

A Greimassian semiotic Analysis of Judith

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SUMMARY

A Greimassian Semiotic Analysis of Judith

The goal of the study is to investigate the possible purpose of the *Judith* narrative by using the Greimassian semiotic approach. The hypothesis of the study is that the Greimassian semiotic approach is insightful and useful in revealing the possible purpose of *Judith*. This can be achieved through studying the contrasting core values in the narrative following from the method chosen.

The investigation of *Judith* involves three levels of analyses as guided by the Greimassian semiotic approach, i.e. the Figurative, the Narrative and the Thematic analysis.

The thesis comprises five chapters, viz. Chapter 1 is the introduction to the study; Chapter 2 presents the Figurative analysis; Chapter 3 portrays the Narrative analysis; Chapter 4 represents the Thematic analysis; and finally Chapter 5 constitutes the summary of the research and concluding remarks. Chapter 5 further asserts the contribution of this research to the literary study of *Judith* and offers recommendations for further research.

The outline of the investigation, as dictated by the Greimassian semiotic approach, is as follows: The Figurative analysis entails investigating the figurative oppositions, motifs and the emplotment of the *Judith* narrative. The Narrative analysis involves investigating the structure of the narrative, the actantial configuration and the canonical narrative schema. The third and last step of analysis, Thematic analysis, concerns using the semiotic square and the veridictory square to investigate the fundamental values that generated the story of *Judith*. The core values are distinguished in terms of 'good' versus 'evil' and 'truth' versus 'falsehood'. The Thematic analysis, the study of the contrasting values in particular, further involves exploring the trajectory of these values from the beginning of the narrative to the end.

The study concludes, first, that the use of the Greimassian semiotic approach does reveal the possible purpose of *Judith*. The findings resulting from the three steps of analysis reveal that the central concern of *Judith* is the survival of the Jewish religion. According to Cohen (2006:50) the Second Temple period was a time marked by the intense interaction between Judaism and its ambient culture, producing in some quarters a hatred of Judaism but in others an attraction to it (resulting in converts and "God fearers").

Against this kind of challenges in the Second Temple period, the analysis concludes that the possible purpose of *Judith* was to rejuvenate the Jewish religion during this time of crisis. The story raises the awareness of the Jewish people to defend their religion, and the values associated with it, from any form of assault and possible extinction.

OPSOMMING

'n Greimassiaanse Semiotiese Analise van Judith

Die doel van die studie is om die moontlike doelwit van die *Judit*-verhaal te ondersoek deur gebruik te maak van die Greimassiaanse semiotiese benadering. Die hipotese van hierdie studie is dat die Greimassiaanse semiotiese benadering insiggewend en bruikbaar is om die moontlike doel van *Judit* bloot te lê. Dit kan bereik word deur die kontrasterende kernwaardes in die narratief te bestudeer, wat uit die metode voortspruit.

Die ondersoek van *Judit* behels drie vlakke van analise soos bepaal deur die Greimassiaanse semiotiese benadering, d.i. die Figuurlike, die Narratiewe, en die Tematiese analise.

Die tesis bestaan uit vyf hoofstukke, t.w. Hoofstuk 1 is die inleiding tot die studie; Hoofstuk 2 lê die Figuurlike analise voor; Hoofstuk 3 beeld die Narratiewe analise uit; Hoofstuk 4 verteenwoordig die Tematiese analise; en Hoofstuk 5 bevat die opsomming van die navorsing asook slotopmerkings. Verder bevat Hoofstuk 5 die bydrae van die navorsing tot die Griekse literatuurstudies oor *Judit* en bied voorstelle vir verdere studie.

Die raamwerk van die ondersoek, soos bepaal deur die Greimassiaanse semiotiese benadering, sien soos volg daarna uit:

Die Figuurlike analise behels die ondersoek van figuurlike oposisie, motiewe en die storielynontwikkeling van die *Judit*-verhaal. Die Narratiewe analise bevat 'n ondersoek na die struktuur, die aktansiële konfigurasie en die kanonieke narratiewe skema. Die derde en laaste stap van analise, die Tematiese analise, het te doen met die gebruik van die semiotiese vierkant en die veridiktoriese vierkant as instrumente om die fundamentele waardes wat die verhaal van *Judit* genereer het, vas te stel. Die kernwaardes word onderskei in terme van 'goed' teenoor 'kwaad' en 'waarheid' teenoor 'valsheid'. Die Tematiese analise, die studie van kontrasterende waardes in besonder, behels verder die verkenning van hierdie waardes se trajek vanaf die begin van die narratief tot aan die einde.

Hierdie studie bevind, eerstens, dat die gebruik van die Greimassiaanse semiotiese benadering wel die moontlike doelwit van *Judit* onthul. Die bevindinge wat voorkom uit die drie stappe van analise toon dat die sentrale belang van *Judit* die behoud van die Joodse geloof is. Volgens

Cohen (2006:50) was die Tweede Tempel tydperk 'n tyd gekenmerk deur intense interaksie tussen die Jodedom en die omringende kultuur, wat in sommige uithoeke 'n haat voort gebring het teenoor die Jodedom, maar in andere 'n aangetrokkenheid daartoe (met bekeerdes en "God-vresendes" tot gevolg).

In ag genome hierdie tipe uitdagings van die Tweede Tempel tydperk dui die analise op die gevolgtrekking dat die moontlike doelwit van *Judit* was om die Joodse geloof te vernuwe gedurende hierdie tyd van krisis. Die verhaal dien as bewusmaking vir die Joodse mense dat hulle hul geloof, en die waardes waarmee dit gepaard gaan, moet beskerm teen enige vorm van bedreiging asook moontlike uitwissing.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The goal of the study is to investigate the Greek apocryphal¹ book of *Judith* using a Greimassian semiotic approach to establish its possible purpose², by revealing the contrasting core values that the story seeks to preserve or reject.

The book of *Judith* is a work of fiction (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:15; 153). This work of fiction, however, remains a literary text before us and it deserves to be approached with respect and be appreciated as it is. Narratives do not have to be historically true to impact the community in either a positive or negative way. Therefore, some over-arching questions around the narrative need to be addressed. For example: What is the intended purpose of this work of fiction (*Judith*)?; What was the problem that the author of this fictional text was trying to address? In which time/period is this fictional text set? What were the challenge/s facing the Jews and their religion in the time of the production of the text?

Judith consists of two halves; these two halves are traditionally called Part I (1-7) and Part II (8-16). Part I is the story of a developing religious crisis facing Israel (Nickelsburg, 2005:97) and Part II is the story of how God saves Israel by the hand of a woman, Judith (Harrington, 1999:27). Scholars have brought forward various opinions concerning the date of authorship of *Judith*³. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:8) argues that the overall ambience of the book reflects the post-exilic era/setting of the book, which is the Persian Era (6th-4th century BCE.), Early Maccabean Era (168-135 BCE.), and the Hasmonean Era (135-63 BCE.). While acknowledging the difficulty around determining the exact date of the setting in *Judith*, this study, agreeing with Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:19), takes into serious consideration the fact that *Judith* reflects a political-religious crisis in which the faithful are threatened by the onslaught of a foreign nation.

¹ The term "Apocrypha" (or "deuterocanonical books" in Roman Catholic usage) is popularly understood to describe the fifteen books or parts of books from the pre-Christian period that the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and East churches accept, wholly or partially, as canonical Scripture, but Protestants and Jews do not (Moore, 1985:31).

² The purpose of *Judith* which this study attempts to investigate is in relation to the message of the book to its first readers.

³ The present study takes note of various opinions around the nature (historical fact or fiction) and the date of authorship of the story of *Judith*. However, it is outside the scope of this study to do an in-depth study concerning these matters. Some scholars have already toiled fruitlessly on these matters, and still we do not have definite answers, only speculations. See also various opinions around the date of *Judith* discussed in Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:22).

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:19) further argues that many scholars have correctly observed that this kind of crisis is most easily accommodated within the Hellenistic period⁴ of Jewish history.

In Protestant Bibles, *Judith* is listed amongst the apocryphal books which do not form part of the canon; however, it is accepted as part of the canon in the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox and Eastern churches (Moore, 1985:86). Kanonge (2009:1) indicates that many of the apocryphal books⁵, including *Judith*, were produced at a crucial moment (Second Temple period⁶) of the Jewish nation. Nickelsburg (2005:9-15) supports this view by stating that this period of time was characterized by the destruction of Jerusalem and her first Temple, the subsequent Exile, the loss of national sovereignty, the dependence of Jews on superpowers in control of the region, and the Diaspora. The literature under investigation came about during this crisis time while Jews were struggling for their identity and survival, as Kanonge (2009:1) points out. Finally, this study observes that scholars such as Gruen (1998:xx) generally agree that most of the LXX Apocryphal books have much to do with the preservation of Jewish identity.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many scholars (cf. Moore, 1985:76-77 below), as highlighted above, have contributed significantly to interpreting the story of *Judith* (Bal, 2004:253). One of the most debated aspects of the story is its purpose.

Jordaan (2009b:331) concedes that, at first glance, the *Judith* narrative seems to be just another story with a sad beginning and a good ending. The saying “and they all lived happily ever after” seems to apply to the story. However, one does not have to read long before realizing that *Judith* is more complicated than it may seem at first glance (Jordaan, 2009:331). Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:124), who deals with *Judith* from a Jungian psychoanalytic perspective, also acknowledges that there are serious ‘gaps’ in current *Judith* studies. These ‘gaps’ need

⁴ While the antecedents of the movement occurred long before, the Hellenistic Age is seen by most to have begun in 323 B.C., with the death of Alexander, and to have continued until 30 B.C. (Elwell & Comfort, 2001:593).

⁵ Tobit, Greek Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ben Sira, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel 1,2,3 and 4 Maccabees, 1 and 2 Esdras and the prayer of Manasseh.

⁶ Cohen (2006:5) states that the later part of the Second Temple period, that is, the period from the rise of the Maccabees (160s BCE) to the destruction of the temple (70CE), was a rich and significant chapter in Jewish history. This was the age of sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, the Qumran community, Christians, Sicarii, Zealots, and others) and of sectarian literature; of apocalypses and of varied speculations about God’s control of human events, the nature of evil and the secrets of the end time; of the growth of the synagogue, of liturgical prayer and scriptural study; of the “golden age” of diaspora Judaism (especially in Egypt); and of Judaism’s intense interaction with its ambient culture, producing in some quarters a hatred of Judaism but in others an attraction to it (resulting in converts and “God fearers”).

holistic consideration to provide in-depth analysis of the book as a whole. This study contends that the question of the possible purpose of *Judith* is still wide open for exploration.

As indicated above, many scholars⁷ have made various contributions towards unlocking the purpose of *Judith*. Along with Efthimiadis-Keith's insightful and exciting contribution, these varying opinions have also given rise to the impetus of approaching the book of *Judith* using the Greimassian semiotic approach. This approach is also implemented in the present study.

Therefore, the main research problem to be addressed in this study may be formulated as follows: What is the possible purpose of the story, based on a Greimassian semiotic analysis of the story of *Judith*?

To answer this main research question, the following subsidiary questions will have to be answered:

- What is the current state of research of *Judith* and how does it provide opportunities for new investigations?
- How does the Figurative analysis, that is, the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment, contribute towards establishing the purpose of *Judith*?
- How does the narrative analysis, that is, the study of the structure of the narrative, its actantial model, and its canonical narrative schema, contribute towards establishing the purpose of *Judith*?
- How does the Thematic analysis, that is, the study of the opposition of values and their trajectory on the semiotic square, contribute towards establishing the purpose of *Judith*?
- What new contribution does the application of the Greimassian semiotic approach bring to the study of the Greek text of *Judith*?

The first of these issues are considered below to establish the need for the present study. The other points are discussed in turn throughout the remainder of this thesis.

1.3 SUBSTANTIATION

Details of the preliminary study on *Judith* serve to contextualize the present study, relating it to existing research on the subject and making its contribution clear (highlighted below). Kanonge (2009:9) states that the Apocrypha are increasingly being investigated more frequently by

⁷ See Moore (1985:76-77), and Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:22).

scholars. He (ibid.) further states that the focus in Apocrypha scholarship has shifted from establishing the original texts to further studies, including employing various approaches of analysis to investigate the intended purpose and the meaning of the texts. Therefore, this section of study intends to discuss the state of the current contribution on *Judith* scholarship and the gap which remains to be filled.

Moore (1985:76-77) provides an outline of various scholarly views concerning the genre and purpose of *Judith* dating from as early as 1888. These may be summarized as follows:⁸

- The author made an attempt to recommend Pharisaic principles by a sort of historical novel (Ball, 1888:246 as referred to by Moore, 1985:76).
- The main purpose of the book is to inculcate and promote Pharisaic Judaism (Oesterley, 1914:38 as referred to by Moore 1985:77).
- The book of Judith was written to prove that insistent prayer and unswerving fidelity to the Law can work wonders, e.g. enable even a woman to overcome the most powerful of armies (Johnson, 1948:7 as referred to by Moore 1985:77).
- The author's purpose is not to tell the story but to preach; he/she exalts religious patriotism and armed resistance against the enemies (Lods, 1950:789 as referred to by Moore 1985:77).
- *Judith* is the homiletic model (a speech giving advice on the correct way to behave) of a man who preaches or advocates active resistance and not passive surrender (Alonso-Schokel, 1973:66 as referred to by Moore 1985:77).
- Moore (1985:77) is of the opinion that *Judith* is a fictional drama in which history, geography and characterizations serve a narrative purpose. By design, the story teaches readiness for the unexpected.
- Harrington (1999:41) views *Judith* as a story that teaches about human suffering as a means of divine testing rather than punishment.

Craven (2003:187), also provides an overview of *Judith* scholarship. She states in the abstract of her work that:

Studies of *Judith* represent three overlapping but distinct periods of critical inquiry. Interests were awakened (1913–49), as three firsts in English witness: Kay's comprehensive *APOT* (1913),

⁸ For a detailed discussion on the wide range of opinions on the genre and potential purpose of the *Judith* narrative see Moore (1985:76-77).

Oesterley's two one-volume introductions to the Apocrypha (1914, 1935) and Pfeiffer's critical introduction (1949). In a second period (1950–85), *Judith's* context undergoes remarkable shifts both within the Bible and the wider community with the inclusion of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books in translations like the RSV and NRSV, text-critical editions, literary analysis, initial feminist studies and collaborative alliances of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish scholars. In a third period (1986–2001), critical strategies enlarge to represent increasingly gender-inclusive, interdisciplinary, international and eclectic concerns.

Craven's main concern in this work was to establish the trajectory of development in *Judith* scholarship from 1913-2001. She concludes that this review of *Judith* studies shows that there is no clear linear progression from traditional modernist studies to non-traditional post-modernist replacements (Craven 2003:209).

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:93-131) has also conducted a thorough survey of current *Judith* analysis. She points out that the works that she was able to access fall primarily into the "new field" (as suggested earlier by Craven, 1977:75) of *Judith* studies, and may be divided into five⁹ categories, that is: commentaries, various types of literary/advocacy analyses, essays/articles on particular aspects of the book, comparative studies and iconographic studies. Her survey further indicates that *Judith* studies are informed primarily by five main methodological orientations, viz. historical criticism, literary analysis, advocacy, rhetorical criticism, comparative/intertextual analysis and iconographic studies. It is outside the scope of this study to do yet another detailed survey of these.¹⁰

The present study falls under Efthimiadis-Keith's second category of methodological orientation, namely literary analysis. The works referred to below, viz. that of Craven (1977;1983), Efthimiadis-Keith (2004), and Kanonge (2009), also fall in this category and will be discussed briefly in order to differentiate the present work from them.

Craven's work (1977; 1983) is important as it is dedicated to doing an analysis of the whole book of *Judith*. Contrary to the present study, however, Craven's work entails a literary/rhetorical analysis of *Judith* and an in-depth study of the book's external and internal structure (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:101). Craven's study demonstrates the usefulness of

⁹ Efthimiadis-Keith indicates, further, that there is also a sixth category of works that focus on a broad range of subjects relating to *Judith*, without it forming their central focus. Such is the work of Aschkenasy (1986), which traces the development of female characters in Hebrew literature from biblical to modern times.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion on the survey, see Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:93-131).

literary/rhetorical approaches as a tool for analyzing both the literary artistry and the theological meaning of this story (structural analysis).

Craven begins by providing the reader with a methodological orientation in which she acknowledges the influence of Robert Lowth and James Muilenburg upon her work (cf. Craven, 1983:3). Craven (1977) argues that the book's compositional analysis demonstrates that all sixteen chapters of the narrative fulfill important structural roles. Both Part I (Jt. 1-7) and Part II (Jt. 8-16) exhibit highly refined, carefully crafted architectural patterns which contribute to the meaning of the story. Craven's study (1977) thus shows that to excerpt a few verses or chapters from Part II about the deed of Judith is to do violence to the whole of the story.

The most valuable contribution of her work is the presentation of the conclusive proof that "[t]he book of *Judith* is a self-defined literary unit of sixteen chapters" (cf. Efthimiadis- Keith (2004:93).

Following Craven's argument, this work also intends to treat the story of *Judith* as a whole, and not to violate the story. This is in keeping with one of the goals of semiotics, which is to analyze texts as a structured whole and investigate latent, connotative meanings (Chandler, 2002:8).

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004), as indicated above, approached the text through the lens of Jungian psychoanalysis, which offers an insightful contribution to the various problems that the book presents. She regards *Judith* as a national dream depicting the Jewish nation's individuation (according to Jungian conceptualization) at the time of its composition (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:153). For a detailed discussion on the application of this approach and the findings it presented on *Judith*, see Efthimiadis-Keith (2004). This unique and positive contribution by Efthimiadis-Keith has identified yet another new way of interpreting *Judith*.

Kanonge's work (2009) is also worth mentioning in this regard. His study investigates the emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general, with a special focus on *Susanna*. Kanonge (2009) tested his hypothesis¹¹, using the semiotic approach of the school of Paris, particularly the version of Everaert-Desmedt (2007). The investigation focused on the three

¹¹ Kanonge's hypothesis was formulated as follows: "The emergence of women in the LXX Apocryphal books, in general and *Susanna* in particular, gives the impression that gender roles, as defined in the patriarchal system, were no longer accepted unanimously among Jews of the Second Temple period. Books were written to address the issue in a pragmatic way. They aimed either at maintaining male sexist prejudices against women or reversing it. *Susanna* radically reverses the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the wisdom of Ben Sira" (Kanonge, 2009:16).

levels of analysis comprising the Greimassian semiotic approach, as refined by Everaert-Desmedt: viz. the figurative, the narrative and the thematic.

This study intends to use the same semiotic approach as did Kanonge (2009). Nevertheless, there are two basic differences: a) this study focuses on *Judith* while Kanonge's thesis focuses on *Susanna*, and b) while Kanonge focuses on the emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha, this study aims at investigating the possible purpose of *Judith* by revealing the contrasting core values that the story seeks to preserve or reject, as already mentioned.

Although numerous articles have been written on *Judith*, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss each one of them. However, a few recent publications attempt to establish the possible purpose of *Judith* and are therefore worth mentioning. The studies conducted by Jordaan (2009b), Jordaan and Hobyane (2009) and Cornelius (2009) are directly relevant to the main focus of this thesis and are subsequently considered here.

Firstly, Jordaan (2009b:331-342) interprets *Judith* as a therapeutic narrative, arguing that the function of the narrative is to advocate a more equal society during times of war. Ammonites, women and slaves should be considered as accomplices for the sake of the nation, as oppose to the ancient patriachal ideology.¹²

Secondly, Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:238-247) conducted a literary study on ethics, gender and the rhetoric of warfare in ancient Israel with a special focus on the book of *Judith*. The impetus for examining *Judith* in this way came from Kelle and Ames (2008). Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:238-247) contend that their approach is unique in that these aspects had never been studied together before. They maintain that some aspects have been treated individually elsewhere, for example Craven on rhetorics, Brenner (2004) and Levine (2004) on gender, Nickelsburg (2005) on *Judith's* ethical stance. The findings¹³ of Jordaan and Hobyane (2009) are crucial for the main goal of this study. They provide new and different insights in reading *Judith*, and can therefore be useful in establishing the possible purpose of *Judith*.

¹² The term ideology is used in this thesis to refer to "a set of beliefs...that influences the way people behave" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2001:593).

¹³ Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:246) established that the book of *Judith* contains few surprising parallels to the discussion of rhetorics, war and gender by Kelle and Ames (2008). The parallels were mainly on the role played by the Assyrian army in ancient warfare, the gender of the city Bethulia and the rhetoric and ethics of war.

Finally, Cornelius' (2009) view is that *Judith* is pure fiction, not historically true, and meant to be humorous. She concludes that the purpose of the story of *Judith* is simple comedy meant to entertain readers.

Other scholars have also contributed to our understanding of the meaning of *Judith*. For example, Milne (1993:37-58) summarizes the book of *Judith* as follows:

[T]he book of *Judith* tells a dramatic tale about sacrilegious arrogance, doubt, faith, and the unrivalled power of Israel's God. It is also a tale of a woman's courage, daring, and piety.

Harrington (1999) establishes that the book is about the theme of suffering, whilst Gruen (1998) relegates *Judith* to simple Jewish fiction, but later discusses the honour/shame theme in the narrative (Gruen 2002). Yet another, DeSilva (2002), interprets *Judith* as a moral tale.

This short overview of suggested readings of *Judith* put forward by these scholars provides support for the initiative of the present study to investigate the potential purpose of the story following a Greimassian semiotic approach. The following section considers the uniqueness of this project as a scholarly contribution.

1.4 CONTRIBUTION OF PRESENT WORK

Judith studies have been dominated primarily by the historical critical approaches until fairly recently (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:123). Despite the fact that there is currently a resurgence of interest in *Judith* studies, no scholarly publications report on an investigation of the book of *Judith* using a Greimassian semiotic approach. This study will thus differ substantially from preceding studies mentioned above and those listed by Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:126–131) in terms of its methodological approach. A Greimassian semiotic approach has not yet been used to establish the possible purpose of *Judith*. It is therefore expected that this study will yield different results, by investigating contrasting core values¹⁴ in order to establish the possible purpose of the story. Therefore, it is the researcher's belief that since the Greimassian semiotic

¹⁴ The term 'value' according to Greimas and Courtes (1982:364) is used with widely differing meanings in different disciplines such as in Linguistics, Logic, Economics, Axiology, Esthetics, etc. In Semiotics we differentiate, for example, between values understood through 'valuation', or estimated worth or price, and value understood as 'quality' which makes someone or something worthy of esteem, desirable or important. Semiotic theory describes 'value' as arising from the relationship between actantial subjects and objects: any subject's need or desire for a particular object makes the later valuable, turning it into an object of value (*objet de valeur*) in the process. Thus, in semiotic analysis, the term 'object of value' has been fashioned to designate objects placed in relation to subjects.

method offers a holistic approach to investigating texts, this endeavour will eventually yield a new contribution in *Judith* literary studies.

In brief, then, the main contribution of this study lies in its choice of the method which, when applied, will lead to new insights and a new conclusion regarding the possible purpose of *Judith*.

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central aim of the research is to establish the purpose of *Judith* using a Greimassian semiotic analysis.

The central aim leads to the following objectives as guided by the approach of analysis:

- To establish the current state of research on *Judith*, and how this state provides opportunities for new investigations.
- To establish the purpose of *Judith* based on results of the Figurative analysis, that is, the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment.
- To establish the purpose of *Judith* based on results of the Narrative analysis, that is, the study of the structure of the narrative, its actantial model, and its canonical narrative schema.
- To establish the purpose of *Judith* based on results of the Thematic analysis, that is, the study of the opposition of values and their trajectory on the semiotic square.
- To establish the purpose of *Judith* that emerges from the results of the completed Greimassian semiotic analysis.

1.6 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The genre and purpose of *Judith* have evoked the attention of various scholars in the past 120 years (cf. Moore, 1985:77). While most *Judith* scholars in this time frame have agreed that the author of *Judith* was concerned more with theology than with history and that he did not intend his account to be taken as describing actual events, their consensus does not extend to its purpose (Moore, 1985:76). Similarly, with regard to the genre of the book, a wide range of opinions has been brought forward. Most of the above-mentioned contributions (Oesterley, 1888; Johnson, 1948; Lods, 1950; Alonso-Schokel, 1973; etc.), as referred to by Moore (1985:77) were historical critically based. Their focus was mainly on the authorship and historicity of the book. In fact, Moore (1985:77) assumes that differences concerning the exact date of *Judith*'s composition contribute towards the broad range of views regarding the author's

intent. He (ibid.) maintains that this is so because the date one assigns the book largely determines one's understanding of its purpose.

Contrary to Moore, this study contends that the possible purpose of *Judith* can be revealed from the data gathered in the text, irrespective of the date one assigns to the text, by means of studying the contrasting core values in the text, as guided by the Greimassian semiotic approach.

1.7 AN OUTLINE OF THE GREIMASSIAN SEMIOTIC APPROACH

Judith is a narrative. Kanonge (2009:29) argues that, generally, narratives are written to make sense when considered as a whole.¹⁵ As already indicated in 1.1, this study adopts the Greimassian semiotic approach as its method of analysis. For the purpose of clarity and understanding the terminology and concepts used in relation to this method, a summary of this approach is provided below.¹⁶

Greimassian semiotics is a general theory of meaning. It is used in relation to understanding architecture, cartoons, business communication, drama, literary texts, arts and multimedia. It consists of exploring semiotic objects at three different levels of analysis: the figurative, narrative and thematic (Kanonge, 2009:27-31). However, before dealing with each of these analytical levels individually, careful attention is paid to narrative structures, particularly the semantic axis and the logic of endings.

1.7.1 THE SEMANTIC AXIS

The progression of events in a narrative can be summarized by a *semantic axis* (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:15-16), revealing its beginning and its end. The state of events from the point of departure is known as the *initial state (S)*; their state at the point of arrival is the *final state (S')*. The initial state is an inverted version of the final. The two states of events can be placed at the extremities of the *semantic axis*, shown in Figure 1.1 as follows:

¹⁵ The study done by Craven (1983) sought to prove this point with regard to the book of *Judith*.

¹⁶ This outline of the Greimassian semiotic approach is a re-worked version of Kanonge's paper presented at the conference on hermeneutics at the faculty of theology of the NWU, Potchefstroom campus in October 2010. It is inserted in this study with the permission of the author. For a detailed discussion of the Greimassian semiotic approach, see Kanonge (2009:24-62).

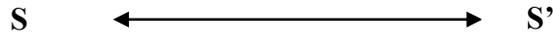


Figure 1.1 Semantic Axis

The inversion, according to Everaert-Desmedt, regroups all narratives into two main structures:
 (1) Lack (disjunction from an object) *versus* settling of lack (conjunction with that object);
 (2) Mission to achieve *versus* mission achieved (contract).

The relation between **S** and **S'** on the semantic axis constitutes the elementary structure of meaning (Greimas, 1966:20-21). The two states of events on a semantic axis reveal the ideological dimension of the narrative. The ending of a narrative is the most meaningful part of the story. It governs the series of all previous actions (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:16). The writer chooses to end with a subject succeeding or failing in his/her quest (Bremond, 1973:131; 1981:67), as depicted in Figure 1.2:

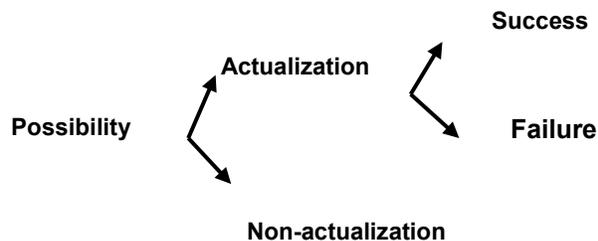


Figure 1.2 Illustration of the possible choice in endings for a narrative.

The adoption of a particular ending is an important clue in the interpretation of a narrative. It is emblematic of the message, or meaning, the author intends to convey (Kanonge 2009:37).

Exploring meaning, with which Greimassian semiotics is concerned, may offer new insights as to the purpose or intent of a text. Exploring semiotic objects on a figurative, narrative and thematic level may provide the necessary, holistic insight. These three levels of analysis form the basis of discussion in chapters hereafter. Therefore a detailed discussion of each is provided in this chapter to establish a framework for the analysis that follows.

1.7.2 THE FIGURATIVE STEP OF ANALYSIS

This step focuses on figures and how they are constructed by the author. Figures are elements of a text that are related to the natural world and can be experienced with five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch (Martin & Ringham, 2000:8). Actors, space and time are the

main figures of a text. The task here consists of analyzing figurative oppositions, recurring motifs in a narrative and emplotment (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:30). Some scholars also call this step the “Discursive level of analysis” e.g. Martin & Ringham (2000:8) in that it focuses on the specific words or grammatical items that are visible on the surface of the text.

In considering the Figurative level of analysis, the following aspects are important: figurative oppositions in a narrative; motifs in a narrative and emplotment of the story. The following section discusses figurative oppositions in the narrative.

1.7.2.1 FIGURATIVE OPPOSITIONS IN A NARRATIVE

It is believed that no figure can produce meaning by itself. Meaning stems from comparison between figures from different parts of the text (Calloud & Genuyt, 1982:23). Actorialization, spatialization and temporalization refer to the process of establishing figures in a narrative to impact the reader. These concepts are briefly discussed below.

Actorialization

It is the process of establishing actors in a narrative (Greimas & Courtes, 1982:8). Actors are constructed by individuation (by considering their actions and names) and/or by identification (their specific traits across the text). Proper names, also known as anthroponyms, gender, age and social classes are also key components in the process of actorialization.

Spatialization

Spatialization is a deliberate and intentional use of spaces in a narrative. Martin and Ringham (2000:124) state that the term spatialization designates the process whereby places and locations are established in a discourse. According to Chandler (2002:87), this can refer to general spatial oppositions such as above/below, front/behind, close/distant, left/right, north/south, east/west, in/out, center/periphery, or to specific places (toponyms) such as a heterotopic space (place out of the action of the subject [hero/ine of the story]) or topic space (place of transformation where a subject performs).

Temporalization

Together with actorialization and spatialization, temporalization is one of the sub-components of discoursivization (Greimas & Courtes, 1982:337). It is the construction of time in the unfolding of a narrative. Insistence on specific moments of time (Chrononyms) is as important to creating the narrative as is the choice of locations.

1.7.2.2 MOTIFS IN A NARRATIVE

According to Kanonge (2009:40) the course of some figures creates motifs or configurations in a narrative. Motif can refer to a word, idea, expression, image, and symbol or theme which an author exploits repeatedly and purposely in a text (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2001:763). Particular motifs in the narrative are confirmed by the presence of specific figures or characters. The question, with regard to *Judith*, would be: what motifs do the author exploit and what is the purpose thereof?

1.7.2.3 THE EMPLOTMENT OF A NARRATIVE

Emplotment refers to the intentional choice and arrangement of events by an author in a specific structure or plot, with the aim of impacting his/her community. Some narratives, for example, are shaped according to a story already known by a community (*archetype*). Emplotment reveals the ideological implication of a narrative (Chandler, 2002:138).; this means that the arrangement of events in a type of plot familiar to the community may be intended to introduce or reject a practice that is judged strange by the community (Kanonge, 2009:44).

In the analysis of *Judith*, special attention is paid to the ideology the author seeks to establish or to reject (cf. Kanonge, 2009:44 on *Susanna*). The genre of the narrative and dominant tropes will play an important role in revealing the ideology of *Judith*. According to Chandler (2002:138), when one of the four tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony) prevails in a narrative it determines the genre of the narrative (romance, comedy, tragedy or satire), its worldview (formism, organicism, mechanism or contextualism) and its ideology (anarchism, conservatism, radicalism or liberalism). Kanonge (2009:45) provides a detailed diagram illustrating this point, which is not reproduced here.

In summary, the Figurative level of analysis can therefore be said to concern mainly of figurative oppositions, recurring motifs and the emplotment of the story. The Narrative step concerns a related dimension, discussed next.

1.7.3 THE NARRATIVE STEP OF ANALYSIS

The narrative analysis examines the organization of a text as discourse. It helps to reveal different functions of actants and track the course of the subject across the narrative. The tools for investigation here are the actantial model (also called actantial narrative schema) and the narrative syntax (Martin and Ringham, 2000:9). Aspects of importance addressed in relation to

this level of analysis are: the structure of the story (the initial and final state of the story, in particular), the actantial model and the canonical narrative schema.

1.7.3.1 THE ACTANTIAL MODEL

The role of the Actantial Model is to reveal different functions and activities performed in a narrative by actants. It consists of six functions called actants (addresser and addressee; subject and object; helper and opponent). An actant is not a character, but a unit of the narrative grammar. A character belongs to the figurative level of analysis, i.e. to the data of the text. An actant belongs to the narrative level of the analysis. It is a constructed unit. It can be a human being or an abstraction, a collective character or an animal (Kanonge 2009:47). The configuration of the actantial model and the relation between actants are the main aspects of the actantial model and are discussed below.

The configuration of the actantial model

Behind the Actantial Model lies Greimas' contention that, like sentences, narratives have their own grammar and syntax. A story always provides an account of the quest of a subject for an object (*axis of desire*). The addresser communicates the longing for the object to an addressee (*axis of communication*); the helper assists the subject in his/her pursuit while the opponent raises obstacles to his mission (*axis of power*). The relations between actants in a narrative can be represented as in Figure 1.3:

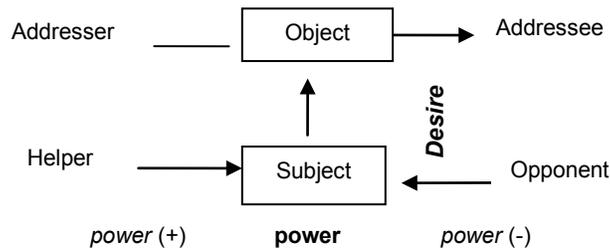


Figure 1.3 An Actantial Model illustrating different relationships between actants in the narrative.

The actantial model comprises three axes which contribute to an understanding of the meaning of a text. The axis of desire relates to subject and object. The axis of communication relates to addresser and addressee. The axis of power relates to subject and helper/opponent. Elements of each are considered briefly in more detail (cf. Fig. 1.3 above).

The axis of desire: Subject and Object

Subject and objects are two fundamental actants. They are the *sine qua non* of every narrative. All other functions in a narrative are determined by their relation to the subject and the object. The course of a narrative is the description of the quest of the subject for the object (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:40). The axis of desire examines relations between subject and object and between subject and anti-subject.

The relation between the subject and the object is called a narrative utterance. It can be either an utterance of state (conjunction or disjunction) or an utterance of doing (underlining the attempt of the subject to be in conjunction with the object).

Anti-subjects are subjects with opposing quests. An anti-subject is always an opponent but every opponent is not always anti-subject. Anti-subjects appear in narratives in three main different ways:

- Two (or more) subjects (S_A and S_B) compete to obtain the same object ($O_A = O_B$);
- Two subjects (S_A and S_B) take each other as objects: S_A takes S_B as object (O_A) and the subject S_B takes as object (O_B) the subject S_A ;
- A subject (S_A) takes as object (O_A) another subject (S_B) who pursues another object (O_B).

The axis of communication: Addresser and Addressee

The addresser imparts the object to the addressee. His mission includes three roles:

- He/She is called subject of state: He/she longs for the object;
- He/She is said to be a subject manipulator: He/She makes the subject act by transmitting to him/her modalities for the acquisition of the object (knowledge and/or duty);
- He/She is called subject adjudicator: He/She represents desired core values in a narrative.

The axis of power: Helper, Subject and Opponent

This last group of actants acts on the subject, either to help him/her reach his/her goal or distract him/her from achieving it. A helper of the subject can also have an opponent in the story.

1.7.3.2 THE NARRATIVE SYNTAX

The narrative syntax describes actions of actants in narratives. The following are elements that contribute to our understanding of the syntax: narrative program (NP) and canonical narrative schema. A narrative program (NP) is a set of actions to be performed by the subject to reach the object. The main narrative program can be achieved by the medium of many narrative programs (i.e. narrative programs of usage). The canonical narrative schema focuses on the course of the subject in the entire narrative. It comprises four steps: the contract, the acquisition of competence, the performance and the sanction. To each of these four steps there are corresponding abilities called modalities. Modalities (willing and competence) enable the action of the subject. Six basic modalities are: *being*, *doing*, *wanting*, *having-to*, *knowing* and *being-able-to* (Greimas & Courtes, 1982:194).

Contract

The addresser (subject manipulator) exerts a persuasive doing/action about the object on the addressee. The addressee appreciates the value of the object offered to him/her. This process corresponds to the contract. The addressee can accept or reject the contract. If he/she accepts the contract, he/she acquires the modality of wanting-to-do (desire) and/or having-to-do (duty) and becomes a subject, i.e. a virtual subject. A contract can be injunctive, permissive or seductive. The contract in the *Judith* narrative is of a seductive nature. This point will be elaborated in the section “Canonical narrative schema” in the study (3.3.2 and 3.3.2.1).

Acquisition of competence

This step is also called a qualifying test. It is a series of narrative programs (NP) during which a subject acquires or manifests his competence. There are two kinds of modalities here: cognitive modalities [wanting-to-do (vouloir-faire) or having-to-do (devoir-faire)] and pragmatic modalities [being-able-to-do (pouvoir-faire) and knowing-how-to-do (savoir-faire)]. When a subject acquires them, he becomes an actualized subject.

Performance

The final action of the subject in a narrative is called performance (the “doing” [le faire] of the subject) or the decisive test. By the performance, the subject acquires the object of his quest and has therefore the status of a realized subject. The performance can either be instantaneous or progressive (See Chapter 3, 3.3.2.3 for a detailed discussion on *Judith*).

Sanction

After achieving his performance, the subject reports his achievement to the addresser. Many narratives end with words of praise in recognition of the performance of the subject. The

addresser assesses the performance of the subject according to the system of values he represents. The subject receives the title of a glorified subject when his actions were in accordance with the axiology of the universe of the narrative.

In summary the narrative step of analysis focuses on the structure of the story, actantial model and the narrative syntax. The following section shortly describes the third and the final step, which is the Thematic analysis.

1.7.4 THE THEMATIC STEP OF ANALYSIS

This level is concerned with the fundamental values which account for the generation of a text (love, freedom, equity, glory, faith, human right etc.), using a semiotic square. Narratives are written to propagate ideologies embodying these cultural values. These values are investigated paradigmatically and syntagmatically by means of a semiotic square (see Fig. 6 below) (Kanonge, 2009:57).¹⁷ According to Martin and Ringham (2000:12) the semiotic square is a visual presentation of the elementary structure of meaning. Articulating the relationships of contrariety (opposition), contradiction and implication, it is the logical expression of any semantic category. The thematic step comprises three tools of investigation viz. opposition of values, the thematic itinerary and the veridictory square.

1.7.4.1 THE OPPOSITION OF VALUES IN A NARRATIVE

Each text offers a judgment of values (good vs. bad). The discovery of opposing values is crucial for the interpretation. The semiotic square, based on binary oppositions, built with two axes (one with contrary values and the other with contradictory values) as illustrated in Figures 1.4 and 1.5 below:



Figure 1.4 Illustration of Semantic axis connecting two contrary values



Figure 1.5 The second axis connecting two contradictory values

The semiotic square is built using these two axes of values and has the following configuration.

¹⁷ The Paradigmatic use of a semiotic square classifies values according to the cultural axiology (good versus bad; acceptable versus not acceptable). The Syntagmatic perspective is concerned with the circulation of values across the text. It is important to notice that the uses of the semiotic square are numerous. Mapping out opposed values is only one of these (Kanonge, 2009:56).

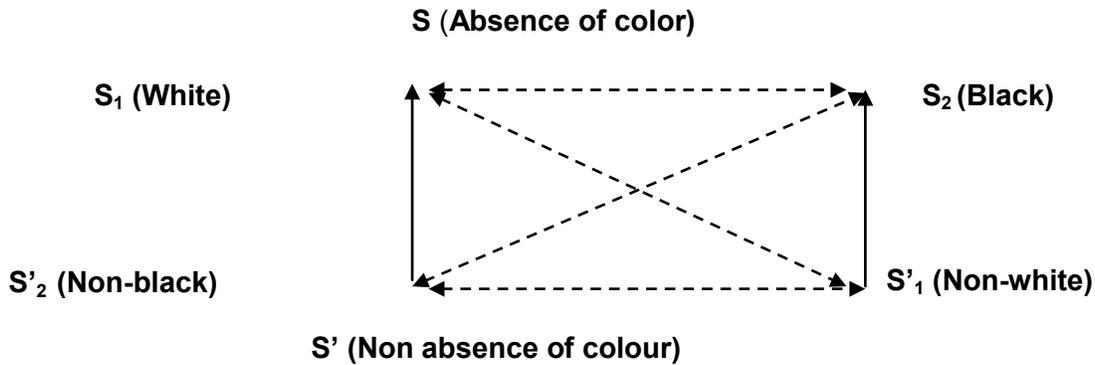


Figure 1.6 Illustration of the Semiotic Square

The semiotic square generates three kinds of relations with regard to active values in a text:

- A ←-----→ Relation between contrary axes S_1 and S_2 & S'_1 and S'_2
- B ←-----→ Relation between contradictory: S_1 and S'_1 & S'_2 and S_2 contrary values exclude each other
- C → Relation of implication: S'_2 implies S_1 & S'_1 implies S_2

Oposing values are established from the Figurative and Narrative analyses by observing figurative oppositions and main actants in the text (addresser, subjects and anti-subjects).

1.7.4.2 THE THEMATIC ITINERARY

The thematic itinerary focuses on the circulation of thematic values across the narrative. S_1 , S_2 , S'_1 and S'_2 from the above semiotic square are now conceived not as opposing values as in fig 6 but as transformation of values from one state to another.

According to Everaert-Desmedt (2007:75), there is a universal logic of circulation of values in nearly all narratives. In general, a narrative (1) lays down a value; (2) denies, doubts or questions the value laid down; (3) proceeds to the opposing value and may stop here; or (4) denies the last; and (5) returns to the first value to reinforce or modify it. When this course of values is taken into account, the new configuration of the semiotic square becomes as shown in Figure 1.7:

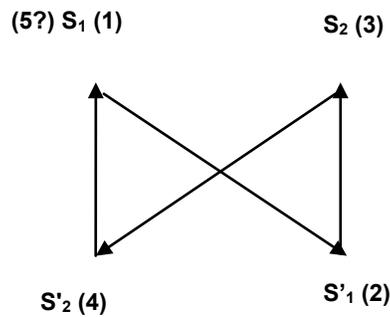


Figure 1.7 A general syntagmatic configuration of the semiotic square

This schema represents the thematic path or the distribution of values in the unfolding of a narrative. It can have two different configurations:

- a. A text asserts a value, then questions it and confirms the opposed (Figure 1.8). There is a plea for the reinstatement of the opposing value.
- b. A text asserts a value, rejects it, asserts the opposed and rejects the opposed as well to reassert the first value (Figure 1.9). It pleads for the reinforcement of that value in the society.

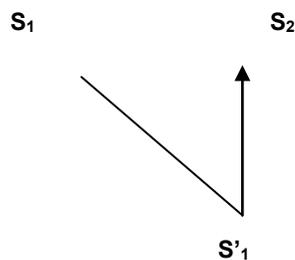


Figure 1.8 The thematic path of a text questioning a value and confirming its opposite

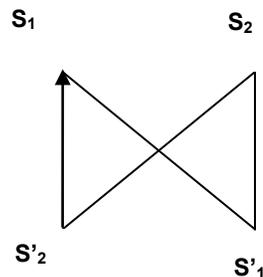


Figure 1.9 The thematic path of a text pleading for the reinforcement of value

1.7.4.3 THE VERIDICTORY SQUARE

In some narratives it is difficult to judge actions of competing subjects. Actions of one subject may appear to be true or real while that is not the actual case. There is a conflict between being and seeming. In these types of narratives, there is a manipulation of truth to convince. A veridictory is introduced to map out the truth. *Être* (being) and *paraître* (seeming) constitute the two basic modalities of the veridictory square. It has the following configuration (cf. Martin & Ringham, 2000:139 and Courtés, 1991:11-119; 1995:81-84) shown in Figure 1.10:

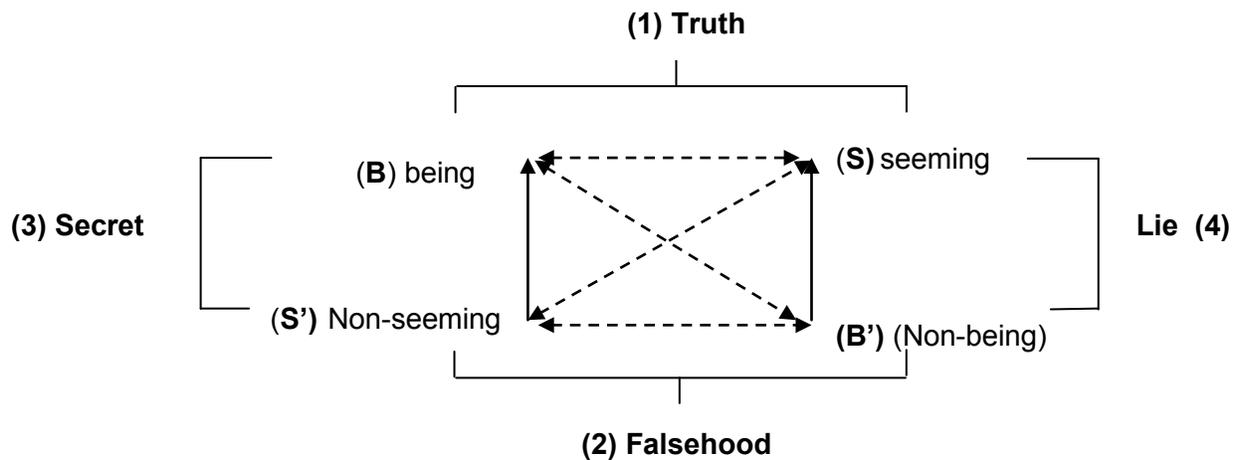


Figure 1.10 Illustration of a veridictory square in a narrative

In brief, the thematic level is the deep and abstract level of a text. This level of analysis is connected with the fundamental values which account for the generation of a text. These values are studied by means of a semiotic square.

It is assumed that if the philosophy underlying the production of narratives is exposed clearly, the interpretation of narratives becomes less puzzling. The production of a text proceeds from the thematic to the figurative level, via the narrative. None of these three levels of the analysis is suppose to generate meaning from the text individually. It is imperative that results from all three levels be combined.

In summary, the thematic step of analysis focuses on the three tools of investigation, that is, the opposition of values, the thematic itinerary and the veridictory square. The following section discusses the text and the context of *Judith* which this study will be using for investigation.

1.8 JUDITH: TEXT AND CONTEXT

The Greek text of *Judith* studied here is that of Rahlfs (1996). It must be pointed out that this investigation is centered on the text rather than on its author or historical background. In a semiotic narrative analysis, as Kanonge (2009:18) puts it, “[t]he historical reconstruction takes us on an unnecessary and somewhat speculative detour”. Therefore, a special consideration of the historical background of the author, date and circumstances of redaction, or even the canonicity of the book is of little interest or value here. Kanonge (2009:18) further suggests that the historical background is directly incorporated in the Greimassian semiotic approach, as it

appears in terms of motifs and/or intertextuality. The text and a close reading of it is all that is important for this study. Since the text is the main focus of the investigation, as in the tradition of semiotic analysis, the analysis of *Judith* will be based solely on the analysis of the edition mentioned above.

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This analysis of *Judith* adopts a structure dictated by the methodology. The analysis is arranged in three main chapters, preceded by this introductory chapter and followed by a concluding one.

This introductory chapter provided contextualization of the study, the problem statement. In conjunction with this, the central theoretical statement (hypothesis), and research aims were stipulated. Furthermore, details of preliminary studies on *Judith* were considered, and the particular contribution of the present study was pointed out. Finally, an outline of the Greimassian semiotic approach, the text and context of *Judith*, the structure of the study and the schematic representation to indicate correlation is provided.

The following chapter (Chapter 2) provides the Figurative analysis of *Judith*. It is the first of the three Greimassian steps of analysis. The main aim of this chapter is to investigate the main figures and their significance in *Judith* in terms of actors, space and time.

The third chapter discusses the narrative analysis of *Judith*. As discussed in the outline of the method (1.7.4) the focus of this analysis is to investigate the configuration of the story of *Judith* as a discourse.

The fourth chapter focuses on the Thematic analysis of *Judith*. The thematic step is the third and final stage of analysis, following the Figurative and the Narrative analyses. In the Thematic analysis, the main aim is to map out the core values that generated the story of *Judith*.

The fifth chapter provides the summary of the results of the whole study. The contribution of the research is also discussed in this chapter and recommendations for future investigation are made.

The following section (1.10) provides a summary of the formulation of the problem statement, aims and objectives and the method of analysis. This is provided for the purpose of indicating correlation.

1.10 SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION TO INDICATE CORRELATION

Problem Statement	Aims and Objectives	Approach and Method
What is the current state of <i>Judith</i> research and how does it provide opportunities for new investigations?	To establish the current state of <i>Judith</i> research and how it provides opportunities for new investigations.	Compiling a documentation of the current state of research of <i>Judith</i> .
How does the Figurative analysis contribute towards establishing the purpose of <i>Judith</i> ?	To establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> using the results of the Figurative analysis.	Using the Figurative analysis to establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> .
How does the narrative analysis contribute towards establishing the purpose of <i>Judith</i> ?	To establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> using the results of the narrative analysis.	Using the narrative analysis to establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> .
How does the Thematic analysis contribute to reveal the purpose of <i>Judith</i> ?	To establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> using the results of the Thematic analysis.	Using the Thematic analysis to establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> .
What new contribution does the application of the Greimassian semiotic approach bring to the study of the Greek text of <i>Judith</i> ?	To establish the purpose of <i>Judith</i> that emerges from the results of the completed Greimassian semiotic analysis.	Using results from the Greimassian semiotic analysis to determine the possible purpose of <i>Judith</i> .

CHAPTER 2: THE FIGURATIVE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in chapter one, this chapter provides a Figurative analysis of *Judith*. It is the first of the three steps in a Greimassian semiotic analysis. According to Kanonge (2009:65), a study of the figurative level takes into account three key elements: figurative oppositions, emplotment and motifs. Following this structure, the first section of this chapter discusses figurative oppositions between the Judithic figures, and the second discusses emplotment in terms of archetype, tropes and genre. The consideration of motifs is integrated within these sections.

2.2 FIGURATIVE OPPOSITIONS

The objective of this section is to examine the main oppositions between figures within the text of *Judith*. Kanonge (2009:65) states that, before comparing figures, it is crucial to examine how the author has constructed them. This process is called figurativization. After considering the figurativization, the main figures featured in the story are examined in terms of actors, space and time.

2.2.1 THE FIGURATIVIZATION OF THE STORY OF *JUDITH*

Henry (1991:107) states that short stories contain few characters, few places and only one significant moment in time that serves as a critical turning point of the story. *Judith* comprises more than twenty active characters, who contribute to the unfolding of the story. They participate in many settings in which the events of the story take place. A shallow reading of *Judith* may lead to the conclusion that it only has one significant moment in time, that is, the beheading of Holofernes (13:8-10). In fact, *Judith* has a number of critical tragic moments in addition to this one which provide the reader with more than one turning point. To mention a few: the defeat and the brutal killing of Arphaxad (1:13-15); the resistance of the western nations against Nebuchadnezzar's call for alliance; and the banishment of Achior from the Assyrian army (6:5-13). Based on this practical observation of its many characters, many settings, and more than one significant moment, *Judith*, may therefore be classified as a long story.

These figures mentioned in relation to the critical moments, along with a number of others are discussed below in terms of actorialization, spatialization and temporalization as guided by the Figurative analysis of the Greimassian semiotic approach.

2.2.1.1 ACTORIALIZATION

As indicated in the Chapter 1, actorialization denotes the way in which the author constructs his/her actors in order to convey the message. The story itself consists of primary and secondary characters. Primary/leading figures are those around whom the story revolves. Secondary characters are those who reinforce the importance of the primary characters and they play supporting roles to the primary ones (Branch, 2012:57). These characters feature in the story either through participating in an action or through reference. The actors investigated in *Judith* are Nebuchadnezzar, Arphaxad, Holofernes, Bagoas the eunuch, Achior, Judith (Hebrew woman), Judith's maid, Children of Esau, Joachim the High Priest, Rulers of the city of Bethulia (Ozias, Chabris, Charmis and the Ancients/Elders of the city), God, unnamed chief of the Children of Esua, the governors of the people of Moab and the Captains of the sea coast, Children of Ammon, Children of Israel (People of Judea, Jewish people, the inhabitants of Bethulia), the army of Assyria and the Captains of the Assyrian army.

The following table summarizes the occurrences of actors in the unfolding of the story in the order of appearance from the most frequent to the least.

Table 2.1 The frequency of actors' appearances in the story of Judith

ACTORS	FREQUENCY (Chapters and verses.)
God	82 times [4:2, 4:9, 4:12, 4:13, 4:14 (x2 as Lord), 4:15, 5:8, 5:9, 5:12, 5:13, 5:17 (x2), 5:18, 5:19, 5:20, 5:21, 6:2, 6:3, 6:18 (x2), 6:19, 6:21, 7:19, 7:24, 7:25, 7:28, 7:29, 7:30, 8:8, 8:13 (Lord), 8:14, 8:16, 8:20, 8:23, 8:25, 8:27, 8:31, 8:33, 8:35, 9:2, 9:4, 9:7, 9:11, 9:12, 9:14, 10:1, 10:8, 11:6, 11:10, 11:11, 11:12, 11:13, 11:16, 11:17 (x2), 11:22, 11:23, 12:4, 12:8, 13:4, 13:7, 13:11, 13:14, 13:15, 13:16, 13:17, 13:18, 13:19, 13:20, 14:10, 15:8, 15:10, 16:2, 16:3, 16:3, 16:6, 16:12, 16:13, 16:16, 16:17, 16:18 and 16:19]
Holofernes	45 times [2:4, 2:14, 3:5, 4:1, 5:1, 5:22, 5:24, 6:1, 6:10, 6:17 (x2), 7:1, 7:6, 7:9 (lord) 7:16, 7:26, 10:13, 10:15 (as lord) 10:17, 10:18, 10:20, 10:21, 11:1, 11:5, 11:10, 11:11, 11:20, 11:21, 12:3, 12:4, 12:5, 12:6 (x2), 12:7, 12:10, 12:13, 12:14, 12:15, 12:16, 12:17, 12:18, 12:20, 13:1, 13:2, 13:6, 13:9, 13:15, 14:3, 14:6, 14:11, 14:13, 14:18, 15:11, and 16:19]
Children of Israel, People of Judea (Jewish people, the inhabitants of Bethulia)	38 times [4:1, 4:3, 4:9, 4:11, 4:13, 4:15, 4:15, 5:1, 5:6, 5:19, 5:23, 6:14, 6:18, 7:6, 7:13, 7:14, 7:19, 7:23, 7:30, 7:32, 8:9, 8:11, 8:12, 8:24, 9:13, 9:14, 10:7, 10:19, 11:2, 11:9, 11:10, 11:12, 13:17, 13:20, 15:5, 15:7, 16:1 and 16:25]
Judith (Hebrew woman)	33 times [8:1, 8:4, 8:9, 8:32, 9:1 (x2), 10:10, 10:23, 11:1 (referred to as just woman) 11:5, 11:16 (she refers to herself as a handmaid) 12:2, 12:4, 12:11 (referred to as a Hebrew woman), 12:14, 12:16, 12:18, 13:2, 13:3, 13:4, 13:11, 14:1, 14:7, 14:8, 14:14, 14:17, 14:18 (Hebrew woman) 15:8, 15:11, 15:14, 16:1, 16:6, 16:19, 16:20, 16:21, 16:25]
Nebuchadnezzar	20 times [1:1, 1:5, 1:7, 1:11, 1:12, 2:1, 2:4, 2:19, 3:1, 3:8, 4:1, 6:2, 6:4, 11:1, 11:4, 11:7, 11:7, 11:23, 12:13, and 14:18]
Achior	13 times [5:5, 5:22, 6:1, 6:2, 6:5, 6:10, 6:13, 6:16, 6:20, 11:9, 14:5, 14:6, and 14:10]
Rulers of the city of Bethulia (Uzziah, Chabris, Charmis)	13 times ¹⁸ [6:15, 6:16, 6:21, 7:23, 7:30, 8:9, 8:10, 8:28, 8:35, 10:6, 13:18, 14:6 and 15:4]
Judith's maid	11 times ἡ βρα [8:10, 8:33, 10:2, 10:5, 10:17, 13:9, 16:23], ἡ παιδίσκη [10:10], δούλη [12:15, 12:19, 13:3]

¹⁸ Uzziah, Chabris and Charmis' names are mentioned together only three times in the story (6:15, 8:10 and 10:6). However, this study combines them as "elders of Bethulia", where Uzziah assumes the leadership role most of the times.

Bagoas (regarded as the representative of the servants of Holofernes)	7 times [12:5, 12:11, 12:13, 12:15, 13:1, 13:3, and 14:14]
Arphaxad	5 times [1:1, 1:5, 1:13 (x2), and 1:15]
Joachim the High Priest	4 times [4:6, 4:8, 4:14 and 15:8]
Army of Assyria,	4 times [5:22, 9:7, 10:11, 13:14]
Children/ Captains of Ammon and governors of the sea coast.	3 times [5:2, 7:17, 7:18]
Children of Esau	2 times [7:8 and 7:18]
Unnamed chief of the Children of Esau, the governors of the people of Moab and the Captains of the sea coast.	2 times [7:8 and 7:18]
The Army of Israel	2 times [15:3, 15:13]
Women of Israel	Once [15:12]
Watchmen at the Gate of Bethulia	Once [13:11]
Captains of the Assyrian army	Once [14:3]

These figures show the number of times an actor's name occurs in relation to that of others, indicating the relative importance of characters. They reflect the primary and secondary characters in the story of *Judith*. Primary characters tend to be referred to more often than secondary characters.

According to the data presented in Table 2.1 above, the following figures emerge as primary characters in the story: Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes, Achior, Judith and God. According to Branch and Jordaan (2009:392), in the biblical text and apocryphal literature, a character is not major (primary) because of his or her rank but instead because of the amount of text accorded to him or her; in the words, the length of description about the character and the character's words and actions determine that character's significance.¹⁹ All the characters listed above as primary characters play a leading and major role in the unfolding of the story. This study also observes that the number of occurrences of Judith's maid and Rulers of the city of Bethulia are almost equal; however, they are classified under secondary characters since they play a supporting role to Judith in the story.

The individual traits of each character are discussed below. Each of the primary characters is discussed in the order in which they are introduced in the story, followed by a discussion of the secondary characters, also in the order that they are introduced.

¹⁹ See Branch and Jordaan (2009:392) for further discussion on characterization.

2.2.1.1.1 Primary characters

a) *Nebuchadnezzar*

Nebuchadnezzar is the first character to be introduced in the narrative. He is introduced as “Ναβουχοδονοσορ, ὃς ἐβασίλευσεν Ἀσσυρίων ἐν Νινευη τῇ πόλει τῇ μεγάλῃ” (Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled Assyria in Nineveh the big city).²⁰ The narrative begins in the twelfth year of his reign. His name is explicitly mentioned 20 times in the narrative, even though his active participation in the story occurs only in the first two chapters. However, his influence is of critical importance in the unfolding of the plot. The narrative does not mention anything about his background and family. However, the reader learns that he is an influential character in the story and he is the force behind the Assyrian army. At least in Chapter 1 of *Judith*, two active verbs denote his active role in the narrative. Firstly in 1:5: “καὶ ἐποίησεν πόλεμον... ὁ βασιλεὺς Ναβουχοδονοσορ πρὸς βασιλέα Αρφαξαδ...” (and king Nebuchadnezzar made war with king Arphaxad); and secondly in 2:5: “εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ⁵Τάδε λέγει ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς” (And he said to him “thus says the great king, the lord of the whole earth”).²¹ In the second instance the narrative reveals that he has authority over the people of Assyria and all his allies.

These two active verbs reveal Nebuchadnezzar as a king who is hungry for dominion. He wages wars and further commands his army to act according to his orders, namely to destroy other nations (their gods and sanctuaries) who refuse to be his allies.

According to Douglas (1988:820), the name Nebuchadnezzar (*Nabû-kudurri-uṣur*) means “Nebu, protects the succession rights” or “Nebu, protects the boundary”.²² From these possible meanings, one cannot make any insightful conclusion with regard to this character’s significance in the story of *Judith*. The problem facing the reader around placing the name “Nebuchadnezzar” is that, in *Judith*, he is introduced as an Assyrian king who ruled in Nineveh (1:1), whereas in the Biblical texts, Nebuchadnezzar belongs to the Chaldean dynasty founded by Nabopolassar. In the Biblical texts, Nebuchadnezzar has always been known as king of Babylon (605-562 B.C.), not Assyria (Douglas, 1988:820). Many *Judith* scholars have already noted this problem around the figure of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of *Judith* and the *Judith* narrative has been criticized as a result of this historical incongruity. These two figures (Nebuchadnezzar in *Judith* and that of the Biblical texts) simply do not correlate. Efthimiadis-

²⁰ The English translations of the Greek text in this thesis are borrowed from Rahlfs (1996), with minor modification by the candidate.

²¹ The expression “the Lord of the whole earth” is very key to this study. It will be discussed further in detail.

²² See Brown, Driver and Briggs (2000).

Keith (2004:7), for example, concedes to this fact when she argues that the city of Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C., seven or eight years before Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, became king. This historical incongruity is one of the points that influenced various scholars to conclude that *Judith* is fiction.

However, *Judith* scholars haven't clearly provided an answer with regard to the significance of Nebuchadnezzar's figure in the *Judith* narrative. Regardless of the historical incongruity in the narrative, the figure of Nebuchadnezzar, as an active figure in the story, calls for interpretation if we are to do scholarly justice to the narrative. This study contends that the author had a purpose in creating this narrative and employing the figure of Nebuchadnezzar in it.

The narrative supposedly presents Nebuchadnezzar as an epitome of irresistible military might (Nickelsburg, 2005:97). Only in the first chapter of the narrative did he, himself, lead the battle against Arphaxad, “καὶ ἐποίησεν πόλεμον...” (“And he made war...”). His last speech is in 2:5-13 when he dispatched Holofernes, his general, against the nations that refused to be his allies (Nickelsburg, 2005:97). From this instance until the end of the narrative, he is a mute character, yet the story continues following his command. It seems that Nebuchadnezzar has such a profound effect on the narrative that his active presence in the beginning of the narrative is enough to be felt throughout.

Although scholars (e.g. Nickelsburg 2005; Moore 1985; Efthimiadis-Keith 2004) agree on the historical incongruity of the biblical Nebuchadnezzar and the one in *Judith*, this study asserts that there are notable similarities between the two figures. Both figures are kings that possess a huge military strength and the power to subdue other nations (Jdth. 1:5-2:13 and Dan. 1:1). Both of them are revealed as oppressors of other nations and are associated with terror.²³

In light of this historical inconsistency around the figure of Nebuchadnezzar, this study argues that the author was not concerned with satisfying historical facts in this narrative. The figure of Nebuchadnezzar was constructed to be a symbol of terror and religious claims that will evoke the God of Israel's protective power over the Jews and their religion. The expression “ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς” (the great king, the lord of the whole earth), contains a serious religious claim. In the Biblical text, this expression is fitting only to the God of Israel,

²³ See Easton (1996) for the discussion about Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible and Chapter 1 of *Judith*.

according to Exodus 8:18 (LXX). In brief, Nebuchadnezzar claims²⁴ to be some kind of deity to be worshipped and his name is further connected with terror and destruction of Israel. He is a useful character to incite fear and terror into the opposition. This point is discussed in detail in the following chapter. Further discussion of the significance of the character of Nebuchadnezzar continues in the investigation of the figure of the Assyrian army.

b) Holofernes

Holofernes is the second major character in the narrative (2:4). His name means “carry everything”. This may bear the connotation “carry the Assyrian army on behalf of Nebuchadnezzar”.²⁵ The author’s construction of the figure and the role of Holofernes in the narrative is dramatic. Holofernes performs military actions and engages in speech.

Holofernes enters the stage just when Nebuchadnezzar vacates it. He is the chief captain of the Assyrians and his role is to carry out the last speech/command of Nebuchadnezzar. The expression, “δεύτερον ὄντα μετ’ αὐτὸν” (being the second from Nebuchadnezzar) signifies his close relation to king Nebuchadnezzar and his high rank. Holofernes is commissioned by his master (one can also say “his god”), Nebuchadnezzar, to punish the western nations. He is to go out in Nebuchadnezzar’s name and destroy all those nations who had disobeyed him and to spare those who submit for their day of judgment (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:172). Closely connected to Nebuchadnezzar’s claim of “the lord of the whole earth”, the text, in 2:7, records that,

καὶ ἀπαγγελεῖς αὐτοῖς ἐτοιμάζειν γῆν καὶ ὕδωρ” (you shall command/inform them to prepare earth and water...).

Holofernes is to command that the people “prepare for Nebuchadnezzar earth and water”. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:172) states that this expression signifies a Persian form of libations to deity. Nebuchadnezzar, in this instant, saw himself as some kind of a god.

Having received his master’s command, Holofernes’ active involvement in the narrative begins. He gathers all the commanders, generals and officers of the Assyrian army (2:14), amasses

²⁴ This study observes that Nebuchadnezzar does not claim to be god himself; however, the call for libations, in 2:7 is associated with this claim. See the discussion of the figure of Holofernes.

²⁵ The meaning of the name “Holofernes” can only be translated on the basis of alliteration or paronomasia. Paronomasia is play upon words where words of equal sound are placed near to each other, or the same word is juxtaposed in different functions (Jordaan: 2004:118). The suggested meaning of Holofernes, is taken from the possible combination of two words, ὅλος meaning, whole or entire + φερνή from φέρω meaning to bring or carry (Liddel & Scott, 2002:484,753).

countless numbers of carrier and slaughter animals (2:17), food and an abundance of gold and silver for their provision (2:18) and sets off to destroy the western lands with his forces. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:172) further indicates that, part of Holofernes' army is a great number of sundry nations which was so numerically vast the author equates it with swarms of locusts and grains of sand.

Holofernes goes on a merciless rampage throughout the Ancient Near East, destroying towns, fields, temples and peoples and leaving a trail of terror in his wake (2:19-28). He deals brutally even with those who submit themselves to him, destroying their gods and sacred groves, declaring Nebuchadnezzar to be god alone and also drafting their best men into his ever-increasing army (3:1-8). The narrative seems to suggest that Holofernes was even more brutal and merciless than Nebuchadnezzar. This is deduced from the fact that Holofernes' achievements and the terror he spread around the nations (3:1-10 and 4:1-2) seem to surpass, that of Nebuchadnezzar by far.

It seems that the author of the narrative created the figure of Holofernes as a rightful person to take the mission of the king forward, since he is made to be both the commander-in-chief of the army and someone close to Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, his figure is like that of Nebuchadnezzar's, but perhaps even more dreadful than his. The significance of Holofernes' character in the narrative is, firstly, to intensify terror and fear amongst the opposing nations. Secondly, his role is to advance the ambition of Nebuchadnezzar of becoming a god of all the nations (see. 2:28 and 4:2).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Greimassian semiotic approach holds that figures cannot produce meaning by themselves. Meaning is produced by comparison between figures from different parts of the text and from the display of their differential relations (Kanonge, 2009:39). Consequently, the figure of Holofernes and its significance cannot be fully understood outside of his relationship to his king and god, Nebuchadnezzar. The same may be argued with regard to the relation of Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes. Both figures are symbols of terror and are associated with destruction as they pursue their ambition of conquering and subduing other nations and religions.

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:174) points out that Holofernes' power and arrogance increase as the story unfolds (2:20; 3:1-8, especially 6:1-21; 7:1, 16-17, 21-22ff.) and that he speaks with his master's voice. The more their relation is investigated, the more the reader discovers their

significance in the story. As already indicated, both function as symbols of terror and destruction. It may also be indicated that Nebuchadnezzar works through Holofernes, but Holofernes is more brutal than Nebuchadnezzar. The significance of the intricate relation between the two characters can be summarised as follows:

- Holofernes is the right hand man of Nebuchadnezzar. He possesses the power similar to that of Nebuchadnezzar, his king and god. His brutality seems to be worse than that of Nebuchadnezzar, since he is directly involved in human slaughtering.
- Holofernes is the first disciple of his god and master (Nebuchadnezzar), employed to advance the mission of the Assyrian cult²⁶ (see also Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:172). In this instance, he is the exact opposite of Judith in the story. This point is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (Actantial model).
- The author intentionally creates his figure to incite more fear and dread. His commissioning made him not only the center of power, but also a source of fear and dread to the opposing nations. In this sense, 2:5-13 can be seen as the author's opportunity substituting characters in the narrative, with Holofernes replacing Nebuchadnezzar. He suddenly becomes the strength of the whole army. Upon his decapitation, the whole army simply becomes powerless. Nothing is mentioned with regard to king Nebuchadnezzar. If the king was stronger than Holofernes, this study contends that he could have come back and led the army against the Israelites, as he did in Chapter 1.
- Holofernes is given freedom with regard to decision making. He even alters the commands of his master to suite the author's intent. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:173) observes that Holofernes' mandate to ensure that all nations worship Nebuchadnezzar alone as god (3:8) seems to be entirely of his own making. Nebuchadnezzar certainly does not command it directly, even though he commands that his enemies prepare "earth and water" for him.
- Holofernes is arrogant and resilient. Upon hearing of the Judaeans' resistance and war preparations (5:1), he becomes extremely angry (5:2). He calls together his foreign advisors and enquires about the identity, military strength and leadership of Israel (5:1-

²⁶ The term "cult" is innocently used by the author to mean "a system of beliefs and ritual connected with the worship of a deity, a spirit or a group of deities" (Babcock, 1976:552). The text states that Nebuchadnezzar is a deity who demands to be worshipped by all the nations (2:5-7, 3:8 and 24:2).

7). After calling together all his advisors, Holofernes is determined not to take any advice which seems to undermine Nebuchadnezzar (as god) and his military power. As a result of such an advice he banishes Ahoir for advising him based on the truth about Israel, but embraces the evil advice of the children of Esau.

- Holofernes is immoral. His image is associated with sexual immorality and drunkenness in the story (12:16-20).
- Holofernes is heartless. In 7:19-22 the text reports about the punishment he issued to the children of Israel, following the advice from the children of Esau.

In a nutshell, Holofernes personifies destruction, immorality and inciting terror amongst opposing nations.

c) Achior

The third major actor mentioned in the story is Achior (5:5), the Ammonite captain (ὁ ἡγούμενος πάντων υἱῶν Ἀμμων). The author introduces him as one of the foreign leaders of whom Holofernes demanded information concerning the Israelites in 5:2-4. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:186) observes that Achior makes his first, indirect retrospective appearance in *Judith* 1 where he is (presumably) amongst those who initially mock Nebuchadnezzar's call (the Ammonites are specifically mentioned in 1:12 and in 5:5; Achior is revealed as the Ammonite leader). The narrative does not distinguish him by name until his first direct appearance in 5:5.

Achior plays a pivotal role in the narrative. First, with regard to the structure of the narrative, this study observes, as Moore (1985:59) does, that Achior is a crucial character for uniting the two parts of the book (cf. also Roitman 1992:32 in Vanderkam, 1992:31-46). His first appearance is in Chapter 5 (Part I). Here he plays a role of an advisor to Holofernes. Achior appears again in 14:5-10 (Part II). Here he is summoned by Judith in order to identify the head of Holofernes which she brought back with her to Bethuliah (ibid.).

Secondly, with regard to his role in the unfolding of the narrative, Achior's participation is vital. The fact that Achior stands out among the group of the foreign advisors and responds to the call of Holofernes makes him a special character. In his response to Holofernes, Achior gives a positive extended report about the children of Israel (5:5-21). Jordaan and Hobyane (2010:5) assert that it seems strange that the narrative employs foreigners (Ammonites) to defend the Jewish religion in a time of crisis. The author, in this instance, is creative. He/she uses, in times

of religious conflict, all means at his/her disposal, even an Ammonite, to advance the Jewish religion (*ibid.*).

Achior's role may be likened to that of a prophet. His introduction can be seen as an act of God's intervention on behalf of Israel. Israel's enemies must know the truth before they are destroyed. Indeed, the text indicates, through Holofernes' words (6:2), that Achior's speech was intended to be a prophecy amongst the Assyrians:

Καὶ τίς εἶ σύ, Αχιωρ... ὅτι ἐπροφήτευσας ἐν ἡμῖν καθὼς σήμερον? (Who are you Achior... that you have prophesied amongst us as today?).

The foreigner (Achior) proves to be fully versed with the history of Israel, the expanded tradition concerning Abraham (DeSilva, 2002:96) and the Deuteronomistic promises to the Jews as made clear in 5:17-18, that is,

καὶ ἕως οὐχ ἤμαρτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτῶν, ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν τὰ ἀγαθὰ, ὅτι θεὸς μισῶν ἀδικίαν αὐτῶν ἐστίν. ¹⁸ ὅτε δὲ ἀπέστησαν ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ, ἧς διέθετο αὐτοῖς, ἐξωλεθρεύθησαν ἐν πολλοῖς πολέμοις ἐπὶ πολὺ σφόδρα... καὶ αἱ πόλεις αὐτῶν ἐκρατήθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ὑπεναντίων ²⁷

The above quotation suggests that it would be suicidal for Holofernes to wage war against the Israelites.

Achior's well intended report provokes the indignation of all present, including Holofernes. His report/advice seems to have undermined the military might and the religious ideology of Holofernes. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:186) states that as a result of this, Holofernes and his army macerate him and declare that the Judeans are powerless and would easily become fodder for Holofernes' forces. The significance of Achior in this instance can thus be seen as an element, which the author uses to elicit anger and arrogance in the Assyrian camp. The report of Achior does not bring any anticipated answers for Holofernes and his men, but only supplies the impetus for further assault and action in the story.

In response to Achior's report (6:3-4), Holofernes, with words full of sarcasm, fury, and irony, declares that Nebuchadnezzar alone is god (6:2) and that the Israelites have no hope of being delivered out of his hand by their God (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:186). Holofernes decrees that

²⁷ ¹⁷ "And while they do not sin before their God, they prospered, because the God that hates iniquity is with them. But when they departed from the way which he appointed them, they were destroyed in many battles very sore...and their cities were taken by their enemies".

Achior, who had dared to prophesy (ἐπροφήτευσας) in this manner, would be cast out to one of the Judean villages on the mountain pass, there to wait for his own destruction once Holofernes returns from destroying the Judeans (6:5-9). Holofernes commands that Achior be bound, taken to Bethulia and be left there at the mercy of its citizens. Amazingly, the Bethulians receive him warmly. They give him a chance to report about Holofernes. The reader learns that the whole city gathers around him as he reports to them the words of Holofernes (6:17):

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα τῆς συνεδρίας Ολοφέρνηου καὶ πάντα τὰ ῥήματα, ὅσα ἐλάλησεν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀρχόντων υἱῶν Ἀσσοῦρ, καὶ ὅσα ἐμεγαλορρημόνησεν Ολοφέρνης εἰς τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ.²⁸

After listening to his report, the people of Bethulia pray unto God (6:18) and offer Achior comforting words (6:19). The narrative reveals that Achior is later circumcised and integrated into the Jewish religion.

Taking all the above into cognizance, the reader is faced with a peculiar situation within the Jewish religion. Is this a kind of a development in terms of how the foreigners (in this case the Ammonites) who believe in the God of Israel should be treated? Is the significance of Achior meant to address this development? Jordaan and Hobyane (2010:10) conclude that the underlying purpose of the *Judith* narrative was to reverse or change the religious ideology of the time, from being exclusive to being inclusive. The message is clear: the Ammonites can now enter the congregation of Israel as long as they obey the Law of Moses. The story of Ruth, the Moabite, can also be a good example of this development (LXX Ruth 1:1-22). This is a significant development, when one bears in mind what LXX Deuteronomy 23:3-4 says:

οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται Ἀμμωνίτης καὶ Μωαβίτης εἰς ἐκκλησίαν κυρίου, καὶ ἕως δεκάτης γενεᾶς οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται εἰς ἐκκλησίαν κυρίου καὶ ἕως εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.²⁹

From the textual data gathered so far regarding Achior's role in *Judith*, one may conclude that the author created the figure of Achior to address the matter of religious exclusivity. Through the character of Achior, the author brings a significant update regarding the conditions through which the Ammonites (and perhaps other non-Jews who served the God of Israel) could be

²⁸ ¹⁷ "He reported to them the words of the council of Holofernes and all the words that he had spoken in the midst of the princes of Assyria and whatsoever Holofernes had spoken proudly against the house of Israel".

²⁹ ³ "The Ammonite and Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord, even until the tenth generation he shall not enter into the assembly".

allowed to enter the Jewish assembly. They must forsake their gods, believe in the God of Israel and obey the Law of Moses. Craven (1983:103) mentions this point with doubts, but this study contends that the purpose of the role of Achior in *Judith* aims at informing readers that this exclusion no longer applies. Thus, the Jewish religion has undergone a significant development: that is, from being exclusive to inclusive. The Ammonites can therefore also be the carriers of the Jewish religion in times of crisis.

d) Judith

Judith is the fourth main character to be introduced in the narrative. A number of scholars, e.g. Craven (1983:84-85); Moore (1985:33), Harrington (1999:34) and Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:220) have observed that Judith is introduced by the longest genealogy, as compared to the rest of the characters in the entire book. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:221) states that this is no mean feat for a female character in an ancient Hebrew narrative. She further observes that Judith possesses the longest genealogy of any woman in the Hebrew Bible-including the Apocrypha too. This sixteen-tier genealogy depicts the strength of her ancestral roots and shows that she is a person who has deep roots in the unconscious³⁰ memories of her people.

Judith is the undisputed main character (protagonist) in the story. She is the principal and the most influential character in the story. Levine (1992:18) also observes that Judith is the text's only named female character and thus the only woman recognized in its male-defined world. Levine further observes that the introduction of Judith (8:1) breaks the pattern of the first seven chapters, in which a plethora of male names (and so individual male subjects) appear. Her name is explicitly mentioned about 38 times in the narrative (see table 2.1). In some occurrences she ironically calls herself a handmaid of Holofernes (11:16)³¹ and in 12:11 Holofernes calls her a Hebrew woman, meaning that he identified her with the Jewish people.

Her name "Ιουδιθ" simply means "Jewess" (Jordaan, 2009:180). Grotius (referred to by Kay, 1913:243), explaining the story allegorically, views / wants the name Judith to represent the Jewish people. Kay (1913:242) argues that apart from the fact that this method of interpretation is forced and unconvincing, there is no need to suppose that the name suggested this meaning. The name Judith is used personally in Genesis 26:34 as belonging to the Hittite wife of Esau, where it cannot mean "Jewess." However, here it is different. She signifies the Jewish nation

³⁰ For a detailed discussion of concepts like "conscious" and "unconscious", see Efthimiadis-Keith's (2004) analysis of *Judith* using Jung's theory.

³¹ The significance of this tittle was probably to fool Holofernes to think that she has completely put herself under his lordship.

under threat of extinction. Therefore, the name Judith should be taken to mean “Jewess” but in the context of *Judith* it most probably represents the Jewish people/religion.

The reader learns that Judith is a pious, beautiful, rich, wise, courageously daring and brave widow of unassailable character (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:212; Milne, 1993:37).³² She dwells in the tent above her house in the city of Bethulia, and has done so since the death of her husband, Manasseh, some three years and four months prior to the narrative events of Chapter 8 (8:4). Through this brief introduction of Judith and her qualities, the author makes his/her intention clear regarding the role she plays in the narrative.

Interestingly, every quality (pious, beautiful, rich, wise and brave) mentioned about her, is significant as the narrative unfolds until the end. Therefore, in order to do justice in the analysis of the figure of Judith, this study investigates each of these qualities to establish their importance in the narrative. The contention here is that the author did not just choose to provoke the reader’s awareness concerning these qualities without a purpose. The author creates a pious, beautiful, rich, wise and a brave female character so that she can complete her commission comprehensively in the narrative. Some scholars, e.g. Jordaan (2009), have raised ethical questions on Judith’s use of some of these qualities, especially her beauty and wisdom. Some of these criticisms are considered later when these qualities are discussed.

However, it can be argued that, with these qualities, the author predestined her to achieve the impossible in her world, more especially so as a female character in the story. She is indeed a woman of courage and piety, as well as a beautiful, resourceful and wise widow. Each of these qualities is investigated below.

- **Judith as a Pious Jewess**

Judith 8:8 and 11:17 reveal that Judith is a God-fearing woman (θεοσεβής). All the days of her widowhood are characterised by her devotion to fasting and praying. (8:6, 8). In 11:17 the text further reports that she served the God of heaven day and night (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας). Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:215) observes that Judith is pious beyond the required norm: she wears sackcloth upon her loins (8:5); she prays constantly in the tent pitched on her roof (8:5); she fasts all the days of her widowhood (8:6); she does not eat unclean food (12:1 and 12:19); she does not take alcohol (12:19); she refuses to indulge in sexual immorality with Holofernes

³² Moore (1985:62) also acknowledges that Judith, like many heroes past and present, had a goodly share of desirable qualities.

(13:16 and 16:22); she gives offerings to God (16:19); and she fears God greatly (8:8). Throughout the narrative, the author consistently reminds the reader about Judith's pious character.

While arguing on Judith's piety, Moore (1985:62) asserts that her piety makes her a unique woman amongst biblical heroines. The question is: what significance does this God-fearing quality carry in this narrative?

This study strongly suggests that the pious character of Judith (more especially as the heroine of the story) outlines the main concern of the *Judith* narrative, which is a religious one. DeSilva (2006:55) observes that Judith emerges from her private life of widowhood to chastise the Elders for their lack of faith and declares that God will deliver the city through her. Therefore the author of *Judith* creates a pious Jewess who will not swerve in her trust in God (unlike the Elders) in the process of defending her people and their religion in this time of crisis.

- **Judith as a Widow**

According to *Judith* 8:4, Judith has been a widow for three years and four months. Her widowed status is significant. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:213) asserts that Judith's widowhood illustrates that she is a ruler over her own household and over her life, having no man over her, be he husband, son, father, brother or male-relative.³³ She further points out that the text makes it clear that the reader understands that Manasseh was her husband and has been dead long enough for her to take on other suitors, yet she does not. This clearly elevates Judith above Manasseh, making him her "dependent" at a textual level (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:214). Contrary to other women mentioned in the narrative, Judith is an independent woman that can move around without being limited by her husband, brother, son or any man. The rest of the women (married and unmarried)³⁴ mentioned in the narrative never act independently or in their individual capacities because they had to fulfil their marital responsibilities (those who are married). In 7:32 the text indicates that after the women had finished praying and crying out to God, they are sent back into their houses. This is not the case with Judith as she is a widow and is on her own. Instead, Judith continues to pray and cry before the Lord. She later comes to the Elders to tell them that she wants to go to the Assyrian camp, and then goes there.

³³ The only men who were near her were her menservants, as mentioned in 8:7.

³⁴ This study assumes that some women mentioned in 7:32 are probably married and some are not.

As highlighted above, the author ensures that Judith remains a widow and as far as possible from being under any male's dominance, both in rulership and sexuality, until to the end of the narrative. The text emphasises this point in 16:22, mentioning that:

καὶ πολλοὶ ἐπεθύμησαν αὐτήν, καὶ οὐκ ἔγνω ἀνήρ αὐτήν πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῆς (and many desired her, but no man knew her all the days of her life).

The author portrays Judith as a widow throughout the narrative, never re-entering the institution of marriage until the end of the narrative, so that she can successfully fulfil her role as a female (widow) protagonist in the narrative. In summary, the significance of Judith's widowhood is that it allows her to move from place to place without any man dictating/restricting her mobility, enabling her to fulfil her destiny / duty as heroine.

- **Judith's beauty**

One of the most instrumental and influential qualities in the figure of Judith is her beauty. The author states in 8:7 that (Judith) “καὶ ἦν καλὴ τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὠραία τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα” (she was also of goodly countenance and very beautiful to behold).

Judith's beauty is referred to about 13 times after her introduction in Chapter 8. Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:241) indicate that as Judith prepares to leave for the Assyrian camp, she beautifies herself and the main reason for the application of cosmetics was “to allure the eyes of all men that should see her” (εἰς ἀπάτησιν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀνδρῶν, ὅσοι ἂν ἴδωσιν αὐτήν; 10:4). In this quote, the author reveals why this actor was created with such an appealing beauty. The purpose was to grant her entrance to the world of men, and indeed, even the most feared men in the narrative gave entrance to their lives as a result of her beauty (10:14, 10:23 and 12:16). As she prepares to leave for the Assyrian camp, the people of Bethulia see her beauty; they worship God and wish her well on her trip to the Assyrian camp (10:8).

Like her piety, Judith's beauty appears to be above the norm. It is appealing to every man who looks at her. The story seems to suggest that God was behind the beauty of Judith; for her beauty constitutes a leading quality that gave entry to the enemy camp in seeking to save God's people. In 10:14 the text shows that her beauty takes effect in the Assyrian camp as it attracts all the men there (10:14): “καὶ ἦν ἐναντίον αὐτῶν θαυμάσιον τῷ κάλλει σφόδρα” (they wondered greatly at her beauty). Judith secures the attention and warm welcome of the Assyrian men

through her beauty. Her beauty further makes it possible for her to gain reception in Holofernes' tent. The text records, in 12:16:

καὶ εἰσελθοῦσα ἀνέπεσεν Ἰουδιθ, καὶ ἐξέστη ἡ καρδία Ολοφέρνηου αὐτήν,
καὶ ἔσαλεύθη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἦν κατεπίθυμος σφόδρα τοῦ συγγενέσθαι μετ'
αὐτῆς³⁵

Judith's beauty thus enables her to enter the very heart of the Assyrian offensive, Holofernes tent, where she can bring her carefully premeditated plan to completion. The purpose of her beauty is thus to entrap the enemy (13:16) and destroy him/them (Branch 2012:58). This study will later discuss the impact of the combination between Judith's beauty and other qualities, like wisdom.

- **Judith as an affluent/resourceful character**

The author includes that Judith is a rich woman (8:7). Her husband had left her gold and silver (χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον), men servants and maid servants (παῖδας καὶ παιδίσκας), cattle and lands (κτήνη καὶ ἀγρούς). According to Achtemeier et al (1985:1123), in the early period of Middle East culture, wealth consisted of the possession of large and small cattle and slaves, as well as silver and gold (Gen. 24:35) and it is attributed to the patriarchs (Gen. 13:2), godly kings (2 Chron. 32:27-29), and Job (Job 42:10-17). They were leaders with significant responsibilities (cf. also Elwell & Comfort, 2001 for a detailed discussion on Job). The *Judith* narrative equates Judith with these figures in the Bible. She is thus a resourceful woman, and this makes her an independent woman. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:214) states that Judith's wealth, servants and unencumbered status indicate clearly that she has the resources to accomplish the goal set by the author in the narrative.

However, Judith's wealth poses a problem to the reader since in biblical tradition, widows are listed amongst the needy and powerless people of the society (Ps. 68:5 and Ex. 22:22). Moreover, in the biblical traditions a man's property had to be inherited by his family not by his wife. In this regard, Achtemeier et al (1985:1123) write:

[T]he major rule states that if a man died without leaving a son, his property was transferred to his daughter. If he had no daughter, his property was assigned to his brothers. If he had no

³⁵ ¹⁶ "When she came in and sat down Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and his mind was moved and he desired greatly her company".

brothers, it was assigned to his father's brothers. If there were none, the property was assigned to the nearest relative in his own clan (Num. 27:8-11).

Against this "major rule", this study considers two possibilities with regard to Judith's wealth in the narrative: a) that the narrative seems to suggest that the rights of inheritance within the Jewish community have changed in the post-exilic era. Widows are now allowed to inherit their husband's property after death in the family; or b) that Efthimiadis-Keith's findings on the Egyptian origin of *Judith* are correct. Efthimiadis-Keith (2011:319) asserts that Mibtahiah was a coproprietor of the household property and her husband's heiress. Women such as Mibtahiah could easily have served as a model for the rich, childless, heir-of-her husband's fortune - Judith (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2011:319). This study agrees with the findings of Efthimiadis-Keith.

It must further be noted that Judith serves as a good example on handling wealth. According to Wood & Marshall (1996:1233) the Bible recognizes that the possession of material wealth brings with it great dangers. For example, there is the danger of failing to acknowledge that God is the source of the blessing (LXX Dt. 8:17-18; Ho. 2:8) and the related danger of trusting in riches (Ps. 52:7). Judith does not fall into either of these dangers. She continues to trust in the God of Israel and not in her own riches. Judith's handling of her wealth displays a great sacrificial attitude. She sacrifices her comfort zone for the sake of her people and the Jewish religion. By leaving for the Assyrian camp, Judith risks not only to lose her life but her wealth too. However, against all odds, Judith continues to trust in God and not to focus on her wealth. This study observes that this attitude on wealth befits the heroine of the story.

In brief, Judith as a resourceful character is significant in the narrative. It puts her in an advantageous position. First, it makes her an independent rather than a needy woman. Secondly, it enhances her pious character: she fully trusts in God not in her wealth. Thirdly, it safeguards her from falling into temptation through the allure of wealth: she could not be deceived by any man using gold or silver or any form of riches, as she has an abundance of such things herself. This study observes that Judith would not even be deceived by the probable promise of "wealth and comfort" in the house of Nebuchadnezzar as Holofernes seems to suggest in 12:13. Unless a reader chooses to ignore these facts from the text, this study asserts that Judith's wealth is thus significant as it enables her to fulfil her role as a heroine of the story.

- **Judith as a wise character**

One of the qualities that Judith is well known for in the narrative is her wisdom. Just after she is introduced (8:1-8), Judith addresses the Elders and the people of Bethulia. The author shows as early as possible in the narrative that Judith acts as an active wise character that does not shy away from drawing the people's attention to listen to her wise words. The strength of Judith and her words of wisdom is evident in 8:11 when she addresses the Elders and says,

Ἀκούσατε δὴ μου, ἄρχοντες τῶν κατοικούντων ἐν Βαιτυλοῦα (Hear me now, you governors of the inhabitants of Bethulia).

The phrase “Ἀκούσατε δὴ μου” is a common expression in the wisdom literature, more especially the Wisdom of Solomon e.g. in LXX proverbs 4:1, 4:10, 19:20, and 23:22. The *Judith* narrative also thus shows Judith to be a wisdom teacher.

Her speech makes both the governors and the people of Bethulia aware of their wisdom. The Elders (Uzziah taking a leading role) agree with her speech and further acknowledge that no one in Bethulia can disagree with what she says (8:28). Through her wisdom, Judith exposes the Elders' weakness in terms of their leadership and knowledge of Israel's historical matters. Judith challenges the Elders, pointing out that “who are they to think that they can test God and therefore showing openly that they think they are more important than God?” (Steyn, 2008:166). In 8:17 the text reports that Judith further reprimands them not to surrender the city but to wait until God saves them (*ibid.*). In the response of Uzziah in 8:29, the reader learns that Judith's wisdom is well acknowledged by the Elders. It may be asserted that Judith's wisdom had an impact in the elders' understanding of the crisis facing the Jewish people/religion. Her wisdom brings a drastic change of behaviour in them. The text further indicates that this is not the first time that Judith's wisdom manifests amongst the people of Bethulia (παῖς ὁ λαὸς), but that she has displayed this talent from the days of her youth (8:29).

It seems that Judith's wisdom is inseparable from her knowledge and the fear of God. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:216) states that she is the only character who understands the nature of God and who is able to provide a different interpretation of his role in the current situation of *religious hardships*.³⁶ Judith's wisdom is grounded on both her knowledge of God and the fact that she fears God greatly (8:8). It seems that the author echoes the teachings of Solomon in LXX Proverbs 1:7 through the character of Judith. LXX Proverbs 1:7 says:

³⁶ Italics indicate my own view apart from that of Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:216)

Ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος θεοῦ, σύνεσις δὲ ἀγαθὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν αὐτήν, εὐσέβεια δὲ εἰς θεὸν ἀρχὴ αἰσθήσεως, σοφίαν δὲ καὶ παιδείαν ἀσεβεῖς ἐξουθενήσουσιν³⁷

The wisdom of Judith is also acknowledged by the Assyrians. After Judith completes her breathtaking speech (a mixture of irony, flattery and lies) to Holofernes, the text in 11:20 indicates that “they marvelled at her wisdom” (καὶ ἐθαύμασαν ἐπὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ αὐτῆς).

As briefly mentioned above, there seems to be a deadly combination between Judith’s wisdom and her beauty. The combination between her wisdom and beauty needs to be pointed out. As this quote emphasises the impact of her wisdom, so are there a few other occasions where the impact of her beauty may be highlighted. First, Judith’s beauty and wisdom made her a wondrous woman in the camp of Assyria. Second, as did her beauty (cf. discussion above), her wisdom enables her to gain the attention of Holofernes. Through the combination of her beauty and wisdom (irony and flattery), Judith is able to elicit from Holofernes the shocking promise of 11:23:

καὶ νῦν ἀστεία εἶ σὺ ἐν τῷ εἶδει σου καὶ ἀγαθὴ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου, ὅτι ἐὰν ποιήσης καθὰ ἐλάλησας, ὁ θεός σου ἔσται μου θεός, καὶ σὺ ἐν οἴκῳ βασιλέως Ναβουχοδονοσορ καθήσῃ καὶ ἔσῃ ὀνομαστή παρὰ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν³⁸

This promise is shocking, if one remembers how determined he was to proclaim Nebuchadnezzar as the only god to be worshiped (6:2).

However, it must be pointed out that the wisdom of Judith contains the best of everything: genuine truth and necessary pure lies. In the first instance, Judith’s speech before the Elders of Bethulia (8:11-27) is a genuine truth stemming from her strong knowledge and fear of God. In the second instance, her speech to Holofernes does not reflect the whole truth. It is a combination of irony, flattery and lies, as suggested briefly above. This study observes DeSilva’s (2006:55) comment that:

³⁷ “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and there is good understanding to all that practice it: and piety toward God is the beginning of discernment, but the ungodly will set at naught wisdom and instruction”.

³⁸ ²³ “And now you are both beautiful in your countenance and witty in your words, if you do as you have spoken, your God shall be my God and you shall dwell in the house of Nebuchadnezzar and you shall be renowned through the whole earth”.

...many scholars have questioned Judith's status as heroine, describing her behaviour as morally reprehensible at worst and morally ambiguous at best largely on the basis of her use of deceit to establish herself in the camp of the enemy and to lure Holofernes into a position of weakness.

Indeed, how can a pious woman use her talents so deceitfully? One cannot help but wonder what could have happened if Judith had decided to speak the truth as Achior did? Would she have been able to gain Holofernes' attention in the same way? The study contends, agreeing with DeSilva (2006:59) that Judith's wisdom (deceit, irony and lies) play a crucial role in the story.

Over and against this unfair judgement to Judith's conduct, DeSilva (2006:59) argues that the use of deception and manipulation is acceptable and even laudable in Judith's cultural context (13:20 and 15:10). DeSilva (2006:57) argues that "[t]he virtuous person protects the honour of his or her kinship at all costs, even if he or she has to lie repeatedly to do so". Efthimiadis-Keith (2010:99) provides further support for this line of argument, which this study supports, when she indicates that, "[i]t was ... not only acceptable but highly laudable for her to lie/deceive to achieve her aims... That much is obvious from the exalted praises which Judith receives upon her victorious return in 13:15-20" (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2010:99).

Therefore, Judith is fully wise in both instances (in genuine truth and pure lies) because she speaks what is needed at the time in order to achieve a very practical purpose. It was fitting for the author to create such a figure and furnish her with this quality so that she can fulfil her role in the narrative. It seems acceptable for the pious heroine to use whichever means available to her – even lies and deceit – to achieve her righteous goal of exalting God.

- **Judith as a brave character**

Judith's bravery is not explicitly mentioned in the text; it is, nevertheless indisputable. One can imagine that it would have taken courage from a woman like Judith to come face-to-face with the Elders, and Holofernes, and oppose them, using her beauty and wisdom as tools to achieve her challenge. Her announcements in 13:32 as well as her actual venture to the Assyrian camp are signs of bravery from her. After addressing the Elders Judith commits herself completely to defend God's honour, and plans to reveal the hollowness of Holofernes' boast against God (on Nebuchadnezzar's behalf) by creating an opportunity for God to bring defeat and shame upon Holofernes and his army (DeSilva, 2006:59). This kind of commitment, coming from any person

(man or woman) in the context of such a crisis, signals some degree of bravery³⁹. Judith's bravery is further demonstrated in her fearless conversations with the first Assyrian patrol (10:14) and Holofernes. Jordaan (2009:180) states that Judith's entrance into the Assyrian camp was perceived as a big event because she did what no man would do. Judith goes, voluntarily, into the presence of the very man who seeks to destroy her people. Steyn (2008:167) further states that Judith is fearless in the face of death. She also faced possibly being raped, as women were considered lesser, and could be subjected to such deeds that would degrade her.

The present study observes that Judith's brave character is associated with her level of faith in the story. If it was not for her strong faith, she would not have taken such risks for the sake of the Jewish religion (Jordaan & Hobyane, 2010:340). Therefore, the driving force behind Judith's bravery is her faith in and zeal for God.

Judith's action and brave attitude contrasts sharply the attitude and actions of the Elders and the rest of the people of Bethulia (see 2.1.1.1.3 j) on the analysis of the Elders of Bethulia). Judith's persistent prayer life and her brave act of going to the Assyrian camp is a good example of the expression "*ora et labora*" (pray and work). Judith prays and takes initiatives to save the people but elders and the rest of the Bethulians pray and wait. The narrative seems to suggest, through the character of Judith, that victory for Israel would not come as a result of prayer alone, but the crisis needed the combination of the two: prayer and bravery. The elders did only one of these, that is, prayer. Therefore the significance of Judith's brave character, as the heroine in the story, is undisputedly critical and also necessary for Israel to emerge victorious in the impending destruction. These qualities are given more attention in Chapter 3 as modalities in the discussion of the contract in the *Judith* narrative.

e) God (θεός or κύριος)

The word/name God/Lord has the highest frequency of occurrences in the story. As indicated in table 2.1, this name is mentioned 82 times in the narrative. He is first mentioned in 4:9; He is revealed as a God to whom the cries and prayers of the Israelites are directed (4:9, 12):

καὶ ἀνεβόησαν πᾶς ἀνὴρ Ἰσραηλ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν (And every man of Israel cried to God);

³⁹ According to Collins Cobuild Essential English Dictionary (1988:86) someone who is brave is willing to do things which are dangerous, and does not show fear in difficult or dangerous situations.

καὶ ἐβόησαν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραηλ ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκτενωῶς (and they cried to the God of Israel all with one consent earnestly).

Only on one occasion does God actually commit an action in the story. In 4:13 the text indicates that:

καὶ εἰ σήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῶν καὶ εἰσεῖδεν τὴν θλίψιν αὐτῶν (and the Lord heard their prayers and saw their afflictions)⁴⁰.

The God of Israel is called both θεός (God) and κύριος (the Lord) in *Judith*. In some scenes, e.g. 13:7, he is also referred to as “Κύριος ὁ θεός Ἰσραηλ (the Lord God of Israel)”. A complete study of these designations is not within the scope of this discussion; only a brief investigation of these names is undertaken to suit the purpose of this study. Kleinknecht (2000:64-78) states that θεός (God) is generally used for the deity in a monotheistic view, or for supernatural beings in a polytheistic conception of reality (cf. also Kanonge, 2009:89). In Jewish traditions, as it is the case in *Judith*, it refers to the God of Israel, assumed to be the only one and true God (Stauffer, 2000:89). In the *Judith* narrative, the honour of the God of Israel is challenged by the religious claim of Nebuchadnezzar (advocated by Holofernes).⁴¹ Kanonge (2009:89) asserts that when the designation refers to the God of Israel in the LXX, his absolute supremacy is in view. Though κύριος is a translation of other Hebrew names of God, such as , it occurs mainly in the LXX as a Greek translation of the Hebrew YHWH (Liddell & Scott, 2003:1013; cf. also Kanonge, 2009:89). This is likely to be the case in *Judith*.

It is remarkable that all the occurrences of θεός (God) and κύριος (the Lord) are exclusively connected with Judith and Israel, either directly or indirectly. The author uses this name to suggest that God pays special attention to, or is rather closely associated with Judith and Israel.

In the whole narrative, the character God is mainly revealed through Achior, Joachim, the priests, the children of Israel and Judith. This suggests that among all the actors, these five actors are those who know God better than the others. This is particularly the case with Judith, as can be seen through the use of the superlative (σφοδρα) in 8:8: “Ὅτι ἐφοβεῖτο τὸν θεὸν

⁴⁰ Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:182) observes that the phrases “the Lord has heard” and “the Lord has seen” entail a turning point in the Exodus saga (Exodus 3:7-9). She further argues that although God’s deliverance is not explicitly stated in *Judith*, one expects it on account of the intertextual connections of these phrases.

⁴¹ This observation has led Otzen (2002:70-72) to summarize the story of *Judith* in this way: Chapter 1-3: Nebuchadnezzar demonstrates that he is god; chapter 4-7: Who is God, Nebuchadnezzar or Yahweh? And chapters 8-16: Yahweh demonstrates that he is God.

σφόδρα” (for she feared God greatly). It is evident that the author used both θεός (God) and κύριος (the Lord) to reveal that God holds a special position among the Israelites. The Israelites know no other God, but him alone (8:20). He is their refuge in times of trouble. He plays a central role in the survival of the Jews and their religion. However, it must be emphasized, as briefly highlighted above, that his active participation as an actor in the story is limited.⁴²

Various other characters are introduced in the narrative, whose roles are limited. Although they are of lesser prominence, they are not less important to a comprehensive investigation into the figurativization of the *Judith* narrative. The following section focuses on these subordinate characters and their significance in the story.

2.2.1.1.2. Secondary Characters

Apart from the primary actors discussed above, there are numerous secondary actors who deserve attention too. These actors play a big supporting role to primary characters in the narrative. They are: Joachim, the Rulers of Bethulia (Uzziah, Chabris, Charmis and the Ancients of the city), Judith’s maid, the Assyrian army, the Foreign Advisors of Holofernes (especially the children of Esau), and Bagoas.

a) Joachim

Joachim, the high priest and leader of the Council in Jerusalem, is announced first in 4:6. The name Ιωακίμ (*Heb. yehoyakim*) means “the Lord will establish” (Douglas, 1988:554; cf. also Kay, 1913:647) and is derived from the conflation of the noun יהוה (the Lord) and the verb מוק (to establish)⁴³ (Kanonge 2009:68). According to Branch (2012:65), he acts as a figurehead of the Israelites who returned recently from exile.⁴⁴ The author mentions Joachim’s name only four times in the narrative (in 4:6, 4:8, 4:14 and 15:8). His background and family is not known, but his activities in the story are notable. He, together with the Elders (γερονσία) in Jerusalem, has an independent function as the political (to guard the passages of the hill country) and spiritual

⁴² *Judith* lies somewhere between the books that expected God to do everything in pre-exilic times and the post-exilic books which focus on what mankind can do to alleviate situations of hardship (Eftimiadis-Keith, 2004:16)

⁴³ The verb “to establish” connotes prosperity, success or victory (Brown et al., 2000:877-879; Holladay, 2000:315)

⁴⁴ Moore (1985:50) observes that some parts of the book indicate that the Israelites had just come back from exile and other parts of the book suggest that they had been back for some time. However, the name Joachim indicates a post-exilic setting for the story (Eftimiadis-Keith, 2004:8-9).

leaders (involves prayers and acts of penance) of the Judaeen nation (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:284). Joachim posits action and also takes part in dialogues. In the first instance he gives commands, through writing, to the people. The text records, in 4:6-7, that:

καὶ ἔγραψεν Ἰωακὶμ ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὃς ἦν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ, τοῖς κατοικοῦσι Βαιτυλουα καὶ Βαιτομεσθαίμ, ἧ ἔστιν ἀπέναντι Εσδρηλων κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ πεδίου τοῦ πλησίον Δωθαῖμ. λέγων διακατασχεῖν τὰς ἀναβάσεις τῆς ὄρεινῆς,⁴⁵

In response to his orders, the children of Israel follow his orders. In 4:8 the text indicates that:

καὶ ἐποίησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ καθὰ συνέταξεν αὐτοῖς Ἰωακὶμ ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας (and the children of Israel did as Joachim the high priest had commanded them).

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:284) observes that in the second instance, Joachim appears with the Elders to provide official ratification for Judith's deeds in section 2 of the story (15:8-10). The two phrases “εὐλόγησαν αὐτήν” (they blessed her) and “εἶπαν αὐτῇ” (they said to her) indicate his active participation in the narrative. Joachim's influence in the story, however, is secondary. As discussed above, he surfaces only once in section 1 and once again in section 2. In both instances of his appearance, Joachim's action is merely re-action. First, he commands the Israelites in re-action to the looming Assyrian destruction. Second, he comes forward to bless Judith in re-action of her victory.

Kanonge (2009:68) states that a name such as Ἰωακὶμ (Joachim) is part of the author's strategy of communication, for it is a well-known name in the history of Israel. The question then is: What is the significance of using such a name which carries a negative connotation in the history of Israel (cf. also Kanonge, 2009:69).⁴⁶

The attribution of such a name to an actor in a story believed to be fictitious (DeSilva, 2002:232) is deliberate. Kanonge (2009:69) argues that fictional literature aims to ‘model’ and ‘shape’

⁴⁵ ⁶ And Joachim the high priest who was in Jerusalem in those days wrote to the inhabitants of Bethulia and Bethomestam which is opposite Esdralelon toward the plain near Dotham, ⁷charging them to keep the passages of the hill country.

⁴⁶ Joachim is the name of a wicked king of Judah who submitted to Nebuchadnezzar for three years, and was later taken as a prisoner to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:6) after attempting to revolt against Nebuchadnezzar.

existing material. It is possible; therefore that the name “Joachim” finds its re-modelling/re-shaping in *Judith*. It develops from a name attached to a Jewish leader who did evil before God (by submitting to Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C.) to a Jewish leader who reacts against submission to Nebuchadnezzar (in *Judith*). The narrator’s main concern, as Gruen (1998: xv-xvii) suggests, is the maintenance of the Jewish religious identity. Therefore, the name “Joachim” grows from a name with a negative connotation (failure to preserve the Jewish identity) amongst the Israelites to a name with a positive connotation in the Judaen community of *Judith*. From the suggested meaning of the name “Joachim” given above, it can be inferred that King Joachim (of Judah) did not live up to his name, as did Joachim in *Judith*.

b) The Assyrian army

The significance of the Assyrian army as a character group in *Judith* calls for an in-depth scrutiny. The present study classifies this group as a secondary character since they are not always mentioned as a group but, in most occurrences, they are overshadowed first by Nebuchadnezzar (cps 1-2:3) and Holofernes (2:4).

The text indicates that the Assyrian army (Holofernes’ troops) is selected from the best ranks of Assyria’s elite (2:15). They are men who trust in their own strength (2:5) and they constitute a vast army of 120,000 soldiers and 120,000 archers on horseback who are willingly joined by a numerically vast diverse crew of nations (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:176). As the story unfolds, Holofernes swells this army by adding to them foot soldiers that he chooses from the western nations, whom he conquered (3:7; 2:19 and also 2:15). Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:176) points out that they become a countless multitude (2:20), a well-oiled war machine set to cover the whole earth under their feet and drown the mountains with the blood of Nebuchadnezzar’s enemies (cf. 2:7, 8, 19 and 6:4).

As highlighted, above, the significance of the Assyrian Army in *Judith* poses some intriguing questions to the reader. The questions surrounding this figure are: Who, exactly, are they? And what is their significance in the *Judith* narrative?

With regard to the first question, Ezekiel 31 states that Assyria was completely overthrown (approximately 586 BCE). It ceased to be a nation (Easton 1996; cf. also Jordaan & Hobyane, 2009:244). The Assyrian Empire was indeed a major empire in the Ancient Near East. The

question, however, is: why do they re-surface in the *Judith* narrative after an absence of about 450 years?⁴⁷ (Jordaan & Hobyane, 2009:244). In the possible date of authorship of *Judith*, Assyria had already ceased to exist as a nation. The same can be said with regard to their army. They were actually non-existent by this time. The *Judith* narrative, however, opens by depicting Assyria as a powerful military nation and as a threat to all existing nations, including Israel. The Assyrian army spread terror and destruction as they conquer many nations (Branch & Jordaan 2009:402).

The work of Kelle and Ames (2008) and Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:238-247) brings an insightful perspective with regard to the significance of the Assyrian Army in the *Judith* narrative. The third set of essays in the book by Kelle and Ames (2008:1-16) explores the rhetoric of war as a biblically presented language that serves as a mirror of culture. The first element that needs attention is the semiotic function of the term “Assyrian Army” in *Judith*. Smoak (2008:83) argues that a number of studies over the past century have shown that there are numerous points of agreement between Assyrian military propaganda and biblical texts. While supporting this claim Jordaan (2009a), in his review of Ames and Kelle’s book, argues that the Assyrians always emerge (in the narratives) whenever they are needed to unite the people of God.

In *Judith* 4:1-2 it is stated that the Israelites, who had returned from exile and were determined to obey the Lord in rituals of worship, reacted with horror at the thought of the destruction of their temple. As a result of this threat from the Assyrian army, they chose to unite and defend access to it and to cry out to the Lord and fast and humble themselves (4:8-11) before the Lord (Jordaan & Hobyane, 2009:245).

With regard to the second question, that is the significance of the Assyrian army in the story, this study offers the following conclusion: It is most probable that the author of *Judith* employed the figure of the Assyrian army as nothing but a sign of brutality, destruction, rape, and immorality. It is used for the purpose of inciting fear amongst the Israelites. This study further observes that the Assyrian army is initially depicted as a strong and a brutal army, but as the narrative unfolds, they become stupid and helpless. In fact, they become extinct in some way. This further proves the possibility that the Assyrian army in *Judith* is just an emotional literary creation of the author. Therefore, the Assyrian army is nothing more than a threatening symbol used artificially to unite the house of Israel and to invoke God’s protective power over Israel.

⁴⁷ This question takes a serious consideration of the discussion of the possible date of authorship of *Judith* in chapter 1 (1.9).

The questionable figure of Nebuchadnezzar as the king and god of Assyria is included here. Rhetorically speaking, the Assyrian army is thus a fake danger employed with the idea to unify the Jews and to revive the zeal to defend the Jewish religion against extinction.

c) Holofernes' Foreign Advisors (the Children of Esau)

The children of Esau, rulers and people of Moab, and generals of the coastal region all come to Holofernes to offer him advice on how to conquer the children of Israel without sacrificing his army (7:8-9). These foreign advisors of Holofernes need some attention - the Children of Esau⁴⁸ in particular. This study gives the children of Esau special attention because they seem to take a leading role compared to all the groups mentioned above (see also Branch & Jordaan, 2009:16). Their involvement in advising Holofernes on how to conquer the Israelites calls for an in-depth investigation.

The narrative introduces this group in 7:8. They are explicitly mentioned again in 7:18. Eventhough their occurrence in the narrative is limited; their role in the unfolding of the events is intriguing. One phrase in the text illustrates their active role. In 7:8 the text states that:

Καὶ προσελθόντες αὐτῷ πάντες ἄρχοντες υἱῶν Ησαυ εἶπαν Ἄκουσάτω δὴ λόγον ὁ δεσπότης ἡμῶν (then all the rulers of the children of Esau came to him and said "Let our lord now hear a word...")

This sentence introduces their advice to Holofernes on conquering the children of Israel. Branch and Jordaan (2009:403) observe that the children of Esau came to Holofernes in a bargaining mood to give him what can be called "insider information" about how to conquer Bethulia without sacrificing his army. Their significance in the story seems to relate to the fact that the children of Esau reports an easy way to conquer Bethulia, namely to cordon off its springs and sources of water, so that her inhabitants could die of thirst. Branch and Jordaan (2009:403) contend that one could expect such conduct and deception from the children of Esau,⁴⁹ for they are the traditional enemies of Israel. Furthermore, they have forsaken the God of Israel and call Holofernes "our master" in 7:9 (Branch & Jordaan, 2009:403). *Judith* seeks to update the reader

⁴⁸ Esau is a historically well-known name in Israel. It is the name of Rebekah's (Isaak's wife) first-born twin son (Gen. 25:25). His twin brother is Jacob (later known as Israel). The name of Edom, "red", was also given to Esau from his conduct in connection with the red lentil "pottage" for which he sold his birthright to Jacob (30, 31).

⁴⁹ The name Esau symbolizes those who abandon their hope of glory for the sake of the things that are seen and not eternal (Douglas, 1988:342).

about the continuity of the old enmity between the children of Israel and children of Esau (the Edomites).⁵⁰ Jordaan and Hobyane (2010:3) further observe that the *Judith* narrative seems to suggest that the Ammonites, like Achior, are even better than the children of Esau.

d) Judith's Maid

Judith's maid is another minor character introduced in the narrative (8:10). The text introduces her as the one who is in charge of all Judith's property. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:249) refers to her as Judith's textually silent, undescribed and nameless ἄβρα. DeSilva (2002:86) describes Judith's maid as a "faithful maidservant". She appears a total of eleven times, seven times under the designation of ἄβρα, three times as δούλη and once as παιδίσκη.

The relationship between Judith and her maid is one of trust (Gen. 24 and 39:1-6 can be used as examples) and affection (cf. also Dt. 15:16). Branch and Jordaan (2009:404) state that Judith and the maid share common traits including: celibacy (16:23);⁵¹ courage (they both face the Assyrian army); beauty (10:19); both pray (13:10); and both are heroines at the end of the narrative. Judith's maid performs very important actions in the story, even if she is undescribed and nameless, and never partakes in dialogue. How then should one understand this unnamed, silent figure from a Greimassian point of view? Why would the author choose to include a mute character in the narrative? What is her significance in the narrative?

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:250) argues that the *Judith* narrative depicts Judith's ἄβρα as an object that is acted upon in that she executes Judith's commands without question and all her actions are completely centred on her mistress' deeds and needs. Branch and Jordaan (2009:406) contend that she does this to show her obedience, competence, trust,⁵² humility, love and companionship towards her mistress. These qualities are a window through which the reader can see Judith's loving and caring personality or character; as Douglas (1988:1123) argues: "the treatment of the slaves depended directly on the personality of their master".

The maid is thus Judith's counterpart in every way, taking part with her mistress in the life-or-death adventure Judith undertakes. According to Branch and Jordaan (2009:406) the maid is

⁵⁰ Easton (1996) records that when the descendants of Jacob came out of Egypt, the children of Esau (Edomites) remembered the old quarrel between the brothers (Israel and Esau), and with fierce hatred they warred against Israel.

⁵¹ After becoming a widow, Judith remains celibate and chaste, as for the maid, there is no mention that she had a family of her own.

⁵² Branch (2012:75) states that the text introduces the maid as someone Judith trusts and has placed her "in charge of all her property" (8:10).

essential to the plot of the story because her presence substantiates Judith's character. They further state that a wealthy woman, like Judith, would not travel alone, especially at night. The maid thus serves as protection. She provides legitimacy to Judith's character (Branch & Jordaan, 2009:406). In addition, Judith's maid carries her belongings and provisions to ensure that Judith is unburdened and free to display her beauty to allure the eyes of all men (10:4) (Branch & Jordaan, 2009:406). After Judith's victory over Holofernes, the maid is welcomed back, along with Judith, to Bethulia (13:13).

Jordaan and Hobyane (2010:342) mention yet another role that Judith's maid plays in the story. They argue, as in the case of Achior, that her significance is to reverse or change the Jewish religious ideology of the time from being exclusive to being inclusive. Slaves and women are depicted as carriers of the Jewish religion in the second temple period, as opposed to men only.

In summary, Judith's task is of such magnitude that she needs a helper, making Judith more credible. The figure of the maid was created as a supporting character to Judith and to ensure that Judith fulfills her role of saving the Jewish religion successfully.

e) *Elders of Bethulia (Uzziah in Particular)*

Uzziah and the Bethulian Elders (Chabris and Charmis) are a group of characters that deserve attention. They are introduced in 6:14-15 as governors of the city of Bethulia. Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:254) observes that they are the last group of characters to be introduced in section 1 and the first group of "old" characters to make their way back into section 2 (13:12). As with other characters that are introduced as a group, there is one character that stands out and represents the group. In this case Uzziah takes a leading role in the group of the governors of the city (cf. also Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:254-255). Branch (2012:67) observes that he receives more textual space than does Joachim and he is a more developed character. His name also means "God is my defence" (Moore, 1985:81).

His first contribution to the narrative occurs during the interrogation of Achior (6:16).⁵³ He leads people to pray through the night after hearing Achior's report. The text depicts him as both the governor and the spiritual leader of Bethulia. However, his ability as a spiritual leader is put to

⁵³ Branch (2012:67) states that Uzziah's primary characteristics are listening and pragmatism. For an example, after listening to Judith, he allows her and her maid to leave Bethulia.

test when the people demand that he should surrender the city and make peace with the Assyrians. The people contend, in 7:26-27, that it would be better to be “living slaves” than “dead Bethulians” (Moore, 1985:33). However, the text reveals him as a man of compromise (Moore, 1985:33). Uzziah succeeds in making a compromise with the people, to the effect that if God did not come to the city’s rescue within the next five days, he would surrender the city. He manages to satisfy the people with this compromise, but their morale remains very low.

He is admonished by Judith in 8:9-27, because of this compromise. After hearing Judith’s admonishment and plan of saving the people, he accedes to her secret plan and also acknowledges Judith’s wisdom (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:254). He later blesses Judith when she leaves Bethulia (10:6).

The compromising character of Uzziah draws a sharp distinction between him and Judith. The text compels us to make this comparison. This fact could be applied to any leader in Bethulia; they could not be compared to Judith in terms of courage, knowledge of God and faith. Uzziah’s accolade to Judith in 13:18-20 acknowledges that Judith is an outstanding woman of faith. Moore (1985:36) states that Uzziah offers the highest accolades by proclaiming Judith as the most honoured woman in the world and stating that she would always be remembered whenever the Israelites thought about the power of God. In 13:20, the people endorse Uzziah’s words by saying: “Γένοιτο γένοιτο” (So be it! So be it!).

Thus, the character of Uzziah and the other governors serve to elevate Judith’s role in the narrative. Uzziah and the Elders are foolish, weak and compromising but Judith is pious, strong and brave.

f) Bagoas the Eunuch (servant of Holofernes)

The reader’s first encounter with Bagoas is in 12:11. The text indicates that he is a eunuch and he is in charge of all of Holofernes’ goods. Arguably, his status, power, and influence depend on that of Holofernes. According to Branch (2012:72), Bagoas displays the following characteristics: arrogance, pride, power, condescension, and anger. Bagoas is a villain, trickster and traitor. Some of these qualities are explained in detail below.

In 12:11 the text indicates that Judith was placed under Bagoas’ care in the Assyrian camp. The narrative seems to suggest that Judith was already seen as Holofernes’ sexual property, temporarily placed under the care of his eunuch, Bagoas. Bagoas proves to be both loyal to Holofernes and intelligent (maybe more of a trickster) in speech. These two qualities are illustrated when he is sent to persuade Judith to come to Holofernes’ banquet. His speech,

when persuading Judith to come to the banquet, illustrates his ability to convince. The fact that he follows (or obeys) his master's commands shows his loyalty to him. It is fitting that a character like Bagoas plays this part in the story. He is sent to convince a wise woman to attend the party, even though Judith does not need convincing, for it is the opportunity she has long been waiting for.

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:271) supports this suggestion by stating that the manner in which Bagoas responds to Judith, his master and his master's death tells us many things about him. We see him as loyal steward who is intelligent enough to convey his master's direct wishes. He does this in the most inoffensive and yet persuasive way. Furthermore, Bagoas' character and role shows that he is not only loyal to Holofernes, but also emotionally attached to him. After discovering the body of his god and master (Holofernes) he is heavily grieved. The author, in 14:16, describes this scene with emotional words:

καὶ ἐβόησεν φωνῇ μεγάλη μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ καὶ στεναγμοῦ καὶ βοῆς ἰσχυρᾶς
καὶ διέρρηξεν τὰ ἴμάτια αὐτοῦ ⁵⁴

As someone who is close to Holofernes, the text reveals Bagoas is the one who brought the announcement that Holofernes is dead. His words announce defeat to the Assyrian army, though. The expression, in 15:2, marks the end of the Assyrian dominance over Israel in the story:

αὐτοῦς τρόμος καὶ φόβος (fear and trembling fell upon them).

In brief, Branch (2012:73) argues that Bagoas proves a foil for two characters, namely Holofernes and Judith's maid. First, with regard to Holofernes, his livelihood and life depend on his master's success. Second, Bagoas is the counterpart of the unnamed, silent maid of Judith. He is the supporting vessel of Holofernes as much as the maid supports Judith (Branch, 2012:73; see also Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:273).⁵⁵ Given his close relationship with his master, the figure of Bagoas, can also be associated with destruction, immorality and inciting fear into the opposition.

⁵⁴ ¹⁶ Therefore, he cried with a loud voice, with weeping and sighing and a mighty cry and he tore his garments).

⁵⁵ Branch (2012:73) shows that Bagoas knows Holofernes likes to party (12:19-20; 13:1). The maid knows Judith enjoys a quiet life of prayer, fasting, seclusion and restricted eating. Significantly, both know the sexual cycles and preferences of their masters. Judith prefers to stay a widow and remain chaste. Bagoas knows Holofernes is off his sexual cycle and needs sex and enjoys a fresh conquest (8:4-8; 3:16; 16:21-22).

g) Women of Israel

The women of Israel also play a noticeable role in the narrative. Once Joachim and the γερουσία have blessed Judith (15:8-10), the people of Bethulia bring her the plunder from Holofernes' tent. She heaps it onto her mules and chariots (15:11). The text records in 15:12, that

καὶ συνέδραμεν πᾶσα γυνὴ Ἰσραηλ τοῦ ἰδεῖν αὐτήν καὶ εὐλόγησαν αὐτήν καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῇ χορὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ ἔλαβεν θύρσους ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῆς καὶ ἔδωκεν ταῖς γυναιξίν ταῖς αὐτῆς⁵⁶

It is difficult to ascertain whether “πᾶσα γυνὴ Ἰσραηλ” refers to Bethulian women alone or includes other women from all over Judea (cf. Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:289). It is not within the scope of this study to clarify this uncertainty. For a more detailed discussion on this point see Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:288-291). In the Greimassian semiotic approach, the focus falls on the author’s purpose for creating such figures.

The significance of the women, in the first place, parallels with other Old Testament women who met victorious warriors with songs and dance. This was not a strange thing within the Jewish religious community. The women’s celebration in *Judith* finds parallels, as will be shown later, with the women’s celebration of David’s victory over the Philistines (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:290). She (ibid) further argues, in the case of David, that it was this act of adulation that provoked Saul’s ire and jealousy towards David (1 Samuel 18:6-9; 21:11 and 29:5).

However, two aspects which contrast the two narratives can be mentioned. First, the women celebrated a man’s victory in 1 Samuel 18, while in *Judith* 15; it is a woman’s victory. Secondly, contrary to David’s victory, there is no jealousy in Judith’s victory; both men and women give her the respect and honour she deserves, presumably because it is rare for a woman to achieve such a victory in such a manner.

Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:288-292) states that Judith’s victory also serves the purpose of conveying a number of gender-related reversals that have been achieved. Women become independent actors which they have not been up to this point. Women lead men, and women of

⁵⁶ ¹² “and all the women of Israel ran together to see her and blessed her and made a dance among them for her, and she took branches in her hand and gave also to the women that were with her”.

every marital status participate in, and lead worship. We may assume that “all the women of Israel” consisted of both married and unmarried women.

In summary, the significance of the women of Israel is notable in the narrative. First, they sanction Judith’s victory, as other women of Israel in history have done for David. Judith has done a work worth celebrating. The women take a lead in doing that. Secondly, the emergence of the women of Israel as a result of Judith’s victory serves to convey gender-related reversals. Women are now independent actors, and they participate in and lead worship.

h) Children of Israel, People of Judea (Jewish people, the inhabitants of Bethulia and those in Jerusalem)

Despite the fact that they appear as secondary actors in the story, the Jewish people, as a collective actor, play an important role in the story. They are first introduced in 4:1 as the target of Holofernes’ destructive mission. The fact that they resist surrendering makes them victims of the Assyrian might, until Judith’s victory towards the end of the narrative. Again, the question arises: What is their underlying significance then?

The Israelites are God’s covenantal people (5:8) who are facing the looming threat of extinction by the army of Nebuchadnezzar. The Israelites are significant in the story in that, without them, the story is meaningless. They are, in fact, the actual recipients of the message of the narrative (see Chapter 3 on addresser and addressee). The Israelites are the very inspiration behind the whole act of the heroine of the story, Judith (16:25). Judith risks her life for the sake of their religion and the honour of their God.

Actorialization in the narrative served to investigate the construction of figures/characters in a narrative. Characters were investigated in terms of how they are constructed by the author and how they relate to one another in the narrative (Kanonge, 2009: 96).

From the analysis concerning actorialization as an aspect of figuritization portrayed in this section, it is clear that the characters in *Judith* – both main and supporting – have particular significance. It is not per chance that they appear in the story. They actively contribute to the meaning of this narrative. The second major aspect of figurativization that contributes to the

meaning of the text is spatialization. The following section explores how the use of spaces and places, carefully selected by the author, serve a similar purpose than the actors. It comprises the second part of the figurativization analysis, namely spatialization.

2.2.1.2 SPATIALISATION

This section discusses spatialization. Spatialization constitutes the environment or space in which the actors are placed in the narrative and this placing of characters contributes to the meaning of the story (cf. Martin & Ringham, 2000:124-125), as illustrated in this section. *Judith* depicts a few settings in which the action takes place: Assyria (capital city – Nineveh), the Assyrian camp, Holofernes' tent, Bethulia, the valley of Bethulia, the mountains of Bethulia and Judith's house. Each of these places is investigated to establish its significance and particular contribution.

Many scholars (e.g. Kay 1913:246; Raja, 1998:703; Harrington, 1999:27 and Kaiser, 2004:41) have posed their concerns regarding the anonymity of some of the places mentioned in the *Judith* narrative. This study does not intend to continue with this historical-critical debate, but to investigate the significance of these settings as they appear in the story. Therefore, this section discusses all the settings revealed in the story, in the order of their occurrence in the story.

a) Assyria and Nineveh

Assyria is the place where *Judith's* events start. The story opens by depicting the successful war campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian King residing in Nineveh. Assyria lies on the upper Mesopotamian plain, bounded on the west by the Syrian Desert, on the south by the Jebel Hamrin and Babylonia, and on the north and east by the Urtian (Armenian) and Persian hills (Wood & Marshall, 1996). The question to be addressed here is: What is the significance of this Assyrian setting in the story of *Judith*?

Assyria plays a critical role during the unfolding of the story. This setting is more than just a name in the story. It has an ideological connotation. In semiotics, Assyria can be seen as a sign of brutality, wickedness, destruction, rape, idolatry and immorality. It is the capital city of the cult of Assyria (see footnote 29, on analysis of the figure of Holofernes). Therefore if Assyria carries an ideological connotation of brutality, Nineveh is the sacred home of their deity (Nebuchadnezzar). Assyria is an ideological contrast of Jerusalem in this instance. In summary,

it can be argued that Assyria is the power that inspires wickedness, destruction and apostasy. It is directly opposed to God.

b) Assyrian Camp

The Assyrian army camp moves from one place to another as the story unfolds. When the army leaves Nineveh, it camps in Bectileth (2:21), which is characterized by the destruction and demolition of enemy cities and sanctuaries. The Assyrian army next spends a whole month camping at a place between Geba and Scythopolis, near Judea (3:10). This study observes that the closer the camp of Assyria gets to Judea; there more it incites fear and terror in the children of Israel.

The final setting where this army settles, as they prepare for war against Israel, is the valley near Bethulia. Here they strategically organise themselves into mini-camps. For example, the children of Esau and the children of Ammon goes up to camp in the hill country over against Dothaim, and the rest of the army of the Assyria camp in the plain (7:18).

As much as the setting of Assyria carries an ideological connotation, so does the camp of the Assyrian army. They are a sign of impending terror, destruction, brutality and immorality. The closer they draw to Bethulia; the more the Bethulians are frightened, and call upon God for help (4:9, 6:18, 7:19 and the prayer of Judith in 9:1-14). Thus the camp sites moving in on Israel can be considered a branching of Assyria, bringing closer the terror which it symbolises.

c) Bethulia

Bethulia may be seen as a unique heterotopic space because it comprises the house of Judith. Furthermore, it is unique in the sense that one cannot have two heterotopic spaces in the narrative. However, this study notes that after leaving her house, Judith further leaves her city and her people to the Assyrian camp. Moving from Bethulia further symbolizes the real beginning of the quest for the protagonist.

Many scholars (Craven, 1983:73; Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:19-20 and Harrington 1999:27 to mention few) note the anonymity of the city of Bethulia. Neither biblical nor extra-biblical references support the historical existence of this city, except that of Moore (1985:69) and Otzen (2002:89-90) who suggest that Bethuliah is in Samaritan territory. Even so, this setting bears important ideological connotations.

Bethulia is described as a gateway city to Judea and Jerusalem, where the temple was. This is the reason why Joachim (4:6) charges its inhabitants to guard the passages thereof. Craven (1983:73) indicates that there have been various opinions concerning the exact meaning of this city. She states that Bethulia can be translated on the basis of alteration or paronomasia.⁵⁷ In this regard, the following three possible translations are given:

- firstly, Bethulia can be translated as “House of God” (from beth-el);
- secondly, it can be translated as “House of Ascents” (from beth’eliya); and
- lastly, it is translated as “Virgin” (from bethula).

Efthimiadis-Keith (2011:304) further suggests the following concerning the possible meaning of Bethuliah. She asserts that Bethuliah could also be read as *bethuljah*, meaning the virgin of God, *bêt ‘el jah* meaning ‘The house of God’, and Bethel-Yahweh or simply *bêt ‘æloah* meaning ‘the house of God’ (i.e. the Jerusalem temple) (see also Otzen 2002:89).

This study prefers the translation of Bethulia as meaning “virgin”. The reason for this choice is that a) *Judith* reports that the Israelites are called upon to defend the narrow opening leading to Bethulia, a gate way city leading to Judea Jerusalem, where the temple is situated. This manner of describing a passage way leading to a sacred place lends itself to sexual interpretation. Breaking and violating such passages carries a connotation of rape/defiling. b) The prayer of Judith in 9:2-4 makes mention of the rape of Dinah by the Shechemites (Gen. 34:1-31) and Simeon lead his brothers to avenge her rape. Efthimiadis-Keith (2011:304) also observes that while Simeon’s act is frowned upon in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 34:30). Judith raises it to an act of emulatable heroism. “Her entire prayer in *Judith* 9 is predicated on this act, as she asks God to empower her to defeat Holofernes as He had empowered Simeon (see Jdt 9:2) to destroy Shechem” (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2011:304). Efthimiadis-Keith (*ibid.*) concludes that Judith’s prayer is dependent on the following analogies: Simeon-Judith, Shechem-Holofernes, Dinah-Bethuliah/the Jewish people, and is striking in the way it foregrounds deceit and the element of female sexuality. c) In the encounter of Judith and Holofernes, the story sketches a sexual atmosphere in that Holofernes is eager to sleep with Judith (12:16).

The impetus for looking at the term Bethulia, in this way comes from Kelle (2008:95-111), who deconstructs certain war texts in terms of gender. He shows that cities in wartime were mainly depicted as female, and that this is how they functioned within the prophetic discourse, for

⁵⁷ Paronomasia is play upon words where words of equal sound are placed near to each other, or the same word is juxtaposed in different functions (Jordaan, 2004:118).

example Ezekiel 23:25-26 and Isaiah 11:6. The destruction of cities during war is described in terms of sexual atrocities and violence against women. Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem) in Ezekiel 23 are good examples for this use of language. Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem) are depicted as two adulterous sisters (prostitutes) that the Lord will punish because of their unfaithfulness.

The book of *Judith* presents another example in this regard, as it also depicts the feminization of cities. The geographical names Bethulia and Betomestham (Βαιτυλουα καὶ Βαιτομεσθαιμ), which are unknown in biblical history, are feminine. Kelle (2008:95) emphasizes that texts and language such as this personify ancient cities as female, and this violent language is used to describe city destruction. The point of focus here is in the name “Bethulia”.

Judith, in this case, personifies Jewish people/religion which is on the brink of defilement. The planned destruction of Bethulia carries a strong allusion to an innocent “virgin” who is about to be defiled (raped) by the Assyrian army, led by Holofernes. Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:243) state that the beheading and the defeat of Holofernes and his army by Judith carries a strong hint of a man who could not succeed in raping the innocent virgin, but was instead killed by the hand of a woman.

Thus, the story of *Judith* is strongly sexually engendered: it portrays a virgin, “Bethulia”, threatened by a powerful army led by Holofernes, who intensely longed to have sexual relations with Judith, the main representative of Bethulia. Eventually, Holofernes is decapitated and Judith, a symbol of chaste or virginity, was free to go. In fact, the one who was about to be penetrated actually cut off the head of the one who wanted to penetrate her. Bal’s (2004:257) suggestion that the decapitation of Holofernes can be seen as a reversed rape or castration supports the reading propagated in this study as explained here.

d) *Judith’s House*

In terms of Greimassian semiotics, Judith’s house is called the heterotopic space (cf. Chapter 1 2.4.1). Kanonge (2009:40) states that heterotopic means ‘other than the place of action’. Moving from this space symbolizes the beginning of the quest for the protagonist. The house of Judith is introduced in 10:6. It is a place from where Judith, the heroine of the story, moves in her quest to defend her people and the Jewish religion. This setting tells more about the figure of Judith and her pious lifestyle. It is the place where Judith exercises her rulership (she is a widow in charge of her own affairs), keeps her wealth and exercises her religious obligations. In 8:5, the

text mentions that Judith “ἐποίησεν ἑαυτῇ σκηνὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος τοῦ οἴκου αὐτῆς” (made for herself a tent upon the top of her house). Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:215) states that the roof of a Palestinian house was frequently used for the purpose of prayer. Ironically, the pious Judith also uses this house to beautify herself, as reported in 10:4: “εἰς ἀπάτησιν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀνδρῶν, ὅσοι ἂν ἴδωσιν αὐτήν” (to allure the eyes of all men that will see her).

However the house of Judith (as argued under Bethulia (2.1.1.2.c) above, is the direct opposite of Assyria, the Assyrian camp and the tent of Holofernes. The house of Judith is associated with prayer, fear of God and Jewish religious customs. It, therefore, inspires an ideology opposite to that of all the places associated with the Assyrians.

e) Holofernes' Tent

The tent of Holofernes is a well-known setting in *Judith*. This setting is probably well-known because of the dramatic event that took place in it, that is, the decapitation of Holofernes. It is first introduced in 10:15. In terms of the Greimassian semiotic approach, Holofernes' tent is a topic space as it is the place where transformation⁵⁸ occurs (Martin & Ringham, 2000:135).

There is more to this tent than the murder of Holofernes as it is attached to both the political and religious ideology of Assyria. This is the place where Holofernes (earlier referred to as the first disciple of Nebuchadnezzar) resides. As much as the camp of Assyria represented the impending terror, destruction, brutality and immorality, the tent of Holofernes carries the same ideological connotation. A few points may be mentioned in elaborating this assertion: First, the general (the vision bearer of the Assyrian cult) resides in it (10:21). It is like a mini capital city of the Assyrian camp. One may also suggest that this tent represents the statute of Nineveh, where Nebuchadnezzar is. Second, it is the tent which carries all the strength and hope of the Assyrian army (15:2), i.e. Holofernes (their army general resides in it). Third, it is in this tent that Holofernes wants to sleep with Judith (14:14).

Therefore the tent of Holofernes represents an ideology different from the tent on top of the roof of Judith's house. The tent of Holofernes is associated with sexual immorality, alcohol abuse (12:20), pride and arrogance (11:1-2), whereas the tent on Judith's house represents prayer, fear of God and Jewish religious customs (see the analysis of Judith's house).

⁵⁸ For a detail discussion on transformation in *Judith*, see Chapter 3 (Narrative analysis).

f) Valley of Bethulia

Another setting which contributes to the unfolding of the story is the valley of Bethulia. This valley is explicitly mentioned in 11:17 and 12:7, in which Judith tells Holofernes that she habitually goes to pray and wash herself in the evenings in the valley of Bethulia. She does so until God reveals to Judith when the Israelites have committed sin. This section considers what value this valley may have in the story.

The narrative introduces the valley of Bethulia as a place where Judith re-connects with God. It is associated with prayer and cleansing (both bodily and ceremonial cleansing). The text mentions in 12:17 that,

¹⁷ ὅτι ἡ δούλη σου θεοσεβής ἐστὶν καὶ θεραπεύουσα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ νῦν μενῶ παρὰ σοί, κύριέ μου, καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ἡ δούλη σου κατὰ νύκτα εἰς τὴν φάραγγα καὶ προσεύξομαι πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ ἐρεῖ μοι πότε ἐποίησαν τὰ ἀμαρτήματα αὐτῶν.⁵⁹

Ironically, the valley of Bethulia, for Judith, suddenly becomes the temple and the tent on top of the roof of her house. It has become a place of prayer and cleansing.

g) Jerusalem

Jerusalem is the last setting that is found in the narrative. No major actions take place in Jerusalem until the victory is gained in 16:18-20. Even though there is no major action taking place in Jerusalem during the war narrative (1:1-16:17), it (Jerusalem) remains a place which every Israelite defends against the looming destruction by the Assyrians. Branch (2012:79) states that Jerusalem is loved by the Israelites because of what it represents: the site of the Lord's Temple and, at some future, unspecified time, the Throne of the Lord (Jer.3:17). Furthermore, according to 16:18, Jerusalem is a place of worship (προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ), purification (ἐκαθαρίσθη ὁ λαός), and offering (ἀνήνεγκαν τὰ ὀλοκαυτώματα αὐτῶν), while in 16:20, it is described as a place of feasting (καὶ ἦν ὁ λαὸς εὐφραίνόμενος ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ). It is in this setting where the feast celebrating Judith's victory continues for three months. After this celebration, everyone returns to their place of inheritance, including Judith.

⁵⁹ ¹⁷ "Because your servant is religious and serves the God of heaven day and night, now, my lord, I will remain with you and your servant will go out at night into the valley and pray to God and He will tell me when they have committed their sins"

Therefore, the setting of Jerusalem is associated with God and his covenantal people. If the Assyrian army trusted in Nebuchadnezzar, who resides in Nineveh, for victory (or in their own strength as also indicated in 2:5), the Israelites trusted in God whose dwelling place is in Jerusalem in the temple. In brief, Jerusalem is the heart of the Jewish religion, and therefore inspires an ideology opposite to that of Assyria and Nineveh.

This section on spatialization demonstrates that, as with actors, spaces and places in a narrative contribute a particular meaning, enhancing the message of the story. The third and final element of Figurativization is temporalization, which is considered next.

2.2.1.3 TEMPORALIZATION

Temporalization, as part of Figurativization analysis, concerns itself with the author's choice of using specific times in the narrative. Kanonge (2009:40) states that the use of time is an important element in a narrative. Insistence on specific times is as important as is the choice of locations (ibid). Martin and Ringham (2000:132) state that, like spacialization and actorialization, temporalization is a necessary ingredient for a referential illusion or reality effect to work.

As discussed in Chapter 1, temporalization is the construction of time in the unfolding of a narrative. Insistence on specific moments of time is as important as is the choice of locations.

Judith has frequent references to the specific moments or time of action in the story. For example, in 1:1, reference is made to: “Ἔτους δωδεκάτου” (in the twelve year of), “ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις” (in the days of), in 1:5 “ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις” (in those days), in 11:17 “νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας” (night and day), in 13:3 “ἡμέραν” (as usual) and in 14:11 “Ἦνίκα δὲ ὁ ὄρθρος ἀνέβη” (on the next day).⁶⁰ These specific indications to time have significance, because it turns a narrative arrangement into a story (Martin & Ringham, 2000:132). The use of time in the story open and closes the scenes as the story unfolds; for an example, if the joyful return of Judith with the head of Holofernes was not preceded by the situation of distress and fear amongst the Jews, there would be no meaning to the story and no tale.

This study observes that the reference to the time of Judith's encounter with Holofernes is intriguing. It is described as “Now when it was the evening...” (“Ὡς δὲ ὀψία ἐγένετο ...” 13:1) and Judith welcomes the presentation of this time saying: “for now is the time...” (“Ὅτι νῦν καιρὸς ...” 13:5). Both expressions refer to a specific time of crucial action in the story, that is, in

⁶⁰ Literally it can be translated “As soon as the morning come”

the evening, which might be very late evening, after the party. This time is “a time of enchantment when anything might, even should, happen” (Kanonge, 2009:101). According to 13:2, this is also the time at which all of Holofernes’ servants are dismissed:

ὑπελείφθη δὲ Ἰουδιθ μόνη ἐν τῇ σκηνῇ, καὶ Ολοφέρνης προπετωκῶς ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην αὐτοῦ, ἦν γὰρ περικεχυμένος αὐτῷ ὁ οἶνος (and Judith was left alone in the tent and Holofernes lying on his bed; for he was filled with wine).

The time of Judith’s encounter with Holofernes is the creation of the author. This is supposed to be the opportune time for Holofernes to seduce Judith and eventually sleep with her, but Judith (and God) turns it around. The author makes sure that the reader understands that no one remains at the scene of murder at that specific time of evening, besides Judith and her maid, who are waiting just outside the tent.

Thus, temporalisation, like actorisation and spatialisation, play an important role in the narrative. Specific time references are used to bring necessary developments in the events of the story as it unfolds to the end.

In brief, the section discussed temporalization as an aspect concerned with the author’s choice of using specific times to bring meaning in the narrative. The following section discusses oppositions in *Judith* which contribute to bring meaning in the story.

2.2.2 OPPOSITIONS IN *JUDITH*.

This section explores the figurative polarisation or oppositions in *Judith*. From the analysis so far, it can be deduced that there are certain prominent opposing stances. As indicated in Chapter 1, for any semiotic study to achieve its goal, there must be a proper analysis of the existing oppositions in the story (Martin & Ringham, 2000:7). *Judith* is a story of oppositions. First, this study pays attention to the opposition it noted between Judith and the Elders of Bethulia. This opposition is referred to as secondary (minor) opposition. Second, there is a major opposition between God (advocated by Judith [and her maid], Achior, Elders⁶¹ and the Israelites) and Nebechadnezzar (advocated by Holofernes and the Assyrian army).

⁶¹ Elders play a supporting role to Judith after she reprimanded them from their bad consideration of surrendering the city.

According to Kanonge (2009:101) opposition depends on the main concern raised by the story, namely its actorial structure and its axiology. This study observes that the major concern in *Judith* is structured around the well-being of the temple and the sanctuary, which are the heart of the Jewish religion. This primary interest may be identified in two instances in the text, first it is explicitly expressed by Judith in 8:21-24:

ὅτι ἐν τῷ λημφθῆναι ἡμᾶς οὕτως καὶ λημφθήσεται πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία, καὶ προνομευθήσεται τὰ ἅγια ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐκζητήσει τὴν βεβήλωσιν αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος ἡμῶν ²² καὶ τὸν φόνον τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν τῆς γῆς καὶ τὴν ἐρήμωσιν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν ἐπιστρέψει εἰς κεφαλὴν ἡμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, οὗ ἐὰν δουλεύσωμεν ἐκεῖ, καὶ ἐσόμεθα εἰς πρόσκομμα καὶ εἰς ὄνειδος ἐναντίον τῶν κτωμένων ἡμᾶς. ²³ ὅτι οὐ κατευθυνθήσεται ἡ δουλεία ἡμῶν εἰς χάριν, εἰς ἀπμίαν θήσει αὐτὴν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν. ²⁴ καὶ νῦν, ἀδελφοί, ἐπιδειξώμεθα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐξ ἡμῶν κρέμαται ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ ἅγια καὶ ὁ οἶκος καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἐπεστήρισται ἡμῖν. ⁶²

The emphasis of the words of Judith quoted above is on the house of God, i.e. the sanctuary. In relation to this key concern, the destruction of the temple and the profanation of the sanctuary must be avoided at all costs, even at the cost of one's life. Secondly, the prayer of Judith (9:1-14) further substantiates the religious concern in the story. In 9:8, for example, Judith prays:

κύριος ὄνομά σοι, σὺ ῥάξον αὐτῶν τὴν ἰσχὺν ἐν δυνάμει σου καὶ κατάξον τὸ κράτος αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ θυμῷ σου, ἐβουλεύσαντο γὰρ βεβηλώσαι τὰ ἅγια σου, μιᾶναι τὸ σκῆνωμα τῆς καταπαύσεως τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς δόξης σου, καταβαλεῖν σιδήρῳ κέρασ θυσιαστηρίου σου. ⁶³

⁶² 21-24" For if we are captured, all Judea will be exposed and our sanctuary will be looted; and He will require the profanation thereof from our blood ²² and the slaughter of our brethren and the captivity of the country and the desolation of our inheritance, will He turn upon our heads among the Gentiles, wheresoever we shall be in bondage and we shall be an offense and a reproach to all who enslaved us. ²³ For our servitude shall not be directed to favour, but the Lord our God shall turn it to dishonour. ²⁴ Now therefore brethren, let us show an example to our brethren, because their hearts depend upon us and the sanctuary, and the house and the altar rest upon us."

⁶³ 8 "the Lord is your name; Throw down their strength with your power, and bring down their force with your wrath, because they have planned to loot your sanctuary and to pollute the Tabernacle where your glorious name resides and to destroy the horn of your altar."

Judith's prayer also illustrates that the Temple and the sanctuary are the main points of focus in the story. A detailed study of this major concern and the identification of the object of the quest follow in Chapter 3.

However, it is critical to realise that oppositions between characters emerge as a result of this major concern in the story. Some characters (e.g. Elders and the people of Bethulia) show reluctance in defending the destruction of the nation and the temple, while some characters (e.g. Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes and the Assyrian army) set out to to destroy the Israelites and the Jewish religion. Others still, like Judith (with God's help), want to save the people and defend the destruction of the temple. As mentioned in the introduction of this section, there exists a minor opposition within the Jewish community: that between Judith and the Elders of Bethulia.

With regard to this secondary/minor opposition, Jordaan (2009:180) states that, in an ironic, sarcastic and hyperbolic style, the author depicts the difference between Judith and the men/Elders of Bethulia. Judith has authority (8:10) while they display distressing weakness (7:19-32). She has knowledge of God (8:12) and the historical traditions of Israel (8:19; 8:26-27) while they are ignorant of God and his almightiness (7:30-32). She has faith and commitment (8:20), embodied in her communion with God by prayer⁶⁴ and observance of the law. They are interested in enjoyment and parties. She has courage, zeal and the determination to defend the case of God even to the cost of her life (8:32-33). They are lax and show an urge to surrender (7:31). She is competent and willing to act in a desperate situation. They are incompetent and unwilling to act in a desperate situation.

Through this minor opposition, it is evident that the author wants to draw a contrast between the Protagonist (Judith) and the Elders of Bethulia. Therefore the two groups comprise of those whose fear of the Lord is of the highest standard (Judith) and of those whose faith is weak (Elders of Bethulia). The text further indicates that Judith, her maid and Achior are bold enough to risk their lives for the sake of the Jewish religion, but the Elders of Bethulia are weak and are, actually, religious cowards.

The secondary opposition, therefore, stems from the people's attitude to defend and the honour of God and retaining the Jewish religion, that is, keenness (bravery) versus reluctance (cowardly) to defend the Jewish people/religion. These two attitudes depend on the nature of

⁶⁴ For more on prayer, see Boda et al. (2006).

the people's relationship with God. They constitute the determining factors in defining a true Jewish religious believer according to the author's standards. However, this study notes that this secondary opposition does not continue until the end of the narrative, but stops when Judith reprimands the elders for their weakness.

This study observes that the major opposition occurs between the Assyrians and the Israelites. This opposition is reflected in the characters of Judith and Holofernes who are the heroes of the faith of their respective people. While Judith stands to defend the honour of the God of Israel (DeSilva, 2006:55), Holofernes is determined to bring all the people under Nebuchadnezzar as their god. It is, therefore evident from the text that the main opposition are between the people who believe in Nebuchadnezzar as their god and those who believe in the Lord God of Israel.

In brief, the main opposition stems from the Israelites' keenness to defend and retain the Jewish religion versus the Assyrian's determination to destroy the Jewish religion and force the Israelites to worship Nebuchadnezzar as god. This opposition is tabled in Table 2.2 below. The table is provided in order to classify the data in terms of the values each group represents in the story. Values are classified in terms of good versus bad, acceptable versus unacceptable, positive versus negative, according to the author's moral standard, as deduced from the text (see also Kanonge, 2009:102).

Table 2.2 A summary of main oppositions in Judith

Actors/ Values	FAITH (RELIGION/MORALS)	IDENTIFICATION/ETHNICITY
Holofernes and the Assyrians. Negative, poor and unacceptable values	1. Ναβουχοδοноσορ... εἰς θεόν (Nebuchadnezzar as god) 3:8	1. Ἀσσυρίων (of the nation of Assyria). 2:4
	2. ἡμεῖς οἱ παῖδες Ναβουχοδοноσορ βασιλέως μεγάλου (we are children of Nebuchadnezzar the great king) 3:2	2. κατοικοῦντας τὴν παραλίαν, Σιδῶνι, Τύρω, Σουρ, Οκίνα, Ιεμνααν, Ἀζῶπῳ καὶ Ἀσκαλῶνι (the inhabitants of the nations which Holofernes has conquered). 2:28
	3. ἄρχοντες υἱῶν Ἡσαυ (the rulers of the children of Esau) 7:8	3. Traditional enemies of Israel. They are traitors.
	DESPISED THE GOD OF ISRAEL. THEY FOLLOWED NEBUCHADNEZZAR AS THEIR GOD.⁶⁵	NON ISRAELITE (ASSYRIAN MEN OF WAR) TRAITORS OF ISRAEL
Judith, Judith's Maid, Joachim, Achior and the Elders of Bethulia. Positive, good and	1. θεοσεβής (a religious woman) 11:17	1. θυγάτηρ Μερარი υἱοῦ ...Ἰσραηλ (the daughter of Merari son of Israel) 8:1
	2. ἡ σοφία (Referring to the wisdom of Judith. 8:29)	2. ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς Μανασσης τῆς φυλῆς αὐτῆς (Jewish woman) 8:1
	3. ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ (the high priest in Jerusalem) 4:6	3. Ἰωακὶμ ...ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ (Jewish priest). 4:6

⁶⁵ Bold font highlights the summary of the main opposition in the table.

	4. ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ σφόδρα (he believed in God greatly). 13:10	4. Αχιὼρ ...υἱῶν Αμμων. (Achior son of Ammon) 5:5
	FAITHFULNESS AND COMMITMENT TO THE JEWISH RELIGION. STRONG LOVE FOR HER PEOPLE.	THE TRUE JEWISH RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS INCLUDES MEN, WOMEN, SLAVES AND FOREIGNERS⁶⁶ ABIDING TO LAW OF MOSES.

As indicated above, this table provides the reader with a summary of the main opposition in the story of *Judith*. The main opposition is based mainly on the religious question: Who is the Lord? Is it Nebuchadnezzar, as Holofernes proclaims? Or is it the God of Israel as Judith eventually proves, as Harrington (1999:28) argues?

In summary, with regard to the main opposition in the story, that between the Israelites and the Assyrians, the analysis illustrates that they represent positive values (good) and negative (bad) values. A true Jewish religious believer must have a great fear of God and must always be keen to defend the assault of the Jewish people/religion and the honour of God. Characters, like Judith, Judith's maid, Achior, and later the Elders of Bethulia, display this kind of keenness which represents positive values. Characters, like Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes, Bagoas, the Children of Esau and the Assyrian army represent negative values (idolatry, brutality, terror, drunkenness and sexual immorality).

This section discussed oppositions in *Judith*. The study established that there exist two oppositions in *Judith*; one secondary opposition and one main opposition. It was established, first, that the secondary opposition is that between the elders of Bethulia and Judith. Secondly, the main opposition is that between the Israelites and the Assyrians.

The following section discusses emplotment as a major aspect which contributes to the meaning of the text.

2.3. EMPLOTMENT

Emplotment is the second major aspect discussed in this chapter. It is related to the storyline, but represents more. It concerns the way events are ordered in a narrative, in a specific

⁶⁶ Provided they are circumcised and accept the God of Israel as their only God.

structure of plot. Emplotment refers to the intentional choice and arrangement of events by an author, in order to impact his community (Kanonge, 2009:42).

The story of Judith is not an exception to this phenomenon. *Judith* echoes various texts within Israel's traditions and history. The arrangement and the content of the story of *Judith* is linked to a number of biblical events, such as the rape of Dinah and her brothers' vengeance upon the perpetrator and his people in Genesis 34; the activities of Deborah and Jael (Judg. 4-5; cf. White, 1992:5-16); the combat of David (the second king of Israel) and Goliath (1 Sam. 17); and the events of Antiochus IV Epiphanes' attempt to suppress Israelites religion (around 167 B.C.E).

Although White (1992:5-16) and Efthimiadis-Keith (2011:306) argue that the author of *Judith* might have used the story of Jael and Deborah as a model, this study takes into serious consideration that *Judith* may have been modelled relating to two stories, viz. the David-Goliath story and Deborah-Jael story. However, this study contends — agreeing with Esler (2001 and 2002) — that the story of *Judith* seems to relate to the combat of David and Goliath in 1 Sam. 17. Branch (2012:81) also points out the same connection: “[a] little Bethulia defeats a mighty Nineveh”. The contention here is that the story of David and Goliath serves as an archetype for *Judith*. Esler (2002:121) states that the closest parallel to *Judith* is the account of David's defeat and beheading of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 (cf. also Esler 2001). He further argues that although it is rare for biblical scholars to draw this comparison, the two narratives are often presented side-by-side in Western art.⁶⁷ The story of David and Goliath serves as an archetype for *Judith*. The investigation in this study of the plot of *Judith* focuses on this suggested similarity with the incident of David and Goliath. This discussion will then be followed by the discussion of the book's ironic tone.

2.3.1 PARALLELS BETWEEN *JUDITH* AND THE COMBAT BETWEEN DAVID AND GOLIATH

The view that *Judith* is modelled on the plot of the *David and Goliath* narrative is highly probable (cf. also Esler, 2002:107-143). Drane (2000:218) contends that the way in which Judith disposes of Holofernes has striking similarities to the stories of David and Goliath (1 Samuel

⁶⁷ For example, that of the detached severity of Judith by Caravaggio (1598), Kremer Schmidt's triumphant Judith (1718-18010 and Gulia's depiction on the prayerful piety of Judith (for a detailed discussion on this presentation see Efthimiadis-Keith, 2002:69)

17). Therefore, the discussion of the relation between the two stories is indispensable and unavoidable for the purpose of this investigation.

Some interesting parallels can be identified between the two narratives, particularly with regard to similarities and reversals. These elements are discussed here.

First, both protagonists of the two narratives are unlikely heroes in the context of battle (a woman and young David) and are characterized by beauty (good looks). The text, in 8:7, describes Judith as “καὶ ἦν καλὴ τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὡραία τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα” (and she was a woman of goodly countenance and very beautiful to behold). In 1 Sam. 16:12 David, on the other hand, is similarly described as: “καὶ οὗτος πυρράκης μετὰ κάλλους ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἀγαθὸς ὄρασει κυρίῳ” (a young man who was ruddy, with beauty of eyes and very goodly to behold).⁶⁸

Second, in both stories the protagonists enjoy a fair share of the Lord’s favour. Judith is a God fearing woman (θεοσεβής) according to 8:7 and her success at the end of the story confirms the favour she has before the Lord. In the case of David, the Lord Himself confirms that David is good “ὅτι οὗτος ἀγαθός⁶⁹ ἔστιν ” (1 Sam. 16:12), and David’s success over the Philistine giant is achieved “ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου” (in the name of the Lord).

Furthermore, this study observes that both stories contain phrases that cannot be ignored. Both protagonists acknowledge that the Lord will bring victory through their hands. In 1 Sam. 17:46 the text reports that: “καὶ ἀποκλείσει σε κύριος σήμερον εἰς τὴν χεῖρά μου” (and the Lord shall deliver you this day into my hand). With regard to Judith, the text, in 8:33, indicates that: “ἐπισκέπεται κύριος τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν χειρὶ μου” (the Lord will visit Israel by my hand” (Judith 8:33), in both stories are appealing. In both instances the Lord is the subject and both Judith and David are instruments or agents of God’s protective power respectively.

Both stories also share the same mode of expression in describing the beheading of Holofernes and Goliath. Judith 13:8 records that:

⁶⁸ This study observes that on the interpretive level, David’s beauty does not play a part in his victory over Goliath, whilst Judith’s beauty does over Holofernes. Therefore, this discussion serves to compare the characteristics of these two heroes on textual level.

⁶⁹ Swanson (1997) states that ἀγαθός can refer to a good deed, fair thing, i.e., an action which is not evil, but a positive moral nature, implying a positive attitude or favour toward the object of the good deed.

καὶ ἐπάταξεν (Ιουδιθ) εἰς τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ ...καὶ ἀφείλεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ αὐτοῦ (and Judith smote into his neck...and she took his head from him).

In 1 Samuel 17:51, the text describes the event of the beheading of Goliath as follows:

καὶ ἔδραμεν Δαυιδ καὶ ἐπέστη ἐπ' αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν ῥομφαίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐθανάτωσεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀφείλεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ (and David ran and stood upon him....and slew him...and he took his head from him).

Both stories seem to suggest that the cutting and seizing of the head is more than just a description of murder, but has an ideological connotation to it. Jordaan and Coetzer (2008:27) observe that the climax of *Judith* lies in the beheading of Holofernes (cf. also Nickelsburg 2005:98). The same can be argued with regard to the encounter between the Israelites (David) and the Philistines (Goliath). Both protagonists, in their act of beheading, bring victory to Israel and the name of the Lord is not shamed but honoured. By beheading, they take away the security and the authority of the enemy or opposition, Assyrians (in the case of Judith) and the Philistines (in the case of David).

Interestingly, in both narratives the protagonists are eventually praised or congratulated for their act. In Sam. 18:6 David is welcome by “dancing women of Israel” (αἱ χορεύουσαι). In Judith 15:12, the text mentions that: “καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῇ χορὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν” (then they (women) made a dance amongst themselves).

In a nutshell, a reader can realize that in both stories God chooses a very lowly vessel as his champion. In *Judith* God chooses to work his salvation through the hand of a woman. In the case of the *David and Goliath* story, God has chosen a young boy to be the champion against a giant. Secondly, like David, Judith leaves her own forces to take up the enemy single-handed (aside from her maid), and succeeds in cutting off his head with his own sword, thus ensuring a victory for her people. Therefore, Judith fulfils her culture’s normally masculine role of war-fighting in a manner noticeably similar to that of Israel’s greatest hero (Esler, 2002:129). The quest in both instances is saving the religion of Israel.

This section discussed the textual parallels that exist between *Judith* and the story of the combat between David and Goliath. This investigation is based on the view that *Judith* is modelled on the plot of the *David and Goliath* narrative. The following section discusses the

ironic mode of emplotment of *Judith* and further pays attention to the ironic expressions, as important elements for a better understanding of the meaning of the text.

2.3.2 THE IRONIC MODE OF EMPLOTMENT IN *JUDITH*

Moore (1985:78) acknowledges that the author of *Judith* was an “ironist *extraordinaire*”. He further observes that a number of biblical books, including Esther, make effective use of irony, but few, if any, are as quintessentially ironic as *Judith*. Failure to recognize this fact has been a primary reason for so many misinterpretations of the book, for whatever else the author of *Judith* may have been, he/she was an ironist (*ibid.*). Harrington (1999:28) agrees with Moore when he asserts that the key to the book of *Judith* is appreciating its irony.

Support for the ironic nature of *Judith* can be found both externally (on the structure of the story) and internally (in the internal data of the text). First, the structure of the story provides some evidence to support that *Judith* can be regarded as ironic discourse. Initially, the story presents the Assyrians as unstoppable and invisible in their attack, but that is not the case. In fact it may be argued that the opposite is the case. They are cowards who depend on one individual for victory; and that constituted their disastrous defeat.

Secondly, support for this ironic nature of the narrative can be found in the internal data of the text. The contention of this section is that irony is not accidental in the content of *Judith*. It depicts a technique through which the author chooses to pass his message. *Judith* is a thematically ironic story. A number of incidences prove the presence of this verbal humour in the story. Nelson (1990:125) says verbal humour generally depends on ambiguity: “on the use of a word, phrase, sentence, or longer unit which can be understood in two different usually conflicting ways”. Cornelius (2009:422) supports Nelson, stating that this verbal humour is much in line with the figure of speech called “irony”. In this study, however, irony is taken to be understood in its broadest sense as an expression in which the intended meaning of the words is the direct opposite of their usual sense or what might be expected.

In the *Judith* narrative, irony constitutes the main communicational strategy of the author. The scene of Achior’s banishment from the Assyrian camp is ironic (6:1-13). First, Holofernes and his army send Achior to be destroyed together with the rest of the people of Bethulia, but he is actually sending him to live happily there. Secondly, Achior’s truth-speaking before Holofernes gets him expelled from the Assyrian camp, while Judith’s lies are believed and get her into the heart of the Assyrian assault.

The encounter between Judith and Holofernes in 10:21-13:9 is also full of ironic expressions. Judith calls herself a servant or handmaid of Holofernes, (τῆς δούλης σου / ἡ παιδίσκη σου 10:5-6 and 10:16). Pious and God fearing as she is, this study contends that these words are not a true reflection of Judith's heart and sincerity. In fact, the text itself indicates that Judith fears and serves the God of heaven (8:8), and she serves Him day and night (11:17). Her heart is with God. She is the servant of the God of Israel, not of Holofernes. The expression “ὁ κύριός μου” (my lord) in 11:5, 10, 11 is also surprising. Also in this instance, Judith makes this expression sound like it is directed to Holofernes, but actually refers to her God. This is viewed here as a ridicule of Holofernes' claim of Nebuchadnezzar as god.

Judith, in 11:6, further states, before Holofernes, that if he will follow her words: “τελείως πρᾶγμα ποιήσει μετὰ σοῦ ὁ θεός” (God will do perfect works with you).

Judith's expression seems to suggest that God has good plans concerning the Assyrian army general, whereas death is waiting for him just around the corner. The suggestion that God will use Holofernes to do great things sounds as though Holofernes will be the receiver, or perhaps the doer of great things. In fact, the 'perfect works' done with Holofernes is his death, which frees the Jewish people/religion.

In 11:19 Judith also promises the general a throne in Jerusalem, but now there is no head on which to place the crown (Craghan, 1982:114).

Cornelius (2009:423) observes that the plundering in the Assyrian camp is an especially ironic reversal of fortune. In 2:23, 26 Holofernes carries out Nebuchadnezzar's orders to plunder the whole region and now in 15:6-7 the Assyrian booty is the possession of Israel.

Lastly, this study observes that Judith, in 11:7-8, seems to acknowledge and praise Nebuchadnezzar as lord who should be served, not only by people but also by the birds of the air (τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), beasts of the field (τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ), and cattle (τὰ κτήνη). This expression is a clear mockery of Nebuchadnezzar. Ironically, Judith's expression fits to be directed to the God of heaven, not Nebuchadnezzar. Craven (1983:96) states that Judith, in this instance, mocks Holofernes in her ironical deception.

In brief, the significance of this figure of speech/ironic expressions in this fictive narrative seems to be most probably that the author of *Judith* employs this figure of speech or verbal humour to

mock or to ridicule the claim and the behaviour of the Assyrians (cf. Kanonge, 2009:109 on *Susanna*).

This section discussed the second and final major aspect of the Figurative analysis, that is, emplotment. It investigated the intentional choice and arrangement of events by an author, in order to impact his/her community with the story of *Judith*. It was established that *Judith* echoes various texts within Israel's traditions and history. However, amongst few Old Testament stories, the story of David and Goliath was argued to be the archetype of *Judith*.

The section further discussed the ironic mode of emplotment as a crucial aspect in investigating the possible purpose of *Judith*. The following section provides a summary of the findings of the Figurative analysis of *Judith*.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter is devoted to the Figurative analysis of *Judith*. The chapter's central concerns are a) to investigate the main figures or actors that appear in the story. In relation to this aspect, attention was also paid to the main oppositions emerging from the story, and b) to investigate the emplotment of the narrative and motifs recurring in the story.

The investigation of figures, in terms of actors, space and time, in the story established that *Judith* contains primary and secondary characters who participate in the unfolding of the story. It was further established that characters in *Judith* are divided according to their religious claims. On the one hand, characters like Judith, Judith's maid, Achior and the Elders of Bethulia serve the God of Israel and strive to defend his honour and their religion. On the other hand characters like, Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes, Bagoas, Children of Esau and the entire Assyrian army serve Nebuchadnezzar as their god.

Following from this divide, a study of oppositions revealed that *Judith* has two modes of oppositions: that is, the secondary and the primary opposition. The secondary opposition identified is the contrast between Judith and the Elders of Bethulia. The investigation reveals that this opposition stems from the people's attitude to defend the Jewish religion, that is, keenness (bravery) versus reluctance (cowardly). The conclusion is made that these two attitudes constitute the determining factors in defining a true Jewish religious believer according to the author's standard.

The secondary opposition reflects the main opposition in the story, which relates to the fact that *Judith* is structured around religious conflict between the Israelites and the Assyrians. This opposition is reflected in the characters of Judith and Holofernes who are the heroes of the faith of their respective people. Furthermore, this opposition entails that the narrative seems to make a call to the Israelites to resist the dishonour of the God of Israel and the assault of the Jewish people/religion by the Assyrians.

In summarizing the investigation of figures like Judith, Judith's maid and Achior, the story of *Judith* seems to suggest that Jewish society must be structured around the keenness versus reluctance to the Jewish religious matters irrespective of whether you are a woman, man, slave and a foreigner. Judith (woman), the maid (slaves) and foreigners (Achior) can participate in the Jewish religious matters as long as they believe in the God of Israel. The character of Judith is a good example for Jewish religious carriers.

The second focus of this chapter is the emplotment of the story and this discussion consists of two parts. First, the parallels between *Judith* and the combat between David and Goliath, and the latter as a presupposed archetype for the first were investigated. Secondly, the investigation focused on the ironic mode of emplotment of the story. Through the ironic structure of the story and the ironic expressions in the story, *Judith* was established as being fundamentally ironic.

The conclusions stated here result from a partial analysis of the story, i.e. the investigation of figurativization and emplotment. In order to establish the purpose of Judith in full, two other levels of analysis need to be conducted: the narrative and the Thematic analysis. These two steps are dealt with in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 3 THE NARRATIVE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter constitutes the second step of the Greimassian semiotic approach (see Martin & Ringham, 2000:8). According to Kanonge (2009:126), the narrative level of analysis examines the organization of the text as a discourse. This step helps to reveal the various functions of the actants and track the course of the subject (main character) across the narrative. The main concern of this chapter is, therefore, to examine the discursive organization of *Judith*. The following analytical tools are relevant here: the narrative structure of the story, actantial model and narrative syntax.⁷⁰ Details concerning the content of each of these are provided in the relevant sections.

In the Greimassian semiotic approach, the narrative and the thematic levels of analysis in particular are aided by schemas or models. The application of these contributes to decoding the meaning of the text (Martin & Ringham, 2000:8). The schematic representations in this chapter, and in the following, are borrowed from Martin and Ringham (2000) and Kanonge (2009) as guided by the approach of analysis.

The following section concerns the narrative structure of the text in question.

3.2. THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE STORY OF *JUDITH*

Narrative structure discusses three main aspects concerning the story of *Judith* viz. the organizational structure of the story of *Judith*, the discussion of the significance of the initial and final sequences of *Judith* and the logic of ending of *Judith*.

According to Kanonge (2009:126) the primary condition for the existence of narrative structures is transformation. Everaert-Desmedt (2007:16-17, as referenced by Kanonge, 2009:35) states that there is no way to think of a narrative starting and ending without change. Martin and Ringham (2000:136) support this idea, arguing that “in order for there to be any story there must be a transformation”. Transformation accounts for what happens when a narrative progresses

⁷⁰ The veridictory square usually forms part of the Narrative analysis; however the present study intends to discuss it in the third level of analysis, i.e. the thematic or the deep level of analysis. This is done for two reasons, viz: the Thematic analysis, just like the veridictory square, uses the semiotic square as its main device for investigation; therefore they can be done together in one chapter. Secondly, this is done for the purpose of balance in chapters, seeing that the Thematic analysis offers less as far as the length of the discussion is concerned, as compared to the first two levels of analysis.

from one state to the other or a categorical movement from one state (initial state) to another (final state) (Greimas, 1987:123; 167). According to Kanonge (2009:126), narrative transformations generally occur in terms of “lack (state of disjunction) versus settling of lack (state of conjunction)” or “mission given versus mission accomplished”.

Extensive reading of *Judith* has shown this researcher that *Judith* is fertile ground for this type of investigation. The following sections focus on a detailed discussion of the transformation process in *Judith*. Two critical points of transformation in the narrative are examined in these sections, viz the initial-final sequence in *Judith*, and the logic of ending of *Judith*. In accordance with the Greimassian semiotic approach, therefore, the relation between the initial and the final sequence of the *Judith* narrative is scrutinized below.

Even so, this study notes that the relation between the two sequences of the story cannot be discussed successfully without first discussing the relation between the two parts of the book (*Judith* 1-7 and 8-16). This is so because the study of the relation between the initial and the final sequence considers the two parts of the story as contributing equally to the meaning of the story. Thus, a discussion of the structure of *Judith* (3.1.1) precedes the examination of the initial-final sequence of the narrative (3.1.2). Finally, the logic in the ending of *Judith* is considered (3.1.3).

3.2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF *JUDITH*

This section focuses on establishing the position of this study (A Greimassian semiotic analysis of *Judith*) concerning the alleged questionable relation between the two parts of the book (*Judith* 1-7 and 8-16). Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:23) refers to this relation as the structural unity of the book of *Judith*. Biblical scholars have reacted to the two parts of *Judith* in a variety of ways. For many, the *Judith* narrative is imbalanced as it consists of two unequal parts, Chapters 1-7 and 8-16 (cf. Alonso-Schökel, 1975; Dancy, 1972; and Craghan, 1982, as referenced in Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:24).⁷¹ Moreover, Cowley (referred to by Craven, 1983:8) puts forward that the book of *Judith* is “out of proportion” because of an overly long introduction (1-7) to the “story proper” (8-16). Dancy (referred to by Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:24) regards Part 1 as “duller in thought and flatter in style”, because it fails to provide a historical setting with the “economy” and “accuracy a modern reader looks for”. Winter (referred to by Moore, 1985:56) is kinder in criticising, suggesting that “[t]he *Judith* narrative is slightly disproportionate in its parts”, whereas Moore

⁷¹ See Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:23-27) for a detailed discussion on the alleged structural imbalance of the *Judith* narrative.

(1985:56) refers to the narrative's "alleged imbalance". The views of Dancy, Winter, Cowley and Craghan (mentioned above) have, for many years, robbed *Judith* of the recognition of its value and brilliance as a narrative with transformational character. However, following Craven's (1983) rhetorical criticism of *Judith*, Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:124) observes that most modern scholarship acknowledges the necessity of both "parts" or sections of *Judith* and the structural integrity of the text as we have it today. DeSilva (2002:88) also acknowledges the structural brilliance of the *Judith* narrative, noting that "the careful structuring of this balanced work attests to the literary artistry of the author". Nickelsburg (2005:99) concurs with DeSilva, that *Judith* is a literary work of considerable artistic merit. He argues that Chapters 1-7 actually constitute the first half of a carefully crafted literary diptych, in which the second part (Chapters 8-16) resolves events and issues presented in the first part. Craven's work (see 1.3.1) has made an insightful contribution to the alleged structural imbalance of *Judith*. It establishes that both parts exhibit highly refined and carefully crafted architectural patterns, which contribute to the meaning of the story. The studies of Craven (1977 and 1983) further show that to excerpt a few verses or chapters from Part II, e.g. about the deed of the woman Judith, is to do violence to the whole of the story.

Following Craven, *Judith* scholars such as Moore (1985), Harrington (1999), Nickelsburg (2005), Efthimiadis-Keith (2004) and DeSilva (2002) generally agree that the story of *Judith* comprises two main parts, traditionally named Part I and II, which are not "disproportionate" or "imbalanced", as some scholars would suggest, but fairly complementary to each other. The present Greimassian semiotic analysis of *Judith* also agrees with the assertion of the above-mentioned scholars. In summary, the two parts of the *Judith* narrative can be segmented as follows:⁷²

Chapters 1-7

1. Introduction to Nebuchadnezzar and his campaigns against Arphaxad (1:1-16)
2. Nebuchadnezzar commissions Holofernes to take vengeance on the disobedient nations (2:1-13)
3. Development
 - A. The campaign against the obedient nations, the people surrender (2:14-3:10)
 - B. Israel hears and is "greatly terrified"; Joachim orders war preparations (4:1-15)

⁷² The structure provided in this study is that of Craven (1977 and 1983).

- C. Holofernes talks with Achior. Achior is expelled from the Assyrian camp (5:1-6:11)
- C Achior is received into Bethulia; he talks with the people of Israel (6:12-21)
- B Holofernes orders war preparations; Israel sees and is “greatly terrified” (7:1-5)
- A The campaign against Bethulia; the people want to surrender (7:6-32)

Chapters 8-16

- A. Introduction to Judith (8:1-8)
- B. Judith plans to save Israel (8:9-10:8)
- C. Judith and her maid leave Bethulia (10:9-10)
- D. Judith overcomes Holofernes (10:11-13:10a)
- C. Judith and her maid return to Bethulia (13:10b-11)
- B. Judith plans the destruction of Israel’s enemy (13:12-16:20)
- A. Conclusion about Judith (16:21-25)

Part I begins with successful campaigns by Nebuchadnezzar and his commission to his army general, Holofernes. Holofernes is ordered to advance Nebuchadnezzar’s ambition of having all the people and nations worship him (Nebuchadnezzar) as god. He is commanded to destroy the nations – including Israel - which refuse to comply with the command of Nebuchadnezzar. The story continues with the description of the threat posed by Holofernes’ army to the city of Bethulia, Jerusalem and the temple.

Part II deals with the introduction of the protagonist, Judith, and her plan to save Israel. This part reveals how God saves Israel through the hand of Judith (Harrington, 1999:27).

The present study considers the first part of the story as a necessary preparation for the second, without which the act of Judith itself in Part II would be contextless. Therefore, the acknowledgement of the necessity of these two parts as complementary halves is indispensable.

Having briefly discussed the grounds for the position of this study in terms of the debate around the two parts of the book, the investigation proceeds to the study of the relation between the initial and the final sequence in *Judith*.

3.2.2 THE INITIAL AND FINAL SEQUENCE IN *JUDITH*

This investigation of the relation between the initial and the final sequence in *Judith*, proceeds from the point of departure that *Judith* is an orderly crafted literary unit, comprising two complementary parts (Part I and Part II). This study postulates that the initial and final sequences introduce and conclude the relationship between the main opposition in the story. This opposition is between the Israelites (represented by Judith) and the Assyrians (represented by Holofernes).⁷³

The study of initial and final sequence is another way of reading *Judith* and may help a reader to read the narrative with a different focus. The focus here is on the unfolding of the story, starting from the threat to the existence of Jewish people/religion posed by the Assyrian army to the preservation of the Jewish people/religion. According to Martin and Ringham (2000:136) the general passage from one state of affairs to another can be illustrated on a semantic axis as follows:

Initial state (**S1**) ————— Transformation (**T**) —————> final state (ending) (**S2**)

Figure 3.1 Relation between the beginning and ending of the Judith narrative

The situation in **S1** introduces the problem (lack) to be addressed, while **S2** presents the settlement of the lack. The situation in **T** is the critical point of transformation in the story. The problem *Judith* seeks to address is how the Jewish religion, under the leadership of the ἄρχοντες (governors) and πρεσβυτέροι (elders) will survive the threat of extinction by the Assyrians. Therefore, the situation in **S1** is that of the Jewish religion in crisis.

The narrative indicates, in 7:31, that the Elders are about to surrender the city just before the introduction of the protagonist, Judith. Even though this opposition has already been referred to as secondary (or minor), this study observes that it deserves a brief discussion. This is so because the presence of the Elders and governors contributes to the state of matters in **S1**. Thus, a reading focused on the elders/governors of Bethulia can be presented as follows in the structure:

⁷³ This study has also suggested (Chapter 2) that a secondary opposition exists between Judith and the Elders of Bethulia. This opposition will also be given brief attention as it contributes greatly to the investigation of the possible purpose of the story.

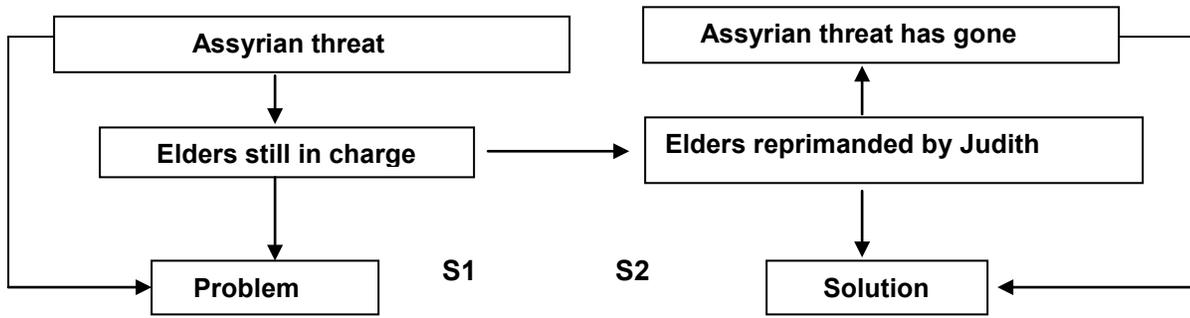


Figure 3.2 Relation between the beginning and ending in Judith focusing on the Elders of Bethulia

The schematic representation (Fig. 3.2) shows that the Jewish religion under the leadership of the Elders would still experience problems. It seems that the Elders do not have a firm vision for the survival of the Jewish religion. However, the representation also shows that after Judith reprimands the Elders, the Jewish people have a hope for survival.

The structure in Fig.3.2 above shows, on the one hand, that the Elders of Bethulia are not only reluctant leaders of Israel, but are also undecided about the future of the city and the Jewish religion. They are bad examples within the Jewish religious community. Their behaviour or undecided attitude is explicitly reprimanded by Judith in 8:11: that “οὐκ εὐθὴς ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν” (your word is not right). Their behaviour poses a danger and can consequently put the Jewish nation and Jewish religion in a compromising position. The Elders’ option or willingness to surrender the city and the sanctuary, if God does not act according to their ultimatum, will have negative consequences on the Jewish religion, as Judith indicates in 8:21 “λημφθήσεται πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ προνομευθήσεται τὰ ἅγια ἡμῶν” (all Judea shall lie waste and our sanctuary will be spoiled). The role of the Bethulian Elders, in their state of fear and uncertainty, can thus contribute to the destruction of the city and the extinction of the Jewish religion. Holofernes would have won the quest to have Nebuchadnezzar worshipped as the only god by all the people, including the Jews.

Similarly, the reading focusing on the presence of Holofernes (Assyrian threat), can be presented as follows in the structure:

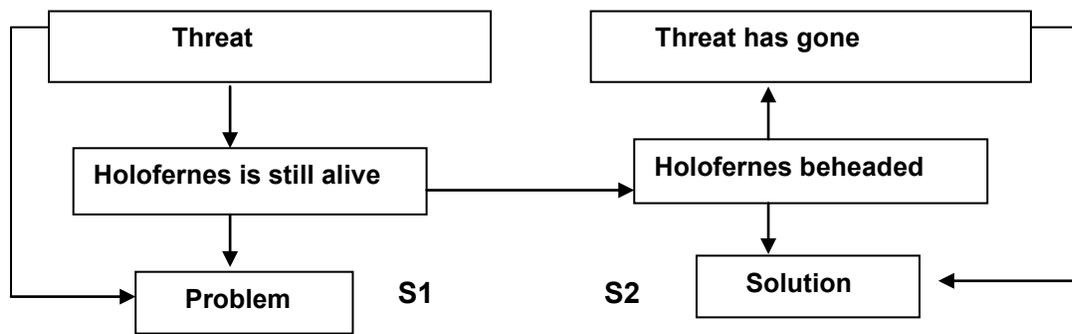


Figure 3.3 Relation between the beginning and ending in Judith focusing on the presence of Holofernes

The second structure Fig. 3.3 illustrates, on the other hand, how the existence of Holofernes in the Assyrian camp constantly bears a threat to the nation of Israel, perhaps of possible extinction. Holofernes is indeed a real threat to the existence of the Jews and their religion. This is clear because, after his death, Israel suddenly experiences victory, peace and stability. Jerusalem and the temple (Jewish religion) are finally safe. The Jewish religion is no longer in crisis; it has survived the threat of extinction.

In summary, from the perspective of the Jewish religion and the role played by Judith within the Jewish religious community (Judith versus the Elders/governors) the transformation, schematically, can be presented as follows:

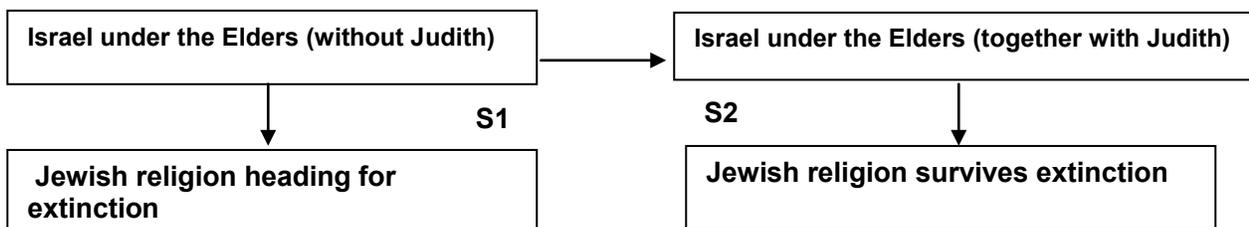


Figure 3.4 Relation between the beginning and ending in Judith focussing on the presence of Judith within the Jewish religious community

Fig. 3.4 emphasizes the role played by Judith (the subject of doing) in saving the Jewish religion. The schematic representation further shows that the presence of the Elders/governors (without Judith) places the Jewish people/religion in danger for extinction. This study takes note of the fact that the narrative perspective seems to be that survival is depended on remaining true God. The character of Judith is the agent of this unbent trust in God (pharisaic religious

experience). From the perspective of the Jewish religion with reference to the impending Assyrian threat (Judith versus Holofernes) the problem presents itself as follows:

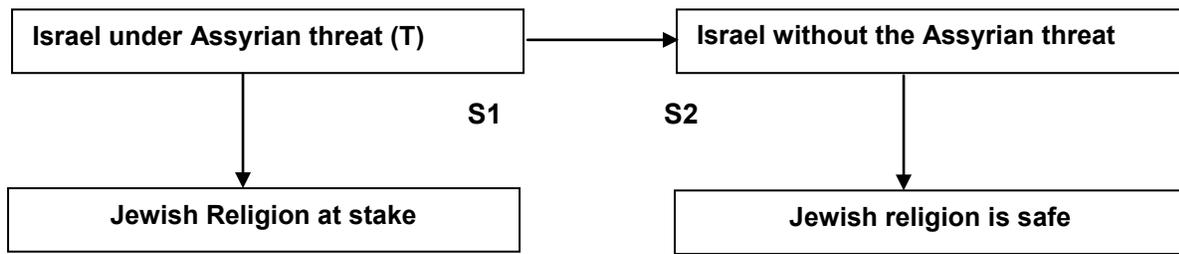


Figure 3.5 Relation between the beginning and ending in Judith focusing on Israel (Jewish religion)

The schematic representation (Fig. 3.5) shows that unless something is done to stop the Assyrian threat, the Jewish religion will always be under threat and in crisis. Therefore, the whole story of *Judith* can be summarized by the following transformational function:



Figure 3.6 The function of transformation underlying the relation between Jewish religion under threat and its survival.

Fig. 3.6 illustrates the transformation of the Jewish religion (**R**) from being a religion under threat of extinction (**R₁**), on account of the Assyrians and the presence of Holofernes, to being a religion that survives extinction (**R₂**), under Judith. The unfolding of the story is a transformation from a state of disjunction (mission to be accomplished by Judith) (**Λ**) to a state of conjunction (mission accomplished) (**V**). In this representation, the subject of transformation is the Jewish religion.

It should be noted, however, that transformation in the narrative does not take place by chance or automatically. Martin and Ringham (2000:136) state that transformation can correspond to the performance of the subject, who thereby becomes a subject of doing. Transformation in the *Judith* narrative does not happen until the introduction of Judith (protagonist) and the role played by all helpers around her. Therefore, the figure of Judith is the subject of doing in the narrative. The aspect of helpers and opponents will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The point here is that Judith's heroic actions bring about transformation within the Jewish religion. Therefore the schematic representation Fig. 3.6 can be read as follows: Judith causes the Jewish religion to be transformed from being a religion under threat of extinction to being a

religion that survives extinction. In this case, the story of *Judith*, focusing on the heroic action of Judith, can be summarized as follows (cf. Greimas, 1987:123):



Figure 3.7 The function of transformation illustrating the heroic action of Judith.

The illustration Fig. 3.7, in simple terms, asserts that Judith’s involvement saves her people and their religion from the impending threat by the Assyrians. Following this transformation in the narrative, in terms of the Greimassian semiotic approach, the figure of Judith is characterized by a *transformation doing* (cf. Martin & Ringham, 2000:136). Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:250) further observes that Judith goes through transformation herself, which she effects in order to bring about the situational transformation. Judith’s beautification process constitutes this transformation (ibid.).

It should be noted, however, that Judith does not work out transformation in the story by herself. She achieves victory through the help of God, as Nickelsburg (2005:98) also observes that Judith’s prayer wins the help of God.⁷⁴ The Lord God of Israel is intimately involved in her victory (12:7).

The focus at this present moment is on the Lord God of Israel. Judith’s pious character points to her relationship and her dependence on God’s help. For example when she beholds Holofernes, she prays, “Κραταίωσόν με, κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ” (Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, in this day) (13:7). The Lord God of Israel gives her strength to destroy the enemy and consequently bring change of circumstance in her community. The Jewish community transforms from being a community under threat of destruction to a victorious community. The same may be argued with reference to the Jewish religion, as already mentioned above. Bethulia, Jerusalem, the temple and the sanctuary are no longer under threat of extinction but are now safe. The whole nation is filled with joy and sings songs of praise; it is no longer full of fear and confusion. Given Judith’s heroic action and the Lord’s intervention, the story may be summarized as follows:

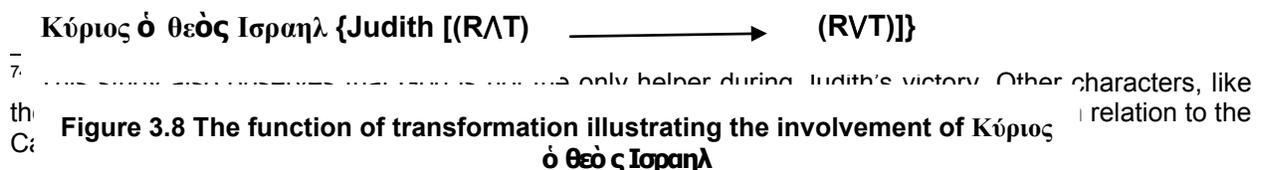


Figure 3.8 The function of transformation illustrating the involvement of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ relation to the

The schematic representation Fig. 3.8 focuses on the beginning and the ending of the narrative and shows that *Judith* is indeed a unified whole, thus confirming Craven's findings (Chapter 1, 1.3.1). The situation in the initial (**S1**) and final state (**S2**), according to Fig. 3.1 does not refer to either Part I or Part II separately, but to the whole story from Chapter 1 to Chapter 16. Judith's heroic act is thus seen as one of the scenes which contributes to the process of transformation, as the Jewish religion transforms from being under threat of extinction to surviving extinction.

Generally, the matter of religion seems to be the main concern in *Judith*. This study asserts that the two parts of the story are joined together by this central question: "Who is the one and only real God?" Harrington (1999:28) supports this view, stating that: "the central to the plot of *Judith* are theological questions. Who is the Lord? Is it Nebuchadnezzar as Holofernes proclaims? Or is it the God of Israel, as Judith eventually proves?"

This religious conflict (**S1**) is introduced by the claim of the Assyrians in 2:5-7 when Nebuchadnezzar gives a command to Holofernes saying:

⁵ Τάδε λέγει ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς Ἴδου σὺ ἐξέλευσή ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου μου καὶ λήμνη μετὰ σεαυτοῦ ἄνδρας πεποιθότας ἐν ἰσχύι αὐτῶν, πεζῶν εἰς χιλιάδας ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι καὶ πληθὸς ἵππων σὺν ἀναβάταις χιλιάδας δέκα δύο, ⁶ καὶ ἐξελεύσῃ εἰς συνάντησιν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ ἐπὶ δυσμάς, ὅτι ἠπειθήσαν τῷ ῥήματι τοῦ στόματός μου, ⁷ καὶ ἀπαγγεῖς αὐτοῖς ἐτοιμάζειν γῆν καὶ ὕδωρ, ὅτι ἐξελεύσομαι ἐν θυμῷ μου αὐτοῦς καὶ καλύψω πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς ἐν τοῖς ποσὶν τῆς δυνάμεώς μου καὶ δώσω αὐτοῦς εἰς διαρπαγὴν αὐτοῖς.⁷⁵

Nebuchadnezzar calls himself "ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς" (the lord of the whole earth), to whom his victims owe "ἐτοιμάζειν γῆν καὶ ὕδωρ" (owe to prepare earth and water). These

⁷⁵ ⁵Thus says the great king, the lord of the whole earth, behold, you shall go forth from my presence, and take with you men that trust in their own strength, of footmen a hundred and twenty thousand; and the number of horses with their riders twelve thousand. ⁶ And you shall go against all the west country, because they disobeyed my commandment. ⁷ And you shall declare unto them, that they prepare for me earth and water: for I will go forth in my wrath against them and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my army, and I will give them for a spoil unto them.

expressions put Nebuchadnezzar in the position of being seen as a deity who deserves to be worshipped, and thus sharply contradict the very essence of the Jewish religion in two ways. First, the expression “ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς” is also found in Exodus 8:18 (LXX and MT⁷⁶) only referring to the Lord God of Israel, and not to any human being. Second, Nebuchadnezzar’s expectation to be worshipped (libations) is also in contradiction with the essence of the Jewish religion as per Exodus 20: 2-3:

²Εγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεός σου, ὅστις ἐξήγαγόν σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας. ³οὐκ ἔσονται σοι θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ (I am the Lord your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage . You shall have no other gods before me).

This commandment is the direct contrast with Holofernes’ words in 3:8:

⁸καὶ κατέσκαψεν πάντα τὰ ὄρια αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἄλση αὐτῶν ἐξέκοψεν , καὶ ἦν δεδομένον αὐτῷ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι πάντας τοὺς θεοὺς τῆς γῆς, ὅπως αὐτῷ μόνῳ τῷ Ναβουχοδοноσορ λατρεύσωσι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη , καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ γλῶσσαι καὶ αἱ φυλαὶ αὐτῶν ἐπικαλέσωνται αὐτὸν εἰς θεόν.⁷⁷

This claim raises a great concern amongst the children of Israel that dwell in Judea. One may also indicate that this claim does more than just raise a great concern; it terrifies the Jews, as mentioned in 4:1-2:

¹Καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησεν Ολοφέρνης τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ ἀρχιστράτηγος Ναβουχοδοноσορ βασιλέως Ἀσσυρίων , καὶ ὄν τρόπον ἐσκύλευσεν πάντα τὰ ἱερά αὐτῶν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὰ εἰς ἀφανισμόν, ² καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα σφόδρα ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ Ἰερουσαλημ καὶ τοῦ ναοῦ κυρίου θεοῦ αὐτῶν ἐταράχθησαν .⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Masoretic text (Hebrew Bible).

⁷⁷ ⁸Yet he did cast down their frontiers, and cut down their groves: for he had decreed to destroy all the gods of the land, that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as god.

⁷⁸ ¹Now the children of Israel that dwelt in Judea heard all that Holofernes the chief captain of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians had done to the nations, and after what manner he had spoiled all their temples, and brought them to naught. ² Therefore, they were exceedingly afraid of him, and were troubled for Jerusalem, and for the temple of the Lord their God.

The text states that the Israelites “ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα σφόδρα” (they were exceedingly afraid) for Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord their God. The text further indicates that Israel’s great concern is for the well-being or the safety of the temple. The double adverb “σφόδρα σφόδρα”, translated as “exceedingly”, shows the narrative’s description of the degree of concern and fear amongst the Israelites. It may therefore be argued that the narrative’s main concern revolves around the survival of the Jewish religion.

The role played by Achior (5:5-6:13) and the introduction of the pious, widowed, wealthy, beautiful, and brave Judith, in Chapter 8, introduces the dawn of transformation (T) in the story. Judith’s announcement to the Elders and the people of Bethulia in 8:32 marks the beginning of her quest for transformation in the narrative:

³² Ἀκούσατέ μου, καὶ ποιήσω πρᾶγμα ὃ ἀφίξεται εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν υἱοῖς τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν (Hear me, and I will do a thing, which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation).

As discussed in Chapter 2 (2.1.1.1.2 d) in relation to the figure of Judith, this brave initiative astounds all in Bethulia. The elders, after realizing the crisis facing the people of Israel, do not disagree with her plan to leave Bethulia for the Assyrian camp. They further wish her success in her quest to save the nation and the Jewish religion. In response to Judith’s declaration, Ozias (the magistrate) and the Elders say to her, in 8:35:

³⁵ Πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην, καὶ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἔμπροσθέν σου εἰς ἐκδίκησιν τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν (Go in peace, and the Lord God be before you, to take vengeance on our enemies).

This expression may well represent the feeling of the whole nation towards Judith’s departure. Eventhough the people are terrified, they at least pray to God in fear of destruction. The fact that they pray may suggest that the whole nation participates, indirectly, in the process of transformation.

After Judith’s success in beheading Holofernes, the situation changes in the narrative. Holofernes’ beheading may thus be seen as the peak point of transformation. The Assyrian threat disappears: the victims (Israelites) gain power to attack the Assyrians. The reader notices

a drastic exchange of roles. The attackers suddenly become victims as per Psalm 9:16⁷⁹ (LXX) and foreigners become Jews (Jordaan & Hobyane, 2010:8). Eventually, the Jewish religion is no longer under threat, but survives extinction.

This encounter can also be seen as a retelling of the story of Haman and Mordecai in Esther 7:10 (LXX). The cross that Haman prepares for Mordecai to be hung on turns out to be the one on which he (Haman) is hung. Mordecai is rewarded for his loyalty before God and Haman receives his punishment. This portrayal of retribution is typical of the Second Temple period. Cohen (2006:97) states that the concept of retribution (the doctrine of sin, punishment and repentance) was individualized and intensified during the Second Temple period. He (*ibid.*) further observes that in this period, righteous individuals are saved even if the nation as a whole is guilty. Achior, the Ammonite, is saved and becomes part of the Jewish religion by virtue of his loyalty to the God of Israel.

The subsequent survival of the Jewish religion, the praising of the Lord (13:17) and the honouring of Judith's brave act (13:18) confirm two important facts with regard to transformation in the story. First, it confirms that the narrative ends honourably in favour of Judith and that her brave action benefits the community and saves the Jewish people and their religion. Second, it confirms that Judith challenges and reverses the initial state (**S1**), namely the Assyrian threat and the claim that Nebuchadnezzar is god. In other words, the story develops from the religious claims of the Assyrians and their threats to the affirmation or acknowledgment that Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ is the real God. Therefore, the main structure of the story, focusing on the heroic achievement of Judith, may be represented as follows:



Figure 3.9 Relation between the beginning and ending in Judith highlighting religion as one of the key issues in Judith.

Figure 3.9 illustrates how the God of Israel was undermined by the claim of the Assyrians and how the Jewish religion survived the threat of extinction. Judith's introduction (preceded by the

⁷⁹ “ἐνεπάγησαν ἔθνη ἐν διαφθορᾷ, ἣ ἔποιησαν, ἐν παγίδι ταύτη, ἣ ἔκρυψαν, συνελήμφθη ὁ ποὺς αὐτῶν” (The heathen are caught in the destruction which they planned: they are caught by a very snare which they hid in their foot).

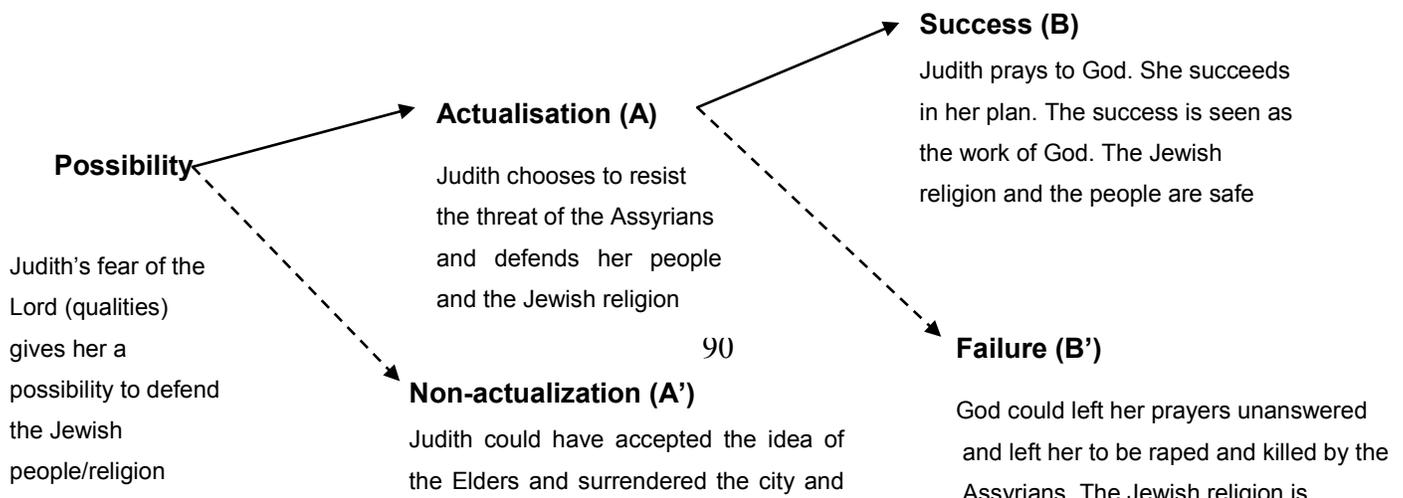
role of Achior) in the story serves as a turning point towards the religious freedom of Israel and the acknowledgment of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ as the one and only God.

In summary, the study of the initial and the final sequences in the *Judith* narrative underlines the transformation of the Jewish religion from threat of extinction to survival as the narrative’s main concern. This study takes a view that the existence of both the Jews and Jewish religion are inseparable. One cannot speak of the Jews without speaking of the Jewish religion. Judith’s transformational doing consists of preserving the lives of her people and the existence of the Jewish religion. This eventually brings honour to the Lord God of Israel and further proves that He is one and only real God).

Judith’s ending shows that a religious reversal eventually occurs in the Jewish community. This ending thus helps to clarify the possible purpose of the story on being structured with an ending focusing on Judith’s success and Assyrian’s failure. This aspect is discussed in detail in the following subsection.

3.2.3 THE LOGIC OF THE ENDING OF *JUDITH*.

The ending of a narrative is subject to an intentional communicational strategy of the author/editor (Kanonge 2009:135). Kanonge (2009:135) states that the ending of a narrative is generally the place where the audience learns something to practise or avoid. Success or failure at this stage is always revealed. The *Judith* narrative, in this instance, is no exception to this kind of literary art by the author. Therefore, following the Greimassian semiotic approach, the logical structure of *Judith’s* ending, focusing on Judith, can be presented graphically as follows:



From the perspective focusing on Holofernes (Assyrians), the schema can be represented as follows:

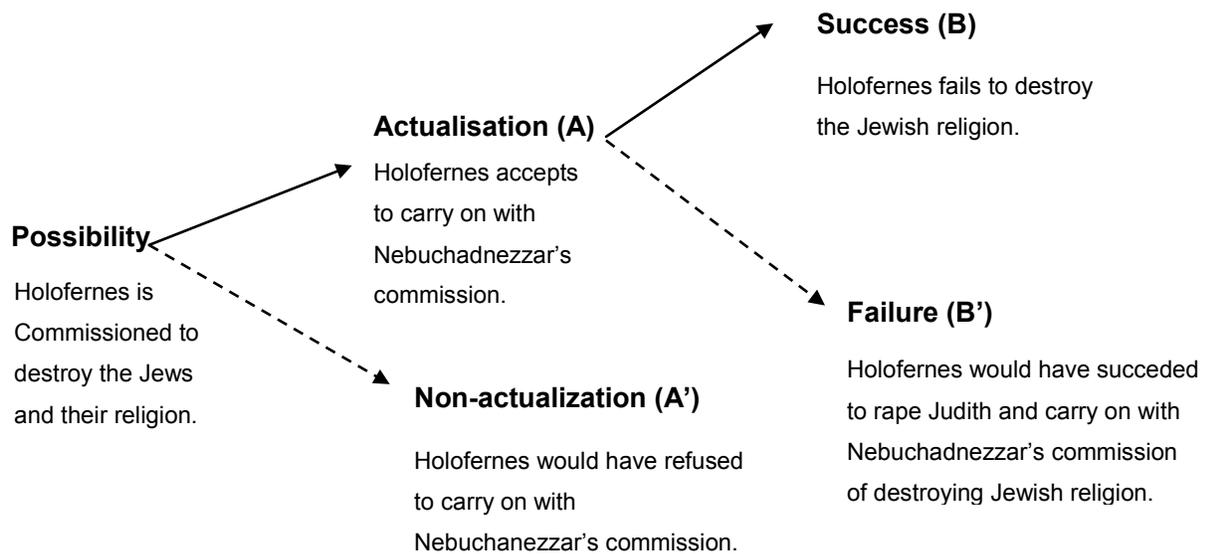


Figure 3.11 The ending of the Judith narrative focusing on Holofernes (Assyrians)

Kanonge (2009:136) states that the choice of the author to tell the story as he/she prefers, reveals his/her motivation for the story. The choice of the author may also reveal the conviction. Figures 3.10 and 3.11 show that the author of *Judith* had at least one other possibility for ending his/her story. **A** and **B** (with continuous lines) in each diagram, illustrate the intentional choice of the author to tell the story of *Judith* as we know it today.

The ending of *Judith* as illustrated in Fig. 3.10, suggests that the author had a few other possibilities to tell the story. The author could have illustrated Judith as easily falling for both the

undecided stance of the Elders, and the schemes of Holofernes, despite her God fearing quality as shown in 8:8 (ἐφοβεῖ το τὸν θεὸν σφόδρα – she feared God greatly) and 11:17 (θεοσεβής – a religious woman).

The illustration **A'** and **B'** in Fig. 3.11 show another open possibility of narrating the story of *Judith*. First, the author could have told his/her story and make Holofernes refuse to carry on with Nebuchadnezzar's commission (non-actualisation). Second, an open possibility was available for the author to have told the story in such a way that Holofernes succeeds to sleep with Judith and carries on with Nebuchadnezzar's commission of destroying the Jewish people as he did with other nations.

The alternative possibilities of endings to the narrative from which the author could have chosen suggest that the current ending of *Judith* was an intentional choice of the author. From this discussion, it becomes clear that the structure of *Judith* was purposefully designed by the author. It seems that the conviction of the author is to urge the Jews to defend the honour of the Lord God of Israel against the claim of the Assyrians.

The following section examines the actantial organization of *Judith* in order to contribute further to the semiotic exploration of the narrative.

3.3 THE ACTANTIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE *JUDITH* NARRATIVE

This section concerns the investigation of *Judith's* actantial organization. Two main aspects are important here, viz. the configuration of *Judith's* actantial model and the relation between actants and antactants in *Judith*. These two aspects are discussed in the following section.

3.3.1 THE CONFIGURATION OF *JUDITH'S* ACTANTIAL MODEL

According to Martin and Ringham (2000:19), all narratives consist of six key actantial roles or functions arranged in three sets of binary opposition: viz.: addresser/addressee, subject/object, and helper/opponent (cf. also Greimas, 1987:107-108 and 1966:146-147). Together, the six actants and their organization account for all possible relationships within a narrative and also within the sphere of human action in general (Martin & Ringham, 2000:19). Adding to this, Kanonge (2009:46-47) states that a story always gives an account of the quest of a subject for an object (*axis of desire*). He (*ibid.*) further states that the addresser communicates the longing for the object to an addressee (*axis of communication*); the helper assists the subject in his/her

pursuit while the opponent raises obstacles to his/her mission (*axis of power*). Therefore, the function of the addresser is to make the addressee do something, thereby turning the addressee into a subject (Martin & Ringham, 2000:19). In view of the Jewish people/religion God is the addresser.

This study observes that *Judith* has a dual actantial organization. It has actants and antactants. This section is devoted to investigating this point. There is, in *Judith*, an addresser and anti-addresser, a subject and anti-subject, and an object and anti-object. The first actantial model could therefore focus on God as the addresser, Jewish religion as the object and Judith as the subject. The actantial organization of *Judith* focusing on God as the addresser and Jewish religion as object of quest has the following configuration (see Chapter 1, 1.7.4.1):

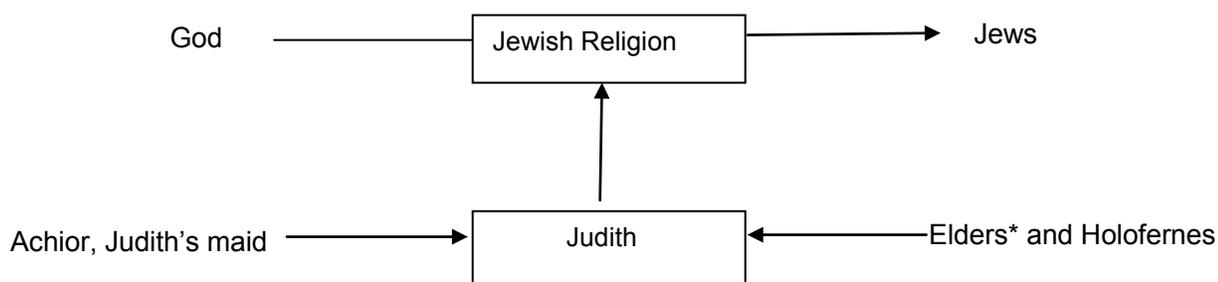


Figure 3.12 The actantial model of Judith focusing on Judith as the subject, God as the addresser and religion as main object of quest in the narrative.

The actantial organization illustrated in Fig. 3.12 reveals that religion seems to be the central object of value in *Judith*. According to 4:3, Holofernes' threats to the Jewish people/religion come after the children of Israel had just returned from the captivity and all the people of Judea were lately gathered together. The temple and the altar were sanctified after the profanation. Following the Assyrian threat and the fear of the possible destruction of the temple and the profanation of the sanctuary, the Israelites prepare themselves for war (Harrington (1999:32). The war preparation for the Israelites (4:8-15) involves prayers and acts of penance. Nickelsburg (2005:98) argues that this kind of response (prayers and acts of penance) proves to be more effective than the military response. He (*ibid.*) further states that from the history of Israel, one can see that Israel's strength does not come from their armies, but from their God.

Israel's dependence on God for strength is a critical point to note in *Judith*. It sets a clear distinction between them and the Assyrians. The Israelites depend on God (addresser) for

strength, while the Assyrians trust in their own strength, or perhaps they trust in Nebuchadnezzar (anti-addreser). The text confirms that their prayers have a greater impact than their military endeavors. God shows concern for the Jewish people and religion, as indicated in 4:13 that: “καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῶν καὶ εἶσεῖ δὲν τὴν θλίψιν αὐτῶν” (and the Lord heard their prayers and looked upon their affliction). Harrington (1999:32) contends that Israel’s dependence on God for victory entails that the struggle in *Judith* is ultimately theological.

By proclaiming Nebuchadnezzar as the only God to be worshipped and by threatening to destroy the Jews and their religion (temple and sanctuary), Holofernes adds a spark for a religious contest in the story. Holofernes’ religious claims regarding Nebuchadnezzar contrast sharply with the basic tenets of the Jewish religion; hence the conflict in the story.

The introduction of Judith heralds the dawn of hope and rescue for the Jewish religion. The figure of Judith represents, more than anything else, the desired religious values of the Jews. The author constructed the figure of Judith as a wise and a pious woman (Pharisaic practices)⁸⁰ upon whom the people of Bethulia could rely. All these qualities were intentionally endowed upon her to serve a religious motive (Enslin, 1972:3). Immediately after she addresses the Elders and the people of Bethulia, the people ask her to pray to God to bring rain (8:31) “ὅτι γυνὴ εὐσεβὴς εἶ” (because you are a godly woman). The reader notes that this request and her earlier summoning of the Elders elevate Judith from being just a woman in the community to being a leader and a subject in the narrative. In all her endeavors to save her people and the Jewish religion, Judith turns to God for help. She shows total commitment to the Jewish God and the Jewish religion.⁸¹

Judith’s resilience against the Assyrians stems from her total commitment to God. By challenging Holofernes’ quest and his army, Judith automatically becomes their opponent in the actantial model (Fig 3.12). Achior⁸², the Elders⁸³ and Judith’s maid are Judith’s helpers.

⁸⁰ Kay (1913:246) argues that from the author’s theological views *in the narrative*, it seems that he/she belonged to the Pharisaic party.

⁸¹ Enslin (1972:1) suggests that this may well be the purpose of the book: “the author wanted to instruct the people and to inflame the Judaeans’ patriotism”.

⁸² This study observes that in the greater scheme of things Achior turns out to be Judith’s helper, but not in the same sense that the Maid is Judith’s helper. After all, Judith and Achior do not meet until later in the narrative. However, the actantial role of Achior in the narrative justifies the stance of this study to regard Achior as Judith’s helper. This point will be discussed in detail in the following section 3.2.2.2 (Relations between Actants and Antactants in *Judith*).

Holofernes' failure results from Judith's fear of God. She avoids falling for Holofernes' schemes because she fears God.

A second possibility of representing *Judith's* actantial model focuses on Nebuchadnezzar as the anti-addresser, Holofernes as anti-subject and religious claims⁸⁴ as their object of quest. The second actantial model designating Nebuchadnezzar as the anti-addresser and Assyrian cult versus Jewish religion as object of quest has the following configuration:

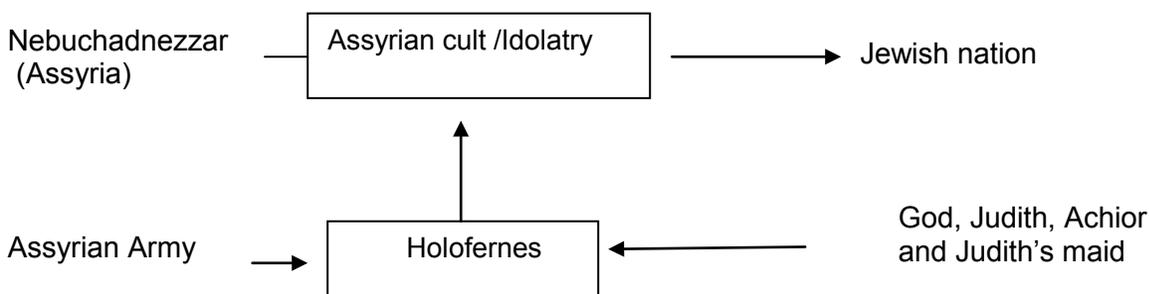


Figure 3.13 The actantial model of Judith focusing on Nebuchadnezzar as the anti-addresser, Holofernes as the subject and religion as main object of quest in the narrative

The second actantial model (Fig 3.13) shows that, apart from actants, there are also antactants in the story of *Judith*. These antactants pursue a programme opposed to that of the actants, as illustrated in Fig 3.12. The second actantial model underlines destruction and Assyrian religious propaganda as the pursuit of Holofernes and his army. Their motivation is the commission of their god and master, Nebuchadnezzar. Therefore, in the second actantial model, Nebuchadnezzar is the anti-addresser. If the Lord God of Israel is the addresser (in the Jewish point view), then Nebuchadnezzar, is the anti-addresser.

The quest of the second configuration, that is, from the Assyrian point of view, is to destroy the Jewish religion and replace it with the Assyrian cult as the alternative religion for Jewish people. Jerusalem, the temple and the sanctuary are to be plundered by Holofernes and his army (4:1-3). In this second actantial model God, the Elders, Achior and Judith are the opponents of the entire Assyrian nation in general, Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes in particular. These two

⁸³ As discussed above, the Elders of Bethulia play the actantial roles of opponents and helpers in the unfolding of the story. Their opposition to Judith has been referred to as secondary/minor in 2.1.2.

⁸⁴ The object of quest for Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes will, therefore, be the promotion of the Assyrian cult at the expense of the Jewish religion.

opposing camps in the narrative are critical. They help a reader establish the meaning of the story.

Martin and Ringham (2000:7) support this view, indicating that semiotics takes as its fundamental premise that there can be no meaning without difference. The narrative syntax in the story of *Judith* proves this claim. The quest for Holofernes and the Assyrian army is to put Nebuchadnezzar in the position of the Lord God of Israel. This quest is the exact opposite of what the Jewish religious patriots such as Judith, the Elders and later Achior are required to observe, as taught in the law of Moses e.g. Exodus 20:1-6 (LXX).

These two opposing quests are also evident when investigating the relationship between actants and antactants in *Judith*. The following section of study is devoted to a more detailed discussion of the relations between actants and antactants in *Judith*.

3.3.2 RELATIONS BETWEEN ACTANTS AND ANTACTANTS IN *JUDITH*

The two schematic representations (Figures 3.10 and 3.11) depicted in the section above show that all six actants of the Greimasian model are identifiable in the story of *Judith*. These six actants, viz. addresser and addressee, subject and object, helper and opponent are discussed here in detail.

a) Addresser and Addressee

The story of *Judith* starts with a depiction of the destruction of all the western nations and the crisis facing the children of Israel (1:1-4:3). In the process of defending the Jewish religion, the text indicates two manners of prayer from the Jewish community. First, the Israelites cry out to God with desperation and fear (4:9). Secondly, and contrarily to the prayers of desperation, Judith's prayer illustrates hope and faith in God (9:1-14). In both these ways of prayer, the text indicates that the people of Israel do not rely on anyone else except God. The narrative ends with people praising and worshipping God in Jerusalem (Judith 16) in acknowledgement of God's salvation of them and their religion. The Lord God of Israel is revealed as the one steering the survival of the Jewish people/religion. The narrative seems to suggest that God is the one who is mostly worried about the state of the Jewish people/religion, and the addressees are performing to the glory of his name. Therefore, the communication of the Lord God of Israel as the addresser, to the Jewish people has the following structure (see also Kanonge, 2009:48):

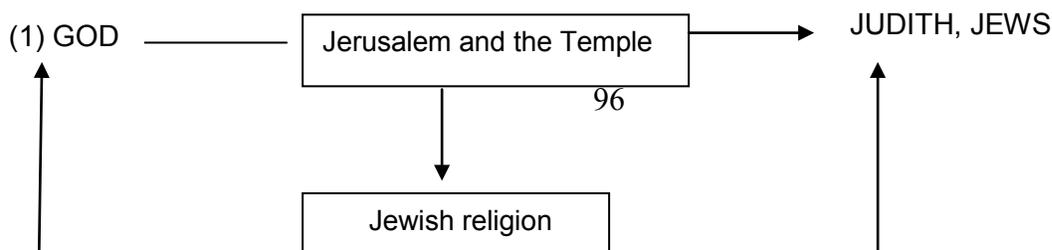


Fig. 3.14 shows the narrative utterance (the relationship/function) that exists between two narrative actants, viz.: addresser and addressee or subject and object (see 1.7.4.1). The narrative utterance can be illustrated in the the following configuration:



Figure 3.15 The function of the narrative utterance underlying the involvement of God as the Addresser in *Judith*

Fig. 3.15 shows that God is the one who makes the situational transformation of the Jewish people/religion possible. The evidence of God's involvement in *Judith* is shown in two ways; viz. through the narrative utterance and his intervention/manipulation. First, with regard to the narrative utterance, the configuration provided above suggests that *Judith* can be viewed as the message from the Lord God of Israel to the Jews of the Second Temple period. The narrative utterance constitutes God's relationship with the addressee. Following the text's report in 4:13⁸⁵ and Judith's words in 13:7,⁸⁶ the narrative utterance may be summarized as follows: God strengthens the Jewish people (Judith) to counter idolatry and maintain the existence of the Jewish people/religion.

Jewish people had to respond positively to this message. The character of Judith is a good example of how to respond to this message. Her role in the narrative illustrates what it means to be a true Jewish religious believer or a true follower of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ.

⁸⁵ “καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῶν καὶ εἰσεῖ ἄεν τὴν θλίψιν αὐτῶν” (So God heard their prayers, and looked upon their afflictions).

⁸⁶ “Κραταίωσόν με, κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ” (Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day).

In summarizing the narrative utterance in Fig. 3.15, the study shows that God is the addresser, the Jewish community assumes the role of addressee, and the Jewish religion is the main concern in the narrative (object of quest).

Secondly, the evidence of God's involvement in *Judith* is shown in his manner of intervention/manipulation in the story. Manipulation denotes the action of the addresser on the addressee to make him/her act (*faire*) (see Chapter 1 in 1.7.4.2). It is synonymous with the word "causation". In this instance, the word "manipulation" is used as a technical term in semiotic analysis (following Kanonge 2009:51). The reader sees God as the pillar of strength behind the actions of Judith and the entire Jewish community. This manner of involvement makes God assume all three traditional functions of the addresser (cf. 1.7.4.1). He appears in the story as a *subject adjudicator*, a *subject manipulator* and a *subject of state*. God, as a subject of state is different from the character Judith, the subject performer (also known as a subject of doing; Martin & Ringham, 2000:127; Greimas, 1987:112). God is himself interested in preserving the Jewish people/religion. Israel and the Jewish religion are his own inheritance as mentioned in 9:12.

It may be argued that the role assumed by the subject and her helpers is the mission which God would have accomplished himself if he was directly involved as a human character in the story. God's intervention is notable in various scenes of the narrative. For example, in Judith's song of praise (9:11):

¹¹ οὐ γὰρ ἐν πλήθει τὸ κράτος σου, οὐδὲ ἡ δυναστεία σου ἐν ἰσχύουσιν , ἀλλὰ ταπεινῶν εἶ θεός, ἐλαπτόνων εἶ βοηθός, ἀντιλήμπτωρ ἀσθενούντων , ἀπεγνωσμένων σκεπαστής, ἀπηλιτισμένων σωτήρ.⁸⁷

This song of praise shows that God is an active participant in the process of the survival of the Jewish religion, even if he is not an active character in the *Judith* narrative. The expression "inactive character" should not be confused with an act of intervention. God is an inactive character in the sense that he does not speak or give orders as he does in Joshua 1 and many other Biblical narratives. However, the reader notes that he is the source for change and transformation in the *Judith* narrative.

⁸⁷ ¹¹ For your strength does not stand in multitude, nor your might in strong men: for you are a God of the afflicted, a helper of the oppressed, an upholder of the weak, a protector of the forlorn, a savior of them that do not have hope.

According to Kanonge (2009:143) the expression “cause-to-do” characterizes the action of the addresser on the future subject. On the semiotic square, this expression offers four different modes of manipulation, which may be illustrated as follows:

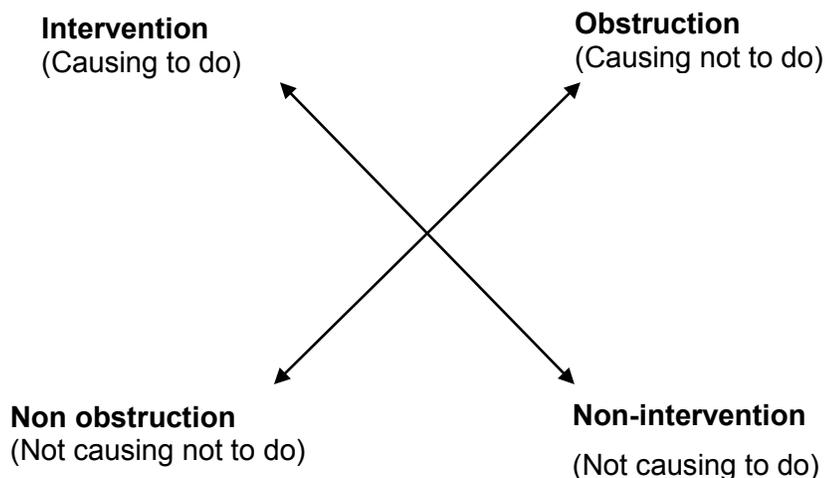


Figure 3.16 The four possible aspects of the manipulative actions of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (the addresser) on the addressee in a narrative

Kanonge (2009:143) asserts that intervention, non-intervention, obstruction and non-obstruction characterize the action or influence of the addresser in the narrative. *Judith* is an appropriate narrative to investigate the influence of the addresser in this way. God’s action in the *Judith* narrative is in accordance with these four aspects of manipulation. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all forms of manipulation in detail; however, a few aspects are pointed out here to illustrate the occurrence of each manipulation in the story.

First, the fact that God hears and answers the prayers of the Israelites signifies his intervention and concern as the helper of Israel in times of trouble (5:13). God intervenes as the hearer of Israel’s prayers. Throughout the history of Israel, God has always revealed himself as their helper, when his people call upon him for help. The story of Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3:1-22, verses 7-10 in particular, is a good example of this, as Efthimiadis-Keith (2004:182) also observes. This text mentions that God heard the cries of the Hebrews and has seen their misery during their Egyptian oppression. The text reports this concern as follows:

⁷ εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Ἰδὼν εἶδον τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου τοῦ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ τῆς κραυγῆς αὐτῶν ἀκήκοα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν, οἳ δα γὰρ τὴν ὀδύνην αὐτῶν, ⁸ καὶ κατέβην ἐξελεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐκ χειρὸς Αἰγυπτίων καὶ ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης καὶ εἰσαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς γῆν ἀγαθὴν καὶ πολλήν, εἰς γῆν ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι ...⁸⁸

God's declaration of his concern for the Israelites in this story confirms that the God of Israel hears and answers the prayers of his people. The petition of Judith in 9:4 and 12 resembles the same understanding about God:

⁴ ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐμός, καὶ εἰσάκουσον ἐμοῦ τῆς χήρας ... ¹² ναὶ ναὶ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ θεὸς κληρονομίας Ἰσραηλ, δέσποτα τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς, κτίστα τῶν ὑδάτων, βασιλεῦ πάσης κτίσεώς σου, σὺ εἰσάκουσον τῆς δεήσεώς μου.⁸⁹

It should be noted that God's response to Judith's prayer is not immediate, but progressive. The same may be postulated with the prayers and the cries of the Hebrews in Egypt. However, God hears and responds to their cries and prayers. As the story unfolds toward the end, the reader learns that God makes it possible for Judith to defend the Jewish people/religion (16:6).⁹⁰ This means that, her prayers are answered.

Second, the introduction of *Judith* can itself be seen as God's indirect intervention to rescue the Jewish people/religion from impending doom. One may argue that God causes Judith to stand up for the Jewish people/religion. God works with the Israelites in this way in times of crisis, e.g. in Additions to Daniel (History of *Susanna* - Theodotion); God raises the spirit of Daniel in *Susanna* 45 to rescue Susanna and to expose the Elders in their lawless adventures (cf. Kanonge, 2009).

Furthermore, other aspects of God's causation in the narrative enter the play. The aspect of non-intervention can also be drawn from the text. God does not explicitly cause (command)

⁸⁸ ⁷ And the Lord said to Moses "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of their masters, for I know their affliction. ⁸And I come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land and to bring them into a good and wide land, into a land flowing with milk and honey"

⁸⁹ ⁴ "O God, O my God, hear me also a widow ... ¹² I pray thee, I pray thee, O God of my father, and God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of the heavens and earth, Creator of the waters, King of every creature, hear thou my prayer."

⁹⁰ "κύριος παντοκράτωρ ἠθέτησεν αὐτοὺς ἐν χειρὶ θηλείας" (the Almighty has disappointed them by the hand of a woman).

Judith to leave her people and go into the enemy's camp. Neither does God stop Judith from going out, nor does he warn her of the danger of the possible ungodly (idolatry and sexual immorality) influence by the Assyrians. It is evident that there is also a *laisser faire* (not causing not to do) in the sense that there is no obstruction here. According to Kanonge (2009:144), *laisser faire* is "a refusal to interfere in other people's affairs or the practice of letting people do as they wish". The going out of Judith seems to be her voluntary action in which God's active intervention is not visible.

The banishment of Achior from the Assyrian camp leaves more to be said in terms of God's causation in the story. After Achior gives his advice to Holofernes, all the people (Assyrian army) standing around the tent of Holofernes call strongly for Achior's death. This strong suggestion seems to be a general feeling of consensus within the Assyrian camp.

The evil scheme (sexual immorality) of Holofernes against Judith is another point that draws the attention of the reader. God neither tells Holofernes to plan this, nor does he stop him. After all his efforts to seduce Judith, Holofernes' plan does not succeed. Judith manages to stay for four days in the midst of potentially dangerous men in the Assyrian camp without anything bad happening to her. The role of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ as protector comes to the fore. He prevents evil from happening to his people. As a result, Judith declares that the Lord plays a role in the obstruction of the enemy to defile her (13:16):

¹⁶καὶ ζῆ κύριος, ὃς διεφύλαξέν με ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ μου, ἧ ἐπορεύθην, ὅτι ἠπάτησεν αὐτὸν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου εἰς ἀπώλειαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἀμάρτημα μετ' ἐμοῦ εἰς μίασμα καὶ αἰσχύνην ⁹¹

When the scene of Judith and Holofernes, in Holofernes' tent, unfolds, Judith brutally kills Holofernes (13:8-9). God does not explicitly order the killing of Holofernes. Neither does God object to the act of killing. Here again, there is, from God's initiative, a *laisser faire* (not causing not to do), i.e. non obstruction.

Generally, the aspect of non obstruction can also be shown with regard to the going out of the Assyrian army in the beginning of the story. God does not obstruct this army to go out, even

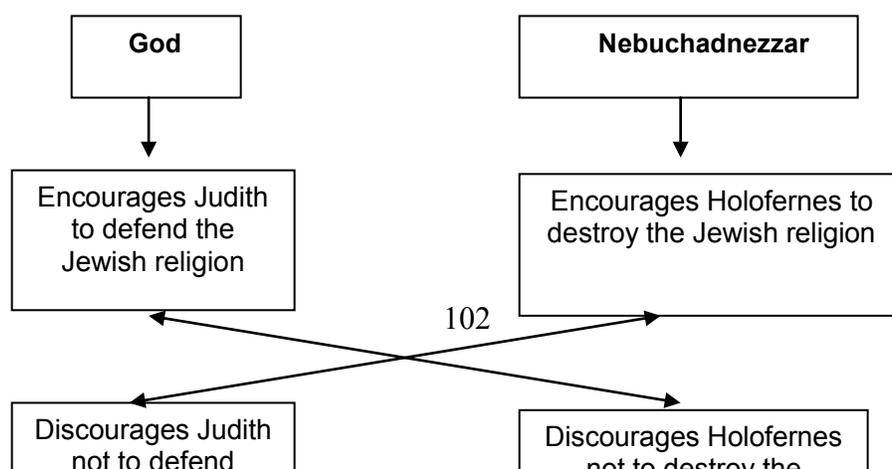
⁹¹ ¹⁶As the Lord lives, who has kept me in my way that I went, my countenance has deceived him to his destruction, and yet has he not committed sin with me, to defile and shame me.

though they would soon become a danger to the existence of the Jewish people/religion (his covenantal people).

It may, therefore, be deduced that, from a careful reading of *Judith*, one can conclude that God does participate actively in the story, even if he rarely plays a role as a character. A reader can see the God of Israel's involvement everywhere in the story. God's causative action controls events and circumstances throughout the story. His direct intervention, non-intervention, obstruction as well as his not-causing-not-to-do, serves his design (Kanonge 2009:145).

Kanonge (2009:145) states that this schema of manipulation may serve to map out the different roles God plays as addresser in biblical narratives. As discussed in the section on actants and their actantial roles, God is not the only addresser in the story. The Figurative analysis showed that there is also an opposing addresser, or anti-addresser in the story, namely Nebuchadnezzar (the king of Assyria). The anti-addresser “not only institutes a system of values that opposes the original quest but also attempts to manipulate the receiver/subject to act in a way contrary to the desires of the first addresser” (Kanonge, 2009:145; cf. also Martin & Ringham, 2000:25). This study observes that even though Holofernes did not know what the God of Israel was planning through Judith, his role in the narrative clearly pushes the agenda of Nebuchadnezzar. His desire to seduce Judith is contrary to the desire of the God of Israel who expects Judith to stay away from sexual immorality (13:16).

The Jews undergo two opposing manipulative actions from the Lord (mainly through the subject Judith) and from Nebuchadnezzar (through the anti-subject, Holofernes). Nebuchadnezzar represents an ideology totally opposite to the Jewish faith centred on the Law of Moses in Exodus 20:3 (LXX), which states, “οὐκ ἔσονται σοι θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ ” (you shall have no other gods before me). Rather, there is an attempt from each side to persuade the other. God strives to persuade the Jews to defend the Jewish religion while Nebuchadnezzar offers an opposing ideology based on immorality and idolatry. The two opposing systems of values can be illustrated on the semiotic square as follows (cf. also Kanonge, 2009:146):



The schema Fig. 3.17 can be divided into two distinct schemas to show the two main transformations in the *Judith* narrative. Both transformations highlight the manipulative actions of the addressers, namely God and Nebuchadnezzar, on the addressee (Jewish community).

First, the function of transformation underlying God's action on Judith appears as follows:

F [God → (Judith ∨ Jewish Religion)]

Figure 3.18 The function of transformation underlying God's action on Judith

The function of transformation in Fig. 3.18 illustrates the result of God's manipulative action on Judith from her introduction in the story to the end of the story. This study observes that God succeeds (∨ = mission accomplished/state of conjunction) in his endeavour to strengthen Judith (as Judith asks in her prayer: "Κραταίωσόν με, κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ" in 13:7) to defend the Jewish religion until the end of the story.

On the other hand, Nebuchadnezzar's influence on Holofernes has the following configuration:

F [Nebuchadnezzar → (Holofernes ∧ Jewish religion)]

Figure 3.19 The function of transformation underlying Nebuchadnezzar's action on Holofernes

The function Fig. 3.19 represents the manipulative action of Nebuchadnezzar on Holofernes against the Jews. The main aim of the action is to have the Jews surrender their religion and follow Nebuchadnezzar as god. This action would see the Jews committing a sin of idolatry before their God, following Exodus 20:3. However, the unfolding of the story reveals that this endeavour by Nebuchadnezzar fails completely (∧ = mission not accomplished/disjunction) as Judith decapitates his army general, Holofernes and eventually overthrows the Assyrian army

before executing their evil plan concerning Bethulia and Jerusalem. The schema provided below represents the confrontation of the two manipulative actions on Jews, at the end of the narrative:

As indicated above, Fig. 3.20, God's endeavour succeeds against Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to dissuade Jews from holding on / defending their religion. Thus, God as addresser conquers over Nebuchadnezzar as anti-addresser. This section explored this intricate relationship between the addressers and addressees in the narrative. The next section investigates the interaction between the subject and object.

b) Subject and Object

The relation subject/object in *Judith* is twofold: both Judith and Holofernes are opposing subjects, with their central quest object being religion. Holofernes and Judith are thus objects of one another.

While keeping in mind Judith's central object of quest (Jewish religion), a reader should recognise that Judith's main reason for coming to the Assyrian camp is to kill Holofernes, even if the text does not explicitly state this objective. Judith also does not state this objective; she only mentions that she is going to go down and show the Jews how God will deliver them before/within the time of ultimatum through the hand of a woman. On the other hand, as of Judith's arrival in the Assyrian camp, she is a soft target for Holofernes' sexual agenda. Therefore, from Judith's perspective, the main purpose is to defend and to maintain the Jewish religion, by decapitating Holofernes and thereby nullifying the strength of the Assyrian army.

The opposite is the case with Holofernes; his goal is to overthrow the Jewish people/religion and impose the Assyrian cult (following Nebuchadnezzar as the only god) as the religion of the people. On his way toward achieving this main goal, he does not mind trying to seduce Judith and have sex with her. Conquering Judith sexually is a microcosm of conquering the Jewish people/religion and their God since she comes as their God's representative.

Following the argument above, both Holofernes' and Judith's quests can be illustrated respectively as follows:



Figure 3.21 Relation between the subject and the object underlying Judith as the object of Holofernes' quest

On the other hand Judith's quest may be illustrated as:



Figure 3.22 Relation between the subject and the object underlying Holofernes as the object of Judith's quest.

The function representing the mission of these two subjects (Judith and Holofernes) has the following structure, focusing, on the one hand, on Holofernes' quest:



Figure 3.23 The relation between Holofernes and Judith underlying the failure of Holofernes in his quest at the end of the narrative.

In his plan to destroy the Jewish religion, Holofernes' plan is to first have sexual intercourse with Judith (i.e. conquer her sexually) and then proceed to destroy her people and the Jewish religion. The text reveals that this quest results in failure. His attempt does not succeed. Holofernes, therefore, goes from the initial state of disjunction to the final state of disjunction, as illustrated in Fig. 3.23. The state at the end is the same as that at the beginning. This means that Holofernes achieves nothing in his quest. It further entails that there is no transformation in terms of achievement. Holofernes fails in his quest.

On the other hand, Judith's quest would appear as follows:



Figure 3.24 The relation between the subject and the object underlying Judith as the subject and the Jewish religion as her object of quest

The schema Fig. 3.24 also represents the collective desire of the entire people of Bethulia and Jerusalem. However, Judith takes up a leading role as the main subject in achieving the desired outcome. In summary, the function representing Judith’s quest would appear as follows:



Figure 3.25 The relation between Judith and the Jewish religion underlying Judith’s success in her quest at the end of the narrative

Even though Judith does not mention her plan of saving her people explicitly, the reader can deduce from the text in 8:32 that her *modus operandi* is killing for the sake of the Jewish religion. As DeSilva (2002:87) puts it “Dressed to kill, she leaves Bethulia...” The disjunction at the initial step in Fig. 3.25 points to the fact that the Jewish people/religion is still under threat of extinction and will remain under threat if something is not done. Judith leaves Bethulia for the Assyrian camp in an attempt to save her people and their religion.

This study argues that her beauty and wisdom makes her journey look easy, even though it was a dangerous one. However, towards the end of the narrative, she succeeds in her plan. By decapitating Holofernes, she saves her people and further proves that the God of Israel is the one and only real God, which is the pivotal claim of the Jewish religion. Therefore, Judith goes from the initial state of disjunction to the final state of conjunction, as illustrated in Fig. 3.25. The two quests have two opposing subjects (or anti-subjects). The success of Judith is the failure of Holofernes. Put together, the two quests stand as follows:

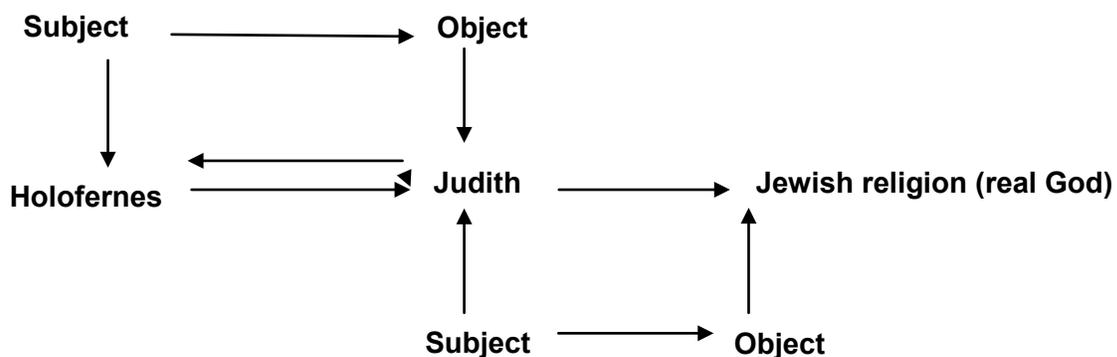


Figure 3.26 Schema representing the two actantial roles of both Judith and Holofernes as subjects and objects in the narrative

Figure 3.26 shows that Judith assumes two functions in the narrative. First, she is the object of Holofernes’ quest and second, she is herself a subject in the pursuit of saving her people and

defending the Jewish religion. In order to achieve her main goal, she has to defeat Holofernes first. This schema shows that an actant can assume different actantial functions in a narrative (Kanonge, 2009:149). The roles played by both Judith and Holofernes in the story provide the reader with a good example for this view.

c) Helpers and Opponents

Martin and Ringham (2000:19) state that helpers and opponents entertain a subsidiary relationship to the subject, their function being to intervene positively or negatively in the pursuit of the goal. Thus, the desire of an object becomes the focal point of the whole scheme. Therefore, any actant that aids the subject in its quest is known as a helper and any actant who hinders the subject in its quest is known as an opponent (Martin & Ringham, 2000:71; 97). In *Judith* some actants contribute towards Judith's success in her mission to save her people and prove that Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ is the one and only real God, while other actants (called antactants, such as Holofernes and Bagoas) attempt to counter her endeavor. This study observes that with regard to Holofernes' quest, some actants (such as, the Assyrian army, children of Esau and Bagoas) also contribute to help him succeed in his mission, while others (such as, Achior, Judith and Judith's maid) attempt to oppose his efforts. The following subsection is devoted to discussing these aspects in detail.

• Opponents

Reading the story from Judith's perspective reveals that Holofernes is Judith's main opponent because he is the anti-subject in the story. Judith's determination to save her people and the Jewish religion encounters the resistance of Holofernes and his entire Assyrian army. Although Holofernes is identified as the anti-subject, and the main opponent of Judith's quest, this study asserts that Holofernes is not the only character who opposes Judith in the story.

In her journey to the Assyrian camp, Judith encounters her first opposition, and that is the Assyrian patrol. They are listed amongst the opponents since they are Assyrians and therefore capable of harming her. However this opposition does nothing to harm Judith. Instead, of ill-treating her, about one hundred soldiers "yoke" themselves to Judith and her maid and escort them to Holofernes (Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:250), thanks to the beauty and wisdom of Judith. The Assyrian soldiers are only too happy to escort her. They do not treat her like a prisoner of war. In fact, they may be seen as her unwitting helpers in that they take her to the very heart of the Assyrian offensive, Holofernes' tent, where she is then able to execute her plan.

When Judith arrives before Holofernes, he unknowingly introduces himself as Judith's main enemy and opponent when he says in 11:1:

¹Καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὴν Ὁλοφέρνης Θάρσησον, γύναι, μὴ φοβηθῆς τῆ καρδίᾳ σου, ὅτι ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐκάκωσα ἄνθρωπον ὅστις ἠρέπικεν δουλεύειν βασιλεῖ Ναβουχοδονοσορ πάσης τῆς γῆς⁹²

Contrary to the above-mentioned quote, the reader knows that it has never been Judith's intention to worship Nebuchadnezzar as god, but rather to prove that the God of Israel is the one and only God and not Nebuchadnezzar, as Holofernes claims. These two opposing religious ideologies make Judith and Holofernes fierce enemies.

Holofernes, on the other hand, left the city of Nineveh under the instructions of his master with goals to achieve, that is, to destroy the Jews and their religion and have Nebuchadnezzar recognized and served as the only god. However, some actants in the narrative oppose his endeavors too. First, Holofernes encounters the resistance of the Israelites in 4:6-7. The text indicates, in 5:1, that it was later declared to Holofernes that the children of Israel are not ready to surrender their cities but are preparing for war to defend themselves and their religion. There is, again, a conflict in the narrative. Holofernes' plan of destroying the Jewish religion encounters resistance and opponents.

Second, Holofernes encounters yet another opponent in the person of Achior in 5:5-21. Achior's speech seems to have undermined Holofernes' military and religious ideologies. Having been labeled as an opponent of Holofernes and his army, Achior is banished from the Assyrian camp and delivered to the Israelites so that he will soon be destroyed together with them by Holofernes and his army.

Lastly, as anti-subjects against each other, Judith and Holofernes stand as opponents in their objects of quests. Having stated this opposition, this study regards Holofernes' proclamation/promise to Judith in 11:23,⁹³ merely as trying to deceive the deceiver (Judith). Even in his encounter with Judith, Holofernes' commission is still clear, that is to destroy the Jewish people/religion and pronounce Nebuchadnezzar as the only god. This would mean the extinction of the Jewish religion. Judith, on the other hand, seeks to destroy the Assyrians

⁹² ¹And Holofernes said to her "woman be of good comfort, fear not in your heart, for I never hurt any that was willing to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of all the earth.

⁹³ In 11:23 Holofernes promises Judith that if Judith helped him to be victorious he would worship her God.

(starting with their leader, Holofernes) and prove that the God of Israel is the one and only real God. Therefore these two actants are fierce opponents of one another.

- **Helpers**

As discussed earlier in this chapter God is revealed as the chief helper of Judith's course in the narrative. Throughout the narrative, from her introduction, Judith is connected to God through faith and prayer. The reader learns from Judith's introduction, in 8:4, that she makes a tent upon the top of her house, which is most probably her special place of prayer, as discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to the figure of Judith.

The text explicitly reports, in 9:11, in the prayer of Judith that God is “the helper of the oppressed” (ἐλαπτόνων εἶ βοηθός) and “the protector of the weak” (ἀντιλήμπτωρ ἀσθενούντων). Thus, Judith identifies herself and her people with the weak and the oppressed. The essence of these expressions in 9:11 illustrates that God is Judith's source of strength and determination. Another remarkable thing to observe is that Judith connects God favourably to Simeon's vengeance of Dinah's rape (9:2). As God has given Simeon the sword to take vengeance against those who defiled her (Dinah), so is Judith praying to be strengthened to destroy the Assyrians. This must be done before they defile the temple and the sanctuary. The story of Dinah may serve as a motivation behind Judith's prayer beside the bed of Holofernes just before she decapitates him. She calls on God to strengthen her in executing Holofernes. She says in 13:7: “Κραταίωσόν με, κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ” (Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day). God is revealed as the provider of strength, the helper and an inspiration behind Judith's bravery. God has always played this role in the history of Israel.

The story of David and Goliath in 1 Sam. 17:45 (LXX), provides a similar scenario to the reader, when David said to Goliath:

Σὺ ἔρχῃ πρός με ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν δόρατι καὶ ἐν ἀσπίδι, κἀγὼ πορεύομαι πρὸς σὲ ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου σαβαωθ θεοῦ παρατάξεως Ἰσραηλ (you come to me with sword and spear and with shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord God of hosts of the army of Israel).

God, also in this encounter, is the helper and the inspiration behind David's determination and victory over the enemy.

It is, however, worth mentioning that there are other actants in *Judith* who play a role in assisting Judith to succeed in her enterprise. Branch and Jordaan (2009:391) call these actants

“secondary characters”. They are not insignificant in the story. These characters, according to Jordaan (2009:336) are also the voice of the narrator. He speaks through them. These are characters like Achior, Judith’s Maid and the elders of Bethulia.⁹⁴ They too may be listed as helpers in Judith’s quest of.

First, Achior laid a foundation (5:5-21) upon which Judith later builds the deceitful argument she presents before Holofernes (11:9-10):

διό, δέσποτα κύριε, μὴ παρέλθῃς τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ , ἀλλὰ κατάθου αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀληθές” (Therefore, O lord and governor, reject not his (Achior) word; but lay it up in your heart, for it is true).

Achior is vindicated by Judith. Another role played by Achior as one of Judith’s helpers takes place in Bethulia when Judith, after returning with Holofernes’ head, commands that Achior be brought before her (14:5). When Achior comes before Judith, he identifies and confirms that the head that Judith brought with her is indeed Holofernes’. Achior’s confirmation strengthens Judith’s evidence before the people of Bethulia.

Second, the Elders of Bethulia play their role as helpers in Judith’s quest. The fact that they do not oppose Judith’s declaration of going out to the Assyrian camp makes it fitting to regard them as helpers in the process of destroying the enemy. The Elders go through a significant development in the narrative. Initially it was argued that they are undecided about the Jewish religion, but later, they acknowledge Judith’s determination and give her their blessings. In other words, they do not remain flat in the story but progresses to a new level of understanding or insight (see Branch and Jordaan, 2009:389-416).⁹⁵ Instead of opposing the request or the plan of Judith, they say to her in 8:35,

Πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην , καὶ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἔμπροσθέν σου εἰς ἐκδίκησιν τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν (go in peace and the Lord God be before you to take vengeance on our enemies).

Lastly, the role played by Judith’s maid cannot go unnoticed. Her role in assisting Judith has already been dealt with in Chapter 2 (Figurative analysis). However, Branch and Jordaan (2009:406) also acknowledge that the maid is essential to the plot of the story because her

⁹⁴ The Elders are mentioned as helpers because they eventually cooperated with Judith in her plan to save the Jewish religion. Their initial state of doubt and being visionless leaders is not ignored but not considered here, because Judith had already reprimanded them.

⁹⁵ Branch and Jordaan (2009:389-416) did not investigate the progress in understanding of the Elders but they used this concept to investigate other secondary characters in Judith narrative.

presence substantiates Judith's character. They point out that the maid advances the plot by her silence and through it, she supports Judith. Through her presence, she willingly risks her life for Judith and her fellow Israelites. She serves Judith by making sure that her toilette is thorough (Branch & Jordaan, 2009:406).

Holofernes' determination and goal, on the other hand, finds support from few actants in the story. Firstly, the narrative mentions that Nebuchadnezzar and the Assyrian army are the main inspiration behind Holofernes' enterprise. Apart from Nebuchadnezzar, Holofernes has other actants who help him in the process of attempting to achieve his goals, viz. the children of Esau (they provided Holofernes with "insider information" as to how can he conquer Israel); the governors of Moab and the children of Ammon (foreign advisors of Holofernes); his servants (13:1) and Bagoas the eunuch. For a detailed discussion on these actants and how they helped Holofernes, see Chapter 2 (Figurative Analysis 2.1.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.1.3).

In summary, this section was devoted to discussing the actantial model of *Judith*. It shows from the distribution of actantial roles that *Judith* has a dual actantial configuration. The first actantial configuration consists of Judith's main quest, that is, to save her people and the Jewish religion. The second actantial configuration is illustrated by Holofernes' pursuit of seeking to destroy the Jews, their cities and sanctuary and eventually proclaim Nebuchadnezzar as god alone. In this second actantial configuration, Judith is herself an object of Holofernes' sexual desire. Holofernes, as an anti-subject, is the fore-runner in this quest.

The discussion on the role of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ has shown that he is the addresser and appears in the story as a *subject adjudicator*, a *subject manipulator* and a *subject of state*. He is the initiator of Judith's quest (see also Kanonge, 2009:151 on *Susanna*).

On the other hand, Nebuchadnezzar (anti-addresser) plays an important role in inspiring brutality in and through Holofernes and the entire Assyrian army. It has already been established that if God is the addresser, Nebuchadnezzar is the anti-addresser; and that if Judith is the subject, Holofernes is the anti-subject. The story shows that Judith is prepared to oppose the impending destruction and wrong religious ideologies of the Assyrians at the risk of her own life and safety. Judith's determination contrasts that of the Elders and the rest of the Bethulians.

The process of encountering the Assyrian cult's claims and defending the Jewish religion forms part of the Narrative syntax. The following section of study is dedicated to discussing this aspect.

3.4 THE NARRATIVE SYNTAX

Kanonge (2009:152) states that this third section of the narrative analysis focuses on the journey of the protagonist (Judith) in the narrative. Three aspects are critical in this section of study, viz: the narrative programme, the canonical narrative schema and the encounter between subject and the anti-subject. The last is the encounter which eventually results in the transfer of the object of quest in *Judith*.

3.4.1 THE NARRATIVE PROGRAMME

According to Martin and Ringham (2000:91) a narrative programme (*programme narratif*) refers to the representation of syntactical relationships and their transformation on the surface level of the utterance.⁹⁶ In simple terms, Kanonge (2009:152) explains that the main narrative programme of *Judith* highlights the main quest of the story. He further states:

The narrative programme is a representation of actions in the story; It is a series of actions related to the way the protagonist (Judith in this case) transforms her initial state (disjunctive condition: Jewish religion under threat of extinction) into her final state (conjunctive condition: Jewish religion survived extinction) (Kanonge, 2009:152).

Therefore, focusing on the state of the Jewish religion and heroic work of Judith, this study suggests that the narrative programme (**NP**) in *Judith*, may be summarized as follows (see chapter 1, 1.7.4.2):

Threat of extinction and destruction of the Jewish people/religion (**S1**), dominates the beginning of the narrative. However, the heroic work of Judith gives hope and life to the Jewish people/religion (**S2**), and eventually the object of value (preservation of the Jewish people/religion) is realized. The Assyrian cult fails to subdue the Jewish religion.

The narrative programme (NP) in *Judith* entails that the heroic work of Judith bring a critical development in the story. Judith transforms her state from disjunctive condition (mission to be accomplished) to a conjunctive condition (mission accomplished). This study further

⁹⁶ See also Greimas (1990:46,173 -176).

emphasizes that the mission in question concerns the preservation of the Jewish people/religion.

3.4.2 THE CANONICAL NARRATIVE SCHEMA

The canonical narrative schema focuses on the action of the subject in relation to the object (Kanonge, 2009:52). It presents in detail the different stages which the subject of doing undergoes in pursuing the object of the quest (Martin & Ringham, 2000:11). This schema comprises of four stages: the contract/manipulation,⁹⁷ competence, performance and sanction. These four stages are discussed below.

3.4.2.1 THE CONTRACT / MANIPULATION

The contract could be defined as “the establishment of an intersubjective relationship which results in a modification of status affecting the subject involved” (Martin & Ringham, 2000:11). According to Martin and Ringham (2000:11), in semiotic metalanguage a narrative schema/sequence starts with a contract/manipulation between the addresser and a subject who undertakes to accomplish an action. Therefore, the contract in *Judith* describes the moment when the protagonist in the story (Judith) becomes aware⁹⁸ of the challenge facing the people of Bethulia or the Jewish religion. According to Kanonge (2009:152), this section of study can also highlight people, things, circumstances or events that contributed to her awareness of the challenge.

Upon her introduction in 8:8, Judith is introduced as a “woman who feared the Lord greatly” (ἐφοβεῖ το τὸν θεὸν σφόδρα). Contrary to this God fearing quality of Judith, the author states that Judith heard the evil words of the people to Uzziah, 8:9 and she had also heard that he had sworn to surrender the city to the Assyrians within five days (παραδώσειν τὴν πόλιν μετὰ ἡμέρας πέντε τοῖς Ἀσσυρίοις). It is clear that this verse seeks to set a clear distinction between Judith and the Elders or the community. The Elders work with God in ultimatums, whereas Judith shows a total trust in God. This verse also serves to single out the origin of the central concern of *Judith*. The social unrest and the evil words uttered are, according to Judith, proof that the people of Bethulia have lost touch with the God of Israel. With regard to her awareness of the problem in the community, the text does not indicate explicitly who informed Judith about these

⁹⁷ See Martin & Ringham (2000:11)

⁹⁸ This study uses this word to describe Judith’s situation, because it seems that Judith was somehow aloof from the situation: In 8:9 the text indicates that “When Judith heard”, as if she was not part of the situation in the first place.

events and speeches. However, the circumstance around the people of Bethulia and the decision of Uzziah might have been heard by all the people in Bethulia; hence Judith (as a member of the community), also “ἤκουσεν” (she heard).

Judith’s high level⁹⁹ of the fear of the Lord encourages her to send her maid (τὴν ἄβραν αὐτῆς) to call the Elders of the city (Uzziah, Chabris and Charmis). It may thus be argued that Judith is immediately taking responsibility or a leadership role to reprimand the Elders for leading the nation to destruction and, moreover, for imposing conditions on the Lord their God (see Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:216). Moreover, in the process of surrendering the city they are about to abrogate the covenant between God and Israel by bowing down to Holofernes/Nebuchadnezzar.

Contrary to the conditions which the Elders impose on God, Judith formulates a plan to save her people and the temple, announcing:

Ἀκούσατέ μου, καὶ ποιήσω πρᾶγμα ὃ ἀφίξεται εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν υἱοῖς τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν (Hear me, and I will do a thing, which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation) (8:35).

The modalities of *wanting-to-do* or *having-to-do* in the character Judith (subject) are also revealed in the above quote. Judith commits herself not to surrender but to defend the city and the temple. Judith’s brave approach is, undoubtedly, based on her fear of God (ἐφοβεῖ τὸν θεὸν σφόδρα) (8:8). Nowhere in the text does God speak to Judith about assuming responsibility, neither does God send anyone to give her a mandate to do so. It may thus be inferred that Judith’s willingness to act is based on the high extent of fearing God and her commitment to the Jewish people/religion.

This study has shown that God is involved in four different modes of manipulation in the story. Following the Greimassian semiotic approach, it has been argued that the introduction of Judith itself may be seen as God’s indirect intervention or perhaps may be seen as part of God’s plan of action towards saving the Jewish people/religion. Therefore, God (as the addresser) exerts a persuasive doing (albeit silently) on the Jews (the addressee) in general, and on Judith in particular to stand against any threat to the Jewish people/religion. According to Kanonge (2009:154) such a communication, intended to cause people to act, is a manipulation.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ The author uses the adverb “σφόδρα”, translated as “exceedingly” to describe this degree.

¹⁰⁰ Martin and Ringham (2000:11) use the two concepts, contract and manipulation, as synonyms.

Manipulation is central to the contract. Without the manipulative action of the addresser, there is no contract (Kanonge, 2009:154).

The contract here is Judith's commitment to saving the Jewish people/religion. Her high degree of faith and trust in God, revealed in her prayer, solidifies her commitment to the contract. By taking up the contract, Judith (woman) parallels male (e.g. David) and female (e.g. Deborah) subjects who played decisive roles in battle victories.¹⁰¹

When discussing the matter of manipulation in *Judith*, it must be noted that God's manipulation is somewhat different; the scenario in *Judith* is different from that, for example, in Joshua 1. In Joshua 1:1-18 God addresses Joshua and gives him a mandate to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land. In *Judith* the manipulation is indirect. The text does not report any conversation between God and Judith (or any prophet sent to Judith with the message) as it is the case with Joshua. Judith's manipulation is causative and not direct. In this kind of manipulation model, the initiative seems to rest with the causee; the causer does not need to do anything, but only to refrain from preventing a particular action by the causee (Kanonge, 2010:156). He (*ibid.*) further mentions that this kind of influence is called contract by seduction. The term "seduction" here does not have a negative connotation. It is a technical term in semiotics to refer to an influence/manipulation that pushes someone to act (*ibid.*).

To summarise, the *Judithic* contract is established between God and Judith through the fact that the author describes her as a "God fearing woman". As a Jewish woman, Judith may have been brought up under strict Jewish teaching, which was the Law of Moses according to Deut 6:6–24. Her Jewish patriotic stance might have been a result of what she was taught from a tender age. According to Kanonge (2010:158), the teaching of the Law produces the fear of the Lord. In Judith's life, the fear of the Lord became a kind of natural duty (having to do). The fear of Lord moves Judith from duty to desire (wanting to do). Judith moves from the state of addressee (Jewish woman) to a virtual subject. She is now ready to resist any kind of threat from the Assyrians.

3.4.2.2 COMPETENCE

When discussing competence in *Susanna*, Kanonge (2009:159) states that at this second stage, the subject needs more than just virtualizing modalities (duty) and/or (desire). The

¹⁰¹ This study has already argued in Chapter 2 (Figurative analysis 2.2.1) that *Judith* parallels the combat between David and Goliath.

subject must be in possession of actualizing modalities that makes it possible for her to carry out the action (Martin & Ringham, 2000:38). Kanonge (2009:159) further states that, in other words, duty and desire are not sufficient to accomplish the subject's mission. According to Martin and Ringham (2000:159), two modalities play an indispensable role in this respect, that is: *pouvoir faire* (being able to do: power) and/or *savoir faire* (knowing how to do: skill). In discussing competence, the interest is to know what makes Judith able to resist the threats of the Assyrians (Holofernes in particular) and thus save the Jewish people and the Jewish religion from possible extinction.

Harrington (1999:35) and Steyn (2008:164) state that the reader should observe that the instrument of delivering God's people is a widow (apparently childless) whose weapons are fear of God, beauty and wisdom. In addition to these qualities, the reader should realize that the qualities of affluence and bravery, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Figurative analysis), also contribute as a driving force behind Judith's success. These attributes help her to achieve her goal successfully in the narrative. It is not within the scope of this sub-section to discuss, all of these qualities again, but only to revise briefly how some of them played a role in Judith's acquisition of competence (see Chapter 1, 2.1.1.1.2 [d] for a detailed discussion of Judith's qualities).

First, Judith's fear of God as shown in Chapter 2 (2.1.1.1.2 d), is a determining feature. The author unswervingly reminds the reader, throughout the narrative, that Judith is a God-fearing woman. She fasts and prays all the time; she does not eat unclean food (12:1 and 12:19), consume alcohol or indulge in sexual immorality. As discussed above (3.3.2.1), this God-fearing quality seems to be a compelling force behind Judith's courage to reprimand the Elders and not succumb to Holofernes' threats. In the scene of Bethulia, Judith secures the attention of the Elders and most possibly the attention of the Bethulian community. Chapter 8:9 marks the commencement of her acquisition of competence in the story. The reader further learns in 8:21, that Judith's fear of the Lord raises her awareness of the impending danger to the Jewish religion, when she says:

²¹ ὅτι ἐν τῷ λημφθῆναι ἡμᾶς οὕτως καὶ λημφθήσεται πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία, καὶ προνομευθήσεται τὰ ἅγια ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐκζητήσει τὴν βεβήλωσιν αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος ἡμῶν.¹⁰²

¹⁰² ²¹ For if we be taken so, all Judea shall lie waste, and our sanctuary shall be spoiled; and He will require the profanation thereof at our mouth.

Judith's knowledge and fear of the Lord enables her to perceive the negative consequences that could arise for the people of Bethulia and the Jewish religion should Holofernes not be stopped. This situation compels her to call upon the intervention of the Lord by prayer.

Judith's prayer plays a pivotal role in the achievement of her goal. Her unbending trust in God helps her to wait for God's help, even in life-threatening or dangerous situations. Judith's prayer and her dependence upon God emerge as her *savoir-faire* (knowing how to do) in the narrative. It may be argued that, without the Lord's intervention, which resulted from prayer, Judith's beauty, wisdom, bravery, and her affluent state, could not have helped her. Consequently, the end of the narrative could have read as a disaster to the Jewish people/religion. Assyria's potential victory over Israel could have meant the end of the Jewish people/religion. Then, Nebuchadnezzar would be hailed as god.

Unlikely as it is for a woman to take up such a responsibility, this study agrees with Raja (1998:700) that the choice of a woman to defend the preservation of the Jewish people/religion in *Judith* is not a strange act in the history of the Jewish people:

Judith stands in the line of Miriam the prophetess who led Israel to sing praises of YHWH after their liberation from Egypt (Exod 15:20-21; Jdt 15:13; Jdt 16:13), she represents Deborah who encouraged Israel to fight against the onslaught of the enemies (Judg 4:4-9; Jdt 14:2-4), she reminds a reader of Jael the brave woman who murdered Sisera, her people's enemy (Judg 4:17-22; Jdt 13:6-8), she parallels the ingenious woman of Abel of Beth-Maacah who by her wise counsels helped to cut off the head of David's adversary (2 Sam 20:15-22; Jdt 8:11-36; 11:20-23), she evokes the beauty and the boldness of Esther (Esth 2:7; 5:1-4; Jdt 10:3-4.7,10,14,18-19,23). One sees in her a harmonious blending of a soldier and a seductress, of wisdom and charm, of masculinity and femininity; a veritable androgyne! In portraying Judith in such a fashion the author of the story stands in stark opposition to the prevalent thinking and culture of the times. His dissenting voice breaks asunder the enslaving prison walls of male chauvinism and lets into the narrative the gentle breeze of a legitimate and much desired feminism. The woman is shown as equal to and in some sense even superior to men.

Jordaan and Hobyane (2010:342) suggest that the possible underlying purpose of *Judith* is to change or challenge the religious ideology of the time, from being exclusive to being inclusive. The choice of a woman to execute this task is therefore no mere chance in the story of *Judith*. It

reveals the ideology which the author seeks to propagate. The intention of the author is likely to reverse the religious protocol of the existing at that time, which was mainly dominated by men, in favour of women too.

Second, Judith's widowhood deserves a brief discussion. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Figurative analysis 2.1.1.1.2 d), Judith was free from male dominance, both in terms of authority and sexuality. She thus enjoys the advantage of being a free woman, which contributes towards her ability (being able to do) to go out to the Assyrian camp. No man can question her about her going out by reminding her of her marital obligations or duties. The same may be argued in reference to the aspect of "knowing how to do", that is, going out freely having beautified herself. This leads to the third quality which is her beauty.

Kanonge (2009:159) states that beauty is an innate quality. He argues that beauty is an actualizing attribute which plays a determining role in *Esther*, *Judith*, and *Susanna* (*ibid.*). In the first two stories, beauty is the central power that preserves Jewishness (existence as a nation and their religion). Steyn (2008:164) arrives at this same conclusion after doing a comparative study of the main characters in *Susanna*, *Judith* and *Esther*. According to Kanonge (2009:160) beauty, in *Susanna*, *Judith* and *Esther*, becomes a source of deliverance only when it is exposed. As already discussed in Chapter 2, beauty, in *Judith*, is one of the capacities that help the heroine to gain the attention of the enemy and eventually destroys them. Judith adorns herself and then leaves her people and exposes herself to the Assyrians (10:1-11). Kanonge (2009:160) states that beauty always constitutes a deadly threat only to the non-Jews. No true Jew, committed to the Law, is trapped by Judith's beauty in the story. In 10:7-9, the story records, instead, the following when the men/people of Bethulia saw her:

καὶ ἦν ἡλλοιωμένον τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν στολὴν μεταβεβληκυῖαν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐθαύμασαν ἐπὶ τῷ κάλλει αὐτῆς ἐπὶ πολὺ σφόδρα καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῇ
⁸ Ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν δώη σε εἰς χάριν καὶ τελειώσαι τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματά σου εἰς γαυρίαμα υἰῶν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ὕψωμα Ἱερουσαλημ”⁹ καὶ προσεκύνησεν τῷ θεῷ

¹⁰³

This is not the case in the Assyrian camp. First, it should be noticed that when Judith meets the Assyrians (first the Assyrian patrol and later Holofernes) in the Assyrian camp, their reaction

¹⁰³ And when they saw her, that her countenance was changed, and her apparel was changed, they wondered at her beauty very greatly, and said unto her. ⁸ “The God, the God of our fathers give you favour, and accomplish your enterprises to the glory of the children of Israel, and to the exaltation of Jerusalem”. Then they worshipped God.

towards her beauty is different. In her encounter with the Assyrian patrol, it becomes evident that Judith's only weapons are her beauty (10:14) and wisdom (irony and seductive skills; 10:12-13). Second, Judith's beauty and wisdom are key weapons in securing her a place and attention in front of Holofernes (12:16). The text reports that:

¹⁶καὶ εἰσελθοῦσα ἀνέπεσεν Ἰουδιθ, καὶ ἐξέστη ἡ καρδία Ολοφέρνηου αὐτήν, καὶ ἐσαλεύθη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἦν κατεπίθυμος σφόδρα τοῦ συγγενέσθαι αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ καιρὸν τοῦ ἀπατήσαι αὐτήν ἧς ἡμέρας εἶδεν αὐτήν¹⁰⁴

Holofernes' lustful eye on Judith may represent the attitude of all the men in the Assyrian camp toward Judith. Judith's beauty is indeed a trap to the enemy. Judith confirms this point in 13:16 when she says: “ὅτι ἠπάτησεν αὐτὸν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου εἰς ἀπώλειαν αὐτοῦ” (My face has deceived him to his destruction, and yet he has not committed sin with me, to defile and shame me).

In summarizing the acquisition of competence, it may be asserted that Judith's beauty, fear and trust in God, prayer, bravery and wisdom are driving forces behind Judith's power (being-able-to-do) and/or skill (knowing-how-to-do). In view of the resemblances between *Susanna*, *Esther* and *Judith*, when it comes to beauty, one may argue that God intensifies the beauty of these women to trap the enemy (Kanonge 2009:166). Their beauty seems to be beyond ordinary beauty. *Judith* is no exception to this fact. Judith's beauty seems to be one that is extraordinary.

The acquisition of competence, therefore, consists in Judith's use of qualities (beauty, widowhood, the fear of the Lord, brave, affluent and wisdom) to go against the threat of Holofernes and eventually save her people.

3.4.2.3 THE PERFORMANCE

By performance, the subject acquires the object of his quest and therefore attains the status of the realized subject. Martin and Ringham (2000:100) declare: “[T]he term performance designates the principal action of the subject, the event to which the story has been leading to. It is by carrying out the performance that the subject acquires (or fails to acquire) the object of value”. In this step, the subject uses his/her powers/skills to achieve his/her mission. Here, Judith uses the abilities discussed above to achieve her mission.

¹⁰⁴ ¹⁶Now when Judith came in and sat down, the heart of Holofernes was ravished with her, and his mind was moved and he desired greatly to be with her; for he waited a time to deceive her, from the day that he had seen her.

In some stories, the performance is instantaneous, while it occurs progressively in others (see Chapter 1, 1.7.4.2). For example, in the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:37-39 (LXX), the performance is instantaneous. After Elijah's prayer to God, the text reports that God reacts immediately by bringing fire from heaven and consuming all the burnt sacrifice and all the prophets of Baal. The prophets of Baal are eventually killed by Elijah and his people. Another example, of a progressive performance this time, is found in the story of Esther and the death of Haman. The events take place progressively until Haman is hanged.

In *Judith*, the protagonist's performance and victory over Holofernes is not progressive but instantaneous, as the text reports in 13:8-9:

⁸ καὶ ἐπάταξεν εἰς τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ δις ἐν τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτῆς καὶ ἀφεῖλεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. ⁹ καὶ ἀπεκύλισε τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς στρωμνῆς καὶ ἀφεῖλε τὸ κωνόπιον ἀπὸ τῶν στύλων, καὶ μετ' ὀλίγον ἐξῆλθεν καὶ παρέδωκεν τῇ ἄβρα αὐτῆς τὴν κεφαλὴν Ολοφέρνηου.¹⁰⁵

The decapitation of Holofernes by Judith happens in one night in a specific place, that is, in Holofernes' tent.¹⁰⁶ Judith spends three days in the Assyrian camp waiting for this specific moment to come so that she can carry out the performance. Therefore, the three days that she spends in the camp may be seen as the preparation to the action. The text mentions that Judith stays in the Assyrian camp for three days and goes out in the night (κατὰ νύκτα) into the valley of Bethulia. These activities, prior to the killing of Holofernes, build up to the encounter of the two subjects (anti-subjects) accompanied by the involvement of the helpers and opponents. The decapitation of Holofernes eventually translates to the transfer of the object of value, which is the preservation of Jewish religion.

After decapitating the drunken Holofernes, Judith and her maid undertake the final trip back to Bethulia with the head of Holofernes in her food bag. Ironically, the daily trip to the valley of Bethulia by Judith and her maid could be seen as a kind of a rehearsal for this final trip back to Bethulia with the head of Holofernes, as the text indicates in 13:3 and 13:10 respectively. The

¹⁰⁵ ⁸ And she struck twice on his neck with all her power and took away his head from him. And she rolled his body down from the bed and took away the curtain from the pillars; and she immediately went out and gave the head of Holofernes to her maid.

¹⁰⁶ One may further indicate that the decapitation of Holofernes was a decisive moment towards Israel's victory over the Assyrians. Holofernes' death opened doors for the rest of Israel's army to attack the Assyrians.

death of Holofernes consequently interrupts the narrative programme of threat and destruction to Israel.

After the decapitation of Holofernes, the state of affairs changes completely in the Assyrian camp. When Bagoas goes to waken Holofernes, he finds him alone in his bedroom, a discarded corpse without a head (14:15). Terror and dread overcomes Bagoas and later the rest of the Assyrian camp (15:2). They are eventually destroyed by the army of Israel. This is in sharp contrast with the events of Chapters 1-3. Fear and dread is no longer amongst the Jews, but has seized the Assyrians. By contrast, the Jews are empowered. They attack and win the battle in defense of their religion and Jerusalem (15:3ff), more importantly, the Temple. Once again, it must be said that this came to pass by the hand of a woman (15:10).

The challenging narrative finally sees its way to victory (Jordaan & Hobyane, 2010:341-342). Judith and her maid are vindicated. The Jewish religion is safe. The text reports, in 15:11, that looting of the enemy camp continued for about a month.

3.4.2.4 THE SANCTION

This last step of the canonical narrative schema focuses on the assessment of the mission of the subject. Martin and Ringham (2000:113) state that the term sanction designates the stage of the quest where the subject's principal action or performance is being evaluated or interpreted by the narrator or actor in the story. They (*ibid.*) indicate that the performance could be considered a success or a failure; the subject could be rewarded or punished. Kanonge (2009:170) further indicates that sanction may be deemed negative or positive depending on what is accepted or rejected as good or bad values within the religious community.

This study observes, agreeing with Jordaan and Hobyane (2009:240) that war is a natural phenomenon in the *Judith*. By virtue of the fact that war, seduction and killing are involved in the story, the sanction is automatically placed under ethical scrutiny.

Ames (2008:24) defines war as a state in which the killing of other human beings is rendered legal, necessary, honourable and "even glorious", as Lincoln (1987:342) points out. This is because the enemy belongs to a rival group to whom ethical norms do not extend (*ibid.*). The enemy is effectively defined as subhuman or even non-human. This situation is also found in *Judith*. The enemy has been identified as a non-Jew and also as an anti-Jew (Assyrians) and ethical norms do not apply when dealing with such people. Seducing, lying to, and even

murdering such people is justified amongst the Israelites of Judithic community. It is not an evil thing for Judith to commit these acts for the sake of the preservation of Jewish people/religion. It may, therefore, be indicated that Judith successfully (even gloriously) achieves the object of the quest by murdering (lying, seducing and flattering included) the enemy of the Jewish people/religion, namely Holofernes.

Kanonge (2009:54) states that after achieving his/her performance, the subject comes back to report his/her achievement. Judith's report on her achievement may be divided into two ways. First, she reports her achievement to the Elders and the people of Bethulia. She comes back with the head of Holofernes. She boastfully mentions that she has achieved her victory without committing sin with Holofernes. This means that her success is achieved within the confines of Jewish religious norms.

Besides the word of praise directed to God, in many narratives, there is also a word of praise in recognition of the performance of the subject. Judith's victory and achievement is sanctioned by words of honour from Uzziah in 13:18 -20 which reads as follows:

¹⁸ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Οζίας Εὐλογητὴ σὺ, θύγατερ, τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ παρὰ πάσας τὰς γυναῖκας τὰς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εὐλογημένος κύριος ὁ θεός, ὃς ἔκτισεν τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὴν γῆν, ὃς κατεύθυνέν σε εἰς τραῦμα κεφαλῆς ἄρχοντος ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν, ¹⁹ ὅτι οὐκ ἀποστήσεται ἡ ἐλπίς σου ἀπὸ καρδίας ἀνθρώπων μνημονευόντων ἰσχύον θεοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος, ²⁰ καὶ ποιήσαι σοι αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὕψος αἰῶνιον τοῦ ἐπισκέψασθαί σε ἐν ἀγαθοῖς, ὧν οὐκ ἐφείσω τῆς ψυχῆς σου διὰ τὴν ταπεινωσιν τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἐπεξῆλθες τῷ πτώματι ἡμῶν ἐπ' εὐθεῖαν πορευθεῖσα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. καὶ εἶπαν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς Γένοιτο γένοιτο.¹⁰⁷

These words are a positive recognition of Judith's achievement. These words of honour are further revealed in the speech of Achior in 14:7 which reads as follows:

¹⁰⁷ ¹⁸Then Ozias said unto her, O daughter, blessed are you of the most high God above all the women upon the earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who has directed/guided you to the cutting off of the head of the chief of our enemies. ¹⁹For your confidence shall not depart from the heart of men, who remember the power of God for ever. ²⁰And God turn these things to you for a perpetual praise, to visit you in good things, because you have not spared your life for the affliction of our nation, but have revenged our ruin, walking a straight way before our God. And all the people said: "So be it, so be it!"

ὡς δὲ ἀνέλαβον αὐτόν, προσέπεσαν τοῖς ποσὶν Ἰουδιθ καὶ προσεκύνησεν τῷ προσώπῳ αὐτῆς καὶ εἶπεν Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν παντὶ σκηνώματι Ἰουδα καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει, οἴπνες ἀκούσαντες τὸ ὄνομά σου ταραχθήσονται.¹⁰⁸

In brief, DeSilva (2006:55) states that concerning all that Judith has done, the Elders said that she walks “in straight path before our God” (13:20) and that “God is well pleased with” her actions (15:10).

Secondly, the songs of praise directed to God may also be seen as her report to the Lord (the addresser and subject adjudicator). After the decapitation of Holofernes, the *Judith* narrative is dominated by songs of praise and thanksgiving specifically directed to the Lord. These praises are introduced by Judith in 13:14 when she says:

Αἰνεῖτε τὸν θεόν, αἰνεῖτε, αἰνεῖτε τὸν θεόν, ὃς οὐκ ἀπέστησεν τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου Ἰσραηλ, ἀλλ’ ἔθραυσε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν διὰ χειρὸς μου ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ¹⁰⁹

In 13:17 the reader learns that when the people hear the report of Judith they also respond and praise God saying:

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ὁ ἐξουδενώσας ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ σήμερον τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ λαοῦ σου¹¹⁰

It must be clarified that the report to the Elders (Bethulians included) and God should be seen as constituting two sanctions. The recognition by the Elders is subject to God’s approval. The Elders are not sanctioning her based on any other Law/norm outside the Law of Moses. The people of Bethulia indirectly acknowledge that Judith’s achievement is according to the norms established by God. Kanonge (2009:54) emphasizes that the addresser, as subject adjudicator, judges the performance of the subject according to the system of values he/she represents. He further indicates that if the actions of the subject were in conformity with the axiology of the universe of the narrative, the subject receives the title of a glorified subject (*ibid.*). After her achievement, Judith is glorified and elevated above “all the women upon the earth” (παρὰ πάσας

¹⁰⁸ But when they had recovered him, he fell at Judith’s feet, and revered her, and said, “Blessed are you in all the tabernacles of Judah, and in all nations, which hearing your name shall be astonished”.

¹⁰⁹ Praise, praise God, praise God, for he has not taken away his mercy from the house of Israel, but has destroyed our enemies by my hands this night.

¹¹⁰ Blessed are you, O our God, who in this day has brought to naught the enemies of your people.

τὰς γυναικας τὰς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). In other words God acknowledges the accomplishment of the subject (Judith).

This study concedes that God does not speak directly in the text. However, it can be argued that He is the object of praises from the entire Jewish nation because of his intervention in Judith's victory. The phrase “διὰ χειρός μου ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ” (by mine hands this night) in 13:14 strongly suggest that God's intervention through the hand of Judith has achieved victory. God helped the children of Israel to gain victory through the hand of Judith.

The most important verdict, with regard to Judith's mission is the words of Judith herself (self proclamation) in 13:16 which says: “καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἀμάρτημα ἐμοῦ εἰς μίασμα καὶ αἰσχύνῃν ” (and yet he did not commit sin with me to defile and shame me). Judith achieved the victory fairly and managed to keep her relationship with God (her commitment to the Jewish religion) uncontaminated and the addresser, as subject adjudicator, is pleased by the action of Judith, as the text reports in 15:10:

¹⁰ ἐποίησας ταῦτα πάντα ἐν χειρί σου, ἐποίησας τὰ ἀγαθὰ μετὰ Ἰσραηλ, καὶ εὐδόκησεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεός, εὐλογημένη γίνου παρὰ τῷ παντοκράτορι κυρίῳ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον. καὶ εἶπεν πᾶς ὁ λαός Γένοιτο.¹¹¹

The quotation given above is very critical to the overall adjudication of Judith's action by the addresser. God is pleased with what Judith did. The people are celebrating the victory. Therefore, Judith accomplishes her mission successfully and to the honour and glory of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter comprised of the second of the three steps of Greimassian semiotic analysis, viz. the narrative analysis. From the narrative analysis, it became clear that the structure, the actantial configuration and the canonical narrative schema of *Judith* were purposely designed to address the religious crisis facing the Jewish people of Judithic community.

The analysis of the relation between the beginning and ending of the *Judith* narrative shows that the Jewish religion is under severe threat of extinction in the beginning of the narrative. However, the ending of the story radically opposes the claim by the Assyrians and the Jewish

¹¹¹ ¹⁰ You have done all these things by your hand; you have done much good to Israel, and God is pleased with these things. Blessed be are you of the Almighty Lord for evermore. And all the people said, “So be it”.

religion emerge victorious through the transformational doing by the main character, Judith. The discussion of the ending of the story has revealed (Fig. 3.9) that the subject of doing (Judith) is no longer in disjunction (**Λ**) with the object of quest but in conjunction (**V**) with the object. This means that the story progresses from “mission to be accomplished” to “mission accomplished”.

At the point of Israel’s victory over the Assyrians, the narrative programme of threat and impending extinction of the Jewish people/religion is interrupted. The object of value, which is the preservation of the Jewish religion, is achieved by Judith (mission accomplished). The Jewish community/religion undergoes a situational transformation. This transformation confirms that Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ is busy manipulating the course of Israel’s history. The story ends honourably in favour of Judith and the Jewish people/religion. This proves that the Lord God of Israel is the one and only real God who must be worshiped. Furthermore, he will never punish or desert his people as long as they do not sin against him.

The actantial model and the relation between actants and antactants further revealed that Judith is the subject in the story and Holofernes, the anti-subject. The object of value is the Jewish religion. Judith’s central mission (with the involvement of all her helpers) is to save the Jews and the Jewish religion from the looming danger of extinction and thus proves that the God of Israel is the real God and the only helper of Israel. On the hand Holofernes’ mission is to destroy it and replace it with the Assyrian cult, and hail Nebuchadnezzar as god.

The canonical narrative schema, traced the trajectory which the subject of doing (Judith) undergoes in pursuing the main object of quest in the story. The chapter finally looked at the schema which comprises of four different stages of her quest, viz.: contract, competence, performance and sanction.

The investigation of the contract (first stage) revealed that the addresser motivates the action and communicates the modalities of desire or obligation (*acquisition of wanting-to-do or having-to-do*) to Judith. Judith emerges as a character who is more concerned about the danger facing the Jewish religion and shows a desire to defend it. In the second stage (investigation of competence) Judith moves from virtualizing modalities of desire to actualizing modalities (*Knowing-how-to-do and being-able-to-do*) that would make it possible for her to carry out an action of saving the Jewish religion. The study further argued that the choice of a woman to resist the threat of extinction of the Jewish religion was not mere chance in the story of *Judith*. The third stage investigated the performance by the subject of doing. This stage was only

restricted to the events of the killing of Holofernes, following the Greimassian semiotic approach. The investigation revealed that the subject acquires the object of her quest by decapitating Holofernes.

It was further demonstrated that the performance was instantaneous. The killing of Holofernes by Judith happens in one night in a specific place, that is, in Holofernes' tent. The decapitation of Holofernes by Judith summarizes the encounter between subject and the anti-subject. It is at this stage where the transfer of the object of quest happens. The investigation revealed that the death of Holofernes plays a critical role in the survival of the Jewish religion. The fourth and last stage of canonical narrative schema focused on the assessment of the mission (more especially the performance) of the subject, sanction. The investigation shows that the performance of Judith is seen as a success, worthy of reward and positive according to the norms and values within the Jewish religious community. The story ends with the honouring of Judith and praising of the Lord God of Israel.

From all the mechanisms of investigation of the narrative analysis, it can be deduced that the story of *Judith* (with a woman protagonist)¹¹² does challenge the male dominance within the Jewish religious matters. The story shows that women can also do honourable work and prove that they too, can be true Jewish religious patriots. Women (Judith), slaves (maid and helper of Judith) and foreigners (Achior) are revealed as reliable Jewish religious carriers in the time of crisis. Therefore, it is appropriate to conclude that God uses men and women alike.

The investigation of the possible purpose of *Judith* has, up to now, only considered two of the three steps of analysis following the Greimssian semiotic analysis. For this study to make an informed conclusion on the possible purpose of *Judith* it has to proceed to the third level of analysis as guided by the approach of analysis, that is, the thematic step of analysis.

¹¹² This point has been highlighted in the investigation of the canonical narrative schema, more especially the contract and competence.

CHAPTER 4 THE THEMATIC STEP OF ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

After analyzing the narrative level of meaning, the next stage of a Greimassian analysis is to examine the deep level, also known as the thematic level (Martin & Ringham, 2000:12). The thematic step is the third and final stage of the investigation of *Judith*, following the discursive/figurative and the narrative analyses. Martin and Ringham (2000:12) state that this is the level of abstract or conceptual syntax where the fundamental values which generate a text are articulated. It is, therefore, the main concern in this chapter to map out the core values that generated the story of *Judith*. These values can be presented on a semiotic square, which is the main tool for investigation at this level. As discussed in Chapter 1, this mechanism serves first to classify values in *Judith*, and second to track their trajectory.

In summary, the focus of the Thematic analysis addressed in this chapter is on the following aspects: opposition of values in the story; the thematic itinerary; and the veridictory square (construction of persuasive truth in the story).¹¹³ The following section investigates the opposition of values in *Judith*.

4.2 THE OPPOSITION OF CORE VALUES IN *JUDITH*

In the analysis of meaning, semiotics proceeds from the recognition of differences to the definition of the relationships underpinning them (Martin & Ringham, 2000:116). Semiotics postulates that opposition gives rise to the meaning. Kanonge (2009:176) states that the paradigmatic use of the semiotic square in the thematic level depends on results from the preceding steps of analysis, that is, figurative and the narrative steps. It is, therefore, compulsory for this study to revisit the results of both the figurative and narrative analysis of *Judith*, to make the goal of this section achievable. Figurative oppositions and opposition of values established in the relation between actants and antactants, that is, object/anti-object, subject/anti-subject and addresser/anti-addresser, are key in this section.

¹¹³ Some scholars, such as Kanonge (2009) include this part of study in the Narrative analysis. However as indicated in chapter 3, this study prefers to include the veridictory square here in this chapter.

From the discursive/figurative and the narrative analyses, this study has revealed notable oppositions between the Jewish religion, propagated by Judith, and the Assyrian cult,¹¹⁴ promoted by Holofernes. The central concern here is that the Jewish religion (with its values) is about to be destroyed and substituted by the Assyrian cult, which also has its own value systems (later called anti-values). In the ancient mindset, the god of the conqueror was the strongest. People even merged deities of the conqueror with those of the conquered and called them by joint names. In the context of Jewish religion, however, the merging of deities was not acceptable. The Jewish God is exclusive. These oppositions are extracted and placed in their positions in the table (Table 4.1) below. The table is a representation of the opposition of core values looking at both Judith (Jewish religion) and Holofernes (Assyrian cult). Furthermore, the table is a representation of values in terms of two main oppositions in the story, i.e. religious affiliation and ethnicity/nationality.

In summary, the two oppositions proposed are demarcated as follows: Oppositions based on religious affiliation are established between the members of the Jewish religion (where Judith and Achior are good models) against the Assyrian cult (Holofernes is the model here). In 4:12 the text reveals that the Jewish religion has Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (the Lord God of Israel) as God and the Assyrian cult has Ναβουχοδονοσορ (Nebuchadnezzar) as their god (3:8). The second opposition is based on ethnic/nationality difference. This study recognizes the exception of people like Achior in the narrative. Even though he is not a Jew by birth, he is added to the house of Israel by virtue of faith in God (Roitman, 1992:31, cf. Grabbe, 2004:167). The same cannot be argued concerning Holofernes and other characters. The oppositions are tabled according to the sequence of their occurrence in the narrative and appear as follows seen in Table 4.1. A discussion of each of the two oppositions follows later in this section.

¹¹⁴ The choice of the author of this study to refer to the Assyrian movement as a cult has been explained in chapter 3. This was done to set a clear difference between the Jewish faith and the Assyrian faith.

Table 4.1. Main opposition of values in the Judith narrative, in terms of religion and ethnicity

	Judith (Jewish Religion)	Holofernes (Assyrian cult)
Religious Affiliation	ἐφοβεῖ το τὸν θεὸν σφόδρα 8:7 (She feared God greatly)	καὶ ἐξῆλθεν Ολοφέρνης ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ (and Holofernes went forth from the presence of his lord) 2:14 ¹¹⁵
	δέσποτα τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς 9:12 (Lord of the heaven and earth)	Τάδε λέγει ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς (Thus says the great king, the Lord of the whole earth) 2:5
	θεραπεύουσα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ 11:17 (She serves the God of heaven day and night)	[Θεραπεύων] Ναβουχοδονοσορ 11:4 (implied) (Serves Nebuchadnezzar) ¹¹⁶
	ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ σφόδρα (Achiur) 14:10 (He believed in the God of Israel greatly)	[ἐπίστευσεν] Ναβουχοδονοσορ 11:4 ¹¹⁷ (implied) (He believed in Nebuchadnezzar)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed to Jewish religion Has a firm trust in the God of Israel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed to serve Nebuchadnezzar as god (Assyrian cult). Believe and trust in Nebuchadnezzar, thus reject the God of Israel (Jewish religion).
Ethnicity / Nationality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ 4:1 (the Children of Israel) Ἰουδιθ θυγάτηρ...Ἰσραὴλ 8:1 (Judith the daughter of Merari...the son of Israel) τὴν γυναῖκα τὴν Εβραίαν 12:11 (a Hebrew woman) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ἀσσύριοι 9:7 (Assyrians) Ολοφέρνης ...ὁ ἀρχιστράτηγος Ναβουχοδονοσορ βασιλέως Ἀσσυρίων (4:1) (Holofernes the chief captain of king Nebuchadnezzar of the Assyrians) Ἀσσυρίων 4:1 (belonging to the nation of Assyria)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jewish Nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assyrians

¹¹⁵ This Greek sentence shows that Holofernes' obedience to his god and master entails reverence which has a religious connotation.

¹¹⁶ In 11:4, Holofernes classifies himself under the group of people who serve Nebuchadnezzar.

¹¹⁷ Holofernes calls Nebuchadnezzar “τοῦ κυρίου μου βασιλέως Ναβουχοδονοσορ” (king Nebuchadnezzar, my lord”).

Table 4.1 reveals that Judith comprises of two main categories of oppositions of values, namely: oppositions based on religious affiliation on the one hand, and oppositions based on ethnicity/nationality on the other . Oppositions related to religious affiliation are discussed below.

4.2.1 OPPOSITION OF CORE VALUES IN TERMS OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

The first category of opposing core values, based on the religious affiliations (Jewish religion versus Assyrian cult), can be placed on the semiotic square as follows (cf. Table 4.1 above):

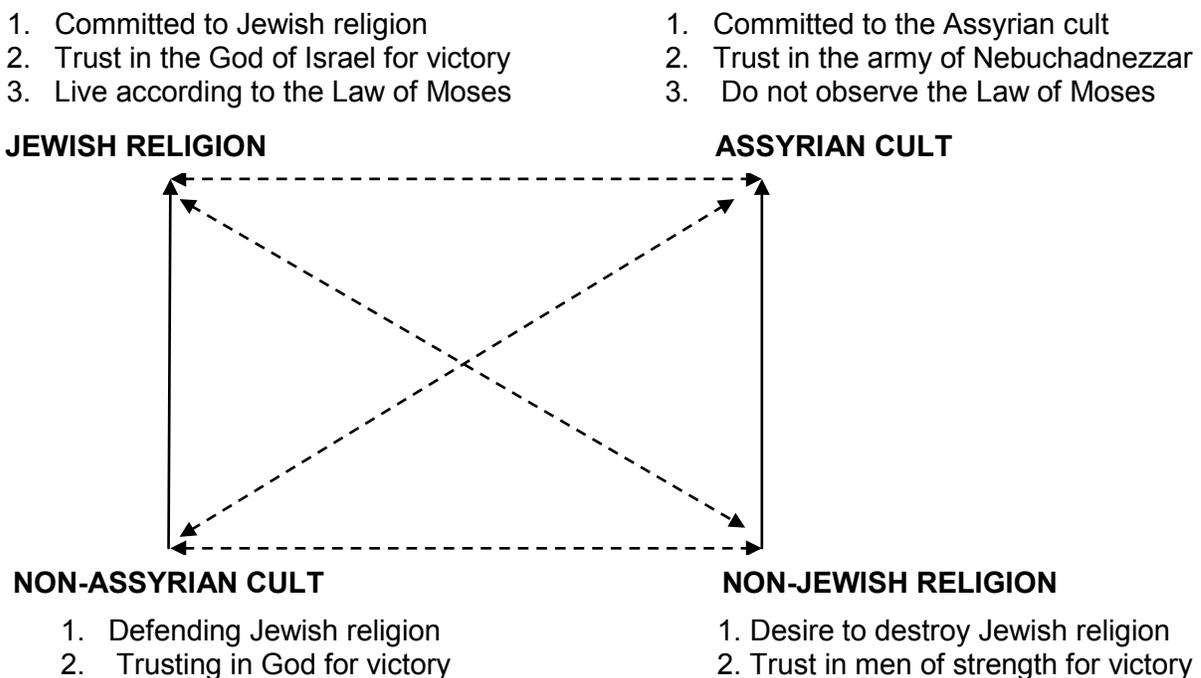


Figure 4.1 Semiotic square illustrating opposition of values in Judith, based on religious affiliations.

It is the contention of this study that religion is the main object of quest in the *Judith* narrative. The existence of the two religious affiliations seems to provide the spark of the conflict in the narrative. In describing the story of *Judith*, DeSilva (2002:85) argues that it is the contest between Gentiles, with their claims about gods and the God of Israel. He further states that this has been a prominent dynamic that runs throughout the history of Israel from the Exodus through to the Second Temple period. The semiotic square (Figure 4.1) depicts the core values of the Jewish people (lead by Judith) against that of the Assyrians under the leadership of

Holofernes. The values outlined in the semiotic square depend entirely on the religious affiliation of the people.

4.2.2 OPPOSITION OF CORE VALUES IN TERMS OF ETHNICITY

The second category of opposing core values, based on ethnicity/nationality (Jewish People versus Assyrians) can stand on the semiotic square as follows:

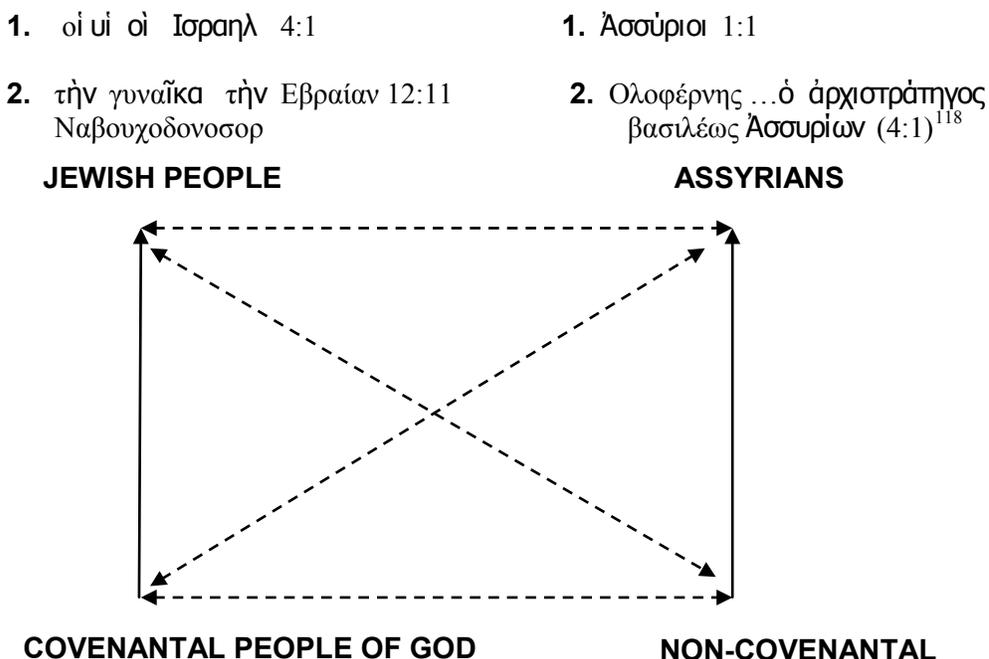


Figure 4.2 Semiotic square illustrating opposition of values in *Judith*, based on ethnicity.

Discussing the question of ethnicity/nationality in the *Judith* narrative seems unavoidable. The question of non-Jewishness in *Judith* is simple: it is the Jews, the covenantal people of God, against the Assyrians (Kaiser, 2004:39).

The opposing core values in the narrative are based on the rivalry between these two nations: the Assyrians under the proud leadership of Nebuchadnezzar and the Israelites trusting in their God for survival. While discussing the role of the Lord God of Israel (Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ) in preserving Israel's identity during the Second Temple period, Wohrle (2011:153) states that only He is able to change the situation of his people, to nullify the threat of the nations, to protect the people against new assaults, and to lead them to new prosperity.

¹¹⁸ Both Holofernes and Nebuchadnezzar are identified as citizens of Assyria.

Putting together religious affiliation and ethnicity/nationality in the semiotic square, the schematic representation is as follows:

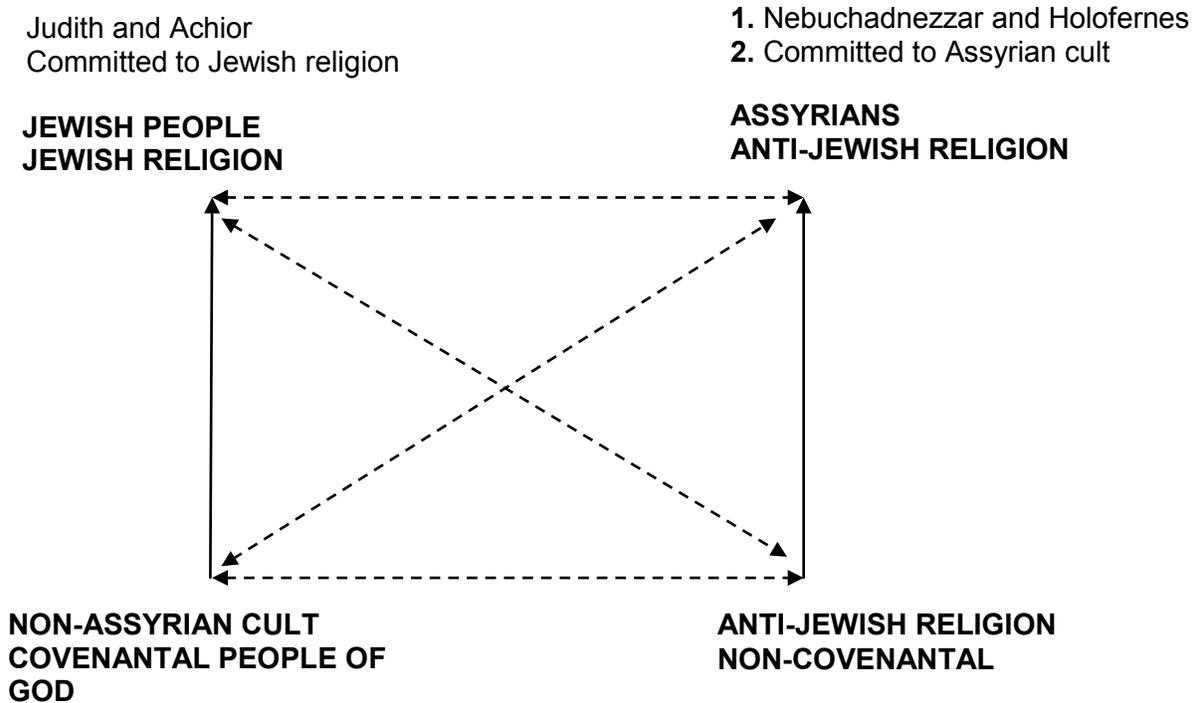


Figure 4.3 Semiotic square illustrating the opposition of values in *Judith*, based on ethnicity/nationality and religious affiliation.

As shown in Figure 4.3 above, the opposition based on ethnicity and religion is key to understanding and interpreting *Judith* fairly. It is evident that *Judith* seeks to call upon the Jews of the Second Temple period and all who believe in the God of Israel to defend the existence of the Jewish religion and its core values. The Jews here are called upon to guard against the extinction of the Jewish religion by foreign cults.

The foreign cult, in this instance, is the Assyrian cult. The latter is viewed as a threat to Jewish identity. In fact, Dor (2011:173) states that Jewish identity of the postexilic congregation is one of the central issues in the recent research on the late biblical period. This is seemingly associated with the current worldwide problem of national identity versus the trends of globalization and of multinational societies. The purpose and main message of *Judith* seem to be very much in line with Dor's findings.

In brief, this section discussed opposition of values in *Judith*. It has been established that oppositions are based on religion and ethnicity/nationality. The following section discusses the thematic itinerary of values in *Judith*.

4.3 THE THEMATIC ITINERARY

The first dimension of the Thematic analysis focused only on the classification of opposing values in the *Judith* narrative, according to the Jewish culture and ideology. The second step is called a syntagmatic perspective. It uses the semiotic square, not to classify values, but to track their trajectory in the story from the initial state to the final state (Kanonge, 2009:182). In other words, the concern here is to see which values the story seeks to reject, and which it seeks to maintain, as essential for the survival of the Jewish religion. According to Kanonge (2009:182) the circulation of values defines the ideology that the narrative seeks to establish or overthrow. He further indicates that the itinerary of commendable values, generally, complete the course and the itinerary of non-commendable values stop halfway.

As already shown above (Figure 4.3) the *Judith* narrative comprises two opposing camps with regard to religious affiliation. The Assyrian camp, on the one hand, represents a religious ideology which is associated with terror (4:2), destruction (3:1-10), idolatry (3:8) and sexual immorality (12:12) and Nebuchadnezzar is a god of this cult. Wennel (2007:68), on the other hand, argues that the essence of the Jewish faith lies in the fact that they are the covenantal people of God (4:1).¹¹⁹ They are expected to hope in and be faithful to Yahweh (8:17), call unto Him for help (4:9, 12 and 15), keep the Laws of Moses and remain pure before the Lord (12:6-10 and 13:16). The Assyrians seem to overlook these values and way of life. They aim to overthrow them and replace them with the Assyrian way of life (anti-Jewish religion). While the Jews (led by Judith), on the other hand, are determined to defend their religion and prove that the God of Israel is the one and only true God not Nebuchadnezzar.

Unlike in other Jewish apocryphal stories where the people who opt for non-Jewishness are from within the Jewish community (e.g. *Susanna* cf. Kanonge, 2009:182), the *Judith* narrative presents a different scenario. Here the people who impose non-Jewishness are non-Jews from a different religious affiliation. However, it should be noted that the Elders of Bethulia nearly fell

¹¹⁹ The expression “Καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ” (And the children of Israel who dwell in Judaea heard...), in 4:1 undoubtedly introduces the covenantal people of the Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ (the Lord God of Israel)

into the trap of opting for anti-Jewish religious values, had it not been for Judith who reprimanded them.

Unless a reader chooses to ignore the textual evidence listed above, the Assyrian cult and Jewish religious belief are two main opposing ideologies in the *Judith* narrative. The investigation of the circulation of values follows focusing on the two main parts of the story, that is part I (1-7) and part II (8-16), which will further be divided into distinct episodes. The following part of the study is dedicated to briefly discussing, the itinerary of these opposing values in *Judith*.

4.3.1 ASSYRIAN CULT (ANTI-JEWISH RELIGION)

The narrative presents the Assyrian cult as the possible alternative religion for the Jewish people. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, sends from his capital city, Nineveh, his chief general, Holofernes, with a mighty army to take revenge on all the people who refused to submit to him. Nebuchadnezzar orders his army general to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations might worship Nebuchadnezzar as god (Enslin 1972:7).

This is the main endeavor of Nebuchadnezzar in the narrative, that is, to destroy the Jews and their religion and put the Assyrian cult as the alternative religion of the people. Nebuchadnezzar and his army general, Holofernes, are introduced in the narrative as destructive, merciless and cruel leaders (Chapters 1-3; 5:22-6:13; 7:1-8; 11:1-8). They are symbols of terror that will evoke God's protective power over Israel and the Jewish religion (cf. Chapter 2).

The circulation of these anti-values is noticeable in the story and can be summarized as follows on the semiotic square:

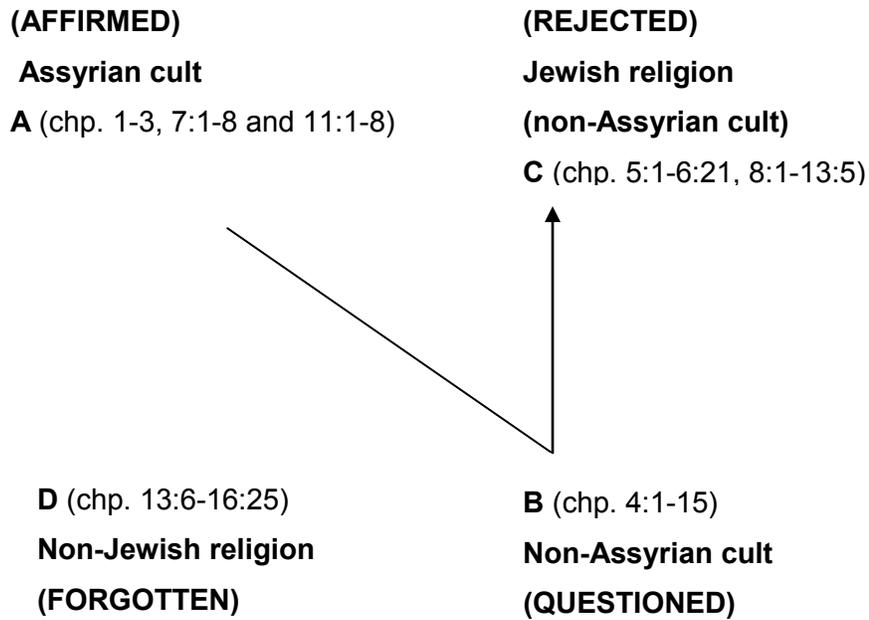


Figure 4.4 Semiotic square illustrating the circulation of anti-values (anti-Jewish religion)

A. The first three chapters of *Judith* narrate the plan of Nebuchadnezzar to wage war against Arphaxad to bring him under subjection and the marches of Holofernes against the western countries, including Israel, which refused to become his allies (Harrington, 1999:27). It is in these chapters where the reader learns more about Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes' cruelty and their determination to destroy other nations and their local gods. The text reports the main reason why these nations must be destroyed in 3:8 when it says,

ὅπως αὐτῷ μόνῳ τῷ Ναβουχοδονοσορ λατρεύσωσι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ γλῶσσαι καὶ αἱ φυλαὶ αὐτῶν ἐπικαλέσωνται αὐτὸν εἰς θεόν (all nations should serve Nebuchadnezzar alone, and that all their dialects and tribes should call upon him as a god).

Nebuchadnezzar is determined to install the Assyrian cult as an alternative religion for all the people. According to Raja (1998:701) the second chapter brings out the high pretensions of Nebuchadnezzar; he is portrayed as making himself equal to Yaweh "the lord of the whole earth" (2:5, cf. also LXX Josh 3:11; Zech 6:5). At this point in the narrative, the Assyrian cult appears to be well on its way to being the only (alternative) religion for Nebuchadnezzar's victims.

B. Chapter 4:1-15 of *Judith* narrates the resistance showed by the Jewish community against the evil plan of Nebuchadnezzar. Raja (1998:701) states that this chapter is a clear example of the dictum "work as though everything depends on God and pray as though

everything depends on you". Hearing about the impending insurgence by Holofernes, Joachim, the high priest and the council of all the people of Israel in Jerusalem order their brethren in the north to take possession of the passage which leads to Judaea. The people appealed to God for help. Clearly, the Jewish community is not ready to give up their religion and accept foreign cults. This refusal to surrender constitutes the rejection and the questioning of the alterity, i.e. the attempt to destroy the Jewish religion and have it replaced by the Assyrian cult.

C. Chapters 5:1-6:21 and 8-13:5 is the narration of how Holofernes and the Assyrian army continue to put pressure on the Jewish community to surrender their cities and sacred places. The *modus operandi* in this section is to silence those who speak the truth about the Jewish religion (e.g. Achior in Chapter 5:1-6:21),¹²⁰ starving the Israelites them to death (7:7, 12 and 17) and to entice (seduction) their leaders (like Judith) to the Assyrian cult's way of life (12:1-9). Instead of submitting to the Assyrian way of life, Judith, as an observant Jew, keeps to the dietary (food) laws, secludes herself for prayer and follows the norms of ritual purification (Raja, 1998:704). The fact that Achior, the people of Bethulia and Judith pass these tests implies that the trajectory of anti-values does not find its way to the end. The Israelites and their leaders, Judith in particular, show uncompromising religious zeal to the Jewish religion. After all the attempts, made by Holofernes and his army, the Assyrian cult still did not succeed to overthrow the Jewish religion.

D. The fourth episode (13:6-16:25), according to Figure 4.4, suggests that the attempt by the Assyrians to replace the Jewish religion with the Assyrian cult fails as Judith beheads Holofernes. The Jewish religion survives extinction and emerges victoriously. The beheading of Holofernes and the defeat of the Assyrian army means that the anti-values (terror, destruction, idolatry and sexual immorality) of the Assyrian cult does not achieve a complete trajectory in *Judith*.

In summary, the central concern in *Judith*, as contested throughout the study, is the assault on the Jewish religion (and its core values) by foreign religions (Assyrian cult), i.e. the story narrates an attempt made by Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the Jewish religion and replace it with the Assyrian cult. Judith (supported by all her helpers) shows her determination to defend the Jewish religion and succeeds after beheading Holofernes and overthrows the Assyrian army. In her success, the narrative acknowledges the intervention of the God of Israel as the helper of Judith.

¹²⁰ Achior is sentenced to death. He is bound and handed over to the people of Bethulia to be killed together with the Israelites when Holofernes attacks them.

The defeat of the Assyrian army by the Israelites leads to the survival of the Jewish religion and the preservation of its core values. Subsequently, Nebuchadnezzar fails in his mission and the God of Israel is hailed a true God, who always protects his people.

In brief, the thematic path of the semiotic square (Fig. 4.4) can be summarized as follows: The narrative starts with the **affirmation** of the Assyrian cult (**A**), then proceeds to **question** it (**B**). The situation in (**C**) shows a complete **rejection** of the Assyrian cult values, and finally the Assyrian cult is forgotten (**D**). The essence of the situation in **D** is that the Assyrian cult is no longer a threat to the existence of the Jewish religion (cf. 1.7.5.2).

4.3.2 JEWISH RELIGION

In discussing the survival of the Jewish religion, Enslin (1972:1) concedes that the author of *Judith* wanted to instruct the Jewish people and to inflame the Judaeans to stand against the assault on the Jewish religion. This is the second value to be discussed in this section. The investigation of the trajectory of this value is also conducted focusing on both parts of the narrative, which for the sake of clarity is organized into four sections (not necessarily episodes in the story). The semiotic square representing these four sections appears as follows:

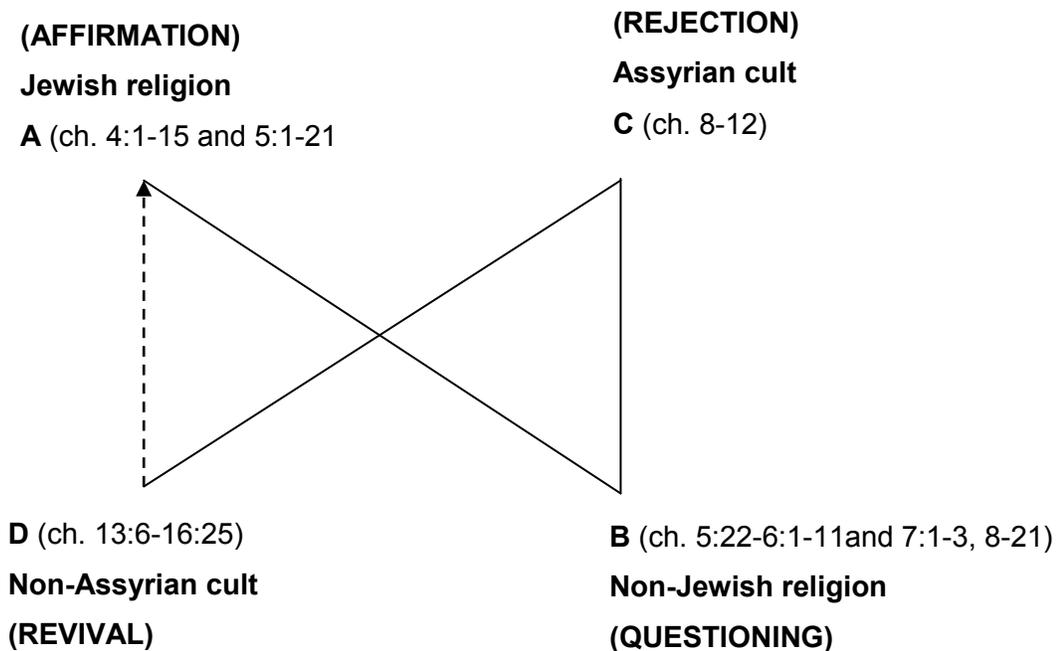


Figure 4.5. Semiotic square illustrating the circulation and the affirmation of values (Jewish religion) in the Judith narrative.

This goal of this section is to discuss the circulation and the affirmation of the Jewish religious values in the *Judith* narrative, as proposed in Fig. 4.5.

A. According to Kaiser (2004:40), the narration of Chapter 4:1-15 raises the question whether the claim (true god) is appropriate for Nebuchadnezzar or for Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (the Lord God of Israel). This section of the narrative introduces the contest between the Jewish religious values and the Assyrian cult anti-values. It also highlights the author's intention with both opposing groups in the narrative. The thematic value of the preservation of the Jewish religious belief is affirmed right from the introduction of "the children of Israel who dwelt in Judaea" (οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ). Contrary to the Assyrians, who trust in Nebuchadnezzar as their god, the children of Israel trust in the God of Israel. The text indicates, in 7:9, that "they cried to their God" (ἀνεβόησαν πρὸς κύριον θεὸν αὐτῶν) for help.

This is not strange of the children of Israel. It is their covenantal obligation to rely on the God of Israel in times of crisis. This can be judged as a good value. The effort to preserve the Jewish religion evolves, in the story, as a strong opposition to the religious claim of Nebuchadnezzar and his followers (Assyrian cult). The resistance shown by the Israelites, since their introduction in Chapter 4, forms the central concern of the whole narrative; i.e. *Judith* seeks to make a call to the covenantal people of God of the Second Temple Period to guard against attempts, by foreign religions, to destroy the Jewish faith. This call seems to be obligatory to follow for any true Jewish religious believer.

B. Having made clear the position of the children of Israel, the story continues to highlight pressure by the Assyrians (5:1-6:21, 8-13:5). The Assyrians, Holofernes in particular, are infuriated by the attitude shown by the Jews and the positive testimony of Achior about the Jewish religion. Holofernes' anger and arrogance as stated in 5:2 (ὠργίσθη θυμῷ σφόδρα – he was very angry) constitutes the questioning of the preservation of the Jewish religious values. Furthermore, when Achior concludes his testimony about children of Israel, "all the people grumbled" (ἐγόγγυσεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς) and demand that Achior be killed. This continues to suggest that the anti-value of non-Jewish religious belief is propagated further by the Assyrians. Instead of receiving Achior's advice, Holofernes shows great interest in the advice of the children of Esau. In 7:16 the text records:

καὶ ἤρρεσαν οἱ λόγοι αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον Ολοφέρνηου καὶ ἐνώπιον πάντων τῶν
θεραπόντων αὐτοῦ, καὶ συνέταξε ποιεῖν καθὰ ἐλάλησαν [And their (children of

Esau) words pleased Holofernes and all his servants and he commanded to do as they had spoken].

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Figurative analysis), the children of Esau are traditional enemies of Israel. They display an attitude of hatred to the children of Israel or against the Jewish religion. They are anti-Israel/anti-covenantal movement. The children of Esau promote values opposed to Jewish faith. At this stage Jewish religious values are questioned or threatened to be rejected.

This act of questioning the Jewish religious values extended in the narration by the evil treatment which Holofernes exerted on the children of Israel. This treatment, as mentioned above, comes after the advice brought forward by the children of Esau (7:8-16). The Assyrian cult, at this stage, intensifies their mission of questioning the Jewish religion. A few examples from the text can be given: In 7:18 the text reports that the armies supporting Holofernes who camped around the Israelites were “a very great multitude” (ἦσαν εἰς πλῆθος πολὺ σφόδρα) and “they had covered the face of the whole land” (καὶ ἐκάλυψαν πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς). Here the author uses exaggeration to elevate the dominance of the Assyrians over the Israelites. As a result of the multitude of the Assyrians camping around them, the Israelites are discouraged. The text, in 7:19, literally says, “ὀλιγοψύχησεν τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῶν” (their spirit was discouraged). This discouragement suggests that the children of Israel do not see a way out from the impending destruction.

In 7:21 the text further reports that the Jewish people are starving and have no water to drink. Consequently, their children “were discouraged” (ἠθύμησεν). According to Swanson (1997) the word “ἠθύμησεν” comes from the word “ἀθυμέω” which can be translated as “to be disheartened”. This word may also mean “to become discouraged to the point that you lack motivation” (Louw & Nida, 1996). In 7:22 the text further reports that their young children and women “had no strength in them” (οὐκ ἦν κραταίωσις ἔπ ἐν αὐτοῖς). The lack of motivation amongst the children of Israel would mean that they have no courage to resist Holofernes for the sake of the Jewish faith values and so no alternative but to surrender to the Assyrian cult’s anti-values. Following the narration of the discouragement amongst the children of Israel is the compromising position taken by the Elders of Bethulia. The Elders of Bethulia are about to surrender the city and the sacred places.

C. Chapters 8-12 highlight the positive trajectory of the Assyrian cult's anti-values over the Jewish religion. The situation here consists of scenarios which suggest that nothing seems to stand in the way of the Assyrians conquering the Children of Israel. Consequently, the Assyrian cult threatens to replace the Jewish religion. Judith has left Bethulia. The people back home continues to starve and they have no water to drink. The leadership in Bethulia has no answers to the situation. All they could do was to let Judith leave the camp with her undisclosed plan (8:35). Despair, terror and great uncertainty rule in Bethulia. Judith, a symbol of the true Jewish faith, is no longer with them, but in the Assyrian camp.

Furthermore, the Assyrian army sees the arrival of Judith in their camp as a triumph for the Assyrian cult. Her speech before the Assyrian patrol and later before Holofernes gives an impression that the Assyrian cult finally has everything under control (10:12-12:19).¹²¹ Judith's lies, flattery and ironic expressions intensify the feeling of victory in the Assyrian camp. Holofernes further places Judith under the care of his servant, Bagoas (12:11). Judith is exactly where Holofernes wants her to be. She has turned to be a property and a sexual object of Holofernes.¹²²

The Assyrian cult, at this stage, seems to have everything under control. However this trajectory does not follow through to the end of the narrative. Things are actually not the way they appear to be.

D. Chapters 13:6-16:25 of the narrative draw attention to the failure of the trajectory of the Assyrian cult's anti-values and the success of the preservation of the Jewish religious values. After the killing of Holofernes, the Assyrians are powerless and helpless, and therefore can no longer propagate their evil schemes against the Jewish religion. It can be argued that the *Judith* narrative seeks to reject the Assyrian cult's anti-values and maintain the values which are essential for the survival of the Jewish religion. The Jewish religion survives extinction.

¹²¹ It must be remembered that the speech of Judith before the Assyrian patrol and Holofernes has no truth in it. Chapter 2 (plotment) discussed the significance of flattery, lies and irony in the speech of Judith.

¹²² Since Judith arrived at the Assyrian camp, the text makes it clear; in 12:16 that Holofernes' desire was to have sexual intercourse with her (τοῦ συγγενέσθαι μετ' αὐτῆς). The word "συγγενέσθαι" come from the verb "συγγίγνομαι" literally meaning "to be with or to hold intercourse with" (Liddell & Scott, 2002:657). This word is used with a sexual connotation in 12:16. Sinful desire and sexual immorality underlines and characterizes a non-Jewish religious belief, and this instance, these anti-values seemed to be totally under control.

Jerusalem and the temple survive destruction. The thematic values of the Jewish religion complete its trajectory.

In summary, Kay (1913:247) suggests, concerning the author of the story, that from the writing in Hebrew and from his detailed references to the geography of the Holy land, it may be inferred that he was a Palestinian Jew. According to Efthimiadis-Keith (2011) *Judith* contains textual elements that link it with the Egyptian origin. As argued in Chapter 1 (1.8) these historical issues are of less importance in the Greimassian semiotic approach of analysis. The point here is that the author seems to be making a strong call to the Jews of the Second Temple period to oppose the extinction of the Jewish religion firmly and strive to preserve its values. This ideology seems to be the central concern of the story and can be seen in the study of the thematic trajectory of the whole story, as discussed above. The trajectory of the promotion of the Assyrian cult (alterity) does not make a complete course in the narrative. However the preservation of the Jewish religious values by the Jews (Judith in particular) completes its trajectory. Therefore, the thematic itinerary does not proceed to the non-Jewish religious belief to imply that the Assyrian cult succeeds in overthrowing the Jewish religion. In fact, the story ends contrary to the desire of Nebuchadnezzar.

In Chapter 16, the story ends with a song of praise unto the God of Israel and a big celebration in Jerusalem. This song of praise is the acknowledgement of the intervention of Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (the Lord God of Israel) in preservation of the Jewish religion. This celebration posits the appreciation of the conservation of the values which the author sought to campaign for with this story.

4.4 THE VERIDICTORY SQUARE

The term 'veridiction' designates the process of truth-telling in a story. This is connected to the circulation of knowledge, or lack of it, within the text: some actors know more than others about what is happening in the narrative; some are being deceived, others misunderstand, etc. (Martin & Ringham, 2000:139). Kanonge (2009:172) argues that the main concern of storytellers is persuasion about truth and falsehood *and this is what veridiction is all about.*¹²³ He states that the production of truth corresponds to exercising a particular cognitive doing or a causing to

¹²³ Italic font is for my own addition to that of Kanonge.

appear as true. He further argues that the concern of such manipulation of truth is “causing to believe” and this technique of persuasion characterizes many Biblical stories.¹²⁴

The story of *Judith* contains, in its many scenes, veridictory modalities: *être* and *paraître* (*being* and *appearing*). Veridiction is also important in the analysis of *Judith* to enable a reader to determine the truth that the author desires to convey and the falsehood he wishes to oppose or expose. The roles played by Nebuchadnezzar (along with Holofernes and his army), Judith and God form the most influential mode of persuasion in answering the question “who is the true god in the narrative?” The veridictory modalities, *être and paraître*, can be mapped out from the role played by these influential characters in the story.

The story of *Judith* begins with successful campaigns by Nebuchadnezzar (advocated by Holofernes and his army) (1:1-2:13). This part of the narrative is dominated by statements and phrases which elevate Nebuchadnezzar’s power and arrogance as irresistible and unstoppable. A few examples can be given from the text. First, in 1:5 the reader learns of Nebuchadnezzar war making (καὶ ἐποίησεν πόλεμον) against king Arphaxad and later in the chapter, in verse 1:13, the story reports: “and he prevailed in his battle for he overthrew all the power of Arphaxad” (ἐκραταιώθη¹²⁵ ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνέστρεψεν πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν Ἀρφαξαδ). Victory for Nebuchadnezzar against Arphaxad is achieved, regardless of the strong security which Arphaxad had built around his city, as reported in 1:1-4.

Second, in 2:5 Nebuchadnezzar continues to make claims that promote him to be some kind of deity to be worshipped by all the nations. He calls himself “the great king, the lord of the whole earth” (ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς γῆς). He sees himself above everyone. The question is: “Is this claim true?”; “Is he really the lord of the whole earth?” Furthermore, those who utter ideas which are contrary to his wishes are banished (e.g. Achior in Chapter 5). The reader wonders if he will banish and destroy all the nations (including Judith). He makes the children of Israel starve to death (7:19-22) and comes close to forcing them to surrender their city and the temple. Again here the reader wonders if the children of Israel will suffer forever and surrender the city and the temple to him.

In summarizing the role played by Nebuchadnezzar and all his successes in the story, it can be argued that he appears (*paraître*), from the beginning of story, to be in total control over everyone and everything. His claim, accompanied by all his successes could make the reader

¹²⁴ See Kanonge (2009:172) for detailed examples in this regard.

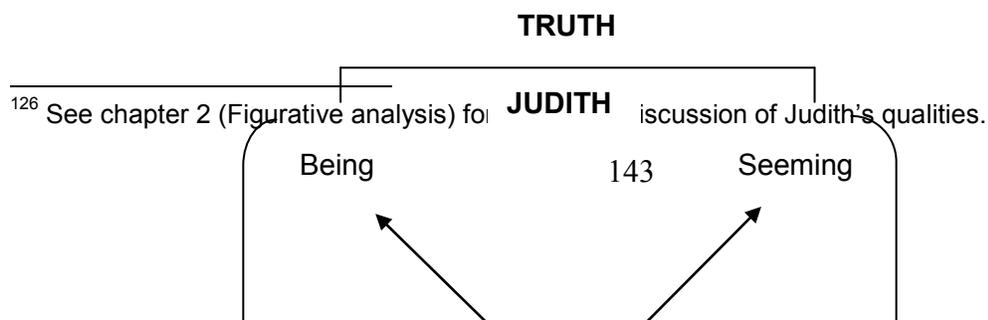
¹²⁵ Literally meaning “he became powerful or overpowering”.

wonder, “Who can stop this king?” The manner in which he destroys all the nations makes him seem unstoppable and unchallengeable.

On the other hand, Nebuchadnezzar’s dominance and religious claim in the first seven chapters of the story cause the Jewish religion to appear (*paraître*) weak and defenseless.

However, the introduction of Judith in Chapter 8 steers the story in a different direction. Contrary to Holofernes and his army, Judith is a God fearing or religious woman (θεοσεβής in 11:17), wise (ἡ σοφία σου in 8:29) and brave woman.¹²⁶ She declares to the Elders in 8:32 that “I will do a thing which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation...” (ποιήσω πρᾶγμα ὃ ἀφίξεται εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν υἱοῦ τῆς τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν). Judith is introduced to advance the course of the Jewish religion and proves that the “true Lord of the Whole earth” is the God of Israel. Judith’s declaration certainly challenges the claim of Nebuchadnezzar and his army general. Judith is the agent of the veridictory modality *être* (*being*) with regard to God and the Jewish religion in the story, as Harrington (1999:28) also acknowledges that the central concern of the story is the question “who is the Lord? Is it Nebuchadnezzar as Holofernes proclaims? Or is it the God of Israel, as Judith eventually proves?”

In brief, the persuasive strategy of communication in the *Judith* narrative shifts from “Assyrian religious claims” or “falsehood” (Nebuchadnezzar claims to be a true god) to truth (The God of the Jewish religion is the true God). Consequently, the God of Israel’s intervention preserves the Jewish religious values. On the other hand, Nebuchadnezzar starts his journey in the story as the one appearing (*paraître*) to be in total control. However, Judith’s role exposes the lies/falsehood of Nebuchadnezzar and his people and exposes the truth concerning the true Lord and the Jewish religion. Based on these two modalities, *être and paraître (being and appearing)*, the semiotic square illustrating the persuasive strategy in the *Judith* narrative can appear as follows: (cf. Martin & Ringham, 2000:139; Greimas & Courtes, 1979:359).



The semiotic square in Figure 4.6 illustrates the persuasive strategy of the author in the *Judith* narrative. Kanonge (2009:175) states that this technique of communication does not aim at producing “objectively true” discourses, but efficiently persuasive discourses. He further states that the construction of persuasive truth may even comprise of illusion. This illusion serves to produce some effects of truth and persuades people to act.

Based on the two veridictory modalities discussed above, *être and paraître* (*being and appearing*), the story of *Judith* can be divided into two parts, that is, its traditional two parts (Part I and II). As argued in Chapter 3 (Narrative analysis), the two parts of the story are viewed as complementary to each other rather than disproportionate as some have suggested.

In the first part of the story (Chapters 1-7), the construction of the persuasive truth concerning the Jewish religion and the Assyrian cult is based on appearance. In the first place, the Assyrian cult appears to be powerful and unstoppable, but this is not the case. It is only an illusion that Holofernes will destroy all the nations and subdue them. In the second place, the Jewish religion appears to be weak and defenseless. Before the entry of Judith, the Elders of Bethulia seem to

be weak to stand against the enemy. However, this situation changes when Judith enters the story.

Therefore, the Assyrian cult and the Jewish religion are judged according to their performance in the process of attacking and defending themselves, respectively. Only the narrator of the story and Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (the Lord God of Israel), at this stage, know the objective truth about the Jewish religion and Assyrian cult. The knowledge concerning the strength of the Jewish religion and weakness of the Assyrian cult is kept a secret by the author until victory (Judith) and defeat (Holofernes) is realized in 13:8-16:25.

The empty conviction of the Assyrians concerning Nebuchadnezzar as “the king of the whole earth” is merely based on the performance of his army which appears (*paraître*) to be unstoppable. This leads them to think (illusion) that the Assyrian cult will become an eligible alternative religion for the Jews. In 3:2-7 the text reports that this appearance persuades many to submit to Nebuchadnezzar’s power. In 7:23-32 the Elders of Bethulia nearly surrender the city to Holofernes. In other words the Jewish religion and its God are displayed as (appears to be) weak and defenseless. Consequently, in 7:24 the children of Israel begin to see the Assyrian cult as something to make peace with, when they say to Ozias:

Κρίναι ὁ θεὸς ἀνά μέσον ὑμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐποιήσατε ἐν ἡμῖν ἀδικίαν μεγάλην οὐ λαλήσαντες εἰρηρικὰ μετὰ υἱῶν Ἀσσοῦρ (Let God be judge between us and you, for you have done unto us a great injustice because you did not seek peace with children of Assyria).

The Assyrian cult is wicked and immoral but in the above quotation they are made to appear as if they are peaceful and reliable.

In the second part of the story (Chapters 8-16), truth is based on *être* (*being*) and is advocated by Judith and Holofernes. Judith goes all out to prove that the God of the Jewish religion is the true God. She succeeds by killing Holofernes and eventually defeats his army. As discussed in Chapter 3 (cf. Narrative analysis; configuration of Judith’s actantial model and the canonical narrative schema) God’s intervention makes the victory possible for Judith. Therefore, Holofernes was not as strong and unstoppable as he appeared to be. Only God and the author of the story know his weakness when it comes to women (sexual immorality).

Kanonge (2009:176) states that only the Lord God of Israel (addresser) knows the truth and falsehood. The victory realized by Judith exposes the truth concerning the contest between the God of Israel (the God of the Jewish religion) and Nebuchadnezzar (the deity of the Assyrian cult). The God of the Jewish religion is the true God and the king of the whole world. Nebuchadnezzar and the Assyrian cult are falsehoods and therefore they cannot be accepted by the covenantal people of God.

Judith's and the rest of the Israelites' song of praise in Chapter 16 acknowledges that even when the Assyrian cult appeared to be strong and unstoppable, it was nothing compared to God's protective power over the Jewish religion. In this song, the author makes sure that this message is clear even to other nations who might attempt to invade the Jewish religion in the future. The text says in 16:17:

οὐαὶ ἔθνεσιν ἐπανιστανομένοις τῷ γένει μου, κύριος παντοκράτωρ ἐκδικήσει αὐτοὺς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως δοῦναι πῦρ καὶ σκόληκας εἰς σάρκας αὐτῶν, καὶ κλαύσονται ἐν αἰσθήσει ἕως αἰῶνος.¹²⁷

Furthermore, the author seems to suggest that the message in the above quotation is heard and well understood by all the people and nations around Israel. The story, in 16:25, closes by reporting that:

καὶ οὐκ ἦν ἔτι ὁ ἐκφοβῶν τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἰουδιθ καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτῆς ἡμέρας πολλὰς (And there was no one that made the Children of Israel afraid any more in the days of Judith nor a long time after her death).¹²⁸

This section discussed the veridiction in *Judith*. The verictory square was used in the analysis of *Judith* to establish the truth that the author desires to convey and the falsehood he wishes to oppose or expose.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter attends to the third step of the Greimassian semiotic analysis of *Judith*, namely, the Thematic analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to track the fundamental values that

¹²⁷ Woe to the nations who will rise up against my nation. The Lord almighty will take vengeance against them in the Day of Judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh and they shall weep in feeling them forever.

¹²⁸ This phrase can be translated literally as “many days” (ἡ μέρας πολλὰς).

generated¹²⁹ the story. The main tool for investigation was the semiotic square. The semiotic square was used to demonstrate the opposing core values in the story. Main opposing values in the story arise around the conflict between the religion and ethnicity/nationality. The main contest in the narrative is between the Jewish religion (and its values) and the Assyrian cult (with its anti-values). From these contrasting values, it was established that the story makes a call to the Jewish people of the Second Temple period to stand against any attempt to destroy the Jewish religion. Jews¹³⁰ are encouraged to refute (even to mock)¹³¹ the assault and the possible extinction of the Jewish religion by foreign religions/cults. This evil attempt must be rejected. The Jewish religious believers must reject the Assyrian cult and its anti-values (destruction, merciless killings, idolatry and sexual immorality).

As for a Jewish religious believer, values like, the fear of God, trust in God, observance of the Law of Moses, are obligatory and must be defended at all cost. The Thematic analysis of *Judith* postulates that the author of the story promotes these values.

The following chapter provides an overview of the arguments put forward throughout this study. It provides a summary of the main concerns, and arrives at a conclusion.

¹²⁹ In the Greimassian semiotic approach the term “generated” refers to the values that pushed the author to tell this story of *Judith* (Martin & Ringham, 2000:12).

¹³⁰ The term “Jew” is used inclusively to refer to men, women and non-Jews (by birth) who trust in the God of Israel and observe the Law of Moses. A good example in the story of Judith would be Achior (cf. Grabbe, 2004:167).

¹³¹ Craven (1983:96) states that Judith, in 11:5-19 mocks Holofernes in her ironical deception. She mocks the self-image of her opponent just as the Lord mocks the arrogance of the haughty Assyrians in Isa. 10:13.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of the study was to investigate the possible purpose of *Judith* using a Greimassian semiotic approach. The investigation is text centered, that is, the close reading and analysis of the Greek text of *Judith* is the main focus of the study. This angle of approach to the text was motivated by the researcher's appreciation for the text of *Judith* as it is, without emphasizing its historical background. The impetus for dealing with the narrative this way grew from the assumption that the possible purpose of the book might be revealed from the data gathered in the text, irrespective of the difficulties surrounding the history and the date one assigns to the text. This was done by investigating the contrasting core values in the text, as guided by the three steps of analysis composed in the approach of analysis employed. The contention here was that narratives do not have to be historically true to impact the society in a pragmatic way (cf. 1.8). Narratives on their own, historically true or not, are written to address issues in a pragmatic way (Kanonge, 2009:16-17).

It was established that the *Judith* scholarship of the last hundred years have been dominated by historical critical methods of investigation (cf. Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:1). It was further proposed that holistic methods like the Greimassian semiotic are needed for narrative analysis to bring new contributions to the field. Even though many scholars have contributed to studying the possible purpose of the book of *Judith*, no investigation seems to have been published on the *Judith* narrative using the Greimassian semiotic approach and arrive at a conclusion as discussed in 5.2 below. This was the driving impetus behind the whole study and it gave rise to the theme of the thesis: "*The Greimassian semiotic analysis of Judith*". The approach applied is thought to be holistic and unique since it entails a thorough study of the contrasting core values in the narrative to achieve its goal.

This thesis aims to try and answer some thought-provoking questions (see Chapter 1) pertaining to the story of *Judith*, which can help us establish the possible purpose of the story. The central theoretical statement of the study is formulated as follows: The Greimassian semiotic approach, through its three levels of analysis (viz. figurative, narrative and thematic) can help to reveal the possible purpose of the *Judith* narrative. The main research problem of the study was formulated as follows: What is the possible purpose of the story based on a Greimassian semiotic analysis of the story of *Judith*?

To answer this main research question, some following issues related to subsidiary questions were addressed.

First, the current state of research on *Judith* and how it accounts for new investigations was discussed and evaluated. Second, that which would constitute a valid method to investigate the possible purpose of *Judith* fairly was considered (cf. also Kanonge, 2009:194). Third, the way in which the Greimassian semiotic analysis, that is, the Figurative, Narrative and Thematic analysis, contribute to the unveiling of the purpose of *Judith* was explored. Fourth, the possibility that the core values which the narrative accept or completely reject can be seen as the subject of the author's campaign to the Jewish religious believers of the Second Temple period was investigated.

Finally, based on the results that emerged from the three step of analysis of the Greimassian semiotic approach, the possible intent of the story was proposed. These results were further used to show the new contribution which the study offers to the Greek literary study of the *Judith*.

This analysis of *Judith* aimed at testing the above mentioned hypothesis by gathering as much data as possible from the text through a close reading. The study also acknowledges the insightful contributions of other scholars whose findings are employed as supporting materials for this study.

The investigation of *Judith* presented here adopts the structure dictated by the approach or method of research. The investigation of the story comprises a three-step-analysis, the results of which are summarized below.

5.2 RESULTS OF RESEARCH

As indicated above, the results of the study of *Judith* are given according to the three levels of the semiotic approach of analysis: the figurative, the narrative and the thematic (cf. also Kanonge, 2009:196).

5.2.1 THE FIGURATIVE LEVEL

The figurative level of analysis was the first step of the Greimassian semiotic approach implemented to analyse *Judith*. It focused firstly on main figures appearing in the story. Careful attention was paid to main oppositions emerging from the text, main motifs recurring in the text and the employment of the narrative. The goal of this investigation was to establish whether

figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment can help to unveil the possible purpose of *Judith*. The Figurative analysis started off by investigating both primary and secondary actors in the story. Even though the actors are considered to be fictive in the narrative, their significance was established.

It was further established from the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment that main oppositions in *Judith* result from the religious conflict between the Assyrian cult and the Jewish religion. On the side of the Assyrians, the claim, in 3:8 that,

ὅπως αὐτῷ μόνῳ τῷ Ναβουχοδονοσορ λατρεύσωσι...αὐτὸν εἰς θεόν (so that all the people may serve Nebuchadnezzar as god);

and the concern of the Israelites (4:2), on the other hand:

καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα σφόδρα...αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ τοῦ ναοῦ κυρίου θεοῦ αὐτῶν ἐταράχθησαν (and they were extremely afraid of him and they were troubled for Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord their God), constituted the conflict in the story.

These two conflicting desires illustrate the beginning of the fundamental opposition in the narrative. The fictive Nebuchadnezzar plans to make himself a god of all the nations (including Israel). He sends out his army to conquer nations for him.

The study further gave attention to the significance of the Assyrian army in the narrative. It was concluded that the Assyrian army is nothing else than a threatening symbol used artificially (fake danger) to unify the Jews and to rejuvenate their zeal to defend the Jewish religion against extinction. Consideration of the questionable figure of Nebuchadnezzar as the king and god of Assyria was also included here.

The claim of Nebuchadnezzar poses a serious threat to the existence of the Jewish religion and its values. As a result, Israel does not accept the self-proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar. Israel is committed to remaining true to their religion, that is, serving Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ and protecting the temple and sanctuary.

Other characters that act positively towards preserving the existence of the Jewish religion also display an attitude of rejection to the Assyrian cult and embrace the Jewish religion. To mention a few examples:

Firstly in relation to Achior, the text, in 14:10, employs the expression “ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ σφόδρα” (he believed in God greatly) to designate a complete turn to the Jewish religion. Achior’s acceptance of the Jewish religion automatically means that he rejects the Assyrian cult way of life. Secondly, the text in 4:8 also describes the responsibility of Joachim as that of giving orders (συνέταξεν) to the Israelites to defend the entry of Jerusalem by their enemies. It was established in the Figurative analysis that Joachim, in the *Judith* narrative, plays a positive role in defending the Jewish religion. He charges the children of Israel to show resistance toward the Assyrian cult. This is certainly his personal conviction too. Thirdly, the prayer of Judith in 9:8, as discussed in Chapter 2, contains expressions with designates a totally negative attitude toward the Assyrian pride and their plan to destroy the Jewish religion. She uses expression like “ῥάξον αὐτῶν τὴν ἰσχὺν ἐν δυνάμει σου”¹³² and “κάταξον τὸ κράτος αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ θυμῷ σου”.¹³³ *Judith* seems to make a call to true Jewish religious believers to stand up and defend the Jewish religion.

The consideration of motifs and intertextuality were done beyond the investigation of characters in the story (cf. also Kanonge, 209:196). The story of *Judith*, just like many other Apocryphal books, contains motifs and intertextual allusion. The author uses expressions, words, names or incidents embedded in the Jewish religious traditions to root *Judith* in the Jewish tradition of the past.¹³⁴ This study argues and eventually concludes that the story of David and Goliath act as an intertextual precedent of *Judith*. The author did this in order to impact the Jewish religious society of the Second Temple period. In summary, a few points can be reiterated to illustrate this fact.

Firstly, the Figurative analysis of the character Judith showed that her qualities (beauty, affluent, bravery and pious) and her heroic act parallels the events of the past heroes of Israel. They all acted in times of religious crisis to prevent the assault of God’s people and their religion. Secondly, the author’s choice of a female protagonist (Judith), a non-Jew (Achior) and a slave

¹³² 8a “Throw down their strength with your power”

¹³³ 8b “Bring down their force with your wrath”

¹³⁴ This conclusion/guideline was borrowed from Kanonge (2009:176) when he was making his conclusion on Susanna.

(Judith's maid) challenges the patriarchal *status quo* which is well known to the addressees (Jewish community). It was drawn from the text that the story of *Judith* explicitly reveals that Jewish society must be structured around the keenness versus reluctance to the Jewish religious matters irrespective of gender (man or woman) or *status quo* (slave or foreigners). In this new proposed structure, gender and *status quo* are deemed totally irrelevant (Kanonge, 2009:124). The maid (slaves) and foreigners (Achior) can participate in the Jewish religious matters as long as they believe in God and remain obedient to the Law.

The second focus of the Figurative analysis was on investigating the emplotment of the story; and consisted of two subdivisions. First, the communicational relationship between *Judith* and its presupposed archetype – the story of David and Goliath - was discussed. The data gathered from the two texts revealed that both protagonists share some striking qualities. Both of them are unlikely heroes in the context of battle in the community (a woman and a young man). The text describes both of them as good looking (beauty) people. The text in 8:7 describes Judith as “καὶ ἦν καλὴ τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὡραία τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα” (a woman of goodly countenance and very beautiful to behold). In 1 Sam. 16:12 David, on the other hand, is similarly described as “καὶ οὗτος πυρράκης μετὰ κάλλους ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει κυρίῳ” (a young man who was ruddy, with beauty of eyes and very goodly to behold). In both stories, the protagonists enjoy a fair share of the favour of the Lord. Judith is a God fearing woman (ἐφοβεῖ το τὸν θεὸν σφόδρα) according to 8:7 and her success at the end of the story confirms the favour she has before the Lord (13:18). In the case of David, the Lord confirms by Himself, in 1 Sam. 16:12, that David “ὅτι οὗτος ἀγαθός ἐστιν” (David is good). His success over the Philistine giant is achieved “ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου” (in name of the Lord).

Both stories also contain parallel phrases: Both protagonists acknowledge that the Lord will bring victory through their hands. In 1 Sam. 17:46 the text reports that “καὶ ἀποκλείσει σε κύριος σήμερον εἰς τὴν χεῖρά μου” (and the Lord shall deliver you this day into my hand).

In the case of Judith (8:33), it is reported that “ἐπισκέψεται κύριος τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν χειρὶ μου” (the Lord will visit Israel by my hand). Both stories also share the same mode of expression in describing the beheading of Holofernes and Goliath. *Judith* 13:8 records that:

καὶ ἐπάταξεν (Ιουδιθ) εἰς τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ ...καὶ ἀφεῖλεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ αὐτοῦ (and Judith smote into his neck...and she took his head from him).

In the case of David (1 Samuel 17:51), it is reported that:

καὶ ἔδραμεν Δαυιδ καὶ ἐπέστη αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν ῥομφαίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐθανάτωσεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀφεῖλεν τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ (and David ran and stood upon him and took his sword and slew him and he took his head).

In brief, the author of *Judith* purposely used this well known story in the history of Israel to model the story of *Judith*.

The second inquiry focused on investigating central tropes and the genre of *Judith*. Attention was drawn to the ironic mode of emplotment and ironic expressions that served a religious motive in the narrative. The study concluded, from the study of the structure of the story and the evidence from the text, that *Judith* is an ironic story. It was further concluded that *Judith* is a religious satire intended to challenge and to reject, in an ironic way, the claim that Nebuchadnezzar is god.

5.2.2 THE NARRATIVE LEVEL

The narrative level of analysis constituted the second step of the Greimassian semiotic approach. The investigation, at this stage, focussed on the structure of the story (particularly, on the initial and final state), on the actantial model and the canonical narrative schema. The main goal in this part of the investigation was to use the structure, the actantial configuration and the canonical schema in order to shed light on the purpose of *Judith*. From the narrative analysis, it became clear that the structure, the actantial configuration and the canonical narrative schema of *Judith* were purposely designed to address the religious crisis facing the Jewish people.

The investigation of the structure focused on two crucial aspects, namely: the initial and the final state on the one hand, and the logic of the ending of the story on the other. All these mechanisms of analysis reveal that the Assyrians' religious claims are being challenged. The numerous possibilities of narrative endings from which the author could have chosen suggest that the current ending of the story of *Judith* is an intentional design choice of the author (cf. Kanonge, 2009:135-136).

The analysis of the relation between the beginning and ending of Judith revealed that, in the beginning of the narrative, the Jewish religion was under severe threat of extinction. However, the ending of the story opposes the claim by the Assyrians radically and the Jewish religion emerges victorious through the transformational doing of the main character, Judith. The ending of the story reveals (Fig. 3.6) that the subject of doing (Judith) is no longer in disjunction (**A**) with the object of quest (Jewish religion), but is in conjunction (**V**) with the object. This means that the story progresses from “mission to be accomplished” to “mission accomplished”.

Furthermore, the study has showed that at the point of Israel’s victory over the Assyrians, the narrative programme of threat and impending extinction of the Jewish religion is interrupted. The object of value, which is the survival of the Jewish religion, is achieved by Judith (mission accomplished). The investigation also revealed the positive role played by Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (the Lord God of Israel) in this regard. The story ends, on the one hand, to the disgrace and defeat of the Assyrian cult. With regard to this, the text records in 15:2 that

καὶ ἐπέπεσεν αὐτοῦ ς τρόμος καὶ φόβος, καὶ οὐκ ἦν ἄνθρωπο ς μένων κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ πλησίον ἔπι, ἐκχυθέντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἔφευγον ἐπὶ πάσας ὁδοὺς τοῦ πεδίου καὶ τῆς ὄρεινῆ ς.¹³⁵

On the other hand, the investigation shows that the story ends honourably in favour of the Jewish religion. The expression in 16:25 serves to illustrate this point:

καὶ οὐκ ἦν ἔπι ὁ ἐκφοβῶν τοὺς υἱοὺ ς Ἰσραηλ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἰουδιθ καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτῆ ς ἡμέρας πολλά ς.¹³⁶

The investigation of the actantial model entailed examining the distribution of actantial roles in the story. This investigation dealt with the relation between actants and antactants. It was established that Judith is the subject in the story and Holofernes, the anti-subject. Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (Lord God of Israel) is the addresser and the initiator of Judith’s mission (see Kanonge, 2009: 141 on Susanna). Nebuchadnezzar is the anti-addresser and the one inspiring the arrogance of the Assyrian cult over Jewish religion. The study contends that the object of value is the Jewish religion (its extinction and survival). Judith’s central mission is to save the Jewish

¹³⁵ 2. And fear and trembling fell upon them, so that there was no man was remaining next his neighbour but they rushed out all together and fled into every way of the plain and of the hill country.

¹³⁶ 25 And there was no one who made the children of Israel afraid anymore in the days of Judith and for a long time after her death.

religion from the looming danger of extinction and thus proves that the God of the Jewish religion is the supreme God. On the other hand Holofernes' mission is to destroy the Jewish religion and replace it with the Assyrian cult, and hail Nebuchadnezzar as god. Holofernes' mission fails and Judith's succeeds. The failure for Holofernes means that his god is not a real god and the opposite applies to Judith and her God.

The canonical narrative schema was used to trace the trajectory of the subject (Judith) in pursuing the main object of quest in the story. The study looked at the schema which comprises four different stages, viz.: contract, competence, performance and sanction (see 3.1.3.2).

The investigation of the contract (first stage) revealed that the addresser (Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ) motivates the action and communicates the modalities of desire or obligation (*acquisition of wanting-to-do or having-to-do*) to Judith. Judith emerges as a character who is the most concerned about the danger facing the Jewish people/religion and shows a desire to defend it. The study disclosed that Judith's acceptance of responsibility is inspired by her fear of the Lord. This act by Judith is also seen as God's manipulation; God causing Judith to act.

At the second stage (investigation of competence) Judith moves from virtualizing modalities of desire to actualizing modalities (*Knowing-how-to-do* and *being-able-to-do*) that would make it possible for her to achieve her goal of saving the Jewish religion. Judith's attributes (fear of the Lord, beauty, wisdom and bravery) plays a role in the achievement of her mission.

The third stage investigated the performance by the subject of doing. This stage was restricted to the event of the decapitation of Holofernes. The investigation concluded that Judith acquires the object of her quest, by decapitating Holofernes. It was further proved that the performance was instantaneous. The killing of Holofernes by Judith happens in one night in a specific place, that is, in Holofernes' tent. It was further showed that the decapitation of Holofernes summarizes the encounter between the subject and the anti-subject. It is in this stage where the transfer of the object of quest happened. The investigation revealed that the death of Holofernes was a turning point toward the survival of the Jewish religion and the shaming of the Assyrian cult.

The sanction constituted the fourth and last stage of canonical narrative schema. This stage focused on the assessment of the mission (more especially the performance) by the subject. The investigation concluded that the performance by Judith is a success, worthy of reward and

positive according to the norms and values within the Jewish religious community. The story ends with the honouring of Judith and praising of the Lord God of Israel.

The study, therefore, concludes that the investigation of the canonical narrative schema (contract, competence, performance and sanction), points to the Jewish religious crisis in the story.

5.2.3 THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The Thematic analysis was the last of the three steps following the Greimassian semiotic method. This part of the analysis aimed at mapping out the core values that generated the story of *Judith* and also revealing the anti-values that the Jewish religious community must reject. The analysis here depended on the results established in the figurative opposition of the Figurative analysis.

The aim of this part of the investigation was to prove whether the opposition of core values and their trajectory on the semiotic square help to unveil the possible purpose of *Judith*. The mechanism of analysis used here was the semiotic square. The semiotic square was also used to determine/portray the contrasting core values in the story. The study concluded that main contrasting values in the story are structured around religious affiliation and ethnicity/nationality. The text reveals these main oppositions through expressions such as: “οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ” (4:1); “Ἀσσύριοι” (1:1); “Κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ” (9:12); and “Ναβουχοδονοσορ λατρεύσωσι εἰς θεόν” (3:8).

The main contest in the narrative is between the Jewish religion (and its values) and the Assyrian cult (with its anti-values). From these contrasting values, it was established that the story strives to encourage the Jewish people of the Second Temple period to refute the assault and the possible extinction of the Jewish religion. The Assyrian cult, on the one hand, with its anti-values (destruction, human slaughtering, idolatry and sexual immorality) must be avoided, at all cost. Jewish religious values (the fear of God, trust in God, and observance of the Law of Moses, on the other hand) are obligatory to the Jews and must be defended with their lives.

The second investigation of the Thematic analysis was the thematic itinerary. In this step, the semiotic square was used to track the trajectory of core values in the story (from the initial to the final state). The goal here was to establish which values the story seeks to reject, and which values it seeks to maintain. It was argued that the circulation of values defines the ideology that the narrative seeks to establish or overthrow (Kanonge, 2009:181). Regarding the circulation of

values, Kanonge (2009:181) further states that the itinerary of commendable values, generally, completes the course and the itinerary of non-commendable values stop halfway. It was observed, in this regard, that the itinerary of the Assyrian cult's anti-values does not complete its course but the itinerary of the Jewish religious values completes its course successfully.

The last part of the Thematic analysis was the consideration of the veridictory square. In this section the object of investigation was the construction of persuasive truth in *Judith* using modalities of *être* (being) and *paraître* (appearing). The goal of the investigation was to establish the truth that the story of Judith wants to convey and the falsehood it wishes to oppose or expose.

The study of the veridictory square concludes that the persuasive strategy of communication in the *Judith* narrative shifts from false claim to truth. The claim of the Assyrian cult (falsehood) appears to be true (as judged by their army's performance) but it turns out not to be so. The narrative at the end reveals that Nebuchadnezzar's claim of being the lord of the whole earth is a falsehood. In fact the truth is that the God of the Jewish religion is the true God; He is the true Lord of the whole earth. His intervention (as addresser and helper) in the story ensures the preservation of the Jewish religion and its values.

5.3 CONTRIBUTION

This study consists of a contribution to research on the investigation of the possible purpose of *Judith* based only on the structure of the story. This goal was achieved by using the three levels of analysis, that is, figurative, narrative and thematic comprised in the Greimassian semiotic approach of analysis; and the result from each of the three steps of analysis were convincing.

The study concludes, therefore, that the possible purpose of *Judith* is to rejuvenate the Jewish religion during the Second Temple period.¹³⁷ The story raises the awareness of the Jewish people to defend their religion and its values, from any form of assault and possible extinction.

This study supports the hypothesis that the possible purpose of *Judith* can be revealed from the data gathered in the text, irrespective of the date one assigns to the text, by means of studying the contrasting core values in the text, as guided by the Greimassian semiotic approach.

¹³⁷ The conclusion (which is the contribution) of this study agrees with the findings of Gruen (1998). It must be noted, however, that Gruen does not employ the Greimassian semiotic approach, as this study does, to arrive at his findings.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study acknowledges that the summary of the research and the conclusions reached and presented above are the results of the application of the Greimassian semiotic approach on *Judith*. The study does not claim to have discussed all issues regarding the possible purpose or the meaning of *Judith* during the Second Temple period. The findings of this study are therefore not unquestionable but are challengeable. Having engaged in the investigation and arrived at the conclusions provided above, this study suggests the following as concerns for further investigations:

The first concern lies on the application of the approach of analysis, as was the main issue with this study of *Judith*. This study does acknowledge that the Greimassian semiotic approach is not the only method that can be used to investigate the possible purpose of *Judith*. Other methods can also be employed to investigate the book of *Judith* regarding its purpose and meaning to the Jews of the Second Temple period.

Second and last, the role played by Judith (woman), Judith's maid (woman slave) and Achior (foreigner) in the story is intriguing. This study suggested that these characters play their roles as reliable Jewish religious carriers in the time of crisis. Can this kind of characterization in *Judith* be suggestive of some kind of equality and the emancipation of women and slaves amongst Jewish religious believers of the Second Temple period? This may be so, particularly considering, as Kanonge (2009:205) observes, that there was a debate on the status of women among Jewish thinkers, just before the Common Era. Can the author of *Judith* be considered as forerunners of the women's emancipation movement? Further research is required to provide answers to these questions

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter comprises the summary of the findings of the Greimassian semiotic analysis of *Judith*. The aim of the study was to investigate the possible purpose of *Judith* based only on the structure of the story. The results from each of the three steps of analysis were convincing. Finally, the contention of this study is that the purpose of *Judith* can possibly be established by using the structure of the story.

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