

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF EXODUS IDENTITY IN THE TEXTS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL:
A SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	American Anthropologist
AB	The Anchor Bible
ACOT	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
Am Sociol Rev	American Sociological Review
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
DBAT	Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament und seiner Rezeption in der Alten Kirche
ECB	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
EJSP	European Journal of Social Psychology
FRLANT	Forschungen Zur Religion Und Literatur Des Alten Und Neuen Testaments
HBT	Horizons in Biblical Theology
HER	Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
IBC	Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
JANER	Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JEMS	Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JPSP	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
LA	Liber annuus
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NAC	New American Commentary
NAS	The New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NEchtBAT	Die neue Echter-Bibel Kommentar zum Alten Testament
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NTS	New Testament Studies
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly

SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
Sociol Q.	The Sociological Quarterly
TBT	The Bible Today
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TWOT	Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WestBC	Westminster Bible Companion
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

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Abstract

In response to the scarcity of biblical scholarship analysing the function of the Hebrew Bible's exodus stories as persuasive communication, this dissertation investigates how these mnemonically dense stories were capable of creating and maintaining a long-term collective identity for ancient Israel. A narrative approach is selected in keeping with this intent, and the primary exodus story (Exod 1:1–15:21) and the 18 retold exodus stories found in the Hebrew Bible are identified as the focus of research. Since the tools used for analysing the narratives of non-fictional peoples need not be limited to those used for analysing literary fiction, a methodological tool—based on the principles of the social identity approach (SIA)—is developed and outlined to assist in exposing identity construction at a rhetorical level. Using the SIA heuristic tool, rhetorical formulations of identity—cognitive, evaluative, emotional, behavioural and temporal—like those occurring in face-to-face relationships, are identified in the exodus stories. These formulations make certain identity claims upon their hearers. A shared experience of oppression and deliverance is represented as the significant feature defining group membership in Israel. The literary portrayal of nine of the eighteen retold exodus stories in a setting just after the death of the adult exodus generation, asserts the importance of the appropriation of the story by a purportedly new generation. Likewise, exodus narratives with a literary setting in every major socio-cultural transition in Israel's larger story portray Israel's rehearsal of and participation in exodus as central and essential to her ongoing collective identity. Possible social identities offered to Israel include the temporal expansion of this ingroup based on the retelling and reappropriation of exodus and the "othering" of Israel based on non-compliance. Pre-exodus narratives are noted to have been shaped so as to include the patriarchs in "the people whom God brought out of Egypt." Plurivocal retold exodus stories also reflects the recasting of narratives to fit identities so that, anachronistically, post-exodus members may also be included in "the people whom God brought out of Egypt." This points to the revision and reuse of exodus narratives rather than to their unilinear development. Apart from any speculation on the historical motives of their producers, the identity-forming potential of exodus narratives characterized by the well-established, recognizable language of social identity is identified. The newly developed heuristic tool used in this analysis is its most significant contribution. It makes visible the nascent social identity language and concepts implicitly noted by prior scholarship, places them within the larger validating theoretical framework of the SIA and systematically identifies the specific persuasive elements and integrating qualities of exodus narratives.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Fans from different continents cheer for the same team, and soldiers on scattered battlefields fight for a common cause. Relief workers unknown to one another stand shoulder to shoulder pulling survivors from the rubble. Patriots, separated by generations, commemorate their fallen, and worshippers practice an age old faith. These individuals, detached from one another by space, anonymity or time, find themselves in a context in which individual self-orientations fade and are replaced by a collective self-concept. This collective identity may be brought about by competition, shared belief, tragedy or a myriad of other factors. It may have fleeting, situational salience, or it may be long-lasting, central to a people's self-concept and pervasive of their reality. This latter kind of collective identity is particularly difficult to explain.

How is a long-lasting, subjective sense of collective identity, created and maintained? The answer to this is complex and multidimensional. Recent studies, however, have illuminated the role texts, narrative discourse and collective memory play in the creation and maintenance of enduring collective identities.

The interest of this thesis is the collective identity of ancient Israel¹ and how particular narrative resources may have contributed to its construction and maintenance. Prior to presenting the specific details of this study, several authorial presuppositions should be noted.

1.1 Presuppositions

Literary and biblical studies have repeatedly demonstrated the significant role texts play in shaping collective identities.² These studies demonstrate that the narrative genre in particular lies at the heart of collective identity formation. An identity constructing narrative is most often presented as a story shared by a people, and it captures key understandings about what it means to be a member of that group. It can ultimately be reduced to something along the lines of "we are the people who...",³ and it is often found in a condensed form as a group label.⁴ Because life narratives are formed retrospectively, they are able to show both continuity and causality and to give significance and closure to life events, thereby contributing to identity.⁵ They not only express the identity claims of their producers, but they also shape the identity of their audiences. Lau argues that "the reading of a text involves a subjective, existential appropriation. ...It is

¹ See definition in section 1.6.

² See Appendix 1, section 1 for a list of these studies.

³ Stephen Cornell, "That's the Story of Our Life," in *We Are a People: Narrative and Multiplicity in Constructing Ethnic Identity* (ed. Paul Spickard and W. Jeffrey Burroughs; Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 42.

⁴ Cornell, "Story," 42.

⁵ Peter H. W. Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth: A Social Identity Approach* (BZAW 416; ed. John Barton et al; Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 40.

through this process that narratives can influence the personal identity of a reader.”⁶ Narratives, therefore, not only define social identity, they also maintain, strengthen and transmit it.

While the above mentioned studies demonstrate group identity is often constructed and maintained through narratives, not all narrative texts are devised in order to create or reinforce identity. Some narratives function primarily to inform or to entertain. The principal objective of social memory narratives, however, is the concretion of group identity. Memories that are deemed as constitutive of the group must be constantly told and retold. To have enduring significance, they must eventually be inscribed in the form of texts (or monuments, images, buildings and other such concrete representations⁷). Because group memory is selective, the memories chosen to be brought forward in such a fixed form are those that have been deemed worthy of representing the group. In this way, social groups build meaning, cohesion and collective identity through inscribed, collective memory narratives.

The term “collective memory”⁸ was first coined by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who shifted the study of memory from its traditional framework as an individual faculty of recollection to an examination of it as a social reality. His focus was primarily on orally communicated group memory, and he noted that individuals who were part of a group shared its collective memory without having personal experience of the events remembered.⁹

Egyptologist Jan Assmann recognized that collective memory included not only oral, collective remembering but also the crystallization of collective memory in texts,¹⁰ referred to as inscribed collective memory.¹¹ The latter consists of a particular set of dynamic, slowly evolving, meaningful images comprising a group’s agreed upon version of the past into which its members are consciously and unconsciously socialized.

There exists a general consensus among social memory theorists that the function of inscribed collective memory is to bind individual members to the group, to orientate and shape the everyday experiences of the group members and to stabilize the identity of the social group over time, making it visible to itself and, to some degree, others. “Today it is widely held that ‘memory is a central, if not the central, medium through which identities are constituted’ since identity is the sense of sameness over time that is derived from memory.”¹² While collective memories are found in a variety of textual media, it is well established that the Hebrew Bible consists of or contains ancient Israel’s collective memory.¹³

Beginning with these presuppositions—that narratives, particularly social memory narratives, construct collective identity and that the Hebrew Bible comprises ancient Israel’s inscribed collective memory—this study will show *how* specific examples of narrative collective memory in the Hebrew Bible

⁶ Lau, *Identity in Ruth*, 41.

⁷ Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique* (1995): 128-130.

⁸ “Social memory” is used interchangeably with “collective memory”. See definition in section 1.6.

⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (ed. Lewis A. Coser; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 52-53.

¹⁰ Assmann, “Collective Memory,” 128-130.

¹¹ This designation was alluded to by Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4.

¹² Mary B. Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities: Jewish Social Memory and the Johannine Feast of Booths* (LNTS 396; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 8.

¹³ See Appendix 1, section 2 for a list of key studies.

may have functioned to construct and reinforce identity for their hearers. The memory of Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt has been chosen as the specific focus of analysis. Narratives of these particular events have a greater "mnemonic density"¹⁴ in the Hebrew Scriptures than any other single narrative theme and are often accompanied by the sense of obligation characteristic of collective memory.¹⁵ This specific story will be referred to as the "exodus story," although elsewhere the same designation has been used to refer to the broader story encompassing Egyptian bondage, deliverance, wilderness wanderings, giving of the covenant and entry into the land.¹⁶ The narrower story of Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt meets Cornell's description of an identity narrative as an event-centred story of a group. Likewise it can be condensed into a group label,¹⁷ identifying Israel as "the people whom God brought out of Egypt."¹⁸

1.2 Scope of Research and Statement of Thesis

Bearing in mind Bal's assertion that reality is created through a text's literary and rhetorical design,¹⁹ the exodus story will be examined to determine how, as a narrative resource, it was capable of presenting hearers with and socializing them into a dominant, social identity.²⁰ Recognizing that the tools used for analysing the narratives of non-fictional peoples are not limited to those used for analysing literary fiction, a methodological tool—based on the principles of the social identity approach (henceforth SIA)—will be developed and outlined to assist in exposing identity construction at a rhetorical level. Since the Hebrew Bible took shape over a considerable period of time, its writers and editors likely adjusted stories to fit identities, resulting in variations in identity construction evident in the form and content of exodus narratives.

The Hebrew Bible contains over 120 direct references to the exodus as well as multiple echoes and allusions.²¹ Because independent research, cited earlier in this chapter, has shown that it is the stories people tell, in particular, that are formative of group identity, this analysis will limit itself to the examination of exodus stories. Echoes, allusions and other short references to exodus that do not take on a story form

¹⁴ Zerubavel explains that while time is homogeneous, equal durations of time are remembered unequally. Some parts of history are essentially relegated to social oblivion while others are remembered intensely. The latter are said to have a greater "mnemonic density" or to occupy a greater "mnemonic space." Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 25-31.

¹⁵ See Assmann, "Collective Memory," 131-132; and Holly Hearon, "The Story of 'the Woman who Anointed Jesus' as Social Memory: A Methodological Proposal for the Study of Tradition as Memory," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Semeia Studies; Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, eds.; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 100. For a list of studies of the exodus as collective memory, see Appendix 1, section 3.

¹⁶ Amos Frisch, "The Exodus Motif in 1 Kings 1-14," *JSOT* 87 (2000): 5; Michael D. Coogan, "The Exodus," *The Oxford Companions to the Bible* (ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 209; and Yair Zakovitch, "And You Shall Tell Your Son..." *The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 9.

¹⁷ Cornell, "Story," 42.

¹⁸ See Exodus 32:11, Lev 25:55 and Deuteronomy 9:26.

¹⁹ Mieke Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3.

²⁰ "Possible social identity" will be defined in chapter 3 (3.1.5.2).

²¹ Direct references to exodus have been categorized according to their apparent function in Appendix 2. Echoes of and indirect allusions to exodus are a more subjective endeavour that falls outside of the delimitations of this research.

will not be considered. With this limitation in mind, it is necessary to determine what constitutes an exodus story.

Ryken identifies three basic elements—setting, plot and character—as comprising a biblical story.²² Since echoes, allusions and other short references to exodus may also embrace elements of setting and characterization, it is the presence of plot that is most helpful in identifying exodus stories. A plot is formed when situations or events are linked to one another in causal, sequential or associational ways.²³ This implies the presence of at least two such elements.

As stated, this thesis will examine stories of Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt. This includes both the "primary exodus story" and multiple "retold stories of exodus."²⁴ The primary exodus story or narrative begins with the summary of the descent of the sons of Israel into Egypt and ends with the Song of the Sea (Exod 1.1–15:21). This literary unit, designated as such by both Childs and Brueggemann,²⁵ comprises a story with a beginning and an end. While new stories proceed from it, this narrowly defined exodus story is frequently recalled as a historical watershed and means of measuring the passage of time within other stories (beginning with Exodus 16:1).²⁶ Although it is widely accepted that various elements of the story, such as the plague narratives, had an independent compositional origin, they are represented in the finished form as part of the exodus story that must be retold to subsequent generations of Israel (Exod 10:2).

The literary unit of Exodus 1:1–15:21 will be referred to as the "primary exodus story" for two reasons. Firstly, it presents itself as an omniscient, eyewitness narration of events. While not historically verifiable (i.e. with respect to the supernatural events reported), or even possible (i.e. in terms of the human knowledge of internal motives and musings), this is nevertheless the implicit claim of the text on the hearer. Secondly, this narrative is represented to Israel as the dominant voice of Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt. It comprises the most explicit and extensive treatment of the exodus found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Many of the expressions and images of exodus found throughout the rest of Scripture are densely communicated here. The designation "primary," however, is not intended to imply that this is developmentally the first and oldest exodus story.

Three broad plot elements characterize the primary exodus story and are densely portrayed in the language and imagery of the text. Firstly, there is an initial situation of adversity. This is variously described in terms of oppression or affliction (derivatives of עָנָה), being enslaved (derivatives of עֶבֶד), being mistreated (רָעָה), as well as in the expressions of groaning and crying out. This first element primarily characterizes Exodus 1:1–2:23, although it is rehearsed throughout the story.²⁷ The second element is the supernatural intervention of God in response to the initial situation. This extends from 2:24–12:30 and is

²² Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 19.

²³ Cornell, "Story," 43.

²⁴ These terms will be defined in the sections that follow.

²⁵ Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 170; Walter Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." *NIB vol. 1* (ed. Leander E. Keck et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 690-804.

²⁶ See references in Appendix 2, section 3d.

²⁷ See for example 3:7, 9, 17; 4:31; 5:6-21; 6:5-6; 13:3, 14.

described with expressions such as “strong hand” (יָד חֲזָקָה), “outstretched arm” (זֶרַע נְטוּיָה), “signs” (אֵימֹת) and “wonders” (מוֹפְתִים). While these terms are used in short references to refer broadly to exodus, Martens demonstrates that they refer specifically to God’s power to cause plagues and diseases rather than to military power.²⁸ Their primary use bolsters this second plot element. The final plot element in the story is the bringing of Israel out of Egypt and broadly characterizes 12:31–15:21. Terms describing this include the hiphil forms of נָצַל, יָשַׁע and יָצָא, as well as the narration of the crossing of the sea. In addition to these three major²⁹ elements of plot, there are two minor ones, namely, the ancestors’ descent into Egypt (1:1-6) on one end of the story and the entry into the land on the other (15:13-17).

In addition to the primary exodus story, this thesis will examine various “retold exodus stories.” These recurring stories represent Israel’s departure from Egypt as being in the historical past, recalled from a variety of seemingly later vantage points. In order to be recognized by hearers as exodus stories, these retold stories must bear a resemblance to the dominant narrative even though this may not represent the developmental direction of influence. Certain plot elements and vocabulary found in the primary narrative characterize these retellings. Whether a narrative is prose or poetic, it can be distinguished by the story-like character of the exodus retelling that narratively links together (or crafts a plot with) these various elements. This sets them apart from both short references to exodus and echoes of exodus.³⁰

Some retellings of exodus, such as Deuteronomy 26:5b-9 and Deuteronomy 6:20-24, not only include all three of the common plot elements of the primary narrative in the form of a concise story, but also impose an obligation on the hearer to retell the story. In this way, they explicitly highlight the storytelling act. The retellings in Psalm 78 and Psalm 105 also contain all three plot elements, although in a less succinct story format, as well as an obligation to retell the exodus story within the context of a broader story of God’s acts. Deuteronomy 5:15, Joshua 24:2-7, 17 and Nehemiah 9:9-12, 36 also contain all three plot elements of the primary narrative and are, therefore, easily recognizable stories of Israel’s sojourn in and departure from Egypt. Other retold exodus stories, distinguished by the presence of at least two of the common plot elements of the primary narrative arranged in story form, are catalogued in Appendix 2, section 2.

Direct references to exodus that do not fit the definition of an exodus story will not be examined in this thesis. Deuteronomy 1:30, for example, explicitly refers to the exodus in order to inculcate confidence in God in the narrative present, but it does not contain the minimum of two plot elements narrated sequentially. By contrast, the similarly functioning Deuteronomy 7:18-19 links the elements of God’s power demonstrated against Egypt with Israel being brought up out of Egypt. For the purpose of this analysis, Deuteronomy 1:30 is categorized as a short reference to exodus while Deuteronomy 7:18-19 is an exodus story.³¹ Another example is the difference between Deuteronomy 34:10-12 and Psalm 136:10-15, 23-24. Deuteronomy 34 recalls a single plot element as a means of identifying Moses, while Psalm 136 links together plot elements in the form of a story in its characterization of God. Likewise, Exodus 32:11 has been

²⁸ Karen Martens, “‘With a Strong Hand and an Outstretched Arm’: the Meaning of the Expression *byd hzqh wbyzrw’ nṭwyh*,” *SJOT* 15:1 (2001): 123-141.

²⁹ This is based on the mnemonic space they occupy in the narrative, not on any evaluation of their significance.

³⁰ These two kinds of references to exodus will be illustrated in the next section.

³¹ See Appendix 2, section 3 for a list of direct short references to exodus.

excluded from consideration. While it might be argued that this narrative contains two plot elements (the bringing out of Israel and the supernatural intervention of God), the explicit linking of these two elements in the form of a story is absent. Instead, they are used as a part of formula to define God.³²

Stories of exodus also differ from echoes of exodus. The latter contain only verbal or imaginal links to the exodus story. Deuteronomy 2:30, for example, has a verbal link to the exodus story when, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Sihon, King of Heshbon, is described as being stubborn and hardening his heart. 1 Samuel 5-6 offers an imaginal link to the exodus story in the narrative of the Ark of the Covenant's descent into the land of the Philistines, God's subsequent affliction of that nation and the Ark's ascent out of that land. Deuteronomy 2:30 and 1 Samuel 5-6 both tell a story and allude to various elements of the exodus, but they do not tell the exodus story, which remains in the background.

This thesis, then, will not analyse short references, echoes and allusions to exodus. Since prior research has demonstrated specifically that stories can be creative of collective identity, only the primary exodus story and retold exodus stories will be examined to determine *how* their literary and rhetorical design may have contributed to Israel's collective identity.

1.3 Rationale

Exploring how exodus narratives construct collective identity is a relevant, although as yet little researched, topic in the field of biblical studies.³³ One justification of such a study is that it adds balance to the scholarly treatment of the exodus. In the past, naïve faith in Scripture's historical factuality, or adamant scepticism of the same, resulted in an inordinate amount of research devoted to defending or disproving the historicity of the exodus. Biblical scholars focusing on exodus as "event" failed to recognize the pre-eminence of the *meaning* of the exodus over the *event* that is intimated by the prevalence of the exodus theme, its creative and varied re-expression and its perpetuation in biblical (and historical) memory. This study focuses on the meaning of exodus and the manner in which that meaning is composed.

By focusing on meaning, this study challenges the assumption that accurate representation is the sole function of textual memory. Linde argues that groups have a variety of purposes for recalling and representing the past. It may be narrated "to establish legitimacy of authority, to claim ownership, to claim political or intellectual priority, to establish stability, to indicate the working out of divine purpose in history, to compare the past with the present to show that things are getting either better or worse."³⁴ Because Linde is dealing with modern narratives, the question remains whether ancient narratives also serve a variety of functions. Davies addresses this concern by warning those studying biblical texts never to respond to the question "Why is this story being told?" with "Because what it describes happened." Not

³² Variations of the formula "Yahweh your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt" appear in both versions of the Decalogue (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6) and frequently in Exodus (6:7; 7:5; 18:1; 29:46; 32:11). This contrasts with the defining of Yahweh as the one who brought Abraham out of Mesopotamia in Genesis 15:7 and Nehemiah 9:7. F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map* (JSOTS 361; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 140-141, n. 340.

³³ Keesmaat presupposes the centrality of the exodus narrative in ancient Israel's identity in her analysis of Paul's use of it in the construction of early Christian identity. Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 15-53.

³⁴ Charlotte Linde, *Working the Past: Narrative and Institutional Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

only does he argue that ancient stories of the past do not neatly reproduce “what happened,” but, more importantly, he contends that “the fact of something happening does not of itself provide an adequate reason for telling it. Literature is a form of persuasive communication, and it cannot help conveying its author.”³⁵ In other words, the ancient stories of the past cannot be regarded as dispassionate accounts of happenings but rather as evidencing authorial purpose and relevance.

Yerushalmi also argues that biblical (and early Jewish) reconstructions of the past had a completely different purpose from those of modern historiography. He asserts that the purpose of these sacred writings was not to keep account of the past for its own sake, but rather to explore the meaning of history for the people of Israel. Thus he maintains that the contents of these writings were selected according to the criterion of *meaningfulness*.³⁶ The studies mentioned earlier in the introduction argue that some reconstructions of the past have been specifically shaped for the purposes of identity formation. The analysis being undertaken here will add credibility to the argument that textual memory functions to shape and reinforce identity.

In addition to focusing on the meaning of the exodus rather than on a fixed event and on textual functions other than historical reconstruction, this analysis follows a current trend in biblical studies, namely, illuminating the role literary art plays in the shaping of biblical narratives. Rather than bringing to light general literary features (i.e., purposeful repetitions, deliberate ambiguities, etc.) found in narratives, the application of the SIA as a heuristic tool will expose specific identity-forming features (e.g. boundary language, comparative evaluations, etc.) of the exodus narratives. It will show how the artful use of collective identity rhetoric and images exposes hearers to and socializes them into possible social identities. This analysis will demonstrate that the application of social scientific theories to literary studies of the Hebrew Scriptures results in invaluable new insights into the text.

1.4 Delimitations

This is a literary study rather than a historic one, examining texts themselves and not the events behind them. It will not research “what happened” (in terms of the exodus), but “what is remembered” and “how it is told” (rhetoric). Other scholars have focused on whether the exodus was an actual historic event and to what degree the biblical description of it is objectively verifiable. While the answers to those questions are important, they are not the concerns of this thesis. Brueggemann says, “*What* happened turns out to be dependent upon and determined by *how* the happenedness is shaped in the speech practices of the remembering community.”³⁷ Although the happening itself is not shaped by the remembering community, what is known about the event is. What hearers know and understand is dependent on how happenings are remembered, shaped and narrated. For many generations of ancient Israel, the exodus was a collective memory rather than a lived experience. What Israel knew and believed was dependent on the cultural tools available to her—oral and written memory and cultic recital. This was the pertinent evidence that informed her worldview and motivated her actions.

³⁵ Philip R. Davies, *In Search of “Ancient Israel”* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1992), 13.

³⁶ Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 10-14.

³⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment: Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 13.

The objective of this thesis is not to employ literary findings to reconstruct the historical or social reality behind the text. Unlike Lieu who expresses scepticism as to whether one can really know anything beyond the textual constructions of identity,³⁸ this author recognizes not only that texts were situated in a social context but that they are capable of offering insights into the past.³⁹ The present research focus, however, is limited to a thorough examination of the textual construction of identity in exodus narratives. Further research will be required to determine the degree to which these constructions had a historical impact on ancient Israel as identity resources.

Just as this study is not concerned with the events behind the text, it is not interested in the formative history of the text. Previous attempts by biblical scholars to identify the original form(s) of a text have proved problematic and the results dubious. This study focuses on the finished form of the text and on the rhetorical shape and effect of the whole. It acknowledges that the finished text contains evidence of various layers of memory and tradition and speaks with a multiplicity of voices. Rather than trying to find meaning by dissecting the text, this thesis will find it by examining the rhetoric of the text itself and the way in which that text is arranged and presented. As various retold exodus narratives are examined, one might argue that “the Exodus is ancient Israel’s national epic, retold throughout its history, with each new narration reflecting the context in which it was rendered.”⁴⁰ Certainly, changes to the exodus story were motivated by their historical context and by authorial or editorial ideologies, but this thesis is particularly concerned with how changes in the story affect hearers when placed in dialogue with other stories, rather than the historical intent of the alterations.

This study will show how literary rhetoric supports particular constructions of collective identity. It will measure the persuasiveness of the rhetoric rather than its historical accuracy. While the latter may be important to faith and theology, it is not indispensable to identity claims. “What matters is not the validity of the representations but their effects: the degree to which the narrative and its component parts are understood—by group members or by outsiders—as illustrative or exemplary, as capturing something essential about the group in question.”⁴¹ In other words, collective identities are authentic to the degree they are accepted as real and believed to be descriptive of self. The specific interest in this study is to show how the rhetoric and verbal images of exodus narratives are persuasive of particular collective identities.

Finally, this thesis will not attempt to trace the chronology of memory and seek out the threads of connectivity working behind the text, i.e. intertextuality, evolution of ideas, recourse to forgotten evidence, shifts of focus, and so forth. Such an approach, known as a mnemohistorical discourse analysis,⁴² is more useful for explaining how texts were formed and relate to one another than how they function. Since this

³⁸ Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24-25, 300-302.

³⁹ This is in agreement with Rikard Roitto, “Act as a Christ-Believer, as a Household Member or as Both?—A Cognitive Perspective on the Relationship Between the Social Identity in Christ and Household Identities in Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Texts,” in *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (ed. Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winnänge; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 153.

⁴⁰ Coogan, “Exodus,” 209.

⁴¹ Cornell, “Story,” 44.

⁴² See Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Jean Delumeau, *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

thesis is concerned with the latter, it will focus on examining how the various voices of exodus texts function both independently and in conjunction as identity resources for ancient Israel.

1.5 Limitations

In addition to the authorial imposed delimitations previously mentioned, several inherent limitations on this study exist. Firstly, although this thesis will demonstrate how the rhetoric of the exodus narrative is constructive of collective identity, it cannot prove that the producers of the exodus narratives were consciously committed to an “identity project.” Establishing intentionality is difficult in the best of circumstances, and when one is working with ancient texts written in a dissimilar culture and context, it is almost certainly impossible. One can, however, expose textual formulations that are similar to those implicated in the creation and maintenance of a coherent collective identity in other contexts of study. The presence of such rhetorical devices in exodus narrative would have the potential to effect identity in hearers apart from the intentions of the producers.

Another limitation of this thesis is its inability to demonstrate subjectively perceived identity. One cannot demonstrate whether or not exodus identity was keenly felt by ancient Israel, but only that the textual rhetoric is of such a nature that it would have persuaded the unresisting hearer and socialized him or her into this identity. An investigation of textual rhetoric cannot demonstrate that Israel as a people actually consumed and assumed the collective identity constructed by the text.

Finally, the recent emergence of the language of “identity” and “identity construction” and its absence in the writings of ancient Israel does not invalidate the application of identity models to biblical studies. Identity theories are descriptive rather than prescriptive. Theories have been developed and modified over time by examining how different articulations or perspectives of the past conform to or challenge previous expressions of identity construction. Lieu notes that the application of contemporary models of identity construction has proved extremely helpful in the analysis of the literature of antiquity.⁴³ She demonstrates how these models can be used to explore ancient Christian texts and shows how the latter created early Christian identity. In the same way, identity models are useful in the analysis of identity formation in the Hebrew Scriptures.⁴⁴ The social identity approach can, admittedly, only reveal certain aspects of the biblical text, and its findings must be supplemented by and enhanced by other methods of critical interpretation. Similarly the approach should not be viewed as determinative or predictive of biblical phenomena but rather as a heuristic tool permitting textual comparison and prompting the search for patterns, correlations and coherency within the extensive biblical materials.

1.6 Definitions

Two important terms should be clarified and their use in this thesis defined, namely, “collective (or social) identity” and “ancient Israel.”

1.6.1 Collective (or social) Identity

Henri Tajfel, the originator of the Social Identity Theory (SIT), defines social identity as “that part of an

⁴³ Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 16.

⁴⁴ See chapter 3, section 2.2.2.

individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."⁴⁵ Thus, according to Tajfel, social identity may include the following components:

a cognitive component, in the sense of the knowledge that one belongs to a group; an evaluative one, in the sense that the notion of the group and/or of one's membership of it may have a positive or a negative value connotation; and an emotional component in the sense that the cognitive and evaluative aspects of the group and one's membership of it may be accompanied by emotions (such as love or hatred, like or dislike) directed towards one's own group and towards others which stand in certain relations to it.⁴⁶

While Tajfel's definition of social identity and its three dimensions or components are generally accepted, "social identity" is used elsewhere both to describe the gregarious aspect of an individual's identity (i.e. "who I am relationally") and to describe group identity (i.e. "who we are"). Thoits and Virshup argue that because both of these types of identity are social in origin, the term "social identity" is inadequate to distinguish between them.⁴⁷ The use of the term "collective identity" to refer to group identity provides additional clarity, but "social identity" cannot be disallowed since this is one of the earliest terms used to describe group identity, and the one primarily used in the Social Identity Theory (SIT) and the Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), both of which are central to the methodology of this thesis.⁴⁸ The expressions "social identity" and "collective identity" will be used interchangeably only to describe group identity.

Collective identity is what creates in people a sense of "us-ness." People from collectivist cultures are less likely to perceive themselves as unique individuals and more likely to identify themselves entirely in terms of group membership. Pilch contends that "the vast majority of the people described in the Bible represent collectivist personality types. Individualist personality types are rather rare in the Bible and the Mediterranean culture in general."⁴⁹

Collective identity should not be equated with one's beliefs, values, language, culture and so on. As Esler notes, people *first* come to the realization they are a distinct people and *then* they define that collective identity in relation to certain cultural indicia, which change over time.⁵⁰ Tajfel also takes such a view of collective identity.

Collective identities may be erroneously viewed as stable rather than dynamic. Cornell and Hartmann argue for a constructionist view. Instead of seeing collective identities as static entities forced on

⁴⁵ Henri Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 28.

⁴⁶ Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 28.

⁴⁷ P. Thoits and L. Virshup, "Me's and We's: Forms and Functions of Social Identities," in *Self and Identity: Fundamental Issues* (ed. R. D. Ashmore and L. Jussim, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 106.

⁴⁸ See chapter 3, section 1.

⁴⁹ John J. Pilch, "Individual? Or Stereotypes?" *TBT* 39 (2001), 171. See also Lau, *Identity in Ruth*, 20-25. Scholars arguing that individualism, as a cultural phenomenon, did not appear until at least the sixteenth century include Philip Esler, *Galatians* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 46-47; Matthew J. Marohl, *Faithfulness and the Purpose of Hebrews: A Social Identity Approach* (Eugene, Oreg.: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 86-87; Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Heinemann, 1979), 16; Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 375; and Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 179.

⁵⁰ Philip Esler, "Ezra-Nehemiah as a Narrative of (Re-invented) Israelite Identity," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 414.

groups by circumstances or by others, they view groups as active agents in the making and remaking of their identities over time. Collective identities are perceived as identities that people “accept, resist, choose, specify, invent, redefine, reject, actively defend, and so forth. They involve an active ‘we’ as well as a ‘they.’ They involve not only circumstances but also active responses to circumstances by individuals and groups, guided by their own preconceptions, dispositions, and agendas.”⁵¹ A constructionist view of collective identities is presumed by this thesis. Findings of variability in identity formulations in the exodus narratives will confirm the validity of this assumption.⁵²

Cornell and Hartmann also argue that “identity construction is most apparent during periods of social change, such as migration or social upheaval.”⁵³ This claim is endorsed by others⁵⁴ and bolstered by case studies on identity construction among immigrants.⁵⁵ The texts of the Hebrew Bible undoubtedly served as identity resources within contexts of social upheaval characterized by migration, conflicts with other nations, displacement and domination.⁵⁶

For the purpose of this study, collective identity will be defined as a group’s continually renegotiated awareness of who they are, their unity and peculiarity and their central understanding about what it means to be a member of the group. While recognizing that collective identity is not singular, this thesis focuses on Israel’s primary identity conveyed by means of her dominant discourse.

1.6.2 Ancient Israel

The expression “ancient Israel” has been used freely in scholarly works for centuries without any apparent need for definition. A cursory survey of Bible dictionaries and encyclopaedias reveals the absence of such an entry, forcing one to settle instead for entries such as “Israel” or “Israel, a History.” Overwhelmingly these latter entries depict Israel as a collective people beginning in Palestine sometime in Iron Age I (as referred to in the 1207 B.C.E. Merneptah Stele) and extending through the Roman Period. Among the materials surveyed for a definition of ancient Israel, only Thompson designates an exact end point for this collective:

⁵¹ Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, 2007), 81.

⁵² Other examples of the reshaping of social memory and identity can be found in Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Barry Schwartz, “Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington,” *Am Sociol Rev* 56 (April 1991): 221-236; and Barry Schwartz, “Collective Memory and History: How Abraham Lincoln Became a Symbol of Racial Equality,” *Sociol Q.* 38 (1997): 469-496.

⁵³ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race*, 211.

⁵⁴ Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992), 32-33; Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*; and Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 185-186.

⁵⁵ Anna De Fina, *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin’s Publishing Company, 2003); Brent O. Peterson, *Popular Narratives and Ethnic Identity: Literature and Community in Die Abendschule* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Anna Arnone, “Journeys to Exile: The Constitution of Eritrean Identity Through Narratives and Experiences,” *JEMS* 34:2 (March 2008): 325-340; Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁵⁶ Isbell argues that the final edition of the exodus story was framed in the crisis of the early exilic period. Such an argument is not germane to this thesis because the social, cultural and theological crisis of exile extended far into the Restoration Period. Charles David Isbell, *The Function of Exodus Motifs in Biblical Narrative: Theological Didactic Drama* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity; Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 6-11.

In A.D. 135 the Romans captured and destroyed Jerusalem, as they had in A.D. 70. This time the Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the city, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and decreed that no Jew should enter it. The political history of ancient Israel was at an end. The religious fruits of that history, during which monotheism was preserved, continued in scattered Jewish communities including modern Israel and in the world-wide Christian Church, which has sometimes called itself the new Israel.⁵⁷

That is to say, “ancient Israel” was so intimately linked to the concept of “land” that eviction from it and the evaporated hope of returning created a logical boundary to her existence.

One caution, however, offered by Davies, must be considered in the defining of ancient Israel. The historical entity of ancient Israel is not wholly accessible or knowable through the biblical texts. In other words, ancient Israel is not the literary, biblical Israel. Instead ancient Israel, or representatives of her, created the literary, biblical Israel, and her own identity was informed and transformed by this self-creation.⁵⁸

This thesis is not centred on searching for the historical Israel behind the text. Like her biblically-portrayed counterpart, ancient Israel was assuredly not homogeneous across space or over time. She was a dynamic and diverse collective that created, compiled and edited the various exodus narratives being considered herein over a long period of time, with final editing likely occurring in the exilic and post-exilic periods. It is feasible these exodus narratives first were heard in mutual conversation between 400 and 250 B.C.E.⁵⁹

While ancient Israel may not have been homogeneous even during the final periods of narrative editing and reception, scholars have noted some of her characteristic features. The loss of national autonomy and the dissolution of Israel as a geographic entity occasioned by the exile had generated shame and self-blame. Israel found herself a conquered, scattered, endangered, and marginalized people.⁶⁰ Walter Brueggemann maintains that

For ancient Israel, [the exile] was the end of privilege, certitude, domination, viable public institutions and a sustaining social fabric. It was the end of life with God, which Israel had taken for granted. In that wrenching time, ancient Israel faced the temptation of denial—the pretence that there had been no loss—and it faced the temptation of despair—the inability to see any way out.⁶¹

Cornell notes that following “periods of rupture,” when people experience such large-scale changes, the normally taken-for-granted collective identities are questioned by those who carry them, contested by others and/or severely tested by events.⁶² Certainly, the post-exile period was one such time when the ruinous cultural effects of Israel’s demoralizing crisis posed a significant challenge to her self-understanding. Sara Japhet claims that this period, which she designates the Restoration Period, is best defined by the central concerns occupying Israel: questions of identity, continuity and self-definition.⁶³ The

⁵⁷ John A. Thompson, “Israel, History of,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible in Five Volumes*, Vol. 3 H-L (ed. Merrill C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 354.

⁵⁸ Davies, *Ancient Israel*, 11-18.

⁵⁹ Diana V. Edelman and Ehud B. Zvi eds., *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2013), xii.

⁶⁰ Pamela J. Scalise, “The End of the Old Testament: Reading Exile in the Hebrew Bible,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 35:2 (2008):172.

⁶¹ Walter Brueggemann, “Conversations among Exiles,” *The Christian Century* July 2-9 (1997): 630.

⁶² Cornell, “Story,” 45. Cornell is speaking here in generalities and not specifically about the post-exilic period.

⁶³ Sara Japhet, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 432.

significant political and social reorientation of the Restoration Period required Israel to redefine herself in the context of a world empire.⁶⁴ She tackled the question, “What is it that really constitutes Israel?” with various identity resources in hand that had the potential to play a role in her negotiation of collective identity.⁶⁵

Thus, while “ancient Israel” can designate any manifestation of a diverse collective extending from the Iron Age I through the Roman Period,⁶⁶ this thesis focuses primarily on the ancient Israel of the exilic and post-exilic periods, who found self-definition to be critical to her survival as a people. Due to her central concerns of identity, continuity and self-definition, the rhetoric of exodus narratives and other available narrative resources would have had a significant effect on her identity construction and maintenance.

1.7 Overview

This thesis will examine the ways in which exodus narratives, through their literary rhetoric, created possible social identities for ancient Israel. Chapter 2, will review previous scholarship to determine the extent to which this question has already been examined. Many scholars, who are engaged primarily in reconstructing Israel’s history, recognize the abundance of exodus references in the Hebrew Bible and attempt to explain their function in terms of identity construction. These scholars focus almost exclusively on *when* the exodus story contributed to unity in Israel. Each argues for a univocal identity building in one historical period, with opinions ranging from an early pre-literary period, in which unity was shaped by oral traditions, to a late period of ethnic self-fashioning at the time the narratives were composed. A small group of scholars has attempted to explain *how* Israel’s exodus narratives forged or shaped collective identity, but no one examines the text systematically for rhetorical formulations of identity.

In order to understand the importance of narrative rhetoric in collective identity formation, Chapter 3 will explore how collective identity is expressed and advanced among social beings. As the SIA attempts to describe the dimensions and processes of collective identification, this approach will be examined and outlined thoroughly. Next, the more recent investigations that have established the SIA’s applicability to ancient cultures and their narratives along with several specific applications of this approach to biblical texts will be explored. Finally, emerging out of this examination of the principles of the SIA, a new tool for isolating rhetorical formulations of collective identity will be presented. In Chapters 4 through 6 this tool will be used to expose the distinct identity-forming rhetoric of exodus narratives. Textual examples of the cognitive, evaluative, emotional, behavioural and temporal formulations of collective identity will be revealed in these exodus narratives. Chapter 4 will consider the primary exodus story and its prior literary context, while Chapters 5 and 6 will examine eighteen retold exodus stories. Identity formation will be analysed in these exodus narratives both separately and comparatively. Chapter 7 will provide a more extensive comparative analysis and synthesis of Chapters 4–6, comparing the dominant discourse with the various other voices of exodus identity. It will draw together what has been learned about identity

⁶⁴ This premise has been repeatedly reinforced in the compiled works of Oded Lipschits, Gary Knoppers, Manfred Oeming, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) and Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

⁶⁵ This expression will be defined later in the chapter.

⁶⁶ The broader use of the term is reflected the prior studies reviewed in chapters 2 and 3.

formation in literary rhetoric. Finally, Chapter 8 will reflect on how the SIA improves on the works and methods of previous scholarship, the significance of the findings of this thesis and recommendations for further study.

Minimal scholarship exists on the explicit application of the SIA to the Hebrew Bible. Existing works highlight a particular text or book rather than a recurring theme, and they tend to focus on limited dimensions of social identity.⁶⁷ The primary contributions of this present study will be the introduction of a broader and more systematic methodology for examining social identity formation in biblical texts and the application of this methodology to the study of the recurring exodus story.

⁶⁷ See chapter 3, section 2.2.2.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: EXODUS NARRATIVES AND ISRAEL'S COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Before examining identity-forming literary rhetoric in exodus narratives or establishing a methodology, it is important to consider how the contributions of others have influenced this research.

Due to the numerous references to exodus in the Hebrew Bible,⁶⁸ many scholars have investigated the purpose and function of this motif. Some, preoccupied with questions of historicity, argue that it serves simply as a historical witness to a real event. Bright, for example, justifies the extensive exodus references saying, "Israel actually escaped from Egypt to the accompaniment of events so stupendous that they were impressed forever on her memory."⁶⁹ Davies disagrees, arguing that narrative patterns never objectively represent the outside world. He contends that the occurrence of a momentous event does not of itself provide an adequate reason for narrative recounting.⁷⁰ This contention is consistent with social memory theories that recognize social memory—especially in an inscribed form—as selective. An increased awareness of the elusiveness of "history" in the objective sense produced by literary criticism has generated more profound questions of the purpose and function of the exodus motif in the Hebrew Bible. The scholars considered below argue that this recurring exodus pattern, in its literary or pre-literary form, served to express or advance Israel's collective identity, even though they differ as to when or how it served this function. These scholars may be divided into three broad camps: 1) those who view exodus narratives as a window to a unified past centred around a historical tradition or memory of exodus; 2) those who perceive exodus as a literary invention that created unity at the time of its composition; and 3) those who recognize exodus as a theological paradigm.⁷¹

2.1 Exodus as a Window to a Unified Past

The scholars considered in this section view the recurring exodus stories of the Hebrew Bible as windows into the past. Through them, they discern a unified people whose solidarity centres on the memory or tradition of exodus at a particular point in history.

⁶⁸ There are "as many as one hundred and twenty references in a variety of literary genres including narrative, law, prophecy and psalm" (Zakovitch, "Tell Your Son," 9; cf. Yair Hoffman in *The Doctrine of the Exodus in the Bible* (Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University, the Chaim Rozenberg School, 1983), 11; Yair Hoffman, "A North Israelite Typological Myth and a Judaea historical Tradition: The Exodus in Hosea and Amos," *Vetus Testamentum* 39 (1989): 170. No comprehensive list is provided by these or other sources.

⁶⁹ John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), 122.

⁷⁰ Davies, *Ancient Israel*, 13.

⁷¹ These categories are not fixed or mutually exclusive, as will be shown, for example, in the works of von Rad and Albertz.

2.1.1 Gerhard von Rad: A Pre-literary, Premonarchical Historical Creed

Von Rad and Noth apply and develop the tradition-historical approach pioneered by Hermann Gunkel,⁷² one of the first approaches to examine seriously the meaning and function of the exodus tradition in the Hebrew Bible. Tradition history is primarily concerned with how historical events gave rise to and influenced biblical tradition and how those traditions passed from stage to stage to arrive at their final form. This approach, however, necessarily acknowledges that the reinforcement and transmission of pre-literary and literary traditions served a defined purpose in Israel's history. Thus, it is not surprising that tradition-historical scholars were some of the first to claim that the exodus paradigm was crucial in shaping Israel's collective consciousness.

Von Rad examines key exodus narratives, namely Deuteronomy 26:5b-9, Deuteronomy 6:20-24 and Joshua 24:2b-13, and based on similarities of thought forms in these texts,⁷³ he postulates the prior existence of a fixed, pre-literary "short historical creed."⁷⁴ Within the Hexateuch, this creed is accompanied by literary accretions and embellishments but nevertheless follows the same "canonical pattern of the redemption narrative long since fixed as to its details."⁷⁵ While von Rad is primarily concerned with the evolutionary development of the tradition, he also claims that the identity of a pre-existing collective community was reaffirmed by the oral recital of this hypothetical pre-literary creed. That is, by means of the cultic utterance of the tradition, "the speaker divests himself of all his personal concerns and aligns himself fully with the community."⁷⁶

In *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, von Rad sees the Yahwist's later literary construction of the exodus tradition, with its developments and embellishments, as lacking this identity-constructing function.⁷⁷ In *Old Testament Theology*, however, he recognizes that this written form did have a "confessional stamp" that later Israel would see and appreciate as defining for the people of God. Rather than maintaining a view of the literary development as a devolution of a living tradition,⁷⁸ von Rad now claims,

This continuous re-interpretation to which, as we have seen, the old stories about Jahweh were submitted, did not do violence to them. Rather, they were predisposed to it from the very start. Their intrinsic openness to a future actually needed such fresh interpretations on the part of later ages; and for the latter it was essential to their life to take up tradition in this way and give it a new meaning. Their own relationship to the God of Israel was clarified in a direct ratio to their understanding of their own position in their fathers' history with God, and, more particularly, with their ability to become an actual part of this history.⁷⁹

⁷² Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (trans. W. H. Carruth; Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1901), 88-122; Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, First English Edition (trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1958), 3-13; Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. Bernhard W. Anderson; 1972; repr. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981).

⁷³ One of the most important similarities, according to von Rad, is the absence of references to the Sinai covenant in these texts. Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 3-13.

⁷⁴ Although this short historical creed is presented in Deut 26:5b-9, he argues that it is pre-Deuteronomistic. Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 3, 8.

⁷⁵ Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 8.

⁷⁶ Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 5.

⁷⁷ Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 69.

⁷⁸ Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 49.

⁷⁹ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Vol II: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions* (trans. D. M.

According to von Rad, the recital and theological reinterpretation of exodus functioned to unify and integrate Israel across time. This later collective identification and participation in the unifying exodus story resulted from Israel's reuse of the text, and not from the recitation of an oral tradition.

Von Rad accurately views exodus narratives not primarily as factual summaries of the past, but as unifying, identity-forming articles of faith. He also recognizes implicitly what this thesis asserts explicitly: it was not the event of exodus but rather the narrative retelling of it that influenced collective identity formation. Because the identity-affirming role of the exodus tradition is such a minor development in his writings, however, von Rad falls short of adequately demonstrating how the literary forms of exodus exerted an ongoing unifying effect.

2.1.2 Martin Noth: Primary Confession of the Tribal Amphictyony

Like von Rad, Noth contends that the exodus pattern in the Hebrew Bible originated from an oral witness to a real historical event that in time attracted illustrative stories. Noth argues that the Pentateuch had its source in an ancient stock of oral traditions rooted in a number of themes that had existed among the Israelite tribes from the earliest times. These themes were originally separate and unrelated, but they were gradually arranged in a sequence with additional material added. The result was the final form of the Pentateuch.⁸⁰

Noth does not claim that the exodus pattern served merely as a witness and memory of a historical event. He recognizes, along with von Rad, that confessions of faith centred in exodus unified the community of Israel. Differing with von Rad, Noth claims that these confessions actually helped to create the historical entity of Israel. Prior to Israel's constitution in the tribal amphictyony,⁸¹ he argues, the exodus tradition was already in existence among some of those who would later be incorporated.⁸² They would transmit their story widely as they were absorbed into the various tribes of Israel.

They were probably related to these clans and brought them the news of the divine miracle "by the sea," which moved them so deeply that they passed the story on everywhere and transmitted it to their descendants as though it had happened to them all. In this way the confession of faith in the God who had manifested himself so gloriously by delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians became the common property of the whole of Israel and one of the foundations of the faith which was vital in the institution of the sacral confederation of the twelve tribes under the protection of the binding law of God.⁸³

Eventually this confession was taken up in communal worship in the central sanctuary, the primary institution of the amphictyony. There it became the primary confession of all Israel and the earliest unifying tradition of the sacral confederation of the twelve tribes.⁸⁴ For Noth, the manner in which this was

G. Stalker; New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 361-362.

⁸⁰ He argues, for example, that the plague and Passover traditions were not originally part of the exodus tradition but were secondary additions. Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 49-51.

⁸¹ Noth initially develops the theory that Israel took the form of a twelve tribe amphictyony analogous to such city-state confederations later attested to in Greece and Italy in Martin Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels* (BWANT 4/1, Stuttgart, 1930), 61ff. This construct is also summarized in Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), 85-109.

⁸² Noth, *History of Israel*, 117.

⁸³ Noth, *History of Israel*, 119. Cf. Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 50-51.

⁸⁴ Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 49.

transmitted between generations is incidental. Of chief importance, he argues, is “the fact that the belief in the deliverance from Egypt belonged to the oldest and most universal heritage of the Israelite tribes as a whole.”⁸⁵ He argues that it was the concern for transmitting this belief that inevitably caused pre-literary hymnic confessions of faith to find their expression in *narrative form* at the hands of Israel’s story-tellers. Thus, simple confessions took on an expanded narrative form, and other traditions such as those of the plagues and Passover were attached along the way.⁸⁶ The confession that Yahweh brought Israel out of the land of Egypt was the “crystallization point” and “nucleus” of the Pentateuchal narrative as a whole.⁸⁷

Like those who would examine the exodus motif as a literary construction, von Rad and Noth recognize the constructed nature of text, that it is selective. They understand that the text was “nourished by many roots and influenced by manifold interests and tendencies.”⁸⁸ Most importantly, they recognize the unifying, identity-forming effect of the exodus tradition. For Noth, it was in the tribal amphictyony that the tradition of exodus developed into a national, foundational myth. Like von Rad, he recognizes that it was the narratives of exodus rather than a historical event that unified Israel. Both recognize that identity-forming content exists in the form of a story. Their methodologies are, at their root, speculative, moving backwards in time from the final form to creedal or thematic beginnings. A more objective examination of the identity-forming potential of the exodus story is needed.

2.1.3 Yair Hoffman: A Ninth and Eighth Century BCE North Israelite Typological Myth

Yair Hoffman is one of the first scholars to argue that exodus was constitutive for Israel (i.e. the northern part of the divided kingdom) rather than for premonarchical Israel. He contends that this tradition was used by Hosea as a typological myth, which demanded generalization rather than specification. The end result was a blurring of unique historical details, creating a core tradition that was adaptable to changing historical situations. Hoffman admits, however, that Hosea’s use of the tradition as a typological myth indicates it already had an elevated, theological status in the Northern Kingdom. This prior endorsement of the tradition allowed for Hosea’s innovation and his use of it to redefine Israel. It also suggests that the tradition may have had a prior unifying effect that Hoffman minimizes.⁸⁹

Hoffman also analyses Amos’ use of the exodus tradition, and he determines that Amos’s prophecies confirm the conclusion derived from Hosea, that in the Northern Kingdom the exodus story had “the status of a constitutive tradition”⁹⁰ The exodus tradition did not serve as a unifying national myth among Judeans until their exile in Babylon, when the tradition no longer posed a challenge or imperilment to the royal Davidic myth.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 51.

⁸⁶ Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 65-71.

⁸⁷ Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 51.

⁸⁸ Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 1.

⁸⁹ Hoffman, “North Israelite Myth,” 176. Blenkinsopp and Kegler agree that temple and cult, rather than exodus, played a central role in Israel’s identity formation during the Davidic dynasty. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *David Remembered: Kingship and National Identity in Israel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 126; and Jürgen Kegler, “Das Zurücktreten der Exodustradition in den Chronikbüchern,” *Schöpfung und Befreiung: Für Claus Westermann zum 80. Geburtstag* (eds. Rainer Albertz, Friedemann W. Golka, Jürgen Kegler; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1989), 55.

⁹⁰ Hoffman, “North Israelite Myth,” 181.

⁹¹ Hoffman, “North Israelite Myth,” 182.

Like the other approaches reviewed in this section, Hoffman sees the text as a window to the past, through which he attempts to construct Israel's earlier history. This approach, like the others, is speculative and historically unverifiable for the purposes of collective identity formation.

Positively, Hoffman, perhaps unknowingly, recognizes that literary form and content are able to contribute to identity formation through the blurring of historical details in a narrative. If such atemporal characteristics could be demonstrated to pervade the finished form of exodus narratives, the possibility would exist for its broader application in collective identity formation.

2.1.4 Baruch Halpern: National Myth of Israel in Iron Age I (1200 BCE–1000 BCE)

Like von Rad and Noth, Halpern asserts that exodus is the focal point of collective identity in Israel's early history. Halpern, however, increasingly accentuates how this tradition constituted Israel's national, rather than religious, identity.

Halpern argues for the existence of a small exodus group with an accompanying cult of Yahweh who encountered a group of Israelites from Syria. Sometime early in Iron Age I, the non-Canaanite Israelites, feeling a cultural and religious affinity with the traditions and beliefs of the immigrant group from Egypt, subscribed to the exodus story as a national myth in order to establish themselves as a nation in Canaan. This myth justified Israelite claims to the lands of Canaan, and it became a call to manifest destiny for both camps of newly arrived peoples.⁹²

Halpern clarifies how the exodus myth functioned to unify these distinct peoples. Firstly, it "coded certain common values into the culture. All Israel shared the background of the ancestors—all Israel had been slaves in Egypt. Whatever one's biological ancestry, to be an Israelite meant that one's ancestors—spiritual or emotive or collective ancestors—had risen from Egypt to conquer Canaan."⁹³ In other words, it gave them a non-genealogical, atemporal "myth of common descent,"⁹⁴ defining them as a unified people.

Secondly, this national myth functioned to distinguish "Israel" from other Canaanites, stereotyped in early Israelite literature as "oppressor."⁹⁵ The purpose of this excluding national myth was to erect a paradigm of national superiority, separateness and independence.⁹⁶

Unlike von Rad and Noth, Halpern does not highlight any narrative elements of the tradition as formative of Israel's unity. Instead, the text is merely a window into the past and not a meaningful object of study.

2.1.5 Norman Gottwald: A Unifying Socio-political Ideology

Gottwald, in *The Tribes of Yahweh*, offers biblical studies a seminal, though controversial, re-conceptualization of the religion of early Israel. In so doing, he legitimizes the use of social-scientific methods in biblical studies. He investigates ancient Israel in the context of her social system in order to

⁹² Baruch Halpern, "The Exodus from Egypt: Myth or Reality" in *The Rise of Ancient Egypt* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archeological Society, 1992), 107.

⁹³ Halpern, "Exodus from Egypt," 88.

⁹⁴ This concept is defined and developed in chapter 4.

⁹⁵ Halpern, "Exodus from Egypt," 107.

⁹⁶ Halpern, "Exodus from Egypt," 108.

understand her religious tradition.⁹⁷ He rejects models of Israel's formation based on the invasion or infiltration of pastoral nomads from outside Canaan, postulating instead an indigenous, Canaanite people who arose from a peasant revolt.⁹⁸ Only a small proto-Israelite Moses-group had a personal experience of exodus from Egypt, and this group did not have a distinct, integral social system until it banded together with the peasant population in Canaan to form tribes. Gottwald argues that the exodus tradition provided solidarity between the Moses-group and the peasant population of an Egyptian-dominated, stress-torn, Canaanite society. When the former group entered Canaan, they immediately allied with the Canaanites, with whom they shared a lower-class identity.

Seizing upon the exodus group's deliverance ideology, the two groups coalesced and settled in the hill countries where they had sufficient strength or remoteness to resist domination. Later, their hostile relations with Egypt and Egyptian surrogates—such as Canaanite city states and the Philistines—“were ‘gathered up’ into the paradigm of a single mass captivity *in Egypt*. Similarly, all the successes of Israelites in eluding Egyptian-Canaanite-Philistine control *in Canaan* were condensed and projected into the paradigm of a single mass deliverance *from Egypt*.”⁹⁹ This highly stylized, selected memory provided a tradition that fused two groups that had both experientially known an oppressor and been delivered by an exodus.¹⁰⁰ That is to say, two ethnically and culturally diverse peoples were joined together by the exodus myth.

The most noticeable difference between Gottwald and Halpern's views is the group that joined with the Exodus group. For Halpern, it was non-Canaanite immigrants from Syria, and for Gottwald, it was Canaanite peasants. In Halpern's view, the “non-exodus group” was the original Israel, while for Gottwald Israel was the exodus group. Both, however, view the exodus myth as central to the integration of the two groups. Halpern and Gottwald, like the scholars already reviewed, claim that early Israel's identity was constructed in major part by the exodus tradition. Both increasingly focus on the appropriation of this religious tradition in the construction or reaffirmation of Israel's national identity.

Gottwald's socio-political matrix for the exodus tradition is in stark contrast with the religious/theological explanations of Noth and von Rad. Not surprising, given his explicitly Marxist point of view, Gottwald views ancient Israel's religion as a function of a socio-political movement. In other words, religion flowed from and sustained the movement. Thus, for Gottwald, unity came first and resulted in the endorsement of unifying traditions.¹⁰¹ He does admit, however, that the mythic exodus paradigm (“root metaphor”) reinforced Israel's solidarity when it came into conflict with Egypt and other hostile powers in Canaan in the 12th century BCE.¹⁰² Also, it may have contributed to unity in the last third of the seventh century when harsh encounters with Egypt in Judah enlivened the motif and contributed to its elaboration in the Deuteronomic traditions.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Norman K Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE* (The Biblical Seminar 66; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), xxv.

⁹⁸ Gottwald, *Tribes*, 210-219.

⁹⁹ Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; ed. Douglas A. Knight; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 167.

¹⁰⁰ Gottwald, *Tribes*, 214.

¹⁰¹ Gottwald, *Tribes*, 92.

¹⁰² Gottwald, *Politics of Ancient Israel*, 166-170, and note 21 on page 298.

¹⁰³ Gottwald, *Politics of Ancient Israel*, 298-299. It will be shown in the subsequent section that Finkelstein and Silberman argue the reverse.

Gottwald differs from Noth who sees the thematic statements and ensuing confessions of exodus as predating unity. Likewise, his position is opposed to von Rad's who viewed the cultic use of exodus creeds as flowing from and reaffirming a prior religious, rather than socio-political, unity.

Gottwald does deeply investigate the function of recurring exodus stories. He explains their function in terms of a consciously appropriated socio-religious ideology that unified Israel. In the end, his methodology remains closer to the historical-critical approach from which he tried to distance himself than to the newer literary approaches which inform this thesis. He ultimately pursues a historical reconstruction of the past by speculatively reorganizing historical data around newer, socio-political categories. Even his later work, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*, cannot claim to be a literary approach.¹⁰⁴ Literary paradigms view the text as the proper object of study, but Gottwald views the text as a residue of a social world that can be revealed by means of hypothetical socio-historical reconstructions.

2.1.6 Karel van der Toorn: A Tenth Century BCE Charter Myth

Like Hoffmann, van der Toorn argues that the exodus paradigm first exerted a unifying effect in the Northern Kingdom in the 10th century BCE.¹⁰⁵ He uses the description of Jeroboam I's religious politics in 1 Kings 12:26-32 to justify this assertion. For van der Toorn, it was Jeroboam who first introduced the story of servitude and exodus into an official Israelite religion. As a national charter myth, the exodus tradition explained and legitimized the political reality of the Northern Kingdom, presenting to the population a focus of national identity.¹⁰⁶ By reinterpreting Yahweh, previously god of the Saul family, as the God of exodus, this myth promoted Yahweh to the position of national God. It consolidated devotion, gave the Israelites the sense of a common past and provided the newly formed nation a religious and national identity. Van der Toorn supports his hypothesis—that the exodus tradition was a relatively young invention—with an examination of what he perceives to be the earliest references to exodus, which are found in the books of Hosea and Amos.

Van der Toorn finds little need to defend exodus as a historical event or to ascertain the origin of the tradition. He does admit, however, that the tradition was not invented from scratch, that it had a historical kernel.¹⁰⁷ Thus he deduces, "the most satisfactory solution is to assume that the sojourn in and the flight from Egypt were historical realities for a limited group of immigrants to Israel. This particular history was gradually transformed into a national past of sheerly mythical proportions."¹⁰⁸ That is to say, Jeroboam's invention was his particular use of the tradition rather than the fabrication of it.

2.1.7 Rainer Albertz: A Historical Liberation Tradition

Albertz agrees with van der Toorn that the exodus tradition was employed as a unifying charter myth by

¹⁰⁴ Norman Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁵ See Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East, Vol VII; ed. B. Halpern and M. H. E. Weippert; New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 42-65 and Karel van der Toorn, "The Exodus as Charter Myth," in *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition: Papers Read at a Noster Conference in Soesterberg, January 4-6, 1999* (STAR vol 3; ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Anton Houtepen; Assen, The Netherlands: Royal van Gorcum, 2001): 113-127.

¹⁰⁶ Van der Toorn, "Charter Myth," 113.

¹⁰⁷ Van der Toorn, "Charter Myth," 126.

¹⁰⁸ Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 301.

Jeroboam I. They differ, however, with respect to the prehistory of the tradition and the significance of its re-use in the Northern Kingdom.¹⁰⁹ Albartz concludes that there is a lack of evidence to support van der Toorn's claims that Saul's family had committed to Yahweh as its sole family god or that he had introduced such exclusive Yahweh worship to the nation as a whole.¹¹⁰

Albartz, along with many contemporary scholars, acknowledges that the portrayal of the liberation of "all Israel" from Egypt in the written accounts of exodus was conceived as a theological response much later than the events which it describes. Thus he says that "the detailed descriptions of the social conflicts this involved are more stereotyped and probably arise from experiences of forced labour by Israelite groups under Solomon."¹¹¹ While van der Toorn reconstructs the history of Israelite religion without exodus as a historical event, Albartz takes the hypothetical liberation of a group of West-Asiatic workers from forced labour in Egypt as his starting point.¹¹² This allows Albartz to speculate further on the use of the exodus tradition prior to Jeroboam.

Like Noth, Halpern and Gottwald, Albartz asserts that only a subset of what would later become Israel actually experienced the exodus, presumably providing that group with internal cohesion.¹¹³ This group encountered a tribal alliance of lower class Canaanite groups who had fled to the hill-country and wilderness regions in response to an internal social revolution.¹¹⁴ At their merger, the exodus group's religious traditions of liberation instigated by Yahweh helped to forge political solidarity and a new tribal alliance.¹¹⁵

As time went on, the collective memory of the remote historical event took on enduring significance as a bias against domination.¹¹⁶ Thus, in addition to an early unifying effect of the exodus, its "memory" was re-appropriated as a defining element of the Northern Kingdom. Albartz's theory deviates from van der Toorn's in which Jeroboam innovatively joined Yahweh religion to the exodus tradition, maintaining instead that "the origin of Yahweh religion is indissolubly connected with the process of the political liberation of the Exodus group."¹¹⁷ That is to say, the merger of the two elements (exodus and Yahwehism) happened in the ancient past. Albartz, rightly, exposes an oversight in van der Toorn's theory: his failure to explain how a marginal exodus tradition survived and achieved enough relevance to be chosen and reinterpreted by Jeroboam as a founding myth.

Albartz objects to van der Toorn's disregard for the content of the exodus charter myth, arguing that its essential content is the liberation tradition.¹¹⁸ He maintains that "the battle against Solomon's

¹⁰⁹ Rainer Albartz, "Exodus: Liberation History Against Charter Myth," in *Religious Identity*, 128-143.

¹¹⁰ Albartz, "Exodus," 137-138

¹¹¹ Rainer Albartz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period, Vol I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 45.

¹¹² Albartz, "Exodus," 129.

¹¹³ Albartz, *Israelite Religion*, 44, 47.

¹¹⁴ Albartz argues that "it was the farming and shepherd population of Palestine which had freed itself from its dependence on the city aristocracy that formed the tribal alliance of 'Israel'." Albartz, *Israelite Religion*, 72. See Gottwald's views in the preceding section.

¹¹⁵ Unlike Noth, Albartz does not compare this tribal alliance to the Greek amphictyony because he rejects the existence of central cultic institutions at that point in Israel's history. Albartz, *Israelite Religion*, 75.

¹¹⁶ Albartz, *Israelite Religion*, 47.

¹¹⁷ Albartz, *Israelite Religion*, 46.

¹¹⁸ Albartz, "Exodus," 131.

forced labour by Jeroboam and the northern tribes was fought with an appeal to the liberation of their forefathers from Egyptian forced labour.”¹¹⁹ The collective memory of this remote, historical event motivated and justified the revolt and legitimized the new kingdom. In this way, the exodus tradition took on contemporary significance as a political charter myth, thereby unifying Israel. Also, according to Albertz, the old religious remembrances of liberation “took on their first narrative form from the contemporary experience of Jeroboam’s revolt.”¹²⁰ If he is correct, the narrative form would have accorded the tradition a heightened and wider-ranging significance in terms of collective identity formation.

Unlike van der Toorn who saw the charter myth as constructing both political and religious identity, Albertz contends that the exodus tradition primarily informed political identity during the time of Jeroboam and that it gained importance in the construction of religious identity in the middle of the eighth century BCE. At that time, he claims, in response to the imminent dissolution of Judah under the Assyrian rule, the exodus tradition was re-discovered by deuteronomic theologians and mediated by prophets and refugees from the north. It was then taken up on religious grounds as the foundation story for a new Israelite identity.¹²¹ This description of the spread of the tradition to Judah differs from Hoffman’s, which claims that it did not serve as the unifying national myth among Judeans until their exile in Babylon when the tradition no longer posed a challenge to the Davidic myth.¹²² Neither Albertz nor Hoffman offers a convincing explanation for the transfer of the tradition or for the added significance and constitutive effect of the myth at the time of Judah’s dissolution or exile.

Van der Toorn and Albertz—contrary to von Rad, Noth, Halpern and Gottwald—argue that the exodus tradition took on its most significant constituting function in the tenth century BCE. Others, discussed later, argue that the identity constructing effect of this tradition in Israel occurred even later in her history.

2.1.8 Ronald Hendel: The Biblical Memory of Exodus in Early Israel

Hendel’s work is analogous to von Rad’s and Noth’s in his attention to the products of tradition, his recognition of their constructed nature, and his interest in how the exodus tradition in particular functioned in early Israel. Rather than focusing on the sequential development and accumulation of traditions, however, Hendel’s interest is in the socio-cultural motive that caused a historical kernel to be adapted into a narrative memory and how the resulting memory served the needs and shaped the identity of Israel in the late Bronze and early Iron age. This “mnemohistory” examines how exodus is remembered by exploring the social function of various elements of the remembered story.¹²³

Hendel’s treatment of the first element, the unnamed pharaoh, illustrates his methodology. He examines this image in the biblical narrative as an example of how collective memory is sustained and social

¹¹⁹ Albertz, *Israelite Religion*, 142.

¹²⁰ Albertz, *Israelite Religion*, 142.

¹²¹ Albertz, “Exodus,” 142-143.

¹²² Hoffman, “North Israelite Myth,” 182.

¹²³ The mnemohistorical approach to cultural memories is introduced in Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*.

Assmann defines mnemohistory by distinguishing it from the historical critical method: “The task of historical positivism consists in separating the historical from the mythical elements in memory and distinguishing the elements which retain the past from those which shape the present. In contrast, the task of mnemohistory consists in analyzing the mythical elements in tradition and discovering their hidden agenda” (10).

identity is created. Based on extra-biblical documentation, he argues that broad memories of Egyptian oppression existed and were known to the early Israelite settlers. In such a cultural setting, the exodus story resonated ideologically. An unnamed pharaoh could provide a movable boundary of inclusion for any who felt the oppression of Egypt at any time in the remembered past.¹²⁴ In this way, the story would become part of the remembered past and collective identity of all Israel, even those who did not emigrate from Egypt to Israel. For Hendel, the memories of commensurate suffering “are potent ingredients in the formation and persistence of ethnic identity.”¹²⁵

Hendel’s methodology moves from a historical kernel (memories of Egyptian oppression) to a socio-cultural motive (the impulse to allow a broader group to identify with this experience) to a particular literary design and then back again. A similar approach is taken in a recent study by Na’aman.¹²⁶ While Na’aman speculates on how the memory of exodus was changed and transformed until it reached its final form, both recognize the long-term impact of the exodus story on Israelite consciousness based on its socio-ideological elements.

Hendel’s and Na’aman’s research, like that of von Rad and Noth, attempts to discern how narrative resources are constituted and how their historical kernels might be identified. They all recognize the significance of the exodus story for Israel’s collective identity. Despite his focus on the social function of history, Hendel provides clear textual examples of how the rhetorical design of the story—the blank of Pharaoh’s name—contributes to its identity-forming and identity-sustaining character. Like Hoffman, Hendel recognizes that the blurring of unique historical details in an account allows it to become more adaptable to changing situations.

For Hendel the memory and reconstruction of the past into a fixed narrative—not an ancient credo or theme—constructed collective identity in Israel in premonarchical Israel. Hendel refers to the effect of the narrative in creating boundaries, which is an essential aspect of the social identity approach though he did not reference it or its contributors.

* * *

The scholars examined thus far reconstruct, essentially, fictive notions of past events, none being more valid than the others. That is to say, their reconstructions are historically unverifiable. Likewise, their attempts to understand Israel’s collective identity formation are at best speculations since it would be extremely difficult to demonstrate conclusively the level of Israel’s self-awareness so early in her history. The most significant contributors are Hoffmann and Hendel who recognize that elements of the textual rhetoric may be involved in the collective identification process.

2.2 The Exodus Paradigm as a Constituting Literary Invention

The scholars considered in the previous section professed, to some degree, confidence in the historicity of the exodus saga. Others, though, view it, and ancient Israel in general, as a literary creation. Dermot Nestor effectively summarizes the impact of literary studies on biblical interpretation:

¹²⁴ Ronald S. Hendel, “The Exodus in Biblical Memory,” *JBL* 120:4 (2001): 604-608.

¹²⁵ Hendel, “Exodus,” 608.

¹²⁶ Nadav Na’aman, “The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historiographical Composition,” *JANER* 11 (2011): 62.

While at the outset of the “search for ancient Israel” it was assumed that the biblical traditions, in essence, reflected a historical reality that the spade of the archaeologist would inevitably confirm, the increasingly potent impact of newer literary studies has seriously undermined any attempt to mine the narratives of the Hebrew Bible for some fabled historical core. Allied to this radical reappraisal of the historical-critical approach has been the growing conviction that the Hebrew Bible, as we now have it, is largely a product of the Persian and/or Hellenistic periods, and, as such is much later than the events which it purports to describe.¹²⁷

“Some fabled historical core” reflects the assumption of more recent scholarship as it relates to exodus, namely, that the biblical text is largely fictive. Although these scholars vary in their individual assessments of the historicity of ancient Israel and her traditions, they generally agree that the portrayal found in the Hebrew Bible reflects the times and ideological concerns of its producers more than historical events. Historical data contained in it is thought to have been included for ideological and literary reasons rather than simply because it happened. For these scholars, excavating a remote, historical core, if one could be found, pales in importance compared to mining the larger narrative imagination for what can be discovered about the time of its composition. In other words, they are concerned with the ideological functions of the text.

This scholarship is representative of the trend away from viewing scripture as a window into a historical reality. Instead, scripture is viewed as a materialization of a new reality comprised of ideological claims, ethnic self-fashioning and narrative imagination. The scholars considered in this section focus on the nature and function of the exodus narratives as documents specifically written to construct corporate identity. They do not view them as compilations that reflect or protect Israel’s historical identity in the face of social upheaval or as windows by which they might regard a unified Israel at some point in the past. Instead, exodus narratives are strategic attempts to represent a shared past and the boundaries of a new and distinctive community at the time the narratives were composed and circulated.

2.2.1 Zakovitch: A Separatist Myth of an Unstipulated Era

Zakovitch explores the exodus pattern as a creative literary device used for both theological and ideological purposes. With respect to the former, he argues that parallels to the exodus story were consciously and intentionally created in the stories of Genesis. Linking the stories about the sins of Abraham and Jacob’s sons to the exodus served as a covert, theological justification of Israel’s enslavement in Egypt. Ideologically, the use of creational language and images shaped the exodus as the beginning of something utterly new. This language defined Israel as a unique creation in the face of conflicting voices in both biblical and ancient near eastern texts that minimized her distinction. Recognizing that “the people of Israel [were] comprised primarily of the indigenous inhabitants of the land: Canaanites themselves,” Zakovitch argues that the literary creation of an exodus myth caused Israel to view herself as distinct from her Canaanite neighbours.¹²⁸ The exodus myth was reinforced and intensified by a biblical pattern that promoted a separatist/isolationist ideal of Israel. Unlike the other scholars considered here, Zakovitch does not attempt to pinpoint when, or by whom, this myth was created.

The strength of Zakovitch’s work is his extensive treatment of the exodus pattern in the Hebrew

¹²⁷ Dermot A. Nestor, *Cognitive Perspectives on Israelite Identity* (LHBOTS; ed. Claudia V Camp and Andrew Mein; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 210.

¹²⁸ Zakovitch, “Tell Your Son,” 133.

Bible. Zakovitch's argumentation, however, is conflicting. He attributes the motive for creating the exodus pattern in Genesis to a covert theological attempt to explain Israelite enslavement as a "measure for measure" punishment, while assuming an identity-creating motive for the creation of the exodus myth as a whole. If the latter is correct, Zakovitch should explore the possible identity-creating effect of the retrojection of the exodus pattern into the Genesis stories, instead of alternating between theological and socio-ideological explanations.

2.2.2 Niels P. Lemche: Late Persian or Early Hellenistic Foundational Myth

Like Zakovitch, Lemche views the exodus pattern as a literary invention. He arrives at this conclusion, however, by reflecting on two biblical constructs—the tribal confederation and the exodus. Lemche argues that the scholarship of the 1960s and 1970s dissolved the historical elements of Noth's tribal amphictyony, thereby eliminating the possibility of an early confederation shaped by a pre-literary exodus credo.¹²⁹ He then moves the biblical concept of a tribal confederation from a historical level to a literary one. The confederation is perceived as an ideological construct of the exilic/post-exilic period, invented to explain the nationality of the Israelites.¹³⁰ The authors of the text created a model of a society that never existed, basing their "nation" on the shared foundational myth of the exodus.¹³¹ As a metaphor, this construction helped to convince the exiles returning under the leadership of twelve men (Neh 7:7) that they were an old people, "with a pedigree reaching back to the twelve-tribe sacral league, installed by God and his loyal servant Moses."¹³² Lemche concludes that this narrative—the product of literary imagination connecting the exodus and the exilic foundational myths—served to constitute unity and a sense of continuity with the past in late Persian and Hellenistic times.¹³³

Lemche is concerned, as is this thesis, with the effect of biblical narratives, not pre-literary traditions, on identity formation. Nevertheless, like the scholars reviewed in the first section, the bulk of Lemche's writing focuses on speculative historical reconstructions of Israel and, like Zakovitch, the results are conjectures about the historical motive for and function of the literary product.

2.2.3 Thomas L. Thompson: Late Persian or Early Hellenistic Literary Fiction

Thompson also views the exodus pattern as a literary invention functioning to create a collective identity for Israel. He does not attempt to use the biblical narratives to reconstruct Israel's history prior to the creation of the text. He calls biblical Israel a "literary fiction"¹³⁴ and the Bible itself an "historical fiction" useful only for what it implies about the author's present.¹³⁵ He argues that the Hebrew Bible was created

¹²⁹ This deconstruction focused on historical matters including the lack of a central sanctuary in pre-monarchic Israel and on the weak textual evidence of Israelite tribes acting in unison during the period of the Judges. On the basis of these findings, Lemche concludes that no such historical entity as Noth's tribal amphictyony actually existed. Niels P. Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1998), 98-101.

¹³⁰ Lemche, *Israelites in History*, 101-107.

¹³¹ Lemche, *Israelites in History*, 106.

¹³² Lemche, *Israelites in History*, 106.

¹³³ Lemche, *Israelites in History*, 130.

¹³⁴ Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), xv.

¹³⁵ Thompson, *Mythic Past*, 10.

in late Persian or early Hellenistic period, and it “reflects constitutional questions of identity.”¹³⁶ Old traditions, stories and lore from Palestine’s past contributed elements to this literary fiction.¹³⁷ That is to say, the *biblical* Israel was created during the creation of the biblical narrative by the *new* Israel, not as it once existed but in a way that met the needs of the writers and their audience.¹³⁸ They created a religious identity for their contemporary society responding primarily to literary and theological concerns rather than historical ones.¹³⁹ The producers’ “interest lay more in transcendent meaning than in developing either a real or an imagined past.”¹⁴⁰

Thompson correctly recognizes that those who create literature are selective, crafting the text with contemporary needs in mind. However, it is presumptuous to conclude that biblical narratives are creations out of whole cloth. A completely innovative and previously unknown story would command little allegiance, and repurposing earlier traditions would indicate the existence of prior meaning and significance for the society. What remains obscure in Thompson’s perspective is why the exodus paradigm in particular would be portrayed as central to the new Israel.

2.2.4 Israel Finkelstein and Neil Silberman: Late 7th or Early 6th Century Saga

Finkelstein and Silberman contend that the exodus tradition effected Israel’s collective identity earlier than argued by Lemche and Thompson. However, their primary argument is similar, “the historical saga contained in the Bible...was not a miraculous revelation, but a brilliant product of the human imagination.” From their “archaeological perspective,”¹⁴¹ they, like many others, maintain that “the Exodus did not happen at the time and in the manner described in the Bible.”¹⁴²

Finkelstein and Silberman, like Gottwald, admit that pre-literary legends of liberation may have served as “a focus of solidarity and resistance as the Egyptian control over Canaan grew tighter in the course of the Late Bronze Age,”¹⁴³ but they are much more sceptical about this than he. Where Gottwald views the 12th century BCE as the time when the tradition coalesced into its fixed narrative form, Finkelstein and Silberman argue that it was constructed in the late seventh or early sixth century to bolster Josiah’s quest for national liberation in the face of Egypt’s attempts at expansion.¹⁴⁴ They contend that the fully elaborated story of conflict with Egypt served an immediate political and military end, resonating in the consciousness of the seventh century’s hearers, reflecting their current difficulties and giving them hope for the future.¹⁴⁵

Finkelstein and Silberman do not deny a prior foundational exodus tradition, but they reject it as a reliable guide to Israelite self-understandings before the seventh century.¹⁴⁶ However, Finkelstein,

¹³⁶ Thompson, *Mythic Past*, 34-35.

¹³⁷ Thompson, *Mythic Past*, 78.

¹³⁸ Thompson, *Mythic Past*, 68.

¹³⁹ Thompson, *Mythic Past*, 50, 67.

¹⁴⁰ Thompson, *Mythic Past*, 62.

¹⁴¹ Israel Finkelstein and Neil A. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology’s New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 3.

¹⁴² Finkelstein and Silberman, *Bible Unearthed*, 63.

¹⁴³ Finkelstein and Silberman, *Bible Unearthed*, 69.

¹⁴⁴ Finkelstein and Silberman, *Bible Unearthed*, 69-70.

¹⁴⁵ Finkelstein and Silberman, *Bible Unearthed*, 70.

¹⁴⁶ See the critique in Mark G. Brett, “Israel’s Indigenous Origins: Cultural Hybridity and the Formation of

Silberman and Gottwald, albeit at times indirectly, show how the exodus paradigm may have exerted its identity-forming effect at more than one point in Israel's formation. This will become more explicit in the examination of the third group of scholars, soon to be discussed.

2.2.5 F. V. Greifenhagen: Persian Period Ideological Assertion

Like von Rad and Noth, Greifenhagen limits his examination of Israel's development to the Pentateuch. Unlike their studies, however, he further restricts himself to the portrayal of Egypt in these narratives, rather than to a consideration of the whole exodus tradition.

Greifenhagen does not make a judgment on the historical value of exodus narratives. Instead, he insists that they must be appreciated first as narratives before they can be used as historical sources.¹⁴⁷ He argues they served to define and identify biblical Israel as a self-conscious people. To this end, the producers of the text created, through literary rhetoric, an image of Egypt as the symbolic "other," a significant component in the process of ethnogenesis.¹⁴⁸ Egypt was not cast as Israel's "other" due to any self-evident, existing distinctions between her and Israel, rather she was given this role because of the proximity and interaction between the two.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the portrayal of Egypt in the Pentateuch reveals little about the actual Egypt and much about the "identity politics" of the producers of the text.¹⁵⁰ In other words, the creators of the text were not concerned with reporting the past as much as they were committed to creating a past that served present needs. Greifenhagen places the production of these ideologies at 450–350 BCE, a time when Persia was particularly troubled by Egyptian rebellions. The Pentateuch's anti-Egyptian stance may represent an attempt by the Yehud colony to dissociate itself from Egypt and bring the Judean communities under the authority of Persia.¹⁵¹

Greifenhagen, like the other scholars considered in this section, holds that exodus narratives were designed to construct biblical Israel's identity. He goes further, though, and demonstrates how specific rhetorical devices may have persuaded hearers of the narrative to include themselves in this identity. He identifies various literary devices used in the Pentateuch to accomplish this end, including the development of an "us" and "them" categorization, stereotyping Egypt, antagonistic differentiation between Egypt and Israel, devaluation of the "other" through mockery, and emphasis on Israel's superiority. Social identity theorists have noted behaviours analogous to these literary devices as characteristic of intergroup relations, even though Greifenhagen does not cite any social identity theorists in his analysis or bibliography. Applying these theories to his narrative observations add credibly to his otherwise speculative assumptions. This thesis will not only demonstrate its dependence on social scientific theories to interpret narrative findings, but it will show why the social identity theories that developed in intergroup contexts are specifically relevant to an understanding of inscribed collective memory in the Hebrew Bible.

Israelite Ethnicity," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 407.

¹⁴⁷ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 16 (note 51).

¹⁴⁸ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 11.

¹⁵⁰ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 8-10.

¹⁵¹ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 226-233.

2.2.6 Jan Assmann: Political and Religious Myth of Identity

Assmann's article "Memory, Narration, Identity: Exodus as a Political Myth" is found within a larger anthology examining how various literary texts employ fictional creativity to shape the world view and identity of those who consume them. According to Assmann, exodus narratives are fashioned as a "political myth," a foundational story that transforms historical experience into the formative memories by which a society or community imagines itself.¹⁵²

Narratives are particularly successful in constructing identity when their story-like nature is charged with values, emotions and ideals¹⁵³ and when they embrace elements of differentiation, conflict and separation.¹⁵⁴ All these elements are present in literarily constructed exodus narratives. As a result, they offered post-exilic Israel a new political identity independent of state or territory.¹⁵⁵ Subsequently, the exodus narratives became the foundation of religious identity for all the "people of the book" who interpreted the exodus myth theologically as a narrative of conversion.

Assmann commendably shows the relationships between narratives elements and the construction of identity. However, as with Greifenhagen, his assertions require a more objective foundation. Their speculative nature would be moderated if placed in direct conversation with theories of social identity formation.

* * *

The scholars reviewed in this section do not regard exodus narratives as windows into the history and self-consciousness of ancient Israel. Instead, they are ideological claims and narrative imaginings aimed at ethnic self-fashioning at the time of composition. They are not dissimilar from Römer's view of the Joseph story as a type of anti-exodus narrative used to create an identity for Israel's Egyptian Diaspora.¹⁵⁶ His assumption that the text was crafted in such a way as to legitimize the diaspora situation, presupposes intentionality and the Egyptian formation of the original story. The scholars considered in this chapter make a similar move from justifiable narrative observations to speculative historical assumptions. With the exception of Assmann,¹⁵⁷ they emphasize a temporally-specific self-fashioning effect of the exodus invention.¹⁵⁸ The scholars to be considered in the subsequent section emphasize the ongoing identity-forming nature of the exodus paradigm.

¹⁵² Jan Assmann, "Memory, Narration, Identity: Exodus as a Political Myth," in *Literary Construction of Identity*, 3-18.

¹⁵³ Assmann, "Exodus as Political Myth," 14.

¹⁵⁴ Assmann, "Exodus as Political Myth," 13. The next chapter will note that social identity theorists recognize these same elements as characteristic of social identity construction.

¹⁵⁵ Assmann, "Exodus as Political Myth," 17.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Römer, "Exodusmotive und Exoduspolemik in den Erzvätererzählungen," in *Berührungspunkte. Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (AOAT 350; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 8-10.

¹⁵⁷ Assmann argues that the literarily constructed exodus narrative created a political identity both for post-exilic Israel and for an ongoing textual community who interpreted it theologically as a narrative of conversion. Assmann, "Exodus as Political Myth," 3-18.

¹⁵⁸ While Zakovitch does not specify the time this literary invention was effected in early Israel, he seems to have a definite period in mind.

2.3 Exodus as a Timelessly Integrating Experiential or Theological Paradigm

As noted earlier, von Rad not only viewed the exodus tradition as a construction of identity in the premonarchical period but also as a theological reflection that unified and integrated Israel across time. Similarly, Assmann viewed the exodus narrative both as a self-fashioning construction of the post-exilic period and as an ongoing conversion narrative for successive generations of Israel who interpreted it theologically. This section will examine other scholarship that focuses on the literary form of the exodus motif as an experiential or theological paradigm with long-term unifying effects for Israel.¹⁵⁹ Two different perspectives are represented. One views the paradigm as creating a new reality for the hearers of the text, re-experienced as *mythos*. The other sees it as a strategic hermeneutical process that unified Israel.¹⁶⁰ Both points of view, however, emphasize the literary characteristics of the exodus pattern which have the potential for unifying Israel across time rather than during a precise historical period.

2.3.1 Harry P. Nasuti: Experiential Identification through Verbal Re-appropriation

Nasuti examines the exodus motif in several psalms as well as Deuteronomy 26, demonstrating how the literary shape of the texts involves its hearers so they identify themselves with the exodus generation in a transformative experience. His argument is based in part on Childs' understanding of "actualization" (*Vergegenwärtigung*). Childs maintains that Israel's traditions had a dynamic, reverberating character so that when a past event was remembered in the present, it was "contemporized for a generation removed in time and space from the original event."¹⁶¹ Unlike Childs, Nasuti focuses on the more objective literary character of the text in effecting actualization rather than on an indistinct process of memory comprised of both inner reflection and action.

Certain verbal mechanics in exodus narratives, such as the shifts in pronouns from third to first person, bridge the distance between those who witnessed the exodus events and those who appropriate the text. This pronominal alternation is seen, for example, in Psalm 66:6, "He turned the sea into dry land; *they* passed through the river on foot. There *we* rejoiced in him." According to Nasuti, the readers of the psalm are situated with those who participated in the event. They "take on the identity of one of those who cried out and were saved in Egypt."¹⁶²

Nasuti's contention that the re-appropriation of the text creates an experiential connection between two historically distinct groups is not accepted by those trying to sustain a clear distinction between the past and the present.¹⁶³ Nasuti's argument, however, is established not on the basis of a cultic

¹⁵⁹ Many scholars also argue for a broader identity constructing effect extending into Judaism and modern liberation, black and feminist movements. For a treatment of these, see Bas Van Iersel and Anton Weiler, *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm* (Consilium: Exegesis and Church History, 189; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987). Keesmaat and Pao each examine the identity constructing effect of the exodus motif in Early Christianity. Both assume the prior formative function of this motif for ancient Israel. They maintain that it was the adaptable paradigmatic quality of the motif that made it formative both for Israel and Early Christians. Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story* and David W. Pao, *Acts and Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000).

¹⁶⁰ These two paradigms will be defined and distinguished by Fishbane.

¹⁶¹ Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1962), 81-89.

¹⁶² Harry P. Nasuti, "Historical Narrative and Identity in the Psalms," *HBT* 23 (2001), 141.

¹⁶³ For example, Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981): 224.

re-enactment of exodus in ancient Israel¹⁶⁴ but rather on the fact that the literary shape of the text enables and suggests its re-appropriation.¹⁶⁵

Nasuti's work is brief and limited to only a few exodus narratives, but his arguments are significant for this study. Not only does he make a case for texts serving as identity resources for later hearers, but he demonstrates how this might occur on the basis of their literary shape. Once again, his argumentation could be strengthened and validated by bringing it into conversation with theories of identity formation.

2.3.2 Michael Fishbane: Exodus as *Mythos* and Literary Motif

Like von Rad, Fishbane views the expansive exodus motif in the Hebrew Bible as a timeless, unifying, theological reflection. He maintains that the exodus event so dominated Israel's theological conversations that the "objective past" was dramatized "through the prism of religious memory and imagination."¹⁶⁶

Fishbane argues that the exodus memory was preserved in national consciousness both as a paradigmatic teaching "in texts of each generation"¹⁶⁷ and, more importantly, through its recurrence as a literary motif. As a paradigmatic teaching, it became a "*mythos*: a life teaching through which an 'objective past' recurrently gave way to a subjectivized event of the present."¹⁶⁸ While exodus is widely referenced throughout the Hebrew Bible, Fishbane perceives it having, however, an even broader use as a literary paradigm. He notes how the biblical authors and editors reworked and reused the exodus motif as a literary and theological device, inventing hermeneutical ties or parallels and, thereby, giving meaning to new historical situations. The producers of the account of Israel's crossing of the Jordan (Joshua 3-5), for example, correlated this event to the exodus.¹⁶⁹ The historiographer was not concerned with reporting events but with interpreting the conquest as a re-manifestation of divine, redemptive power. A new phenomenon was fit to the "archetypal armature of [Israel's] formative experiences."¹⁷⁰ Another example of this is the linking of the patriarchal histories of Genesis with the Egyptian sojourn of Exodus.¹⁷¹ The exodus prototype, however, also provided "the linguistic and ideologic prism for projective forecasts of future redemption."¹⁷² Israel's new exodus (i.e. the exile), for example, is correlated to the exodus from Egypt through multiple and sustained lexical linkages.¹⁷³

Literary analogies do not imply that the events, people or places are equivalent. Rather, they allow for the deeper interpretation of these phenomena as continuities and discontinuities. Thus, for Fishbane, the reworking of exodus functions to create new theological insights, attitudes and speculations. Latent and

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, Sigmund Mowinckel, *Religion und Kultus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 77-79. A comprehensive list of scholars advancing this position can be found in Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 75 (note 2).

¹⁶⁵ Nasuti, "Identity in the Psalms," 137.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 64.

¹⁶⁷ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 121.

¹⁶⁸ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 122.

¹⁶⁹ Fishbane refers to this example as retrojective typology. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 358-368.

¹⁷⁰ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 125.

¹⁷¹ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 63-64.

¹⁷² Fishbane refers to this as projective typology. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 361.

¹⁷³ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 285.

unsuspected meanings are drawn from the exodus.¹⁷⁴ Viewed as a whole, this broad literary and theological reworking of exodus “serves to articulate the felt inner unity of Israel’s history with God.”¹⁷⁵

Fishbane’s observations deal with the intertextual reworking of the exodus to create an overarching unifying effect within the Hebrew Bible. However, the question as it relates to identity formation is whether the rhetorical linking of all the parts of Israel’s history is actually an indication of an underlying unified national consciousness that views all of life corporately through the lenses of exodus or an ideological strategy created by the producers of the text to bring about such a consciousness. Fishbane’s method illustrates the difficulties of combining literary and historical approaches.

2.3.3 Walter Brueggemann: A Critical and Conflictual Identity

Brueggemann, like Nasuti, maintains that through the re-appropriation of the literary exodus saga “Israel is ‘constructing’ her own life and identity and permitting each new generation to appropriate it and to participate in its peculiar angle of vision.”¹⁷⁶ Brueggemann, however, further argues that the exodus saga creates a “conflictual” identity for Israel which begins with “social criticism and exposure of the dominant ideology.”¹⁷⁷ The exodus motif is faith’s rejection of oppressive ideologies.

The purpose of the narrative, generation after generation, is to enhance faith formation in a conflictual, disjunctive way. The Egyptian program here enunciated becomes a model for every social setting which is judged by Israel to fall short of covenantal humaneness. The Israelite is given an identity of critical awareness and the boldness to begin to think through alternatives that lie outside the legitimated structure which is now dramatized as inadequate and tentative. ... Each new generation, as it participates in this narrative, learns how to make and engages in this social criticism of established power. ... Israel knows that the dominant ideology will be destroyed by the proper telling of the story.¹⁷⁸

Clearly, Brueggemann acknowledges a theological or “faith forming” function of the exodus motif in biblical narratives. His central argument, however, is that the retellings and re-enactments of exodus serve as a means of judging the inadequacy of social structures and as a way to train Israel in social criticism. The Israel-versus-Egypt model, a basic element of the motif, teaches that God has made the distinction between Israelites and Egyptians. Thus, the Israelites are not to be exploitive like the Egyptians, nor are they to be victims. Telling the story and using the motif deconstructs contrived and illegitimate social structures. Living in this storytelling act of deconstruction (or “act of defiance”¹⁷⁹) between oppression and freedom is what it means to be Israelite.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Multiple examples of the use of the exodus motif as a literary device with a creative hermeneutical function are found in Fishbane’s *Text and Texture* and in Frisch, “Exodus Motif,” 3-21.

¹⁷⁵ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 126.

¹⁷⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *Hope Within History* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 10.

¹⁷⁷ Brueggemann, *Hope Within History*, 16.

¹⁷⁸ Brueggemann, *Hope Within History*, 14.

¹⁷⁹ Walter Brueggemann, “Antidote to Amnesia” in *Reclaiming the Imagination: The Exodus as Paradigmatic Narrative for Preaching* (ed. David Fleer and Dave Bland; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2009), 25.

¹⁸⁰ Several other scholars share a similar perspective. Daube says that the exodus paradigm is an eternally valid norm of social justice for Israel; David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), 16. Bergant says that the exodus paradigm is a socio-theological critique of injustice and domination; Dianne Bergant, “Exodus as a Paradigm in Feminist Theology” in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm* (ed. Bas Van Iersel and Anton Weiler; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 100-106. Croatto says that the vocabulary of exodus took on expanding symbolic significance and was used over and over to affirm Israel’s freedom; José S. Croatto, “The Socio-Historical and

While Albertz views Israel's historical exodus tradition as a critique of domination, Brueggemann focuses specifically on the impact of her literature, particularly the exodus saga, in Israel's identity formation. The identity-forming (or *formative*) function of the exodus motif is a recurring theme in Brueggemann's writings. In *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, an identity-forming function of the exodus motif is assumed. Community is perceived as formed and maintained by the recital of the exodus story.¹⁸¹ In his article "Passion and Perspective," Brueggemann argues that it is through the telling or hearing of non-negotiable stories and the resultant participation in *narrative imagination* that new generations of Israel are nurtured into a distinct identity.¹⁸² In *Reverberations of Faith*, Brueggemann asserts that, in the formation of the Bible, the exodus "becomes an engine for Israel's continuing interpretive imagination. The root event itself is of course remembered; at the same time, however, the remembered event becomes paradigmatic for Israel, so that other occurrences in its life and tradition are presented as replications of the exodus event."¹⁸³ Thus, Brueggemann maintains that both Israel's life and her perception of events were transformed and viewed through exodus lenses because of her use of exodus stories. No literary characteristic or aspect of the story is given, however, as particularly identity-forming.

2.3.4 Charles D. Isbell: Exodus Narratives as "Theological Didactic Drama"

Isbell identifies the recurring saga of the exodus in the Hebrew Bible as a "theological didactic drama." As drama it serves as a literary vehicle, probing the position of humankind in relation to the cosmos and the divine. It is theological because the power of the story is not in its historicity but in its ongoing and timeless re-happening. It is didactic in that it was intended for community formation.¹⁸⁴ Without it "Israel could not know who she was, who God is, or what the relationship between Israel and God should be."¹⁸⁵ According to Isbell, as with Westermann,¹⁸⁶ the dramatic re-staging of exodus took place through Israel's sacred text rather than through cultic drama.

The final literary form of the exodus saga sprung from a process of "creative canonizing,"¹⁸⁷ and it was instructive and identity-forming both for Israel during the Babylonian exile and, paradigmatically, for all future generations of Israel.¹⁸⁸ Isbell rejects as illogical the view that the exodus myth was created for

Hermeneutical Relevance of the Exodus" in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, 125-133. All maintain that the paradigm constructed collective identity throughout biblical and modern history.

¹⁸¹ Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim, David L. Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 99, 121-123.

¹⁸² Walter Brueggemann, "Passion and Perspective: Two Dimensions of Education in the Bible" in *Theology* 42 (1985), 172-180.

¹⁸³ Walter Brueggemann, *Reverberations of Faith: A Theological Handbook of Old Testament Themes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 72.

¹⁸⁴ Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, xiv, xi.

¹⁸⁵ Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, 2.

¹⁸⁶ See Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 224-225.

¹⁸⁷ By "creative canonizing" he means "a reasoned and creative use of judgment in the selection, arrangement and presentation of materials that would over time come to be sanctified by the community of Israel as her 'Bible.'" Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, 2. Isbell's focus here is on the constructed literary work rather than its historical basis or its constituting sources.

¹⁸⁸ Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, 7-13.

political purposes in the post-exilic period. A convoluted story of Israel's wandering, four hundred year sojourn in Egypt and subsequent failure to meet her deity's moral demands, would not have convinced Persian (or Hellenistic) authorities to assign land to people who otherwise had no claim to it and no history in it.¹⁸⁹ Isbell argues that the exile was the only valid historical context for this creative canonizing, and identity construction was the only reasonable purpose for it. Likewise, all Israel, from the exile onward, was shaped by the text. The exodus saga gave Israel an interpretative perspective through which her contemporary situation could be understood and transformed. Isbell maintains that each new generation had to internalize and appropriate an answer to Gideon's "so what?" of the exodus.¹⁹⁰

Isbell does not claim that life was experienced as exodus-like in its historical reality during "biblical times." Instead, like Fishbane, he maintains that exodus-like experiences resulted from a retrospective literary construction. The producers of the text knew they were not writing history but, "theological interpretations of history, and unabashedly so."¹⁹¹

As literary drama, not a historical account, the exodus saga was used for the strategic, hermeneutical purpose of teaching the Babylonia generation of Israel, and later generations, to view themselves as part of one, continuous community. People, places and events of contemporary Israel were tested against the paradigm of the exodus story. That is to say, the textual drama was created for the Babylonian generation so that the paradigmatic deeds of Yahweh might be brought out of the dusty recesses of historical memory and made current and relevant to a new generation.¹⁹²

For Isbell, as for von Rad, the exodus story both constructed Israel's identity at a particular historical period and unified her theologically across time. There is, however, an important difference between their perspectives. While von Rad highlights the effect of a historical tradition and its narrative re-interpretation in Israel's collective identity formation, Isbell emphasizes the ongoing impact of the text itself on Israel's identity construction.

* * *

Common to all scholars reviewed in this section is the assumption that the biblical writers and redactors used the exodus pattern to create literary coherence and theological interpretations.¹⁹³ The exodus paradigm, through the craftsmanship of the text, has a transformative identity constructing effect. In other words, the text itself has the long-term potential to shape the collective identity of Israel. These scholars offer a broader, atemporal view of the identity constructing functions of these texts than espoused by the first two groups. Other than Nasuti, however, they focus on the community's appropriation of the text for identity formation rather than on the identity-forming potential of the text itself based on its literary features. All of these scholars make assumptions about identity formation without incorporating social identity theories into their methodologies.

¹⁸⁹ Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, 10.

¹⁹⁰ See Judges 6:13.

¹⁹¹ Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, 4.

¹⁹² Isbell, *Function of Exodus Motifs*, 123.

¹⁹³ Husser's essay is also based on this same assumption. However, he fails to demonstrate how this literary and theological development fostered Israel's collective identity. Jean-Marie Husser, "La typologie comme procédé de composition dans les textes de l'Ancien Testament," in *Typologie biblique: De quelques figures vives* (ed. Raymond Kuntzmann; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2002), 11-34.

2.4 Conclusion

Unlike much of the scholarship reviewed, this thesis does not attempt to identify the precise time when the exodus or its narratives constructed identity in Israel. Rather, it demonstrates *how*, not *when*, collective identity is constructed through Israel's textual exodus memory.

As with Assmann and the final group of scholars, this thesis recognizes the ongoing unifying potential of the text for those communities that might appropriate it. The intentions of the producers and the unifying potential of its theological content are not emphasized. Instead, this thesis will highlight the nature and ongoing effect of the narrative's rhetorical design. It will show how the exodus stories are characterized by both a well-established, recognizable language of social identity and a literary configuration that allows for ongoing identity formation.

Perhaps unknowingly, several of the scholars surveyed here utilized social identity language and concepts. These will become visible when set within the methodological framework of the social identity approach and its application to exodus narratives. This thesis will bring these scholars' germinal but detached findings of identity formation in exodus narratives into conversation with other identity-forming elements of exodus narratives, triangulating biblical studies, literary criticism and social identity studies.

The focus of this thesis is on the identity-forming potential of exodus narratives. While one can only speculate on the *actual* historical role of the exodus motif in identity formation, sociological understandings of identity formation and their recent applications to ancient texts are able to show the *potential* to create collective identity. The subsequent chapter will explore the theories of collective identity formation, will reveal multiple elements which constitute collective identifications both in face-to-face relationship and in textual constructions and, finally, will develop a conceptual framework for the analysis of collective identity construction in exodus narratives.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: THE SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH

The previous chapter reviewed scholarship arguing for the identity-forming function of exodus remembrances in ancient Israel. While many scholars attempt to uncover precisely *when* the exodus tradition fostered collective identity in ancient Israel, only a few undertake to show *how* the narratives of exodus construct identity. This thesis examines the recognizable language of social identity in these stories as a means to show how they potentially construct identity.

The social identity approach (SIA) offers a well-established means by which to understand how collective identity is constructed in social contexts, both theoretically and empirically. This chapter begins by exploring how collective identity is expressed among social beings in face-to-face relationships. The SIA is presented here systematically and categorically as it is now understood rather than on the basis of its historical and chronological development.¹⁹⁴ After explicating the SIA, this chapter justifies the applicability of this approach to ancient societies and their inscribed cultural memory. Finally, a methodological tool for discerning social identity formation in biblical texts is presented. The use of this tool will offer insight into how the texts may have functioned as identity resources for ancient Israel.

3.1 Social Identity Approach

The SIA was developed in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues. It consists of two related theories on the formation and interaction of groups. Tajfel's Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour (SIT)¹⁹⁵ describes the dynamics taking place *between* distinct groups and the minimal conditions necessary for intergroup discrimination. Turner's Self-Categorization Theory (SCT)¹⁹⁶ describes how a group forms and the processes taking place *within* it.

SIT and SCT grew, at least in part, out of the "master problem"¹⁹⁷ of social psychology, the difficulty in establishing the relationship between individual and group behaviours. In the first half of the twentieth century, social psychology tended toward a reductionist approach, understanding groups simply in terms of the sum of individual and interpersonal processes. Social identity theories emerged as a critical response to such reductionism. The fundamental hypothesis shared by both Tajfel and Turner, and by others who

¹⁹⁴ An example of the latter can be found in Philip F. Esler, "An Outline of Social Identity Theory," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament* (ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 13-39.

¹⁹⁵ Tajfel, *Differentiation*.

¹⁹⁶ John C. Turner et al., *Rediscovering the Social Group: Self-Categorization Theory* (New York: Blackwell, 1987).

¹⁹⁷ Marohl, *Faithfulness and Hebrews*, 62.

further developed their theories,¹⁹⁸ is that individuals define themselves in terms of their memberships in social groups and group-defined self-perception produces psychologically distinctive effects on social behaviour.¹⁹⁹

For the SIA, groups are “processes” more than “things,” determined by dynamic self-perception rather than static composition.²⁰⁰ Group behaviours fall on an “interpersonal-intergroup” continuum. Social encounters defined primarily by personal relationships fall near the interpersonal end, while those defined by membership in different social categories fall near the intergroup end. The SIA is chiefly concerned with interactions near the intergroup end of the continuum.

The various processes of collective identification are examined independently, yet they tend to be integrated within the social context. The three dimensions of collective identity identified by Tajfel—cognitive, evaluative and emotional²⁰¹—create the experience of belonging to a group from which stems the behavioural component of collective identification. This behavioural component is examined independently in order to demonstrate how it maintains and enhances social identity. The temporal dimension of social identity, largely overlooked by early theorists but recently advanced and exposed by Condor²⁰² and Cinnirella,²⁰³ is also considered.

3.1.1 Cognitive Dimension

The cognitive dimension of social identity is the self-awareness that one belongs to a group.²⁰⁴ As the SIA developed, it became evident that such knowledge could be conveyed in a variety of ways, including categorization, boundary formation, designations of prototypical group members and stereotyping.

3.1.1.1 Categorization and Boundary Formation

Humans simplify the seemingly infinite stimuli that daily bombard their senses to create a “more manageable number of distinct categories,”²⁰⁵ a process called categorization. Social categorization happens as humans systematize and simplify their environment by grouping together similar people, objects and events.²⁰⁶ People may be sorted into named groups or categories or into a category represented by a plural pronoun such as “us” and “them.” When encountering something novel, people tend to evaluate it based on one or more existing categories that make sense to them. Categorization also guides people’s actions. Grouping similar situations and events based on one’s past experience, along with previously tested responses, creates a more limited array of choices and a greater possibility of a positive

¹⁹⁸ Other early contributors to the theory include Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams (see subsequent note).

¹⁹⁹ Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988), xiv.

²⁰⁰ Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (European Studies in Social Psychology; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 485.

²⁰¹ See his definition of social identity and its components in Chapter 1

²⁰² Susan Condor, “Social Identity and Time” in *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel* (ed. W. Peter Robinson; Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996), 285-315.

²⁰³ Marco Cinnirella, “Exploring Temporal Aspects of Social Identity: the Concept of Possible Social Identities,” *EJSP* 28 (1998): 227-248.

²⁰⁴ Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 28.

²⁰⁵ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 18.

²⁰⁶ Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 61.

outcome. Categorization of other people varies widely based on the context of the interaction.

Categorization, then, leads to the creation and maintenance of boundaries, or boundary markers. Boundaries are the criteria used to distinguish between group members and non-members.²⁰⁷ The study of the interrelationship between boundaries and group identity originated with social anthropologist Fredrik Barth.²⁰⁸ He reacts against the assumption that group identity persists because of geographic or social isolation. Instead, he posits that identity exists in the midst of social interaction due to the creation and maintenance of boundaries. Recently, scholars have integrated Barth's approach to identity and boundary formation into social identity research.²⁰⁹

Barth rightly notes that boundaries comprise only those features that the members themselves regard as significant, rather than all the objective differences that may exist between groups.²¹⁰ Boundaries should not, therefore, be confused with all the cultural trappings they enclose.²¹¹

Group boundaries may be situational and fluid, adapting to the needs of the group. They are always dialectical. In other words, the group generates the boundary and not the reverse. One such boundary, examined in this thesis, is "the people whom Yahweh brought up out of Egypt." It creates a means of distinguishing Israel from not-Israel. However, neither this boundary nor a historical exodus event created Israel per se. Instead, Israel, who regarded this distinction as significant, selectively emphasized it in her narratives as an act of social identification.

Boundaries affect the processes of exclusion and incorporation but they do not necessarily prevent social interaction. They range in nature from rigid—making it impossible or difficult for individuals to move from one group to another—to flexible—permitting individual social mobility. Boundaries may be crossed through natural means, such as marriage or adoption, or through fabricated ones, such as re-actualizing a past event²¹² or the creation of "fictive kinship" ties²¹³ and myths of common origin.²¹⁴ The latter examples serve to unify group members across time and fit more appropriately into the temporal dimensions of social identity.

Boundaries provide meaning and significance to social categorization and often are the basis of evaluative differentiation of one's group (the ingroup) from others (the outgroups).²¹⁵ Negative effects of cognitive processes on group behaviour may motivate it to redefine itself. For example, boundaries may be

²⁰⁷ Tajfel introduces the idea of social boundaries to SIT, though he expounds little on this concept. Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 27-60.

²⁰⁸ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1969).

²⁰⁹ See for example Esler, "Ezra-Nehemiah," 413-426; Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2003); Esler, *Galatians*; and Coleman A. Baker, "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *BTB* 42 (2012): 131.

²¹⁰ Barth, *Ethnic Groups*, 14.

²¹¹ Barth, *Ethnic Groups*, 15.

²¹² See the arguments of Nasuti and Childs in chapter 2. They do not speak about boundary crossing (in the language of SIT) but they do talk about taking on the identity of others through actualization.

²¹³ James Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," *CBR* 6 (2008): 174.

²¹⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 57-89.

²¹⁵ The terms ingroup and outgroup were coined by Sumner, who intimated that preference for and attachment to one's own group (ingroup) rather than the other-group (outgroup) may be a universal feature of human social life. William G. Sumner, *Folkways: a Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals* (Boston: Ginn, 1906), 12-13.

redrawn to be more inclusive, thereby reducing bias or discrimination.

Prior to the formation of the SIA, a social psychologist named Sherif examined intergroup conflict. He found that bias and hostility could be reduced by introducing mutual goals into a situation of conflict between groups.²¹⁶ From these observations, contemporary social identity theorists developed recategorization models that encourage members of conflicting groups to regard themselves as belonging to a common overarching group that is inclusive of both memberships.²¹⁷ Thus, “when members of two groups or subgroups are incorporated within a superordinate group, they will treat one another favourably as ingroup members rather than engage in the practices of stereotyping and antipathy accorded to outgroups.”²¹⁸ According to Daniel Bar-Tal, groups often come into existence and persist as a result of a perception of shared beliefs among individuals, not just by means of social categorization.²¹⁹ Group beliefs may take the form of values, goals, norms or ideology. One’s inclusion or exclusion is based on the acceptance of those beliefs. Distinguishing group members from non-members based on shared beliefs, however, can be viewed a type of social categorization.

3.1.1.2 Prototypes and Stereotypes

For groups, information about a social category is aggregated into a prototype, an actual or idealized member of the group who “is believed to capture the central tendency of a social category.”²²⁰ The prototype, then, represents the group: its character, its values, its goals, its beliefs and its norms, and those who conform more closely to the prototypes tend to have enhanced esteem and status within the group.²²¹ Changing situations and recategorization processes require prototypes that are dynamic and adaptable.²²²

Similarly, categorization is moderated by the use of stereotyping, an “accentuation effect” that emphasizes the similarities between the units of a particular category—people, events, concepts, etc.—while minimizing the differences. People may not fully understand every unit of a category, so they streamline them to include only those attributes shared by most of the category’s members. As a result, members tend to define both ingroups and outgroups homogeneously or stereotypically. Thus, people may perceive and interact with others on the basis of their categorical assignment rather than as unique individuals.

²¹⁶ M. Sherif et al., *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: the Robbers Cave Experiment* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Book Exchange, 1961), 160-188.

²¹⁷ S. L. Gaertner and J. F. Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Ingroup Identity Model* (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2000), 33.

²¹⁸ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 142. The term “ingroup” is used in the SIA to refer to the social group with which one identifies strongly in contrast to the “outgroup” with which one does not identify.

²¹⁹ Daniel Bar-Tal, “Group Beliefs as an Expression of Social Identity” in *Social Identity: International Perspectives* (Stephen Worchel et al. eds; London: Sage, 1998) 94-101.

²²⁰ Marohl, *Faithfulness and Hebrews*, 133. Some scholars distinguish between “prototypes” and “exemplars” based on whether the idealized member is a past group member or a present one (Eliot R. Smith and Michael A. Zarate, “Exemplar and Prototype Use in Social Categorization,” *Social Cognition* 8 [1990]: 243-62) or an imaginary group member or real one (Philip F. Esler and Ronald A. Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Gospel of John* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006], 33). In this thesis, the term “prototype” is used for any ideal representative of a social group.

²²¹ Rikard Roitto, “Behaving like a Christ-Believer: A Cognitive Perspective on Identity and Behavior Norms in the Early Christ-Movement” in *Exploring Early Christian Identity* (WUNT 226; ed. Bengt Holmberg; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 109.

²²² Baker, “Social Identity Theory,” 132.

The central hypothesis for group behaviour is that, as shared social identity becomes salient, individual self-perception tends to become depersonalized. This means that when we experience ourselves as identical with a certain class of people and in contrast to some other classes, we tend to stereotype not only the members of outgroups, but also ourselves as a member of our own ingroup.²²³

The creation of prototypes and stereotypes are interrelated. According to Hogg, “When we categorize others as ingroup or outgroup members we accentuate their similarity to the relevant prototype—thus perceiving them stereotypically and ethnocentrically. When we categorize ourselves, we define, perceive, and evaluate ourselves in terms of our ingroup prototype, and behave in accordance with that prototype.”²²⁴ The depersonalization process that occurs as a result of categorization, stereotyping and the creation of prototypes guides group perception and behaviour. Tajfel contends that the depersonalization process is so indispensable to group identity that categorical distinctions are maintained even when they are not completely rational or reasonable.²²⁵

3.1.2 Evaluative Dimension

Categories, boundaries, prototypes and stereotypes are all shared realities among members of a group. Once constituted, self-aware groups and their members tend to act on the basis of those formulations: comparing, differentiating and making value judgements about themselves, their members, and others. These evaluative processes act in concert with the cognitive processes.

The evaluative dimension of social identity has to do with one’s positive or negative evaluation of a group and its membership.²²⁶ This evaluative dimension also applies to the ingroup’s assessment of outgroups. Evaluative components include acts of differentiation, positive evaluation of the ingroup and devaluation of the outgroups.

3.1.2.1 Differentiation

A self-aware group with defined categories tends to differentiate itself from other groups. This differentiation happens through its self-perception in respect to an outgroup, but it also is fashioned by how the group *thinks* the outgroup perceives it. The formation of collective identity is a relational process. Thus, when groups of people categorize themselves, it is in contrast to an “other”—“[a] person or group of people symbolically constructed as foreign or alien so as to serve as a definitional boundary for the self or for one’s own group.”²²⁷ Often, the “other” is not radically different, and—especially in the case of the “proximate other”—it becomes necessary to create distinctions between the two groups.²²⁸ “It is often the

²²³ Raimo Hakola, “The Burden of Ambiguity: Nicodemus and the Social Identity of the Johannine Christian’s,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 447.

²²⁴ Michael A. Hogg, “Social Identity Theory,” in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* (ed. A. Manstead and M. Hewstone; Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 559.

²²⁵ Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 132-133.

²²⁶ Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 28.

²²⁷ Carol A. Newsom, “God’s Other: The Intractable Problem of the Gentile King in Judean and Early Jewish Literature” in *The ‘Other’ in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Daniel C. Harlow et al.; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 34.

²²⁸ Jonathan Z. Smith, “What a Difference a Difference Makes,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews and Others in Late Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 5.

perceived similarity between groups that threatens the distinctiveness of the group and triggers intergroup conflict.”²²⁹

Hinkle and Brown observed that not all groups engage in this intergroup differentiation. In one study, only nine of fourteen groups showed comparative inclinations. The authors determined that groups are more likely to engage in intergroup comparison if 1) the social setting is more collective than individualistic and 2) the group exhibits a comparative outlook.²³⁰ The SIA is an appropriate tool for analysing the identification processes of groups, but especially for the collective-comparative groups. These members tend to evaluate themselves more closely in relation to the prototypical ingroup representative.²³¹ Likewise, the ingroup views others as exemplified by a perceived outgroup prototype. Differences between the ingroup and the outgroup, therefore, tend to be exaggerated and polarized.²³² This need for social differentiation, according to Tajfel, “is fulfilled through the creation of intergroup differences when such differences do not in fact exist, or the attribution of value to, and the enhancement of, whatever differences that do exist.”²³³ While categorization and differentiation accentuate the differences *between* groups, they also maximize similarities and minimizing differences *within* the group.

3.1.2.2 Positive Evaluation of the Ingroup

Groups engage in differentiation to create a positive identity by making comparisons that favour the ingroup in relation to the outgroup. It is a selective process as positive characteristics are enhanced and negative aspects minimized or selectively eliminated. At the same time, the outgroup’s negative features tend to be exaggerated and their positive qualities minimized. These distinctions are generalized to the whole group. Thus, “while categorization produced the search for distinguishing features, social comparison and the need for positive identity promote selective accentuation of intergroup differences that favour the in-group.”²³⁴

Social comparison results in both positive esteem for the ingroup and in behaviour favouring the ingroup and discriminating against outgroups. Tajfel’s social identity research was prompted, in part, by a series of studies conducted by social psychologist Muzafer Sherif.²³⁵ Sherif studied boys of similar ages and backgrounds who did not know each other prior to attending a summer camp. They were randomly

²²⁹ Raimo Hakola, “Social Identities and Group Phenomena in Second Temple Judaism,” in *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions From Cognitive and Social Sciences* (ed. Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysiainen, and Risto Uro; Boston: Brill, 2007), 264.

²³⁰ Steve Hinkle and Rupert Brown, “Intergroup Comparison and Social Identity: Some Links and Lacunae,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (ed. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg; New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1990), 67-68. A collective orientation emphasizes co-operation within the group, collective achievements and close ties with ingroup members rather than interpersonal competition, individual achievement and separation from the ingroup. Comparative ideologies may be based on the nature of the group and/or the specific group context.

²³¹ John C. Turner, “The Social Identity Perspective,” in *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content* (ed. Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje; Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 11.

²³² Raimo Hakola, “Social Identity and a Stereotype in the Making: The Pharisees as Hypocrites in Matt 23” in *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (ed. Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge, Tübingen: Mohn Siebeck, 2008), 132.

²³³ Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 276.

²³⁴ Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg, *Social identity theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1990), 3.

²³⁵ Sherif, et al. *Intergroup Conflict*.

separated into two groups. After each group built social attachments within its ranks, they were pitted against each other in a series of competitive games. Sherif observed that the competitions were increasingly aggressive. He documented hostility, inter-group bias and discrimination. Various attempts were then made to reduce tension between the groups. The most successful was the introduction of common, superordinate goals, which could not be achieved apart from the cooperation of both groups.

In the 1970s, Tajfel conducted experiments designed to determine the minimal requirements needed to cause individuals to create perceptions of group belonging, to think in terms of “us” and “them” and to sanction intergroup discrimination.²³⁶ Sherif had shown that differentiation occurred in situations 1) where there was anticipation of future interaction between groups, 2) where responses were thought to benefit one’s own interests or 3) where there were previous attitudes of hostility. Tajfel eliminated these factors and there were no face-to-face encounters between participants, yet individuals were noted to discriminate against an imaginary outgroup. That is to say, individuals developed an ingroup identity and showed favouritism toward it with respect to a *symbolic* outgroup. Thus, Tajfel demonstrated that even a small act of categorization was enough to produce intergroup behaviour and achieve a positive social identity.

3.1.2.3 Devaluation of the “Other”

While groups tend to emphasize and enhance their own favourable characteristics in order to promote positive self-esteem, social identity theorists have observed that groups achieve the same outcome by devaluing or denouncing the outgroup. Devaluation takes many forms: mocking, pronouncements of curses, announcements of doom, ironic reversals, political satire, and so on. In extreme forms, devaluation gives rise to dehumanisation of the other and even violence. The outgroup’s negative characteristics are emphasized and exaggerated. Thus, “from a sociological point of view, vilification and misrepresentation of the opposition can serve to establish the identity and boundaries of the polemicist’s group and weaken the power and attraction of the opposing group.”²³⁷

3.1.3 Emotional Dimension

The cognitive and evaluative aspects of a group’s social identity may be accompanied by emotional responses of its members toward themselves and others who stand in certain relations to it.²³⁸ This emotional dimension, however, has received little attention by the SIA theorists.

Positive emotions linked to group membership may include feelings of attachment and belonging, a sense of interdependence and the perception of a shared fate. Negative emotions may include feelings of hostility and conflict toward the outgroup. Hogg argues that this affective dimension is the outcome and not the basis of ingroup identification.²³⁹ This coincides with Turner’s earlier contention that “social categorization per se should cause individuals to perceive their interests as cooperatively linked within

²³⁶ Henri Tajfel et al., “Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour,” *EJSP* 1 (1971), 149-178.

²³⁷ Anthony J. Saldarini, “Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23,” *CBQ* 54 (1992): 659.

²³⁸ Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 28.

²³⁹ Michael Hogg, “Social Identity and Group Cohesiveness” in *Rediscovering the Social Group*, 102; and Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 100.

groups and competitively linked between groups.”²⁴⁰

Members of social groups tend to possess some degree of emotional involvement or closeness with one another, which results in feelings of group attachment and belonging. These in turn reinforce the positive esteem of the ingroup discussed in the previous section.²⁴¹ This often leads to affective ties toward symbolic representations of the group, such as flags, cities, buildings and land.²⁴²

The more a group positively perceives itself as interdependent and having a shared fate, the greater their attachment is to one another. Interdependence is “a functional relationship in which one’s own outcomes depend instrumentally on the actions of the other and the other’s outcomes depend on one’s own behaviour.”²⁴³ The perception of a shared fate is the sense of “being together in the same situation facing the same problems”²⁴⁴ or “sharing the same positive or negative outcomes.”²⁴⁵ Theorists from Sherif to Korostelina have demonstrated, however, that strong identification with an ingroup often leads to antagonism, antipathy and conflict with others.²⁴⁶ Such negative emotional aspects, though, may be reduced through successful recategorization of two disparate groups into a superordinate group.

3.1.4 Behavioural Dimension

The behavioural dimension of social identity—also referred to as “group identity norms” and “identity descriptors”²⁴⁷—has recently received increased attention by scholars. Social psychologist Rupert Brown defines group norms as “a scale of values that defines a range of acceptable (and unacceptable) attitudes and behaviours for members of a social unit.”²⁴⁸ Group norms, in essence, guide members into how to behave appropriately in order to remain part of the group. Thus, group norms act as a further means of ingroup/outgroup differentiation.

Norms serve several functions relevant to the creation and maintenance of collective identity. They create cohesion as well as visible displays of group identity in social interactions. They bring order and predictability to new situations by narrowing the number of appropriate moral choices. Likewise, the acceptance of group norms helps to instil a group’s particular vision of reality into the hearts and minds of its members, thus helping the group achieve its goals.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁰ John C. Turner, “The Experimental Social Psychology of Intergroup Behaviour” in *Intergroup Behavior* (ed. John C. Turner and Howard Giles; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 98.

²⁴¹ See also Rupert Brown and Dora Capozza, “Motivational, Emotional, and Cultural Influences in Social Identity Processes” in *Social Identities: Motivational, Emotional and Cultural Influences* (ed. Rupert Brown and Dora Capozza; New York: Psychology Press, 2006), 4.

²⁴² Richard D. Ashmore, Kay Deaux and Tracy McLaughlin-Volpe, “An Organizing Framework for Collective Identity: Articulation and Significance of Multidimensionality,” *Psychological Bulletin* 130:1 (2004): 90.

²⁴³ John C. Turner, “Social Identity, Interdependence and the Social Group: A Reply to Rabbie et al.” in *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel* (ed. W. Peter Robinson; Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996), 38.

²⁴⁴ Turner et al., *Rediscovering*, 34.

²⁴⁵ Turner, “A Reply to Rabbie,” 38.

²⁴⁶ Sherif, et al. *Intergroup Conflict*. Karina V. Korostelina, *Social Identity and Conflict: Structures, Dynamics, and Implications* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

²⁴⁷ Philip F. Esler, “Social Identity, the Virtues, and the Good Life: A New Approach to Romans 12:1–15:13,” *BTB* 33 (2003): 55.

²⁴⁸ Rupert Brown, *Group Processes: Dynamics Within and Between Groups* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 56.

²⁴⁹ Esler, “Good Life,” 54-55.

3.1.5 Temporal Dimension

The temporal dimension is the most recently developed. Early social identity theorists did not significantly address the question of how a group might maintain a sense of “us-ness” over time. Recent works by Condor and Cinnirella address this deficit.²⁵⁰

3.1.5.1 Transmission and Translation of Social Identity over Time

In a Festschrift honouring Tajfel, Condor acknowledges his inaugural contributions toward viewing social groups as temporal processes. She underlines several of his brief descriptions of social identification as dynamic and variable.²⁵¹ Unfortunately, however, Tajfel did not develop this idea to any significant extent in his empirical research, which regards social perceptions and identifications as relatively enduring. Turner’s SCT, by contrast, empirically demonstrates social identifications as flexible and context-dependent, but does not account for the temporal continuity of social identities, stereotypes, categories and groups over time.

Condor argues that social groups, as processes, must be viewed as both dynamic and as enduring over time. The key to a social group’s endurance is found in it having “successive social actors.” Each of these social actors will effectively “‘translate’ (drop, transfer, corrupt, modify, add to or appropriate) [certain] practices in the course of taking them up and passing them on.”²⁵² With respect to social identity, the translation over time and the dispersal over space create the perception of an ontological continuity encompassing successive generations.²⁵³ In this way social identity may be experienced as a serial connectedness with other ingroup members.²⁵⁴ “This sequence extends beyond the boundaries of my life, both into the past before my birth and into the future after my death. ...The *we* with whose experience the individual identifies can both pre-date and survive the individuals that make it up.”²⁵⁵

Condor recognized that a social identity’s coherency over time or space is dependent upon boundaries that are flexible enough to allow the inclusion of new social actors. “Translated” identities and manipulations of a group’s past and possible future are essential to the maintenance of social identity over time. Otherwise, a social identity would be limited to a particular group of people at a particular time in a particular place. Condor demonstrates that a temporal understanding of social identity is simultaneously enduring and malleable.

3.1.5.2 Possible Social Identities and Shared Life Stories

Cinnirella further develops the under-researched temporal dimension of social identity. Extending Markus and Nurius’ “possible selves” perspective (unconnected with the SIA),²⁵⁶ he creates the concept of “possible

²⁵⁰ Condor, “Social Identity,” 285-315; Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 227-248.

²⁵¹ Condor, “Social Identity,” 288.

²⁵² Condor, “Social Identity,” 291.

²⁵³ Condor, “Social Identity,” 305-306.

²⁵⁴ Condor, “Social Identity,” 306.

²⁵⁵ Condor, “Social Identity,” 306.

²⁵⁶ Hazel Marcus and Paula Nurius, “Possible Selves,” *American Psychologist* 41 (1986): 954-969. Marcus and Nurius maintain that “possible selves” represent one’s ideas of what he/she might become, would like to become or is afraid of becoming. The pool of possible selves derives from representations of the self in one’s socio-cultural and historical context and from models, images and symbols provided by social experiences and mass communication. “Possible selves thus have the potential to reveal the inventive and constructive nature of the self but they also reflect

social identities”—perceptions of current and possible group memberships.²⁵⁷ According to Cinnirella, social identity is not only influenced by social representations of a group's past and possible future, but also by group efforts to seek coherence among past, present and future identities, what he calls “possible social identities.”²⁵⁸

Cinnirella is particularly concerned with the effect of past social identities. He maintains that social groups predominately oriented to the past tend to re-discover and re-activate past-oriented prototypes, stereotypes and social identities in order to construct their own present identity.²⁵⁹ He also contends that possible social identities associated with large social groups are especially subject to negotiation, manipulation and contestation. They tend to be widely and visibly distributed in order to persuade both ingroupers and outgroupers to endorse the desired possible social identities of the ingroup.²⁶⁰

One means of socializing members into possible social identities is through shared “life stories.” These are broad and ongoing narratives created by social groups to integrate the contemporary hearers with those of the past and the predicted future in order to create a sense of “us-ness” that will endure over time. The re-tellings and re-casting of these life stories promote a cohesive group identity.²⁶¹ This allows a group to see its identity over time as a coherent, perhaps gradually unfolding, story.

Carr's findings are consistent with Cinnirella's “shared life stories.” According to Carr, all human reality, including experience and memory, is inherently temporal, and therefore inherently narrative. In other words, life is best understood as story, and “narration, as the unity of story, story-teller, audience, and protagonist is what constitutes the community, its activities, and its coherence in the first place.”²⁶² For Carr, there is no separation between a community and its constitutive narrative. “A community exists where a narrative account exists of a *we* which persists through its experiences and actions. Such an account exists when it gets articulated or formulated—perhaps by only one or a few of the group's members—by reference to the *we* and is accepted or subscribed to by others.”²⁶³ That is to say, a group is defined, composed and maintained by the stories it lives and tells.²⁶⁴ Thus, there exists within the social group an obligation to tell and participate in the group's shared life story.²⁶⁵

Cornell and Hartmann argue that the construction of social identities involves the use of symbolic resources to communicate meaning.²⁶⁶ These symbolic resources “establish or reinforce the sense among group members of sharing something special—a history, a way of being, a particular set of beliefs—that

the extent to which the self is socially determined and constrained” (954).

²⁵⁷ Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 230.

²⁵⁸ Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 227-248.

²⁵⁹ The truth of this claim is demonstrated in Jonathan Friedman, “The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity,” *AA* 94 (1992): 837-859.

²⁶⁰ Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 235.

²⁶¹ Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 235.

²⁶² David Carr, “Narrative and the Real World: an Argument for Continuity,” *History and Theory* 25 (1986): 128.

²⁶³ Carr, “Narrative,” 130.

²⁶⁴ See also Linde, *Working the Past* and Cornell, “Story.”

²⁶⁵ Linde, *Working the Past*, 72-195.

²⁶⁶ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race*, 236-237.

captures the essence of their peoplehood.”²⁶⁷ Stories, celebrations and other symbols condense and capture the meaning of a group’s social identity, or at least its desired meaning. For Cornell, stories become most salient in constructing social identities in periods of “rupture” when “the taken-for-grantedness that characterizes most collective identities is disturbed.”²⁶⁸

When people take on, create, or assign an ethnic identity, part of what they do—intentionally or not—is to take on, create, or assign a story, a narrative of some sort that captures central understandings about what it means to be a member of the group. It is a story that can be told in many ways, but ultimately it can be reduced to something along the lines of “we are the people who...” (alternatively: “they are the people who...”), in which the lacuna becomes a tale of some sort, a record of events, ...the things the group does or did or will do or has done to it. ...[The] narrative is an event-centered conception of the group. The label group members carry or assign to others is a referent or symbol, in effect a condensation of that narrative.²⁶⁹

In other words, one of the most common ways for social groups to identify themselves is by telling stories of who they are in relation to significant events. This is what is meant by a shared life story.

Cinnirella, Carr, Linde and Cornell all demonstrate the crucial role stories play in the shaping of a group’s collective identity over time. The shared life story model is essential to understanding the temporal dimension of social identity construction in face-to-face relationships.

3.1.5.3 Myths of Common Descent

Studies of ethnic identity have developed independently from the SIA. One of the first efforts to incorporate findings into SIA from these studies was Esler’s application of Barth’s ethnic boundaries. The concept of boundaries is now well integrated into SIA. Lacking, though, is the integration of the conception of *myths of common descent* into social identity studies. Smith recognizes the important role of myths in social movements, including their potentialities for group identity and collective action. He differentiates between *genealogical* and *cultural-ideological* myths. The former traces descent biologically from a common ancestor and the latter rests on a spiritual kinship, cultural affinity or ideological “fit” with a previous group. Smith posits that myths of common descent are vital for national solidarity.²⁷⁰ This thesis will show that they are applicable to the more comprehensive category of social identity as well. They often serve as temporal expressions of group identity.

3.2 Applicability of Social Identity Approach to Biblical Studies

This chapter began with an examination of the theoretical foundations of collective identity formation. The findings have been tested in controlled face-to-face experiments and in real life social situations. All the dimensions of the SIA have been substantiated by empirical data, though the temporal dimension, as the youngest, requires further testing. Because essential, corroborative longitudinal studies are complex and time consuming by nature, a retrospective study of social identity in ancient cultures could offer helpful insights into understanding this dimension of social identity.

The issue, then, is whether the SIA is applicable to ancient cultures and their inscribed collective

²⁶⁷ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race*, 237.

²⁶⁸ Cornell, “Story,” 42.

²⁶⁹ Cornell, “Story,” 42.

²⁷⁰ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 57, 62. See also Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 57-58.

memory. The subsequent sections will argue in favour of such an application, particularly as it relates to the study of ancient Israel and her texts.

3.2.1 Ancient Cultures and Social Identity

The SIA was conceived and developed within the British context of the 1970s and 1980s. It is necessary, then, to show exactly how its findings might be applied to ancient cultures.

3.2.1.1 The SIA as a Universal Conception

As discussed earlier, the SIA is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Research reveals that similar elements and methods of identity construction that exist in face-to-face contemporary relationships are also identifiable in narratives of the past. Lieu demonstrates that the SIA's differentiation of "us" from "others" was present as early as the fifth century BCE.²⁷¹ Bosman favours a similar applicability of the SIA to ancient Israel, arguing that it is a "universal" theory. That is to say, identities are constructed and operate according to certain basic principles that are then customized to a particular group. This makes it theoretically possible to apply the approach to ancient societies such as Israel.²⁷² Mikael Tellbe agrees with Bosman maintaining, "Theories about the construction of social identity transcend time and history, at least at a general level."²⁷³

3.2.1.2 Cultural Dimensions and Social Identity

According to Hinkle and Brown, collectivist-comparative groups are by nature more likely to engage in social identification processes such as categorization and differentiation. Bosman shows that ancient Israel is an example of a collectivistic culture.²⁷⁴ This is well established in biblical scholarship especially with respect to Israel's portrayal of herself in her sacred texts,²⁷⁵ in cultural anthropological studies of the ancient Near East, the examination of biblical law and ideology and, in a limited way, through the finding of ethnoarchaeology. Coleman Baker points to the common scholarly understanding of Israel as a tribal coalition by the 12th century BCE and to the unifying effect of covenant as further evidence of the collective orientation of ancient Israel.²⁷⁶ While personal identity in Israelite society was present, it was a non-dominant component. Since the SIA is more appropriate for evaluating processes of collectivist groups, it is a relevant tool to use in the study of ancient Israel.

Not only was ancient Israel collective in nature,²⁷⁷ but her scriptures reflect a comparative

²⁷¹ Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 17.

²⁷² Bosman, *Nahum*, 84.

²⁷³ Mikael Tellbe, *Christ-Believers in Ephesus: A Textual Analysis of Early Christian Identity Formation in a Local Perspective* (WUNT 242; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 138.

²⁷⁴ Bosman, *Nahum*, 86. Harry Triandis describes four traits of collective cultures: 1) the definition of the self as interdependent; 2) the primacy of ingroup goals; 3) the primary emphasis on group norms as the determinant of behaviour; and 4) the importance of communal relationships; Harry C. Triandis, "Individualism and Collectivism," in *The Handbook of Culture and Psychology* (ed. David R. Matsumoto; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 36.

²⁷⁵ Lau, *Identity in Ruth*, 39 and Carol Meyers, "The Family in Early Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue, et al.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 21.

²⁷⁶ J. Coleman Baker, "New Covenant, New Identity: A Social Scientific Reading of Jeremiah 31:31-34," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 4:1 (2008): 5.4-5.6.

²⁷⁷ Even if the Hebrew Bible is a literary invention that does not reflect the reality of the early history of Israel (see 2.2), its portrayal of a group characterized by a collective orientation reflects the time of its composition.

ideology, at least on the part of their producers. Even a cursory examination of the Hebrew Bible reveals a portrayal of Israel as distinct from the wider ancient Near Eastern societies, of the elect over against the non-elect.²⁷⁸ This is to be expected, as research shows that collectivist cultures tend to be comparative and competitive, directing great loyalty and commitment toward the ingroup, while treating outgroup members with hostility and contempt.²⁷⁹

3.2.2 Ancient Texts and Social Identity

While the previous sections show that the SIA is applicable to ancient cultures such as Israel, the question remains as to whether this approach may be properly applied to texts and not just to their composers.

3.2.2.1 Assimilation of Collective Memory and Social Identity

Although social identity concepts were first developed by examining real or imagined social interactions, newer studies of its temporal dimension suggest that social identity can be created or sustained by means of collective memory. For social identity to be translated over time and dispersed over space, retroactive and proactive memory is required.²⁸⁰ Shared life stories are one possible means of how this translation occurs.²⁸¹ These stories may subsequently be reinterpreted or reconstructed in order to maintain the continuity of a group's identity over time. Groups that have an orientation to the past will mobilize these shared stories to "tell itself who it is in the present."²⁸² Cinnirella shows that such groups will proffer both events and figures from the past as prototypes, and these prototypes will be distributed widely among the social group.²⁸³

Social Memory Theory, developed independently of SIA, explores the ways that social groups and their members reconstruct, commemorate and transmit their pasts. Social memory, also called collective memory, is defined as "recollections of the past that have been shaped and formed by and for a corporate group."²⁸⁴ Groups selectively construct their collective memory "in ways that provide them with collective self-esteem, distinctiveness, continuity over time, self-efficacy and group cohesion."²⁸⁵

Kirk and Thatcher compiled research on significant analytic approaches to the operations of inscribed social memory among ancient peoples, assessing their effects. They showed that through social memory "a group continually reconstitutes itself as a coherent community."²⁸⁶ As mentioned in Chapter 1, it is now widely recognized that collective memory is the central medium through which group identities

²⁷⁸ Joel S. Kaminsky, "Israel's Election and the Other in Biblical, Second Temple, and Rabbinic Thought" in *The 'Other' in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins* (ed. Daniel C. Harlow, et al.; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 18.

²⁷⁹ Marohl, *Faithfulness and Hebrews*, 89.

²⁸⁰ Condor, "Social Identity," 303-305.

²⁸¹ Cinnirella, "Temporal Aspects," 235.

²⁸² Philip F. Esler, "Collective Memory and Hebrews 11: Outlining a New Investigative Framework," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (SBL Semeia Studies 52; ed. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 158.

²⁸³ Cinnirella, "Temporal Aspects," 232-233.

²⁸⁴ Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 6.

²⁸⁵ Nida Bikmen, "History, Memory, and Identity: Remembering the Homeland in Exile," (Ph.D. diss., The City University of New York, 2007), 21.

²⁸⁶ Alan K. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in Alan K. Kirk and Tom Thatcher, eds., *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Semeia Studies; Atlanta: SBL, 2005). 5.

are constructed. When Assmann expanded collective memory to include cultural memory in the form of texts, images, rituals, and so on, he argued that such a crystallized memory has the same constructive effect on group identity.²⁸⁷ Studies of inscribed collective memory have proven this to be true.

Esler shows how the SIA is helpful for augmenting the collective memory model.²⁸⁸ The growing field of collective memory studies easily assimilates recent interest in the temporal dimension of the SIA.²⁸⁹ Both domains are concerned with how a group deals with the past for the sake of the present and future. The inscribed collective memory of the one approximates the shared life stories of the other, and both of these have been shown to be fundamental to the construction and reinforcement of collective identity.

Shared life stories are not the only point in which the temporal dimension of the SIA intersects Social Memory theory. Idealized figures from a group's past—prototypes—"must be remembered and commemorated in various ways for their prototypical status to remain effective."²⁹⁰ Prototypical figures from the past, representative of Cinnirella's "possible social identities," are enrolled as members of the contemporary group.²⁹¹ One recent work examines how prototypes from the Hebrew Scriptures provided Yehud and Judean diasporic communities with a sense of a shared past and a common identity.²⁹²

The temporal dimension of the SIA, therefore, overlaps with Social Memory Theory at a minimum of two points: the use of prototypical figures from the past as possible social identities for a group's present and the use of shared life stories to define group identity. The application of Social Memory Theory to biblical studies is broadly supported, thus its integration with the SIA reinforces the applicability of the latter to ancient narratives.

3.2.2.2 Prior Research on Ancient Texts and Social Identity

Not only is the SIA theoretically suitable for examining the collective memory of ancient texts, but prior research in the field of biblical studies has demonstrated its practical applicability.

Applications of the SIA to the Christian Testament and Qumran Texts. Esler was the pioneer of this type of application in his studies of the Christian Testament.²⁹³ His work reveals the presence of various components of the SIA in the rhetoric of these ancient texts. His early works focus on the narrative use of social identification processes either to create and maintain distinct group identities or to reduce the resulting intergroup conflict.²⁹⁴ He explores each of the three dimensions of social identity recognized by

²⁸⁷ Assmann, "Collective Memory," 128-130.

²⁸⁸ Esler, "Hebrews 11," 157.

²⁸⁹ Esler and Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha*, 4.

²⁹⁰ Baker, "Social Identity Theory," 132.

²⁹¹ Esler, "Hebrews 11," 163.

²⁹² Edelman and Zvi, *Remembering Biblical Figures*.

²⁹³ Philip F. Esler's first published work on the extended use of the SIA in the Christian Testament was "Group Boundaries and Intergroup conflict in Galatians: A New Reading of Gal. 5:13-6:10" in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996). An earlier essay on the Beatitudes had been presented by Esler at a 1994 British New Testament Conference in Nottingham. This was revised and published in 2014 as Philip F. Esler, "Group Norms and Prototypes in Matthew 5.3-12: A Social Identity Interpretation of the Matthaean Beatitudes," in *T&T Clark Handbook*, 147-171.

²⁹⁴ Esler, "Group Boundaries;" Esler, *Galatians*; Philip F. Esler, "'Keeping it in the Family': Culture, Kinship and Identity in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians" in *Families and Family Relations as Represented in Early Judaism and Early Christianities* (ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Athalya Brenner; Leiden: Deo, 2000), 145-184; Philip F. Esler, "Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict: The Parable of the Good Samaritan in the Light of Social Identity," *BibInt* 8:4

Tajfel—cognitive, evaluative and emotional—and cites specific examples of each found in the texts. He then introduces the fourth dimension—behavioural—of collective identity.²⁹⁵ Each of these dimensions are shown to define and maintain a new identity for Christ-followers that is distinct from those of Gentiles and Israelites. He further shows how social identification processes such as recategorization are used in the text to widen the scope of the Christian group identity and to reduce conflict among hearers.²⁹⁶

In three later works, Esler examines the more recently articulated temporal dimension of social identity.²⁹⁷ He demonstrates how texts reconstruct the Israelite past to create a shared story that is formative of Christian identity in the present with “a trajectory trailing into the future,” as well as how prototypes, not only in their cognitive dimension but as possible selves, have the potential to sustain identity over time.²⁹⁸ Paul is given as an example of a prototype of the Christ-movement—a real person from the historical past characteristic of its identity—²⁹⁹ as are Lazarus, Mary and Martha.³⁰⁰

Esler demonstrates how textual data is employed to create and maintain group identity among listeners. His application, however, is limited to small literary units and to the use of the SIA to “make sense of the meanings biblical texts communicated to their original audiences.”³⁰¹ This use of texts as windows into the past is similar to that of the scholars examined in Chapter 2. Esler does not go on to explore how the texts communicated identity to a broader audience over time. He does, though, pave the way for such discussion by advancing the temporal dimension of social identity. In total, his writings lay the foundation for the systematic exploration of how the rhetoric of ancient texts effect a wide range of social identity formulations. Several dozen recent studies are built upon this foundation, including scholarly applications of the SIA to the Christian Testament and Qumran writings.

The most common dimensions of social identity examined in Christian Testament and Qumran texts are cognitive and evaluative formulations. Emotional formulations are only examined in depth by Tellbe.³⁰² Behavioural formulations are developed extensively by several of Esler’s writings³⁰³ as well as those of Ukwuegbu, Tellbe and Roitto.³⁰⁴ The temporal formulation of shared life stories is examined by Tellbe, Marohl and Esler,³⁰⁵ while the examination of figures from the past as prototypes or “possible social

(2000): 325-357; Esler, *Conflict and Identity*; and Esler, “Good Life.”

²⁹⁵ Although this is introduced briefly in Esler, “Group Boundaries,” 228-229 and Esler, *Galatians*, 45, its first extensive treatment is in Esler, “Good Life,” 53-61.

²⁹⁶ Esler, “Reduction of Conflict,” 347-349 (recategorization) and Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 30-32 (common ingroup identity).

²⁹⁷ Esler, “Hebrews 11,” Philip F. Esler, ““Remember My Fetters’: Memorialisation of Paul’s Imprisonment” in *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Sciences* (BibInt Series 89; Boston: Brill, 2007); and Esler and Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha*.

²⁹⁸ Esler, “Hebrews 11,” 163, 171.

²⁹⁹ Esler, “Remember My Fetters,” 239.

³⁰⁰ Esler and Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha*, 75-103.

³⁰¹ Esler, “Remember My Fetters,” 235.

³⁰² Tellbe, *Christ Believers*.

³⁰³ Esler, “Group Boundaries,” Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, and Esler, “Group Norms,” 147-171.

³⁰⁴ Bernard O. Ukwuegbu, “Paraenesis, Identity-defining Norms, or Both? Galatians 5:13-6:20 in the Light of Social Identity Theory,” *CBQ* 70 (2008): 538-559; Tellbe, *Christ Believers*; and Roitto, “Act as a Christ-Believer,” 141-161.

³⁰⁵ Tellbe, *Christ Believers*; Marohl, *Faithfulness and Hebrews*; and Esler, “Hebrews 11.”

selves" for later hearers is found in writings by Esler, Marohl, Baker and Carter.³⁰⁶ The most noteworthy applications of the SIA to the rhetoric of Christian Testament texts (after Esler) are those of Marohl and Tellbe,³⁰⁷ but their treatments are far from comprehensive or systematic.

The application of the SIA is not limited to a particular time or context, and, as a heuristic device, it "can help interpreters to pay attention to social aspects and processes of identity formation in the texts."³⁰⁸ Scholars vary, however, in their estimation of the usefulness of textual formulations for also reconstructing the history and social world of the producers of the text or their audiences. Many, like Esler, see the processes of social identification in the text as a reflection of processes occurring within the historical context.³⁰⁹ Marohl, for example, demonstrates that the text of Hebrews employs social categorization in the form of us/them to compare the faithfulness of the ingroup with the unfaithfulness of the symbolic outgroups. As a result, Marohl identifies the addressees of Hebrews as a distinct social group whose "dominant identity descriptor" was "faithfulness." The weakness of Marohl's argument is the assumption that the text reflects the social context of the addressees, while it is equally likely to reflect an ideal, polemical world of its creators. In other words, the addressees may not have categorized the world into "faithful" and "unfaithful," thus prompting the writers to generate such a process of social identification.

Hakola cautions against assuming a direct correlation between textual rhetoric and existing socio-historical context. He judiciously notes that social identification processes should be understood as the product of efforts to construct and clearly define ingroup social identity.³¹⁰ In his essay applying the SIA to Qumran writings, for example, Hakola examines the polemic against the Pharisee. He concludes that it was more a reflection of social differentiation against a proximate other that threatened the distinction of the Qumran community than it was a representation of an existing, real world distinction. Analysing texts with a social identity hermeneutic may illuminate the processes of social identification, therefore, without revealing the actual socio-historical world of the original audience.

Baker's narrative-identity model highlights how narratives affect the identities of their audiences.³¹¹ He builds on Ricoeur's understanding of the emergence of identity as hearers of narrative are engaged in a three-fold process of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration.³¹² Firstly, an audience brings to their hearing of the text information, experiences, memories and an initial identity (prefiguration). Then an interaction occurs between this audience and the narrative (configuration). Finally, this interaction results in either the reinforcement of the initial identity and memory or the reformation of identity and memory (refiguration). Baker's model is invaluable to any discussion of texts as identity-shaping resources,

³⁰⁶ Esler, "Hebrews 11;" Esler, "Remember My Fetters;" Marohl, *Faithfulness and Hebrews*; Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative in early Christianity: Peter, Paul, and Recategorization in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, Oreg.: Pickwick Publications, 2011); and Warren Carter, "Social Identities, Subgroups, and John's Gospel: Jesus the Prototype and Pontius Pilate (John 18.28–19.16)," in *T&T Clark Handbook*, 235-251.

³⁰⁷ Marohl, *Faithfulness and Hebrews*; Tellbe, *Christ Believers*.

³⁰⁸ Tellbe, *Christ Believers*, 138.

³⁰⁹ See Roitto, "Act as a Christ Believer," 153 for an explicit example. Nebreda also uses the SIA "to get as close as possible to the social context of Philippians." Sergio R. Nebreda, *Christ Identity: A Social-Scientific Reading of Philippians* (FRLANT 240; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 35.

³¹⁰ Hakola, "Burden of Ambiguity," 453.

³¹¹ Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative*, 28-30.

³¹² Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer; 2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1985), 1:52-83, 2:157-179.

reminding scholars that identity formation takes place in dialogue between active agents and textual identity rhetoric. Although Baker, like Esler, is concerned with the authorial audience, his model is applicable to subsequent hearers of the text. The methodological question might be, “how might the identity-shaping processes evident in a text interact with a particular audience’s pre-existing identity to reinforce or transform it?”

The applications of the SIA to Christian Testament and Qumran texts not only serve as examples for a similar application to the Hebrew Bible, but they provide essential cautions about inferring direct relationships between identity rhetoric and actual socio-historical situations.

Applications of the SIA to the Hebrew Bible. In contrast to the multiple works applying the SIA to the Christian Testament, comparatively few studies have specifically employed the SIA in the study of the Hebrew Bible. Bosman’s 2005 doctoral dissertation³¹³ offers the first explicit and extensive application of SIA to the Hebrew Bible. He focuses on how the social identity of ancient Israel is constructed *in* and *through* the Oracles Concerning the Nations found in Nahum. He posits that “groups create their social identity by constructing textual identities.”³¹⁴ Not only do texts reflect the collective identities of their composers, but, he asserts, these same texts present a possible social identity to their hearers. Thus, the identity formulations present in the biblical text “have a hermeneutical effect on the way readers (old and new) of these oracles interpret their own lives and construct their own identity”³¹⁵ Similarly, a group’s possible social identities are limited by the resources available to it at a given point in time.³¹⁶

Bosman insists that *social* identity, rather than other specific categories of identity—religious, ethnic, national, etc.—represents an integrated approach to understanding Israel’s identity. Bosman argues that the SIT and the SCT (referred to together in this thesis as the SIA) provide the best instruments for describing ancient Israel’s collective identity construction. He notes that while other approaches may be able to describe a group’s identity, the SIA is best able to describe the *process* and *dynamics* of identity construction.³¹⁷

Bosman specifically applies many of the social identity principles delineated in the first section of this chapter to the text of Nahum. He demonstrates how the text defines homogeneous, stereotypical outgroups, how prototypes are created in the process of categorization, how certain textual methods are used to devalue the outgroup and how group norms affect identity construction.

Two years after Bosman’s dissertation, Jonker’s applied the SIA to Chronicles, comparing its account of Hezekiah’s reign to that of Kings. He found that the Chronicler recasts the narrative to shift the focus from the Deuteronomist’s emphasis on political events to an emphasis on cultic events. As part of an identity reforming process, this retelling supports Israel’s new identity not as an independent political entity but as the Persian province of Yehud.³¹⁸ Jonker cites Bosman’s use of the SIA in Nahum and agrees that it is

³¹³ This dissertation was published in book form as Jan P. Bosman, *Social Identity in Nahum: A Theological-Ethical Enquiry* (Piscataway, NJ : Gorgias Press, 2008). Citations are from the book.

³¹⁴ Bosman, *Nahum*, 89.

³¹⁵ Bosman, *Nahum*, 16.

³¹⁶ Bosman, *Nahum*, 89.

³¹⁷ Bosman, *Nahum*, 84.

³¹⁸ Louis Jonker, “Reforming History: The Hermeneutical Significance of the Books of Chronicles,” *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007): 26.

the appropriate method to describe the processes of identity construction in Chronicles. Jonker especially applauds Bosman's understanding of and application of "textual identities." He adds, "texts that are the products of reinterpretation, allusion and rephrasing, are therefore not merely a reflection of social identities, but the process of construction of these texts in itself contributes to the process of identity formation during their time of origin."³¹⁹

Jonker also applies the SIA to a study of rhetorical differences between the accounts of Jehoram's reign in Chronicles and Kings.³²⁰ In the omissions, additions and changes found in the Chronicles text, Jonker observes a "blurring of the lines" between Judah and Israel consistent with the condition of post-exilic Yehud in which boundaries between north and south were no longer clearly defined. The formerly divided kingdoms now endured a common political fate under Persian rule which motivated them to remember their shared past.³²¹ On the other hand, the portrayal of Jehoram turning from the ways of the kings of Judah to the ways of the kings of Israel, challenges the people of Jerusalem to differentiate themselves from the *religious* behaviours of the north.³²² Thus, assimilation and differentiation are held in tension with respect to Yehud's "blood brothers" to the north. Foreigners are also displayed ambiguously, both as different and as useful tools of judgement in the hands of Yehud's God.

Jonker summarizes his research, "historical traditions were repeated not for the sake of reconstructing the past but for the sake of self-categorization in a new present."³²³ Chronicles reflects the identity work of the post-exilic Jerusalemite composers and functions as a resource for a community negotiating its identity. Jonker employs many social identity components in his analyses, including categorization, boundaries, differentiation, positive evaluation of the ingroup, shared fate and of the coherence of the group over time.

Baker purposes to employ the SIA as a heuristic tool for understanding the treatment of the New Covenant in Jeremiah.³²⁴ He summarizes the SIA and defends its applicability to ancient Israel as a collective and competitive culture. He argues that 31:31-34 should be understood as an attempt to create a new common in-group identity for the collective category consisting of both the House of Israel and the House of Judah in the post-exilic Israelite community.³²⁵ He does not succeed in applying any specific principles of the SIA to his textual analysis.

In contrast to Baker, Finitis explicitly applies the SIA to a consideration of "the Other" in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8. He shows that the polarized portrayal of Israel's identity, characteristic of the late postexilic period and reflected in the text of Ezra-Nehemiah, is atypical of the early postexilic period. The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah are shown to adopt a more conciliatory approach, formulating a new

³¹⁹ Jonker, "Reforming History," 33.

³²⁰ Louis Jonker, "Textual Identities in the Books of Chronicles: The Case of Jehoram's History," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 197-217.

³²¹ Jonker, "Textual Identities," 211.

³²² Jonker, "Textual Identities," 212.

³²³ Jonker, "Textual Identities," 214.

³²⁴ Baker, "New Covenant, New Identity." For bibliographical purposes, it should be noted that this biblical scholar was previously known as Jr. Coleman Baker, J Coleman Baker or JC Baker. Following the completion of his PhD studies and the death of his father, he has been referred to as Coleman A. Baker.

³²⁵ Baker, "New Covenant, New Identity," 5.1.

cohesive group identity for the people of Yehud.³²⁶ Avoiding Ezra-Nehemiah's distinction between returnees and "remainees," Finitis underscores Haggai's rhetorical representation of his audience as all the people who came out of Egypt (2:4-5a). In other words, he unifies his audience by associating them with the exodus tradition, invoking the shared, foundational story to help achieve the rebirth of the nation.³²⁷

Haggai also uses exodus imagery to construct the outgroup as "the oppressing enemy and the wealthy neighbour"³²⁸ (cf. 2:21b-22; 2:6b-8). According to Finitis, Haggai's re-purposing of the exodus motif allows him to avoid casting the "other" as merely a part of the former self. This representation establishes cohesion for the ingroup and a commitment to rebuilding the Temple together.³²⁹ This is in keeping with Brown's contention that "biased intergroup attitudes may be functional in assisting the group to achieve its objective."³³⁰ Further, the use of exodus imagery creates a sense of continuity between the contemporary group and the past generation of exodus, building a sense of certainty that a future deliverance is coming.³³¹

For Finitis, Proto-Zechariah paints a more complex portrait of self and Other than Haggai. Like Haggai, the ingroup comprises all the people of Yehud. By using the designation "your ancestors" in every verse of his introduction and by presenting a common heritage, Zechariah connects his audience with the past of pre-exilic Israel and connects the returnees to those who stayed behind.³³² At the same time, Zechariah creates categories for inclusion and group behaviour. The people should shun the practices that led to their ancestors' demise because membership in the community is not automatic or unconditional but based on superior, ethical behaviour. Group boundaries are flexible enough, though, to include others, beyond the residents of Yehud, including the diasporic remnant who will one day be gathered to Jerusalem.³³³ Zechariah's vision of the community may encourage further returns among the diaspora as well as motivate Israelites abroad to financially support the restoration project, something Haggai does not envision.

Proto-Zechariah's boundary between self and Other is less rigid than Haggai's. Although the nations that inflicted exile on the Israelites must be punished, once the balance is restored the prophet opens the door for outsiders to join Yahweh's people. Proto-Zechariah presents Israel's group identity as enviable even to outsiders, making it even more valuable to the ingroup.³³⁴ Finitis identifies specific formulations that contribute to group identity: defining an "other," delineation of boundaries, emotional imagery of belonging and conflict, interdependence and shared fate, identity norms, images of the group as coherent over time and a sense of common heritage.

Lau also applies the SIA to the Hebrew Bible. His heuristic approach to the Ruth narrative, analyses the behaviour of the text's protagonists to show how literary devices might have promoted group identity

³²⁶ Antonios Finitis, "The Other in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8," in *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 117.

³²⁷ Finitis, "The Other," 120.

³²⁸ Finitis, "The Other," 120-122.

³²⁹ Finitis, "The Other," 122.

³³⁰ Brown, *Group Processes*, 260.

³³¹ Finitis, "The Other," 121.

³³² Finitis, "The Other," 123.

³³³ Finitis, "The Other," 124-125.

³³⁴ Finitis, "The Other," 131.

norms in ancient Israel. Ruth's presence as a virtuous foreigner, for example, promotes the value of tolerance towards outsiders, and it challenges their reader to broaden their conception of membership in Israel to include choice and quality of character rather than simple genetic descent.³³⁵ Likewise, Boaz is portrayed as an ideal Israelite, presenting **בן** to the reader as an identity norm that exceeds the minimal prescriptions of the law.

Lau highlights various aspects of social identity including a prototypical group member (Boaz), stereotyping of the outgroup (Ruth the Moabite) and emotional images of attachment, belonging, interdependence and shared fate. In addition to revealing the text as a potential identity resource, Lau posits that the pressing social identity concerns of the text help to establish its provenance in the Persian Period. Finally, Lau defends the use of this methodology against charges of reductionism and determinism and shows how these pitfalls might be avoided.³³⁶

The five applications of the SIA to the Hebrew Bible considered here³³⁷ do not focus on reconstructing the past through their textual analysis but rather on questioning how the identity rhetoric of their particular literary unit may have functioned to negotiate a new identity for Israel in the post-exilic period. They recognize the persuasive potential of these texts, regardless of their provenance, during "periods of rupture" when ancient Israel's collective identity was questioned and contested.³³⁸ There is wide agreement that most of the books of the Hebrew Bible were read together and came to be seen as a coherent collection in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.³³⁹ Thus, the potential identity-forming function of any one of these literary units might best be discerned and understood in conversation with the others. A study that places a larger cross-section of texts in conversation with one another will add to the understanding of the potential effect of textual resources as a whole on identity formation.

The applications of the SIA to the Hebrew Bible examined thus far illuminate social identification processes closely resembling those observed in face-to-face relationships by Tajfel and others. Such evidence provides sound argument for the applicability of the SIA as a heuristic tool for understanding Israel's sacred texts. Cognitive, evaluative and emotional dimensions of identity, which are largely internal and invisible in face-to-face relationships, become more visible in textual rhetoric, allowing them to be internalized and personalized by the hearers of the text. Behavioural norms and temporal connections with the past and future are made verbally explicit.

3.3 A Methodological Tool for Discerning Social Identity Formation in Biblical Texts

The applications of the SIA to the Hebrew Bible, cited above, show that the dimensions of social identity

³³⁵ Lau, *Identity in Ruth*, 115-118.

³³⁶ The charge of reductionism is that viewing the biblical text through a particular lens, such as SIA, flattens the inherent contours of a text by concentrating attention on only a specific aspect of the text. This is true of every analytical method and can only be avoided by recognizing the multi-dimensional character of the biblical text and supplementing social scientific approaches with other methods of critical interpretation (7-8). The charge of determinism is that the use of a method such as SIA "leads the interpreter to view the biblical evidence in a certain way, or assume that a particular pattern of conduct must be present" (8). Lau maintains that the use of models as heuristic tools, prompting the search for patterns, correlations, and coherency among masses of material in a comparative process, is central to the avoidance of determinism (9).

³³⁷ Baker's work has been excluded for not making specific application of the SIA.

³³⁸ Cornell, "Story," 42.

³³⁹ Edelman and Zvi, *Remembering Biblical Figures*, xi-xii.

recognized in face-to-face relationships are also discernible in the rhetoric and images of ancient texts. Dimensions of collective identity construction that are often internal and invisible in face-to-face relationships, become visible, audible and even exaggerated in their narrative formulation.

By integrating the SIA's five dimensions of social identification explored in the first section of this chapter with prior scholarship recognizing their textual formulation, a valid methodological tool for discerning the expression of social identity in biblical texts has been devised (see Table 1). This multidimensional heuristic tool follows the systematic organization of the processes seen in face-to-face relationships and presents a matrix of verbal and imaginal representations of social identity that might be expressed in narrative. When placed alongside of a biblical text, the heuristic tool will help to pinpoint the consciously or unconsciously crafted narrative formulations of social identity. These formulations not only represent collective identification processes present in the text but they have the potential to mediate social identity to hearers. Combined with the recognition that social identity is "not an essence but a positioning,"³⁴⁰ this tool will assist in analysing exodus narratives and exposing their possible impact on ancient Israel's collective identity.

Israel's foundational story, preserved in sacred text, is centred on a major event, the exodus, and is condensed in the label "we are a people whom God brought up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." As such, it is constructed in the manner and with the ingredients previously described by Cornell as characterizing an identity story. The aim of the remainder of this thesis is not to further prove the validity of a social identity approach to ancient texts, but rather to utilize the newly developed methodological tool to illuminate social identification processes at work in exodus narratives. The primary exodus story will first be examined for language and images reflecting the five dimensions of social identity formation. Then eighteen retold exodus stories will be examined in the same way.

This study will show how exodus social identity was broadened through literary formulations to incorporate previous and subsequent social actors who were not initially included in the category of "the people whom Yahweh brought up out of Egypt." Such representations (possibly even "manipulations") of a group's past and possible future were essential to the maintenance of social identity over time. In this way, the exodus generation and exodus event become prototypical of all Israel and her experience.

³⁴⁰ Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Manner; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 237.

Table 1: Literary Formulations of Social Identity

VERBAL OR IMAGINAL REPRESENTATION	Definition and Examples
Cognitive Formulations	
CATEGORIZATION	
Named Group (group name or label)	General names, e.g. "people of God," "foreigners" as well as specific, proper names, e.g. "Israel," "Egyptians," "Philistines"
Plural Pronouns	The placement of self or others in a category represented by plural pronoun, e.g. "Us," "You (plural)," "Them"
Boundaries	Features of the group that its members consider significant or defining, e.g. "Those who worship Yahweh," "those who keep covenant," "descendants of Abraham," "circumcised," "one who had turned from idols to God"
Shared Beliefs	Values, goals, norms or ideology characteristic of the group
PROTOTYPES	A member who typifies the group or is depicted in an idealized way to represent the group
STEREOTYPES	A selection of one or more characteristics of a group as representative of the entire group, e.g. "And all Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines." Both Israel and the Philistines are stereotyped here as homogeneous groups, acting corporately.
Evaluative Formulations	
DIFFERENTIATION	Distinctions made between the self and the "other"
POSITIVE EVALUATION OF THE INGROUP	Emphasizes or accentuates positive traits of ingroup
DEVALUATION OF THE "OTHER"	Mocking, pronouncing of curses, announcements of doom, ironic reversals, political satire
Emotional Formulations	
INTER-GROUP CONFLICT	Expressions of struggle or opposition
ATTACHMENT AND BELONGING	Expressions of closeness and solidarity
INTERDEPENDENCE	Terms involving cooperation and reliance
SHARED FATE	"My fate and my future are bound up with that of all Israel"
Behavioural Formulations	
IDENTITY NORMS	Defining acceptable group behaviour and attitudes
Temporal Formulations	
COHERENCY OVER TIME	The group is perceived as a unified whole over time
POSSIBLE SOCIAL IDENTITIES	Identity a group believes it has had in the past, often embodied in a real or imagined person, which becomes prototypical of its identity in the present or for the future.
MYTHS OF COMMON DESCENT	Traces a group's origins back to common place, ancestor, event, etc.
Genealogical	Tracing the group's descent biological to a common ancestor
Cultural-Ideological	Tracing descent by means of spiritual kinship, cultural affinity or ideological "fit" to presumed ancestors
SHARED LIFE STORIES	
Obligation to tell	Needs a definition and examples
Actualization	Summons to enter into the group

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL IDENTITY FORMATIONS IN THE PRIMARY EXODUS STORY

Chapter 3 introduced the social identity approach (SIA), established its applicability to ancient texts and proposed a methodological tool for recognizing and distinguishing rhetorical formulations of identity in biblical narratives. The next three chapters employ this heuristic tool to search for consciously or unconsciously crafted narrative formulations of social identity in the primary exodus story and retold exodus stories. Narrative examples of the cognitive, evaluative, emotional, behavioural and temporal formulations of collective identity are analysed both separately and in conversation with each other.

This chapter will examine, in particular, how the primary exodus story (Exodus 1:1–15:21) and its prologue construct and maintain Israel’s identity through the use of social identity formulations. In his survey of the book of Exodus, Johnstone maintains that

The narrative itself is not a sober historiographical analysis and reconstruction, seeking merely to satisfy the antiquarian interest of the intellect, but an artistic work which seeks also to appeal to the imagination and win the commitment of readers or hearers of all ages and abilities. It employs suitable devices of narrative art to capture and intrigue the audience.³⁴¹

Johnstone may not have had in view literary formulations of social identity when he asserted that the book of Exodus employed “suitable devices of narrative art,” but it is just such formulations which stand out in the story of the exodus and which may have captured the imagination and commitment of the hearers of the text.

4.1 Prologue to the Primary Exodus Story (Genesis 12:1–50:26)

The “prologue” to the primary story (Genesis 12:1–50:26) contains two proto-exoduses: Abram’s sojourn in and departure from Egypt (12:10–20) and Jacob’s experience of Egypt—descent (46:1–47:12), promise of being brought out (46:4) and post-mortem exodus (50:7–14). Also included are two “prequels” to exodus: God’s revelation to Abraham of the eventual descent of his posterity into an unnamed foreign land, followed by bondage and exodus (15:13–16), and Joseph’s prediction of Israel’s departure from Egypt and his request for his bones to be taken with her (50:24).³⁴² The identity formulations found in this literary

³⁴¹ William Johnstone, *Exodus* (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield: JSOT Press: 1990), 31–32.

³⁴² It is unclear in Genesis 50:24–25 whether Joseph is speaking about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt after a period of bondage (as claimed by the Christian Testament in Heb 11:22) or simply referring to God’s abbreviated promise to Jacob in Genesis 46:3–4. The narrative claims that the latter was explicitly transmitted to Joseph in Genesis 48:21, but there is no explicit indication that God’s plan revealed to Abraham—of bondage and deliverance (Gen 15:13–16)—was transmitted ultimately to Joseph or that he recognized his situation as a preliminary enactment of this scenario. Nevertheless, Genesis 50:24–25 would be heard as a “preview of exodus” by those who hear these stories in juxtaposition.

prologue will help illuminate those found in the primary exodus story.

4.1.1 Cognitive Formulations

In Genesis it is common for collective peoples to be categorized into named groups. Examples include the Hittites, Canaanites and Perizzites (23:7 and 34:30). However, with the exception of an anachronistic comment found in 32:33, references to **בני ישראל** in Genesis refer to the patriarch and his fixed set of sons rather than to a community of people. The use of **בני ישראל** as the named group of a community or society of people commences in the book of Exodus. The singular **עבר** is used once to describe Abraham (14:13) and three times in reference to Joseph (39:14; 39:17; 41:12). The plural **עברים** occurs twice (40:15; 43:32) as an ethnic designation for proto-Israelites.³⁴³ This dearth of collective labels alerts the hearer³⁴⁴ that Israel's collective identity has not yet taken a definitive shape. Whether this reflects a socio-historical reality or an ideological claim is unknown. It is, nevertheless, what is communicated to the hearers of the text.

While cognitive formulations of social identity are rare, subtle evaluative formulations of collective identity begin to appear in these texts.

4.1.2 Evaluative Formulations

One might expect the defining of Israel as a collective people to begin with rhetorical differentiation of her from others. Instead, the texts of Genesis reveal conflicting images of a relationship between Israel³⁴⁵ and Egypt. Discordant images of Egypt's valuation are seen. In a positive light, Egypt is seen as a place of nourishment, refuge and enrichment. In 13:10, for example, she is grouped together with the well-watered plain of the Jordan and the garden of Yahweh. In contrast, Egypt is also depicted negatively, as a place of fear, deception, assimilation and death. These discordant images of Egypt are found throughout the Abraham and Joseph cycles of Genesis.³⁴⁶

In addition to conflicting images of Egypt as an entity, the text of Genesis vacillates in its presentation of Israel's integration with and separation from Egypt. Literary images of integration include the following: Abram takes an Egyptian concubine as a wife (16:1ff); Joseph engages in Egyptian government (41:41–50:25), speaks Egyptian (42:23), takes an Egyptian name (41:45) and marries the daughter of an Egyptian priest (41:45); all Israel comes to dwell in Egypt during the famine (46:5–34); Jacob blesses Pharaoh (47:7); Jacob blesses Joseph's half-Egyptian sons as if they were his own (48:1–21); Egyptian dignitaries accompany Joseph and his family to Jacob's burial (50:7–9); Canaanites label the entire funerary group "Egyptian" because they apparently cannot distinguish one group from the other; and generations of Israel are found in Egypt after the famine has apparently ended (50:22–23). Offsetting these images of

³⁴³ D. N. Freedman and B. E. Willoughby, "עבר" in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol X (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 431.

³⁴⁴ As this primary exodus story belongs to Israel's sacred text, the earliest and most frequent hearer would be ancient Israel.

³⁴⁵ The claim of the text is that Israel came into existence in Egypt. Use of the designation prior to that time is admittedly anachronistic.

³⁴⁶ The details of these contrasting images of Egypt in the Abraham and Joseph cycles are well illustrated in Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 28–42.

integration are portrayals of separation: Abram's Egyptian son is excluded from the lineage that would become Israel (21:8-12); a subtle undercurrent of Hebrew superiority is seen in Joseph's sexual restraint compared to his Egyptian mistress and in his pre-eminence as a dream interpreter and government administrator³⁴⁷ (39:7–41:45); Joseph dines separately from the Egyptians (43:32); Israel acquires property and prospers while the Egyptians are reduced to servitude (47:20-27); and Jacob and Joseph reject Egypt as a proper resting place for their bones (49:29-30; 50:24-25).

The strongest image of separateness in the midst of integration, however, is Israel living in Goshen, separate from the rest of Egypt (46:34; 47:1), purportedly because "all shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians" (46:34). Because of this separation, Israel will later escape God's plagues (Exod 8:22; 9:26). Goshen, however, contrasts with other images of Israel receiving Pharaoh's promised benefits from *all* of the land (47:18, 20), of potentially taking charge of Pharaoh's own livestock (47:6) and of receiving post-mortem care from Egypt's physicians (50:2). Following the story of Joseph's own near assimilation, Goshen symbolically serves as a means of establishing a distinct identity for Israel, thereby preserving an illusion of segregation. Greifenhagen is justified in his interpretation of the discrepancy, "Perhaps here the concept of a 'mental map' may be used to interpret Goshen less as an actual location and more as an ideological construct that seeks to maintain the separateness of Israel while in Egypt."³⁴⁸ The conflicting images of Israel as both integrated into and separate from Egypt, foreshadow an imminent identity crisis.

In these pre-exodus narratives, a people begin to emerge from an unnamed, undifferentiated collective with ill-defined boundaries. Proto-Israel's differentiation and positive evaluation, however, is attenuated by her integration and assimilation with Egypt. Devaluation of the "other" is diluted by positives evaluations of Egypt.

4.1.3 Emotional Formulations

Emotional formulations of identity in Genesis contribute little to the portrayal of Israel as a collective people. Only two explicit images are found of the attachment and belonging of individuals to a collective larger than a family group. A company of the dead is represented in 25:8, 17; 35:29 and 49:33, and a broadly inclusive circumcision group is portrayed in Genesis 17. A living and distinct collective with a shared fate—first of oppression then of deliverance—is projected only as a future entity in 15:13-15 and 46:3 and possibly in the shadows of 50:24-25.

4.1.4 Behavioural Formulations

Behavioural formulations of identity are absent in the literary prologue to exodus. This is to be expected as, unlike the other formulations of identity, behavioural formulations tend to sustain rather than create collective identity. They define acceptable attitudes and behaviours for a collective and assure coherence and visibility in social interactions. Such formulations will proliferate in the retellings of exodus, but they do not exist at this initial stage of group identification.

³⁴⁷ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 35.

³⁴⁸ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 40.

4.1.5 Temporal Formulations

In contrast to the absence of behavioural formulations of identity in the prologue to the primary exodus story, temporal formulations abound. The first is God's revelation to Abraham that his descendants will one day constitute a continuous, coherent, identifiable group (15:13-16). Then Joseph, Abraham's grandson, looks backward and insists that the fate of his brothers is tied to the promise made to this predecessor (50:24). These projective and retrojective visions together portray connectedness and coherence over time between individual members of proto-Israel.

Genesis 12–50 constructs a genealogical myth of common descent, tying a future Israel and her fate to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This myth purportedly motivates Joseph's petition in 50:24-25. Yet the exodus story that follows portrays this myth of shared ancestry with Abraham as offering no comfort or assurance to Israel in the midst of bondage (Exod 6:5-9). It is the claim of the text that the genealogical myth of descent did not create a strong sense of collective identity in that people.

In addition to the myth of genealogical descent connecting the ancestors of the prologue to the exodus generation of the primary exodus story, significant literary artistry has been used to link the patriarchal narratives to the stories of Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt. Greifenhagen depicts these efforts as forming bookends, beginning with Abram's sojourn in Egypt and ending with Jacob's burial outside of Egypt and Joseph's request to have his bones carried out from there.³⁴⁹

Cassuto, Fishbane and Zakovitch³⁵⁰ have discussed in detail the parallels, both verbal and imaginal, between Abram's sojourn in Egypt (12:10-20) and the exodus story. Similarities include the descent into Egypt due to famine, the murderous Egyptians who kill males and spare females, the acquisition of riches from Egypt, God's wrath poured out in the form of plagues upon the "other" and Pharaoh's command to leave Egypt. At the other end of the patriarchal stories of Genesis is Jacob's burial outside of Egypt with its similarities to the exodus story: requests made to Pharaoh to let the people go, the presence of chariots and charioteers (Gen 50:9; cf. Exod 14), and the people's circuitous route to Canaan.³⁵¹

After the narrative of Jacob's burial, the text of Genesis condenses the remainder of Joseph's life into a few verses, ending with Joseph's deathbed request that his bones be taken up out of Egypt when Israel departs the land. He then dies, is embalmed and is placed in a coffin **במצרים**, the final words of the Hebrew text of Genesis. While the pattern of "entry into and exodus from Egypt" is accomplished in the stories of Abraham and Jacob, it is left incomplete in the account of Joseph.³⁵²

Scholars vary widely in their interpretation of the purpose of this recurring "entry into and exodus from Egypt" pattern. De Pury views it as the literary glue that allows three independent legends of the origin of Israel to be joined together,³⁵³ though he offers no reason why this particular motif was selected.

³⁴⁹ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 44.

³⁵⁰ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part II: From Noah to Abraham* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), 135-136; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 375-376; Zakovitch, "Tell Your Son," 18-20, 46-47. See also Terence E. Fretheim, "Genesis," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol 1 (ed. Leander E. Keck et al.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 669; Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 415; and Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 492.

³⁵¹ Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 304; Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 387.

³⁵² Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 44.

³⁵³ Albert de Pury, "Le choix de l'ancêtre," *TZ* (2001): 105-114.

For some, the stories of Abraham and Jacob prefigure or foreshadow the exodus.³⁵⁴ Others regard them as typologies or pre-enactments of exodus.³⁵⁵ The consensus is that these parallels connect the patriarchs to the exodus, but to what end?

Cassuto claims that the parallels teach Israel that bondage in Egypt was part of the long-range divine plan.³⁵⁶ Zakovitch expands on this didactic purpose, saying,

The impression of repetition or even periodicity in history is created to teach that the world is not governed by chance but by a well-defined plan, discernible in patterns set by divine providence. ...The Chronicles of the patriarchs are thus like a detailed table of contents; they are an overview at the beginning of the book of the history of Israel. Just as Abraham entered Egypt safely and left it safely, so did his children, and so the children of Israel will survive other calamities awaiting them, such as the Babylonian exile.³⁵⁷

For Zakovitch, the familiar pattern generates confidence. Brettler concurs, "By creating an exodus-liberation pattern in Genesis that then gets repeated in Exodus (and still later in Deutero-Isaiah), the community, even when in a state of subjugation, will feel that the cycle is about to turn, that liberation is again around the corner."³⁵⁸

While agreeing with Zakovitch on the positive psychological effect of the exodus literary pattern in Genesis 12:10-12, Brettler offers a more comprehensive explanation for the overall exodus pattern found in the Hebrew Bible. He sees exodus as such a seminal event in Israel's collective memory that imposing it on earlier events became a way of fulfilling the injunction to remember their departure from Egypt all the days of their life (cf. Deut 16:3).³⁵⁹ In other words, when the producers of the text integrated exodus into many of Israel's stories, even those whose literary position preceded the exodus account, it was, in effect, being *remembered*.

While the patriarchal stories do appear to have been redacted in light of the exodus story,³⁶⁰ the exodus story, on the other hand, does not demonstrate the same strong connections to the patriarchal traditions. For example, according to Exodus 3, the land to which Israel would journey after her rescue from Egypt was unknown, the home of foreign nations. There is no mention of the patriarchs having lived there or that it was promised as a permanent possession.³⁶¹ Similarly, it is only in the light of the exodus narratives that the full import of the proto-exodus element is grasped. Only in the exodus narratives does the Jacob/Israel who hears about Egypt in Genesis become a people.³⁶² The primary exodus story, which for

³⁵⁴ Fretheim, "Genesis," 429; Alter, *Genesis*, 52; Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 44; and Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 123.

³⁵⁵ Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 48-53; Cassuto, *Genesis*, 326-327; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 292.

³⁵⁶ Cassuto, *Genesis*, 337.

³⁵⁷ Zakovitch, "Tell Your Son," 20.

³⁵⁸ Brettler, *Creation of History*, 54.

³⁵⁹ Brettler, *Creation of History*, 54.

³⁶⁰ Römer, "Exodusmotive und Exoduspolemik," 6-7.

³⁶¹ Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1976), 66.

³⁶² David M. Carr, "What is Required to Identify the Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections between Genesis and Exodus? Some General Reflections and Specific Cases," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 167. The contention that Israel's collective identity is forged in Egypt will be further described in the analysis of the primary exodus story.

all intents and purposes excludes the patriarchs from what it means to be Israel, exists “*in einer Kohabitation*”³⁶³ in the final form of the Hebrew Bible, with texts depicting the patriarchs as descending into and coming out of Egypt, in an exodus-like pattern. The placement of Abraham’s³⁶⁴ exodus near the beginning of the patriarchal narratives and Jacob’s exodus near the end forms a literary *inclusio*, unifying Genesis 12–50.

Seemingly two different origin traditions³⁶⁵—genealogical and cultural-ideological—coexist in Israel’s narratives, rather than being seamlessly integrated into a hybrid. The genealogical tradition of common descent portrays Israel as a relatively old people, descending from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The stronger cultural-ideological myth will be shown to portray her as a people united together through the cultural kinship of bondage and exodus. The redacting of several patriarch stories with an exodus-like overlay does not collapse the differences between these two origin myths. Both harmony and dissonance are evident in the superimposing of the exodus pattern on the patriarchal narratives. The proto-exoduses of Abraham and Jacob do not fit well into the definition of exodus stories outlined in chapter 1. In Abraham’s story, the minor plot element of the descent into Egypt due to famine bears a close resemblance to that of the primary exodus story. The first major plot element, however, is absent or infinitesimal. There is no initial situation of adversity described in terms of oppression or affliction, groaning or crying out. On the contrary, Abraham is treated well in Egypt (Gen 12:16). There is only an enigmatic reference to Sarai being “taken” (לקח) into פרעה, בית, with no explicit description of enslavement or mistreatment. Nevertheless, it is this situation apparently that inspires the supernatural response of God (second major plot element), bringing ננעים upon Egypt (cf. Exod 11:1). Like in the primary exodus story, this results in Abraham coming out of Egypt. The vocabulary of this third plot element, however, is dissonant. Abraham is not brought out using the common language of exodus stories (hiphil form of יצא) or even the uncommon language of Joshua 24:17’s retold exodus story (hiphil form of עלה).³⁶⁶ He simply comes up out of Egypt (qal form of עלה).

Jacob’s proto-exodus is an even more imperfect fit with respect to our definition of exodus stories despite the repetition of the “entry into and exodus from Egypt” pattern. The minor plot element of his descent into Egypt because of famine is not unique. This is the same corporate descent of the primary exodus story. Again, there is no description of adversity in Egypt and, in this case, no supernatural intervention. And it is Joseph who comes up out of Egypt (qal form of עלה), bringing along Jacob’s embalmed body.

In contrast to the more successful effect of the primary exodus story and the retold exodus stories in incorporating other non-exodus generations into the exodus experience,³⁶⁷ the proto-exodus stories do

³⁶³ Römer, “Exodusmotive und Exoduspolemik,” 16.

³⁶⁴ Abraham was still referred to at this point of the Genesis text as Abram.

³⁶⁵ See Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999); and John van Seters, “The Patriarchs and the Exodus: Bridging the Gap Between Two Origin Traditions” in *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman* (Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2006), 1-15. It should be noted that these authors are concerned primarily with when and by whom the two traditions were combined rather than the literary purpose or effect of this joining.

³⁶⁶ The use of עלה rather than יצא in Joshua 24:17 will be discussed in the analysis of this passage in chapter 6.

³⁶⁷ This will be examined in section 4.2 (primary exodus story) and chapters 5-6 (retold exodus stories).

not neatly fit the patriarchs into this story. In contrast to both Gertz—who sees the Genesis stories as an attempt to “reclaim the exodus tradition for the patriarchs”—and Carr—who rejects this intent³⁶⁸—this analysis emphasizes the possible effect on hearers rather than the authorial motive behind the text. Hearers of the proto-exoduses would see both the parallels to the exodus story in terminology and theme and the uneasy fit of the patriarchs in the exodus story.

4.1.6 Summary of Findings

Though the prologue to the primary exodus story portrays a nameless, indistinct proto-Israel, through the textual rhetoric of differentiation (evaluative formulations), the image of a collective begins to take on a vague shape. Proto-Israel is ambivalent in her identity with respect to Egypt, the proximate other, yet it is out of this contiguity that a more distinct people will emerge. A myth of genealogical descent connects the patriarchs to the soon-so-be-examined-people of the primary exodus story, but the textual imagination of these ancestors’ proto-exoduses does not allow them to fit flawlessly into the latter’s exodus story. Other retold exodus stories, however, will be shown to incorporate the patriarchs more successfully as “participants” in exodus.³⁶⁹

4.2 Primary Exodus Story (Exodus 1:1–15:21)

The rhetorical formulations of collective identity—and the lack of them—in Genesis 12–50 add perspective to the consideration of identity formation in Exodus 1:1–15:21, the primary exodus story. The latter augments the evaluative and temporal formulations of identity found in the texts of Genesis. Likewise, it adds cognitive formulations, as well as the emotional formulations of both shared fate and intergroup conflict.

4.2.1 Cognitive Formulations

Categorization, boundary formation, and prototypes—all of which are cognitive formulations of collective identity—are identifiable in the primary exodus story.

4.2.1.1 Categorization

Thirteen uses of the named group עֲבְרִי are found in the primary exodus story.³⁷⁰ Six of these refer to the “God of the Hebrews,”³⁷¹ an expression that appears only 12 times in the remainder of the Hebrew Bible.³⁷² By and large, “Israel” displaces “Hebrews” as the designation for this collective people, and that process begins in the book of Exodus. Compared to just six uses of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in the prologue—referring to Israel’s sons³⁷³—this expression is employed 51 times in the primary exodus story³⁷⁴—referring to a

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³⁶⁹ See the examination of Deuteronomy 26:5-9, Nehemiah 9:9-12 and Psalm 105:23-39 in chapters 5 and 6.

³⁷⁰ Exodus 1:15, 16, 19; 2:6, 7, 11, 13; 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3.

³⁷¹ Exodus 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3.

³⁷² Deuteronomy 15:12; 1 Sam 4:6; 4:9; 13:3; 13:7; 13:19; 14:11; 14:21; 29:3; Jeremiah 34:9, 14; Jonah 1:9.

Both Deuteronomy 15:12 and Jeremiah 34:9 include separate gender specific terms to designate male and female Hebrews.

³⁷³ The exception, as previously mentioned, is the anachronistic mention of a future collective in Genesis 32:33.

³⁷⁴ This does not include the appearance of this term in 1:1 where it refers to individual sons of Israel rather

collective people. It is then commonly used throughout the remainder of the Hebrew Bible.

In the primary exodus story, **בני ישראל** first appears in the mouth of Pharaoh in 1:9. It is also used by the narrator, God and Moses. God refers to Israel both as **העם** and **עמי** with a preference for the latter, while Pharaoh and the narrator refer to Israel simply as **העם**. By contrast, Pharaoh only refers to his own people three times as **עמי**.³⁷⁵

In the wording of the fifth plague, God affirms that he will make a distinction between the livestock of *Israel* and that of *Egypt* (9:4). This is the beginning of the use of these labels in the primary exodus story, and initially their use is limited to the divine voice, his mouthpiece Moses and the narrator. In Exodus 12, the collective designation **עדת-ישראל** is used twice by God. It is not until Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron after the death of the firstborn that he makes a clear verbal categorization of the two people groups living under his reign saying, “Rise up, go away from **עמי**, both you and **בני ישראל**!” (12:31). As the Egyptians struggle in the midst of the Sea, they too make the distinction between **ישראל** and **מצרים** (14:25).

This increased use of collective labels (e.g. **בני ישראל**), designating a community of people (rather than a fixed set of individuals), in the primary exodus story, compared to their minimal use in the prologue of Genesis, is of particular significance. It informs the hearer that Israel’s collective identity is taking on definitive shape during her sojourn in Egypt. That is to say, **בני ישראל** as a group of 12 sons is portrayed as conceived in Canaan but **בני ישראל** as a collective is depicted as conceived in Egypt and born in exodus. This does not mean that the concept of common ancestry does not exist in the primary exodus story or that it was immaterial to this collective. Genealogical links may exist between individuals without giving them a self-conscious sense of peoplehood. The claim of the text to unresisting hearers, however, is that it was the corporate experience of Egypt and the exodus that took individuals, albeit of common ancestry, and forged them into a people.

4.2.1.2 Boundaries

A qualitative boundary comprised of meaningful features that define Israel and separate her from Egypt is not explicitly detailed in the primary exodus story. The closest approximation may be the representation of Israel as a people capable of worshipping Yahweh, compared to Egyptians who find such practices detestable (8:25-26). Another type of real or imagined boundary, however, continues to define and differentiate Israel, namely, the borders of Goshen. This boundary, ambiguous in nature, is significant enough to protect the Israelites from the decimation caused by the plagues, but so inconsequential that it both permits Israel to ask her Egyptian neighbours for spoils (12:35-36) and prevents her from offering sacrifices for fear of offending these neighbours (8:25-26). Greifenhagen fittingly interprets Goshen as an ideological construct necessary for the composition of Israel’s distinct identity.³⁷⁶ That is to say, settling in Goshen allows the narrative to show that Israel clearly lived in Egypt, while ideologically remaining separate from her.

Although a qualitative boundary separating Israel from Egypt is lacking, the text is unmistakably

than to a collective body.

³⁷⁵ Exodus 8:8; 9:27; 12:31.

³⁷⁶ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 40.

concerned with the question of boundaries. Boundaries not only differentiate between peoples, but they define membership within a social group, expressed often as “we are this...”³⁷⁷ or “we are a people who...”³⁷⁸ So, while the ideological-physical boundary of Goshen attempts to distinguish ingroup from outgroup, the primary exodus story begins the construction of an ingroup—“the people whom God brought up out of Egypt” (although this explicit designation is not applied until later³⁷⁹). This ingroup is portrayed as exceedingly large, with the adult, male Israelites leaving Egypt totalling about 600,000 (12:37). This figure has resulted in estimations of the entire exodus group (including women, children and the “mixed multitude”) totalling between 2 and 3 million.³⁸⁰ Critical scholars balk at such a large number, citing the impossibility of such a huge increase in population in a span of several hundred years, the inconceivability of a comparable food and water supply, or the lack of a physical imprint from such a tremendous group.³⁸¹ Rejecting this figure as a literal statistic, various interpretations have been offered. The gematria approach postulates that the 600,000 number resulted from the Hebrew letters in **ישראל בני** being given a numerical interpretation.³⁸² Another common explanation insists that, before military units were patterned after the monarchical 1000/unit, **אלף** in certain contexts (such as Numbers 1:16 and Judges 6:15) represented not 1000 individuals but a smaller, family-sized military unit.³⁸³ This interpretation of **אלף** does not fit in other contexts, however, such as in Exodus 38:26 where individual men are indicated as being counted.³⁸⁴ Similarly, the two later censuses referred to in Numbers 1 and 26, recording population figures comparable to that of Exodus 12:37, do not suggest the counting of groups. In addition, **אלף** as a family-sized unit was an expression used early in Israel’s history. Even if this were the original intent of the term in Exodus 12:37, such an interpretation would not have been common by post-exilic times.³⁸⁵ By the time of the final editing a less ambivalent translation likely would have been possible if “family unit” had been intended.

The gematria and “family-group” approaches just discussed assume that a factual, and more plausible, measurement was actually intended by the narrative. By offering explanations for such and, thereby, diminishing the impact of the narrative claim, they disregard obvious literary efforts to expand the grandiosity of this ingroup with the addition of each phrase in 12:37-38: **וְגַם-עַרְב רַב, הַגְּבִירִים לְבַד מִטָּף** and **וְצֹאֵן וּבָקָר מִקְנֵה כְּבֹד מְאֹד**. Similar literary attempts to expand the dimensions of Israel even in the face of oppression and persecution were also evident in Exodus 1:12 and 1:20.³⁸⁶ Meyers, therefore, interprets the 600,000 as hyperbole, “as such round figures often are in the literary mode of the Hebrew Bible,” and she asserts that this hyperbole “functions here to echo the assertion of 1:7 that the Israelites

³⁷⁷ Assmann, “Collective Memory,” 130.

³⁷⁸ Cornell, “Story,” 42-45.

³⁷⁹ See for example Exodus 32:11; Leviticus 25:55; Deuteronomy 9:26; Amos 3:1; 1 Chronicles 17:21.

³⁸⁰ George A. Knight, *Theology as Narration: A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 94 and Georg Beer, *Exodus* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1939), 68-69 respectively.

³⁸¹ A. Lucas, “The Number of Israelites at the Exodus,” *PEQ* (1944):164-168 and Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Exodus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP), 2009.

³⁸² Beer, *Exodus*, 69.

³⁸³ This was originally proposed by Petrie and then refined by Mendenhall. F. Petrie, *Egypt and Israel* (London: SPCK, 1911), 42-47. G.E Mendenhall, “The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” *JBL* 77 (1958): 52-66.

³⁸⁴ James K. Bruckner, *Exodus* (NIBCOT; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2008), 119.

³⁸⁵ John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 72.

³⁸⁶ Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1-15* (IECOT; ed. Walter Dietrich et al; trans. Philip Sumpter; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2015), 258.

became so numerous that they filled the land.”³⁸⁷ Such views focus on the literary function of the claim. They recognize 600,000 not as a corrupted historical representation but as another example of meaningful editorial freedom similar to that used in redacting the patriarch stories with the “entry into and exodus from Egypt” pattern. They recognize that 600,000 would certainly have been an accurate representation of the Israelite fighting men during the time of Solomon, and possibly during the time period when the finished text was produced.³⁸⁸ The use of the figure in this verse, then, may represent a “retrojective attempt to include that population as a delivered people”³⁸⁹ or “a theological statement that all later Israelites have a share in the exodus from Egypt, even if they were not literally there.”³⁹⁰ Even if the inclusion of later Israel was not the intention of the producers, it would have been the effect of this measurement on later hearers. This inordinately large number, similar to the population of Solomon’s time, expands the boundary of the exodus people and apprehends all Israel who hears the finished text. For the hearer of the text in exilic or post-exilic Israel, the narrative creatively suggests that all Israel was present at exodus. This interpretation is consistent with other, sometimes imperfect, literary attempts to include previous and subsequent generations in the experience of exodus. These literary attempts will be examined throughout this thesis.

The delineation of the boundary of the “people whom God brought out of Egypt” is also evident in Exodus 12:38, which asserts that those who came out of Egypt included more than just ethnic Israelites. Among those leaving Egypt was *עַרְב רַב*, a “large motley group”³⁹¹ or “a mixed multitude.”³⁹² Some scholars suggest it comprised the slaves of the Israelites, kindred Semitic groups or other non-Israelite forced labourers who took advantage of Israel’s departure as a chance to escape their own bondage.³⁹³ Others have suggested that they were Egyptian slaves,³⁹⁴ spouses from intermarriages³⁹⁵ or mercenaries.³⁹⁶ Regardless of their makeup, they have also been equated with the “rabble” mentioned in Numbers 11:4.³⁹⁷

Whoever comprised the *עַרְב רַב*, they too shared the boundary of ones “brought out of Egypt” and served the literary function of augmenting the perceived magnitude of this group. Although distinct from the Israelites mentioned in 12:37 and 12:15, the mixed multitude’s inclusion in this textual memory portrays “the people whom God brought out of Egypt” as both diverse and as characterized by a sense of solidarity. Inclusion and exclusion are bundled together, and the hearer must wait until the next narrative

³⁸⁷ Carol Meyers, *Exodus* (NCBC; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 100.

³⁸⁸ Janzen, *Exodus* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2000), 163; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1991), 62; Terrence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 144; and Durham, *Exodus*, 172.

³⁸⁹ Bruckner, *Exodus*, 119.

³⁹⁰ Janzen, *Exodus*, 163.

³⁹¹ Durham, *Exodus*, 172.

³⁹² Sarna, *Exodus*, 62. See also KJV translation; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983), 147; Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press LTD, 1962), 99; J. Philip Hyatt, *Exodus* (NCB; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 139.

³⁹³ Noth, *Exodus*, 99; Fretheim, *Exodus*, 143; Sarna, *Exodus*, 62.

³⁹⁴ See for example Hyatt, *Exodus*, 139.

³⁹⁵ See Alan Cole, *Exodus* (TOTC; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1973), 53-54.

³⁹⁶ This and other arguments are summarized by Shaul Bar, “Who were the ‘Mixed Multitude’?” *Hebrew Studies* 49 (2008): 27-39.

³⁹⁷ See Sarna, *Exodus*, 62; Bar, “Mixed Multitude,” 31; and Frank E. Gaebelien, ed. *ECB 2: Genesis-Numbers* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1990), 379.

to see how this is clarified. While only ethnic Israelites celebrated the first Passover (Exod 12:1-28), subsequent celebrations must account for, at a minimum, the **עַרְב רַב** who exited Egypt with Israel, making “the issue of the non-Israelite role an acute one.”³⁹⁸ Exodus 12:43-49 is therefore significant, as it identifies precisely who may participate in the ritual commemorating the exodus. Clearly, this is the language of boundaries.

Rituals and commemorative celebrations tend to promote inclusion. They comprise language and images of attachment and belonging, connecting participants to the shared past and thereby heightening and preserving a sense of corporate identity.³⁹⁹ According to 12:47, **כָּל-עַדַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל** is to celebrate Passover.⁴⁰⁰ Meyers argues that while this term ordinarily refers to the assembly of adult males, here it appears to be age and gender inclusive, as indicated by the involvement of households and families.⁴⁰¹ Exodus 12:19 made it clear that “the whole congregation of Israel” includes both the **אֲזִירָה** and the **גֵּר**. In 12:44, the **עַבֵּד** is included as well.⁴⁰² Those excluded are **כָּל-בֶּן-נֹכַר**, **תּוֹשֵׁב** and **שִׁכִּיר** who apparently are only loosely attached to Israel⁴⁰³ and do not ratify God’s lordship through circumcision.⁴⁰⁴ Circumcision is not intended to exclude but to integrate the experience of freedom with the confession of faith in the God who frees.⁴⁰⁵ Clearly, Passover “provides identity, shared values, and thus group cohesiveness to those

³⁹⁸ Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 202.

³⁹⁹ See E. Turner, “Rites of Communitas,” in *Encyclopedia of Religious Rites* (ed. F. A. Salamone; New York: Routledge, 2004), 98; and Meyers, *Exodus*, 95. Lamoreaux maintains that rituals and symbols are often used in social groups to allow new members to cross group boundaries and be incorporated into a group; Jason T. Lamoreaux, “Social Identity, Boundary Breaking, and Ritual: Saul’s Recruitment on the Road to Damascus,” *BTB* 38 (2008): 125-127.

⁴⁰⁰ The annual “re-performance” of exodus is so essential to what it means to be an Israelite that, in the further development of Passover in Numbers 9:1-14, the Israelites are told that if they should find themselves in a state of uncleanness on Passover, rather than being completely excluded from the celebration, they may delay their observance for a month. On the other hand, anyone who is able to observe Passover but fails to do so will be cut off from the people of Israel (Num 9:13).

⁴⁰¹ Meyers, *Exodus*, 95.

⁴⁰² The Hebrew **גֵּר** has been variously translated “sojourner” (Cassuto, *Exodus*, 150), “alien” or “alien resident” (Meyers, *Exodus*, 89 and 95), and “newcomer” (Durham, *Exodus*, 156). (Child’s translates it as “foreigner” but then also translates **נֹכַר** as “foreigner”—Childs, *Exodus*, 179-180.) The **גֵּר** is a permanent resident of the community and was treated as a protected citizen and largely regarded as a proselyte (Harold G. Stigers, “[330a] **גֵּר** [gēr] sojourner,” *TWOT*, Vol 1 (ed. R. Laird Harris et al; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 156. Thus, the **גֵּר** enjoyed many of the same rights as the native (**אֲזִירָה**) and was expected to show fidelity to Yahweh. The **עַבֵּד** (slave or servant) was also joined permanently to the community of Israel. Circumcision was the sign that the **אֲזִירָה**, the **גֵּר**, and the **עַבֵּד** were joined to the faith community.

⁴⁰³ The **נֹכַר** (foreigner) in the Hebrew Bible frequently refers to those who worship other gods (Bruckner, *Exodus*, 120). Sarna contends that the **נֹכַר** “does not profess the religion of Israel and does not identify with the community’s historical experiences” (Sarna, *Exodus*, 63). The **תּוֹשֵׁב** was a temporary, landless wage earner (Walter C. Kaiser, “[922d] **תּוֹשֵׁב** [tōshāb] sojourner,” *TWOT*, Vol 1 [R. Laird Harris et al, eds; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980], 412) who didn’t plan on being associated with the believing community very long (Bruckner, *Exodus*, 120), and the **שִׁכִּיר** worked for wages and was only associated with the community for monetary purposes (Bruckner, *Exodus*, 120).

⁴⁰⁴ Hamilton argues convincingly that circumcision was not a cognition sign. It did not identify Israelites to non-Israelites—many of whom also practiced circumcision as a social (rather than religious) rite—since the mark was ordinarily concealed. Similarly, he contends that circumcision shouldn’t be understood as a mnemonic sign for Israel or for God because it lacks the clause explaining the purpose of the sign characteristic of mnemonic signs found in scripture. Instead, circumcision is a confirmation sign—a means by which people ratify God’s lordship over them. See Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (NICOT I; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 470-472.

⁴⁰⁵ Fretheim, *Exodus*, 143.

who celebrate it”⁴⁰⁶ and “form[s] a community around the historical deliverance of God’s people,”⁴⁰⁷ but the significance of the second Passover narrative 12:43-49 is its implicit claim that it is possible for outsiders to cross group boundaries and become part of the faith community. The experience of deliverance along with the profession of faith in the God of that deliverance defines the boundary of “the people whom God brought out of Egypt” or “the exodus people.”

Several conclusions may be drawn with respect to the עַרְבֵי רֶב. Firstly, social categories are neither fixed nor singular. Those who would otherwise be considered outsiders, may be recategorized. In this case, the exodus people is both coterminous with Israel and representative of a superordinate category that allows those once classified as “other” to be regarded in this particular social context in a more positive light. Secondly, although such outsiders may be viewed more positively, this does not necessarily mean that they become insiders.⁴⁰⁸ Those permitted to celebrate Passover are not identical to “Israel,” though they are part of the larger group of exodus people, and they legitimize Israel’s identity as the ones whom God delivered. The category “exodus people” is more flexible than would be possible if it were defined based solely on genealogy.

The inextricable linking of exodus and Passover will keep the reality of redemption alive in the community over time.⁴⁰⁹ The dominant identity descriptor of Israel—“the people whom God brought up out of Egypt”—defines commonality not in ethnic terms but in the language of a shared experience. This will become the cultural-ideological myth of common descent unifying later generation of Israel with this exodus generation.⁴¹⁰ Prior to considering other types of identity formulations present in the primary exodus story, however, one final type of cognitive identity formulation—the literary depiction of a prototypical Israelite—will be examined.

4.2.1.3 Prototypes

Moses and Aaron are the only visible members of the ingroup. The people, who are becoming Israel, remain in the background. Moses and Aaron are notable in the primary exodus story for their obedience; they do just as the Lord commands. Because their obedience is repeated many times over, it becomes characteristic of these prototypical ingroup members.⁴¹¹ Thus when Israel finally emerges as a people at the first Passover, their characterization is identical to that of Moses and Aaron, they “did just as the Lord had commanded” (12:28).⁴¹²

Similar to Israel, the people of Egypt are inconspicuous in the primary exodus story. The shadowy images that are presented of them are not entirely negative. For instance, the Egyptians, suffering from the lack of potable water, anxiously dig for drinking water, in contrast to Pharaoh who is immovable and

⁴⁰⁶ Meyers, *Exodus*, 92.

⁴⁰⁷ Bruckner, *Exodus*, 119.

⁴⁰⁸ Raimo Hakola, “‘Friendly’ Pharisees and Social Identity in Acts” in *Contemporary Studies in Acts* (ed. T. E. Phillips; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 198-199.

⁴⁰⁹ Fretheim, *Exodus*, 143.

⁴¹⁰ See temporal formulations for further development.

⁴¹¹ Exod 7:10 and 20 use the actual phrase כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה; Exod 8:6, 17, 9:10, 23, 10:3, 13, and 22 simply show Moses and Aaron carrying out the specific thing that was commanded by God in the preceding text.

⁴¹² Israel is again characterized as doing כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה after the giving of the ongoing Passover regulations (12:50).

unconcerned (7:22-24). Egyptians who fear the word of God are interspersed with those who ignore it (9:20). Pharaoh's officials encourage Pharaoh to relent and let Israel go (10:7). The Egyptians are favourably disposed toward Moses and the Israelites (11:3; 12:36). Even near the end of the narrative, caught in the confusion at the Sea, the Egyptians cry out, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt" (14:25).

Social identification, however, depends on categorization and differentiation, particularly the sorting into categories of "us" and "them" and the distinguishing of the ingroup from the "other." Normally, social identification would be impeded by a positive, or even ambiguous, perception of Egypt. The depiction of Pharaoh as the prototype of Egypt surmounts this obstacle. In contrast to the favourable, though infrequent, images of the Egyptian people, the portrayals of Pharaoh are numerous and unambiguous: he is arrogant, obdurate and recalcitrant; he opposes the legitimate governance of God.⁴¹³ He is a diametric opposite to the prototypes of Israel—Moses and Aaron—who do just as Yahweh commands. It is he, not the Egyptians per se, who embodies the outgroup in the intergroup conflict depicted in the narrative. Pharaoh's wise men, sorcerers and magicians make an initial appearance in the conflict, but by the third plague, they admit, "This is the finger of God!" (8:15). They appear one last time after the fifth plague strikes, only to admit they could no longer stand before Moses (9:11). Pharaoh, by contrast, is the epitome of callousness. He is, from first to last, the stereotypical embodiment of Egypt as the "other." The ingroup's perception of this "other" is not based on geography or ethnicity. Instead, it is the qualities of Pharaoh that define Egypt's boundary. Here—and in the retold exodus stories—the metaphoric or symbolic nature of the outgroup is one who is resistant or opposed to God.

4.2.2 Evaluative Formulations

Evaluative formulations of collective identity, which were weak and unstable in the Genesis prologue, grow in frequency, force and clarity in the primary exodus story.

4.2.2.1 Differentiation

Like the Genesis narratives, the early sections of the primary exodus story reveal conflicting images of Israel's relationship with Egypt. At times, the narrative depicts Israel's integration with Egypt: generations of Israelites settled in Egypt even after the famine apparently ended (1:6-8, cf. Gen 50:22-23); Moses was mistaken for an Egyptian (2:19); Israel dwelt so closely to the Egyptians that at their departure they demanded spoils from their neighbours (3:22)⁴¹⁴; and, finally, the Israelites called themselves servants of Pharaoh (5:15-16). The strongest image of separation in the midst of this integration is the sustained depiction of Israel living in Goshen, separate from the rest of Egypt (8:18, 9:26).

Moses is also portrayed as a conflicted individual. The linguistic blending of his name, with roots both in Egyptian ("child of") and Hebrew ("to draw out") is not evidence of a "dual identity" or of "the youth's membership in two communities," as Carol Meyer suggests.⁴¹⁵ Such a positive estimation is not supported by the literary context. Instead, Moses has a confused identity. Like Israel, Moses' origins are

⁴¹³ This refers specifically to the image of Pharaoh in the primary exodus story. Previous Pharaohs in the Abram and Joseph cycles were partially favourable like the current image of the Egyptian people.

⁴¹⁴ The context indicates the neighbour is Egyptian.

⁴¹⁵ Meyers, *Exodus*, 44.

outside of Egypt. Assimilated into Egypt, both Moses and Israel are content with their apparent integration until differentiation from Egypt turns into victimization. Even then, both Moses and Israel are apprehensive and insecure when faced with God's plan of separation. As Greifenhagen notes, "Moses' ambiguous identity mirrors that of Israel itself."⁴¹⁶ That is to say, Moses' and Israel's stories are to be heard in conjunction. It is this crisis of identity that the subsequent narratives will attempt to resolve.

The conflicting representations of Israel's integration with and separation from Egypt, prominent in the literary prologue and in the opening sections of the primary exodus story, begin to give way as the text draws lines of distinction between Israel and Egypt. The first occurs in Exodus 1:9, **וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-עַמּוֹ הִנֵּה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעֶצוֹם מִמֶּנּוּ**. The text casts Pharaoh as the first to utter words of differentiation, distinguishing rhetorically between **עַמּוֹ** (his people) and **עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** (the Israelite people). This is immediately followed by physical acts of discrimination and victimization (1:10ff).

In spite of Pharaoh's ruthless efforts to abase the Israelites, the narrative highlights their positive distinctiveness: "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites" (1:12). Pharaoh escalates the differentiation, charging the midwives to kill Hebrew boys. When they fail to do so, their rhetoric of self-preservation, intentionally or unintentionally, emphasizes Israel's positive distinctiveness: "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them" (1:19). Undeterred, Pharaoh again orders a distinction event—the drowning of all male babies (1:22).⁴¹⁷ Pharaoh's daughter, finding the baby Moses, makes a distinction—"This must be one of the Hebrews' children" (2:6)—but, like the midwives, she refrains from victimizing the perceived "other." Moses, when grown, also makes a distinction, between **אִישׁ-עִבְרִי מֵאֲחֵיו** and **אִישׁ מִצְרִי**, with this distinction resulting in violence (2:11).

Following Moses' flight from Egypt, the old Pharaoh dies, and a new Pharaoh comes to power (2:23). The language of transition is so smooth and imperceptible that the hearer is apt to regard these two unnamed Pharaohs as one in the same. The new Pharaoh continues the inequitable treatment of Israel, further differentiating Egypt and Israel. The minimizing of distinctions between the two Pharaohs has a stereotyping effect, and "Pharaoh," as mentioned earlier, becomes the prototype of the arrogant outsider who opposes God.

Soon after the new Pharaoh appears, the narrative voice of distinction changes. God is portrayed as the one differentiating his people from Egypt (6:6-8). This change is carried forward in the narrative up to Israel's departure from Egypt. Israel, by comparison, is depicted as unable or unwilling to have a voice in the differentiation. In 5:16, the Israelite foremen respond to Israel's harsh treatment saying, **וְהִנֵּה עִבְרִיךָ מַכִּים וְחַטָּאת עִמָּךְ**. The abstruseness of **וְחַטָּאת עִמָּךְ** has generated two different translations based on corrections to the text: "you sin against your own people" and "the fault is with your own people."⁴¹⁸ The first interpretation places **עִמָּךְ** and **עִבְרִיךָ** in a synonymous relationship, and Israel's assimilation is visible (Pharaoh's servants="your own people"). The second translation distinguishes between two groups, with **עִבְרִיךָ** referring to the Israelites and **עִמָּךְ** to Egyptians, though the difference

⁴¹⁶ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 59.

⁴¹⁷ The Masoretic text simply reads **וְהִלֵּיד וְכָל-הָיָה**. The Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and Targums add "to the Hebrews" to clarify the implied meaning.

⁴¹⁸ Durham offers a good overview of the textual difficulty in *Exodus*, 67.

is minimal since both groups belong to Pharaoh. The obscurity of the narrative as it appears is indicative of the ambiguity of Israel's perceived identity. Unclear with respect to her distinction or assimilation, the words of her foreman rhetorically represent Israel's identity crisis.

From an unnamed, undifferentiated people with ill-defined boundaries found in the literary prologue and the ambiguousness of Israel's identity in the early sections of the primary exodus story, a distinct people begins to emerge. The plague stories continue the differentiation of Israel from Egypt, inflating and embellishing it. At least nine of the ten plagues presumably strike only the Egyptians.⁴¹⁹ In the first, second, sixth and eighth plagues, where Israel is not included in the list of those affected, the implication is that only the "other" suffered. That is to say, the plague texts clearly differentiate between two peoples.

In the fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth and tenth plagues, the distinction is explicit. In three of these five, the narrative claims the distinction arises from God's wilful intent. The verb פָּלַח is used to convey the idea of either being separate or distinct (niph'al) or making separate or distinct (hiphil).⁴²⁰ Differentiation is most clearly seen in 8:22-23, the plague of flies, where God announces that he will "set apart" Goshen (differentiation) thus making "a distinction between my people [עַמִּי] and your people [עַמְּךָ]" (categorization). The language of differentiation—"setting apart"—also characterizes the story of the plague of livestock (9:1-7). Here, God "make[s] a distinction" between the livestock of יִשְׂרָאֵל and the livestock of מִצְרַיִם (v. 4). The results are categorical: "all the livestock of the Egyptians died...of the Israelites *not one* died" (v. 6).

The narrative of the final plague, the death of the firstborn, dramatically demonstrates strategic differentiation, as God once again declares his intention to "make a distinction between Egypt and Israel" (11:7). "Egypt" is inclusive of not just humans and animals, but their gods as well (12:12). This is the first explicit inclusion of the gods of Egypt in the category of "other" threatened with conflict and judgment. This is also the first time that the terms of distinction require action on the part of the Israelites, painting their doorframes with lamb's blood. Exodus identity is not portrayed as *ascribed* to Israel; it is *achieved*.⁴²¹ The narrative implies that ethnic descent will not prevent one from being counted as "Egyptian" (12:13, 23 cf. Exod 15:26) by the destroyer. Personal involvement becomes a necessary component of exodus identity. In Chapter 5, it will be shown that new members will also achieve this exodus identity by personal involvement, namely, the appropriation of and participation in the group's shared life story.

The exaggerated differentiation between Israel and Egypt is depicted in vivid and poignant images. It is reinforced and framed by the unrelenting demand, "let my people go." The refrain underscores unambiguously that a collective group now exists—"my people"—which is more highly esteemed by God and readily distinguishable from Egypt. This evaluative formulation of identity leads to another, perhaps the

⁴¹⁹ The third plague, the plague of gnats, is unusually short in length and fails to mention who bore the effects of the scourge.

⁴²⁰ See Exodus 8:22, 9:4, and 11:7. The verb פָּלַח is not used in 8:19, however, where God says וְשָׁמַתִּי פֶדֶת בֵּין עַמִּי וּבֵין עַמְּךָ. Both the contrast between "my people" and "your people" and the context here requires that the noun פֶּדֶת be translated "a distinction" even though in all other occurrences it is translated "a ransom."

⁴²¹ Deaux et al distinguish between "ascribed identity," in which a person does nothing to gain membership, and "achieved identity," which requires some act of attainment. Kay Deaux, et al, "Parameters of Social Identity," *JPS* 68:2 (1995): 282.

strongest formulation found in the primary exodus story, the devaluation of the “other” through the subtle but unequivocal mocking and fall of the outgroup.

4.2.2.2 Devaluation of the “Other”—Mocking the Outgroup

The SIA recognizes that groups often construct social identity through the devaluation of an outgroup. While the plague narratives may represent either a “progressive disordering of creation”⁴²² or a subtle mocking of the Egyptian pantheon (Nile, frogs, cows and sun)⁴²³ and the professed divinity of the Pharaoh,⁴²⁴ an overt outcome is in view: the Israelites will be able to tell their children and grandchildren “how I made a mockery of the Egyptians” (10:2, NAS and JPS).⁴²⁵

Mockery of Egyptian power. The first image of mockery in the primary exodus story is that of staffs becoming snakes (7:8-13). By imitating Aaron and throwing down their staffs, the Egyptian magicians do not remove the threat of a snake, but farcically add to the problem, as will also happen in the plagues of blood and of frogs. Not only is their wisdom satirized, but, when their staffs are subsequently swallowed up by Aaron’s, their power is discredited. Greifenhagen notes that the context becomes “a means of delimiting the boundary of identity between Israel and Egypt by ridiculing what is seen as the illusionary pretensions of ‘them’ in contrast to the authentic power and wisdom of ‘us’.”⁴²⁶ The use of the verb בִּלֵּעַ in 7:12 and again in the swallowing of the Egyptians at the Sea (15:12) ties the beginning of Pharaoh’s demise to his ultimate defeat. The hyperbolic images of frogs invading not only the palace, bedrooms and beds, but also ovens and kneading bowls adds to the derision of Egyptian wisdom and power.⁴²⁷ “God chose not only to inflict a punishment upon the Egyptians, but to expose them to mockery by its ignominious nature.”⁴²⁸ When Pharaoh requests that Moses intervene in prayer, Moses responds, “Kindly tell me when I am to pray for you and for your officials and for your people” (8:5), an answer that sounds like Moses is “toying with Pharaoh.”⁴²⁹ After the magicians exit the story, the mockery loses, temporarily, its laughable quality. The devaluation of Egypt, however, continues as Pharaoh is belittled both generally—feigning unfaltering resoluteness in the face of hyperbolized calamity—and more specifically—bartering with Moses on the conditions of Israel’s religious journey (8:21, 24; 10:8-11, 24).

Mockery of Pharaoh’s authority. Another depiction of devaluation, though subtle, is found when Pharaoh reverses his command forbidding Moses to return to his presence (10:28), and summons him once

⁴²² Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 101.

⁴²³ See Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1952), 198-202. Also, Sarna, *Exodus*, 39-56; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 97-129; Dozeman, *Exodus*, 216-247; John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus* (Old Testament Series; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), 79-129.

⁴²⁴ Davis, *Gods of Egypt*, 89.

⁴²⁵ The verb here is עָלַל in the hithpael form. Its use varies with context and has elsewhere been translated as “to deal severely with” or “to abuse.” In Numbers 22:29, Balaam accuses his donkey saying, כִּי הִתְעַלַּלְתָּ בִּי (“you have made a fool of me”). Here as in Exodus 10:2 the idea of making a mockery of or mocking someone is most fitting to the context. In both of these uses, the Septuagint also translates this verb as ἐμπαίζω meaning to ridicule, make fun of or mock. Images of mockery throughout the narrative also support this interpretation.

⁴²⁶ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 101.

⁴²⁷ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 98-102.

⁴²⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony* (trans. Rev. Charles William Bingham; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 159.

⁴²⁹ Brueggemann, “Exodus,” 745.

more (12:31-32). Following a series of six imperatives⁴³⁰ in which he feigns sovereignty, Pharaoh reduces himself to a position of supplication by begging for a blessing, וּבִרְכָתָם גַּם־אֲתִי. As an added insult, the next verse, 12:33, portrays “the Egyptians”—the whole outgroup—in the same deferential posture, begging the Israelites to hasten their departure. The mocking continues and is amplified in 12:35-36 where Israel is portrayed as a victorious militia, taking spoils from a defeated army.⁴³¹ The image of spoils is doubly ironic: there was no military battle, and the spoils are taken before the coming non-battle at the sea.

Just as Egypt is devaluated, the valuation of Israel is conversely enhanced. “Their status has now changed; they leave Egypt ‘dressed out,’ not as slaves, but as persons who have been raised to a new level of life by their God. Their raiment and jewellery are those of persons no longer bound but free.”⁴³² That is to say, the Israelites are not pictured as slinking out of Egypt; they depart with a very positive sense of self, like a conquering army.⁴³³ Even the Egyptians are said to look with favour upon them (12:36).

Mockery of Pharaoh’s judgment. The narrative derides Pharaoh as stubborn (13:15), gullible (14:3) and indecisive (14:5). At the climactic non-battle at the sea, the narrative depicts a Pharaoh and his troops as, at best, unreasonable or, at worst, completely mad as they pursue the Israelites into the sea (14:23-25). Favouring the latter, Durham says, “the effect of their madness is heightened by the repetition of their ranks: Pharaoh, horses, chariots, riders—they all went.”⁴³⁴ In other words, no one had the sense of mind to halt the pursuit. The scorn turns humorous in verse 24 as the already-lacking-in-reason Egyptians are *suddenly* thrown into confusion, and it continues, in a comical bit of understatement, as they have “difficulty driving” their wheel-less chariots (v. 25 NIV).

The narrative mocking of the outgroup continues, even as the story switches to a poetic version of events in chapter 15. The Egyptians are portrayed as being tossed into the sea like toys (15:1, 4).⁴³⁵ They are shattered by God’s right hand (15:6). They are thrown down and consumed like stubble (15:7). Egypt is mocked as “a cocky, bloody despoiler of Israel” who is “humbled and sunk in the depths of the sea” (15:9-10).⁴³⁶

Mocking Egypt is explicit in the primary exodus story, and in keeping with principles of the SIA the devaluation of the “other” is rhetorically designed both to augment Israel’s esteem and to further define her collective identity.

4.2.2.3 Devaluation of the “Other”—Fall of the Outgroup

Another way the textual rhetoric devalues the outgroup is by rehearsing or celebrating its downfall. In Exodus 15, the “fall of the outgroup” motif is literally seen as the Egyptian army sinks into the waters (15:5,

⁴³⁰ קומו צאו מתוך עמי...ולכו עברו את־יהודה...קחו...ולכו

⁴³¹ Childs, *Exodus*, 177.

⁴³² Fretheim, *Exodus*, 142.

⁴³³ Although Exodus 12:39 claims that Israel was “driven out of Egypt,” this does not conflict with the image of the positive elevation of Israel. גרש typically communicates the physical removal of a person or group, often resulting in a lack in possessions or resources on the part of one who is driven out (as in Gen 3:24 and Gen 4:14). In Exodus 12:39, there is no mention of Israel’s physical removal by another party, nor are they left destitute as with other banished people. The context indicates that גרש is employed here simply to emphasize the suddenness of Israel’s departure.

⁴³⁴ Durham, *Exodus*, 196.

⁴³⁵ Alan J. Hauser, “Two Songs of Victory: A Comparison of Exodus 15 and Judges 5” in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 273.

⁴³⁶ Hauser, “Two Songs,” 274.

10) and falls into an abyss (15:12). This “final iteration of the fall motif...no doubt symboliz[es] not only the defeat of the Egyptians but also their descent into the underworld.”⁴³⁷ Whether or not Hauser is correct in interpreting this image of fallen Egypt as their damnation, it is undeniably a portrayal of obliteration, not just defeat. For Greifenhagen, ambiguity and blurred boundaries are characteristic of the human world, yet the narrative does away with such uncertainties. Instead the clear image is of a God who not only insists on making a clear distinction between Israel and Egypt, but who must destroy Egypt for Israel (and its God) to exist.⁴³⁸

From a SIA perspective, this devaluation rhetoric directly contributes to the formation of Israel’s corporate identity. By employing the fall motif, the producers of the text show Israel coming *up* out of Egypt (both geographically and in positive evaluation) while Egypt is going *down*, literarily and in negative evaluation.

* * *

The evaluative formulations of collective identity found in the primary exodus story will influence unresisting hearers of the narrative to align themselves with the protagonist, Israel. The abstractness of Israel’s object of derision, the Egyptians, will allow them to apply the concept of Egypt symbolically to the arrogant “other” of their present circumstances. The exodus story they hear becomes their story.

4.2.3 Emotional Formulations

Emotional formulations of collective identity did not contribute in any significant way to the portrayal of Israel as a collective people in the literary prologue. By contrast, the evaluative formulations of differentiation and distinction examined in the primary exodus story result in emotional formulations of identity that assiduously paint Israel as a collective people who belong to God.

Emotional formulations tend to cause individuals to perceive their interests either as cooperatively linked within a group or as competitively linked between groups.⁴³⁹ Both of these are evident in the primary exodus story. The first explicit expression of group attachment is found in Exodus 1:9-22, apparently produced as a side-effect of the Israelite/Egyptian differentiation. Throughout the primary exodus story, the Israelites are cognisant of their solidarity in oppression; they are linked to one another as they collectively groan and cry out. Repeatedly depicted are the shared fate of bondage (3:7, 9, 17; 6:9) and the bitter suffering of a collective people (1:13-14; 2:23-25; 6:9). The unresisting reader “is led by the narrative to be hostile to the Egyptians and to sympathize with the Israelites.”⁴⁴⁰

The narrative not only conveys emotional formulations of bondage and bitter suffering, but it also predicts an impending change in Israel’s collective experience (3:8, 20-22; 6:1-8; 7:3-5). God will hear the cry of Israel, and he will act on behalf of this collective whom he identifies as “my people.” The use of עַמִּי conveys images of both belonging *to God* and attachment *to one another*. The change of Israel’s shared fate is described in poignant, sweeping terms: brought up out of misery, freed from slavery, redeemed, taken as God’s own people, brought to and given the land promised. Through it all, God affectionately refers to

⁴³⁷ Hauser, “Two Songs,” 278.

⁴³⁸ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 116.

⁴³⁹ Turner, “Experimental Social Psychology,” 98.

⁴⁴⁰ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 55.

Israel as עַמִּי (3:7, 10; 7:4).

Multiple images of both God and Moses' attachment to Israel are evident in the narrative as they tirelessly campaign for Israel's freedom despite conflicts with the wise men, sorcerers and especially Pharaoh, the prototypical "other." Emotional images of inter-group conflict appear in both the plague stories and in the conflict at the sea. Yet, in the end, the narrative presents Israel's shared fate as collective rejoicing.

4.2.4 Behavioural Formulations

Behavioural formulations of identity develop from and sustain Israel's exodus identity. These will be more apparent in the retold exodus stories considered in the next two chapters. In the primary exodus story, however, there are three behavioural norms that emerge from Israel's newly forming collection identity: the explicit expectations that "all Israel" will commemorate the exodus (12:14-20) and retell the story (10:2; 12:25-27) and the implicit expectation that she will participate in the Song of Deliverance (15:1-21). As each of these has noteworthy temporal components, they will be explored in the next section.

4.2.5 Temporal Formulations

Representations of evaluative and temporal formulations are by far the most common literary formulations of social identity found in the primary exodus story.

4.2.5.1 Temporal Coherence

Social identities cannot endure over time without being taken up by successive "social actors."⁴⁴¹ To be taken up, identities must have flexible enough boundaries to allow the inclusion of the new members into the ingroup. Examples have already been given of how previous *and* subsequent generations are incorporated into the exodus story. This integration is evident in both the content and the form of narratives.

With respect to content, the narratives of Genesis 12–50 revealed the subtle, and admittedly imperfect, incorporation of Abraham and Jacob into exodus. Likewise the 600,000 men who purportedly participated in exodus (12:37) may represent the anachronistic incorporation of subsequent generations into the exodus. Joseph is posthumously incorporated into the exodus, as one who descended into Egypt as a slave but was brought up from there as part of a victorious army (13:19).

Various portions of the primary exodus narrative also create temporal continuity between the patriarchs of old and the people of the narrative present. In Exodus 1:1-7, a family of individual actors—known literally as בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (v.1)—gives way to an emerging people—represented by the group name בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (v. 7). The identity claim of the narrative is that Israel's origin is not of Egypt, but that she emerged as a people in Egypt.⁴⁴²

Other examples of temporal continuity between Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of old and the growing people of Israel in Egypt are articulated in 3:6, 15-16; 4:5 and 6:2-8. The patriarchs are established as the אֲבוֹת of all Israel. The explicit emphasis of these verses, however, is the assertion that the patriarch's God is

⁴⁴¹ Condor, "Social Identity," 285-315; Cinnirella, "Temporal Aspects," 235-237.

⁴⁴² Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 49.

one and the same as the God now acting on Israel's behalf. "The tradition wants to affirm the full continuity of God in the exodus narration with God in the ancestral tales of Genesis."⁴⁴³ Thus, Exodus 3:6 claims the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is Moses' God (i.e. "the God of your [singular] father"). Then in 3:15-16 and 4:5, Moses is portrayed as being given the task of convincing a potentially resistant Israel that the God of the patriarchal triad is also her God.

The form of the narrative also conveys the ongoing participation of Israel in exodus. Actors in the narrative present are tied to those in the narrative past, creating a continuous and coherent group over time. This is seen in Exodus 2:24-25's portrayal of God engaged in four actions:

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם²⁴

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל²⁵

וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים

The first, third and fourth actions are in relation to the Israelites: God heard their cries (2:24a), then, after an intervening action (2:24b), God saw the Israelites (2:25a), and God knew (2:25b).⁴⁴⁴ The second action, God remembering his covenant with the patriarchs apparently stems from his hearing and results in his seeing and knowing. According to Brueggemann, "God connects present slaves and old promises. God has one eye on the old covenant oaths in Genesis. The other eye, however, is on the present circumstance of Israel in bondage. ...God knew that promises were yet to be kept."⁴⁴⁵ Brueggemann, however, does not state the obvious, that God connects two groups of people: one was *given* the promise, the other *received* it. The Israelites implicated in the first and last actions of the above verses enclose the patriarchs in the narrative construct, implying again that all their fates are joined together. Unless the two groups are part of one collective, the covenant oaths given to the one in the past would not be applicable to the other in the present. That is to say, covenant promises to ancestors presume the coherence of the group over time.

Exodus 6:2-8 offers another example of present Israel's relationship to social actors in the past. As in 2:24-25, it is the covenant promises that link the patriarchs to the collective group. While God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (6:4), God will keep this promise by bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and into the land (6:8). In other words, "It is God's memory of promises to the ancestors in Genesis that operates in Exodus for liberation."⁴⁴⁶

The voice of continuity evident in the narrative, however, is accompanied by an equally audible voice of discontinuity with the past. Firstly, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not explicitly referred to as Israel's אֲבוֹת (as in Exodus 3:15-16 and 4:5). Also, present Israel's acquaintance with God is contrasted with that of the patriarchs (v. 3). Whether the claim of the narrative is that the patriarchs did not know the name

⁴⁴³ Brueggemann, "Book of Exodus," 733.

⁴⁴⁴ This may also be translated "knew them" (as in the Vulgate) or "he became known to them" (as in the Septuagint). The choice of interpretation does not alter the fact that God and Israel are linked in the action.

⁴⁴⁵ Brueggemann, "Book of Exodus," 706.

⁴⁴⁶ Brueggemann, "Book of Exodus," 733.

אל שדי יהוה),⁴⁴⁷ had not experienced the full meaning or revelation of that name,⁴⁴⁸ or had not encountered God in a specific “I am Yahweh” moment,⁴⁴⁹ is immaterial to the identity claim of the narrative. The assertion of the narrative is that there is something unique about the Israelites in Egypt that is discontinuous with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Finally, a unique relationship between Yahweh and the present collective is implied in the narrative of Exodus 6:7. God promises that he will take Israel as his people and become their God. Greifenhagen posits that “the language here suggests adoption or marriage or taking possession, language that presumes the beginning of a new relationship rather than the continuation of an old one.”⁴⁵⁰

Continuity and discontinuity between the Israelites of Egypt and the patriarchs of the Genesis traditions intermingle in Exodus 6:2-8. Two perspectives of Israel’s origins—one from outside Egypt and one from within—coexist without being fully integrated. It is impossible to ascertain whether this reflects two competing historical perspectives of Israel’s origins⁴⁵¹ or simply the persuasive claim of the narrative upon unresisting hearers.

Some of the clearest examples of the use of the narrative form to convey the image of a present Israel as coherent with a future one are in Exodus 12–13. The narrative of the first Passover (12:1-13, 21-30) is split in two with instructions for its perpetual, cultic re-performance (12:14-20) in the middle. The consecration of the firstborn (13:1-2) is fused with that of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:3-4), and the narrative of their initial commemoration is immediately followed by directives for their perpetual, ritualistic re-performance (13:5-16). Passover, the consecration of the firstborn and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are all grounded in the “exodus formula,” which says, in essence, “Do this...because the Lord brought you up out of Egypt.”⁴⁵² The construction of the narrative ignores historical sequencing in favour of emphasizing how the events of the first night will be celebrated later.⁴⁵³ Undoubtedly, interrupting the temporal flow draws out the storyline in a way that heightens the dramatic interest.⁴⁵⁴ More significantly, however, the placement of the instructions to commemorate, remember and tell⁴⁵⁵ before the narrative of the exodus event itself highlights the primary importance of the persistent, ongoing experience over the punctiliar occurrence. All Israel is being integrated into the redemptive events from the start.

Broadening the boundaries of exodus social identity to incorporate previous and subsequent social actors into the category of “the people whom God brought up out of Egypt” is essential to the maintenance of that social identity over time. Through content and form, the narrative accomplishes this expansion; exodus identity is not restricted to a certain people of a specific time.

⁴⁴⁷ This would imply the Genesis references to יהוה were anachronistic. R W L Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 30-37.

⁴⁴⁸ Cassuto, *Exodus*, 76-78. Sarna, *Exodus*, 31. Brueggemann, “Book of Exodus,” 733-734. Janzen, *Exodus*, 51-52.

⁴⁴⁹ Jared C. Hood, “I Appeared as El Shaddai: Intertextual Interplay in Exodus 6:3,” *WTJ* 76 (2014): 174-188.

⁴⁵⁰ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 93.

⁴⁵¹ See discussion and notes on p. 71 and Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 97-98.

⁴⁵² Childs, *Exodus*, 203.

⁴⁵³ Childs, *Exodus*, 199.

⁴⁵⁴ Meyers, *Exodus*, 92.

⁴⁵⁵ The obligation to remember and retell exodus will be examined in the next section.

4.5.5.2 Myth of Common Descent

Contrary to de Pury's claim that "la légende d'origine fondée sur l'exode est une tradition foncièrement antitribale et antigénéalogique,"⁴⁵⁶ the genealogical myth of Israel's descent from the patriarchs is not absent in the primary exodus story. This myth, however, does not appear to contribute greatly to Israel's emerging corporate personality. The Israelites are depicted as voicing their solidarity in the mutuality of their suffering, while needing to be schooled in their unity with patriarchs and promises. A cultural-ideological myth begins to define Israel, articulating her self-consciousness peoplehood through cultural kinship. She is defined by her suffering and bondage. Ancient hearers of the narrative could not miss the portrayal of "all Israel" as slaves in Egypt, bitterly suffering a shared fate. If they had experiential knowledge of social and political subjugation to a powerful "other," they would comprehend Israel's cultural-ideological myth of common descent and might experience solidarity with this people. After the narration of Israel's exodus from Egypt is complete, a different, stronger myth of cultural-ideological descent predominates in the Hebrew Bible: one of mutual deliverance from Egypt.

4.2.5.3 Shared Life Story—Obligation to Tell

The primary exodus story opens the way to incorporate all Israel, regardless of their placement in time, into the exodus event. This section will examine what it means for all Israel to participate in exodus.

Scattered throughout the primary exodus story, hearers encounter various charges that are to be carried out after the exodus event. Children and grandchildren who did not witness the miraculous signs and wonders are to be told of them and their meaning (10:2). Children who ask about the meaning of the Passover during annual re-performances are to be told of the original Passover and its meaning (12:25-27). Israel is to remember the day she came out of Egypt by celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:3) and by telling her children why she celebrates it (13:8). "When in the future" children ask why the firstborn are consecrated, they are to be told that it was because God delivered them from slavery (13:14-15). To aid in this future process of remembering and telling, Israel is instructed to set up זכרון (12:14; 13:9).

The Hebrew concept of remembering, communicated by both the verb זכר and the noun זכרון, is not limited simply to recalling the past. For Childs, "to remember [זכר] was to actualize the past, to bridge the gap of time and to form a solidarity with the fathers. ... זכרון reactivates the original event in Egypt."⁴⁵⁷ Thus, the producers of the text are "concerned, not only that the tradition be passed on to subsequent generations, but that the tradition be experienced...in an ongoing experiential appropriation."⁴⁵⁸ Accordingly, Sarna notes not only that "Israel's liberation from Egypt is to be an event that is indelibly imprinted upon its memory, individually and collectively" but that "a set of symbols is created to actualize the experiences."⁴⁵⁹ Durham also agrees with Childs, saying that the single purpose of Israel's exodus remembrances was "to make the parents' exodus also the children's exodus."⁴⁶⁰ Remembering, telling and establishing memorials function to maintain and transmit the memory of exodus,

⁴⁵⁶ Albert de Pury, "Le cycle de Jacob comme légende autonome des origines d'Israël," *Congress Volume* (ed. J.A. Emerton; New York: Brill, 1991), 91.

⁴⁵⁷ Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 74, 69.

⁴⁵⁸ Childs, *Exodus*, 203-204.

⁴⁵⁹ Sarna, *Exodus*, 65.

⁴⁶⁰ Durham, *Exodus*, 176-177.

and, more importantly, to actualize it.

The social identification process, however, involves more than just acts of remembering and telling, and the SIA clarifies how collective identity is created and reinforced. The desire for continuity over time motivates the creation of a particular object of memory—the shared life story,⁴⁶¹ which is essential to the temporal maintenance of social identity. A shared life story is inclusive, incorporating past, present and future generations. It is exemplified by the primary exodus story, which joins the exodus generation to prior and future generations who proleptically experience, tell, commemorate and ritually re-enact it. Desired possible identities are disseminated through shared life stories because “ingroup members are concerned to persuade both other ingroupers *and also outgroupers* to endorse desired possible social identities of the ingroup.”⁴⁶² It is not surprising that the obligation to tell the shared life story is often part of the story itself.

The first example of the obligation to tell the story found within the primary exodus story is in 10:2. Even before God’s miracles and signs occur, Israel is obligated to transmit the collective memory of them from generation to generation.⁴⁶³ This obligation is part of Israel’s shared life story. Other examples of the “obligation to tell” are found in 12:27, 13:8 and 13:14.⁴⁶⁴ Intentionally or not, the producers of the text are creating and transmitting a shared life story that is constructive of social identity, specifically exodus identity. The ultimate production of the text also exemplifies compliance with the obligation to tell.

4.2.5.4 Shared Life Story—Actualization

Israel’s obligation is not just to tell the shared life story of exodus; she is summoned to enter into it. This is clearly illustrated in 15:1-21, and becomes the premise of the retold exodus stories examined in the next two chapters.

Exodus 15:1-21 represents the only lengthy poetic text in the book of Exodus.⁴⁶⁵ This in itself is indicative of its functional importance: “The Song marks a pause in the action and invites the audience of the text to participate.”⁴⁶⁶ Exploring this narrative using the SIA will draw attention specifically to how its form and content maintain and transmit exodus identity by inviting hearers to participate in the exodus story.

A prose introduction precedes the Song: “Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord” (15:1a). The ensuing poem is framed by the literary *inclusio* in 1b and 21. The only difference between the two verses is the change in verb conjugation: first person singular cohortative—“let me sing”—and the second person plural imperative—“sing!” The introduction interprets the first person in 1b as Israel, a

⁴⁶¹ Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 236.

⁴⁶² Cinnirella, “Temporal Aspects,” 235.

⁴⁶³ While the first verb *תספר* is second person singular, many scholars agree that this injunction was meant not just for Moses but for all Israel. For example Durham contends that Moses would begin the practice of recounting which would then be carried from generation to generation (Durham, *Exodus*, 135). Sarna maintains, “the singular form of the verb shows that Moses is addressed as the personification of the people of Israel, for whom the message is really intended” (Sarna, *Exodus*, 48). See also Cassuto, *Exodus*, 123.

⁴⁶⁴ Similar examples of this obligation to tell the exodus story will be examined later in the study of Deut 6:20-23 and Psalm 78.

⁴⁶⁵ This statement is based on the final unity of the text. Most scholars agree that two developmentally independent songs have been joined together by the prose insertion in 15:19-21a.

⁴⁶⁶ Brian D. Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1-21* (SBL 101; New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), 48.

personified, singular collective. The implicit claim is that all Israel participated in the celebratory song. The imperative in verse 21 serves as a closing charge for the hearer to join in the song. The form of the song and its emotive, expressive language invites participation.

Several aspects of the form and content of Exodus 15 communicate a sense of temporal inclusiveness, allowing all Israel to take up this song, creating an exodus paradigm through which all Israel can interpret their experience.

A peculiar use of verbs in Exodus 15 offers the first example of how the form of this text contributes to its temporal inclusiveness. In verses 5-12, imperfect and perfect verbs alternate in phrases that seemingly refer to the same incident. While such non-standard use of verbs⁴⁶⁷ is not uncharacteristic of Hebrew poetry, the context usually helps to determine an appropriate translation.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, the majority of scholars including Childs, Cassuto, Sarna, Meyers and Durham interpret the imperfect verbs in these verses as describing the same events as the perfect verbs, having the same force and describing complete action in the past time.⁴⁶⁹ In verses 13-17, however, problematic perfect verbs do not lend themselves to the same contextual approach resulting in a multiplicity of translations (see Appendix 3).⁴⁷⁰ After a careful analysis of the finite Hebrew verbs and the strengths and weaknesses of each translation model, Shreckhise concludes that possibilities and problems are apparent with each model and no one interpretation is entirely satisfactory.⁴⁷¹ While all three translation models interpret the imperfect in verse 18 as incomplete action, David Freedman argues for the omnitemporal interpretation of the verb *יָמַלַךְ* and suggests the following translation: "As for Yahweh, he has reigned, continues to reign, and will reign from most ancient times on into the endless future."⁴⁷² Although such a translation fails to reflect the terseness and rhythm of Hebrew poetry, it communicates well the essence of the Hebrew verbs, not only in verse 18, but throughout the song. This verbal ambiguity resulting in interpretive variability may have been present with the ancient hearer as it is with the contemporary one. Then the omnitemporal character of Hebrew verbs in this narrative would have contributed to the Song's repeatability.

In addition to the omnitemporal character of finite verbs, another structural aspect of Exodus 15 that contributes to its temporal inclusiveness is the violation in the temporal sequencing of the story line. Instead of providing a chronological narration, the story reflects backward on the earlier intentions of the enemy in verse 9 and infinitely forward in time in verse 18. Also reflected in the Song are multiple narrations of throwing adversaries into the sea and their subsequent drowning (15:1, 4-5, 7, 10, 12, 19, 21).

⁴⁶⁷ Perfect verbs generally reflect completed action, mostly in past time. Imperfect verbs generally reflect incomplete action in present or, more commonly, future time. When either of these verb forms is preceded by the conjunction *vav* (i.e., the *vav*-consecutive form), the reverse is usually true of both forms: perfect verbs suggest incomplete action in the present or future time and imperfect verbs indicate completed action in past time. (David N. Freedman, "Moses and Miriam: The Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-18, 21)," in *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell, Jr. at His Retirement* (ed. P. H. Williams and T. Hiebert. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 73.

⁴⁶⁸ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC, 19; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 111.

⁴⁶⁹ Childs, *Exodus*, 240-241. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 174-176. Sarna, *Exodus*, 79-80. Meyers, *Exodus*, 108-109. Durham, *Exodus*, 198-200.

⁴⁷⁰ Meyers, *Exodus*, 109-110; Sarna, *Exodus*, 80-82; Childs, *Exodus*, 241-242; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 176-177; Durham, *Exodus*, 200-201; Dozeman, *Exodus*, 319-320.

⁴⁷¹ Robert Shreckhise, "The Problem of Finite Verb Translation in Exodus 15.1-18," *JSOT* 32.3 (2008): 287-310.

⁴⁷² Freedman, "Moses and Miriam," 83.

Six times the hearer is brought back to reflect on an “event” that only “happened” once.

The three content aspects of Exodus 15:1-21 that remove the song from a particular historical context and summon all Israel to participate in it are the unnamed Pharaoh, the exaltation of a timeless hero and the application of the exodus deliverance to a new temporal perspective in verses 13-18.

Firstly, it is unlikely that the failure to name the Pharaoh in the song—and throughout the book of Exodus—resulted from inadvertent, unmotivated amnesia. Instead, “the blank of Pharaoh’s identity may...function as a strategic feature of the tradition, providing a movable boundary of inclusion for those who shared this memory. ...By leaving the name of Pharaoh a blank, the memory of Egyptian oppression could extend to all who had felt the oppression of Pharaoh at any time in the remembered past.”⁴⁷³ By not identifying the Pharaoh and by avoiding specific references to time, the song is able to cross temporal boundaries.

The second content aspect that contributes to the Song’s temporal inclusiveness, is its extolment of God alone, rather than of Moses or the fighting men of Israel. This allows for the Song’s repeatability since the action is not tied to any particular human heroes of the past.

The third and strongest feature facilitating inclusion is the application of the deliverance at the Reed Sea to an altogether new set of circumstances in 15:13-18. As previously noted, exegetes and translators struggle over whether to interpret the events as anticipatory or as having already taken place. The uncertainty results both from ambiguous verb forms and from the content of the verses. After five rehearsals of God’s destruction of the Egyptians, and without transition, God becomes Israel’s guide who strikes the surrounding nations with terror. A broad listing of Israel’s enemies adds a timeless note to the Song. Even more noteworthy is the inherent tension seen in the poem’s abruptness. It creates an “illusion of simultaneity” as if the Canaanite nations instantly hear of the demise of the Egyptians and are panic stricken, years before the actual arrival of the Israelites.⁴⁷⁴ The people are poetically transported from the shores of the Reed Sea to the “mountain of God’s inheritance” amidst trembling nations, a temporal illusion augmented by the ambiguous use of the verb עבר⁴⁷⁵ which could be heard as an allusion to the crossing of the Jordan.⁴⁷⁶ While some simply interpret these verses as proleptic,⁴⁷⁷ they should not be interpreted as

⁴⁷³ Hendel, “Exodus,” 604-605.

⁴⁷⁴ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 54.

⁴⁷⁵ Verse 16 claims that terror fell upon the nations as the people of Yahweh “passed.” This verb may be translated as “passed by,” “passed through,” or “passed over” depending on the context. It may refer to the crossing of the Reed Sea, the crossing of the Jordan River, or the passing through the land in the Conquest. Here the context does not offer any clue to support one particular interpretation, thus giving it an ambiguous or atemporal nature. Multiple interpretations are possible for the unnamed mountain and sanctuary of verse 17 as well.

⁴⁷⁶ Many modern translations fail to reflect the temporal illusion, or they try to resolve the tension by simply translating these verses in the future tense. Grammatically speaking, this is irresponsible. The perfects in verse 13 set the tone for understanding the events as already completed. The two imperfects found in verses 14-15 speak of the same event (the terror of the nations) as the perfects which surround them, compelling one to view them as completed action. One must do likewise with the imperfects in verse 16 which reflect the further reactions and responses of the nations. Verse 17 causes the greatest degree of uncertainty in terms of the “tense” and aspect of the two imperfect verbs. Here, however, one must agree with Freedman and translate them as having past time and completed action: “Up to this point, all of the imperfect verbs have been interpreted as having past time and completed action, owing in good part to their close association with perfect verbs referring to the same incidents and covering the same territory. So there should be a predisposition to interpret these verbs in the same way, an indication supported by the presence of two perfect verbs in the same verse” (Freedman, “Moses and Miriam,” 78).

“prophesying events still to come; it is a celebration of YHWH’s victories, past and future, seeing them all encapsulated in the victory by the Reed Sea.”⁴⁷⁸ Within the song itself, other experiences are being viewed through the lens of the victory of exodus.

The song of God’s victory by the sea invites the participation of all Israel. Its omnitemporal nature is appropriate to this paradigmatic function. Hearers of the Song, not present at the sea, become witnesses to God’s act of salvation, thus joining the celebration from their own temporal perspective.⁴⁷⁹ The past is appropriated, and common memory is created.

Two different but related effects are produced for the hearers of the text. Firstly, the Song’s rehearsal provides a means through which all Israel, by their participation, unite with the exodus generation. Secondly, the Song offers a paradigm of how God consistently acts on behalf of his people, delivering them from oppression and establishing them in relation himself. The event at the sea becomes a paradigm through which hearers may reimagine and relive their own experiences.⁴⁸⁰ Thus, the appropriation of the text would unify Israel’s past and present both by identifying the hearers with the exodus generation and by actualizing the exodus and its meaning for the hearer.⁴⁸¹ Deliverance is not experienced simply by standing in the flow of observable events but also through participation in the poetic reading of reality. It is not just the artistry of the poem but particular social identity formulations that capture and absorb the hearers of the story. As Israel takes up the song, it creates Israel as a collective people, “the people whom God brought up out of Egypt.”

4.2.6 Conclusion

The application of the SIA to the primary exodus story has brought to light specific social identity dimensions of the text that might otherwise have been overlooked. This elucidates its potential impact on unresisting hearers.

The text makes the case that Israel was constituted as a people in Egypt, in a context of oppression and misery. It persuades hearers to acknowledge that this was their initial fate too, the basis of their solidarity with all Israel. It convinces them of the disorientation and confusion of assimilation and the necessity of separation from the “other.” It challenges them to do just as Yahweh commands. That is to say, these unresisting hearers are impelled to oppose any “Egypt” that would defy the legitimate governance of Yahweh. Further, they are to acknowledge that Yahweh is their deliverer and that he has placed them into a superordinate collective identity of the “people whom Yahweh brought up out of Egypt,” an identity that

⁴⁷⁷ See for example Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC 2; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 356; Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 17.

⁴⁷⁸ James Watts, “Song and the Ancient Reader,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22/2 (1995): 143.

⁴⁷⁹ Watts maintains that the text itself, especially verses 12-18, facilitates this inclusion of the later reader: “The psalm moves from the temporal perspective of the narrative, in which the land’s settlement lies in the future, to that of the readers, for whom it is in the past. The effect of the move is to allow the readers to join in the celebration at the sea from their own temporal perspective” (“Song and the Ancient Reader,” 143-144).

⁴⁸⁰ Walter Brueggemann, “Psalms in Narrative Performance” in *Performing the Psalms* (ed. Dave Bland and David Fleer; St Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 16. It should be noted that Brueggemann is speaking here specifically about the re-performance of Psalms.

⁴⁸¹ Walter Brueggemann, “A Response to the ‘Song of Miriam’ by Bernhard Anderson,” in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (ed., E. R. Follis; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 299.

also comprises the exodus generation of Israel, the mixed multitude and the patriarchs. The narrative raises their own positive valuation and sense of attachment and belonging as it draws them into the collective “us” of Israel. Most importantly, though, the hearers are persuaded that this identity is now achieved not by painting doorframes but by retelling the story, commemorating the Passover and singing the song. Through the rhetoric of the text, they sense a cultural affinity with all Israel, and they reimagine, relive and re-experience their present situation through the paradigmatic lens of exodus.

The primary exodus story is the dominant voice of Israel’s shared life story that becomes a narrative resource for subsequent hearers. Eighteen retold exodus stories, however, also add to the conversation and make identity claims on hearers. They will be examined next.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL IDENTITY FORMATIONS IN RETOLD EXODUS STORIES (PART I)

Using the heuristic tool developed in Chapter 3, the previous chapter exposed the literary formulations of social identity informing the design of the primary exodus story (Exod 1–15:21). It also acknowledged the persuasive potential of this rhetoric to capture the imagination and commitment of hearers of the narrative and to construct or reinforce their collective identity.

The primary exodus story was narrated from the perspective of one who was observing the events as they happened. Retold exodus stories, by contrast, portray exodus as a past event, told from other narrative perspectives. In the next two chapters, the social identity approach will be applied to these retellings.

According to Kirk, “genuine communities are communities of memory that constantly tell and retell their constitutive memories.”⁴⁸² Ancient Israel qualifies as such, and the memory she tells and retells is the story of exodus. However, Israel was obligated to do more than simply retell the story; she was summoned to enter into it. The primary exodus story, presented as an eyewitness account, narrates the exodus generation’s experience. In a limited way (e.g. Exod 12:14-20; 15:1-21), it also anachronistically called future generations into the exodus experience. This summons, however, is the premise and purpose of the retold exodus stories.

The retold exodus stories are not as comprehensive or detailed as the primary narrative. They nevertheless include some key components of the story. This chapter and the next will show how certain rhetorical formulations found in retold stories also function to persuade hearers to enter into the shared exodus story and take up a collective exodus identity.

Generally, the retold exodus stories depict the exodus generation as prototypical of all Israel. That is to say, they portray the exodus event as normative of all Israel’s experience. Exodus becomes the shared life story defining Israel’s collective identity. At times, however, these narratives offer a reinterpreted account of the exodus story in order to be relevant to new situations and to create a sense of commonality between the past and the present.

Of the 18 retellings that meet the criteria outlined in Chapter 1 for inclusion in this thesis, the 10 from the Pentateuch will be considered in this chapter. These narratives would have been heard in juxtaposition with one another as they became available because, as Greifenhagen notes, these writings—encompassing the life of Moses with Genesis as a prologue—project themselves as a bounded literary entity.⁴⁸³ The remaining eight retold stories will be considered in Chapter 6.

⁴⁸² Kirk, “Social and Cultural Memory,” 4. Kirk’s work focuses specifically on the early Christian community.

⁴⁸³ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 21.

Scripture references identify the boundaries of the retold stories rather than the full literary units in which they appear. Plot elements characterizing each story will be identified as well as the narrative perspective of the retelling, followed by a more detailed assessment of the identity constructing rhetoric found in the retold story. Verbal and imaginal ties with the primary exodus story that link later generations to the exodus generation will be examined as well. Brief observations will also be made as to the possible effect of specific rhetoric presentations on hearers of the narrative.

5.1 Numbers 20:14-16

Like the primary exodus story, the retold version found in Numbers 20 is prefaced by “our ancestors went down into Egypt.” However, of the three major plot elements of the primary exodus story, only two are found in 20:14-16: an initial state of suffering and the bringing out of Egypt. There is no mention of the supernatural intervention of God in response to Israel’s suffering. The emphasis is on their hardship, and this will be shown to play a significant role in Israel’s identity formation.

While the vocabulary used to describe Israel’s affliction in the retold story is distinct from the primary exodus story, the term used for Israel’s response of crying out, **זַעַק**, may be interpreted as parallel in meaning and a variant of **זַעַק** (Exod 2:23; cf. Deut 26:7).⁴⁸⁴ Another interpretation, however, would be to recognize **זַעַק** as referring to Israel’s cry at the Reed Sea (Exod 14:10) followed by God’s sending of a **מַלְאָךְ** to bring Israel out (Exod 14:19). In either case, the shared images of hardship and shared vocabulary of crying out and being brought out (i.e. **יָצָא** and **מִצְרַיִם**) tie this retold tale to the primary narrative.

The narrative context of this exodus story is one of increasing vulnerability⁴⁸⁵ characterized by death and the intimation of death, lack of water and, most noteworthy, a “*mise en question par le peuple du projet exodique de Dieu*”⁴⁸⁶ (i.e. Num 11:5 [18-20]; 14:2-4; 16:12-14; 20:4-5; 21:5 cf. Exod 14: 11-12; 16:3; 17:3). Expressions of nostalgia for Egypt immediately preceding the passage are subversions of the dominant exodus tradition.⁴⁸⁷ While the producers of the text give voice to those who positively evaluate Egypt, they “make it a voice of complaint and rebellion against YHWH, thus negating its legitimacy.”⁴⁸⁸ Nostalgia for Egypt is also portrayed as characterizing only the exodus generation who will be excluded from the land.

Although, “the scroll of Numbers marks the transition from the generation of Israel that emerged from Egypt to a new generation birthed in the wilderness,”⁴⁸⁹ Numbers 20:14-16 does not identify the characters in its story exclusively as a new generation of Israel. In fact, based on the literary design of Numbers, these verses capture the first and last retelling of exodus by the exodus generation. It is Numbers

⁴⁸⁴ Leon J. Wood, “(570a) זַעַקָה (zē‘āqā) cry, outcry,” *TWOT*, Vol 1 (ed. R. Laird Harris et al; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 248.

⁴⁸⁵ Thomas L. Brodie, “The Literary Unity of Numbers: Nineteen Atonement-Centered Diptychs as One Key Element,” in *The Books of Leviticus and Numbers* (ed. Thomas Römer; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2008), 468.

⁴⁸⁶ Thomas Römer, “Exode et Anti-Exode: La nostalgie de l’Égypte dans les traditions du désert,” in *Lectio difficilior probabilius? L’exégèse comme expérience de décroisement: mélanges offerts à Françoise Smyth-Florentin* (DBAT 12 ; Heidelberg: B.J. Diebner and C. Nauerth, 1991), 171.

⁴⁸⁷ Römer, “Exode et Anti-Exode,” 172. Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 178-184.

⁴⁸⁸ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 178.

⁴⁸⁹ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 167. See also Dennis T. Olson, “Negotiating Boundaries: The Old and New Generation and the Theology of Numbers,” *Interpretation* 51 no 3 (July 1997): 229-240.

25 and 26 that explicitly mark the transition from the Egypt-born generation of complaint and rebellion to a new generation of hope, respectively. Numbers 20, in its literary context of chapters 11-25, portrays the fate of the old generation, dominated by images of death. The last of this old generation presumably dies in the plague narrated in Numbers 25:9. By contrast, chapters 26-36 represent the fate of the new generation, and no Israelite death is recorded there (e.g. 31:49). It is this literary design that contradicts Alter's claim that the phrase "the whole community" at the beginning of the chapter (20:1), refers to the new generation of Israelites poised to enter the land.⁴⁹⁰ Alter reads back into Numbers 20 the summary of Israel's journey in Numbers 33 that seemed to indicate that Israel's arrival at the border of Edom and Aaron's death marked the end of the original adult exodus generation. His conclusion, however, is based on an attempted historical reconstruction rather than on the literary context of the story.

Thus, Moses sends a message to the King of Edom, purportedly from the Egyptian-born generation (20:14). The retelling does not elicit sympathy from Edom,⁴⁹¹ enlist a sense of Semitic ethnic solidarity against the non-Semitic Egyptian persecutors⁴⁹² or persuade the king of Edom of the worthiness of Israel's journey.⁴⁹³ This retold exodus story, nevertheless, contains various formulations of social identity. As the defining of self and others is closely integrated in this narrative with the making of value judgements about the ingroup and outgroup, cognitive and evaluative formulations will be examined together. The same will be done with respect to the blended emotional and temporal formulations. Behavioural formulations, however, are notably absent.

5.1.1 Cognitive and Evaluative Formulations

From the narrative perspective of this passage, Israel's exodus story was essential to her identity, to entry into the land and to her future.⁴⁹⁴ The story's placement after the introductory identifier of the speaker as "your brother Israel" alludes to its epithetical nature. The exodus story becomes the group label that should cognitively define Israel (i.e. "we are the people who ..." ⁴⁹⁵) and be central to her positive self-evaluation. As "seeing oneself" and "being seen" is what constitutes social identity,⁴⁹⁶ the narrative makes the claim that Edom knows Israel and her story (20:14). Perhaps this is a nod to the primary exodus story, where Edom was among the nations that stood dismayed as Israel passed by, victoriously delivered from Egypt (Exod 15:14-16). However, this Edom, who is unmoved by Israel's story and aggressively refuses the request

⁴⁹⁰ Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 782. Alter holds to the view of Rashi and Ibn Ezra.

⁴⁹¹ Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996), 130; Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1990), 167; and Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991), 217.

⁴⁹² Alter, *Five Books of Moses*, 784.

⁴⁹³ Adriane Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-2.

⁴⁹⁴ A contemporary example of this is offered in the opening paragraphs of Cornell's "Story," 41. Cornell demonstrates how a representative from an American Indian reservation prefaced his participation in an economic development dialogue with a summary of the history of his people. Cornell recognized that the Native American's historical digression was not merely informational. His people's identity, as contained in their shared life story, was of critical importance to the future of that nation and, consequently, was perceived as a necessary preface to the issue at hand.

⁴⁹⁵ Cornell, "Story," 42.

⁴⁹⁶ Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 12, 102.

for passage, is altogether different than the group that was “shaken to the core by the display of Yahweh’s power.”⁴⁹⁷

Although, in general, kinship language characterizes the Hebrew Bible’s representation of the relationship between Israel and Edom,⁴⁹⁸ Edom is, nevertheless, portrayed ambiguously, sometimes positively (i.e. Gen 33; 35:29–36:43; Deut 2:4; 23:8) and sometimes negatively (i.e. Gen 25; 27; Ezek 35:1–36:5; Obad 10–12; Amos 1:6, 9–12; Mal 1:4). In the exodus retelling in Numbers a process of differentiation between the two peoples is advanced not only by Edom’s refusal of Israel’s request, but by the ironic use of kinship terminology. Israel’s request for safe passage through Edom is prefaced by, “thus says your brother Israel” (20:14). This terminology does not reflect a claim by Israel that she and Edom have common ground and want similar things, as Bridge claims.⁴⁹⁹ Furthermore, Edom’s response to her sibling’s request is not simply “impolite.”⁵⁰⁰ Her failure to “know” Israel’s exodus story in any practical or functional way is a refusal to acknowledge Israel’s identity. It is not merely rude; it is un-brotherly, effectively differentiating Edom and placing her in the category of “other.” Failure to appropriate the story becomes the boundary that excludes Edom.⁵⁰¹

The differentiation of Edom’s “otherness” is also subtly insinuated in that Edom is not included in the “we” and “us” as it relates to the hardships and mistreatments of Egypt. Israel was the one oppressed and enslaved, prerequisites to the promise of land inheritance made to Abraham (Gen 15:13–16). Edom cannot make any claim to the land based solely on ancestry. Edom remained free, while Israel paid the debt of serfdom, giving her title to the land and the right to request passage.⁵⁰² The kinship label rings with irony rather than solidarity. This story not only evaluatively rehearses the us/them distinction between Israel and Egypt, but it differentiates, more subtly, between Israel and Edom. A further level of subtlety, however, is that realization that the Egyptian-born Israel may be “other” as well, despite Moses’ apparent claim that it is they who are telling the story. Their pro-Egyptian perspective calls into question their ability to construct their own identity over and against Egypt by the retelling of the story. Appropriation of the identity story requires not just external differentiation from Egypt but internal differentiation as well.

5.1.2 Emotional and Temporal Formulations

Numbers 20:15 alternates between past and present subjects, “our ancestors” and “us,” with corresponding third person plural and first person plural verbs. For Noth, this alternation is insignificant and attributed to the author’s variation or even carelessness.⁵⁰³ Ashley, however, interprets this alternation as

⁴⁹⁷ Meyers, *Exodus*, 120.

⁴⁹⁸ Bradford A. Anderson, “Edom in the Book of Numbers: Some Literary Reflections,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 124:1 (2012): 40.

⁴⁹⁹ Edward Bridge, “Polite Israel and Impolite Edom: Israel’s Request to Travel Through Edom in Numbers 20.14–21,” *JSOT* 35.1 (2010), 83. Bridge’s focus is on the language and strategies of politeness.

⁵⁰⁰ Bridge, “Polite Israel,” 77–88.

⁵⁰¹ In contrast, Deuteronomy 2:2–8 shows Israel passing through Edom without resistance as part of a narrative with the altogether different aim of vindicating God’s provision during the forty years of wilderness wandering.

⁵⁰² Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bamidbar (Numbers)* (trans. Aryeh Newman; Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, Dept. for Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, 1980), 252.

⁵⁰³ Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 149.

implicitly claiming that “harm to the fathers meant harm to the present generation.”⁵⁰⁴ Unresisting hearers of the narrative may find themselves, nevertheless, drawn to commiserate and ally themselves with the exodus generation. The first person plural language invites their participation, and the alternation between participants past and present exemplifies the temporal solidarity of all Israel.

By placing the story “in the mouth” of Israel, even if they have not truly appropriated it, Moses fulfils the “obligation to tell” and the summons to enter into the story mandated by the primary exodus story. In SIA language, the rhetoric of the retelling offers an emotional portrayal of Israel’s shared fate that is inclusive of past and present members. Moses, or the narrative, will have to find a way, however, to transfer the story to a new generation of Israel if it is to become her enduring identity story. This will become evident in the exodus stories of Deuteronomy.

5.2 Introduction to Retold Exodus Stories in Deuteronomy

The most extensive collection of retold exodus stories is found in the book of Deuteronomy. Nine passages meet the criteria of an exodus story as defined in Chapter 1. Deuteronomy portrays a new generation of Israel poised on the border of the Promised Land, preparing to enter and begin a new life. Although logically this group should have included the children of the exodus, the persuasive literary discourse of Numbers portrays them as new. For God declares in Numbers 14:22 that not any of those **וְאֵת־אֲחֵי** of God, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, would enter the land. Also, the census taken after the death of the old generation (Num 26) emphasizes only the discontinuity between generations and not continuity. Apart from any historical reality (hinted at only in 14:31-32), the narrative claim of the text is that the generation that stood on the edge of the land was new and not a witness to God’s glory and signs performed in Egypt. The experiences of wilderness and hardship, however, were certainly fresh in her mind. The presumed narrator, Moses, calls this new generation to a new commitment to God and a fresh understanding of the nature of what it means to be the people of God.⁵⁰⁵ The greatest danger to Israel’s success is forgetfulness. The means to avert forgetting is the recital of the formative story of exodus, upon which her uniqueness and her defining relationship with God is grounded. Remembering her story will in turn motivate single-minded obedience and exclusive allegiance to the God of exodus.

5.3 Deuteronomy 4:20

On the surface, Deuteronomy 4:20 appears to be an incomplete exodus story, narrating only the final plot element—being brought out of Egypt. The term “iron-smelter,” however, represents a prior state of oppression or enslavement.⁵⁰⁶ Thus it represents the first plot element—Israel’s oppression in Egypt. In addition, the phrase “to become a people of his very own possession, as you are now” connects this verse to the more complete story in Deuteronomy 4:34-38 that ends with “giving you their land for a possession,

⁵⁰⁴ Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 390; Noth, *Numbers*, 149.

⁵⁰⁵ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 7.

⁵⁰⁶ Dieter Vieweger, “...und führte euch heraus aus dem Eisenschmelzofen, aus Ägypten...,” **כּוּר הַבְּרֹזֶל** als Metapher für die Knechtschaft in Ägypten (Dtn 4,20; 1 Kon 8,51 und Jer 11,4) in *Gottes Recht als Lebensraum: Festschrift für Hans Jochen Boecker* (ed. Peter Mommer et al; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993), 272-276.

as it is still today.” Whether designed as an independent reference or as a disconnected part of the Deuteronomy 4:34-38 story, Deuteronomy 4:20 meets the qualifications of a retold exodus story, albeit one of the shortest.

Identity constructing and reinforcing formulations are found in both the form and the content of the story.

5.3.1 Cognitive and Emotional Formulations

In this retold story, cognitive formulations are cast in emotive terms, thereby serving a dual function with respect to identity formation. Two group labels categorize Israel. Israel’s previous identity as a people in an “iron-smelter” is contrasted with her present status as “a people of [God’s] own possession.” The iron-smelter metaphor (also found in 1 Kgs 8:51 and Jer 11:4) conjures images of immense heat, pain, toil and suffering, all of which were present in the Egyptian oppression. However, connotations of punishment⁵⁰⁷ or testing⁵⁰⁸ are untenable here due to the absence of any such overtones in the story or the surrounding literary context, though they are clearly present in the re-use of the term in the exilic context (Isaiah 48:10).⁵⁰⁹

The claim here is that Israel—implicitly valued by God—has been taken from an unstable, agonizing existence and reconstituted into the people of God. Her identity is defined in part by this prior state of being, a constituting experience that Israel is commanded not to forget. Braulik highlights the special dignity of Israel as God’s possession, delivered from adversity:

Er Selbst hat es dem “Schmelzofen” Ägypten, einem qualvollen Verlust seiner Existenz als goj, entrissen, um es zu seinem 'am, seinem “Volk”, genauer: Seiner Familie, zu machen. Mehr noch: Israel ist durch die Herausführung zum “Erbvolk” Jahwes geworden, also zu einem Besitz, den er letztlich nicht mehr veräußern kann.⁵¹⁰

God placed himself in a unique position when he snatched those who had become devoid of any sense of peoplehood out of the Egyptian iron-smelter. Not only did he fashion them into a people, but he made them his non-transferable possession.

“His possession” does not have the impersonal connotations found in the current use of this expression. The retold story paints an emotionally charged image of attachment and belonging that is present even in the assertion that Israel has become for God an **עַם נְחֻלָּה**. Tigay perceptively notes that the term **נְחֻלָּה** “expresses not only God’s sovereignty over the people of Israel but also His attachment to them ‘since a person’s personal property and his portion are dear to him.’”⁵¹¹ This term demonstrates a Deuteronomic construction of Israel’s exodus identity not evident in the primary exodus story. In Exodus 15:17, Israel is brought out of Egypt and planted on the mountain of God’s inheritance (**נְחֻלָּה**). However,

⁵⁰⁷ Karl H. Singer, *Die Metalle Gold, Silber, Bronze, Kupfer und Eisen im Alten Testament und ihre Symbolik* (Forschung zur Bibel 43; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1980), 130.

⁵⁰⁸ S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 71. See also Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9, revised* (WBC 6A. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 89.

⁵⁰⁹ Vieweger, “Eisenschmelzofen,” 272-276.

⁵¹⁰ Georg Braulik, *Deuteronomium 1-16, 17* (NEchtBAT; Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1986), 43.

⁵¹¹ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 51 quoting Saadia, *Book of Belief’s and Opinions*, 2:11.

here in Deuteronomy 4:20, as in 9:26; 9:29 and 1 Kings 8:51, Israel *becomes* his inheritance (עם נחלה). Removed from the exodus generation, Deuteronomy is able to reflect on and interpret the significance of exodus from its retrospective vantage point. This is the first of many interpretations of exodus as representing God's love for Israel that promote the emotional formulations of attachment and belonging.

5.3.2 Evaluative Formulation

In addition to using group labels that define Israel both in terms of adversity and deliverance, Deuteronomy 4:20 implicitly makes positive and negative evaluations of groups and their membership. The context of the retold story differentiates Israel from other nations and their non-gods (4:15-19).⁵¹² Describing the objects of other nation's worship (sun, moon and stars) as "allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven" (4:19) is not intended to express tolerance for the practices of the "other."⁵¹³ Rather it prepares the way for the highlighting Israel's positive distinctiveness in verse 20.

5.3.3 Behavioural Formulation

As mentioned, the immediate literary context of Deuteronomy 4:20 portrays Israel's as the possession of God, in direct contrast to the idolatrous worship practiced by other nations (4:19, 23-28). Her exodus identity imposes behavioural norms befitting of her identity.

5.3.4 Temporal Formulations

An important temporal image of Israel as coherent over time is also presented. A new generation of Israel is addressed as if they were the prototypical exodus generation itself, and God's inheritance of Israel is portrayed as one inheritance from the exodus to the present day (כיום הזה). The second-person address ("But the Lord has taken you...") and the singularity of the inheritance to "this day" welcome other hearers of the narrative into the collective identity. Vieweger recognizes the identity construction potential of this passage for exilic period hearers, assuming that hearers may have found identification with the exodus generation and the hope of a new leading out because of the similarity of their situations.⁵¹⁴ The SIA offers a more thorough explanation of their identification. The rhetoric of the text, with its second-person address and its emotional images, draft all subsequent hearers of the narrative into a shared life story which offers them a sense of both corporate identity and hope.

5.4 Deuteronomy 4:34-38

The second plot element characteristic of exodus stories—the supernatural intervention of God—that was missing in the retold stories of Numbers 20:14-16 and Deuteronomy 4:20, dominates Deuteronomy 4:34-38. Vocabulary tying this story to the primary narrative includes אהת ובמופתים and נמוצרים, as well as the recurrent, third plot element and anchoring phrase יד חזקה ובורע נטויה. Deuteronomy employs the vocabulary differently than the primary narrative. The latter, for example, uses each of the phrases יד חזקה and זרע נטויה independently (Exod 13:9; 6:6). The same is true for the use of אותות (Exod 10:1-2) and מופתים (Exod 11:9-10), with the complete phrase

⁵¹² Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, 86.

⁵¹³ A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (NCB; Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1979), 154.

⁵¹⁴ Vieweger, "Eisenschmelzofen," 276

יד חזקה ובזרע נטויה only appearing in Exodus 7:3. Deuteronomy, by contrast, uses יד חזקה ובזרע נטויה (Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 11:2; 26:8) and האתת והמפתים (Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 34:11) as idiomatic wholes. Set within a literary context that repudiates the practice of idolatry, this vocabulary of God's supernatural intervention serves to emphasize the power of God displayed in exodus and his right to exclusive worship.

Another unique vocabulary usage noted here and in Deuteronomy 7:18-19⁵¹⁵ is the appropriation of the term מִסָּה for the retelling of exodus. Elsewhere, this term evokes images of Israel testing God in the wilderness (Exod 17:7; Deut 6:16; 9:22; 33:8; Ps 95:8). However wilderness has no place in Israel's ideal social identity as established through the exodus story. Only one of the nine retold exodus stories in Deuteronomy includes a wilderness account (Deut 11:2-7). Here the anecdote of Dathan and Abiram is employed to portray a threat to Israel's identity.⁵¹⁶ Three of Deuteronomy's exodus stories portray Israel as transported directly from Egypt to the land (Deut 4:34-38; 6:20-23; 26:5-9). Deuteronomy 4:34 and 7:19 appropriate מִסָּה and combine it with יד חזקה ובזרע נטויה and האתת והמפתים to describe God's supernatural intervention in Egypt.

5.4.1 Cognitive and Evaluative Formulations

The social identification processes of defining and evaluating groups are interwoven in Deuteronomy 4:34-38 as they were in Numbers 20:14-16. Due to its retrospective literary vantage point, it is able to incorporate an interpretation of the exodus into its retelling. It portrays both Israel and her redemption from Egypt as unique.⁵¹⁷ As social memory, the selectiveness of Deuteronomy 4:34-38 is aimed at promoting a positive evaluation of the ingroup.⁵¹⁸ The rhetorical question of 4:34 is employed with this aim in mind: "Has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself...as the LORD your God did for you?" The devaluation of the outgroup through the use of idioms יד חזקה and זרוע נטויה, however, is more subtle. These expressions describe God's redemptive action toward Israel, yet they are the same epithets found in Egyptian texts in regard to the power of the pharaohs.⁵¹⁹ If the Egyptian use of these terms was part of ancient Israel's common memory, then their use here would be polemical, underscoring Yahweh's superiority over Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. As Hoffmeier says, "What better way for the exodus traditions to describe God's victory over Pharaoh, and as a result his superiority, than to use Hebrew derivations or counterparts to Egyptian expressions that symbolized Egyptian royal power."⁵²⁰ While neither Currid nor Hoffmeier examines identity construction, their insights, nevertheless, illuminate the devaluation of the outgroup that is recognizable by the SIA as a characteristic element of identity formation. This same devaluation of the outgroup is implicit in the textual claim that God took for himself גוי מקרב גוי (4:34).

⁵¹⁵ This term is also used in the same way in the short reference to exodus in Deut 29:3.

⁵¹⁶ מִסָּה is used elsewhere in Deuteronomy to remind Israel of her wilderness experience, but not in exodus stories.

⁵¹⁷ See also 2 Samuel 7:23-24 and its parallel in 1 Chronicles 17:21.

⁵¹⁸ Bikmen, "History, Memory, and Identity" 21.

⁵¹⁹ John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2006), 114. A survey of the use of these terms in Egyptian texts is found in James K. Hoffmeier's "The Arm of God Versus the Arm of Pharaoh in the Exodus Narrative," *Biblica* 67:3 (1986): 378-387.

⁵²⁰ James K. Hoffmeier, "The Arm of God Versus the Arm of Pharaoh in the Exodus Narrative," *Biblica* 67:3 (1986): 386-387.

5.4.2 Emotional Formulations

The images and language of hostile inter-group conflict used to devalue the outgroup also add emotional intensity to the story. Supernatural presence and strength on Israel's side of the conflict, as well as language of being loved, chosen and brought out, fortify her sense of attachment and belonging (v. 37).

Deuteronomy is the first book of the Pentateuch to speak of God *loving* and *choosing Israel*,⁵²¹ thereby making the emotional dimension of God's relationship with Israel explicit. A similar effect is realized by the language of a shared fate: Israel was *taken out* of one nation, and other nations will be *driven out* before her until she is *brought into* her inheritance.

5.4.3 Behavioural Formulations

According to Deuteronomy 4:39-40, Israel's retold story and her identity as "the people whom God brought up out of Egypt" should give rise to certain behavioural norms, namely, the acknowledgement of Yahweh, the God of exodus, as the one true God and subsequent obedience to him.

5.4.4 Temporal Formulations

Numbers and Deuteronomy portray the adult exodus generation becoming extinct during the forty years of wandering in the desert.⁵²² Thereafter a new generation⁵²³ is depicted. The narrative never breaks down the composition of this new adult generation by distinguishing between the children of the exodus and those born in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy 4:34-38 they are all addressed as one body as having witnessed God's displays of power before "your very eyes" עֵינֶיךָ (Deut 4:34). This recurring expression depicts all Israel as witnesses to God's acts and, therefore, as coherent over time. The same and similar phrases (עֵינֵינוּ and עֵינֵיכֶם) are found in successive exodus narratives (Deut 6:22; 7:19; 11:7; Josh 24:17) and in other short references to the exodus story (Deut 1:30; 10:21; 29:2-3) where it is used to create the same effect. In SIA terms, the rhetoric of the text creates collective identity by showing all Israel as participating in the experience of exodus. Persuading a new generation of Israel to remember an old generation's experience as if it occurred before her eyes is an invitation to actualize the group story, a temporal formulation of social identity made even more explicit in Deuteronomy 11:2-4, 7.

Not only does the phrase "your/our very eyes" contribute to a sense of Israel as coherent over time and invite her to enter into the group story, but the shift in pronouns from second to third and back to second—"loved *your* ancestors...chose *their* descendants...brought *you* out"—achieves the same effect. This is true not only for the purported community of the Deuteronomy narrative but for the hearer of the narrative as well.

5.5 Deuteronomy 5:15, 15:15 and 24:18

All three short retellings of exodus found in Deuteronomy 5:15, 15:15 and 24:18 begin with the phrase זָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶר הָיִיתָ followed by בְּמִצְרַיִם or בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. Deuteronomy 5:15 incorporates all three

⁵²¹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 56.

⁵²² See Num 14:23, 30; Deut 1:35; 2:14-16; Josh 5:4.

⁵²³ This of course is with the exception of Joshua, Caleb and Moses. However, as Greifenhagen notes, "Even Moses must expire outside the land in order for the break between Israel and Egypt to be final." Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 172.

plot elements of the exodus story complete with common vocabulary linking it with the primary narrative (זרע נטויה, יד חזקה, יצא). Deuteronomy 15:15 and 24:18 also begin with the same introductory phrase, making them easily recognizable, but then substitute פדה for יצא to express the final plot element. These very brief retold stories incorporate cognitive, emotional and behavioural formulations of identity.

5.5.1 Cognitive Formulations

These three retold stories go a bit beyond the referent of Exodus 13:3. Israel must not only remember the day of deliverance from בית עבדים but her former identity as a slave as well. An important group label for Israel is “a people who were slaves in Egypt.” That is to say that Israel is cognitively defined by both her slavery and her freedom from it (יצא in Deut 5:15; פדה in Deut 15:15; 24:18).

The use of עבד is significant for Israel’s cognitive identity formation. In the book of Exodus, Israel is exhorted to refrain from mistreating or oppressing the גר (22:20-26; 23:1-9) since she was once גרים (22:20; 23:9). Here, though, in addition to remembering being a גר, Israel is called on to remember being an עבד. Her prior condition links her not just to sojourners but to disenfranchised peoples in general (Deut 24:17-22). Therefore she is expected to “*revivre positivement une histoire d’humiliation et de souffrance*.”⁵²⁴

5.5.2 Emotional Formulation

The replacement of יצא, the most prevalent term of deliverance, with פדה in 15:15 and 24:18 evokes the particular exodus scene of the sparing and consecration of the firstborn (Exod 13:11-16).⁵²⁵ These emotional images add to the perception of being loved and chosen that is distinctive to the Deuteronomic interpretation of exodus. Israel’s cognitive and emotionally formulated identity—as a brought out/redeemed slave—in turn presents her with behavioural norms which both demonstrate and substantiate her identity.

5.5.3 Behavioural Formulations

These stories connect the remembrance of being a slave to keeping the Sabbath (5:15), to freeing fellow Hebrew slaves in the seventh year of servitude (15:15) and to practicing other humanitarian acts (24:18). Certainly, these verses are part of the broader motivations found in the Hebrew Bible for cultic observances, law-keeping and the fair treatment of others.⁵²⁶ However, as part of Deuteronomy they are concerned in general with the possibility that Israel might fail to remember (4:9; 4:23; 8:11; 8:19; 9:7; 25:19) and, in particular, with her forgetting the God of exodus (6:12; 8:14). Childs argues, based on the syntactical structure of the texts, that Israel is not commanded to keep the Sabbath day and Sabbath year and perform other humanitarian acts because of God’s past redemption. Instead, she is to be obedient *in order* to remember the events of her redemption and thereby to participate again in the exodus event.⁵²⁷ “The act of remembering serves to actualize the past for a generation removed in time from those former

⁵²⁴ Jacques Pons, “La référence au séjour en Égypte et à la sortie d’Égypte dans les codes de loi de l’Ancien Testament,” *Études théologiques et religieuses* 63:2 (1988), 171.

⁵²⁵ This is not an argument for developmental influence but rather speaks to how this story would be heard in conversation with the dominant exodus story.

⁵²⁶ See Appendix 2, sections 3a and 3b.

⁵²⁷ Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 53.

events in order that they themselves can have an intimate encounter with the great acts of redemption. Remembrance equals participation.”⁵²⁸

Miller affirms Childs’ interpretation by arguing that while the Sabbath command in Exodus 20:8-11 follows the form of *remember in order to keep*, the Deuteronomic structure is reversed, namely, *keep in order to remember*. “So in the case of Exodus, the community is called to remember and to obey out of the memory; in the Deuteronomic form, the community obeys in order to keep alive the memory of redemption and to bring out the provision of rest from toil for all members of the community.”⁵²⁹

The general pattern “remember...therefore act”⁵³⁰ is evident in much of the rhetoric of Deuteronomy and shows how the memory of exodus results in behavioural formulations of identity. But Childs and Miller add balance to the interpretation of these texts by showing that traditions and social actions also remind Israel of her shared past. “Positively reliving a history of humiliation and suffering,”⁵³¹ “re-establishing a liberation perspective,”⁵³² “re-actualizing the exodus event”⁵³³ and even “keeping the memory of redemption alive”⁵³⁴ draw those who remember into a collective identity, coherent over time and grounded in a shared story. The Israelite master, for example, is reminded that he once shared the same condition with the one who now serves him, and his identity as a freed slave is more valuable than the fruits of incessant labour or the profits gained through the subjection of others (Deut 15:15). Calendrical observances and humanitarian acts remind Israel of this common identity in the past and, therefore, of her solidarity in the present. The “keep in order to remember” structure becomes more apparent in Deuteronomy 26:5b-9’s retold story, as will be demonstrated in the analysis of that text.

While having been slaves is a boundary of Israel’s identity, those sharing this identity are sympathetic to and, perhaps even, accommodating toward, others in comparable circumstances. Hearers of the texts will observe the Sabbath and other compassionate acts and, in so doing, will reactivate the memory of exodus and find coherence not only with one another, but with the exodus generation.

5.6 Deuteronomy 6:21-23

The retold story found in Deuteronomy 6:21-23 contains all three plot elements of the exodus story with the use of common shared vocabulary (עֲבָדִים, יֵצֵא, יֵרְחֹקָהּ and אֵיתָן וּמִפְתִּיחַ). Like Exodus 15 the story takes Israel from the land of Egypt to the land of promise with no intervening narration of trials or testing. Full deliverance is symbolized by landedness, and the complete transformation of Israel’s fate from Egypt to the land of promise is represented as the experience of one people rather than that of successive generations.

5.6.1 Cognitive Formulations

As in Exodus 12:26-27, this retold story is presented as the proper response to a child’s question about the

⁵²⁸ Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 56.

⁵²⁹ Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 80.

⁵³⁰ Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 83.

⁵³¹ Translated from Pons, “La référence au séjour,” 171.

⁵³² Translated from Pons, “La référence au séjour,” 173.

⁵³³ Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 53.

⁵³⁴ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 80.

“meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances.” Here though, the parent is to recite the exodus story beginning with the “named group” categorization of Israel as “Pharaoh’s slaves,” an echo of her prior identity. This specific reference to Israel’s prior identity is uncommon in the Hebrew Bible,⁵³⁵ overshadowed by the widely distributed group label identifying her as “the people whom God brought out of Egypt.” The choice reflects, again, the particular concern of the producers of Deuteronomy that Israel not be allowed to forget who she used to be. Knowing who one was in the past is crucial to present identity.

5.6.2 Emotional Formulations

Deuteronomy 6:21-23 represents social identity as relational. Not only are Israel’s prior and present identities to be experienced corporately, but they are defined in terms of relationships. Israel’s former identity was tied to Pharaoh and Egypt and her current identity to the “LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Deut 6:21). In the literary context of this retold story, פרעה—the prototype of the “other” who opposes יהוה—is reintroduced to make this contrast evident. Those who have been brought out of the house of slavery (עבדים) are instructed to serve (תעבד) God (Deut 6:13). As Craigie notes, “both words are derived from the same root and contrast vividly the old and the new masters of Israel.”⁵³⁶ While the categorization language defining Israel in the past and present is a cognitive formulation of social identity, the images of attachment and belonging, both to one another and to the God of exodus, potentially create an emotional identification. Israel is called on to remember not only her transformed state but also the vivid displays of God’s power that effected this new identity. This binds the people’s hearts as well as their minds to one another and to their God.

5.6.3 Behavioural Formulations

In addition to the cognitive and emotional formulations of social identity noted above, behavioural formations found in 6:10-25 are similar to those that follow 4:34-38. Exodus identity is the motivation for exclusive allegiance to Yahweh and obedience to his law. Here, as in 26:5-9 and Joshua 24:2-7, there is no mention of the covenant at Sinai. This omission has nothing to do with the separateness of the Sinai tradition from the exodus-conquest tradition.⁵³⁷ Instead, the form and content of these narratives suggest that the recounting of exodus elicits new acts of allegiance characteristic of covenant ratification, rather than the remembrance of prior obligations.

5.6.4 Temporal Formulations

The explicit admonition to parents to transmit the exodus story to future generations exemplifies a temporal formulation of social identity. While some see the retelling as necessary to retain a sense of history,⁵³⁸ this thesis argues that the obligation to tell the story is to maintain a sense of coherence over time. The child uses second-person pronouns, asking about that which “God has commanded *you*?” The parent, though, responds with inclusive pronouns: “We were Pharaoh’s slaves...the LORD brought *us* out of

⁵³⁵ There are more than 75 references to Israel being brought out of Egypt, but only 15 of them describe Israel’s prior enslavement, three of which are in the form of a metaphoric iron smelting furnace. Of those 15, Deuteronomy contributes 9 (5:6; 5:15; 6:12; 6:21; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5; 13:10).

⁵³⁶ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 173.

⁵³⁷ Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 1-78.

⁵³⁸ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC 4; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 174.

Egypt". The child's question creates separation from the events, while the parent's response melds the generations. "The attempt by fathers to transform their uninvolved sons from 'distemporaries' to contemporaries, i.e., true-life sharers, is an issue of supreme and recurrent significance in the Bible."⁵³⁹ That is to say, exodus must be actualized by generations not having eyewitness experience of it. As seen in the primary exodus story (Exod 10:2) the text seems to prioritize the retelling of the events over the actual experience of exodus. This contention will be further evaluated in the analysis of Deuteronomy 11:2-4, 7.

From the perspective of the SIA, Israel's coherency over time and space emerges from the telling of and participation in the story. The exodus story becomes her myth of common descent by which solidarity is traced to a cultural affinity with others. The retelling of exodus creates a memory for each new generation, regardless of where or when the child asks the question. The memory constructs and reinforces a unified identity, exemplified by a grateful response of allegiance and obedience.

5.7 Deuteronomy 7:18-19

Deuteronomy 7:18-19 contains two of the three plot elements necessary for it to be labelled a retold exodus story: the supernatural acts of God and the bringing out of Israel. No mention is made of her initial state of adversity or crying out to God.

The focus is clearly on the supernatural act of God, laid out in emotive terms, namely, Israel being brought out of Egypt by means of great trials,⁵⁴⁰ signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm. The emphasis on the second plot element in this retelling reflects the explicit purpose of the narrative, namely, to counter apprehension and inspire faith in God, so that Israel will act in accordance with God's plan. The memory of her earlier refusal to trust God, which led to her failure to possess the land (1:26-36), undoubtedly informs this story.

5.7.1 Evaluative Formulations

Evaluative formulations of differentiation between Israel and the nations are evident in the literary context leading up to this exodus story. Deuteronomy 7 "fervently asserts the distinctiveness of Israel that is to be affirmed and appreciated in the contexts of the other nations. ...The anxiety of this chapter is that the next generation will fail to recognize and cherish Israel's distinctiveness."⁵⁴¹ This concern with Israel's positive evaluation is reflected in exhortations not to make treaties with the other nations, not to intermarry with them, to destroy them without pity and to demolish their altars and idols. Although the nations are cast as mightier and more numerous than Israel (7:1), the promise is that God will give the nations over to Israel (7:2). If, in the face of this imminent war with the nations, however, Israel finds herself fearful and unsure, she is charged emphatically to remember (זָכַר תִּזְכֹּר) the exodus,⁵⁴² the unequivocal proof of Israel's distinctiveness.

5.7.2 Emotional Formulations

In this short retelling of exodus, Israel's emotional attachment to the God of signs, wonders and power is

⁵³⁹ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 81-82.

⁵⁴⁰ See the notes on the use of this term in Deuteronomy 4:34-38.

⁵⁴¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 93.

⁵⁴² The emphatic infinitive absolute is used together with the verb.

emphasized through the threefold repetition of **יהוה אלהיך**. The shared fate of Israel, set in contrast to that of the nations, further bolsters a perception of shared identity. The narrative portrays exodus as the prototypical way God will differentiate Israel from all other nations. As God dealt with the “other” in Egypt, he will deal with the “other” peoples. The paradigmatic exodus not only provides the rationale for war and the strict prohibition against assimilation, but it creates a perception of shared fate.

5.7.3 Temporal Formulations

The promise of supernatural deliverance for the new generation is like that of the prototypical exodus generation. Again, the “you” of Israel extends beyond a single generation. The temporal formulation of remembering exodus brings the past to bear on the present. Remembrance is essential to handling that which threatens Israel’s distinctiveness. Whereas in the primary narrative, the exodus event asserts Israel’s distinction with respect to a particular context and threat of assimilation, retellings of exodus maintain and reinforce this distinctiveness for other narrative casts and subsequent hearers, unifying them over time and space.

5.8 Deuteronomy 11:2-4, 7

Set within a broader recollection of the great and awesome thing God had done for Israel (beginning in Deut 10:21), the retold exodus story in Deuteronomy 11:2-4, 7 takes on a distinctive quality. Not only does it emphasize the second plot element of God’s supernatural intervention on behalf of Israel, but it begins the story there. There is no indication of Israel’s initial state of adversity. The familiar expression **ידו החזקה וזרעו הנטויה** is followed by the unconventional phrasing **ואת־אתחיו ואת־מעשיו**. The narrative moves seamlessly to the third plot element, showcasing God’s awesome deeds at the Red Sea with no use of the familiar verb **יצא**. The replacement of **מופת**, which in exodus retellings refers specifically to God’s supernatural interventions in Egypt, with the more general term **מעשה** allows for the use of derivatives of **עשה** to connect all of God’s interventions (11:3-7). Thus, the bringing up (**יצא**) from Egypt is replaced by what God did (**עשה**) at the sea. The unconventional construction and phrasing of this retold story places emphasis on the uniqueness of the God of exodus rather than on Israel’s experience of it.

Although the emphasis of this story is on God’s actions, the narrative nevertheless contains important evaluative, behavioural and temporal formulations of collective identity.

5.8.1 Evaluative Formulations

Rather than defining Israel or her boundaries (cognitive formulation) this story defines God as the enemy of Egypt. The retold exodus story emphasizes God’s punitive actions against Egypt, placing heavier emphasis on the devaluation of the “other” than in any of Deuteronomy’s other exodus retellings. The devaluation is thorough; Pharaoh, his country, his army, his horses and chariots are overwhelmingly enduringly shattered. The inclusion of the story of Dathan and Abiram (v. 6; cf. Num 16) is innovative and unique. This provides the first hint of the partial categorization of Israel as “other,” which will be found repeatedly and more explicitly in retellings examined in Chapter 6.

God stomps out all threats to Israel’s identity, external (i.e. Egypt) and internal (i.e. the households of Dathan and Abiram). God’s efforts to separate out a distinctive people are underlined by the rather

hymnic, five-fold repetition of **אשר עשה** that joins these two stories (vv. 3-7).

5.8.2 Behavioural Formulations

Behavioural formulations of collective identity are found in the immediate context of this retold story: exhortations to fear, love and obey God, the promise of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience (10:2–11:1; 11:8-32). Enveloping the exodus story within these formulations implicitly places the remembrance of exodus—with an emphasis on God’s deeds—at the core of covenantal obedience. It is the impetus and rationale for acceptable group attitudes and behaviours, “the springboard of action for the present.”⁵⁴³

5.8.3 Temporal Formulations

The emphatic contribution of this passage is the assertion that God’s discipline (i.e. the lessons learned from these mighty acts of judgement) is the experience of *this* generation of Israel. The story is bracketed by that which “your children have not known or seen” (v. 2) and that which “you have seen” (v. 7). The contention—that God’s miracles to set apart a people were not experienced by the children of the listeners but by the listeners themselves—should be heard in conversation with Deuteronomy 5:3, which argues that God’s covenant was not with the listener’s ancestors but with the listeners themselves. The exodus story is neither a second-hand memory nor a child’s acquired inheritance. Instead, hearers must personally experience and participate in it. Otherwise, the statutes and ordinances of God, subsequently presented in Deuteronomy 12–26, will be groundless and inexplicable.⁵⁴⁴

The design and content of this exodus retelling emphasizes Israel’s positive evaluation and her need to actualize the exodus in personal experience. The latter is the core of covenant obedience. This passage clarifies the tentative interpretation drawn from Deuteronomy 6:21-23, namely, that the retelling of exodus takes priority over the experience of exodus. While the retelling may take priority over the historic event, this recollection of exodus is the primary entry point into the ongoing experience of exodus. The living memory of exodus is more crucial to Israel’s self-definition than a historically verifiable event.

Common to all the retellings in Deuteronomy, the exodus story blurs the line between the exodus generation and succeeding generations. A rhetorical bridge binds together Israel’s many generations, creating a sense of unity and reasserting the claim of God on every generation of Israel.⁵⁴⁵ There is no question; Israel’s identity is represented as coherent over time.

5.9 Deuteronomy 26:5b-9

With the exceptions of the short retellings of Deuteronomy 15:15 and 24:18, all other retold exodus stories in Deuteronomy are found prior to the legal portion of chapter 12 through 26. The final story meeting the qualification of an exodus retelling is found near the end of this section. Deuteronomy 26:5b-9 contains all three major plot elements of the primary exodus story and the two minor ones as well: the descent in Egypt and entry into the land. Images and vocabulary shared with the primary narrative consist of the portrayal of

⁵⁴³ Ronald E. Clements, “The Book of Deuteronomy: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *NIB: Numbers-Samuel* (ed. Leander E. Keck, et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 2:369.

⁵⁴⁴ Thomas W. Mann, *Deuteronomy* (WestBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 103.

⁵⁴⁵ Clements, “Book of Deuteronomy,” 369.

Israel as becoming עֶצְרוֹם and רַב in Egypt (Deut 26:5b; Exod 1:9; 5:5), language of affliction (עֲנִיעָנָה, Deut 26:6-7; Exod 1:11-12; 3:7; 3:17; 4:31), hard labour (עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה; Deut 26:6; Exod 1:14; 6:9), oppression (לְחִץ; Deut 26:6; Exod 3:9); the supernatural intervention of God (יָד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה) and of being brought out (יִצָּא). As previously noted, Deuteronomy uses some of these phrases in ways that are distinct from the primary narrative.⁵⁴⁶ It also shares with Numbers 20:14-16 the language of Egypt's mistreatment (רָעָה), of Israel crying out (צָעַק) and of God hearing Israel's voice (וַיִּשְׁמַע קִלְנוֹ). Finally, Deuteronomy contains unique exodus vocabulary, מֵרָא גִדְלָה (Deut 4:34; 26:8; 34:12) and עָמַל (Deut 26:7).

Both the shared and the innovative exodus vocabulary found in this retelling have significance with respect to collective identity formulation. Firstly, shared life stories with stable elements create a sense of coherence among hearers and storytellers across time and space. Secondly, innovative, dynamic elements alongside of the stable elements allow the story to be "translated"⁵⁴⁷ so as to be taken up by successive social actors.

Deuteronomy 26:5b-9 weaves together cognitive, emotional and temporal formulations all with the potential of creating of social identity.

5.9.1 Cognitive Formulations

Deuteronomy 26:5b-9 is an identity constructing narrative presented as a story. It captures key understandings about what it means to be a member of Israel, reducible to "we are a people who..."⁵⁴⁸ As Israel recites the exodus story, she divests herself of all personal concerns and aligns herself with the community⁵⁴⁹ of all who have been brought out of Egypt. This act cognitively and collectively defines her; the exodus story encapsulates what it means to be a member of Israel. "Us" and "them" language also categorizes Israel as separate from Egypt.

5.9.2 Evaluative Formulation

Israel's story differentiates between the "us" and "them" categories by emphasizing the positive valuation of Israel as going from being "few in number" and "an alien" to "a great nation, mighty and populous" (26:5), favoured by God and gifted with "a land flowing with milk and honey" (26:9). Egypt on the other hand is devalued by God's "mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders" (26:8).

5.9.3 Emotional Formulations

The words and images used to evaluatively differentiate Israel from Egypt integrate the hearers emotionally and bind them to the group. A "surprising, 'undeuteronomic' memory"⁵⁵⁰ is unique to this exodus story: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor" (v. 5b). The phrase fittingly refers to Jacob, who took his small family down to Egypt. He is "Aramean" due to his marriage to two Aramean women. While this retold exodus

⁵⁴⁶ See the earlier discussion on Deuteronomy 4:34-38.

⁵⁴⁷ Condor, "Social Identity," 291.

⁵⁴⁸ Cornell, "Story," 42.

⁵⁴⁹ Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 246.

⁵⁵⁰ J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (ACOT; Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 384.

story traces Israel's old identity back a step further than slavery in Egypt, "wandering Aramean" does not primarily anchor Israel's identity in the patriarchs. The indirect mention of Jacob allows for the attachment of the adjective "wandering" to describe Israel's ancestor. When this phrase, set at the beginning of the exodus story, is placed in relation to the ending of this particular story—Israel's landedness (v. 9)—it becomes clear that its purpose is to trace all Israel back to a common condition, rather than to a common ancestor. The old identity defined by homelessness and misery is powerfully contrasted with Israel's new identity of being delivered by God and being given a lavish homeland.

5.9.4 Behavioural Formulations

Here, as in Numbers 20:14, the exodus story is placed in the new generation's mouth, as if telling this story were crucial to its identity. Israel is commanded to observe her first celebration of Firstfruits. The precise purpose of the celebration is to remember exodus. Landedness and fruitfulness are not viewed here as a fulfilment of ancestral promises but as the accomplishment of exodus. Israel's slavery and deliverance from Egypt is relevant to her present situation and gives meaning to her acts of worship. All Israel is to celebrate this first Firstfruits in order to remember her exodus identity. Whereas, the multiple retellings prior to the legal portion of Deuteronomy place a somewhat stronger emphasis on exodus identity as motivating covenant-keeping behaviours,⁵⁵¹ this unique retelling in the legal core portrays covenantal behaviours as reminding Israel of her exodus identity.

5.9.5 Temporal Formulations

In the midst of this drama of wandering, affliction and deliverance, the narrative switches from talking about the plight of the ancestors to a "we" and "us" memory of suffering. Because of the shifting pronouns (from third-person masculine singular pronouns and verbs in verse 5b to first-person plural direct object in verse 6 and first-person plural verbs and possessive pronouns in verse 7), exodus group members are seen as coherent over time, descriptive of all Israel. That is to say, the identification process begins with a third person telling of the story and ends with the storyteller participating in the story.⁵⁵² This process is repeatable by every generation. The SIA recognizes that such temporal formulations are essential to corporate identity. Identity stories such as this cannot endure over time or space without being taken up by successive social actors. As the story is taken up, translated over time and dispersed over space, the perception of an ontological continuity encompassing successive generations is created.⁵⁵³

5.10 Significance of Identity Formation in Numbers and Deuteronomy

When the retold stories of Numbers and Deuteronomy are considered in conversation with one another and with the primary exodus story, several additional effects on the hearers come to light. Firstly, these retold stories make explicit for hearers that which was only implicit in the primary exodus story (Exod 15:1-21), namely, that all Israel (present and future) must not only tell the exodus story, but they must participate in it. Deuteronomy portrays a non-exodus-generation transmitting the story as if the obligation

⁵⁵¹ The explicit exception to this is Deuteronomy 6:21-23 in which a commemorative service inspires remembrance of exodus identity.

⁵⁵² Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 247.

⁵⁵³ Condor, "Social Identity," 305-306.

were their own. They identify themselves by telling the story. Further, they not only tell this shared life story, but they tell it as if they were, every one of them, eyewitnesses to it, having seen it with their “very eyes.”

Being the “people whom God brought out of Egypt” is achieved rather than ascribed.

Deuteronomy’s exodus narratives claim that this identity is not just achieved by painting doorframes with blood or being present at a historical event. Deuteronomy makes explicit, even in a way that Numbers 20:14-16 cannot, that exodus identity is achieved by participation in the story. Remember, retelling and participating in the exodus story becomes the definition of a prototypical group member.

The shifts from third to first-person plural subjects reflect the experiential participation of new generations in this share life story. The gap between generations of Israel is blurred and collapsed, resulting in a sense of coherence and unity across time. The boundaries are flexible enough to allow for additional participants to be added to the superordinate group of the “people whom Yahweh brought out of Egypt.” Along with the patriarchs, the exodus generation of Israel and the mixed multitude (assigned to this category by the primary narrative), a new generation is added as they tell the exodus story.

The exodus stories of Numbers and Deuteronomy are also significant in that they enlarge the concept of the “other” against which Israel may define herself. The outgroup category is expanded from a literal Egypt to include both Edom (e.g. Num 20:14-16) and the other nations (e.g. Deut 4:20; 7:18-19). This allows for the exodus story to maintain Israel’s distinctiveness over time and space. The distinction that is created, however, is less ethnic and more cultural-ideological. Therefore, the exodus generation herself may be “other” because of her failure to participate in an internal separation from Egypt.

Finally, these retold stories represent an exodus identity that is cognisant not only of deliverance but of oppression and homelessness. The dominated and the landless of the hearer’s generation might readily identify with these retold stories of a previous generation. The exodus story becomes relevant to the contemporary generation, and it offers them a cultural-ideological myth of common descent, unifying them with the exodus generation. The identity story endures because it is relevant to the present situation, and the social identity rhetoric of the narrative persuades hearers to take it up and enter into it.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL IDENTITY FORMATION IN RETOLD EXODUS STORIES (PART 2)

In Chapter 5, the retold exodus stories of the Pentateuch were examined for the various literary formulations of social identity presented in Chapter 3. The content of these identity formulations was compared and contrasted with that of the primary exodus story, and then the possible effect of these formulations as identity resources for later hearers was considered.

The current chapter examines the remaining eight retold exodus stories for the same types of cognitive, evaluative, emotional, behavioural and temporal social identity formulations. The order of consideration of the retold stories will be based on their narrative perspectives. The first is from Israel's perspective following conquest and settlement in the land. Subsequent stories have narrative vantage points of transition from the rule of judges to kings, of impending exile and of the post-exilic period. The retold stories from the Psalms, lacking explicit narrative perspectives, will be considered last.

The actual compositional order of the stories is not necessarily indicative of how these stories may have been used as identity resources in ancient Israel once they became available. Instead, similarities in language, ideology or theme and the logical succession of narratives in the larger story of Israel would have affected how the stories were heard in relation to one another. The exodus story of Joshua, for example, would have been heard in relation to Deuteronomy, not because of editorial influence or development but because the story of Joshua, as a whole, continued the story of Deuteronomy. In addition, commonly recognized correlations between the language and ideology of Deuteronomy and that of Joshua, 1 Samuel and Jeremiah would have caused any of the latter to be considered in conversation with the former.⁵⁵⁴

Literary constructions of identity will be exposed in these eight retold stories as they have been in the previous two chapters. The stories and their identity constructs will be considered in conversation with one another and with the primary exodus story to determine their mutual resonance, variance or dissonance.

6.1 Joshua 24:2-7, 17

The recital of exodus in Joshua 24 may be divided into two retellings. The first in verses 2-7 is set within a broader recollection of God's gracious acts toward Israel. The second, verse 17, is a response to the first. Both are narratively portrayed as prefacing a covenant renewal ceremony initiated by Joshua following Israel's conquest and settlement.⁵⁵⁵ In Deuteronomistic style, "all Israel" is assembled for the retelling of

⁵⁵⁴ This is not intended as an argument for (or against) the construct of the Deuteronomistic History. As stated both here and in the delimitations in Chapter 1, this thesis is not concerned with the formative or developmental history of the text.

⁵⁵⁵ David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 428. Other recitals of

exodus at this transitional time in her history. Her leader, Joshua, calls Israel to covenant faithfulness and asks her to choose between idolatry and serving Yahweh, the one who gave Israel the land. Two of the primary plot elements are present: the supernatural acts of God and the bringing out of Israel from Egypt.

In the primary exodus story and the retellings examined thus far, God is represented as *responding* to Israel's cries for deliverance. Here, however, God is depicted as *initiating* exodus. The commissioning of Moses and Aaron and the afflicting of Egypt are unprovoked. There is no mention of oppression in the story, and the only instance of Israel crying out to God is at the edge of the sea as the Egyptian army overtakes her. Yet, even this hint of trouble is overshadowed by the narrations of Israel's already accomplished bringing out (24:5-6; cf. Exod 14:10). Narrated in the divine first-person, this retold exodus story contrasts God's direct actions (taking Abraham, leading him, etc.)⁵⁵⁶ with the misdirected actions of both Israel and Egypt. The form and content highlight God's superiority over other gods and other human powers, thereby, preparing the hearer for the call to allegiance that follows.⁵⁵⁷

The dissonance between this retelling and the primary narrative and the other retellings grips the attention of the listener. Here, the listener is taken further back than the wandering Aramean of Deuteronomy 26:5 to Terah's purported worship of other gods beyond the rivers. God is portrayed as intent on freeing Israel from the worship of other gods, attributed to her distant, pre-patriarchal ancestors (24:2, 14-15) as well as her immediate ancestors in Egypt (24:14). This is the only instance where exodus is presented as God's response to Israel's worship of other gods. Here, Israel is not portrayed as unfortunate or oppressed but as culpable. This goes to the heart of the ancient Jewish debate of whether Israel's disgrace prior to the exodus was that she was a slave or that she was an idol-worshipper.⁵⁵⁸

The retelling continues with the uncharacteristic inclusion of Israel's wilderness experience, the significance of which will be examined below. This contrasts with the more common narration that takes Israel from Egypt directly to the land.⁵⁵⁹ Verse 14 continues the story with Joshua expounding upon the ramifications of God's historical review. The narrative perspective shifts again when the people respond to the exodus memory with consternation (24:16) and then with their own, distinct retelling of exodus (24:17). Israel does not admit to worshipping other gods. Her retelling is more consonant with the primary exodus story and the retellings of Numbers and Deuteronomy than of God's retelling. The familiar vocabulary of being brought out (עלה) of Egypt and of having been eye-witnesses of God's miracles are the only connections between the two retellings in Joshua 24. The identity formulations in these two retellings will be examined together as the second story is portrayed as a response to the first.

6.1.1 Cognitive Formulations

The two exodus stories provide conflicting definitions of Israel. The first, in 24:2-7, identifies her as

exodus related to covenant ceremonies have been identified by Boling and Wright, namely, Exodus 19:3b-6; Deuteronomy 6:20-25; 26:5-9. Robert G. Boling and G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1982), 534.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Deuteronomy 26:5-9 where the ancestors "went down," "lived" and "became."

⁵⁵⁷ Trent C. Butler, *Joshua* (WBC 7; Waco: Word Books, 1983), 267.

⁵⁵⁸ This debate is summarized in Joshua Kulp, "'We Were Slaves': Rava's Babylonian Haggadah," *Conservative Judaism* 60:3 (2008): 59-75.

⁵⁵⁹ See for example Deuteronomy 4:34-38, 6:21-23, 26:5b-9; 1 Samuel 12:8, Jeremiah 32:20-22.

descendants of idolatrous patriarchs (and idolatrous forefathers in Egypt—24:14-15), the second as prior slaves or descendants of slaves (24:17). The boundaries of Israel, thus, are contested as either “those who were idolaters” or “those who were slaves.” Both images are set in temporal terms connecting her to the exodus generation, creating myths of common descent and discordant, possible social identities. Therefore, the analysis of these images will be deferred to the section on temporal formulations

6.1.2 Evaluative Formulations

Joshua 24:2-7, 17 displays all three representations of evaluative formulations of identity. Firstly and common to most exodus stories, there is a clear differentiation between Israel and Egypt: God plagued Egypt but brought out Israel (24:5), put darkness between *you* (Israel) and the *Egyptians* (24:7) and made the sea cover *them* while *you* (Israel) saw what occurred (24:7). Secondly, verses 5-7 also highlight God’s overt devaluation of the Egyptians. The bringing down of Egypt, both literally and in negative evaluation, is adequately described. All that remains is an example of the elevation of Israel. This is certainly implied in God’s actions on her behalf. Nevertheless, this implicit positive evaluation is followed in the first story by a subtle, devaluation of Israel: ותשבו במדבר ימים רבים (7d). Terse and lacking specifics, the reference to her wilderness experience nevertheless contaminates Israel’s identity story and is augmented by the final phrase “for a long time.” This contamination is corrected by Israel’s responsive retelling. The use of עלה rather than יצא emphasizes the bringing *up* and not just the bringing *out* of Israel. Israel’s rebuttal also addresses the negative reference to her wilderness experience. It does this with the counterclaim that the desert experience is evidence of God’s extended care for Israel:

ישמרנו בכל־הדרך אשר הלכנו בה ובכל העמים אשר עברנו בקרבם.

6.1.3 Emotional Formulations

Evaluative and emotional formulations are intertwined in this retelling of exodus. The negotiation between the two exodus retellings, just described, creates emotional formulations of collective identity, poignant images of God acting against Egypt and for Israel. All Israel—the new generation and their ancestors (ואת־אבותינו)—are bound together in the language of the shared fate of those brought up out of Egypt, out of בית עבדים. These emotional formulations of identity in turn motivate behavioural norms.

6.1.4 Behavioural Formulations

With the corrective from the second exodus retelling in Joshua 24, the supernatural acts of God are shown to result in the positive valuation of Israel and her corporate sense of belonging to God. As such, these acts serve as the foundation for Joshua’s imperative identity norms (vv. 14-15) and the people’s commitment to them (vv. 16-18). Remembrance of exodus and God’s other exodus-like interventions on behalf of Israel (vv. 8-13, 17-18) are portrayed as the grounds for all acceptable group behaviours and attitudes.

Like the first Firstfruits celebration described in Deuteronomy 26:1-11, the covenant renewal narrated in Joshua 24 offers Israel the opportunity to remember exodus. It reminds the people that their identity and behaviour are grounded in the telling of and participation in the story of exodus. As in Deuteronomy’s retellings, the exodus story is the nucleus of covenant.

6.1.5 Temporal Formulations

The Joshua retellings are unique in that they differentiate between two possible social identities for Israel: a feckless, polytheistic one and a faithful one that worships the true God. Both God and Joshua paint Israel's present identity in terms of the former.⁵⁶⁰ The patriarchs are mentioned only to illustrate the long history of idolatry leading up to the narrative present. In other words, Israel is presented as a coherent, idolatrous group over time. God's actions on behalf of Israel are portrayed as precursors to the creation of a new identity for Israel, one that is devoid of idolatry. The implication is that Israel had never truly rid herself of false worship, despite God's faithfulness, and he urges her to do so in the strongest terms possible.⁵⁶¹

Israel is silent with respect to Joshua's/God's myth of common descent from idolatrous ancestors and the accusation that she is currently worshipping foreign gods. The people affirm that they will serve God and not forsake him to serve other gods (v. 16), but they never respond directly to Joshua's warning about serving other gods or to his exhortations to throw away foreign gods (vv. 14-15). The people respond with a proper retelling that highlights their prior condition as slaves, God's supernatural intervention and his bringing up of Israel (v. 17).

While the brief recollection of exodus in verse 17 may have served a liturgical purpose,⁵⁶² its placement following the God/Joshua speech and its content—reverting to a more conventional expression of the exodus story than verses 2-13—appear designed to contest the implied accusation that Israel's identity is polytheistic. That is to say, in the face of a dissonant exodus retelling with a discordant identity claim, Israel reclaims her traditional expression of exodus identity. Her ideal possible social identity⁵⁶³ is grounded in the primary exodus story. Israel refuses to be drafted into a different identity, past or present, that portrays her as a worshiper of foreign gods. Hearers of the retellings, however, influenced by their own context of interpretation, may see in this identity negotiation not only a foreshadowing of the history of Israel, but a real choice of possible social identities.

The coherence of Israel over time is seen, once again, in the shifting pronouns used to describe exodus. In the first retelling, the divine narrator switches between second and third pronouns—"when *they* cried out...he put darkness between *you* and the Egyptians"—as if there is no difference between the exodus generation and those now present. This is overtly stated near the end of the retelling, "and *your* eyes saw what I did in Egypt," the significance of which will be discussed below. The alternation between "you" and "they" unifies the contemporary generation with their ancestors in connection with exodus.⁵⁶⁴ Further, the shifting pronouns "invite any reader to make personal identification with those whose story is recounted."⁵⁶⁵ The result is a "transgenerational unity of the exodus experience."⁵⁶⁶ That is to say, the story incorporates successive social actors as a clear example of Israel's coherence over time as the "people

⁵⁶⁰ See Joshua 24:2, 14, 23.

⁵⁶¹ Howard, *Joshua*, 435.

⁵⁶² See Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 270; Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 538.

⁵⁶³ Cinnirella defines "possible social identities" as potential group memberships (both past and future), as well as current group memberships in "Temporal Aspects," 230.

⁵⁶⁴ Howard, *Joshua*, 431.

⁵⁶⁵ Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 535.

⁵⁶⁶ Nelson, *Joshua*, 276.

whom God brought out of Egypt.” The retelling also emphasizes that the exodus story is a shared life story.

In the second retelling, the second-person is consistently used by the present Israel, yet she says “The LORD...brought *us* and *our ancestors* up from the land of Egypt” (v. 17). The speakers actualize themselves as among those “brought up.” The expressions “your eyes saw what I did to Egypt” (Josh 24:7) and “before our eyes” (Josh 24:17) are similar to the language of Deuteronomy, and hearers who had access to both narratives would easily make the connection. Israel’s assembled masses are cast as coherent over time and as genuine witnesses to exodus.

When Joshua’s retellings are heard in conversation with those of Deuteronomy, the dissonance arising from Joshua’s first exodus story is further underscored. The second retelling affirms the new generation’s *discontinuity* with Joshua’s version of a possible social identity: idolatrous Israel. Thus, the retellings implicitly assert that exodus is the shared experience of both the exodus generation and the new generation only if the story is properly narrated. For later social actors, however, who could no longer deny the culpability of Israel, the initial, dissonant exodus retelling would offer a possible expansion of what it means to be included in the ingroup. That is to say, exodus identity might expand further to include not only the innocent, oppressed or homeless (as in Deut 26:5b-9), but also Joshua’s group of guilty idol worshippers who also had seen exodus. As the exodus story is adjusted to fit Israel’s changing identity, it might persuade successive, culpable generations to identify themselves as “the people whom God brought out of Egypt.”

6.2.1 Samuel 12:6-8

The retold story found in 1 Samuel 12 is part of a pattern representing the retelling of exodus by prominent characters during times of significant transition: prior to entry into the land (Num and Deut); after the conquest (Josh 24); just before (Jer 32) and after exile (Neh 9).

The literary context is key to understanding the retold story in 1 Samuel, and it will be exposed here and throughout the treatment of identity formulations. This retold exodus story is represented as being narrated just prior to the establishment of Israel’s monarchy. Samuel and God are displeased that Israel has asked for a king. Once again, “all Israel” is gathered to hear a message. Samuel begins with a legal defence of his time as judge. His claim to covenant faithfulness is clearly meant to stand in contrast to his characterization of the self-serving “manner of the king” in 1 Samuel 8:11-17.⁵⁶⁷ Samuel reminds Israel of the oppressive ways and practices of kings and how God had delivered her from Egypt and from כל־הממלכות הלחצים אתכם.

The specific setting—at the time of the wheat harvest (i.e. Feast of Weeks), ties yet another commemorative celebration to the remembrance of exodus (as the primary exodus story did with Passover and Deuteronomy 26 with Firstfruits). Samuel exhorts the people to listen to all the evidence of God righteous acts performed for them and their fathers (v. 7). He ends his speech with a parallel entreaty to consider what great things God has done for them (v. 24).

1 Samuel 12:6-8 contains two of the three major plot elements that define an exodus story: Israel’s prior condition of suffering (represented by her crying out in זעק not זעק) and the bringing out (יצא) of

⁵⁶⁷ Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1983), 115. Brueggemann agrees with this allusion in Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 90.

Israel. The two minor elements are also present: Jacob's descent into Egypt and settlement in the land. Samuel twice states that God sent Moses and Aaron and brought Israel's ancestors out of Egypt. Only this retold exodus story and those of Joshua 24:2-7 and Psalm 105 portray Moses and Aaron as characters in the exodus. This representation also ties these stories to the primary exodus story. Like most other retellings, the narration skips wilderness and conquest, portraying a direct transport from Egypt to the land. The specific plot elements of exodus that are clearly stated (being in the land of the "other," crying out, being delivered) are subsequently revisited by Samuel as he inveighs against the ancestor's response to the repeated saving acts of God.

6.2.1 Cognitive Formulations

In the exodus story found in 1 Samuel 12:6-8, the ingroup that cries out from Egypt and is delivered remains nameless. The exodus generation is simply referred to as "they," or in relation to Samuel's listeners as "your forefathers." Israel is not mentioned by name in the subsequent conflicts with named groups either (12:9-12). Instead, she is represented stereotypically as forgetful of exodus from the time of her settlement in the land to the present time in which she has asked for a king. Israel's namelessness in the exodus story seems to be tied to her present crisis of identity. The literary context of the retold story implies that the God of exodus and his exodus-like paradigm of deliverance are all that Israel requires. While the textual rhetoric is not univocally anti-monarchical, the institution of monarchy clearly does not define Israel. Samuel minimizes the theological significance of the king, his relevance to Israel's life and self-definition. When Israel is presented with the if/then blessings and curses evocative of Deuteronomy 28, even the king is included as one more member of the community subject to the covenant (12:20-25).

6.2.2 Evaluative Formulations

Samuel's ongoing speech following the retelling of exodus is a devaluation of the assembled Israel, the current ingroup. Even the note of positive reassurance—"the LORD will not cast away his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself" (v. 22)—is dampened by the final warning that persistence in evil will result in Israel being swept away (v. 25). Israel's uniqueness and positive valuation are sustained only in the retelling of the exodus with its two references to God's deliverance through Moses and Aaron (12:6, 8).

6.2.3 Emotional Formulations

Not only does the retelling of exodus promote Israel's sense of uniqueness and positive value in contrast to the remainder of Samuel's speech, but it rehearses God's relational commitment to Israel. His unflinching attachment to Israel would bolster her feelings of attachment and belonging. By tying present characters to exodus and later generations, Israel is represented as sharing one fate, whether of rejection (12:15) or of blessing (12:22).

6.2.4 Behavioural Formulations

The experience of exodus expressed God's relational commitment to Israel, and should have defined Israel's behavioural response. Yet, immediately following Samuel's retold exodus story is a historical review that shows otherwise, beginning with the opening words, "But they forgot the LORD their God" (12:9a). This

phrase implies that the forefather's behaviour was not in keeping with God's righteous acts. The experience of exodus should have engendered certain acceptable group behaviour and attitudes (i.e. identity norms). Instead, and in greater detail than his description of exodus, Samuel describes the period of judges as characterized by recurring cycles of forgetting God, resultant bondage, crying out to God and deliverance by one of God's chosen judges. The narrative is clear that Israel brought bondage on herself. The cycle continues until the people ask for a king, and the story arrives at the narrative present.

Samuel exhorts Israel to **הִתְצַבּוּ וְרֵאוּ**. The connection to the primary exodus story is clear as this phrase is only used in 12:7, again in 12:16 and in Exodus 14:13. Furthering the conversation with the primary exodus story, the manifestation of God's power is framed on the other side by the people's response—"all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel" (1 Sam 12:18), which resembles Exodus 14:31—"the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses." The manifestation of God's power in images of thunder and rain is analogous to the plague of Exodus 9:23-33. Direct and indirect references to exodus and the exodus paradigm are the primary focus of Samuel's theodicy.

1 Samuel 12 ends with a look forward to Israel's future. Samuel affirms God's faithfulness to "the people he was pleased to make his own" (v. 22). In Deuteronomic style, he exhorts and warns of future blessings or curses conditioned on Israel's willingness or unwillingness to remember and serve God. The remembrance and experience of exodus is represented as foundational to the people's obedience and crucial to their successful transition to a new era.

The retold story of exodus does not primarily call Israel, however, to look backward. Instead, Israel brings exodus forward into the present as motive for covenant keeping. Even the Philistine "other" who remembers the God of exodus acts judiciously (according to 1 Sam 6:6ff). As in the theology of Deuteronomy, Israel's forgetting of exodus and the God of exodus is a threat to her own identity, putting her at risk of being "othered."⁵⁶⁸

Remembrance of exodus and the God of exodus will motivate Israel's espousal of behavioural norms unlike those of her forefathers, ones that are consistent with her exodus identity, which can be taught to her by Samuel (12:23). The commemoration of the wheat harvest becomes, therefore, an occasion to remember exodus as the basis of covenant (cf. Firstfruits in Deuteronomy 26:1-9).

6.2.5 Temporal Formulations

In this story, there are no radically shifting pronouns to unite the present generation with the exodus generation. However, the two generations are united by the theophany-like thunder and rain that come down at Samuel's request, reminiscent of the wind, darkness and fire that came when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea (Exodus 14:13-31). Also, twice Samuel argues that Israel's fate is bound to her "fathers" (vv. 7, 15). In this context "fathers" refer to the exodus generation and their descendants.⁵⁶⁹ The Israel who gathered to hear Samuel is only the most current iteration of the people, tracing her lineage in an unbroken line back to exodus. She was a witness to **כָּל-צַדִּיקוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אֲתָכֶם וְאֵת-אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם**.

⁵⁶⁸ Diana V. Edelman, "YHWH's Othering of Israel," in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diane V. Edelman; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 41-69.

⁵⁶⁹ Thomas Römer, "Le cycle de Joseph," *Foi et Vie* 86:3 (1987): 3-15; and de Pury, "Le cycle de Jacob," 82.

The insinuation is clear: Israel will once again witness God's acts, but the hand of God will turn against her as it did to her fathers in the times of the judges. From Egypt to the present, Israel is represented as being coherent over time, because Yahweh was pleased to make her **לֹא לָעַם** (12:22). The cyclical return to oppression should not be the expression of her coherence over time. In order to successfully make the transition into the new era, Israel must remember and live in response to exodus.

6.3 Jeremiah 32:20-23a

Scholars have long noted the Deuteronomic phrasing and cadences of the Jeremiah tradition, including "rigorous covenantal conditionality" in which "blessings and curses are meted out in strict response to obedience or disobedience."⁵⁷⁰ The bulk of Jeremiah, fittingly, speaks of Israel's impending exile, vindicating the dismantlement of the nation as the intention of Yahweh.⁵⁷¹ However, Jeremiah is also un-Deuteronomic at times with messages of hope, of return from exile, of the restoration of Israel and of the making of new covenants between God and Israel (chapters 30–33).

In the prior literary context of the story to be considered, Jeremiah is called on to redeem the field of his cousin despite the impending Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. The legal minutiae of the transfer are noted, and this action takes on symbolic meaning. It "put Jeremiah on public record as claiming that there is indeed 'life after Babylon,'"⁵⁷² and it had "sacramental significance as a sign more widely relevant concerning God's future intentions for his people."⁵⁷³

The retold exodus story (32:20-23a) follows this transaction and is included in a prayer offered by Jeremiah (32:16-25). Prayers in written prophecy are rare, so its presence takes on particular ideological and theological significance. It is an attempt to make sense of the profound incongruity between the present experience of destruction and displacement and God's voiced purpose of rehabilitation and resettlement.⁵⁷⁴

Jeremiah's retelling of the exodus story contains two of the three major plot elements: the supernatural acts of God in Egypt and the bringing out of Israel. It focuses specifically on the displays of God's ability to accomplish his purposes. It is linked contextually to God's creational power. Connections to the primary exodus story are found in verses 20-21 in the phrase **הָאֵתָהּ וְהַמִּפְתִּים**. Also, this retelling shares the general form, content and vocabulary of Deuteronomy 26:8-9. Common to both are the idiomatic phrases **יָד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה** and **הָאֵתָהּ וְהַמִּפְתִּים** (Jer 32:21; Deut 26:8; cf. Deut 4:34; 5:15; 6:22; 7:19; 11:2; 26:8; 34:11-12). The retelling in Jeremiah also contains the common image of Israel going from Egypt directly to the land.⁵⁷⁵

Beyond shared vocabulary, this retelling and those in Deuteronomy both present an unreservedly

⁵⁷⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20-41.

⁵⁷¹ Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 264.

⁵⁷² Brueggemann, *Commentary on Jeremiah*, 302.

⁵⁷³ Ronald E. Clements, *Jeremiah* (IBC; John Knox Press, 1988), 194.

⁵⁷⁴ Walter Brueggemann, "A 'Characteristic' Reflection on What Comes Next (Jeremiah 32:16-44)" in *Prophets and Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (ed. Stephen B. Reid; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 19.

⁵⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 4:34-38; 6:21-23; 26:8-9; 1 Samuel 12:8.

positive recital abruptly broken off.⁵⁷⁶ Like Samuel's speech, Jeremiah's prayer acknowledges that Israel has sinned, thus meriting devastation. The Deuteronomic deed-consequence sequence⁵⁷⁷ is visible in verses 18, 23 and 24, and disobedience results in punishment extending across generations (32:18; cf. Deut 5:9-10).

The acknowledgement of a drastic outcome for Israel would be the anticipated end to Jeremiah's prayer. Instead, not only does it depart from Deuteronomy's typical deed-consequence sequence,⁵⁷⁸ but it exceeds even Deuteronomy's "more developed tradition"⁵⁷⁹ which offers the possibility of a return to God's favour conditioned on repentance and a return to obedience. The proclamation of God's greatness and the thematic affirmation "nothing is too hard for you" (v. 17),⁵⁸⁰ results in the prophet's seemingly illogical confession of faith: "Yet you, O Lord GOD, have said to me, 'Buy the field for money and get witnesses' — though the city has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans" (v. 25).

6.3.1 Cognitive and Evaluative Formulations

All of the methodological tool's identity formulations, with the exception of behavioural, are evident in this exodus retelling and its literary context. Because of the overlap, cognitive and evaluative formulations will be examined together, as will the emotional and temporal ones.

The exodus retelling in this passage both categorizes Israel as well as differentiating her from the "other." God brought a named group—"your people Israel"—out of Egypt; this is what it means to be Israel. No prehistory or prior existence is discussed. Israel's identity is attached directly to the God of exodus, and her distinctiveness is in contrast to Egypt. The text contends that this distinction was powerfully wrought, not only with the familiar "signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm" but also with "great terror" (v.21). Implicit in the decimation of Egypt is her devaluation as the outgroup. Israel's positive evaluation is also implied as the object of God's attention. However, it is muted by the statement "they did not obey your voice or follow your law."

6.3.2 Emotional and Temporal Formulations

Jeremiah's retold story intimates emotional and temporal connections between Jeremiah's Israel (v. 20) and the people God brought out of Egypt (v. 21). Coherence between the two groups is sustained by a myth of common descent with the mention of Israel's ancestors. However, it is exodus that truly unifies Israel past and present. They are also united by a shared fate, both negative and positive in nature. The disaster threatening Jeremiah's Israel is linked to the previous generation's lax attitude toward obedience. Also, the wonders perceived by "to this day" in Israel are described as a continuation of those performed in the primary exodus story.

Israel's coherence over time, however, is not demonstrated by shifting pronouns or phrases indicating that the present generation was also an eyewitness to exodus. Notably different from

⁵⁷⁶ Brueggemann, "Reflection," 20.

⁵⁷⁷ See Brueggemann, "Reflection," 21.

⁵⁷⁸ Brueggemann demonstrates that these elements are characteristic of Deuteronomic theology.

Brueggemann, *Theology of Jeremiah*, 143.

⁵⁷⁹ Brueggemann, *Theology of Jeremiah*, 37.

⁵⁸⁰ The affirmation, "Nothing is too hard for you" in verse 17 is paralleled by God's rhetorical question, "Is anything too hard for me?" in verse 27.

Deuteronomy 26, Jeremiah's retelling of exodus does not portray Yahweh's deliverance as a response to Israel's actions (descent into Egypt, oppression and crying out). Instead, like creation, the supernatural acts of exodus are unprovoked, God's own initiative.⁵⁸¹ Also different, God's current intervention does not follow the patterns and covenant obligations of Deuteronomy. Instead, "by the end of the poem, it is clear that the claims of creation are all mobilized toward Israel."⁵⁸² The prayer affirms that hope is based on God's character alone. It is unaffected by Israel's misdeeds or politics. The prayer, including the noble exodus story, utters "a newness that violates all trusted rhetoric."⁵⁸³ These expressions and images of exodus, like that of Jeremiah's field, become the source of Israel's illogical future hope—exodus wonders that continue "to this day." God's identity is coherent over time and Israel's hope is in his exodus-like interventions throughout time and on her behalf.

6.4 Nehemiah 9:9-12, 36

The exodus retelling of Nehemiah 9—set within a larger prayer of praise, confession and entreaty—is the only example from an explicitly post-exilic narrative perspective. It contains all three plot elements of the primary narrative.

Links with the primary exodus story include the setting. The people of Israel are led in prayer by the Levites, as in Exodus 15:1-21 when Israel is led in the Song by Moses, also a Levite. In addition, there is an extensive amount of shared vocabulary between Nehemiah 9 and Exodus 14–15:21. Present in both is the familiar vocabulary of suffering (עָנִי), crying out (זַעֲקָה) and signs and wonders (אֲתֹת וּמוֹפְתִים). The drama at the sea is compacted into a single verse that includes the division of the sea (הַיָּם בִּקְעָתָהּ; cf. Exod 14:16, 21; cf. Ps 78:13), the passing through on dry ground (יַבְשָׁה; cf. Exod 14:16, 22, 29; 15:19), the pursuit (רָדָה; cf. Exod 14:4, 8, 9, 23; 15:9) and the hurling of the adversary into the depth (מִצּוֹלָה; cf. Exod 15:5) like a stone (אֶבֶן; cf. Exod 15:5).

Following the rehearsal of exodus, the narrative recites how God saved Israel from other self-induced dangers, demonstrating goodness, patience and mercy. Israel's response, however, was forgetfulness, disobedience and rebellion. Perhaps the most devastating criticism is in verse 17 where the people of Israel are described as "determined to return to their slavery."⁵⁸⁴ Israel's history after the exodus is characterized in terms of cycles of sin, bondage, crying out to God and merciful deliverance, similar to 1 Samuel 12's retold exodus story. As in the narratives following the primary exodus story, the Nehemiah context traces Israel's forgetfulness back to the wilderness. This contrasts with Samuel's placement of culpability after settlement in the land and Joshua's attributing its beginnings to forefathers in Egypt or "beyond the River" (cf. Josh 24:14). In Nehemiah, wilderness failings are represented as stereotypical of Israel's ongoing behaviour, just as exodus deliverance becomes paradigmatic of God's actions.

The Levites cry out, in typical wilderness fashion, for God to see Israel's "hardship" and "distress" (9:32, 37). This is not explicitly the hardship of Egypt but rather the self-inflicted תִּלְאָה that occurred after leaving Egypt (Exod 18:8).

⁵⁸¹ Cf. Joshua 24:2-7.

⁵⁸² Brueggemann, *Theology of Jeremiah*, 47.

⁵⁸³ Brueggemann, "Reflection," 24.

⁵⁸⁴ Some manuscripts, including the Septuagint, have added "in Egypt" possibly based on the resemblance of this text to Numbers 14:4.

Israel's situation in the narrative present is then described as slavery, brought on by her sin. The narrative is not explicit whether this slavery stems from the arrogance and disobedience of previous generations or from the present generation's own disobedience and defiance. The cycle has come full circle and once again Israel is in bondage. If the pattern holds true, the next action rests with God alone: the conferral of mercy and deliverance. However, the supplicants do not presume to solicit this directly. Instead the people enter into a binding agreement to keep the Law of God, determining to make a break with the cycle of sin, suffering, and bondage. Hope of deliverance is only implicit.

Cognitive, evaluative, emotional and temporal formulations of identity are all found in the prayer of Nehemiah 9 with behavioural formulations in the subsequent narratives.

6.4.1 Cognitive and Evaluative Formulations

The protagonist in this retold exodus story and surrounding context is referred to primarily as **אֲבוֹתֵינוּ**. Foreign peoples and adversaries are both named (9:8-9, 22, 24) and unnamed (9:22, 27, 28, 30, 37). The unnamed are referred to as kingdoms and nations, foes, enemies, peoples of the land and simply as "they" in contrast to "we" (vv. 22, 27, 28, 36-37).

Nehemiah 9 describes the prototypical member of Israel, however, as one who is arrogant and unmindful of God's marvellous exodus-like deeds (**נִפְלְאוֹת**; cf. Exod 3:20; 15:11). This theme is emphasized throughout the prayer, which moves quickly from brief reflections on creation and Abram to a more lengthy contemplation of exodus. Israel is portrayed stereotypically like Egypt. The hiphil perfect third-person plural form of **יָד** used to describe the insolent Egyptian outgroup in Nehemiah 9:10 is reused to describe Israel in Nehemiah 9:16 and 29. The devaluation of the Egyptian outgroup, represented in images of mocking and fall (9:10-11), not only resembles that of the primary exodus story, but serves by comparison as a subtle warning to Israel.

6.4.2 Emotional Formulations

Despite the negative cognitive and evaluative formulations of Israel's identity in this prayer, the narrative contains abundant language and imagery of attachment to Israel. God's tender mercies are repeatedly displayed toward Israel in the exodus, the giving of the law and in various earthy expressions of his goodness: fertile land, clothes that did not wear out, feet that did not swell, and wells already dug. Israel is shown as a well-nourished people who should be revelling in God's goodness.⁵⁸⁵

6.4.3 Temporal Formulations

The prayer of the Levites is similar to the summary speeches of Moses, Joshua, Samuel and indirectly Jeremiah. Looking backward and forward and recalling exodus, whether through speeches or through prayers, is essential to Israel's collective identification and to her successful transition from one context or period to the next.

Israel is portrayed throughout this narrative as an unbroken succession of fathers and sons from the time of their suffering in Egypt onward (9:9, 16, 23, 24, 32, 34, 36). Initially, only the sins of the

⁵⁸⁵ Ralph W. Klein, "The Books of Ezra & Nehemiah: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," *NIB* vol. 3 (ed. Leander E. Keck, et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 813.

forefathers are recounted in the prayer. A shift occurs in verses 33-37, as the sins of the past and present are intermingled. The speakers are united with their ancestors in guilt, and the history of sinning becomes their personal history. They share the same fate of oppression and distress and can only hope for a future deliverance like that of their ancestors. In this portrayal of hardship (9:32) and slavery (9:36), Israel is coherent over time.

The purpose of the narrative, though, is not primarily to proclaim the present Israel's continuity with the ancestors in forgetfulness, culpability and subsequent slavery nor to extend those lines of continuity into the future, as Throntveit claims.⁵⁸⁶ Instead, the rhetoric of this text acts to highlight the inappropriateness of the ancestors' response to exodus from the wilderness period to the present.

Throughout Nehemiah's prayer, אֲבוֹתֵינוּ refers to the exodus and subsequent generations, rather than to the patriarchs. While identity construction in the post-exilic period increasingly appealed to genealogical continuity with Abraham (cf. 1 and 2 Chronicles), Abram is introduced in the narrative prior to the retold exodus story for a different purpose. Abram is introduced in Nehemiah 9:7 as an example of one who, like Israel, was "brought out" by God.⁵⁸⁷ As Klein notes, "the verb 'brought out' (יָצָא) yāšā', used of God's guidance of Abraham from his southern Mesopotamian home in Ur of the Chaldees (cf. Gen 11:28, 31; 15:7), suggests a kind of deliverance, or exodus, also for him."⁵⁸⁸ Rather than upholding Abraham as the father of Israel, the text endorses Abram's example as a possible social identity for those who have been "brought out." Abram's response of faithfulness is then contrasted with Israel's own response.

While no behavioural formulations of identity are explicitly endorsed in the prayer, the possible social identity represented by Abram—as a "brought-out one" who responds with faithfulness—offers a more desirable identity for Israel than her present one, and may be the motivation for her response in 9:38–10:39.

6.5 Narrative Perspectives of the Psalms

Four different Psalms (78, 105, 106 and 136) have language that meets the definition of a retold exodus story. They are considered below.

Because their poetic form is not bounded by a prose narrative like the poems and poetic patterns of Exodus 15, Nehemiah 9 and Jeremiah 32, they do not fit into a precise place in Israel's larger story. They are characterized by indistinct narrative speakers and narrative audiences. References to specific events or contexts are most often blurred or non-existent. The advantage is that they are able to speak more easily across generations. Their ability to express in words profound emotions also accounts for their enduring use.⁵⁸⁹ While the surveys of Israel's past in Psalms 78, 105, 106 and 136 may all initially resemble that of Nehemiah 9, a careful analysis will reveal that they each offer a creative retelling of Israel's story with a particular purpose in mind.⁵⁹⁰ They are, in the words of Hossfelt, "history in poetic refraction."⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁶ Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 92.

⁵⁸⁷ The similarities in Abram's exodus from Ur are less obvious than in the exodus of Abram narrated in Gen 12:10-20 (see chapter 4).

⁵⁸⁸ Klein, "Ezra & Nehemiah," 810.

⁵⁸⁹ Adrian Curtis, *Psalms* (Epworth Commentaries; Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004), xxii.

⁵⁹⁰ J. Clinton McCann Jr, "The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *NIB* vol. 4 (ed. Leander E. Keck, et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 989.

Some contextual analysis may be possible. For instance, examining the placement of adjacent psalms, the “Book” into which the psalm has been grouped or the “type” (e.g. historic psalms) may reveal clues about the compilers and their interpretative decisions. Organizational decisions, however, were made very late in the canonical process. Even as late as the Qumran community, the order and grouping of the Psalms in manuscripts was still fluid.⁵⁹² Because the canonical groupings may not offer additional insight into how the message and purpose of an individual psalm was understood by ancient Israel, they will first be considered as independent constructions. An introduction to the overall message of each psalm will be given before identity formulations are evaluated.

6.6 Psalm 78:11-14, 42-53

Psalm 78 exhorts hearers to heed the shared life story transmitted to them and to recognize their obligation to transmit it to the next generation. The retold exodus story is part of a larger recollection of Israel’s failure to live up to her identity as the people of God. Like Nehemiah’s version, Psalm 78 portrays the failure as beginning in the wilderness and continuing to the narrative present.

Only two of the plot elements that define an exodus story are explicitly present in the two-part retelling found in Psalm 78. Verses 11-14 narrate the dividing of the sea and the bringing out of Israel (third element). Verses 42-53 narrate God’s supernatural intervention in Egypt (second element) and Israel’s deliverance at the sea (third element). As will also be seen in Psalm 105, the plagues are central to this retelling, though the number and order seems to be of no interest to the psalmist.⁵⁹³ Therefore, rather than investigating how the differences in plague lists may have arisen from independent traditions and sources⁵⁹⁴ or out of particular theological-contextual concerns,⁵⁹⁵ the possible literary effect of their use will be the focus this study. For example, the portrayed effect of the plagues in Psalm 78 is more severe than in Psalm 105, represented as the unleashing of God’s anger against Israel’s enemies.

The exodus story is told in a context of forgetfulness of exodus, resulting in ingratitude and rebellion. The psalmist’s stated purpose is to offer a conundrum (חידה) for the people to consider (78:2), namely, that in spite God’s ample care of Israel, her forefathers were insubordinate and presumptuous toward him.

6.6.1 Cognitive Formulations

The Psalm begins in the first-person singular, with the speaker authoritatively calling “my people”—subsequently identified as Israel/Jacob—to listen (vv. 1-2). A shift to first-person plural occurs in verse 3, as the speaker joins himself to the “we” group and speaks of “our ancestors.” The SIA recognizes both the

⁵⁹¹ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, “Psalm 78” in *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (HER; ed. Klaus Baltzer; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 286.

⁵⁹² Curtis, *Psalms*, xxiv.

⁵⁹³ C. Hassell Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 105.

⁵⁹⁴ See the summaries in Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-50, revised* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 54-55; and John H. Choi, *Traditions as Odds: The Reception of the Pentateuch in Biblical and Second Temple Period Literature* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2010), 124-127.

⁵⁹⁵ Hossfeld, “Psalm 78,” Archie C. C. Lee, “The Context and Function of the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 78,” *JSOT* 48 (1990): 83-89; Dennis W. Tucker, “Revisiting the Plagues in Psalm CV,” *VT* 3 (2005): 401-411.

named group—Israel/Jacob—and the plural pronoun as categorization language and a potential resource for the formation of collective identity. Israel’s unbroken chain and ideal boundary of “ones who remember exodus”—past, present and future—is also established.

After the introductory exhortations the exodus story is retold as part of an extended, historical survey. As in the primary exodus story, Israel as a people begins in exodus. Thus, the “ancestors” begin with the exodus generation—not the patriarchs (78:12-13)—and extend through the wilderness generation. The ancestors—prototypes of Israel—comprise both the faithful fathers who have transmitted the stories of God’s praiseworthy deeds and the stubborn and the rebellious fathers who forgot them (vv. 1-11). The ingroup is characterized by identity confusion.

6.6.2 Evaluative Formulations

Both parts of the retold exodus story (11-14 and 42-53) hint at the positive evaluation of Israel by a God who orchestrates her deliverance and works wonders on her behalf. Prototypical Israelites put their trust in God and do not forget his deeds. This in turn leads to keeping his commands (v. 7). In verses 9-12 and 17-43, however, the psalmist—employing a third-person designation commonly used as a label for the outgroup—exhorts hearers to differentiate themselves from a “they” who is negatively and stereotypically defined by lawlessness, rebellion, unfaithfulness and disloyalty. This “other” is formerly and genealogically part of the self. Twice the negative behaviours of this outgroup is linked to their forgetfulness of exodus and God’s other נַפְלְאוֹת. Israel’s covenant relationship was grounded in God’s might acts, which “they” have forgotten.

Two “theys” are positioned side by side in the second part of the retold exodus story (42-53). The first is the one just described—the “other” who is part of Israel’s ancestry (42a). Then, following a subtle transition in 42b-43, verse 44 distinguishes the prototypical “other”—the Egyptian “they”—who is afflicted by plagues. Because there is no clear, intervening antecedent⁵⁹⁶ to explicitly distinguish the Egyptian “other” introduced in verse 44, the line is blurred between these two groups of “other.” That is to say, the culpable forefathers are barely distinguishable from Israel’s primary outgroup and both are the object of devaluation. This contrasts with a more obvious distinction between the Egyptian other and the non-culpable forefathers (“his people” vv. 51-53).

The Psalm ends by rejecting two tribes and choosing the tribe of Judah. But Ephraim had been “made culpable from the beginning”⁵⁹⁷ as verses 9-11 reveal. The narrative expressly binds Ephraim’s failure to live in a covenant relationship (v. 10) to their forgetfulness of exodus (v. 11). While boundaries normally allow for both the inclusion of the ingroup and the differentiation of the outgroup, Israel’s ideal boundary of “ones who remember exodus” now also excludes those who were once part of the self.

6.6.3 Emotional Formulations

The listeners in the narrative, and later unresisting hearers of it, are persuaded to identify with the faithful who retell the awe-inspiring wonders of God and to reject the forgetful and insubordinate forefathers.

⁵⁹⁶ Because צַדִּיק is singular (78:42b) and מִצְרַיִם is used as a geographic indicator, there is not a clear antecedent for the masculine plural pronouns and subject that begin in verse 44.

⁵⁹⁷ Hossfeld, “Psalm 78,” 287.

Belonging to the ingroup is inseparably linked to remembrance of God and his wonders. The story, with its focus always on God, is the basis of their relationship with God and subsequent trust and obedience. As in the retellings of Deuteronomy and Joshua, remembrance of God's mighty deeds—with an emphasis on the exodus—is at the core of the covenantal relationship.

6.6.4 Behavioural Formulations

While the narratives of Joshua, 1 Samuel, Jeremiah and Nehemiah also trace the people's rebellion from the exodus generation to the contemporary one, Psalm 78 does not accuse the contemporary generation of unfaithfulness. Rather, the implication is that such faithlessness may be avoided by hearing and telling the stories of God's great deeds. Hearers and tellers alike are exhorted to trust in God rather than turning from him by forgetting, being stubborn or rebelling like their forefathers.

Notably, the unfaithful ancestors are said to be from the northern tribes (cf. Ps 78:9, 67).⁵⁹⁸ Although not explicit, the exile of the northern kingdom may be represented in 78:59-67. If so, the exhortations to remember and retell God's glorious deeds would then represent a call to covenant renewal for the southern kingdom to avoid an imminent national catastrophe.⁵⁹⁹ Regardless of historical intent, however, Greenstein argues that the psalmist "practices memory, not to recount the past, but to prompt the kind of remembrance that leads to change."⁶⁰⁰ The purpose of receiving and transmitting the story of God's great deeds is to guard participants against the stubbornness, rebelliousness, disloyalty and unfaithfulness that characterized previous generations (78:6-8) and, thus, "to avoid becoming negative characters in such a sad story."⁶⁰¹ Remembering and telling the story is the behavioural norm that motivates covenant keeping and creates and maintains ingroup identity. But the order of the narrative in Psalm 78:10-11 and 32-42—with the covenant breaking preceding the forgetting of exodus—may also suggest that forgetfulness of exodus is an example of covenant breaking or even the result of it. The latter is consonant with the retold stories of Deuteronomy and Joshua that portray specific acts of covenant keeping provoking the remembrance of the exodus. Remembering exodus and keeping covenant exist in mutual relationship according to the retold exodus stories.

6.6.5 Temporal Formulations

Psalm 78 portrays Israel's collective identity as coherent across generations in several distinct ways. As in Exodus 15, there is a violation in the temporal sequencing of the story line. In verses 9-11, the omniscient narrator portrays narrative actors as looking backward in time with forgetfulness. Then time moves forward from Egypt to Canaan as Israel's story is remembered. In verses 43-72 time is turned back once again to remember that which has been forgotten. Hearers are called on to remember twice that which only "happened" once, and to take up this "collective memory" of the group without having had personal

⁵⁹⁸ These two particularities are discussed by Alviero Niccacci, "The Exodus Tradition in the Psalms, Isaiah and Ezekiel," *LA* 61 (2011), 13.

⁵⁹⁹ Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 565.

⁶⁰⁰ Edward L. Greenstein, "Mixing Memory and Design: Reading Psalm 78," *Prooftexts* 10 (1990): 197.

⁶⁰¹ Paul R. House, "Examining the Narratives of Old Testament Narrative: An Exploration in Biblical Theology," *WTJ* 67 (2005): 240.

experience of the events remembered.⁶⁰²

This narrative portrayal strips the exodus of its particular historical context and invites all Israel to participate in it. The remembrance of exodus is constantly relevant to the present, and ingroup identity is achieved by receiving, transmitting and participating in the story of God's great deeds (vv. 1-8). Ingroup members (the collective "we") are not defined primarily by genealogy but by this cultural/ideological myth of common descent. That is to say, the unbroken line to the past is marked by remembering and telling. This sets up the conflict between those faithful ancestors and "*their* ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation" (v. 8). Forgetting exodus results in loss of identity, while rehearsing exodus reorients life to the relationship that gives identity and hope.⁶⁰³

The representation of the ingroup as coherent over time—as transmitters and participants in the story—serves as an identity resource for later hearers of the narrative. In other words, the inclusiveness of the narrative allows Israel's stories to take on a formative nature. Later hearers will also become a chapter in the story, represented either as those who remember or as those who were forgetful, stubborn and rebellious. This undoubtedly places Israel's shared life story at risk of being transformed so much that it no longer sustains identity and continuity. At the same time, it allows each new generation to appropriate and participate in the story.

Psalm 78 also further enlarges the category of the "other" against which Israel may define herself. To the classical understanding of Egypt as "other" were added Edom (Num 20:14-16) and other nations (Deut 4:20; 7:18-19). Psalm 78 adds to this category those who were formerly part of self. This "other" explicitly includes the northern tribes but potentially includes the psalmist's audience if they fail to transmit the story. As with the retellings of Numbers and Deuteronomy, therefore, this is less an ethnic distinction than a redrawing of ingroup boundaries based on one's participation in the exodus story. The assertion of these exodus stories is that the "people whom God brought out of Egypt" is defined by remembering exodus, whether one is entering the land or returning to it, on the verge of a new kingdom or faced with impending siege. Even those who are ethnically Israel can be excluded from this superordinate identity by a stubborn forgetfulness of exodus. Prototypical members of Israel, however, are those who know and remember God's wonders and transmit them to the next generation.

Psalm 78's exodus retelling shares vocabulary and images with other exodus stories, which adds to Israel's perceived coherence over time. The compositional influence of the Pentateuch, in particular Deuteronomy, has been widely debated.⁶⁰⁴ However, even if there were no compositional influences, similarities in language or themes would place Psalm 78 in conversation with the other retellings of exodus for those hearers who had access to them. It shares an extensive amount of vocabulary with the primary exodus story (e.g., *עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא* 78:12; Exod 15:11; *בִּקַּע יָם* 78:13; Exod 14:16; *וַיִּצְבּ־מִים כְּמוֹ־נֵד* 78:13; Exod 15:8).⁶⁰⁵ Even though the psalmist's version of the plagues "diverges notoriously from both the

⁶⁰² This according to Halbwachs is the task of a social group. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 52-53.

⁶⁰³ Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr, *Psalms* (NCBC; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 343.

⁶⁰⁴ A bibliography of the various positions is given in Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127:2 (Sum 2008): notes 14-16.

⁶⁰⁵ A comprehensive comparison is found in Greenstein, "Memory and Design," 205-208.

sequence and the wording of the Torah⁶⁰⁶—the series ends with an intractable link to the primary exodus story **וַיֵּךְ כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּמִצְרַיִם** (78:51; cf. Exod 12:29).

More important than lexical connections, however, are the identity claims shared between Psalm 78 and the other retellings. Like the primary exodus story and Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78 emphasizes Israel's perpetual obligation to remember and retell the exodus story (Exod 10:2; 12:26-27; Deut 6:20-23). Forgetting the God of exodus and the wonders he performed (Ps 78:7, 11; cf. Deut 4:9; 6:12; 8:14; 1 Sam 12:9) stands as a constant threat to Israel's identity.

6.7 Psalm 105:23-39

Like Psalm 78, Psalm 105 begins with a call to remember God's "wonderful works" (v. 2). However, this retelling is to be told "among the peoples" (**בְּעַמִּים**), not to the next generation of Israel, and its focus is on God's promise, purpose and his praiseworthy deeds, not on Israel's actions and reactions. The retold story stretches from God's promise of land (vv. 9-11) to Israel's entry into it (v.44). Like Joshua 24:17, the wilderness experience is remembered, but the narrative focuses on God's provision and avoids discussing Israel's failures.

The greatest amount of mnemonic space in Psalm 105 is occupied by Israel's exodus story—from descent into Egypt to her joyous deliverance (vv. 23-28), with anticipatory (vv. 2 and 5) and summary remarks (v. 43). While all the major and minor plot elements of a retold exodus story are present, Israel's experience of oppression is minimized. None of the language of the primary narrative or other retold stories is used here to describe Israel's distress. Only general images are offered of Israel's prior condition, first as foreigners and later as a hated people (vv. 23-25). True to the stated purpose in verse 2, the plagues are examples of God's power, evoking praise. The Psalm selectively recasts Israel's deliverance, eliminating Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel and her distress at the sea, instead asserting simply, "Egypt was glad when they departed" (v. 38).

The retelling of exodus in Psalm 105 serves not only to display reasons for praise but to model a possible social identity characterized by a faithful and grateful response to God's wonders. The psalmist calls the people to make known, sing, tell and remember (vv. 1-5) and then exemplifies these actions for them.

All five types of identity formulations are present in this retelling and its literary context.

6.7.1 Cognitive Formulations

In the first five verses of Psalm 105, the audience is addressed anonymously by ten masculine plural imperatives. Other categorizing labels include **בְּשִׁירָה** (v. 15), **עָמִי** (vv. 25, 43) and **עַבְדֵּי** (v. 25). Collectively, they define Israel in relation to **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ** (v. 7). The psalm also names the people "Israel" as they enter Egypt (v. 23) and a second time as they are brought out (v. 37). This highlights again that the sojourn in and departure from Egypt was commonly perceived as the formative point of the people known as Israel. Finally, the group label **בְּחִירָיו** occurs in both verse 6 and 43, thereby enclosing the exodus story. Similar to Deuteronomy, Psalm 105 interprets the significance of exodus for Israel in terms of being chosen.

⁶⁰⁶ Greenstein, "Memory and Design," 207.

6.7.2 Evaluative Formulations

Evaluative formulations of collective identity are numerous in Psalm 105. In verses 12-15, proto-Israel is differentiated from others as the recipient of divine favour and protection. This differentiation unambiguously raises the evaluation of the ingroup. This continues in Egypt where Israel's positive distinctiveness is acclaimed in verse 24: "And the LORD made his people very fruitful, and made them stronger than their foes." The outgroup, Egypt, is the target of devaluation as she is struck by decimating plagues emanating from Moses, Aaron and God (vv. 26-36).⁶⁰⁷

Instead of devaluing Egypt by expounding on her demise (cf. Exodus 15), Psalm 105 exalts God's chosen by spatially differentiating Israel from Egypt twice (vv. 37, 43). The twofold "brought out" declarations violate the temporal sequence of the story line. This would allow both the narrative audience and the hearers of it to interpret the atemporal deliverance as inclusive of them as well as the exodus generation.

6.7.3 Emotional Formulations

The shared fate of "a thousand generations" (v. 8) unifies the entire psalm. Both the common usage of "thousand" in the Hebrew Bible⁶⁰⁸ to signify "innumerable"⁶⁰⁹ and the context describing the promise of land as an "everlasting covenant" (v. 10) indicate that Israel's shared inheritance extends over time and generations.⁶¹⁰ In the language of the SIA, this shared claim creates a sense of attachment for all Israel. Exodus is pivotal to the fulfilment of this promise and is, therefore, fundamental to Israel's identity. This is asserted rhetorically by the placement of the exodus story in the centre of the narrative structure of the psalm.

6.7.4 Behavioural Formulation

A behavioural norm appears in the concluding verse of Psalm 105. Everything God has done for Israel is designed so that she might "keep his statutes and observe his laws" (v. 45). Although the content of this formulation is sparse, its placement at the end of the psalm enhances its impact and the significance for the hearer. Like the retellings of Deuteronomy and Joshua, Psalm 105 implicitly asserts that exodus must be remembered in order to keep Torah.

6.7.5 Temporal Formulations

Like Psalm 78, the dominant identity formulations here are temporal. Firstly, Israel is emphatically portrayed as a coherent group over time but not based on a strong genealogical myth of common descent as, for example, Mays claims.⁶¹¹ Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are not mere illustrations of the ancientness of Israel's bloodline. The leitmotif of this psalm—land—with nine references, makes this

⁶⁰⁷ Not part of the exodus story, a devaluation of other nations and people is similarly recounted in verse 44 as Israel is given the land and wealth of other nations and peoples.

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. Exodus 34:6-7 and Deuteronomy 5:10.

⁶⁰⁹ Jack B. Scott, "109a אֶלֶף (°elep) thousand" in *TWOT*, Vol I (ed. R. Laird Harris, et al; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 48.

⁶¹⁰ The covenant referred to here is the promise of land to Abraham. The leitmotif of land will be discussed in the section on temporal formulations.

⁶¹¹ James L. Mays, *Psalms* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 338.

apparent. Landless Abraham is promised a land (v. 11). His few descendants were not a people but strangers and wanderers (v. 12). While the Joseph story anticipates Israel's future identity formation, the homelessness of verse 12 is emphatically repeated in verse 23. So then, the patriarchs of Psalm 105 are like the stereotypical "wandering Aramean" of Deuteronomy 26:5b-9 who anchor Israel's prior identity not in her bloodline but in a common condition, a cultural-ideological myth of common descent, which is a stronger constructor of collective identity than genealogy.

Secondly, much of the language and images found in Psalm 105 would resonate with anyone familiar with the primary exodus story and its prologue. This includes Psalm 105's prologue to the exodus story that exhorts Israel to "tell of all his wonderful works" (v. 2), references to the Abraham-Isaac-Jacob triad (vv. 9-10), Joseph's story (vv. 16-22) and the plagues (vv. 26-36). The images of Israel being brought out with rejoicing (v. 43) and being exhorted to sing (v. 2) would link hearers with Moses' Song of Exodus 15. The shared language and images thereby join the psalmist's audience collectively with the exodus generation. Participation in remembering is essential to what it means to be Israel. Singing and telling the story of God's mighty deeds reminds Israel who she is and how she is to live.

6.8 Psalm 106:7-12, 21-23

Psalm 106 begins and ends with praises to God, but its focus is squarely on Israel's failures. Her vocation to praise God is compromised by her sin and its consequences.⁶¹² The psalm is mnemonically dense with wilderness images, eventually characterizing even her existence in the land. The dominate tone is mournful. Moses, Phinehas and Yahweh himself have stood in the breach to prevent the destruction of Israel (vv. 8, 23, 30, 44-45). Unlike 1 Samuel 12 and Nehemiah 9, there are no cycles of returning to God, just a continual history of sin similar to Psalm 78. Verses 4 and 47 frame the psalm, indicating that the present Israel is once again in trouble, scattered among the nations and in need of God's deliverance.

The only positive highlight of this selective "historical" review is the first part of the exodus retelling (vv. 7-12). The exodus story is prefaced with a dissonant narration, like Joshua 24, of the prior wickedness and failings of Israel in Egypt which continued even to the drama at the sea (v. 7). The story contains no hints of the first plot element (Israel's oppression or distress), moving instead directly to the third element, the "bringing out of Egypt." God is portrayed as the one who initiated the deliverance in order to make his name and power known and to prevent Israel's imminent demise. This is the only instance in the psalm when the people of Israel respond positively: **יִשְׁרֵי תְהִלָּתוֹ יְאִמִּינוּ בְּדַבְּרֵי יְשִׁירֵי תְהִלָּתוֹ** (v. 12).

Unfortunately, Israel's belief is short lived as she quickly forgets God's acts (v. 13). The verb **אָמֵן** is used a second time after the next reference to the exodus story where Israel's continues her sinful forgetting (v. 21-22). The second plot element—God's supernatural deeds, signs and wonders, and so forth—is half forgotten in the retelling just as the Israel of the text is characterized as having forgotten God "who had done great things in Egypt" (v. 21) Despite Moses' intervention, Israel **לֹא־הֶאֱמִינוּ לְדַבְּרוֹ** (v. 24). The correlation is once again clear: appreciating exodus resulted in belief/trust (**אָמֵן**) in God, forgetting it culminates in incredulity.

The psalm ends with Israel finally raising an exodus-like cry for help (v. 47), followed by an

⁶¹² Mays, *Psalms*, 341.

exclamation of praise ending with the confirmation אמן. This hints at the hope of exodus expressed in the verb אמן, and together these two terms structure the psalm.

The exodus retelling and itself narrative context in Psalm 106 is similar to that of Nehemiah 9, which recites God's goodness, patience and mercy as well as Israel's failure. As with Joshua's first retelling, Israel's forefathers are accused of sinning even while in Egypt; but unlike Joshua's portrayal of the sinful forefathers as beginning "beyond the rivers" (Josh 24:2, 14), the forefathers in Psalm 106 are only those of the exodus generation. Also, in contrast to Joshua's precise portrayal of idolatry as the principal sin in Egypt, in Psalm 106 sin is characterized vaguely as the failure to remember God's חסד.

The purpose of Psalm 106 and its exodus retelling is found in verse 47: Israel needs deliverance. The exodus story confronts Israel with her current predicament and offers her hope. Deliverance in turn will result in the exultation of God's name (vv. 8, 47; cf. Exod 15; Psalm 105).

All the rhetorical formulations of identity, with the exception of explicit behavioural ones, are found in this retelling and its narrative context.

6.8.1 Cognitive and Evaluative Formulations

In verses 4 and 5 of the psalm, the present generation of Israel is identified by the categorical formulations "your people," "your chosen ones," "your nation" and "your heritage." The plural pronouns "we" and "us" are used in verses 6 and 47. Previous generations are referred to both as "our fathers" and "his people," designations highlighting continuity with the narrative present, and as "they" and "them," rhetoric of differentiation. In this way, Israel is portrayed as united with her forefathers in guilt (v. 6) and the need for deliverance (v. 47), and yet she is potentially made distinct by her projected response of praise and gratitude (vv. 47-48).

6.8.2 Emotional Formulations

In verses 9-11, inter-group conflict is evident as God overcomes unnamed adversaries and natural forces (יָם-סוּף) that resist his plans for Israel. These emotional formulations assert God's attachment to the exodus generation and her belonging to him. A sense of solidarity with the exodus generation is engendered by the present generation's analogous cries of distress (vv. 44, 47) and by God's response of love (v. 45).

6.8.3 Temporal Formulations

Once again temporal formulations of identity are evident as potential identity resources. Each generation over the centuries has contributed to a "backlog of sins" including the contemporary one.⁶¹³ Because of this, an exodus story narrating the deliverance of the innocent and oppressed (e.g. Exodus 14-15) would not do. Instead, Psalm 106 crafts the exodus retelling to fit the contemporary need for a Jeremiah-like, illogical hope based solely on the coherence of the exodus God over time. God is portrayed as one who defends his own name and reputation while simultaneously delivering a sinning people. In fact, the line between exodus and wilderness are blurred. While "in Egypt," Israel rebelled (מִרְדָּה; v. 7; cf. Num 20:10, 24; 27:14), and her sea crossing on dry ground is creatively described as "as through a wilderness" (כַּמִּדְבָּר v.

⁶¹³ Allen, *Psalms 101-50*, 70.

9).

Hope is possible for any generation, knowing that God has delivered the guilty in the past on the basis of his own commitment to covenant rather than theirs (vv. 43-45). The psalm itself ultimately offers all hearers an example of the confession and crying out for salvation that can change their own life story. A possible future identity that is discontinuous with the fathers is implicit. While the fathers responded to deliverance with rebelliousness and iniquity (v. 43), Israel vows to give thanks and glory in response to God's salvation (v. 47).

6.9 Psalm 136:10-15, 23-24

Psalm 135 was excluded from consideration as an exodus retelling since it contained only the second plot element, the supernatural intervention of God. Psalm 136, however, ties that plot element to the third, the bringing out of Israel at the sea. The first plot element is arguably present in the oblique references to "our low estate" (v. 23),⁶¹⁴ but there are no linguistic links with other exodus stories to support such an interpretation.

The psalm begins with a threefold imperative, "O give thanks," and it ends with a final repetition of the imperative. In between, the psalmist selectively recalls events from Israel's past. Some are specific (creation, exodus, wilderness, conquest and settlement) while others are imprecise (being remembered while in a low estate and being freed from enemies). Each phrase is followed by the response **וְלֵם חֲסִדוֹ** **כִּי לֵעַ**. The divine name **יְהוָה** is only employed once, in the opening verse, with **אֱלֹהִים** in verse 2, the shortened **אֵל** in verse 26 and **אֲדֹנָי** in verse 3. Throughout, however, God is described as "the one who...", reinforcing his identity as being constituted by his wonderful deeds and benevolence. While he gives general care to all (v. 25), his partiality to Israel is evident. The exodus story is central both literally and theologically to the psalm.

6.9.1 Cognitive, Evaluative, Emotional and Behavioural Formulations

Identity formulations are intertwined in Psalm 136 and will be examined together with the exception of temporal formulations, which will be considered separately due to their importance as a potential resource for identity formation.

The collective Israel is identified and differentiated from both Egypt (v. 10) and Pharaoh (v. 14). She is more personally designated **עַבְדִּי** and **עַבְדִּי** in verse 16 and 22, respectively, in contrast to other named and unnamed enemies (vv. 17-24). Like the primary exodus story, Psalm 136 portrays Israel as born when God brought her out of Egypt (v. 11). Unlike that narrative, however, there is no prologue, no mention of promises, ancestors or the descent into Egypt. The narrative jumps directly from the creation of the universe to the precipitous creation of Israel. This not only differentiates between her and the "other", it positively evaluates Israel by portraying her as the second major creative movement of God.

God's actions in history are clear indications of his steadfast love in general, but the distinguishing feature of Israel is God's particular commitment to her as expressions of his **חֲסִד**, another example of her

⁶¹⁴ This is suggested in Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 571 and Allen, *Psalms 101-50*, 299. The latter argues that "from our foes" (**מִצָּרֵינוּ**) functions as a wordplay for Egypt. Allen offers an extensive summary of other interpretations.

positive evaluation as the ingroup. In verses 10-24, God's partiality toward Israel is evident in the unbalanced inter-group conflict and the devaluation and defeat of Egypt and Israel's other enemies. The enemies are not worthy foes of God as he delivers Israel. He passes Israel through the midst of Egypt and the sea (10-15). He tosses Pharaoh's armies (v. 15, cf. Exod 1:27). He not only struck (נִכַּח) Egypt through their firstborn (v. 10, cf. Exod 12) but he struck (נִכַּח) other kings as well. The category of "other" is broadened to include any who would pretend to stand in the way of God delivering Israel into the land. She alone and no "other" is able to interpret God's deeds with the refrain "his steadfast love endures forever."

This lyrical phrase, "his steadfast love endures forever," is repeated 26 times. The emotional element is evident, as the refrain adds dimension to what it means to understand God's power. His "great wonders" are dramatized through time and over space, converging on Israel. She is portrayed as a unique creation, evaluatively distinct and particularly loved and favoured by her God. The portrayal of exodus as an expression of God's love places this psalm in conversation with Deuteronomy's retold exodus stories of divine love and election (cf. 4:37; 7:8). What was only declared briefly in Deuteronomy's exodus stories is repeated six times in this retelling (vv. 10-15). While Deuteronomy conditions God's love on obedience, Psalm 136 simply declares that it "endures forever." The only behavioural requirement is to "give thanks."

6.9.2 Temporal Formulations

The community expressing thanks is unnamed in Psalm 136. Israel is named three times and referred to only in the third-person as the one whom God saved in exodus and resettled in the land. The repetition of the bringing out of Israel in verses 11-12 and then again in 13-14 interrupts the story's chronology (cf. Exodus 15). It portrays exodus deliverance as an atemporal or recurring experience.

In verses 23 and 24, the community is finally represented by means of second-person plural pronouns, as God is identified as the one "who remembered *us* in our low estate...and rescued *us* from our foes." This shift of pronouns constructs a sense of continuous identity, bridging the temporal distance between past ("them") and present ("us") generations. A clear understanding of the historical setting of the Psalm is not necessary to understand the meaning and significance of verses 23 and 24. Though there are no contextual references to contemporary events, these verses appear to be a summary of the preceding history with the contemporary generation "us" assuming the identity of the foundational generation in similar circumstances.⁶¹⁵

6.10 Conclusion

The retellings of exodus in the psalms reveal distinctive identity resources. Their evaluative formulations, for example, expand the conception of the outgroup to a more symbolic interpretation of Egypt and allow for the inclusion of former members of the self in this designation (e.g. Ps 78). Mostly absent are the explicit behavioural formulations that are so prevalent in Deuteronomy. Instead of covenantal obligations, Israel is to live cognizant of exodus: remembering it, retelling it and giving thanks to the God of it.

According to these psalms, the past had not been lost simply because of the fathers' "misconduct"⁶¹⁶ in general but because of their failure to remember and live by the exodus story

⁶¹⁵ This is Nasuti's argument in Nasuti, "Identity in the Psalms," 138.

⁶¹⁶ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations* (FOTL XV; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans

specifically. Remembering exodus, therefore, was a solution—a way back—from failure. As in Psalms 78 and 106, Israel's failure was now an indisputable part of the story (cf. Joshua 24:2-7, 17). But the story has taken on a new, open-ended quality, and Israel is being drafted into the story. At times this story even needed to be slightly modified, as in Psalm 106:7, so that Israel could find her place in it.

CHAPTER 7

METHODOLOGICAL FINDINGS AND SIGNIFICANCE

Prior research on the social identity approach (SIA) has shown that collective identity is manifest in certain cognitive, evaluative, emotional, behavioural and temporal expressions. It has also shown that collective identity may be expressed in the texts of ancient collectives in analogous rhetorical formulations. With this in mind, a methodological tool for identifying narrative formulations of social identity was developed (chapter 3). This heuristic tool was applied to all exodus stories found in the Hebrew Bible, and chapters 4, 5 and 6 discussed the rhetorical formulations of identity that were observed in each story. The current chapter will consider the general and methodological findings of those chapters and their significance.

7.1 General Characteristics of Exodus Stories and Their Significance

Exodus 1:1–15:21, dubbed the primary exodus story, narrates the story of Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt. It presents itself as an objective narration of "real events." Its seemingly omniscient, although anonymous, narrator exhaustively reports not only "historical" details but overheard conversations, motives and the internal musings of characters as well.

Two particular aspects of the primary exodus story's content shed light on its purpose. Firstly, the story's sequential narration is interrupted by the placement of instructions to commemorate (12:14-20), remember and tell (10:2; 12:25-27). Secondly, the story concludes with a poetic, paradigmatic song that invites ongoing participation in exodus (15:1-21). This content indicates that the chief purpose of the narrative is not to present a sober historiographic account but rather to emphasize the importance of the persistent, ongoing participation of Israel in this exodus. As Alexander maintains, "The exodus was not merely a past event but an ongoing activity. Even those who have never been in Egypt were meant to see themselves as having been liberated from there."⁶¹⁷

Eighteen retold exodus stories were found using the definition set out in chapter 1. All eighteen are portrayed as retrospective accounts of the exodus. The nine Deuteronomic retellings present themselves as the first existential appropriations of this story by a non-exodus generation in their transition from the wilderness to the conquest of Canaan. As mentioned in chapter 5, this is the literary—not historical—claim of the text. The retold exodus story in Joshua 24:2-7, 17 is set in the transition from conquest to settlement, 1 Samuel 12:6-8 in the transition from the period of judges to the monarchical era, Jeremiah 32:20-23 in the transition from this kingdom period to exile and Nehemiah 9:9-12, 36 in Israel's transition back to the land after exile. Like Exodus 15:1-21, the retold exodus stories in the Psalms are

⁶¹⁷ T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 86.

presented as timeless, poetic rehearsals of exodus that invite the participation of all Israel.

The retold exodus stories portray Israel's rehearsal of and ongoing participation in the exodus, as was anticipated by the primary exodus story. In their final form, they have narrative settings at every major socio-cultural transition in Israel's history up to her restoration in the land following the exile. Even before an analysis of identity formulations, this last observation suggests the potential identity-forming purpose of retold exodus stories. Cornell posits that during significant socio-cultural changes ("periods of rupture") collective life stories are retold in order to re-narrate group identities that have lost their taken-for-granted quality.⁶¹⁸

The nine retold exodus stories set at the transition between the wilderness period and the conquest of the land, following the death of the exodus generation, are particularly significant. They illustrate the fundamental importance of the first transitional event when the story changes hands and is appropriated by those not present at the story's events. Taking on another's experience as relevant to one's own is crucial to continuing the life of the story.⁶¹⁹

7.2 Differences in Meaning, Vocabulary and Content and Their Significance

The retold exodus stories unabashedly re-present the exodus imaginatively and interpretively. Differences between the retold stories and the primary narrative are meaningful and apparent. They include differences in the interpretative meaning of exodus, differences in vocabulary use, and the inclusion or exclusion of various plot elements.

Interpretive additions to Deuteronomy's and Jeremiah's retellings are made possible by the retrospective vantage point that characterizes retold exodus stories. Deuteronomy's retellings interpret exodus in ways that could not ostensibly be expressed by the primary narrative's "objective" account of events, namely, interpreting exodus as representing God's love for and choosing of Israel. Deuteronomy 4:20 asserts exodus signifies Israel becoming God **עַם נִחְלָה**. Deuteronomy 4:34-38 explicitly states that God brought Israel out of Egypt because he loved and chose her. Deuteronomy's repeated inclusion of behavioural norms *in* (5:15; 15:15; 24:18) or *immediately after* retold exodus stories (4:39-40; 6:24-25; 11:8-9), however, sustains its overall theology: that God's ongoing favour displayed in exodus rests on Israel's obedience.

In contrast to Deuteronomy's interpretation of exodus as an expression of God's conditional love, Jeremiah's retold exodus story (32:20-23a) proposes a future, illogical hope and unconditional valuation of Israel. The implicit promise of deliverance is not based on Deuteronomy's deed-consequence sequence. It is neither a reward for proper behaviour nor clemency for repentance. Instead exodus is its own premise of hope, reflecting the extraordinary and unsolicited intervention characteristic of God. Psalm 106 appears to share this interpretation of the hope of a new exodus in the life of Israel.

Differences in vocabulary usage in retold stories compared to the primary exodus story also have particular significance. Deuteronomy 5:15, 15:15 and 24:18 all begin with an image of Israel—consistent with the primary exodus story—as having been an **עֶבֶר** in Egypt. The replacement of **יִצְא**, the most prevalent term of deliverance, with **פָּדָה** in 15:15 and 24:18, however, evokes the particular exodus scene

⁶¹⁸ Cornell, "Story," 45-46.

⁶¹⁹ Linde, *Working the Past*, 73-74.

of the sparing and consecration of the firstborn (Exod 13:11-16). This vocabulary change supports Deuteronomy's interpretation of exodus as representing God's election of and love for Israel.

The second exodus retelling in Joshua (24:17) substitutes יצא with עלה to emphasize the bringing *up* and not just the bringing *out* of Israel. This was a necessary response to the first retelling in 24:2-7, which had both explicitly and subtly devaluated Israel by accusations of idolatry and unwelcome references to her wilderness experience.

Another difference in vocabulary is the re-appropriation of wilderness language by exodus retellings. Unlike the linking of the primary exodus story to the subsequent wilderness stories, which narrate Israel's many failures prior to entry into the Promised Land, the retold exodus stories commonly portray Israel as going up out of Egypt and directly into the land (Deut 4:34-38; 6:20-23; 26:5-9; 1 Sam 12:6-8; Jer 32:20-23a). When wilderness experiences are narrated in exodus stories, they are used for the "othering" of Israel, as in Joshua 24:2-7 mentioned above (cf. Deut 11, Neh 9, Pss 78 and 106). In addition to this absence or different use of wilderness narratives with respect to the retold exodus stories, the term מוֹסֶה is re-purposed in the exodus retellings of Deuteronomy 4:34-38 and 7:19.⁶²⁰ Instead of evoking images of Israel's testing of God in the wilderness (cf. Exod 17:7; Deut 6:16; 9:22; 33:8; Ps 95:8), Deuteronomy 4:34 and 7:19 appropriate and incorporate it into the description of God's supernatural interventions in Egypt. That is to say, מוֹסֶה is added to יד חזקה ובורע נטויה דנא האתת והמפתים as a means used to deliver Israel from Egypt. Each of these three treatments of wilderness themes indicates the incompatibility of "wilderness" with Israel's ideal social identity represented by exodus story. By contrast, entry into the land is portrayed as part of this ideal identity, namely, as the completion of exodus.

In addition to the differences in the interpretative meaning of exodus and differences in vocabulary used in exodus stories, the varying use of exodus plot elements has particular significance. Retold exodus stories, by definition, include two or more of the major plot elements of the primary exodus story linked to one another in causal, sequential or associational ways. These provide the stable essence that makes them recognizable across generations. The stories vary, however, as to which major elements they employ. All retold stories were found to include the final plot element, the bringing out of Israel. In 11 of 18 stories, however, only one other plot element is present, either the prior oppression of Israel (five stories) or the supernatural deliverance of God (six stories). The presence and design of the additional plot element highlights the function of the exodus retelling in some narratives. This is seen in Deuteronomy 7:18-19's exclusion of any mention of Israel's descent into Egypt, her former condition of oppression or her crying out to God. This retold story places, instead, an increased focus on the supernatural acts of God that brought Israel out of Egypt. The stated purpose of the retelling is to relieve the narrative audience's apprehension concerning "all the peoples you now fear" and inspire faith in God. In a similar way, Deuteronomy 4:34-38; 11:2-4, 7; Jeremiah 32:20-23a; Psalm 106 and Psalm 136 exclude any mention of Israel's negative prior fate and emphasize God's power at work in Israel. Excising the extraneous plot elements supports this purpose well. By contrast, the exodus story retold in Numbers 20:14-16 makes no mention of supernatural acts. Its purpose is not to counter apprehension or inspire faith in God. Instead, the focus is on Israel's endurance of the long-foretold hardship that would entitle her to possess the land

⁶²⁰ This term is also used in the same way in the short reference to exodus in Deuteronomy 29:3.

(cf. Gen 15:13, 16). In 1 Samuel 12:6-8, the absence of this plot element parallels Israel's own failure to remember God's supernatural acts in the exodus. In each of these cases, including elements of supernatural deliverance would only serve to weaken the narrative's function. The second plot element appears to have been excluded from Deut 4:20, 15:15 and 24:18 simply for brevity's sake.

Other differences in exodus narratives are communicated through the specific use of diverse literary formulations of identity. These allow for a reinterpreted understanding of the prototypical exodus generation or of the exodus story in order to address new situations and to create a sense of commonality between the past and the present. These reinterpretations will be further explained in the sections that follow. They are legitimized by the narrative assumptions that the exodus story has relevance to and bearing on "current" events, but may have to be "translated"⁶²¹ so as to be taken up by successive social actors.

7.3 The Formation of Israel as a Collective

According to the primary exodus story and retold exodus stories, Israel initially came to regard herself as a collective entity because of her shared experience of oppression, divine intervention and deliverance. Although narrative rhetoric may not reflect the actual socio-historical reality, this is the identity claim of the stories on their hearers. Being "the people whom God brought out of Egypt" was the feature of the group that was regarded as significant and defining—the boundary of the group. Several of the identity formations observed in chapters 4–6 support this finding.

7.3.1 Emergence of "Israel" in the Primary Exodus Story

In the Genesis prologue to the exodus story, categorical designations of Israel as a community are virtually absent. The designation "Israel" and other such instances of a named group (e.g. Hebrews, my people) to represent a broad populace first appear in the primary exodus story. That is to say, Israel's existence is defined in terms of her sojourn in and deliverance out of Egypt.

7.3.2 Dramatic Representation of Israel's Emergence in Psalm 136

The implicit contention of the primary exodus story is dramatically represented in Psalm 136. With no mention of promises, ancestors or the descent into Egypt, the narrative jumps without interruption from the creation of the universe to the precipitous creation of Israel, in her emphatic "bringing out" (vv. 11, 14) from Egypt.

7.3.3 Use of the "Fathers" to Trace Ancestry Back to Egypt

With the exception of Deuteronomy 26:5, Jeremiah 32:22 and Joshua 24:2-7, references to Israel's ancestors in the retellings (Num 20:15; Deut 4:37; Josh 24:17; 1 Sam 12:6-8; Ps 78:12;⁶²² 106:6-7) refer consistently to the exodus and later generations, not the patriarchs,⁶²³ reinforcing the impression that Israel

⁶²¹Condor, "Social Identity," 291.

⁶²²Non-specific "fathers" are also mentioned in Psalm 78:3, 5 and 8.

⁶²³See identity construction in 1 Samuel 12, Psalm 106 and Nehemiah 9 in chapter 5, Römer, "Le cycle de Joseph," 3-15, and de Pury, "Le cycle de Jacob," 82. While, "fathers" in these stories does not refer to the patriarchs, it has been noted in both chapter 4 and Nehemiah 9 that various narrative attempts were made to incorporate the patriarchs in the exodus story.

as a people may be traced back only as far as Egypt. Deuteronomy 26:5 and Jeremiah 32:22 refer to an earlier patriarch father simply to illustrate Israel's prior condition of landlessness and promise of land but not to represent an older collective identity. Joshua 24:2-7 also tries to present a negative collective identity traced back to the patriarchs and their ancestors "beyond the River." This, however, is rejected in Joshua 24:17 and fathers are again traced back only as far as Egypt. In Nehemiah 9:7-8, Abraham is cited as an example of a "brought out one" who responded with faithfulness rather than explicitly being designated as a "father" of Israel.

7.3.4 Significance of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Defining Israel

Seven times in the primary exodus story Moses or Israel are reminded of their genealogical ties to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod 2:4; 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5; 6:3, 8). After the last of these, the narrative notes: "Moses told this to the Israelites; but they would not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel slavery" (6:9). Common ancestry is not denied, it is simply portrayed here in the text as a feature of the group that its members do not regard as significantly defining of their identity as a people. They are depicted as seeing themselves unified by oppression and, later, by deliverance. It is important to note, therefore, that the later expressions of Israel's identity in Judaism and Christianity defined in terms of a common ancestry may not have been definitive for all of ancient Israel or for the producers of these narratives.

7.3.5 Prior Identity as Slaves

Israel's representation of her emergence as a collective body is found in exodus stories that trace the origin of the prototypical Israelite back as far as slavery in Egypt. Israel's first sense of solidarity or "us-ness" is portrayed in the primary exodus story with images of collective suffering and crying out (Exod 2:23, cf. 6:8-9). That is to say, slavery is prototypical of Israel prior to deliverance. Her condition is described as oppressed (עָנָה) in Exodus 1:11-12 and Deuteronomy 26:6; oppressed (רָעָה) in Numbers 20:15 and Deuteronomy 26:6; in slavery or the house of slavery (עֲבָדִים, עֲבָדָה or עֲבָדִים בֵּית) in Exodus 2:23; 6:5, 6, 9; 13:3, 14; Deuteronomy 5:15; 6:21; 15:15; 24:18; Joshua 24:17 and in an iron-smelter (כּוּרְהַבְרֹזֶל) in Deuteronomy 4:20.

Since the primary exodus story's concluding, paradigmatic song (Exod 15) only rehearses Israel's deliverance, it might be conjectured that Israel would, thereafter in her story, be defined only by deliverance. This is not the case. Deuteronomy 4:20 says that Israel was brought out of the iron-smelter, out of Egypt, to become a people of God's very own possession. It is this poignant transformation of selfhood and transfiguration of Israel's fate that defines her as a people. Her present status cannot be understood except in comparison to her former existence marked by debilitating heat, pain and suffering. Remembrance of this prior condition is essential to keeping Sabbath (5:15), to freeing Hebrew slaves in the seventh year of servitude (15:15) and to other humanitarian acts (Deut 24:18). Thus, Israel's prior condition as a slave also helps to define her present identity. This is made clear by the retellings of Numbers 20, Deuteronomy 5:15, 15:15, 24:18 and Nehemiah 9. Despite their retrospective and interpretative perspective, they all portray exodus identity as an ongoing identification with suffering and slavery, as well

as deliverance. The latter enhances but does not replace the former in defining Israel's collective exodus identity. Israel is expected to "*revivre positivement une histoire d'humiliation et de souffrance*."⁶²⁴

The importance of a rightly portrayed prior identity—as a slave—to Israel's self-definition is illustrated by the exodus stories of Joshua 24. In the face of a dissonant exodus retelling presenting an undesirable idolatrous prototype (Josh 24:2-7), Israel maintains her desired expression of exodus identity by means of a conventional retelling (24:17). She is represented as refusing to be drafted into a faith story that changes her prior identity from slave to idolater. Whereas social memory studies recognize that memory is malleable and constantly reinterpreted, this narrative demonstrates its claim that collective memory also has a stable essence.⁶²⁵

7.3.6 Boundary Supported by Evaluative and Emotional Formulations

Israel is not portrayed as a collective prior to the primary exodus story, and in the story she is initially represented as an indistinct collective, ambiguously linked to Egypt.⁶²⁶ Moses' personal identity crisis ensuing from his mixed identity is prototypical of the identity crisis of this Israel, newly conceived by Egypt's oppression, yet lacking distinction. Evaluative and emotional formulations, however, begin to distinguish Israel from Egypt as a separate, well-defined collective entity. These include purported Egyptian distinctions (Exod 1:9-22; 2:6), the poignant and unremitting divine demand, "let my people go" (Exod 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13, 10:3) and the devaluation of the "other" (Exod 1:12, 19; 7:14–15:12; cf. Deut 4:34-38).

The principal outgroup of the primary exodus story is Egypt, represented by Pharaoh. Egypt, often portrayed in a rather positive light (Exod 2:5-10; 7:24 cf. 7:23; 8:19; 9:20; 11:3; 12:33) makes a poor candidate for the "other." Pharaoh, by contrast, is unambiguously depicted as arrogant, obdurate, recalcitrant and opposed to God. Pharaoh, then, emerges as the primary, prototypical depiction of "other." While the story narrates two Pharaohs, it names neither, adding to the stereotyping effect of "the other" as an enemy and oppressor of God's people who is set in contrast to them. Conflict between the two peoples underscores their distinction.

The rhetoric of exodus narratives asserts that being "a people whom God brought out of Egypt" is the significantly defining boundary of Israel. These narratives make the claim that group membership in Israel is not simply genealogically ascribed.

7.4 The Temporal Expansion of the "The People Whom God Brought Out of Egypt"

Both the primary exodus story and the retold stories assert that "the people whom God brought out of Egypt" consists of more than just Israel's exodus generation. If group membership is achieved, rather than

⁶²⁴ Pons, "La référence au séjour," 171.

⁶²⁵ Barry Schwartz rejects the constructionist conviction that social memory can undergo such modification to serve present needs that it is rendered unrecognizable. While acknowledging that memory is malleable and constantly reinterpreted, he argues that it, nevertheless, retains a stable essence that makes it recognizable across generations; Barry Schwartz, "Where There's Smoke, There's Fire: Memory and History," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (ed. Tom Thatcher; SBL Press: Atlanta, 2014), 7-37. See also Schwartz, "Social Change and Collective Memory," 221-236; and Barry Schwartz, "Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory" in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (ed. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher; SBL: Atlanta, 2005), 43-56.

⁶²⁶ Ambiguous language and images of both integration and separation from Egypt were described in detail in chapter 4 (4.2.2.1).

simply ascribed, the stories must answer the question of how new members are added to this group across time. They accomplish this by representing new members crossing the boundary into this identity through the appropriation and transmission of a shared life story—the exodus story. This is demonstrated in various ways in the primary exodus story and retold exodus stories.

7.4.1 Proleptic Inclusion of the Patriarchs

“The people whom God brought out of Egypt” becomes inclusive of more than just the exodus generation. The creative narration of patriarch stories represents Abraham and Jacob going down and up from Egypt (Gen 12:10-20; 46:1-7; 50:5-13) in an exodus-like pattern. These narratives do not, however, succeed perfectly in revealing the patriarchs as proleptic participants in the exodus story. This impedes the patriarchs from crossing the boundary fully into the group membership defined by participation in exodus. Retold exodus stories, however, further accommodate the patriarch’s membership in the “people whom God brought out of Egypt.” Because a prior condition as a “slave” is not particularly apt for describing Abraham and Jacob, it is expanded to include prior conditions of wandering and landlessness (Deut 26:5b; Ps 105:8-13).⁶²⁷

A significant contribution of the SIA methodology applied to these stories is the illumination of two coexisting but possibly competing origin traditions—one that traces Israel’s origin back to Egypt and the exodus, the other that traces it back genealogically to the patriarchs.⁶²⁸ Exodus stories compellingly promote the cultural-ideological myth that links generations by means of their experience of slavery and deliverance.

7.4.2 Inclusion of Present and Future Others into the Primary Exodus Story

While the Genesis prologue to the primary exodus story creatively, but imperfectly, incorporates the patriarchs in “the people whom God brought out of Egypt,” various rhetorical devices within the primary exodus story are also noted to expand this category. Exodus 12:38 delineates the group as inclusive of a “mixed multitude” (JPS) and not just ethnic Israelites. The hyperbolic count of 600,000 plus people purportedly participating in exodus (12:37) possibly represents the anachronistic incorporation of subsequent generations into the exodus.⁶²⁹ Passover and Firstborn commemorations inserted into the primary exodus story prior to the narration of the exodus event itself, symbolically incorporate later generations into the initial deliverance (Exod 12:14-20; 13:5-16). Taken together, these may represent creative, editorial attempts to integrate all Israel into the initial redemptive event. Even if intention cannot be demonstrated, the identity formulations of these narratives would have fostered these perceptions of incorporation and inclusion in hearers of the narratives.

7.4.3 Inclusion of Later Generations Through Shifting Pronouns in Retold Stories

The less-than-perfect incorporation of the patriarchs and the theoretical inclusion of later generations by means of commemorative instructions illustrate the expansiveness of the category of “the people whom God brought out of Egypt.” New generations of social actors are also integrated by the use of shifting

⁶²⁷ See 7.4.2

⁶²⁸ See discussion on pages 71 and 86-87.

⁶²⁹ See chapter 4 (4.2.1.2)

pronouns in retold exodus stories. An implied pronoun shift, in the form of a temporally inclusive second person narrative, occurs in Deuteronomy 4:20. Here the narrative audience is addressed as if they were the prototypical exodus generation itself: “But as for you, the Lord took you and brought you...out of Egypt” (NIV). This same second person narrative occurs in Deuteronomy 5:15, 15:15 and 24:18. A new generation of Israel is portrayed as those who experienced the exodus. A similar implied pronoun shift occurs in the form of a temporally inclusive first person narrative in Deuteronomy 6:21: “We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.” The introduction to this assertion indicates the future generations should repeat this first person narrative to their children.

In contrast, 1 Samuel 12:6-8, Nehemiah 9:9-11, Psalm 78: 11-14, 42-53 and Psalm 106:7-12, 21-23 simply tell the story as it occurred to their ancestors, and Joshua 24:17 claims that God “brought *us and our ancestors* up from the land of Egypt.” Psalm 105:23-39 and Jeremiah 32:21 use the indefinite language of “Israel” or “your people.”

Shifting pronouns that narrate the exodus story partially as happening to “them” and partially to “us” occur in Deuteronomy 26:5-9, Joshua 24:2-7 and Psalm 136:10-15, 23-24. Joshua 24:6-7 offers a key example:

When I brought *your ancestors* out of Egypt, *you* came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued *your ancestors* with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.⁷ When *they* cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between *you* and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and *your eyes* saw what I did to Egypt. Afterwards *you lived* in the wilderness a long time.

All of these pronouns shifts contribute to dissolving the gap between past and present members of Israel. Israel is, thus, an atemporal expression of collective identity. The use of the second person plural and first person plural has the potential to draft hearers of any epoch into the shared life story and thus to enter into “the people whom God brought out of Egypt.” This identity is inclusive and may be definitive of any generation of Israel.

7.4.4 Inclusion of Later Generations by Eyewitness Language

The narratives of Numbers amplified the discontinuity (and minimized the continuity) between the new generation and the old so that—from a literary point of view—the new generation is depicted as not having actually witnessed the exodus events (Num 14:21-23). Thus, the claims of Deuteronomy 4:34, 6:22, 7:19, 11:7 and Joshua 24:17 that the events of exodus occurred before “your/our very eyes” accomplish the same effect as that of the shifting pronouns described above: they portray the inclusion of later generations in “the people whom God brought out of Egypt.”

7.4.5 Delineation of a Prototypical Israelite

The expansion of “the people whom God brought out of Egypt” is also accomplished by the comprehensive delineation of a prototypical Israelite. The primary exodus story portrays Moses and Aaron, explicitly and implicitly, doing everything that God commands (Exod 7:10, 20; 8:6, 17; 9:10, 23; 10:3, 13, 22). They represent the ideal Israelite. As Israel finally emerges as a distinct people her characterization is identical to that of Moses and Aaron, she “did just as the Lord had commanded” (12:28).

Coherence with this people over time is dependent on obeying God’s commands inserted into the primary exodus story, namely, to retell and to participate in exodus (10:2; 12:25-27; 12:14-20; 15:1-21). The

prototypical member of every new generation is the one who does this. Thus, the retold exodus story in Psalm 78 exhorts hearers to heed the shared life story transmitted to them and to recognize their obligation to transmit it to the next generation (vv. 1-8). This is how membership is achieved. Ingroup members are defined by an unbroken line to the past marked by remembering and telling. Because the exodus story defines Israel's existence and distinctiveness, it is viewed as a shared belief whose historical factuality is never internally questioned.

Both the exodus story and the telling of the exodus story define Israel. Numbers 20:14-16 exemplifies the former and Psalm 78 the latter. In Number 20:14 the introductory identifier "your brother Israel" is followed by the carefully positioned exodus story, which alludes to its epithetical nature. Psalm 78 advances Israel's obligation to tell the story and ties forgetfulness of this story to covenant breaking. Deuteronomy 6:20-23 and 26:5b-9 provide Israel with explicit models of how to properly tell the story.

Cycling back to the coherency of Israel over time, exodus stories are not simply to be retold. They serve as reminders and points of entry into a corporate identity. Those who know the story are obliged to *transmit it*, and those who subsequently hear the story are *reconstituted by it*. Even a return to Egypt, literally or symbolically as narrated in Nehemiah 9, does not threaten Israel's collective identity as much as forgetting the story or failing to participate in it.

The significance of this, based on the claims of the exodus stories, is that Israel's identity across time cannot be validly traced simply through bloodlines. Similarly, new generations of Israel are not just descendants of "the people whom God brought up out of Egypt." They are the people who tell the story of being brought up out of Egypt. The primary narrative hints, and the retold stories more explicitly state, that Israel is distinguished by a proper retelling of and incorporation into the exodus story. The extent to which this exodus story became a permanent feature of Jewish imagination is proof of its success in identity construction. Thus, modern Israel reminds herself in the Passover Haggadah: "Therefore, even if we were all sages, all men of understanding, all advanced in years, and all expert in the Torah, it would yet be our duty to tell of the departure from Egypt, and the more a man tells about the departure from Egypt, the more praiseworthy he is."⁶³⁰

7.4.6 The Ongoing Experience of Exodus at the Core of Covenant Allegiance and Renewal

As "the people whom God brought out of Egypt" is expanded temporally, the behavioural norms that distinguish them are illuminated.

There are only a few behavioural formulations of identity evident in the primary exodus story: the anachronistic injunctions to commemorate and retell the exodus at a future time (Exod 10:2; 12:14-20, 26-27) and an implicit summons to all Israel—not just to the generation at the sea—to enter into the exodus story by taking up the Song of Deliverance (Exod 15:1, 21).

In contrast to the primary exodus story, the retold stories contain numerous behavioural formulations of identity. The exodus story is at the core of Deuteronomy's commitment to covenant obedience. A unique example of this is the form of Deuteronomy 11. Behavioural formulations of collective identity are found immediately prior and subsequent to the exodus retelling in 11:2-4, 7—exhortations to

⁶³⁰Zakovitch, "Tell Your Son," 9.

fear, love and obey God—with promises of blessings to the obedient and curses for disobedience (10:2–11:1; 11:8–32). The implicit claim of this form is that exodus is central to (i.e. is the motivation for) covenant obedience.

In other retold stories, covenant obedience (Deut 6:21–23; 26:5–9) and covenant renewal (Josh 24) seem to point toward and inspire the remembrance of exodus. Commemorative celebrations and traditions (e.g. Firstfruits in Deut 26 and the wheat harvest/feast of Weeks in 1 Sam 12) similarly remind Israel of her shared story. Israel is to be obedient *in order* to remember the events of her redemption and thereby to participate again in the exodus event.

Deuteronomy is concerned, in general, that Israel “not forget” (e.g. 4:9; 4:23; 8:11; 8:19; 9:7; 25:19). In particular, she is not to forget the God of exodus (6:12; 8:14). The immediate narrative contexts of other retold exodus stories illustrate the effect Israel’s failure to remember exodus has on her behaviour (1 Sam 12:9–15; Neh 9:16–35; Ps 78:17–42; Ps 106:13–43). The remembrance of exodus inspires certain behavioural norms and these same norms inspire the remembrance of exodus. The retold exodus story of Jeremiah 32 uniquely notes that, while collective identity grounded in exodus has behavioural implications for Israel (vv. 18, 23), her exodus identity is also the premise of a future illogical, exodus-like hope, independent of behavioural qualifications.

Identity norms in retold exodus stories significantly redefine covenant keeping. Of the 18 retellings of exodus only two include the giving of the covenant at Sinai (Neh 9:13; Ps 106:19). Retold exodus stories do not view covenant allegiance as primarily based on a remembrance of or adherence to the Sinai Covenant, but on a present-day encounter and oath of allegiance of each generation when confronted with the remembrance of exodus (e.g. Deut 11:1–32; Joshua 24:2–27, Psalm 105). Covenant sustains and is an expression of exodus identity. Covenant keeping reminds Israel of exodus, but remembrance of exodus is primary and definitive for Israel.

7.5 Plurality of Exodus “Voices”

The primary exodus story represents the dominant voice of the exodus story. Sometime this story must be reinterpreted in order to address new situations, incorporate new members and create a sense of commonality between the past and the present.

7.5.1 Expanding the Other Category

The first example of the expansion of the “other” is found in Numbers 20:14–16. Edom fails to take up or acknowledge Israel’s story, which is required for ingroup membership, and thus becomes part of the outgroup. Also, because a prior condition as a slave is definitive of the ingroup, Edom is further disqualified by her lack of participation in the trials of Egypt. Israel’s endurance of the hardship of Egypt was the means of differentiating her from Edom. This exodus retelling distinguishes Israel not only from the radically other (Egypt/Pharaoh) but from the “proximate other” (Edom).

Deuteronomy 7:18–19, in turn, expands the outgroup category further to include other nations. The nations who occupy Israel’s Promised Land are not only viewed as “other” but they will be brought down in the same way as Egypt: with great trials, signs and wonders and “a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” The initial lack of precision of the “other” (two nameless Pharaohs) invites the expansion of this category.

7.5.2 Adjusting the Story

Israel's identity is anchored in her collective perception of self as "slaves" (or wandering or homeless ones) whom God brought out of Egypt. Nehemiah's and Psalm 106's exodus stories, however, are dissonant in this respect. Beginning with a conventional recollection of Israel's suffering, crying out to God and deliverance from Egypt, Nehemiah 9:36 then describes the present people of Israel as still slaves in distress. Similarly, Psalm 106 portrays Israel as having returned to her prior condition of homelessness ("gather us from among the nations," v. 47). In these dissonant retellings, both continuity and discontinuity are represented as existing between the Israel depicted in the narratives and the exodus generation. Continuity is seen in the analogous cries of distress. Discontinuity is represented in the depiction of the supplicants as unequivocally guilty rather than presumably innocent. Deliverance is an implicit hope rather than a foregone, future reality and exodus is a paradigm of God's repeated deliverance (1 Sam 12; Neh 9; Ps 106). These dissonant stories demonstrate that, at times, only a re-narration of the exodus story can fit the experience of "all Israel" and provide a coherent exodus identity.

7.5.3 The "Othering" of Israel

Identity stories cannot be adjusted to include those who do not have the features that are group defining. The "people whom God brought out of Egypt" are defined by their telling of and participation in the story of exodus. An identity crisis is indicated when the prototypical Israelite is depicted as one who forgets the story.

In Psalm 106, the previous generations going back as far as Egypt are referred to as "our fathers" (v. 6) and "his people" (v. 40), designations highlighting continuity with the narrative present. These same prior generations, however, are also referred to throughout the psalm as "they" and "them," drawing on a non-inclusive rhetoric of differentiation. This representation provides a coherent exodus identity between the past and the present, as the Israel hearing the narrative is portrayed as united with her forefathers in guilt and the need for deliverance. At the same time, however, the narrative of Psalm 106 is incomplete. Neither the deliverance nor the response to deliverance has been narrated. The latter portrays the hearers as potentially distinct in their anticipated response of praise and gratitude ("that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise," Ps 106:47). Membership in "the people whom God brought out of Egypt" is anticipated.

Retold exodus stories portray the "other" as anyone who threatens Israel's distinctiveness, even those who might previously or otherwise be classified as Israel. The principal undesirable, but possible, identity for Israel in the present and future is one in which Israel is characterized by forgetfulness of exodus, the story of the exodus, and the God of exodus. This results in the "othering" of those who were formerly believed to be part of the Self (i.e. Israel). Psalm 78 depicts an unbroken line of those who tell the story of God's wonders—including exodus—from the fathers of the past to the present hearers to the children yet to be born (vv. 1-6). Ingroup members are defined and positively evaluated by this unbroken line of remembering and retelling. Within the ingroup, though, there are those who are negatively and stereotypically differentiated because "they" did not remember God's displays of power (vv. 17-42a). This group of "they" is practically indistinguishable from the Egyptian "they" whom God utterly decimates and devalues (v. 42b-50).

In Nehemiah 9, Abram is represented as a prototype of one who is brought out and responds faithfully to his deliverance (vv. 7-8). Those who experienced exodus from Egypt, by contrast, “acted presumptuously and stiffened their necks and did not obey your commandments” (v. 16), and “failed to remember the miracles you performed among them” (9:17 NIV). Throughout this retold exodus narrative, Israel is referred to as “they.” The boundaries that should separate “us” (Israel) from “them” are blurred. Israel is equated with the Egyptian outgroup based on her arrogant dealings with God (vv. 16, 29).

The othering of Israel allows a means of discriminating between authentic members of the ingroup and those who bear a strong resemblance to the outgroup. The “other” is not defined ethnically but by boundaries drawn on the basis of their participation in and appropriation of the exodus story. Only by participating effectively in the exodus story does Israel avoid devaluation as “other” and achieve positive distinctiveness as the ingroup. These representations of social identity serve as resources that would help persuade hearers of the narrative of the desirability of the identity they endorse.

7.6 Possible Social Identities for Hearers of Exodus Stories

While exodus narratives represent the “concretization” of collective memory, they are neither uniform or inflexible, reflecting instead the adjusting of stories to fit identities. They offer Israel distinct possible social identities.

7.6.1 Slaves or Heedless and Idolatrous People “Whom God Brought Out of Egypt”

Psalm 106 equates Israel’s present identity with a pre-exodus generation’s identity characterized by rebelliousness, failure to remember God’s kindnesses and heedlessness of God’s miracles (Psalm 106:7). Exilic hearers of this exodus story may find hope of a similar deliverance.

While the retelling in Joshua 24:2-7 of an Israel characterized by idolatry meets with resistance and re-narration in Joshua 24:17, it may ring true with exilic and post-exilic hearers of the retelling who are familiar with Israel’s history of idolatry. Joshua’s first retelling of exodus foreshadows it. The hearer of the narrative may view the undesirable identity of an “idolater set free” as a real choice of possible social identities for the narrative characters and for him or herself.

The significance of the retold exodus stories is that they provide a pluriformity of voices. Modifications of the exodus story are possible while still maintaining a stable essence. They provide the possibility of diverse, even undesirable, potential social identities. These make the stories potentially transferrable to a variety of hearers which is crucial, for the key to a social group’s endurance is found in it having “successive social actors.”⁶³¹ It was noted above that exodus identity is not always portrayed as transformation from oppression to deliverance; in two retold stories it is represented as shift from wandering to landedness (Deut 26; Psalm 105). There is no indication that such a redefinition distresses Israel’s identity. Instead, it allows the tellers to emphasize aspects of Israel’s desired exodus identity that were likely of particular relevance to the producer’s generation.

Exodus stories, therefore, construct a prototypical identity for Israel that is not anchored in bloodlines. They embrace a prior identity of slavery and oppression and are agreeable to a previously shared fate of wandering and homelessness. They portrayed a prior identity as an idolatrous people as

⁶³¹Condor, “Social Identity,” 291.

conceivable though undesirable.

7.6.2 Faithful Remembering Response or Forgetfulness

Identity formation effected by the proper telling of and incorporation into the exodus story creates both an exclusive and inclusive boundary within Israel. It excludes those who forget the story, even though previously considered part of the Self, and it includes those who remember and narrate it.

Some retold stories prompt Israel to *embrace* continuity with her ancestors (e.g. Deut 4:37-40; 6:22-25; Josh 24:16-18) while others call her to *reject* them (e.g. Ps 106:7). At least one retelling calls for both (Josh 24:14, 16-18). When expressed positively, the narratives promote Israel's continuity with the past as a means of extending the lines of continuity into the future. In cases where Israel's past is cast in negative terms, as exemplified in the retold stories of 1 Samuel 12 and Nehemiah 9, a faithful response to exodus is only a future possibility, portrayed as discontinuity with the past and the present. In Psalm 78, the present Israel, who is not accused of unfaithfulness, is presented with a choice of identities. She may embrace continuity with a chain of the faithful by telling the exodus story, as the psalmist prompts her to do, or she may join herself to the unfaithful ancestors who forgot God's deeds, particularly his wonders performed in Egypt. In each of these cases, a possible social Self is presented.

Hearers of the story, both the characters in the narrative and those who hear the narrative, are constrained not only to relay the story forward to the next generation but to choose between various possible social identities as they become social actors in the story. To avoid becoming a tragic "other" in a sad story, Israel is presented with a desirable social identity represented by a faithful and grateful response to God's deliverance. An example of this is the anachronistic response mentioned above in Nehemiah 9. Abram is incorporated into the exodus story as prototypical of one who not only is "brought out" but also responds faithfully to exodus.

Having elaborated in detail on the methodological findings and their significance, the final chapter will examine the significance of these within exodus scholarship. It will also explore opportunities for further research that derive from this study.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to elucidate how a long-lasting collective identity may have been created and maintained through persuasive narrative resources. It built upon previous research from diverse fields of study to approach this question. Prior social memory studies had established that group memory is selective and that memories deemed worthy of representing the group are the ones brought forward in fixed form. Therefore, the social memory occupying the most mnemonic space in the Hebrew Bible—Israel’s sojourn in and departure from Egypt—was chosen to be examined for its identity-creating potential. Previous literary studies had revealed the centrality of the narrative genre in identity construction. As a result, the research sample analysed was limited to exodus *stories*. The principles of the social identity approach (SIA) had been shown to be applicable not only to face-to-face relationships but also to ancient cultures and their narratives. Hence, the SIA was called on to offer insight into how these exodus stories may have contributed to ancient Israel’s identity.

8.1 Responses to Prior Scholarship Connecting Exodus Narratives and Israel’s Collective Identity

The main empirical findings of this study were explicated in chapters 4–6 with a synthesis in chapter 7. This concluding chapter will show how using the SIA as a heuristic tool to analyse identity construction in exodus narratives confirms, broadens or deepens the previous approaches within exodus scholarship linking identity formation and exodus narratives. It will then conclude with an examination of issues and questions requiring further research.

8.1.1 Response to Those Viewing Exodus Narratives as Windows into a Unified Past

The first eight scholars surveyed in chapter 2 consider the exodus narratives as witnesses to, or windows into, an historical exodus event. They therefore employ the narratives in their historical reconstructions of Israel. This thesis, by contrast, does not defend or deny an historical core to exodus stories. Instead of looking backward from exodus narratives, this analysis focuses on the narratives themselves as valid objects of study. In doing so, it demonstrates that, regardless of any underlying historical impulse, the retold exodus stories themselves do not narrate history. They actually contradict such a function by calling on all generations of Israel to “remember” exodus and by the use of devices that temporally expand the category of “the people whom God brought out of Egypt.”⁶³² Exodus narratives offer little insight into any historical events behind them. Unmindful of historical accuracy, they take on instead the character of compelling rhetoric aimed at persuading Israel of a long-lasting collective identity.

⁶³² See chapter 7, section 4.

Although exodus narratives cannot reconstruct the past or prove the prior existence of an historical exodus, they do provide several important insights. Firstly, it is precisely their “texture” as collective memory—a mixture of “‘authentic’ historical details, folklore motifs, ethnic self-fashioning, ideological claims, and narrative imagination”⁶³³—rather than their historicity that may be credited for their identity-forming potential. Secondly, these identity constructing stories indicate the prior existence of a self-conscious Israel. The SIA maintains that it is the group that generates the boundary. Therefore, it was a prior Israel that defined herself via her narratives. This recognition affirms von Rad’s and Gottwald’s contentions that unity preceded and resulted in the endorsement of unifying traditions. It also sharpens the understanding of the primary source behind the narratives. Rather than a creed (von Rad), a primary theme (Noth) or an historical kernel (Hendel), a unified, complex and dynamic people were the primary source behind the plurivocal narratives. It was they who determined that exodus was significant to their self-definition.

The narrative analysis offered by this thesis cannot demonstrate when Israel first existed in this self-conscious unity, whether following an historical exodus from Egypt, an oppressive experience under Solomon, a conflict with Egypt in the days of Josiah or in the wake of captivity in Babylon. At whatever point historical scholars are able to establish definitively the earliest existence of an exodus narrative, oral or literary, however, a prior self-conscious group can be said to have existed. It was this group that selectively defined itself by exodus narratives. Contrary to Noth, who claims that the narratives helped to create the historical entity of Israel, and to those who emphasize predominantly the unity of a larger group created from the merging of an exodus group and another group, the SIA contends that the prior existence of a self-conscious group and their narratives preceded the creation of a merged group. If this self-conscious group and narrative identity occurred early in Israel’s history, the identity narratives may have been forgotten or replaced in periods of stability and then re-activated during periods of rupture. Rather than taking on its first narrative form and subsequently defining a unified people as a result of the experience of Jeroboam’s revolt,⁶³⁴ therefore, the exodus narrative was more likely to have been created by an earlier, self-conscious people, forgotten during the stability of monarchy and rekindled by group members in a context of rupture. The plurivocity of the story itself, however, seems to indicate revision and reuse rather than a unilinear development.⁶³⁵ Further, the diversity of the story is more representative of agents adjusting stories to fit their identities than simply the attraction and attachment of literary accretions and embellishments (von Rad) or illustrative stories (Noth).

While Noth and von Rad implicitly recognize that it was the narrative retelling rather than the event of exodus that influenced collective identity formation, this thesis demonstrates explicitly how the narratives themselves may have achieved this effect through their rhetorical formulations of identity. While this will be discussed further in conversation with Greifenhagen, the persuasive, identity-constructing character of exodus narratives explains, for example, *how* smaller groups could be added together into a larger Israel. The SIA to exodus narratives does not confirm the historical reconstructions of the merging of an exodus group with a Syrian (Halpern) or Canaanite (Gottwald and Alberty) group per se. It does,

⁶³³ Hendel, “Exodus,” 602.

⁶³⁴ Hoffman, “North Israelite Myth,” 181; van der Toorn, “Charter Myth,” 113.

⁶³⁵ This will be further examined in section 8.1.4.

however, explain the possibility of the incorporation of new members into a self-conscious group by means of the exodus narratives and, in particular, their temporal formulations of social identity.

Finally, this thesis confirms the initial notion of Hoffman, Hendel and Na'aman that the exodus narratives may have had a long-term impact on Israelite consciousness. Elements of their form and content have been shown to be potentially constructive of a long-term collective identity.

8.1.2 Response to the Portrayal of the Exodus Paradigm as a Constituting Literary Invention

The six scholars considered in the second section of chapter 2 place little emphasis or importance on the exodus stories as historical witnesses to a real event. They view them, instead, as partially or wholly (e.g. Thompson) ideological inventions. By contrast, this thesis does not argue that exodus stories were created with an *intentional* ideological agenda, but rather that their form and content would be persuasive of an exodus identity to an unresisting hearer. The insights offered by the SIA broaden the contentions of this second group of scholars. They highlight the prior existence of a self-conscious collective that created (or revised) the identity narratives, which had been largely neglected by these scholars. That is to say, behind any attempt to construct an ideal Israel through narrative, there existed a real Israel. Israel was not entirely created by the narratives, for she created them.

Zakovitch, one of the scholars examined in the second section of chapter 2, asserts the existence of over 120 direct references to the exodus in the Hebrew Bible.⁶³⁶ Appendix 2 of this thesis provides the first explicit listing of these occurrences. Zakovitch inconsistently attributes the parallels to exodus in the stories of Genesis to a covert theological attempt to explain Israelite enslavement as a “measure for measure” punishment, while assigning an identity-creating motive to the exodus myth in general. The application of the SIA as a heuristic tool to the exodus stories in Genesis provides Zakovitch with grounds for a more logical argument. The exodus stories in Genesis are shown to be similar to those found throughout the Hebrew Bible, functioning to incorporate non-exodus generations into a temporally coherent exodus identity. This is evident in the rhetoric of the text apart from speculative reflection on historical motives.

Greifenhagen’s work, in particular, provided an initial challenge to this study to appreciate exodus stories as narratives before using them as historical sources.⁶³⁷ A focus on the artistry and meaning of narratives, similar to Greifenhagen’s, was maintained in this analysis. The resulting approach was aimed at exposing the identity claims of exodus stories rather than at identifying the producers of these claims or their intended recipients. Greifenhagen’s groundwork, focusing on explicit references to Egypt in the Pentateuch, was expanded to include an examination of all aspects of exodus stories in the Hebrew Bible. Greifenhagen’s significant reflection on and implicit recognition of cognitive and evaluation formulations of identity in exodus narratives—“*us*” and “*them*” categorization, stereotyping, the role of “*other*” in identity construction, antagonistic *differentiation*, and the *devaluation* of the other⁶³⁸—were validated and expanded as they were examined within the framework of the SIA. As a result, this thesis was able to reveal more diverse expressions of identity than a study limited to an examination of the “other” (i.e. Egypt).

Assmann notes some limited relationships between narrative elements—particularly those

⁶³⁶ Zakovitch, “Tell Your Son,” 9.

⁶³⁷ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 16 (note 51).

⁶³⁸ Greifenhagen, *Egypt*, 24-205.

charged with emotions and conflict—and the construction of identity. The explicit application of the social identity hermeneutic in this analysis also legitimizes his conclusions and expands the understanding of the emotional formulation of identity in exodus narratives based on an established theoretical framework.

8.1.3 Response to Exodus as a Timeless Paradigm

Four scholars (in addition to von Rad and Assmann) were surveyed in the third section of chapter 2 with respect to their views of exodus as a timelessly integrating experiential or theological paradigm. These scholars emphasized the identity constructing function of exodus narratives across time rather than during a precise historical period. However, with the exception of Nasuti, they focus on the community's strategic hermeneutic processes and appropriation of the text rather than on the identity-forming potential of the narratives themselves. The focus of this analysis is on the latter.

Nasuti's contention that the literary shape of the text enables and suggests its re-appropriation is confirmed by this analysis. Examining Deuteronomy 26 and several psalms,⁶³⁹ Nasuti notes that certain verbal mechanics in exodus narratives, such as the shifts in pronouns from third to first person, bridge the distance between those who witnessed the exodus events and those who appropriated the text. This thesis finds a similar pronoun shift in the exodus story of Joshua 24. More importantly, this particular device is noted to be part of a larger category of temporal formulations that constructed a sense of coherence over time between hearers of exodus narratives. Connecting Nasuti's findings to the SIA not only substantiates their role in identity formulation but offers a systematic methodology for expanding the literary analysis of texts as identity resources for later hearers.

8.1.4 Broad Responses to Both the When and How of Exodus Identity Construction in Israel

Although not the primary focus of this thesis, its findings offer several clues as to when exodus stories explicitly defined Israel's collective identity. Prior scholarship examined in chapter 2 overwhelmingly focuses on a single period in time when Israel's initial or most profound sense of collective awareness occurred. Von Rad, Noth, Halpern, Gottwald and Hendel all view the exodus as constructing Israel's identity in the Late Bronze Age (1539–1200 BCE) when Egypt dominated her political life. Albertz, van der Toorn and Hoffman argue for the identity constructing effect of the exodus myth at the time of the establishment of the Northern Kingdom and in response to forced labour under Solomon (9th and 8th century). Finkelstein and Silberman maintain that exodus was a late 7th or early 6th century rallying point of Israelite identity during Josiah's quest for national liberation in the face of Egypt's expansion. Isbell argues that the exodus myth was the point of convergence of Israelite identity in the exilic period, Assmann in the post-exilic period and Greifenhagen in a Persian period troubled by Egyptian rebellion (450–350 BCE). Thompson and Lemche argue that exodus narratives functioned to create a collective identity for Israel in the Late Persian or Early Hellenistic period. These scholars assume the unilinear development of the exodus tradition.

In contrast to prior studies, this narrative analysis reveals exodus stories inserted at many key places in Israel's overall story, from her earliest history up to her post-exilic restoration in the land. This presentation, while not necessarily representative of actual socio-historical realities, results in an implicit narrative claim: remembrances of exodus defined Israel during many socio-cultural transitions. As it is

⁶³⁹ Nasuti, "Identity in the Psalms," 141.

already well established that stories become more salient in constructing social identities in periods of social change, as during periods of migration, conflicts with other nations, displacement or domination,⁶⁴⁰ the findings of this analysis advance biblical scholarship by suggesting that the remembrance of exodus also served the identity needs of more than one historical period.

The plurivocity represented in exodus stories also has significance for biblical scholarship. It favours the unlikelihood of the unilinear development of a single exodus story. The findings of this thesis indicate that exodus stories were recast to express Israel's complex and dynamic group identity. The dominant narrative with its portrayal of Israel as a victim of unfortunate circumstances would not accommodate the incorporation of a culpable Israel whose misfortune was self-imposed. Thus, while an exodus narrative such as Joshua 24:2-7 may not have adequately expressed the identity of Israel prior to the exile, it offers an acceptable expression of group identity for exilic or post-exilic Israel who could no longer deny her idolatrous practices. Evidence that agents adjusted stories to fit identities is found not only in the plurivocal stories but in the multiplicity of rhetorical formulations of identity present in these exodus narratives. Thus, the expansion of the "other" in evaluative formulations—so as to include all those who resisted God's purpose, even Israel herself—was necessary to the ongoing expression of Israel's complex and dynamic self-consciousness.

The primary contribution of this analysis, however, is not its expression of when exodus narratives constructed identity in Israel but how they might have done this. Having recognized at the commencement of this study that the tools used for analysing the narratives of non-fictional peoples were not limited to those used for analysing literary fiction, a methodological tool—based on the principles of the SIA—was developed and used to demonstrate identity construction at a rhetorical level. The SIA tool was applied heuristically to all the exodus stories of the Hebrew Bible to determine how, as narrative resources, these stories were capable of constructing and reinforcing Israel's identity. Exodus narratives were shown to be characterized by the well-established, recognizable language of social identity. Rhetorical identity formulations—similar to those found in face to face relationships—were identified in the primary exodus story and in eighteen retold stories of exodus. Findings, summarized in chapter 7, included the claims of the narratives and their rhetorical formulations. Nested in the stories themselves, independent from their composers, these narrative claims had the potential to create, transmit and maintain collective identity over time.

The development of the heuristic tool to identify rhetorical formulations of identity in ancient texts is the most significant contribution of this thesis. Its subsequent, systematic application to all the exodus stories in the Hebrew Bible, adds to the conversation of how exodus narratives informed and sustained collective identity in ancient Israel. The ensuing analysis agrees with Hendel, Assmann, Lemche, Greifenhagen and von Rad (in his later writings) that it was the exodus *narrative*, rather than the physical proximity of groups, that effected commonality and unity. It agrees with identity studies in general, which recognize that the narrative genre lies at the heart of collective identity formulation.

The methodological tool devised for this study makes visible the social identity language and concepts unknowingly used by previous scholarship, and it theoretically justifies their conclusions that

⁶⁴⁰ Cornell, "Story," 42.

these elements were constructive of Israel's identity. Hendel's unnamed Pharaoh and Nasuti's rhetorical pronoun shifts are recognized as providing movable *boundaries of inclusion* (cognitive and temporal formulations), potentially creative of an ongoing collective identity. Greifenhagen's work most significantly reflects the principles and concepts of social identity theories, exploring the role of "*other*" in identity construction, "*us*" and "*them*" categorization, *stereotyping*, antagonistic *differentiation* and the *devaluation* of the other (cognitive and evaluative formulations). Gottwald, Halpern, Albertz and Hendel all essentially assert that a perception of *shared fate* leads to collective identity formation. Finkelstein and Silberman recognize that *conflict* in the story encourages identity formation. Assmann expands this, saying that stories charged with *values, emotions, ideals, difference, conflict* and *separation* fuel the creation of collective identity. Each of these is now easily recognizable as emotional formulations of collective identity. The tool similarly makes visible temporal formulations in Halpern's designation of the exodus story as a unifying *myth of common descent*, and van der Toorn's view of it as creating a sense of *common past*. Brueggemann's contention that *telling the story* properly fosters identity is validated by the SIA's recognition of storytelling as another temporal formulation of social identity. This study places the findings of these scholars within the larger validating theoretical framework of the SIA. The methodological tool illustrates how one particular dimension of identity can be combined with other dimensions to offer a more comprehensive view of identity formulation in exodus narratives. Using this tool heuristically, exodus stories are shown to be capable of presenting hearers with and socializing them into a dominant, social identity by means of five types of identity rhetoric.

Adding to the nascent social identity formulations previously and implicitly noted, this thesis, with its application of the SIA to exodus narratives, identifies extensive, integrated narrative identity formulations that invite hearers to identify with an "exodus group." In addition to the general blurring of historical details noted by Hoffman and the indefinite Pharaoh recognized by Hendel, many other temporal formulations in particular were identified that had the potential to cause hearers to view themselves as participants in the exodus story. Shifting pronouns and second person addresses, inclusive phrasing (e.g. the perception of exodus wonders before "your very eyes," which continued "to this day"), a myth of cultural-ideological descent (representing fathers and sons crying out and being delivered), violations in the temporal sequencing of exodus events and exhortations to sing and tell of God's exodus wonders all emphasize the narratives' identity-creating effects. Other imaginal and verbal formulations of social identity—including devaluations of an "other" and images of a people with a shared fate—had the capability to effect a collective identification among those who took up these narratives.

This thesis advances previous scholarship by identifying the specific persuasive elements and integrating qualities of exodus narratives. These rhetorical formulations may account for how the narrative accounts of one generation actually contributed to the collective identification of another. Conversely, they might express the ideological claims of the producers of the text who were attempting to create an identity for Israel. In either case, the rhetorical formulations created, or were believed to be capable of maintaining and extending a sense of unity and solidarity in ancient Israel. Their effect on hearers was not determined by the details of their historical production.

8.2 Opportunities for Further Research

Several opportunities for further research have emerged as a direct result of this thesis.

8.2.1 Applying the Methodology to Short References to Exodus

Short references to exodus were excluded from consideration in this study. These either contained only a single plot element of the primary exodus story (e.g. Deut 1:30 and 34:10-12) or elements that were not linked together in the form of a story (e.g. Exod 32:11).⁶⁴¹ Limiting the present study to only exodus stories was justified by prior research in the literary studies, which had specifically established the involvement of the narrative genre in social identity construction. Now that *exodus* stories have been shown in this thesis to rhetorically construct identity, however, other articulations of *exodus* may also be evaluated for evidence of identity formulations. Again, to avoid charges of determinism, the methodological tool must be used carefully as a heuristic device, examining and comparing the short references in the search for patterns, correlations, and coherency.

This application of the methodological tool to the short reference to exodus identified in the third section of Appendix 2 may either confirm the identity formulations established by the methodological tool or suggest others that have been undiscovered. Such a study will undoubtedly identify other settings and periods of social change in which the memory of exodus purportedly constructed identity. This, for example, might give further support to the interpretations of Hoffman, van der Toorn and Albertz who viewed the establishment of the Northern Kingdom as a setting in which the exodus myth was vital in constructing Israel's collective identity.

The inscribed memories of Joshua's and Josiah's purported initiatives to commemorate the Passover (Josh 5:10-12; 2 Kgs 23:21-30) are another possible area in which to examine identity formulations. Examining commemoration of exodus may provide additional imaginal formulations of identity that were not evident in the more verbal remembrances of exodus.

These additional analyses of verbal and commemorative expressions of exodus may result in the confirmation or revision of the methodological tool. They will also further demonstrate how ancient texts served as identity resources.

8.2.2 Exploring Conflicting Myths of Israel's Origin

Another area of further research arises from the determination that exodus stories identify Israel's sojourn in and departure from Egypt as the feature of the group that was boundary forming (i.e. significant and defining for the group). This contrasts with another myth of common descent evident in the Hebrew Bible, later Judaism and Christianity that traces Israel's identity by means of genealogical descent from the patriarchs. This thesis showed how exodus stories compellingly promote the myth of cultural-ideological kinship. Nevertheless, it leaves questions about the origin of the genealogical myth. Understanding when, where and why genealogical expressions took on significance for Israel's identity formulation are important to this conversation and require further research.

⁶⁴¹ These examples were discussed in chapter 1, section 2.

8.2.3 Examining Historical Contexts of Plurivocal Exodus Stories

This thesis has noted repeatedly that exodus narratives likely constructed and maintained Israel's group identity at various periods of transition and social upheaval throughout her history. It was also noted that although exodus stories were set at key places within Israel's overall story, the narratives, in reality, may not have informed Israel's collective identity in those particular socio-historical contexts. Their placement there may simply express an ideological stance of the producers of the text who were attempting to emphasize the importance of these particular transitions in Israel's history.

Having accomplished the aim of this thesis, namely the recognition of rhetorical formulations capable of constructing and maintaining group identity, and having noted a plurivocity of exodus stories and formulations, the subsequent challenge would be to see if the ideologies and diversities noted offer insight into the context in which each story was composed or the audience for which it was intended.

Some narrative clues may initially seem quite obvious. Jeremiah's and Nehemiah's stories suggested exilic and post-exilic redactions respectively. The portrayal of pre-exodus Israel as idolatrous in Joshua's retelling and as heedless and un-remembering in Psalm 106's exodus story suggests at least an exilic redaction, when such culpability in Israel was undeniable. The stories of Deuteronomy and Psalm 136, with their added interpretations of exodus as evidence of God's love and election, may also have been redacted with a demoralized and marginalized exilic Israel in mind.

Compositional history is much more complex, however, than these seemingly obvious narrative clues. Several of the retold exodus stories examined, for example, represent Israel going directly from Egypt to the land (Deut 4:34-38; 6:20-23; 26:5-9; 1 Sam 12:6-8; Jer 32:20-23a). Following a tradition-historical approach that views themes (such as wilderness) as having been gradually added to the earlier exodus theme, one would have to conclude that these retold stories were composed earlier than the primary exodus story, which shows Israel moving from the exodus, to the wilderness and finally into the land. This is clearly not the case. Hakola cautions against assuming a direct correlation between narrative rhetoric and existing socio-historical context. It is possible that narrative rhetoric is simply a product of the effort to construct a clearly defined social identity rather than a direct reflection of the real world.⁶⁴² In the exodus stories mentioned above, group identification processes are seen as constructing an ideal identity for Israel that excluded the narration of wilderness failings. The absence of wilderness themes, therefore, is not a good indication of a particular time of composition, but rather of an ideological stance.

Further efforts to identify the historical context of exodus narratives will require a complex examination of social context, linguistic clues, storylines, webs of intertextuality and diachronic continuities and discontinuities.

8.2.4 Exodus Narratives in Conversation with Other Identity Narratives

It is also important to note that the plurivocity of these exodus stories came together in conversation at some point in Israel's history, likely in the post-exilic period. The possible effect of these stories in mutual conversation and in conversation with other identity narratives prominent in that period must be considered. The goal would not be to harmonize these stories disingenuously but rather to recognize from

⁶⁴² Hakola, "Burden of Ambiguity," 453.

the start that the question, “What is it that really constitutes Israel?” was negotiated with various resources from Israel’s sacred scriptures in hand.

The resources described in the works of Bosman, Jonkers, Finitis and Lau, namely, the texts of Nahum, Chronicles, Hosea, Zechariah, Ruth and, comparatively, Ezra–Nehemiah must be placed in conversation with exodus narratives. This will offer insight into the ongoing effect of exodus narrative on Israel’s collective identity in both dissonance and consonance with other identity resources. Here too the conversation between myths of cultural-ideological and genealogical descent might be heard, offering further insight into when, where and why the genealogical myth was taken up as an expression of Israel’s identity.

By engaging in conversation with other identity narratives, one notes that unlike Finitis’ conclusions regarding identity construction in Haggai,⁶⁴³ for example, some exodus narratives do present the possibility of the “othering” of Israel (Ps 78; Neh 9). Exodus narratives also portray coherent group identity as achieved and not acquired. Sometimes they call for a superior ethical behaviour, as in Zechariah (Deut 4:34-39; 6:13-25; Ps 106:43-45), but more often this identity is portrayed as achieved by remembering, retelling and living in light of the exodus. Some voices of the exodus, namely Jeremiah 32 and Psalm 106, even assert the possibility of a continuing and coherent identity in Israel despite her failure to live by exodus. This is based on the illogical paradigm of exodus deliverance and God’s own exodus identity characterized by נִסִּים (Ps 106:7; cf. Exod 15:13).

Various identity negotiations may attempt either to create cohesiveness or to promote exclusion. Further comparative research is needed to understand fully how exodus narratives participated in this identity conversation following the exile and throughout the remainder of Israel’s history. Because possible social identities are limited by resources and socialization into those resources, the significance of the recurring exodus story in mediating identity should not be ignored.

This study has shown that narrative resources in particular had the potential to influence the process and practice of collective identification in ancient Israel, mediating realities to the present experience of those who used them. Analysis of recurring exodus stories has demonstrated that whether the producers of the text were consciously instigating an identity project to fend off assimilation and create an identity, or unconsciously reflecting a contemporary ideological struggle, the artistry and design of the narratives, particularly their rhetorical formulations of identity, highlight their potential as identity resources.

⁶⁴³ Finitis, “The Other,” 121.

APPENDIX 1
PRIOR RESEARCH ON IDENTITY AND MEMORY IN TEXT

1. General Studies on Collective Identity in Text

a. In Literature

- De Fina, Anna. *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2003.
- Linde, Charlotte. *Working the Past: Narrative and Institutional Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Somers, Margaret R. and Gloria D. Gibson. "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity." Pages 37-99 in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*. Edited by Craig Calhoun. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- Vila, Pablo. "Narrative Identities: The Employment of the Mexican on the U.S.-Mexican Border." *The Sociological Quarterly*, 38 (Winter 1997):147-183.
- Wertsch, James V. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Whitmarsh, Tim. *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: the Politics of Imitation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

b. In Biblical Texts

- Esler, Philip F. "Ezra-Nehemiah as a Narrative of (Re-invented) Israelite Identity." *Biblical Interpretation*, 11 (2003): 413-426.
- George, Mark. "Constructing Identity in 1 Samuel 17." *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*, 7:4 (1999): 389-412.
- Greifenhagen, F. V. *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity*. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Jonker, Louis. "Reforming History: The Hermeneutical Significance of the Books of Chronicles." *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007): 21-44.
- Knoppers, Gary N. and Kenneth A. Ristau, editors. *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- Linville, James R. *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity*. JSOTS 272. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Lipschits, Oded, Gary Knoppers, Manfred Oeming, editors. *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- Lipschits, Oded and Manfred Oeming, editors. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Liss, Hanna and Manfred Oeming, editors. *Literary Construction of Identity in the Ancient World: Proceedings of a Conference, Literary Fiction and the Construction of Identity in Ancient Literatures: Options and Limits of Modern Literary Approaches in the Exegesis of Ancient Texts, Heidelberg, July 10-13, 2006*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010.
- Mullen, E. Theodore. *Ethnic myths and Pentateuchal Foundations: A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch*. Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.
- Sparks, Kenton L. *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and their Expression in the Hebrew Bible*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.
- van Henten, Jan Willem and Anton Houtepen, editors. *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition: Papers Read at a NOSTER Conference in Soesterberg January 4-6, 1999*. Studies in Theology and Religion 3. Assen, NL: Van Gorcum, 2001.

2. Collective Memory in the Hebrew Bible

- Greenstein, Edward L. "Mixing Memory and Design: Reading Psalm 78." *Prooftexts*, 10 no 2 (May 1990): 197-219.
- Hendel, Ronald. *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Smith, Mark S. "Remembering God: Collective Memory in Israelite Religion." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 64:4 (Oct 2002): 631-651.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Memoires of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- Yadin, Azzan. "Goliath's Armor and Israelite Collective memory." *Vetus Testamentum*, 54 no. 3 (2004): 373-395.
- Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim. *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982.

3. Exodus as Israel's Collective Memory

- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. "Memory, Tradition, and the Construction of the Past in Ancient Israel." *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 27 (1997): 76-82.
- Brettler, Marc Zvi. "Memory in Ancient Israel." Pages 1-17 in *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism*. Edited by M. Signer. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.
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- Stargel, Linda M. "Social Memory and the Exodus Tradition." ThM Thesis, Duke University, 2007.

APPENDIX 2
DIRECT REFERENCES TO THE EXODUS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

1. Primary exodus story—**Exodus 1:1-15:21**

2. Retold exodus stories

Num 20:14-16	Deut 6:21-23	1 Sam 12:6-8	Ps 136:10-15,
Deut 4:20	Deut 7:18-19	Jer 32:20-23a	23-24
Deut 4:34-38	Deut 11:2-4, 7	Ps 78:11-14, 42-53	Neh 9:9-12, (36)
Deut 5:15,	Deut 26:5-9	Ps 105:23-39	
15:15, 24:18	Josh 24:2-7, 17	Ps 106:7-12, 21-23	

3. Short references to exodus

a. Recalling exodus as motivation for law keeping and for the fair treatment of others

Exod 19:4	Lev 11:45	Deut 10:19	Deut 29:1-2
Exod 20:2;	Lev 19:34, 36	Deut 23:4-8	1 Sam 15:2, 6
Deut 5:6	Lev 25:38	Deut 24:9	2 Kgs 17:36;
Exod 22:20	Lev 25:42	Deut 24:22	Hos 13:4
Exod 23:9	Lev 25:55	Deut 25:17	Jer 7:22

b. Recalling exodus in the observance of calendrical celebrations

Exod 34:8	Lev 23:43	Deut 16:1-3	Deut 16:12
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c. Recalling exodus as justification for other institutions such as the Levitical priesthood, inheritance of the land, the prophetic office.

Num 3:13	Num 8:17	Num 26:4	Deut 34:10-12
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d. Recalling exodus as a historical watershed and means of measuring the passage of time.

Exod 16:1	Num 14:19	Judg 19:30	Jer 7:25
Exod 16:32	Num 33:1-5	1 Sam 8:8	Jer 11:7
Exod 19:1	Num 33:38	2 Sam 7:6	Hag 2:5
Exod 23:15	Deut 4:45-46	1 Kgs 6:1	
Num 1:1	Deut 9:7	1 Kgs 8:9, 16	
Num 9:1	Josh 5:4-6	2 Kgs 21:15	

e. Recalling exodus to define Israel's God and to motivate confidence in times of stress.

Exod 32:11	Judg 6:13	Is 63:11-14
Deut 1:30	Is 43:16-17	Ps 77:13-20
Deut 20:1	Is 51:10	Ps 135:8-9

f. Recalling exodus as a means of defining Israel's unique covenant relationship to God.

Exod 16:6	Lev 26:13, 45	Deut 13:10	1 Kgs 9:9
Exod 29:46	Num 15:41	Deut 29:25	2 Kgs 17:7
Exod 32:1, 4, 7, 8,	Deut 1:27	Judg 2:1, 12	Jer 2:6
11, 23; 33:1	Deut 4:20	Judg 6:8-10	Jer 11:4
(1 Kgs 12:28)	Deut 6:12	1 Sam 10:18	Hosea 11:1-5
Lev 11:45	Deut 7:7-8	2 Sam 7:23-24	Amos 2:10, 3:1, 9:7
Lev 22:33	Deut 8:14	(1 Chr 17:21)	Micah 6:4
Lev 25:38	Deut 9:26	1 Kgs 8:21	Psalms 114:1-3
Lev 25:55	Deut 13:5	1 Kgs 8:51, 53	

g. Recalling exodus to distinguish present situation from the past

Exod 16:3	Num 20:5	Isa 10:24-26	Ezek 20:5-10,
Exod 17:3	Num 21:5	Isa 11:16	34-38
Num 11:5, 18, 20	Num 32:11	Jer 16:14; 23:7	Hos 2:15
Num 14:2-4	Deut 11:10	Jer 31:32	

h. Recognition of Israel's exodus identity by outsiders

Exod. 18:1, 9-11	Josh 2:10	1 Kgs 9:9 (2 Chr
Num 22:5, 11;	Judg 11:13	7:22)
23:22, 24:8		Jer 16:14, 23:7

APPENDIX 3
THREE MODELS OF TRANSLATIONS OF EXODUS 15:13-18

Carol Meyers (NCBC)

- ¹³In your steadfast love you **led** the people who you **redeemed**; you **guided** them by your strength to your holy abode.
- ¹⁴The peoples **heard**, they **trembled**; pangs **seized** the inhabitants of Philistia.
- ¹⁵Then the chiefs of Edom **were dismayed**; trembling **seized** the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan **melted away**.
- ¹⁶Terror and dread **fell** upon them; by the might of your arm, they **became** still as stone until your people, O LORD, **passed by**, until the people whom you **acquired passed by**.
- ¹⁷You **brought** them in and **planted** them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O LORD, that you **made** your abode, the sanctuary, O LORD, that your hands **have established**.
- ¹⁸The LORD **will reign** forever and ever.

Sarna (JPSTC)

- ¹³In Your love You **lead** the people You **redeemed**; In Your strength You **guide** them to Your holy abode.
- ¹⁴The peoples **hear**, they **tremble**; Agony **grips** the dwellers in Philistia.
- ¹⁵Now **are** the clans of Edom **dismayed**; The tribes of Moab—trembling **grips** them; All the dwellers in Canaan **are** aghast.
- ¹⁶Terror and dread **descend** upon them; Through the might of Your arm they **are** still as stone— Till Your people **cross over**, O LORD, Till Your people **cross** whom You **have ransomed**.
- ¹⁷You **will bring** them and **plant** them in Your own mountain, The place You **made** to dwell in, O LORD, The sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands **established**.
- ¹⁸The LORD **reigns** for ever and ever!

Dozeman (ECC)

- ¹³You **led** in your steadfast love the people whom you **redeemed**; you **guided** in your strength to your holy abode.
- ¹⁴People **heard**, they **trembled**. Pangs **seized** the inhabitants of Philistia.
- ¹⁵Then the chiefs of Edom **were terrified**. The leaders of Moab, trembling **seized** them. All the inhabitants of Canaan **melted**.
- ¹⁶Terror and dread **fell** upon them; at your great arm they **became** silent like a stone. Until your people **cross over**, Yahweh, until the people, whom you conceived, **cross over**.
- ¹⁷You **will bring** them in and **plant** them on the mountain of your inheritance, the place for your dwelling that you **made**, Yahweh, the sanctuary, my Lord, that your arm **established**.
- ¹⁸Yahweh **will reign** forever and ever

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