C. Romer. "Why would the Deuteronomists Tell about the Sacrifice of Jepthah's Daughter?" *JSOT* 77, 1998: p.27-38. Romer suggested that this part of the Jephthah story is a Hellenistic insertion into the Deuteronomic History.

[45] G, Wilkes, p.11

[46] John Goldingay, p.481

surviving only in later biblical texts; [47] the *herem* as a law was never practiced and utopian; [48] the practice of *herem* could be subverted.[49]

YHWH's commissioning of *herem* comes only later in Deuteronomy, which was most acceptable to the Deuteronomistic redactors for it suited their emphasis on the possession of Canaan as a gift from YHWH.

The comprehensive version of *herem* used in relation to the indigenous people in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 is actually part of an internal social and religious reform. [50] The historical background of the book attests to this as the reforms by Josiah after the exile focused on destruction of religious objects (2Kgs 23:12-15). More importantly, there was no wholesale destruction of towns. It may well be that the most extreme form of the *herem* in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 was never taken literally in the seventh century.[51]

Baruch J. Schwartz upholds the non-actuality of *herem* in Holy wars.[52] By re-examining the fate of the Canaanites using the source materials of the Pentateuch he revealed that both the Jahwist (J) and Elohist (E) sources claim that the Canaanites 'fled' from the land in the wake of Israelite invasion and conquest. The rationale behind the expulsion was religious. In the Deuteronomic (D) source, the inhabitants of the land were

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[47] Susan Niditch. *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993) cited in G. Wilkes (2004) and M. G. Brett (2004).

[48] Moshe Weinfeld. "The Ban on the Canaanites in the Biblical Codes & its Historical Development". *Nielsen Festschrift* (1994), p.142-6. Abstract

[49] John Goldingay, p.482

[50] M. G Brett. "Genocide in Deuteronomy: Postcolonial Variations on Mimetic Desire", forthcoming in a Festschrift for Antony F. Campbell. (Whitley College/Melbourne College of Divinity, 2004), p.3

[51] Ibid., p.10

[52] B. J Schwartz, "Re-examining the Fate of the 'Canaanites' in the Torah Traditions", in C. Cohen, A. Hurvitz and S. M. Paul (eds), *Sefer Moshe: The Mosche Weinfeld Jubilee Volume.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, (2004), p.158.

to be 'destroyed' otherwise the Israelites would be the subject of the *herem*. The Priestly (P) source had the inhabitants 'dispossessed' from the land, and the Holiness Code (H) saw the pre-Israelite population of Canaan 'emigrated' from the land on their own free will as they were 'vomited out' by the land. Only (D) had the population annihilated. All the other sources saw it otherwise.

The traditions differ on two further issues. Who was responsible for the displacement, YHWH or Israel? How was the displacement carried out?

For J and E, the promised displacement of the Canaanites was to be a miraculous one carried out by YHWH alone. E speaks of an expulsion exercise carried out in stages,[53] where only in the final stage is human participation visualized. In so far as the land of Canaan is concerned, E is of the same mind as J that the Israelites were commanded only to destroy the cultic objects and sites and refrain from contact with the locals and their deities. What E preserves for the wars of conquest for land expansion D applies to the Canaanite people from the outset. For D the annihilation is a military mission incumbent on the tribes of Israel the moment they cross the Jordan.

The direct references to the fate of the Canaanites are found in H as given in Leviticus 18:24-30 and Leviticus 20: 22-24.[54] In particular the sexual abominations of the

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[53] Four stages are suggested. 1) Before the arrival YHWH terrifies the occupants into fleeing not from the battle but stricken with fear by some manifestation of God himself. 2) The remaining people would be driven out by God's mysterious "deadly weapon" that would go before. 3) The Gradual in-step with the pace of Israel's proliferation. 4) The expansion of territory through military means.

[54] The image in the first passage (the defiled inhabitants of Canaan as a "nausea-inducing" food substance and the land as a "person" so sickened by this substance that he has no choice but vomit it out) implies actions performed by the land on its population, and accordingly refers to the departure of the population from the land as a result of desolation and the devastation of its natural resources. The second passage takes the expulsion of the inhabitants as due to the land's refusal to sustain a sinful population.

inhabitants are seen as a form of impurity for the land. Schwartz's conclusion on these two H passages is compelling:

> Only here is their (the pre-Israelite population of Canaan) fate said to be the result of their sexual promiscuity; .only here is the evacuation of the Canaanites presented as not having required any role on the part of YHWH himself; only here are the Canaanites said to have been forced to wander away from the land as a result of its having become blighted, barren and uninhabitable, and only here is this supposed to have taken place before Israel ever arrived on the scene – by which time, the land of Canaan had become once again a land flowing with milk and honey[55]

John Goldingay affirms Schwartz's view and agrees that the local population of Canaan were to be dispossessed rather than annihilated. One can dispossess a people, or one can annihilate them; one cannot do both. Israel did neither.

1.5 Synthesis

The ensuing discussion has revealed a significant finding - it is unlikely that there was ever a Holy war in the history of Israel. The cited literature on both the Holy war concept and the *herem* favour strongly the non existence of these ideals. The uncertainty of administration of the concepts from early Israel tradition to its later tradition and to post exilic times casts enormous doubt upon their authenticities. In particular, there is substantial evidence which suggests that the *herem* especially was not a practice but merely a theoretical principle in Israel's wars. The arguments for this conviction by Weinfeld, Goldingay, Brett and Schwartz are credible and reasonable. Even the *herem* on the Canaanites was preceded by peace negotiations – the Israelites were commanded to

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[55] B. Schwartz, p.170

lay siege to cities with consideration for their civilian population.[56] This is hardly a prerequisite for an annihilation exercise!

The non-existence of the Holy war ideology with its *herem* has exposed some significant consequences. The role of Israel in their wars now assumes a primary status rather than a secondary one as when YHWH fought for them. The presentation of war procedures is now not linked to the reality of YHWH as before, so that the authorization of violence against Israel's neighbours is no longer YHWH's. Because YHWH now takes on a subsidiary role in Israelite life (wars especially) the concern for war equipments and war tactics therefore takes on an imperative meaning. This may explain the immediate placement of a kind proviso to preserve fruit trees in a besieged city (Deut 20:19-20) after the atrocious text of the *herem* (Deut 20:16-18). It seems that Israel was to show favouritism in the use of its authority and to be guided by good sense and serviceable requirements.

Despite the paradigm of life sustenance depicted in Deuteronomy 20:19, acts of despoliation and vandalism (re)surfaces in Deuteronomy 20:20 through the cutting down of trees for siegeworks. Are there avenues of compassion, human concern and care for the natural order in the midst of the destruction that is intrinsic to war and assumed by these very texts? Maybe the Hebrews did not know the consequences of cutting down trees such as soil erosion and loss of species. It is doubtful that the Canaanites understood the process of photosynthesis and the greenhouse effect, but one needs little ecology to know

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[56] G. Wilkes, p.13

that lands do not flow with milk and honey unless a concerned attitude for the environment is employed.

The next Chapter will highlight this fundamental relationship between trees and humans and the retribution of violating this essential affiliation. The compass reading of this scientific information to the setting of Deuteronomy 20: 19-20 will also be assessed.

CHAPTER TWO

TREES AND HUMANS: BREAKING EVEN

There must be an imperative significance of trees (in particular fruit trees) in biblical conflicts to warrant the prohibition of their being destroyed as articulated in the rules of warfare in Deuteronomy 20: 19-20. Are the given laws in the text checks for unlawful actions or are they simply sanctions against wilful wasting of resources? Perhaps the laws are genuine moral restraints or maybe conceptions of cornucopian fallacy are subtly woven into the text? Of relevance to proposing an answer to these questions is an overview of trees; their composition and their contribution to the diversity of life that exists in this world. This will be the mainstay of this Chapter.

2.1 Photosynthesis and Respiration

Trees are *producer* plants. As such, they are in a category of their own, for they alone can manufacture their own food. They contain the green chlorophyll (the green pigment in the leaves) that capture solar energy through the process of photosynthesis (Figure 2.1) and transform it into chemical energy stored in simple sugar molecules such as glucose ($C_6H_{12}O_6$). The other product is molecular oxygen gas (O_2) which is released to the atmosphere.[57] This is the source of all the oxygen in the atmosphere on which humans (and animals) depend for life. Glucose is an energy-rich compound that serves as a central primary fuel for all metabolic processes of cells. The energy in its chemical

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[57] G. T Miller. *Living in the Environment*. (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1988), p.75.
The process of photosynthesis itself is not that simple as is widely known. It begins with a series of steps called 'light dependent reactions' because they occur only while light is being received by the chloroplasts. Then there is a whole set of reactions that involve breaking and forming bonds, which result in the release of energy.

bonds (created by photosynthesis) can be released by other enzymes and used to make other molecules.

carbon dioxide + water + solar energy = glucose + oxygen
$6\,CO_2 + 6\,H_2O$ + solar energy = $C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6O_2$

Figure 2.1: Photosynthesis

Plants and animals transform a portion of glucose and other carbon-containing molecules they synthesize (plants) or eat (animals) back into carbon dioxide and water by the process of cellular respiration (Figure 2.2). The chemical energy released in this complex process drives the physical and chemical changes needed for plants and animals to survive grow and reproduce.[58] The two sets of reactions illustrate how we get all our energy for life. We eat plants (or other animals that have eaten plants) and the food is broken down to obtain energy.[59]

glucose + oxygen = carbon dioxide + water + energy
$C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6O_2 = 6CO_2 + 6H_2O$ + energy

Figure 2.2: Cellular Respiration

Photosynthesis and cellular respiration are the basis of the carbon and oxygen cycles. Through these two interconnected cycles, plants produce food and oxygen needed

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[58] G. T. Miller, p.74

[59] W. P. Cunningham and S. B. Woodworth. *Environmental Science: A Global Concern.* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999), p.51

by animals and absorb carbon dioxide given off by animals. In fact this is how we get all our energy for life.

In chemical terms, life can be summed up in six words: carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, phosphorus and sulphur.[60] These chemicals as elements and compounds make up 95% of the mass of all living organisms. The essentially fixed supply of elements and compounds needed for life is continuously cycled through the air, water, soil, plants and animals and converted to useful forms in biogeochemical cycles.[61] Without these cycles, the entire world would be knee-deep in plant litter, dead animal bodies, animal wastes and garbage.

2.2 Tree-Human Relationship

Human intervention in all these cycles is exclusively detrimental. In particular, interference with the carbon and oxygen cycles increases the average amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by removing forests and other vegetation (carbon sinks) without sufficient replanting. Consequently fewer plants are available to convert carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to oxygen and other organic nutrients.

The burning of fossil fuels and wood also adds to this increase in carbon dioxide emission. Carbon dioxide, water vapour and a trace of other gases such as methane, nitrous oxide play a key role in regulating the temperature of the earth.[62] These gases are

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[60] G. T. Miller, p.73

[61] Ibid., *bio* meaning living, *geo* for water, rocks and soil, and *chemical* for the matter changing from one form to another. These cycles driven directly or indirectly by the incoming energy from the Sun include carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur and hydrologic cycles. These cycles are documented in most Chemistry or Environmental textbooks.

[62] G. T. Miller, p.440

known as *greenhouse gases*. They let in visible light from the sun but prevent some of the infrared radiation from escaping and reradiate it back to the earth's surface. If there were no greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the earth would be a cold and lifeless planet with an average atmospheric temperature of -18°C.[63] On the other hand, a build up of one or several greenhouse gases in the atmosphere would slow down the escape of heat into space and lead to an increase of the average temperature of the earth's atmosphere. Environmentalists have attributed this increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as the cause of global warming that is causing major climatic changes seen today.

Trees are part of a linked feeding relationship called *food chain*. All organisms that share the same general types of food in a food chain are said to be in the same 'trophic' level. Individual food chains become interconnected to form a *food web* because different animals feed on several types of food. At each transfer from one trophic level to another in a food chain or food web, work is done and low quality energy is given off and the availability of high quality energy to organisms at the next trophic level is reduced.[64] In effect, the greater the number of steps in a food chain the greater the cumulative loss of usable high quality energy. An important principle affecting the ultimate population size of an omnivorous species such as humans emerges from a consideration of this loss of available energy at successively higher trophic levels in food chains and food webs: *The shorter the food chain, the less the loss of usable energy.*[65] This means that a larger

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[63] G.T. Miller, p.440

[64] W. P. Cunningham and S. B. Woodworth, p.53

[65] G. T. Miller, p.83

population of humans can be supported if people shorten the food chain by eating grains directly. For good health such a vegetarian diet must include a variety of plants that provide all the nitrogen-containing molecules needed by the body to form essential proteins.

2.3 Fruit Trees – Occurrence and Use in Palestine

The fruit trees are invariably trees that have fruits. Botanically, the fruit is developed from the ovary of a flower as a result of the fertilization of the contained ovule or ovules. It induces various changes and ultimately the ovules develop into seeds, each containing an embryo plant.[66] Normally, no fruit is produced unless fertilization is effected.

The Mediterranean climate is characterized by moist cool winters and hot dry summers. To survive these conditions, plants must store energy either in long-lasting seeds or in underground tubers or roots, both of which are convenient for humans to harvest and store.[67] While the Mediterranean climate appears to be the origin of wheat, barley oats, rye, peas and rapeseed together with apples, figs, grapes, melons and onions, only the fig tree the olive tree and the pistachio nut are endemic to the Mediterranean area.[68] Some of the fruits mentioned in the Bible are listed in Table 2.1 below. Most fruits were eaten fresh, dried, pressed into cakes and squeezed for juice.

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[66] The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 5, MACROPAEDIA. Ready Reference.15th Ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc, 1988), p.27

[55] W. P. Cunningham and S. B. Woodworth., p.218

[68] The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 19, MACROPAEDIA.15th Ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc, 1988), p.131

Table 2.1: Names and Uses of Fruits mentioned in the Bible.[69]

Name (Use)	Scientific Name	Biblical reference
Almond (food)	*Prunus amygdalus*	The fruit has been known since early Bible times (Gen 43:11). It is called *shaked* meaning hasten. It may refer to the fact that the pink blossoms of the tree are the first to appear in the spring.
Apple (Food, Firewood)	*Malus pumila*	Different scholars identify the apple in Joel 1:12 and the Song of Solomon 2:3 with apple and apricot. In these passages, the Hebrew word is *tappuah*. The Romans prized the apple tree for its fruit, and they introduced it to England. Some argue that the apple tree in the Bible was actually the apricot and fits the description of Proverb 25:11.
Dates (Food, Drink)		An important food for the Middle East, eaten fresh or dried and used in making wine. It reaches its fruit bearing peak between its 13th and 15th year.
Figs (food)	*Ficus carica*	In Hebrew, it is *teenah* meaning to spread out. Although it is not tall, its large leaves and wide branches provide excellent shade. Sitting under the fig tree was a sign of prosperity and peace (1Kgs 4:25; Mic 4:4). The fruits were eaten (1 Sam 25:19), or used as a poultice (2 Kgs 20:7). The crop ripens continually from August to March.
Olives (food, oil)	*Oleo europaea*	The tree has been known since very early times (Gen 8:11) and flourished in Canaan before the conquest of Joshua (Deut 6:11). The fruit is green when immature and black when ripen. In autumn the olives are harvested. Olives were grown chiefly for their oil for cooking, fueling lamps grooming hair and skin and for religious rites. Olive wood was used in Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:23). Olive trees do not bear fruits until its 15th year but grows for hundreds of years.
Sycamore (fig) (food)	*Ficus carica*	It is called *shikmah*. It is grown in Egypt (Ps 78:47), along the coast of Palestine and in the Jordan Valley (1 Kgs 10:27). Its small yellow fruit is very sweet and grows in clusters close to the branches.
Grapes (food)	*Vitis vinfera*	The Holy Land was rightly called the land of grapes. Enormous clusters of grapes were growing in Canaan (Num 13:23). Besides furnishing raisins and wine, they provided juice which was called *debash* or honey mentioned in Genesis 43:11 and Ezekiel 27:17.
Mulberry (food)	*Rubus allegheniensis*	Believed to be the *baka* (weeping) and mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:24 and Psalm 84:6.
Pistachio nut (food)	*Pistacia vera*	Hebrew *botnim* resemble the almond but smaller and very sweet and probably fits the description in Genesis 43:11. The tree bears fruit in August.
Pomegrates (food, drink)		It is called *rimmon* in Hebrew. Its juice was enjoyed as a cooling drink (Song of Sol 8:2) and embroidered as decorations around bottom of high priests robe (Exod 28:33-34) and carved on the pillars of the temple (1Kgs 7:20). Its reddish-maroon fruit is about the size of the orange and had many seeds. The Bible makes early reference to the tree of knowledge, and the pomegranate was long held in reverence by the Jews and Persians as the biblical forbidden fruit.

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[69] Adapted from J. J. Packer and M. C. Tenney (eds), p.256 and The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 19, MACROPAEDIA.15th Ed. p.131

2.4 A Short Analysis of Material

The role of trees in sustaining life is nothing short of critical. Without trees humans cannot live on this planet, for trees produce the oxygen that humans breathe and maintain the oxygen supply of the earth. Humans have no photosynthetic capability to capture the sun's energy and produce oxygen on its own.

Removing trees will affect the geochemical cycles which recycle the key elements and compounds needed for life on earth. Moreover, there will be an increase in the average amount of carbon dioxide (and decrease in average oxygen concentration) in the atmosphere which has unpleasant consequences. The cutting of the trees as discussed earlier is indeed a breakage of a feeding relationship of which trees are an essential part of. The result of such an action will be initially a competition for the same scarce resource, a reliance on shorter food chains and ultimately death.

The harsh climate of Israel necessitates a reliable and dependable supply of food and drink. Fruit trees were very important for human's sustenance in these kinds of climate and provided an excellent source of food as depicted in Table 2.1. In addition, the production of fruits requires a delicate and sophisticated process (fertilization) necessitating careful nurturing for the fruits to be in bloom. The process from inception to maturity takes years (See especially dates and olives in Table 2.1) and cutting these trees down means a devoid of such food source for quite some time.

The prohibition of destroying trees provides favourable conditions for photosynthesis and therefore adjoins a futuristic life-pertaining intention for fruit trees (and all trees). This life-giving aspect is further realized by the fact that this is the only

viable option (diet-wise) in wartime – a vegetarian diet for the population (Section 2.1). To sustain a population in times of stress, a shortened food chain must be realized.

The rabbinic stance on the subject of *bal tasshit* is unreservedly one of moral restraint with the Talmud applying the concept to numerous non military situations, including the destruction of food, clothing, furniture and even water.[70] Rabbinic law also exempt from the law of *bal tashhit* fruit trees that have aged and not worth the value of the trees as lumber, and fruit trees of inferior quality growing amidst and damaging those that are better and more expensive. The interpretation here seems to be concerned with commercial values based upon an economy of scarcity. This is in line with the cornucopian viewpoint that the earth is a place of unlimited resources and any type of conservation that hampers short term economic growth is un-necessary. But even if the criterion is a commercial one, it is the waste of an object of economic value that is considered unlawful and the destruction of all objects that may be of potential benefit to the population.

The environmentalists and eco-theologians also side with the rabbinic view. They see the degradation of resources as the result of the harshness of life entertained by millions of people in the world. For these designers, the 'tragedy of the commons'[71] must be addressed at a level which needs urgent praxis.

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[70] Norman Lamm. "Ecology in Jewish Law and Theology" in *Faith and Doubt*. (KTAV Publishing House, 1971) in, http:// *www.shalom ctr.org/node/170,* p.4

[71] G. T. Miller (1992:11) defines "tragedy of commons" as the phenomenon when resources such as clean air, clean water in a lake or river or fish of the sea are considered common property free to be used by anyone. The resources are then over harvested or polluted because each user reasons "If I don't use this resource, someone else will".

To envisage a sustainable environment, cooperation, honesty, humility and love must be the guidelines for our behaviour toward one another and the earth.[72]

Deuteronomy 20:19 upholds one of the main themes of Deuteronomy ('Do not kill') by the call to preserve fruit trees. In the very next verse (Deut 20:20) the cutting of non-fruit trees is allowed giving two opposing norms on the fate of trees in a besieged city. Why the contradiction within the same text?

It is suggested that the verse portrays a conflict parallel to the 'tension' between certain parts of Deuteronomy as studied by Dennis Olson[73] or perhaps 'competing voices on compositional planes' as described by Robert Polzin.[74] Inherently, the placement of the two distinctly contradicting texts (Deut 20: 16-18 and Deut 20:19-20) next to each other was purposefully done by the final editor of Deuteronomy. The post-colonial theory discussion in the next Chapter shall provide answers as to what these purposes were and the effects on the readers of the final form of the text.

What is clear in the discussion so far is that "until and unless God intervenes at the end of the age to abolish the food chain as we know it, and puts us all on a photosynthetic diet, hunting, killing and eating among creatures will continue indefinitely. It cannot be any other way".[75]

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[72] G. T. Miller, p.602

[73] Dennis T. Olson. "Deuteronomy as De-Centering Center: Reflections on Postmodernism and the Quest for a Theological Center of the Hebrew Scriptures, in (*Semeia Vol 71*), p.121

[74] Robert Polzin. *Moses and the Deuteronomist – Part One: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p.64

[75] W. Sibley Towner. "The Future of Nature". *Interpretation Vol 50,1*, (January 1996), p.28

CHAPTER THREE

POST-COLONIAL READING OF THE TEXT

The characteristics of post-colonial reading of texts has been documented at the beginning of the paper. To move from cultural theory of hybridity to reading texts as hybrid discourses the idea of 'intentional' hybridity is employed.[76] According to M. Bakhtin intentional hybridity sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure which retains 'a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness.[77] The editing of Deuteronomy 20:16-20 reflects an 'intentional' hybridity process that exercises the juxtaposing of alternative discourses in a way that undermines the dominant discourse without eliminating it. This is essentially what decentering, destablizing and mimicry is all about.

A look at the features of the text Deuteronomy 20:19-20 will start off the Chapter before establishing the dates of the two texts Deuteronomy 20:16-18 and Deuteronomy 20:19-120. The paper will then argue that the placement of these two contrasting texts side by side was intentional and was an editorial strategy to challenge the dominant discourse (Deut 20:16-18) without eliminating it. As with post colonial hermeneutics the paper will also survey the 'world behind the text' and the 'world in front of the text'. Some conclusions and a contextualization of the material will draw the Chapter to a close.

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[76] M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* . (Austin: University of Texas Press), p.358.

[77] R. J. Young, *Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p22

3.1 Text: Deuteronomy 20:19-20

verse 19

When you besiege a city (for) many days to fight against it (in order) to capture it, Do not destroy its trees (by) wielding an axe against it because from it you shall eat. Do not cut them because are trees of the field men coming against you?

verse 20

Only the trees that you know are not food trees you shall destroy and cut them and build siegeworks upon the city who is making war against you, until it falls.

The translation was construed directly from the Hebrew text of the passage in the Hebrew Bible.[78] The textual notes in the Hebrew text have been incorporated into the translation. The use of the conditional clause plus the Imperfect of 'besiege' at the beginning of verse 19 constitutes a 'command' giving the whole verse connotations of a strong (perhaps divine) directive (c.f. Ex 21:2). The last part of this verse also is given as a question by reading the textual note 20^{b} as an interrogative *heh*.

3.2 Features of the Text

Deuteronomy 20 is in the central law collection of the book (Deut 12:1 – 25:19), and more directly is part of the legal material in Chapter 19-25.[79] More specifically, Deuteronomy 20 is situated in the section of the book that is explicating the fifth commandment, 'killing' which is the essence of Deuteronomy 19:1 – 22:8.

It seems that the two verses are directed to two different groups of people or addressed in two different contexts. The question that comes to mind is who is making

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[78] Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Germany: Vierte, verbesserte Auflage, 1990

[79] Ronald Clements, p.xvi

war here? While verse 19 has '*to fight against it to capture it'*, verse 20 has *making war against you.* Apparently, verse 19 is a command addressed to the Israelites while verse 20 is addressing an adversary of Israel. In addition, there are other contradicting wordings of the text as articulated in the comparison below.

Verse 19	Verse 20
Do not destroy its trees	*....you shall destroy....*
...Do not cut...	*....and cut them....*
When you besiege...	*...and build siegeworks...*
...to fight against it...	*...making war against you...*

While verse 19 has this strong 'Do not' decree which is reflective of the Decalogue verses, this is not apparent in verse 20. The noted oppositions have clear implications - the passage has tensions within itself; wanting to preserve trees and at the same time wanting trees to be cut down and used for a purpose; fighting against an enemy and an assumed enemy fighting against 'you'. The discussion in Section 3.5.1 shall explore this ambivalence further.

3.3 Exegesis

The exegesis is selective, confined only to those parts of the text which are deemed relevance to the discussion that follows.

verse 19

....besiege a city (for) many days.

Sieges had long term consequences on the land's productivity, bringing years of famine (cf. Ezek 5:12). A prolonged siege not only brought with it the neglect and

plundering of fertile land, but also led to deliberate actions to render good land infertile as a punitive measure (cf. Deut 29: 22-23). Another war tactic employed by the besieging army was to cut off all food and water supplies to the enemy city. From previous experiences the people were also aware of the immense devastation brought to Israel's agricultural land by military campaigns waged by Assyria and Babylon.[80]

you shall not destroy its trees

An attacking army would not necessarily resort to destruction of trees, from which it could itself benefit, unless the siege was protracted and additional pressure was necessary to force surrender.[81] In ancient warfare it was a common practice to look for ways of weakening the enemy. Destroying the enemy's fruit trees was one such measure so as to enfeeble its economic potential and hampered the enemy's ability to retaliate. It was also an Assyrian custom (at least after the capture of a city) to destroy the valuable trees in the vicinity, especially the date palms.[82] Rabbinic exegesis expanded this rule into a broad prohibition (applicable all the time and everywhere) of destroying anything useful, such as vessels, clothing, buildings, and water sources. The prohibition proscribes that it is not the use of trees to win a battle (which may often be a matter of life and death) but the wanton devastation of embattled areas so as to render them useless to the enemy should they win – a 'scorched earth' policy.[83]

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[80] Ronald Clements, p.92

[81] Jeffrey, H. Tigay. *The JPS Torah Commentary – Deuteronomy.* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), p.190

[82] R. Driver. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy.* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1980), p.240

[83] Norman Lamm, p.3

....are trees of the field men coming against you?

From the Hebrew syntax, it means 'men are the trees of the field' which may be interpreted to mean that 'men live on the trees of the field'. But even this leaves the rest of the verse strangely isolated.[84] This translation suggests the trees are vulnerable and are unable to protect themselves whether in times of war or peace. More importantly, this brings out the concern for some salient rules of warfare that are usually neglected like oral ethics, environmental conservation and casualties of war.

verse 20

... trees that you know are not food trees you shall destroy and cut them

Non-fruit bearing trees are exempt from the law. Rabbinic interpretation introduced a commercial element into the law by including fruit trees that have aged, and whose crop is not worth the value of the trees as lumber, fruit trees of inferior quality growing amidst and damaging those that are better and more expensive.[85] The basis of the differentiation of the trees to be cut (bearing/non-bearing fruits) is questionable as it permeates into divine jurisdiction.

siegeworks

The Hebrew word *matsor* refers primarily to the encirclement of a city (enclosure) or 'come into a stage of siege'.[86] Here it probably means a siege wall, a series of fortifications built by an attacking army around a besieged city to blockade it so that it

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[84] A. D. H. Mayes. *The Century Bible Commentary – Deuteronomy.* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1979), p.296.

[85] Norman Lamm, p.3.

[86] F. Brown, S. Driver and C. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon.* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1906), p.849

cannot be resupplied with food, weapons and manpower, and to protect itself from raids by the city's defenders or its allies.[87] The present law prohibits the use of fruit trees (but apparently supports the use of other trees) for this purpose. Siegeworks may also include equipment used in assaulting the city; ladders, battering rams, and the ramps on which the rams were rolled up to the city wall. All these involved the use of a lot of lumber.

3.4 The Date of Deuteronomy 20:16-18

A. D. H. Mayes maintains that Deuteronomy 20:16-18 is Deuteronomic (D). M. G. Brett upholds this view and suggested the text to have been composed in the seventh century, after the older conquest narratives.[88] In the same article, Brett cited Eckhart Otto's specific dating of the (D) material between 672 and 612 BCE whose work noted striking comparisons between Deuteronomy and the vassal treaties of neo-Assyrian kings.

This is a period of turmoil in Judah (under King Hezekiah) which has just experienced invasion by the Assyrian King Sennacherib.[89] Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah to the throne, an evil king who corrupted the Israelite worship to YHWH and the nation was flooded with paganism. At this time, there was real danger that Judah would shift its allegiance from YHWH to the gods of the Canaanites or the Assyrians. The prophets, the accounts of various kings and Josiah's vigorous reforming activity all reflect this threat so that the reference to utter destruction (Deut 20:16-18) makes sense and have its dynamic

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[87] Jeffrey, H. Tigay, p.190

[88] M. G. Brett. "Genocide in Deuteronomy: Postcolonial Variations on Mimetic Desire", forthcoming in a Festschrift for Antony F. Campbell. (Whitley College/Melbourne College of Divinity, 2004), p.3

[89] A. D. H. Mayes, p.82

in such a context in late pre-exilic Judah.[90] In Judah, the grandson of Manasseh, Josiah came to the throne between 640 and 638 BCE after a palace revolt against his father (2 Kings 21:19-26). Josiah's reforms (which coincided with the end of Assyrian domination) were in part a cultic reform of worship in the Jerusalem temple, intended to rid it of Assyrian cult objects and practices. So what appears as a program for genocide is actually part of an internal social and religious reform.[91]

3.5 The Date of Deuteronomy 20:19-20

There are also materials in Deuteronomy which are both earlier and later than the seventh century.[92] Specifically, Deuteronomy contains three major sources of tradition; the Levitical priestly tradition, prophetic (8^{th}-7^{th} centuries BCE) and scribal wisdom tradition (post exilic).[93] D. H. Mayes noted weaknesses in the allocation of authorship to these three traditions and suggested that the authors of Deuteronomy were formerly Levites unconnected with the cult but now attached to the Jerusalem temple. For W. Brueggemann the historical locus of literature that became the book of Deuteronomy is likely to be in the eighth or seventh century, during the period of Assyrian domination.

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[90] Patrick. D Miller. "Deuteronomy" in, *Interpretation – A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), p.4

[91] M. G. Brett 2004, p.10.

[92] Antony Phillips,. *Deuteronomy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Academic Press. 1973), p.7-8. This view is also given by Mayes (1989), Miller (1990) and Brueggemann (2001)

[93] Ibid., p.7-8. The prophetic relation is seen in Deuteronomy's stand upon traditions of old Israelite amphictyony like the observance of covenantal law, adherence to holy war ideology and critical attitudes towards the monarchy. The proposal of Levitical priests as origin of tradition lies on the fact that they, as religious leaders were the ones preserving the material; they had the authority to interpret and expose the material to the people. The origin of Deuteronomy in wisdom and scribal circles is evidenced from the knowledge of treaty formulations, and many wisdom traits esteemed in the book. The great emphasis on material reward and retribution is consistent with the way wisdom is set forth in other parts of the Old Testament.[93] This tradition also shows concern for obedience and natural order.

This paper is aligned behind these views and suggests that Deuteronomy 20:19-20 is part of this earlier material of the Levitical priestly tradition and echoes a pre-exilic Assyrian fabric. This assertion is based on the following arguments:

There is an abrupt change in tone and subject matter between the *herem* passage (Deut 20:16-18) and the life provision paradigm given in Deuteronomy 20:19-20. This sudden appearance of a kind proviso in the dominant (D) material is somewhat puzzling, but the change is most probably due to this difference in the source materials of the respective texts. It is suggested that Deuteronomy 20:19-20 is a *Levitical Priestly* material commanding an older pre-exilic dating for the passage.

Although the armies of Israel and Judah besieged various cities during their history, the Bible never records their use of battering rams or siegeworks. Only their enemies use these against them.[94] The Assyrians besieged Samaria (Jeremiah 5:17), Sannacherib besieged Hezekiah's Jerusalem (2 Kings 18: 19-23) and Babylon conquered Judah by taking all her fortresses and besieging Jerusalem. Therefore, the reference to siegeworks was thriving and ardent during the Assyrian period. Further evidence of this Assyrian influence is the command to cut down trees for siegeworks. Siege of cities was a widespread practice in the Assyrian era,[95] and siege weapons require lots of lumber.

3.6 Post-colonial Reading of the Texts

The post-colonial discourse requires two opposing norms or 'tensions' in order for the reading to be diffused. Parallel to the post-colonial reading attempted in this paper are

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[94] Mark K. Fretz. "Weapons and Implements of Warfare". *Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol 6.* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p.894

[95] Mark K. Fretz,.p.894

Dennis Olson's centering and decentering of four (4) 'tensions' in Deuteronomy[96], Robert Polzin's 'double voiced' analysis of Deuteronomy[97] and Peniamina Leota's Samoan Postcolonial hermeneutic.[98] In all these studies, the 'conflict' between the opposing ideals is evident. Section 3.2 has revealed oppositions within the text which will be discussed below. The discussion of tensions between Deuteronomy 20:19-20 and the preceding *herem* text (Deut 20:16-18) follows in Section 3.6.2.

3.6.1 The Tension Within Deuteronomy 20:19-20

Section 3.2 has revealed oppositions within Deuteronomy 20:19-20, where the first part of the verse calls for the preservation of fruit trees. This part of the verse undermines the *herem* text (Deut 20:16-18) just prior to it. While the *herem* text (D) promotes the purity of Israel's worship by exterminating the Canaanites, the Priestly verse preserves fruit trees, a prominent feature of Canaanite worship.[99] Why would an Israelite writer want to leave fruit trees (used in Canaanite worship) when this contradicts with central worship in sanctuary envisioned in the (D) text? In a subtle way, the priestly editors are destabilizing the dominant Deuteronomic text. For them, centralising worship

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[96] Dennis T. Olson, p.121. Olson enumerated four tensions: 1) the juxtaposition of the covenant of Horeb (Deut 5-28) and the covenant at Moab (Deut 29-32); 2) the function of the imagery of the Ark; 3) the call for a central sanctuary and 4) the decentring of Moses' voice in the death of Moses.

[97] Robert Polzin. *Moses and the Deuteronomist – Part One: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p.64. Polzin's work looks at the opposing voices of Moses and the Narrator in the three addresses of Moses in Deuteronomy.

[98] Peniamina Leota. "Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehhud: A Samoan Postcolonial Hermeneutic". Unpublished PhD Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, January 2005. Leota argues that the ethnic tensions in Persian period Yehud provide analogies for viewing present tensions in contemporary Samoa (p.41-42)

[99] Canaanite fertility cult (Baal worship) sees fertility as bearing fruits. Fruit bearing trees are signs of Baal's presence in the community.

in a specific sanctuary is not the only (or true) way of worship. Worshipping under fruit trees (or other places for that matter) is also a viable (if not better or an alternative) way.

Interestingly in the very same verse (Deut 20:19) other trees are allowed to be cut down showing a tension within this same verse (Section 3.2). Emically, the tension is economical and is beneficial for the colonizers – cutting trees for making lumber for war equipment (siegeworks, battering rams etc). Etically, the tension is theological (as noted above) it is the decentring of the worship advocated in the dominant text. The first part of the verse is decentring the last part and vice versa.

The following questions can be asked further of Deuteronomy 20:19-20 concerning the opposition of 'good' and 'bad':[100] Was the original situation of the besieged city really good? Was the action of the colonizers (leaving fruit trees and cutting non-fruit trees) a bad one? Is the situation resulting from the colonizer's action (the post-siege state) really bad?

As to the first question, at least one essential element of the initial 'good' situation was evidently bad – that there was a 'diversity' of trees in the place. When the exemption call came, this 'variety' factor was both 'good' (for trees with fruits) and 'bad' (for trees without fruits). Obviously from the point of view of the trees (and as it seems from the viewpoint of the colonizers as well) it was 'bad' to have no fruits. In fact this led to their destruction but not through a fault of their own. One obtains thus a double message about the situation of the place before the siege – it is both 'good' and 'bad'.

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[100] This is one of the oppositions used by Slivniak (2003) in his deconstruction of four hierarchical oppositions in the Garden Story. Dimitri M. Slivniak. "The Garden of Double Messages: Deconstructing Hierarchical Oppositions in the Garden Story", *JSOT 27.4* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2003), p.442.

The evaluation of the action taken by the colonizers also transmits an ambivalent feeling towards the trees. Was it good to leave the fruit trees and cut down the non-fruit trees? The preservation of fruit trees is both 'good' and 'bad'. The call to preserve the fruit trees is for the sustenance of the colonizers (Israelites) who are in turn those who execute the *ban* in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 – an unethical exploit. The cutting down of non-fruit trees for siegeworks and bulwarks is also 'good' and 'bad'. It is beneficial economically for the colonizers in the production of lumber, but degrading for the environment for it destroys the natural food chain. The Hebrews knew enough to trust that there is in every seed and root a promise, but it is doubtful that they understood the value of trees in photosynthesis and the crucial part they play in food chains and food webs. Is a 'good' situation in fact a 'bad' one, when one does not know the whole truth?

Finally, is the state of affairs resulting from the colonizer's action (the post-siege state) really bad? To put this into a practical perspective, we visualize what has happened. All the people (and animals) have been destroyed (in the *herem*). The fruit trees remain untouched and continue to provide food for the 'people'. In war situations, this short food chain is the best option for sustaining the 'population' – man/plant relationship (Section 2.1). The non-fruit trees are cut down and siegeworks, bulwarks and other war equipment requiring lumber are built. So, while the environment suffered, the colonizers' situation actually turns better 'material-wise'. In essence, they have acquired a 'higher', specifically human status which according to Dimitri Slivniak is a "falling upwards"

temperament.[101] So here again we have the final state of affairs of the place as both 'good' and 'bad'.

3.6.2 The Tension Between Deuteronomy 20:16-18 and Deuteronomy 20:19-20

There is an ambivalent characteristic evident by considering the two strongly contrasted passages side by side. The placement of the Levitical priestly text (Deut 20: 19-20) in the 'D' material and more importantly just after the *herem* text (Deut 20: 16-18) produces an 'unstable' effect on the dominant text. The execution of the *herem* in Deut 20:16-18 was Israel's means of maintaining their religious purity – one of the characteristics of D theology. The purity of Israel was an obligation that grew out of its existence as a holy people (Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21). Such purity was not a matter of ritual activity but the quality of life belonging to the people's being set apart as the chosen nation of the Lord.[102] The maintenance of this purity arises both out of the presence of the Lord in the midst of the people (Deut 23:14) and the awareness that the land as a gift of God is not to be polluted (Deut 21:23).

P. D. Miller noted that one of the ways of maintaining the purity of the people is the insistence that 'things be kept in order' and not mixed up inappropriately. The Levitical priestly tradition (Deut 20:19-20) violates this 'orderliness' aspect by cutting down trees and 'polluting' the land in the process. Furthermore, this Levitical priestly material promotes ritual purity rather than religious purity. For Daniel Smith-Christopher it takes behaviour that is contrary to cultural unity as impure which corresponds with the

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[101] Dimitri M. Slivniak, p.445.

[102] Patrick D Miller, p.161.

holy seed discourse in Ezra-Nehemiah.[103] Daniel Smith-Christopher draws on post-colonial cultural theory and argues that marginal groups resist the dominant culture by maintaining their ethnic identity. The Israelites as a *minority* group is doing just that.

Moreover, while the siege and rules of warfare given in this Levitical passage appear to be an Israelite initiative, it is essentially an Assyrian mechanism of integrating states into mutually beneficial relationships with the imperial core. The siegeworks are for the benefit and use of the colonizers (the Assyrians). Comically, the siegeworks are made of timber from the "colonized" (the Israelite) trees! There is unquestionably a strong sense of 'exploitive' economics evident in this relationship.

According to Rene Girard such ambivalence characterizes hierarchical relations that are typical of the teaching of culture: things belonging to the superior are 'good' but not meant for the inferior members – it is 'good' but not intended for you.[104] Desire is mimetic: desiring a certain thing because somebody else has it, especially when this somebody else is an 'authoritative' figure. The 'inferior' then looks for an appropriate substitute. The Israelites (the colonized) mimicked the Assyrians (the colonizer) in their approaches and tactics of warfare. According to Brueggemann a self-conscious Israelite community may have borrowed a covenant form deliberately, to offer its covenant with YHWH as a radical alternative to alliance with Assyria. This is quite logical taking into account the circumstances under which the people of Israel were subjected to at the time.

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[103] Daniel L, Smith-Christopher. "The Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13: A Study of the Sociology of Post-exilic Judean Community", in T. C. Eskenazi and K. Richards (eds), *Second Temple Studies I* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), p.247

[104] Cited in Dimitri M. Slivniak, p.445.

3.6.3 The World in front of the Text

Why do we read a text? Just to explore its historical truthfulness? For what scope? The fact that one's reading is motivated for some utility, leads Ricoeur to explore this important field that lies 'in front' of the text. This is the third element of post-colonial reading of texts.

The discussion in the previous sections has unveiled ambivalence both within Deuteronomy 20:19-20 itself and between this text and the *herem* text Deuteronomy 20:16-18. The tension within Deuteronomy 20:19-20 is one of frugality.[105] As a subversive virtue, it undermines the colonizers who are expanding and growing (military-wise) through the cutting of trees for war equipments. Is there a need to expand on the military front at the expense of nature? It is a reminder to such nations (enterprises and individuals alike) who are advancing at the expense of nature to think twice. This exploitative attitude is condemned and against ethical justice. Similarly, frugality under conditions of relative scarcity is calling for the distributive justice with food sources being made available to all the people and not just for the few rich elites of society. The accessability to (natural) resources on an equal basis has been (and will contine to be) the source of extreme poverty in society.

In both cases frugality is calling for a conservative outlook. It is good to use resources but not to the extent that they are exhausted and rendered useless. For stable living conditions to prevail the people should realise that the 'tragedy of the commons' mentality somehow must be removed.

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[105] Frugality connotes thrift, moderation, temperance and material sufficiency. It is the opposite of compulsive consumption, the force behind economic maldistribution and ecological degradation.

The 'good' and 'bad' opposition evident in the text is a reminder that there are always two sides to a story in everything. What is good to one person does not go down well with another person, and to uphold one's perfection results in frictional relationships and uncertainty.

The conflict between the contrasting texts is theological (Section 3.5.2) and speaks to those who are zealous about which religion is the correct one and the proper places of worship. The Christians uphold Christianity as the only true religion as with Islam, the Hindus and other major sects. This mentality as observed results only in wars, whom some have attributed as 'Holy wars'. According to post-colonial thinking, a 'hybrid' living is the key to harmonious living. The need to appreciate other people's belief is important.

The ambivalence between the texts is a reminder of Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman (John 4: 21-23). The place of worship is irrelevant, but how one worships is important. The true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth (John 4:24).

3.7 Conclusions

There is a strong argument that the Holy war concept of Israel is questionable. So much so that it is suggested that there was never a Holy war and the *herem* was always a theological principle rather than a practice. Schwartz's work is compelling, recognizing that the indigenous people of Canaan left on their own as the land 'vomited' them out. Inevitably, the *herem* and its actuality in the Holy war concept is very much deceptive (Section 1.3). As such, the Israelite and YHWH played no part in the displacement of the

former inhabitants of the land of Canaan. But if ever it was known, consensus favour the contention that *herem* was never taken literally in the seventh century the time allocated as the historical setting of Deuteronomy. The non-existent therefore of the *herem* as expressed in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 clears Israel (and God) of barbaric intentions and inhumane actions.

Furthermore, the non-existence of Holy wars meant that the Israelites are now depending very much on their intuitions for victory in warfare, as the role of YHWH is now reduced to a secondary one. With the roles of YHWH and Israel interchanged, both the function of lumber for building siegeworks and other war equipments and the *bal tasshit* on fruit trees for food become very crucial.

The post colonial reading of Deuteronomy 20:19-20 has exposed an 'undermining' and 'subversive' ploy by the then dominant culture (Assyrians) on the marginalized one (Israelites). The Israelite belief of using the *herem* as a 'religious purity' approach was tweaked by the Assyrians to their benefit (Section 3.5.2) and therefore destabilizing the Israelite society. Invariably, the concern remains solely a 'ritual purity' exercise, which intriguingly is what the Levitical priestly tradition (exemplified by Deut 20:19-20) is promoting. For this tradition, living an 'amalgam' lifestyle is the best option for a marginalized society. Being in the minority and serving a subsidiary role, the Israelites need to extract what is beneficial from the dominant Assyrian culture. Otherwise, they are destined to lose out altogether.

For the Levitical priestly tradition, keeping ethnic boundaries intact is terminal and harmful. Rather, a 'mix' ideology towards everyday living guarantees a stronger and superior society by living a lifestyle of 'both worlds'. In the process therefore the

marginalized mimicked the dominant culture in order to gain some recognition and at the same time have a beneficial relationship with the dominant culture. In retrospect the people of Israel must live according to Assyrian rules and laws and at the same time trying to keep their identity as well. It is a life of trying to 'live by each culture' as much as possible. It was a life of 'copying' each other and at the same time subtly 'decentring' each other. This was the lifestyle the Israelites experienced at the time of Assyrian sieges. This was especially true when Israel was a vassal nation during the reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh (715-642 BCE). This is the 'mockery' element of the post-colonial reading which ambivalence texts expose - one can never mesmerize *both* cultures totally. From whatever culture or traditions you observe from, the leaving of fruit trees for food is ethically and morally good. The law of *bal tasshit* prohibits outright acts of vandalism and as such is based on a religio-moral principle that is far broader than a prudential commercial rule, and its wider applications may well be said to include ecological considerations. Emically, it is good for the Israelites that the fruit trees are preserved for their nourishment. It is good that they are to be kept pure to satisfy their relationship with their God. Etically, it is to the advantage of the Assyrians that the Israelites are fed well and the Israelite community is kept pure. For the Assyrians this is to their advantage economically. The stronger and healthier the Israelites, the more revenue the Assyrian government will obtain (from the Israelites as a vassal nation) through taxes. It is one of the ideological mechanisms to create periphery states as part of its expansion. In this case, it was restructuring dependent populations (Israelite) into ethnic collectives for economic purposes.

This cannot be said about the cutting of non-fruit trees for siegeworks where its ethicality follows closely the argument given for its ambivalence stance in Section 3.6.1. In addition, there is a subtle permeation of a 'self destructive' facet in cutting trees. The removal of trees lessens the probability of oxygen supply for humans (Figure 2.1) which in the case of the siege are the Israelites. Ironically, they are living in a city with a 'depleted' supply of oxygen. While the argument is purely on scientific grounds (and its effect not forthcoming), the fact remains that less trees means less oxygen available for humans. The exchange of gases is interfered with and carbon dioxide (CO_2) gas begins to accumulate in the atmosphere. As noted in Section 2.1, this is the cause of global warming - one of the main environmental problems we are facing today.

In the Samoan context ambivalence can be described by the term *fia-palagi* (wanting to be a European). Samoan social life is also one of post-colonial hybridity. While Emma Va'ai implies that this hybrid pattern of social relations need not result in a weakening of cultural identity,[106] this paper argues otherwise. The Samoans have imitated the European lifestyle so much that the social structures and mentality of the people are nothing short of ambivalence. Not only do they want to drink cold water and watch television but the fridges and TV sets are being accommodated in their small huts (*faleo'o*).[107] They build houses imitating the European architecturally designs, and then they lock these houses up, and prefer living in the much smaller open Samoan house at

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[106] Emma K. Va'ai, "Producing the Text of Culture: The Appropriation of English in Contemporary Samoan", Unpublished PhD Thesis, (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1997), cited in B. Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p.221

[107] This is not normal in Samoan culture, but the desire to possess a TV set is overwhelming and one has to have a set when one return from a short 3 months visit to relatives overseas. The presence of TV has disrupted the usual ritual of prayers in the evening. This I believe is a weakening of culture.

the back, as it is cooler. The Europeans houses are too inclusive with all the locked rooms and drawn curtains. While the European house is more stable, the preference still lies with the Samoan house for its simplicity, and exclusiveness – it's the Samoan way of life.

The 'mimicry' element of the post-colonial reading which ambivalence texts has been used by Least Developed Countries (LDC) to promote their development. Samoa as one of the LDC is no exception. As noted already, Samoa is living in a post-colonial perspective, 'taking advantage of our disadvantage' to entice assistance from the wealthy nations. Only last week in the local newspapers is the insistence by the Prime Minister of Samoa to defer Samoa's graduation from the list of LDC countries[108], despite the government's avowal that the economy is booming. In an interview with the Prime Minister, his concern was that even though the graduation may be a positive reflection in the government's endeavours to improve the lives of the people, this may undermine the country's achievements to date. It was not an easy decision torn between the country's honour on the line against the lucrative offers of soft interest loans. But perhaps the real reason for the insistence is that post-colonial living is too good to be stopped. It requires only a Japanese project in the making for the Chinese to offer assistance and implement a larger project of its own. The Japanese replies with another aid and the cycle goes on. In this subtle way, the two super powers are destabilizing each other. Although manipulative, and dangerous, Samoa through this means is decentring the two 'super powers' by accepting aid at the expense of cultural, social and religious undermining.

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[108] *Samoa Observer, 30 September 2006* "LDC Status, Wait and See", p6. LDC are those with below average Gross National Income, Human Assets Index and Economic Vulnerability Index. Samoa's claim is that its Economic Vulnerability Index is not up to standard, although the other two are.

The Australian and the New Zealand governments are not far behind. As long as they are offering scholarships for the Samoans to study overseas in their respective countries, they are keeping the Samoans at bay. They are still in control but in a very subtle way. Like the Chinese and the Japanese, Samoa's vote in the United Nation's General Assembly is all they are asking for. The Samoans on their part have used this post-colonial living to their advantage. The first generation Samoans that migrated to New Zealand as factory workers have used the opportunities well. They continue to be factory workers but their children are now established lawyers, doctors, business people, prominent sports players and parliamentarians. The New Zealand General Election in 2005 saw a Samoan (Taito Phillip Field) got the highest winning majority votes in any electorate. Soon afterwards he was indicted for 'foul play' and consequently losing his ministerial post. The case is still pending, but this is a clear example of *mimicry* that 'got away' and was posing a threat to the New Zealanders[109] (the dominant culture).

This paper has shown that the ambivalent elements exposed in the post-colonial reading of Deuteronomy 20:19-20 as relevant as they were in seventh century Judah, are also relevant today especially in the Samoan context. Deuteronomy 20:19-20 has given another solution to the global environmental crisis concern – it is a revitalization of the frugality norm as a witness to a culture that is literally consuming itself to death.[110]

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[109] *Samoa Observer 08 September, 2006.* "Brash Denies Brown Bashing", frontpage. In this front page article, the New Zealand Opposition Leader Dr Don Brash denied allegations of racism against him over the Taito Phillip Field controversy. An inquiry into allegation of Field's conduct cleared Field of any wrongdoing, but the National Party has refused to bury the issue.

[110] James A. Nash. "Toward the Ecological Reformation of Christianity", *Interpretation Vol 50, no1* (1996), p.12

Post-colonial living is a novel approach but becomes a flawed one if it allows the 'unheard' voices of society to remain anonymous. The criticality of allowing the two cultures standing next to each other, but never one 'under' the other is stressed. As Stuart Hall asserted, cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all but a matter of positioning which is a matter of representation.[111]

The positioning of contemporary Samoan cultural identity at this day and age is not hard to see. This strategy of maintaining cultural integrity by embracing European traditions will persist, because the marginalised can never be a complete copy of the dominant culture. The wanting to be someone else will therefore continue especially if that someone else is, in your thinking, authoritative.

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[111] Stuart Hall. Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in, Jonathan Rutherford (ed) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference,* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990). Cited in Ashcroft. 2001, p.4.

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