

**The emergence of women in the LXX apocrypha,
a semiotic study of Susanna**

D. M.Kanonge

20375751

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Promoter: P. J. Jordaan

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SUMMARY

The emergence of women in the LXX apocrypha, a semiotic study of Susanna

The central concern of this study is the emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general, and *Susanna* in particular. The contention of the study is that *Susanna* radically reverses the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period against women, as exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

In order to test this hypothesis, the semiotic approach of the school of Paris, particularly the version of Everaert-Desmedt, is followed. The analysis focusses on the three levels of analysis comprising the Greimassian semiotic approach, as refined by Everaert-Desmedt: the figurative, the narrative and the thematic. Following an introduction in Chapter 1 and justification of the research approach in Chapter 2, Chapters 3 and 4 constitute the analysis of the story. Finally, chapter 5 gives a summary of the study and formulates some recommendations for further research.

The figurative analysis tests the hypothesis by investigating figurative oppositions, motifs and the emplotment of *Susanna*. The narrative analysis examines *Susanna* focusing on the structure, the actantial configuration, the canonical narrative schema and the veridictory square. The thematic analysis attempts to map out fundamental values that generated the story by sorting out values in terms of negative versus positive and by observing their course in the unfolding of the story.

From the results of the semiotic analysis, it is evident that the main concern of *Susanna* is the redefinition of Jewishness. In fact, the choice of a pious woman as a subject and two corrupted men as anti subject of the narrative reveals that gender plays an important role in the process of redefinition of Jewish identity. The driving concern of the story is identified and formulated in a question as follows: "Who is a true Jew?"

Results from the analysis of *Susanna* reveal that the answer to this question is unambiguous: Neither exclusively a man nor a woman. True Jewishness, according to the story, depends exclusively on the commitment to the Law of Moses. The attempt to define Jewishness by

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excluding women is deemed irrelevant and thus strange to Jewish traditions and history. A woman such as Susanna, committed to the Law even to the cost of her life, is a true Jew, “a daughter of Judah” (θυγάτηρ Ἰούδας). Men like the elders, opposing the Law, are dangerous strangers, “the seed of Canaan” (σπέρμα Χανάν). Based on such a conclusion, *Susanna* unambiguously reads as a gender equalizing narrative.

OPSOMMING

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Die hoofdoel van die studie is om die opkoms van vroue in die LXX apokriewe oor die algemeen, en in die besonder *Susanna* te bestudeer. Die gevolgtrekking van hierdie studie is dat *Susanna*, op 'n radikale wyse, die geslagtelike vooroordele teen vroue van die Tweede Tempel periode, soos dit in die *Wysheid van Ben Sira* voorkom, omkeer.

Die semiotiese benadering van die Paryse skool, meer spesiek die unieke benadering van Everaert-Desmedt, word gebruik om hierdie hipotese te toets. Die analise fokus op die drie vlakke van Griemas se analise soos verfyn deur Everaert-Desmedt: die figuurlike, die narratiewe en die tematiese vlakke. Na die inleiding in Hoofstuk 1 en regverdiging van die navorsingsmetode in Hoofstuk 2, bevat Hoofstukke 3 en 4 die analise van die storie.

Die figuurlike analise toets die hipotese deur die figuurlike opposisies te ondersoek, asook die motiewe en die verhaalstruktuur van *Susanna*. Die narratiewe analise ondersoek die struktuur, die aktansiële dieptestuktuur, die kanonieke narratiewe skema en die struktuur van betekenis. Die tematiese analise poog om die grondliggende waardes aan te dui wat die storie laat ontstaan het. Dit word gedoen deur verskillende waardes te onderskei en hulle trajek aan te dui.

Die resultate van die semiotiese analise dui daarop dat die hoofdoel vir die skryf van *Susanna* die herdefiniëring van Joodsheid is. Die keuse van 'n vrou as onderwerp van die narratief duid daarop dat geslag 'n belangrike rol speel in die herdefiniëring van Joodsheid. Die hoofpunt van die storie wat geïdentifiseer is, kan soos volg in 'n vraag gestel word: "Wie is 'n ware Jood?"

Die resultate van die analise dui daarop dat die antwoord op hierdie vraag meerduidig is. Dit is nie eksklusief 'n man of 'n vrou nie. Joodsheid is eksklusief verbind aan die onderhouding van die Wet

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van Moses. Die poging om Joodsheid te definieer sonder die insluiting van vroue word bevind as irrelevant en selfs vreemd tot die Joodse tradisies en geskiedenis. 'n Vrou soos Susanna, getrou aan die Wet van Moses selfs tot die dood, is 'n ware Jood, " 'n dogter van Juda". Mens soos die oudstes, wat die Wet van Moses teëstaan, is gevaarlik, "die saad van Kanaän". Hierdie gevolgtrekking bring mens onmiskenbaar tot die konklusie dat *Susanna* 'n geslag-gelykmakende narratief is.

RÉSUMÉ

L'émergence des femmes dans les apocryphes de la LXX, une étude sémiotique de Susanne.

La préoccupation centrale de cette recherche est l'émergence des femmes dans les Apocryphes de la LXX en général, et *Susanne* en particulier. La prétention de l'étude est que *Susanne* inverse radicalement les préjugés sexistes de l'époque du Second Temple, contre les femmes, comme en témoigne la Sagesse de Ben Sira.

Afin de tester cette hypothèse, nous nous sommes inspiré de l'approche sémiotique de l'école de Paris en général et la version d'Everaert-Desmedt en particulier. L'étude porte essentiellement sur les trois niveaux d'analyse de la sémiotique Greimassienne, telle que raffinée par Everaert-Desmedt. Il s'agit notamment du niveau figuratif, du niveau narratif et du niveau thématique. Après une introduction au chapitre 1 et la justification de l'approche de recherche au chapitre 2, les chapitres 3 et 4 constituent l'analyse proprement dite du récit. Le chapitre 5 résume enfin les résultats de la recherche et formule quelques recommandations en des nouvelles investigations.

L'analyse figurative teste l'hypothèse en recherchant les oppositions figuratives et les motifs d'une part, et en examinant minutieusement la mise en intrigue de *Susanne* d'autre part. L'analyse narrative examine *Susanne* en se concentrant sur sa structure, sa configuration actantielle, son schéma narratif canonique et son carré véridictoire. L'analyse thématique enfin, tente, par le biais du carré sémiotique, de dénicher d'abord les valeurs fondamentales qui ont généré l'histoire en opposant les valeurs négatives aux valeurs positives et, enfin, d'observer leur course dans le déroulement du récit.

Il est évident, d'après les résultats de l'analyse sémiotique, que la préoccupation principale de *Susanne* est inclusivement la redéfinition de l'identité juive. En effet, le choix d'une femme comme sujet et deux hommes comme anti sujet du récit révèle que le genre joue un rôle important dans

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cette redéfinition de l'identité juive. La préoccupation centrale de l'histoire est identifiée et formulée sous forme de la question suivante: «Qui est un vrai Juif? »

Les résultats de l'analyse de *Susanne* révèlent que la réponse à cette question est sans aucune ambiguïté: ni exclusivement un homme ni une femme. La vraie identité juive, selon le récit, dépend fondamentalement de l'engagement de l'individu à se soumettre inconditionnellement à la loi de Moïse. La tentative à définir l'identité juive en excluant les femmes est considérée ici comme non pertinente et partant, étrangère à l'histoire et aux traditions juives.

Selon le récit, une femme comme Susanne, restée imperturbablement loyale à la loi, même au prix de sa vie, est certainement «une vraie Juive», une fille de Juda» (θυγάτηρ Ἰουδαῖας), malgré sa féminité. Tandis que des hommes tels que les deux anciens, farouchement opposés à la loi, sont des dangereux étrangers, «la semence de Canaan» (σπέρμα Χανάν), malgré leur masculinité.

Sur base de cette conclusion et en rapport avec le débat du genre, *Susanne* se lit, sans aucune ambiguïté, comme un récit égalisateur.

PREFACE

The Second Temple period was marked by deep social cleavages. Ethnicity, social status and gender constituted insurmountable boundaries between people. With regard to gender cleavage, it is recounted that a male Jew uttered the following prayer every morning:

Blessed he who did not make me a gentile, Blessed be he who did not make me a woman, Blessed he who did not make me an "ignoramous" ... who did not make me a woman because women are not obligated to fulfil commandments. (Ilan, 1996:176)

This prayer reveals, without doubt, the exclusion of women from the Jewish religion. This practice, however, according to the message of *Susanna*, seems to be strange to Jewish traditions of Biblical times. It likely has its origin in the mixing of Jews with other people, during the Second Temple period. The above prayer seems to be rooted in Greek traditions rather than in Jewish texts. In fact, according to a maxim attributed successively to Thales, Socrates and Plato, "there are three reasons to be thankful to the gods: that I am a human; that I am a Greek; that I am a male" (quoted by Reeder, 1995:26 cf. also Bruce, 1982:187; George, 1994:285). Furthermore, Greek myths recount the creation of the woman as punishment inflicted to the man by the gods (Lefkowitz & Fant, 1992:23). In the Jewish traditions, however, the creation of the woman (Eve) is recounted as the Hebrew God's attempt to address the man's (Adam) need of loneliness.

Jews of the Second Temple period seem to have been much concerned with the re-examination of this cleavage between men and women. In fact, in Books written during this period, the LXX Apocrypha, women emerge significantly, in a contrasting way. The investigation of the emergence of women in these books in general, and *Susanna* in particular, is the object of this study.

Before embarking into the world of the LXX, however, it is a sacred duty to pay tribute to those who contributed to the success of the investigation:

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Εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης Θεοῦ
καὶ
τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Potchefstroom,

November 26, 2009

Dichk Mwamba Kanonge

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To the memory of

Rev. **Aaron Kalenga**

a gifted Bible Languages lecturer who
laid a solid foundation for my
knowledge of Greek

μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι. ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα,
ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν,
τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν

(Revelation 14:13)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The study examines the emergence of women in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple¹ period, especially the Septuagint Apocrypha. The corpus embodies the books of Tobit, Judith, Greek Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, 1, 2, 3 and 4 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, the Prayer of Manasseh and Psalms 151². According to this project of study, material on women in these books may be studied from two vantage points:

- The time of their production,
- the prominence of women in these books

All these volumes were produced at a crucial moment of the Jewish nation. 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 (Nickelsburg, 2005:9-15).

The literature under investigation came about in this crisis while Jews were struggling for their identity and survival, as Gruen (1998:xv) states. In other words, this literature appears as a reinterpretation of the Jewish traditions and history. By this endeavor, Jews aimed at facing the challenge of the time and adjusting to the new way of life. The adjustment could not become effective without a reconsideration of their understanding of their sacred scriptures and all its

¹ The expression *Second Temple period* refers to what is known as the Intertestamental Period. The delimitation of this period, however, is subject to debate (Grabbe, 2000:6; 2006:2; Schiffman, 1991:44; Anderson, 2002:2). The period extends from the 6th century BCE to the 1st CE (Hachlili, 2005:17, 37; Helyer, 2002:17)

² See Jobes & Silva (2000:80), Harrington (1999:7) and Craven (2003:193-194) for the number of apocryphal Books in the Septuagint.

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consequences on social and cultural level. In fact, the letter of Aristeas (second century BCE; cf. Geisler & Nix, 1984:503; Elwell, 1988:2025) shows that at that particular time, at least the Pentateuch already existed in Greek (Schürer 1890:160). Conybeare & Stock (1905:15) are of the opinion that:

Prophets, and the rest of the Books', so far as the last were then written, already existed in Greek at the time of the writing, and the text itself shows acquaintance with the phraseology of the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch. That Prologue cannot have been written later than 132 B.C., and may have been written as early as the reign of the first Euergetes, who succeeded Philadelphus (B.C. 247-222).

It is in these particular surroundings that books with special emphasis on women were written. Scholars generally agree that most of the LXX Apocrypha have much to do with the preservation of Jewish identity (Gruen, 1998:xx). This is the case for Tobit (Hieke, 2005:120; Nowell, 2005:13; Perdue, 2005:154; Beyerle, 2005:71-88), Judith (Kaiser, 2004:39; Efthimiadis-Keith, 2004:288) Greek Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ben Sira (Hunter, 2006:194-195; Harrington, 1980:184-187), Additions to Daniel, the 1,2,3 and 4 Maccabees (Doran, 1980:201), and 1 Esdras (Eron, 1991).

The highlighting of women at that particular time seems to go together with the redefinition of Jewish identity in terms of the reconsideration of gender roles. There is no doubt that this period played an important role in the reinterpretation of Jewish theology and traditions (deSilva, 200:20). It is possible that the emergence of women in these books was part of the reconsideration of Jewish tradition of the Second Temple period.

This period, however, is important not only for the Judaism but also for Christianity. It is, in a way, the cradle for the Christian thought and the development of the Rabbinic Judaism as well (Harrington, 2005:2-3; deSilva, 2002:25). Thus, the understanding of some Christian and Rabbinic views of women will require a familiarity with this formative period. In any case, a study of women in the Apocrypha constitutes a prerequisite for a study of women in the NT. It would then be biased to

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read NT documents against the Greco-Roman World without taking into account its Jewish background as reflected in the Apocrypha. As Jensen (1996:xxi) puts it, "playing off Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian women against each other apologetically would contradict their intentions".

The Apocrypha constitute an important source of valuable information for the study of women and gender roles in Early Judaism and in the ancient world in general (Ilan, 2001:127-153). In fact, women emerge remarkably in the LXX apocrypha. Female characters appear frequently in this corpus and are portrayed as playing decisive roles for the sake of the Jewish nation. Judith saves her nation from the Assyrians' invasion by luring and then killing Holofernes. Consequently, she is celebrated by Joakim, the high priest (Judith 15:9b), as follows: "Σὺ ὕψωμα Ἱερουσαλημ, σὺ γαυρίαμα μέγα τοῦ Ἰσραηλ, σὺ καύχημα μέγα τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν" (You are the elevation of Jerusalem; you are the great exultation of Israel; you are the great glory of our nation). Esther also saves her people by countering Haman's decree stipulating the annihilation of all Jews (Additions to Esther E and F). In 2 Maccabees 7, the heroic resistance of the mother with her seven children to the Antiochus's persecution and their ensuing death constitute "the turning point in the historical drama" (Nickelsburg, 2005:108). Susanna's resistance to the elders' advances saves her community from lawless and maintains the identity of her people (Tkacz, 2008). It is worth noticing that:

- As special characters, women emerge remarkably in the Septuagint Apocrypha. Of fifteen books embodying the corpus, ten of them (Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), Additions to Daniel, the Maccabees (1, 2, 3 & 4) and 1 Esdras) refer to women in a noteworthy way.
- The appearance of women in these ten books seems to go beyond a mere remark. Even in books where they appear just in one Chapter as in 2 Maccabees 7 or in some verses as in 1 Esdras 4, the roles they are given are generally central to the book (cf. Nickelsburg, 2005:108 in relation with 2 Maccabees 7) or expose some negative aspects of the ancient

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patriarchal society (cf. Eron, 1991 in relation with women in 1 Ezra 4). These are aspects like war, violence and the killing of women and children.

The prominent appearance of women in this corpus gives good reason for the title of the study: *The Emergence of Women in the Septuagint Apocrypha*. According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, to emerge here means literally to come out “from a place shut off from view, or from concealment, obscurity, retirement, or the like into sight and notice” (Stein, 1967:466). This is apparently the case for women in the Septuagint Apocrypha. There are certainly stories of extraordinary women in the Jewish environment and in the Greco-Roman world. However, Esler (2002:129) suggests that the ideal status of women proposed by the authors of these documents sounds unique and unknown to both Hebrew and Greco-Roman traditions.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Women appear constantly in the Septuagint Apocrypha. In narratives such as Judith, Additions to Esther, Susanna and 2 Maccabees, they emerge as leading heroic figures in Israel, as well as in the Diaspora. In the wisdom of Ben Sira, however, they are subject to bitter criticism and disapproval (cf. Coggins, 1998:85-90; Snaith, 1974:130 in relation with Ben Sira’s assumption that woman was the origin of evil). Books in which they emerge outstandingly include Tobit, Ben Sira, 1-4 Maccabees, 1 Esdras 4, Judith, Esther (the Additions) and Susanna (Additions to Daniel). These books were written in some overlapping periods of time from the third century to the first century BCE and they circulated in the same period among Jews (Hyeler, 2002:21). Although they all notably refer to women, however, they compose two sets of discourses with two totally different views.

- On the one hand Ben Sira represents a very negative and pessimistic view of women. He is fundamentally conservative and describes women as dangerous and deserving no credit. In fact, he is nothing else than a misogynist. This vision seems to be also characteristic of the wisdom literature, such as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. However, Ben Sira “deals with negative topics about women that are not contained in the biblical wisdom or other

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literature” (Trenchard, 1982:172-173). It is certain that his view of women seems to have no exact precedent in the Jewish traditions preserved in the canonical books of the Hebrew Bible. Evidence suggests that he was influenced by the Greco-Roman negative vision of women. In fact, according to Collins (1997:68),

[t]here is no precedent in Hebrew tradition for the view that woman is source of all evil, but there is a clear Greek precedent in the theory of Pandora’s Box. It would be too simple to ascribe the misogynist aspects of Ben Sira’s thought to Hellenistic influence. Pseudo-Phocylides represents a more heavily Hellenised form of Judaism but does not pick up these elements. There is undoubtedly Greek influence here, but Ben Sira’s personality also played a part in his selective use of Greek culture.

That Ben Sira’s view of women was influenced by Greek tradition can be observed from the difference between Jewish and Greek accounts of the origin of women. In the Jewish canonical tradition, the origin of the woman is explained as follows (Genesis 2:18-22):

¹⁸Καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς Οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον, ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κατ’ αὐτόν. ¹⁹ καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ καὶ πάντα τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἤγαγεν αὐτὰ πρὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ ἰδεῖν, τί καλέσει αὐτά, καὶ πᾶν, ὃ ἐὰν ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸ Ἀδὰμ ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, τοῦτο ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. ²⁰ Καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Ἀδὰμ ὀνόματα πᾶσιν τοῖς κτήνεσιν καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς πετεινοῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς θηρίοις τοῦ ἀγροῦ, τῷ δὲ Ἀδὰμ οὐχ εὐρέθη βοηθὸς ὁμοῖος αὐτῷ. — ²¹ καὶ ἐπέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς ἕκστασιν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀδὰμ, καὶ ὑπνωσεν, καὶ ἔλαβεν μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεπλήρωσεν σάρκα ἀντ’ αὐτῆς. ²² καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὴν πλευράν, ἣν ἔλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ, εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ ἤγαγεν αὐτήν πρὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ³.

³ ¹⁸The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the

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The woman's creation is recounted here as God's attempt to address Adam's loneliness. This is not the case with the Greek account of the origin of the woman. In fact, according to Lefkowitz and Fant (1992:23), "[i]n an epic that explains how and why man's life is now so hard, reads as a school text throughout antiquity, Hesiod describes how woman was given man's representative Epimetheus (Afterthinker) as punishment for his brother Prometheus' (Forethinker) crimes against Zeus". This is thus a negative view of woman.

From these two texts, accounting for the creation of the woman, it is clear that Ben Sira can clearly be identified with the latter rather than with the former.

- On the other hand, Tobit, Judith, 2 Maccabees (likely a reinterpretation of 1 Maccabees cf. Nickelsburg, 2005:110), 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, Esther and Susanna, give the impression to be positive and enthusiastic about women. They portray them as commendable partners embodying the hopes for the survival of the nation in hard times.

This thesis is devoted to exploring this phenomenal emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha. However, due to the abundance of the material on women in the LXX, it is impossible to deal with all examples semiotically, in a single thesis. Consequently, only the narrative of Susanna will constitute the focus of this study. *Susanna* will be studied in consideration of its historical and sociological background of the Second Temple period. For this reason and for the preservation of the dialectical structure of the study, the analysis of Susanna will be contrasted to the patriarchal ideology of the Second Temple period in general and Ben Sira in particular.

The book of Ben Sira, especially its view of women, has already been subject of important investigations. Consequently, it will not receive a special analysis here. Reference is made to Ben Sira in this thesis, depending on the contributions by scholars such as Trenchard (1982), Sanders

place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (Today New International version: TNIV)

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(1983), Di Lella (1966), deSilva (1996), Eron (1991), Camp (1991), McKinlay (1996), Ilan (2001) , Corley and Skemp (2005).

As the following résumé reveals, the view of women in *Susanna* seems to be the complete opposite of the wisdom of Ben Sira in particular, and the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period in general.

Susanna is a story of a beautiful and pious Jewish woman. From pious parents, Susanna is married to a rich and influential Jew living in Babylon, Joakim. Joakim's house and garden serve as public gathering place for Jews. Susanna goes out every day for a walk in the garden, at noon, when Jews go home for lunch.

One year two elders were elected to assume the functions of judges within the Jewish community. However, despite their high position, the two elders were highlighted by a prophetic utterance as vectors of sexual perversion in the community. In fact, each of the elders individually longs for sexual intercourse with Susanna without telling the other. One day, when it was lunch time, they said to each other to go home for lunch. This was only one way of getting rid of each other in order to remain alone and have an opportunity to find Susanna alone, in the garden. Ironically, however, they found themselves hiding by one another. They question each other on the reason of hiding and confess their intense sexual longing for Susanna. As a consequence, they decide to act together in order to achieve their common desire. That is, to have sexual intercourse with Susanna.

One day Susanna enters the garden as usual, with her two maids. Without realising the presence of the two elders hiding in the garden, Susanna decides to bath as it was hot. As soon as Susanna is left alone by the maids, the elders run to her and propose to have sexual intercourse with her. Susanna is given the choice between complying to their demand or being accused of adultery with a fictitious young man and thus be sentenced to death. Susanna chooses the latter alternative. She is falsely accused of adultery and subsequently sentenced to death. The account takes a surprising

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turn when Susanna rejects the result of the jury and appeals to God by praying. God raises the spirit of/in Daniel a very young boy. Daniel questions Susanna's sentence and is allowed to re-examine the case. Finally, Susanna is acquitted but the two elders executed. This is thus a turnaround of events.

As this résumé indicates, Susanna seems to contradict the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple evoked above. One aspect of the prejudices against women was the assumption that women were sexually more corrupted than men. To intensify the prejudice, Ben Sira compared a woman's sexual desire to a "thirsty traveller" (v12 διψῶν ὁδοιπόρος), opening desperately his mouth to drink "from any near water" (Ben Sira 26:10-12). This means that women are sexually promiscuous and would have sexual relations with anyone and at any offer.

This dichotomy leaves us with no doubt that two traditions about women, apparently contradictory, would have circulated conjointly among Jews during the Second Temple period. These two conflicting propagandas, contra or pro women respectively in *Ben Sira* and in *Susanna*, constitute the problem to be investigated in this study.

The main research problem may be formulated as follows: Does *Susanna* reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the wisdom of Ben Sira? To answer this main research problem, the following subsidiary questions will have to be answered:

- What is the current state of studies of *Susanna* and how does it account for new investigations?
- What is a valid method for the study of the view of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general and *Susanna* in particular?

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- Does the figurative analysis of *Susanna*, that is, the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment, reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*?
- Does the narrative analysis of *Susanna*, that is, the investigation of the structure of the narrative, its actantial model, its veridictory square and its canonical narrative schema reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the *wisdom of Ben Sira*?
- Does the thematic analysis of *Susanna*, that is, the study of oppositions of values and their course in the narrative reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the *wisdom of Ben Sira*?
- What is the view of women that emerges from the results of the Greimassian semiotic analysis of *Susanna* and how does it reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the *wisdom of Ben Sira*?

1.3 SUBSTANTIATION

The Apocrypha are being investigated more frequently. The attention has moved from establishing the original texts to further studies, including the role of women. Since the study of women in the Apocrypha is sometimes interwoven with the study of the Apocrypha in general, it is important to give the state of the current contribution before moving forward.

For the purpose of this study, results from the investigation reveal that works produced on the Apocrypha in general, and *Susanna* in particular, range between three categories. Contrary to Craven (2003), who chronologically regroups the study of the LXX Apocrypha, the categorisation in this study has to do with the interest of authors and the kind of method used to investigate these books. Some of the following studies are interested in the transmission of texts while others focus

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on the content and message of the Apocrypha. Consequently, works on the Apocrypha, from different periods, can be grouped together according to their interest.

The development of scholarship on Susanna follows the same scientific trajectory as all other LXX Apocrypha. Susanna is absent from the Jewish and Protestant canon of sacred Scriptures (Tate, 1968:340; cf. Sundberg, 1966). Even in the Catholic canon where it is incorporated, Susanna and other apocryphal books are relegated to the second place of authoritative Scriptures. In fact, according to Mills and Wilson (2002:xvi), "Roman Catholics call these books "Deuterocanonical"-secondarily canonical or those added latter to the canon" (cf. also Boadt, 1984:18; Davies & Finkelstein, 1989:409-411). Surprisingly, however, *Susanna* is one of the most interpreted and the most reproduced stories of the ancient world, from the late antiquity until the post modern time.

- The first group of studies Apocrypha including Susanna is identified with Böckler (1891) in his *Apocryphen des Alten Testaments*; Kautzsch (1898) in *Apocryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*; Charles (1913; cf. Kay on Susanna) in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* and ZIEGLER (1999) in *Susanna Daniel Bel et Draco*. These works prove their importance in stabilizing the texts and providing insight for translation.
- The second is associated with Oesterley (1935) in *An Introduction to the Books of Apocrypha*; Pfeiffer (1949) in *History of New Testament Times, with an Introduction to the Apocrypha*; Metzger (1957) in *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*; Goodspeed (1971) in *The Story of the Apocrypha*; Dancy (1972) in *The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha. Tobit, Judith, Rest of Esther, Baruch, Letter of Jeremy and Additions to Daniel and Prayer of Manasseh*; Moore (1977) in *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah, the Additions*; Kottsieper (1998) in *Das Buch Baruch Der Brief des Jeremia Zu Esther und Daniel*; Société Biblique Francaise (2004) in *La Bible traduction œcuménique édition intégrale* and Wills (2004) in *Ancient Jewish Novels an Anthology*; Ditommaso (2005) in *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel*

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Literature. These publications are more or less based on to the historical critical approach to texts (cf. 2.1). One of the main gains of these studies was to expose the literary genre of the different books. They uncovered various problems in the texts that still needed to be addressed (Jordaan & Kanonge, 2006).

- In the last group, there are some works such as Cassey (1976) in *The Susanna Theme in German Literature; Variations of the Biblical Drama*; Dunn (1981) in *Discrimination in the Comic Spirit in the Story of Susanna*; Steussy (1993) in *Gardens and Faith in the Greek Legends of Daniel*; Brenner (1995) in *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*; Harrington (1999) in *Invitation to the Apocrypha*; Craven (1998) in *The Greek book of Daniel* (cf. also Craven, 1992 & 2001); Ilan (1999) in *Integrating Women into Second Temple History*; Bohn (2001) in *Rape and the Gendered Gaze: Susanna and the Elders in Early Modern Bologna*; DeSilva (2002) in *Introducing the Apocrypha. A Historical and Literary Introduction*; deSilva (2002) in *Introducing the Apocrypha. Message, Context, and Significance*; Nickelsburg (2005) in *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*. Clanton (2006) in *The Good, the Bold and the Beautiful*; Cornelius (2008) in *The woman in "Susanna". An understanding of the rhetoric of "Susanna"*. Jordaan (2008) in *Reading Susanna as Therapeutic Narrative*. Steyn (2008) in *"Beautiful but tough". A comparison of LXX Esther, Judith and Susanna* and TKAZC (2008) in *Susanna and the Pre-Christian Book of Daniel: Structure and Meaning* (cf. 1998). With the growing interest in the Second Temple period, these scholars take a major step forward in the treatment of the Apocrypha. While taking into account the contribution of other scholars, they deal with texts in terms of ideology behind them, such as gender roles, power struggle and body.

All the works on *Susanna* that were accessed for this study consisted of commentaries, essays and articles, monographs, and reviews. Most of the above Commentaries on *Susanna* are historical critical studies of the narrative (cf. 2.1). These kinds of studies are inadequate for the

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study of Susanna as character because plot and characterisation does not receive due attention. Commentaries may shed light on historical, linguistic and textual dimensions of narratives but plot and characterisation are left behind. A study of women in narratives is mainly a study of characterisation (how characters are constructed) and emplotment (archetype and tone) (cf. 3.2.1).

Essays and articles constitute the most abundant contribution on *Susanna's* scholarship. Most of them are written in the feminist perspective of analysis. Though, it is generally referred to as an approach, the feminist perspective of analysis is an ideological stance rather than an approach of analysis. In fact, not all feminist studies follow a unique approach of analysis. For example, *Semeia* 42 is devoted to the studies of women in the Bible (cf. Bos & Exum, 1988). It is a collection of feminist essays. However, not all of them use the same approach (cf. Steinberg, 1988; Camp, 1988; Bos, 1988; Fuchs, 1988; Fontaine, 1988). According to Ashley (1988), these essays use respectively a sociological theory, structural theory, cultural hermeneutics and moral psychology.

Despite their abundance, none of the essays or articles on Susanna has yet attempted to use the Greimas approach of analysis even partially.

Apart from commentaries and essays and articles, only three monographs (PhD theses) were available for this study: they are successively from Steussy (1993), Cassey (1976) and Clanton (2006). Steussy's study is devoted not only to the investigation of the narrative of Susanna but also to Bel and the Dragon. Susanna is studied only as one of the stories from the book of Daniel. Besides, Steussy uses the narratological approach of analysis designed by Bal (cf. Mills, 1994:550; Walsh, 1994:573). His method is totally different from the Greimassian semiotic used in this study.

Cassey's study is not a literary study *per se*. It is more concerned with the use of the Susanna in drama from the 16th to the 20th century, in German (Casey, 1976:13). Casey is more concerned with the influence of *Susanna* on the composition of drama in Germany (Casey, 1976:12). His investigation is a literary review study (cf. Mouton, 2001:179). The problem he addresses is the lack of a sufficient and accurate catalogue of "the historical evolution of the Susanna legend in German

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literature" (Casey, 1976:13-17). There is neither a direct interest in the text nor an interest in gender roles.

The last important treatment of Susanna is Clanton's book. Clanton (2006:4-5) himself refers to it as "aesthetic interpretation of the story". Although he discusses the historical context, the date (Chapter 2) and provides a Narrative-Rhetorical analysis of the story (Chapter 3), his main endeavour is the use of the story during the Renaissance. In fact, Clanton (2006:5) declares,

[m]y intention in this monograph is to provide the first such treatment (aesthetic) of this topic focused on the Renaissance period that discusses the story at length, using insights from the field of biblical studies. By bringing together information on many of the most important aesthetic interpretation of the story created during the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, this project will be making a large contribution to the field of the biblical studies by illuminating the power and endurance of this story.

Clanton's concern is the aesthetic interpretation of *Susanna* during the Renaissance, in paintings and music (Chapter 5). In brief, Clanton's contention is that *Susanna* is misused by focusing on the mimetic approach with its sexist connotation rather than the thematic. In the conclusion (Chapter 7), Clanton urges his readers to focus on the thematic approach in order to avoid the mimetic dimension of the story because it is sexually corrupting (cf. Glancy, 2008:107).

1.4 CONTRIBUTION

The present study differs substantially from other contributions in terms of the approach of analysis. No analysis of the story has yet dealt with the story according to the Greimassian way of analysis. The first contribution of the investigation lies in the use of method. Secondly, it is believed that the use of an adequate approach of analysis will have advantage to attend to problems that have never been addressed. Consequently, the study will lead to a new conclusion.

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One of the most debated issues in relation to the story is gender reconsideration. In fact, there is no agreement among scholars to whether Susanna does enforce or undermine patriarchy. Most scholars, mainly feminists, are pessimistic and suspicious about the subversive nature of *Susanna*. In fact, scholars such as Bal (cf. Levine, 2004), Clanton (2006), Cornelius (2008), Glancy (2004), Gruen (2002), Ilan (2001), Levine (2004), MacDowell (2006), Sered and Cooper (1996), and Steussy (1993) are but a few among those who read *Susanna* as a negative narrative, with regard to gender equality. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the case. Sered and Cooper (1996:54) are of the opinion that “the story of Susanna functions to maintain patriarchy, not to undermine it”. The same view is shared by Ilan. Though Ilan (2001:141) argues that “Esther, Judith and Susanna were indeed composed as propaganda for Hasmonean queenship”, she surprisingly declares that those books are not “revolutionary in nature” (2001:153). Gruen (2002:173) argues that Susanna is not a social satire. His argument is that

There is no class warfare here. Susanna herself belongs to the upper echelons of Jewish society ... Susanna’s prime occupation seems to be lolling and bathing in the garden of her estate; she lives a luxurious life, far from the social margins. Her vindication brings the downfall of the lascivious scoundrels, but only reinforces the social (not to mention gender) structure ... The Susanna tale unambiguously ratifies the status quo.

Recently, in her article *The woman in “Susanna”, An understanding of the rhetoric of “Susanna”*, Cornelius (2008) has taken the same direction. Cornelius concludes her article by contending that “[t]his text rather serves the patriarchal world, it reinforces male power in public” (Cornelius, 2008:107). Examples supporting such a position are too numerous to be given exhaustively here.

The alternative view of the narrative is not supported by many scholars. Craven (1992, 1998 & 2001) and Tkacz are the only two scholars who hold the view that Susanna is an emancipatory narrative Susanna.

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Craven argues that Susanna and other women such as Judith and Esther can be considered as "teacher of right behaviour" in Israel (Craven, 2001:282). In addition, Craven values Susanna as heroine in the same way as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (1998:314 cf. also 1992:569-570). However, Craven's contribution on Susanna is not as important as her work on Judith. The two of Craven's publications consist of her contribution in Bible commentaries. One consists only of 4 pages (1998) and in the other, her commentaries on Susanna, appears in an appendix (1992). Craven's other contribution on Susanna appears in a 12 pages essay where she investigates Susanna together with women in Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1, 2, and 3 Maccabees and Susanna (2002). It is evident that Craven's contribution on Susanna is not sufficient.

The second scholar, who makes a positive contribution on Susanna, with regard to gender roles, is Tkacz (1998 & 2008). One of her contributions addresses what she terms as "neosexism" (1998), the feminists' ill treatment of Susanna. In this contribution Tkacz argues that Susanna "constitutes real evidence against the idea that Judeo-Christian tradition is inherently sexist. Therefore, feminists find it expedient to deny that Susanna speaks, and thus they silence Susanna" (Tkacz, 1998:36). Her other publication is concerned with the meaning of Susanna in the structure of the pre-Christian version of Daniel (2008). Tkacz's contribution of Susanna is important in gender debates, but it is limited because of the nature of her publications. It consists of articles that are not aimed at investigating the whole narrative of Susanna, but seek to address particular issues raised by feminist scholars. Her contribution needs to be taken further by a thorough contribution that deals systematically with the whole narrative. This is precisely the aim of this investigation.

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central aim of the investigation consists of establishing whether *Susanna* reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the wisdom of Ben Sira. From this general aim some ensuing objectives are the following:

- To establish the current state of research on *Susanna* and how it accounts for new studies.
- To develop a valid method of analysis accounting for the emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general and *Susanna* in particular.
- To establish, from the figurative analysis, that is, from the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment whether *Susanna* reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the Wisdom of Ben Sira.
- To establish from the narrative analysis, that is, from the study of the structure of the narrative, its actantial model, its veridictory square and its canonical narrative schema whether *Susanna* reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the Wisdom of Ben Sira.
- To establish, from the thematic analysis, that is, from the opposition of values and their course on the semiotic square, whether *Susanna* reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the Wisdom of Ben Sira.
- To establish the view of women that emerges from the results of the semiotic analysis of *Susanna* and how it reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the wisdom of Ben Sira.

1.6 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha, 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

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a pragmatic way. They aimed either at maintaining male sexist prejudices against women or reversing it.

It is the contention of this study that *Susanna* radically reverses the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the wisdom of Ben Sira.

The analysis of *Susanna* here will seek to test this hypothesis in view of confirming or rejecting it, using an appropriate approach to narrative analysis.

1.7 APPROACH OF ANALYSIS

Susanna is a narrative. Generally, narratives are written to make sense when considered as a whole. For this reason, a semiotic approach will be adopted in this investigation. In the next chapter, the semiotic approach that will be followed in the study of *Susanna* will be discussed in more detail.

1.8 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This analysis of *Susanna* adopts the structure dictated by the approach of research. It consists of three main chapters preceded by an introduction and ending with a conclusion. This chapter was devoted to the introduction.

The second chapter offers an outline of the approach which this study follows in the analysis of the Theodotion version of *Susanna*. This study adopts the Greimassian semiotic approach to narrative analysis.

The third chapter provides the figurative analysis of the story of *Susanna*. It is the first of the three steps of analysis. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the main figures featuring in the story in terms of actors, space and time.

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The fourth chapter discusses the two other steps of Greimasian semiotic analysis, namely the narrative and the thematic levels. The fifth chapter gives the summary of the results of the story. The contribution of the investigation is made clear here.

1.9 *SUSANNA*: TEXT AND CONTEXT

The text of *Susanna* that will be used here is essentially the Theodotion version. This version has a most elaborate narrative focussing more on Susanna than the LXX does (cf. Kanonge, 2009:362). Besides, *Susanna* will be used in this study to refer to Susanna as character while *Susanna* refers to the narrative.

This investigation is centred on the text rather than on its author or historical background. In narrative analysis, as Robinson (1996:103) puts it, “[t]he historical reconstruction takes us on an unnecessary and somewhat speculative detour”. Therefore there is no concern for a special historical background involving, the author, date and circumstances of redaction. The historical background is directly taken into account in the investigation when it appears in terms of motifs and/or intertextuality. The text and a close reading thereof is all that is important here.

The Greek text of Theodotion *Susanna* used here is from the Septuaginta edited by Ziegler (1999). Greek texts for other books of the LXX are quoted from Rahlf’s edition of the LXX. Translations of *Susanna*’s Greek quotations are done by the author. For the other books of the LXX, the translation is either from the author’s personal translation or a use of existing translations of the Bible, as referenced. Greek texts from the New Testament are quoted exclusively from Nestle-Aland 27 edition.

In the tradition of semiotic analysis used in this study the text is the centre of the investigation. It always constitutes a part of the investigation (cf. Courtés, 1976, 1991 & 1995). The analysis of *Susanna* will be based on the following text:

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¹ Καὶ ἦν ἀνὴρ οἰκῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι, καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωακὶμ. ² καὶ ἔλαβεν γυναῖκα, ἣ ὄνομα Σουσαννα θυγάτηρ Χελκιου, καλὴ σφόδρα καὶ φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον,³ καὶ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτῆς δίκαιοι καὶ ἐδίδαξαν τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτῶν κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ. ⁴ καὶ ἦν Ἰωακὶμ πλούσιος σφόδρα, καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ παράδεισος γειννίων τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν προσήγοντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐνδοξότερον πάντων. ⁵ καὶ ἀπεδείχθησαν δύο πρεσβύτεροι ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ κριταὶ ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ ἐκείνῳ, περὶ ὧν ἐλάλησεν ὁ δεσπότης ὅτι Ἐξῆλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἐκ πρεσβυτέρων κριτῶν, οἱ ἐδόκουν κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν. ⁶ οὗτοι προσεκαρτέρουν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰωακὶμ, καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτοὺς πάντες οἱ κρινόμενοι. ⁷ καὶ ἐγένετο ἡνίκα ἀπέτρεχεν ὁ λαὸς μέσον ἡμέρας, εἰσεπορεύετο Σουσαννα καὶ περιεπάτει ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς. ⁸ καὶ ἐθεώρουν αὐτὴν οἱ δύο πρεσβύτεροι καθ' ἡμέραν εἰσπορευομένην καὶ περιπατοῦσαν καὶ ἐγένοντο ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτῆς. ⁹ καὶ διέστρεψαν τὸν ἑαυτῶν νοῦν καὶ ἐξέκλιναν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν μηδὲ μνημονεύειν κριμάτων δικαίων. ¹⁰ καὶ ἦσαν ἀμφοτέρωθεν κατανευγμένοι περὶ αὐτῆς καὶ οὐκ ἀνήγγειλαν ἀλλήλοις τὴν ὁδύνην αὐτῶν,¹¹ ὅτι ἠσχύνοντο ἀναγγεῖλαι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῶν ὅτι ἤθελον συγγενέσθαι αὐτῇ. ¹² καὶ παρετηροῦσαν φιλοτίμως καθ' ἡμέραν ὁρᾶν αὐτήν.

¹³ καὶ εἶπαν ἕτερος τῷ ἑτέρῳ Πορευθῶμεν δὴ εἰς οἶκον, ὅτι ἀρίστου ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ ἐξελθόντες διεχωρίσθησαν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων,¹⁴ καὶ ἀνακάμπαντες ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ἀνετάζοντες ἀλλήλους τὴν αἰτίαν ὡμολόγησαν τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῶν, καὶ τότε κοινῇ συνετάξαντο καιρὸν ὅτε αὐτὴν δυνήσονται εὐρεῖν μόνην.

¹⁵ καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ παρατηρεῖν αὐτοὺς ἡμέραν εὐθετον εἰσῆλθὲν ποτε καθὼς ἐχθὲς καὶ τρίτης ἡμέρας μετὰ δύο μόνων κορασιῶν καὶ ἐπεθύμησε λούσασθαι ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, ὅτι καῦμα ἦν,¹⁶ καὶ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς ἐκεῖ πλὴν οἱ δύο πρεσβύτεροι κεκρυμμένοι καὶ παρατηροῦντες αὐτήν. ¹⁷ καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς κορασίοις Ἐνέγκατε δὴ μοι ἔλαιον καὶ σμηγμα καὶ τὰς θύρας τοῦ παραδείσου κλείσατε, ὅπως λούσωμαι. ¹⁹ καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἐξήλθοσαν τὰ κοράσια, καὶ ἀνέστησαν οἱ δύο πρεσβῦται καὶ ἐπέδραμον αὐτῇ²⁰ καὶ εἶπον Ἴδου αἱ θύραι τοῦ παραδείσου κέκλεινται, καὶ οὐδεὶς θεωρεῖ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ σου ἐσμεν, διὸ συγκατάθου ἡμῖν καὶ γενοῦ μεθ' ἡμῶν,¹⁸ καὶ ἐποίησαν καθὼς εἶπεν καὶ ἀπέκλεισαν τὰς θύρας τοῦ παραδείσου καὶ ἐξῆλθαν κατὰ τὰς πλαγίας θύρας ἐνέγκαι τὰ προστεταγμένα αὐταῖς

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καὶ οὐκ εἶδοσαν τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους, ὅτι ἦσαν κεκρυμμένοι. ²¹ εἰ δὲ μή, καταμαρτυρήσομέν σου ὅτι ἦν μετὰ σοῦ νεανίσκος καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐξαπέστειλας τὰ κοράσια ἀπὸ σοῦ. ²² καὶ ἀνεστέναξεν Σουσαννα καὶ εἶπεν Στενά μοι πάντοθεν, ἐάν τε γὰρ τοῦτο πράξω, θάνατός μοί ἐστιν, ἐάν τε μὴ πράξω, οὐκ ἐκφεύξομαι τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν, ²³ αἰρετόν μοί ἐστιν μὴ πράξασαν ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν ἢ ἀμαρτεῖν ἐνώπιον κυρίου. ²⁴ καὶ ἀνεβόησεν φωνῇ μεγάλη Σουσαννα, ἐβόησαν δὲ καὶ οἱ δύο πρεσβῦται κατέναντι αὐτῆς. ²⁵ καὶ δραμῶν ὁ εἶς ἤνοιξεν τὰς θύρας τοῦ παραδείσου. ²⁶ ὡς δὲ ἤκουσαν τὴν κραυγὴν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ οἱ ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας, εἰσεπήδησαν διὰ τῆς πλαγίας θύρας ἰδεῖν τὸ συμβεβηκὸς αὐτῇ. ²⁷ ἠνίκα δὲ εἶπαν οἱ πρεσβῦται τοὺς λόγους αὐτῶν, κατησχύνθησαν οἱ δοῦλοι σφόδρα, ὅτι πῶποτε οὐκ ἐρρέθη λόγος τοιοῦτος περὶ Σουσαννης.

²⁸ Καὶ ἐγένετο τῇ ἐπαύριον ὡς συνῆλθεν ὁ λαὸς πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς Ἰωακίμ, ἦλθον οἱ δύο πρεσβῦται πλήρεις τῆς ἀνόμου ἐννοίας κατὰ Σουσαννης τοῦ θανατώσαι αὐτήν²⁹ καὶ εἶπαν ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ λαοῦ Ἀποστείλατε ἐπὶ Σουσανναν θυγατέρα Χελκιου, ἣ ἐστὶν γυνὴ Ἰωακίμ, οἱ δὲ ἀπέστειλαν. ³⁰ καὶ ἦλθεν αὐτὴ καὶ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς καὶ πάντες οἱ συγγενεῖς αὐτῆς, ³¹ ἡ δὲ Σουσαννα ἦν τρυφερὰ σφόδρα καὶ καλὴ τῷ εἶδει. ³² οἱ δὲ παράνομοι ἐκέλευσαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτήν, ἦν γὰρ κατακεκαλυμμένη, ὅπως ἐμπλησθῶσιν τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῆς, ³³ ἔκλαιον δὲ οἱ παρ' αὐτῆς καὶ πάντες οἱ ἰδόντες αὐτήν. ³⁴ ἀναστάντες δὲ οἱ δύο πρεσβῦται ἐν μέσῳ τῷ λαῷ ἔθηκαν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς, ³⁵ ἡ δὲ κλαίουσα ἀνέβλεψεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ὅτι ἦν ἡ καρδία αὐτῆς πεποιθυῖα ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ. ³⁶ εἶπαν δὲ οἱ πρεσβῦται Περιπατούντων ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ μόνων εἰσῆλθεν αὕτη μετὰ δύο παιδίσκων καὶ ἀπέκλεισεν τὰς θύρας τοῦ παραδείσου καὶ ἀπέλυσεν τὰς παιδίσκας, ³⁷ καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτήν νεανίσκος, ὃς ἦν κεκρυμμένος, καὶ ἀνέπεσε μετ' αὐτῆς. ³⁸ ἡμεῖς δὲ ὄντες ἐν τῇ γωνίᾳ τοῦ παραδείσου ἰδόντες τὴν ἀνομίαν ἐδράμομεν ἐπ' αὐτούς, ³⁹ καὶ ἰδόντες συγγινομένους αὐτούς ἐκείνου μὲν οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐγκρατεῖς γενέσθαι διὰ τὸ ἰσχύειν αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀνοίξαντα τὰς θύρας ἐκπετηδηκέναι, ⁴⁰ ταύτης δὲ ἐπιλαβόμενοι ἐπηρωτῶμεν, τίς ἦν ὁ νεανίσκος, ⁴¹ καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησεν ἀναγγεῖλαι ἡμῖν. ταῦτα μαρτυροῦμεν. καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτοῖς ἡ συναγωγὴ ὡς πρεσβυτέροις τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ κριταῖς καὶ κατέκριναν αὐτήν ἀποθανεῖν. ⁴² ἀνεβόησεν δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλη Σουσαννα καὶ εἶπεν Ὁ θεὸς ὁ αἰώνιος ὁ τῶν κρυπτῶν γνώστης ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ πάντα

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πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν,⁴³ σὺ ἐπίστασαι ὅτι ψευδῆ μου κατεμαρτύρησαν, καὶ ἴδου ἀποθνήσκω μὴ ποιήσασα μηδὲν ὧν οὗτοι ἐπονηρεύσαντο κατ' ἐμοῦ. ⁴⁴ Καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῆς.

⁴⁵ καὶ ἀπαγομένης αὐτῆς ἀπολέσθαι ἐξήγειρεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον παιδαρίου νεωτέρου, ὧ ὄνομα Δανιηλ, ⁴⁶ καὶ ἐβόησεν φωνῇ μεγάλη Καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος ταύτης. ⁴⁷ ἐπέστρεψεν δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπαν Τίς ὁ λόγος οὗτος, ὃν σὺ λελάληκας; ⁴⁸ ὁ δὲ στὰς ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν εἶπεν Οὕτως μωροί, οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ; οὐκ ἀνακρίναντες οὐδὲ τὸ σαφὲς ἐπιγνόντες κατεκρίνατε θυγατέρα Ἰσραηλ; ⁴⁹ ἀναστρέψατε εἰς τὸ κριτήριον, ψευδῆ γὰρ οὗτοι κατεμαρτύρησαν αὐτῆς.

⁵⁰ καὶ ἀνέστρεψεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς μετὰ σπουδῆς. καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι Δεῦρο κάθισον ἐν μέσῳ ἡμῶν καὶ ἀνάγγειλον ἡμῖν, ὅτι σοὶ δέδωκεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πρεσβεῖον. ⁵¹ καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς Δανιηλ Διαχωρίσατε αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων μακράν, καὶ ἀνακρινῶ αὐτούς. ⁵² ὡς δὲ διεχωρίσθησαν εἰς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνός, ἐκάλεσεν τὸν ἕνα αὐτῶν καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Πετταλαιωμένε ἡμερῶν κακῶν, νῦν ἤκασιν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου, ἅς ἐποίησες τὸ πρότερον ⁵³ κρίνων κρίσεις ἀδίκους καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἀθῶους κατακρίνων ἀπολύων δὲ τοὺς αἰτίους, λέγοντος τοῦ κυρίου Ἀθῶν καὶ δίκαιον οὐκ ἀποκτενεῖς, ⁵⁴ νῦν οὖν ταύτην εἶπερ εἶδες, εἶπόν Ὑπὸ τί δένδρον εἶδες αὐτοὺς ὁμιλοῦντας ἀλλήλοις; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Ὑπὸ σχίνον. ⁵⁵ εἶπεν δὲ Δανιηλ Ὁρθῶς ἔψευσαι εἰς τὴν σεαυτοῦ κεφαλὴν, ἥδη γὰρ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ λαβὼν φάσιν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ σχίσει σε μέσον. ⁵⁶ καὶ μεταστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκέλευσεν προσαγαγεῖν τὸν ἕτερον, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδα, τὸ κάλλος ἐξηπάτησέν σε, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία διεστρεψεν τὴν καρδίαν σου, ⁵⁷ οὕτως ἐποιεῖτε θυγατράσιν Ἰσραηλ, καὶ ἐκεῖναι φοβούμεναι ὠμίλουν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' οὐ θυγάτηρ Ἰουδα ὑπέμεινεν τὴν ἀνομίαν ὑμῶν, ⁵⁸ νῦν οὖν λέγε μοι Ὑπὸ τί δένδρον κατέλαβες αὐτοὺς ὁμιλοῦντας ἀλλήλοις; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Ὑπὸ πρίνον. ⁵⁹ εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ Δανιηλ Ὁρθῶς ἔψευσαι καὶ σὺ εἰς τὴν σεαυτοῦ κεφαλὴν, μένει γὰρ ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ῥομφαίαν ἔχων πρίσαι σε μέσον, ὅπως ἐξολεθρεύσῃ ὑμᾶς. ⁶⁰ καὶ ἀνεβόησεν πᾶσα ἡ συναγωγὴ φωνῇ μεγάλη καὶ εὐλόγησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ σώζοντι τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπ' αὐτό ⁶¹ καὶ ἀνέστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς δύο πρεσβύτας, ὅτι συνέστησεν αὐτοὺς Δανιηλ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν ψευδομαρτυρήσαντας, καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτοῖς ὃν τρόπον ἐπονηρεύσαντο τῷ πλησίον, ⁶² ποιῆσαι κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ, καὶ ἀπέκτειναν αὐτούς, καὶ ἐσώθη αἷμα ἀναίτιον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. ⁶³ Χελκίας δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ

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ἦνεσαν τὸν θεὸν περὶ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῶν Σουσαννας μετὰ Ἰωακὶμ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν πάντων, ὅτι οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα.⁶⁴ καὶ Δαυὶδ ἐγένετο μέγας ἐνώπιον τοῦ λαοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ἐπέκεινα.

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1.10 SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION TO INDICATE CORRELATION

Problem Statement	Aims and Objectives	Approach and Method
What is the current state of studies on <i>Susanna</i> and what is the need for new investigations?	To establish the current state of research on <i>Susanna</i> and justify the need for new studies.	Compiling a documentation of the current state of studies of <i>Susanna</i> .
What is a valid method for the study of the view of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general and <i>Susanna</i> in particular?	To develop a valid method accounting for the emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general and <i>Susanna</i> in particular.	Explaining the Greimassian semiotic with an emphasis on Everaert-Desmedt's version.
Does the figurative analysis of <i>Susanna</i> , that is, the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment in <i>Susanna</i> reverse <i>Ben Sira</i> sexist prejudices against women?	To establish, from the figurative analysis, that is, from the study of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment whether <i>Susanna</i> reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the Wisdom of <i>Ben Sira</i> .	Using the figurative analysis of the Greimassian semiotic approach to investigate figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment in <i>Susanna</i> .
Does the narrative analysis, that is, the structure of <i>Susanna</i> , its actantial model, its veridictory square and its canonical schema reverse <i>Ben Sira</i> 's sexist prejudices against women?	To establish from the narrative analysis, that is from the study of the structure of the narrative, its actantial model, its veridictory square and its canonical narrative schema whether <i>Susanna</i> reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the Wisdom of <i>Ben Sira</i> .	Using the narrative analysis of the Greimassian semiotic approach to investigate the structure of <i>Susanna</i> , its actantial model, its veridictory square and the canonical schema of <i>Susanna</i>
Does the thematic analysis of <i>Susanna</i> , that is, the oppositions of values and their course on the semiotic square reverse <i>Ben Sira</i> 's sexist prejudices against women?	To establish, from the thematic analysis, that is from the opposition of values and their course on the semiotic square, whether <i>Susanna</i> reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the Wisdom of <i>Ben Sira</i>	Using the thematic analysis of the Greimassian semiotic approach to sort out opposing values in <i>Susanna</i> and track their itinerary on the semiotic square.
What is the view of women, emerging from the results of the study of <i>Susanna</i> and how does it reverse <i>Ben Sira</i> 's sexist prejudices against women?	To establish the view of women that emerges from the results of the semiotic analysis of <i>Susanna</i> and how it reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the wisdom of <i>Ben Sira</i> .	Using result from the semiotic analysis to determine the view of women emerging from <i>Susanna</i> .

Table 1.1 The schematic correlation between the problem statement, aims and method of the study

CHAPTER 2: THE APPROACH OF RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the approach followed in this study of the Theodotion version of the story of Susanna. This study adopts a semiotic approach to narrative analysis. The chapter comprises five main sections following the introduction. First, the chapter discusses the reason for the choice of this particular approach. It also discusses the diversity in the Semiotic approach, with particular focus on the School of Paris and the contribution of Everaert-Desmedt. Third, the structure of narratives and segmentation are considered. Finally, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth sections explain each one of the three levels of analysis (figurative, narrative and thematic) as proposed by Everaert-Desmedt.

2.1 THE CHOICE OF AN APPROACH OF RESEARCH

The choice of this approach, to a great extent, is based on the structure of the object of investigation. The text under consideration is a narrative with “a female protagonist at the very center of the action” (Wills, 2002:4). As Kaiser (1994:83) insists, “the interpretation of narrative must give priority to the literary devices and the literary structure if we are to be successful in interpreting this very profuse genre”.

Most readings of *Susanna* make use of either grammatical historical or historical critical analyses. The Grammatical Historical approach was the preferred exegetical method during the reformation. Reformers “were concerned to recover the original sense of the Scripture, which they felt had been buried under centuries of spiritual interpretation” (Vanhooser, 1998:118). Jordaan (2007:215) argues that the reformer’s use of the Grammatical Historical method emerged from a dogmatic interpretation of Scriptures. Reformers were primarily interested in the defence of the soul of the church and therefore not looking critically at the use of the approach. They neglected or ignored –

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wittingly or unwittingly – literary form, genre and structure of texts because these were not their main concern in studying Scriptures. According to Janse van Rensburg (2009), however, the Grammatical-Historical method of reformers is no more the same, since it has improved to meet the challenges of our time.

Oeming (2006:31) praises the Historical Critical method as “one of the prime achievements of academic theology.” Nonetheless, he questions the “dissection of texts” (2006:41). In this respect, Rivard (1981:335) contends that the practice of dissecting texts renders uncovering of meaning from narratives more problematic.

In any case, the contribution of the Grammatical Historical and Historical Critical approaches to the interpretation of biblical texts is remarkable. These approaches provide ample principles for dealing with literary work in terms of rules of general hermeneutics. However, “while the general principles of interpreting literature (context, historical-cultural background, words and grammar) apply to all writings, each genre or form has unique features that interpreters must consider if they are to understand accurately” (Klein, 1998:332). With regard to narrative analysis then, unless coupled with a rhetorical analysis (Loader, 2008), these two approaches seem to be limited. Their initial conceptualization did not comprise specific and adequate principles “for dealing with the literary form of the text as part and parcel of the meaning of the text” (Long, 1982:50).

An adequate approach to analysing narratives has to focus on plot and characters in an attempt to uncover thematic values supposed to have generated the text. For, as Long demonstrates (1982:59), “plot is the way that the content of the narrative is shaped and the situation of the characters transformed, and, thus, is a deeper, more basic, element of narrative than style, image, or any other surface trait”.

Semiotics is one of the theories that take plot and characters into account in the reading of narratives. Semiotics seems to be one of the most efficient approaches to analysing narratives and,

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for this reason, it is the approach adopted in this study. It offers adequate principles for dissecting texts in detail. Semiotic principles of analysis are purposely designed to account for the production of narratives by taking into account the complexities of their structures. In fact, the Semiotic approach “seeks to analyse texts as structured wholes and investigates latent, connotative meanings” (Chandler, 2002:8). It centres on the data of the text and pays careful attention to the macrostructures of narratives. It is assumed that a narrative only makes sense when read as a non-dissociable whole.

The option for a semiotic approach, however, does not mean to suggest that there exists a unique “semiotic method”. Semiotics is a complex and diverse discipline, as discussed below.

2.2 DIVERSITY IN SEMIOTICS

De Saussure, who is considered a founder of Semiotics, predicted in 1916 that the discipline known as Semiology would play a specific role regarding studying signs within societies (De Saussure: 2005:33; cf. Jordaan, 199:665). Indeed, the field of Semiotics has developed and diversified. It is currently impossible to speak of only one semiotic approach. Patte (1998:3) argues that “[s]emiotics is not a methodology; it is a scholarly paradigm in terms of which critical biblical studies can be conceived. As such, Semiotics can be used as a basis for developing critical methods – but many kinds of methods, rather than a single one”.

The diversity in Semiotics and the flexibility of its principles make it possible to deal with all kinds of literary texts accordingly. For the present study, the approach of the school of Paris, as refined by Everaert-Desmedt (2007), is adopted. However, a critical assessment of Greimassian work is beyond the scope of this study. In fact, Greimas’ approach to narratives is by now accepted by scholars as part of the canon of narratology. The investigation will not, therefore, scrutinise Greimas and thus Everaert-Desmedt critically. Much has already been said about Greimas’ Semiotics, underlying its strengths as well as its weaknesses. Greimas’ critics include Paul Ricoeur

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(1989a; 1989b), Frederic Jameson⁴, Everaert-Desmedt (2007), Tremper Longman (1996), Budniakiewicz (1992), Poittier (2006) and Schleir (1987). These scholars provide evaluations of Greimas' thought, which is now known as the school of Paris.

2.2.1 THE APPROACH OF THE SCHOOL OF PARIS

In spite of its diversity, Semiotics consists mainly of two important schools, each comprising many sub-schools, viz. the Greimassian Semiotics in Europe (stemming from Saussure and Hjelmslev to Greimas) and the Peircean Semiotics (from Peirce), in the United States of America (Budniakiewicz, 1992:1-3).⁵ Greimas' approach of analysis is now referred to as the school of Paris. The preference for this school, here, is primarily stimulated by Greimas' particular dedication for the study of narrative⁶ structures.

Greimas, however, is not the only scholar interested in narratives. Many names, from the early antiquity, are associated with the development of narratology (cf. Bal, 2004; Onega & Landa, 1996). Nevertheless, Greimas is likely to be the best known scholar for studying narratives from a Semiotic perspective (Danesi, 2007:89).

The working philosophy of the Paris School of Semiotics is based on Greimas and Rastier's (1968:86-87) assumption that:

In order to achieve the construction of cultural objects (literary, mythical, pictorial, etc.), the human mind begins with simple elements and follows a complex trajectory, encountering on its way both constraints to which it must submit and choices it is able to make.

⁴ (Greimas, 1987 : vi-xxii)

⁵ For a discussion on the differences between these two main schools of Semiotics cf. Martin and Ringham (2000:1).

⁶ Although the most investigated aspect of Greimas' theory is narratives analysis, his work is not limited to analysing literary texts. Greimassian Semiotics is a general theory of meaning (Pavel, 2004:30). The theory is intended to deal with all kinds of semiotic objects (Courtés, 1995:19), including texts, painting, sculpture and music (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:85-86).

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Our aim is to give a rough idea of this trajectory. We can consider that it moves from immanence to manifestation in three principal stages: (1) *Deep structures* define the fundamental mode of existence of an individual or society, and subsequently the conditions of existence of semiotic objects. As far as we know, the elementary constituents of deep structures have a definable logical status. (2) *Surface structures* constitute a semiotic grammar system that arranges the contents susceptible of manifestation into discursive forms. The end products of this system are independent of the expression that manifests them, insofar as they can theoretically appear in any substance and, in the case of linguistic objects, in any language. (3) *The structures of manifestations* produce and organize the signifiers. Although they can include quasi-universals, they remain specific to any given language (or more precisely they define the specific characteristic of languages) or to any given material. They are studied by the surface stylistics of lexemes, shapes, colors, etc.

The above statement constitutes the backbone of Greimassian narrative Semiotics. This declaration is the leading philosophy underlying Greimas' approach and that of his followers. The approach consists of exploring semiotic objects, including narratives, at three different levels: deep structures, surface structures and structures of manifestation.

The theory that stemmed from this logic is highly commended by many scholars for its efficiency. Taylor and Van Every (1999:52) go as far as to suggest that Greimas' approach to narrative analysis is "the most fully elaborated and subtle of any we have encountered". Martin and Ringham (2000:2) argue that, "compared to Peirce, the Paris school thus takes a wide-reaching approach and, in the final analysis, is of greater practical use". These scholars are but a few among many others who wish Greimas' approach to narrative analysis were properly vulgarised. The vulgarisation of Greimassian Semiotics, however, encounters difficulties in some academic circles, as discussed in the following section.

As noted above, Greimas' theory is highly praised and, thus, it is already accepted as part of the canon of narratology. The acceptance of the theory, however, contrasts sharply with its reception

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among scholars. There is no doubt that the approach is not yet fully and widely used. Its use seems to still be limited to a small circle of scholars. In some cases, only some of the components of the approach are used to advance other theories such as communication in organisations⁷, criminal justice⁸ and drama⁹, to name only a few. Scholars invoke possible reasons accounting for this reluctance. Longman (1996:117-118) argues that:

Greimas and other structuralist writers as well as their commentators are often unclear in their theoretical expression. Scholes finds that Greimas is "frequently crabbed and cryptic". The result is that biblical scholars are at odds concerning the correct application of his theory to particular texts ... they conclude about Greimas' theory that "Nevertheless, its high level of complexity, its almost esoteric terminology...have and likely will prevent the vast majority of biblical scholars from actively participating in the endeavour.

Katilius-Boydston (1990:4) is of the same opinion. He declares that "Greimas' account of narrative grammar is so abstract that he tends to scare off some readers ... All of the Greimas' work is at a very high level of generality, and it seems to get more and more abstract-and difficult-the further you get along into it".

In summary, some scholars find Greimas' reading of narratives very exciting. Unfortunately, they fail to understand the technical and philosophical language in which the theory is encased. The alleged complexities of Greimas' formulation of his theory of narratives are the main reason for the choice of Nicole Everaert-Desmedt's version for this study.

Everaert-Desmedt managed to fill the gap between Greimas and his readers. Her main concern is to make Greimassian theory accessible to readers. Her mission in teaching, research and publication is aimed at providing a good explanation which could help initiate novices into Narrative

⁷ See Taylor and Van Every (2000:50-58) for the use of Greimas' modalities in communications;

⁸ See Milovanovic (2003:198-203) for the use of Greimas' semiotic square in Social Law.

⁹ See Savona (1991:38-40) for the use of the Actantial Model in theories of theatre.

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Semiotics, particularly to Greimas' theories¹⁰. Initiation, according to her, is an empowering process that will enable her readers to practise the discipline (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:6). Everaert-Desmedt has made it her duty to come down to the level of her audience without altering fundamental principles of Greimassian Semiotics. Her approach consists of the same three steps as proposed by Greimas. However, while Greimas called these three phases of analysis deep structures, surface structures and structures of manifestations, Everaert-Desmedt calls them, correspondingly, the figurative, narrative and thematic levels. Everaert-Desmedt's adaptation of Greimas' approach, even still containing some of Greimas' original metalanguages, is easy to use.

The theory was designed for instructional purposes. The aim is to train students of literature, including secondary school instructors (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:6). For this reason, it is written in a simple and concrete language for practical purposes. In view of this fact, this study will heavily lean on Everaert-Desmedt's version of Greimas' approach of analysis. The intention of the study however, is not to use Everaert-Desmedt's theory exhaustively. Only important components of the theory, indispensable for this study, will be considered,, viz. specifically the three levels of analysis.

Following Everaert-Desmedt with the school of Paris, however, is not meant to be an exclusive option. Numerous and significant contributions of other scholars, such as Foucault and Bakhtin cannot be ignored. This applies also particularly to those who employ other structural and

¹⁰ « Notre propos, redisons-le, n'est pas la vulgarisation. Nous voulons, au contraire, introduire à la technicité narrative. Le lecteur est prévenu : il ne trouvera pas, dans les pages qui suivent le beau langage de l'Académie. Il sera aux prises avec une langue formelle, des énoncés métalinguistiques. Qu'il ne se décourage cependant pas ! En effet nous lui avons rendu la route la moins austère possible: notre exposé est **progressif** et il est **illustré**, au fur et à mesure, d'analyses concrètes » (2007:6). [Our purpose, let's repeat it again, is not the vulgarization. We want, to the contrary, to introduce (people) to the narrative technicality. The reader is warned: he will not find in the following pages the beautiful language of the academy. He will encounter a formal language of metalinguistic utterances. Let him not get discouraged. In ["fact we have his way the least astringent as possible: our teaching is progressive and illustrated with concrete analyses"] (Translation from French by DM Kanonge, 2009).

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narratological methods to the interpretation of narratives, such as Genette (1981), Bremond (1973 & 1981), Todorov (1966), Alter (1981) and so on.

In the semiotic traditions, an analysis begins with structuring and segmenting narratives to simplify their study. This investigation follows this established custom. In consideration of its importance for this study, the structure and segmentation of narratives will be separated from the analysis and presented before, as discussed below.

2.3 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND SEGMENTATION

This section addressed two aspects. First, the structure of narratives is discussed. Then, the segmentation of narratives into episodes is discussed as means of making them easier to handle.

2.3.1 THE STRUCTURE OF NARRATIVES

Narratives constitute a set of particular texts. These literary works function according to their own morphology. In this subsection, their universality and their specificities are discussed.

2.3.1.1 The universal logic of narratives

Story-telling constitutes one of the universal phenomena among people. Narrative, as Barthes (1981:7) observes, "is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind, and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative"¹¹. Narration constitutes one of the most important channels for conveying information within human societies. Narrators seek to address problems that arise in their environment by ways of a covert or overt manipulation. Tambling (1991:1) is of the opinion that "To persuade, to deceive, to cast the truth in the light most favorable to the narrator these seem to be some of the functions of story" Grasping narrative messages, however, presupposes the knowledge of universal laws that regulate this genre. One of these laws is related to its structure.

¹¹Translated quote from Tambling (1991:2). For the French version of the same article see Barthes (1981:7).

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Understanding narrative structures constitutes an important step toward a correct interpretation of stories. In order to understand narratives, it is necessary to consider the significance of a narrative, its sequential structure, the semantic axis, transformation in narratives and the logic of possible endings. This section considers each of these aspects. Thereafter, the segmentation of narratives can be discussed more meaningfully.

The term “narrative” as used in this study refers to a told story aimed at communicating a message. Narratives are different from mere descriptions or reports. A narrative is a “semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way” (Onega & Landa, 1996:3). According to Genette (1981:158) the events framing a narrative may be real or fictitious. It is its particular way of conveying information as a series of connected events that distinguishes narrative structures from other structures (Lacey, 2000:13). In fact, narratives always present sequences of events, starting from and moving toward their point of consumption in a linear way.

One way of dealing with the structures of a narrative is to consider the conventional structure of the plot. Studies (e.g. Kress, 1999; Lacey, 2000) tend to reveal that the ordering of events in many stories follows more or less the same pattern; this model seems to be characteristic of narratives all over the world. The simplest structure of a plot of a narrative comprises a *beginning*, *middle* and *end* (Kress, 1999:3). Due to the fact that stories are told to address problems in a society, this structure may be regarded as the same as the following:

“*situation 1 > problem > resolution (situation 2)*” (Lacey, 2000:27).

Lacey (2000:29) points out, however, that according to Todorov, a complete structure of a plot comprises five stages set in sequences as follows:

1. a state of equilibrium at the outset;
2. a disruption of the equilibrium by some action;
3. a recognition that there has been a disruption;
4. an attempt to repair the disruption;
5. a reinstatement of the equilibrium.

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The above sequential structure of narratives represents the organisation of a story at the figurative level of analysis (form of expression). In the Greimassian approach, all sequences do not receive equal attention. The initial and the final sequences seem to be given more attention than others. These two major sequences are generally represented by the semantic axis discussed below.

2.3.1.2 The semantic axis

The linearity of events in a narrative allows the action of the main character (the subject) and the state of events to be displayed on a straight line, revealing how it starts and how it ends. This line is called a *semantic axis* (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:15-16). The later gives an account of the state of the subject (or the state of events) at the point of departure and his state at the point of arrival. The state of events from the point of departure is called the *initial state* (S); their state at the point of arrival is the *final state* (S'). The two states of events can stand to the extremities of the *semantic axis* as follows:



Figure 1.1
Semantic Axis

The analysis of a narrative starts by reconstructing the initial state, i.e. the problem to be addressed. In some more complex narratives however, it is not always easy to know exactly what the initial state is about. In this case the end of a narrative is the best place to start the investigation. The initial state is an inverted version of the final. Based on this logic, Hénault (1983:81) defines a narrative as “the strange cognitive machine that succeeds to posit a term at the place where its contrary or contradictory was first asserted”. The inversion, according to her, regroups all narratives into two main structures as follows:

- (1) lack (disjunction from an object) *versus* settling of lack (conjunction with the same object).
- (2) mission to achieve *versus* mission achieved (contract).

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In the Greimassian approach of analysis, S and S' correspond to two opposite states of the subject. The two depict the subject with regard to the object of his quest in terms of conjunction (\wedge) or disjunction (\vee). The relation between S and S' on the semantic axis constitutes, according to Greimas (1966:20-21), the elementary structure of meaning. The two states of events on a semantic axis reveal the ideological dimension of the narrative.

Practical examples to illustrate this point abound in the Old Testament. One of these is the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38). Tamar can stand for the subject of the narrative¹². The object of her quest is begetting an offspring. S corresponds to her point of departure in Genesis 38:6, with no child (lack) and S', the final in Genesis 38:27ss, with twins (lack settled). The opposition in these states of Tamar already constitutes the elementary structure of meaning, the interpretation of the story. It shows at least that Tamar has succeeded in her quest for an offspring at the end of the narrative. The story can be represented as follows:

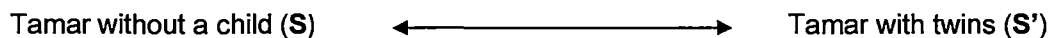


Figure 1.2
The semantic axis illustrating the story of Judah and Tamar

This representation is intended to insist that Judah's offspring, which was jeopardized by his sons' corrupted behaviour, was made possible by Tamar, a Canaanite woman. It is not aimed at disapproving her behaviour as bad or corrupted. Her appearing in genealogies from the Old (1 Chronicles 2:1-9) to the New Testament (Matthew 1:3) reveals that her affair with Jacob is not condemned as bad in Jewish tradition.

The semantic axis focuses chiefly on the action of the subject which is the key element of the Greimassian Semiotics. This particular way of looking at narratives has advantages and disadvantages. Its main strength is in following the course of the subject step by step, unfolding the

¹² For a full interpretation of the story see D M Sharon (2005) and Bos (1988:37-67)

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narrative. This will be particularly important here where the study focuses on Susanna as the subject of the narrative.

The main disadvantage of the model is that the sequential aspect of narrative, the structure of the plot, is neglected. Greimas and his disciples admit that dealing with the plot, which is part of their figurative analysis remains the least satisfying element of their work. According to Greimas (1989: 556), “[t]his level of discourse is extremely important and is probably the least studied of all in Semiotics. It is also the least organized since we have only a very few ideas and projects to create models to account for it” (cf. also Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:30 and Courtés, 1976:43 on this subject).

2.3.1.3 Transformation in a narrative

A narrative as a representation of a series of events always entails transformation. The transformation is implied by change in states, from the first state S (initial state) to the second state S' (final state), as revealed by the semantic axis. In a narrative, transformation can affect both plot and characters. Transformation is the most important occurrence in a narrative and can happen suddenly or progressively. There is no way to think of a narrative starting and ending without change (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:16-17).

Character change and development, however, depends on the ideology of the narrative and the approach of analysis. Dietrich and Sundell (1974:75-76) are of the opinion that:

[d]epending upon which theory of fiction one consults, the major character must be either static or developing. Older types of fictions delighted in depicting characters who might wreak vast changes upon their environment but undergo little or no change themselves, as was often the case with epic heroes. Perhaps the chief point of epic characterization is in the constancy of the hero-what makes him so valuable as a leader of men and founder of nations is that he does not change in the face of great pressure to weaken. Epic action often provides a test of the hero's strength and virtue, and if the hero is successful, he will remain, despite all such tests, what he

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has always been. If he changes at all, it is in the direction of manifesting qualities such as strength and virtue already inherent in his nature.

According to the semiotic approach to narratives, the development of the subject or main character is monitored step by step by the canonical narrative schema to be explained later.

In brief, transformation is a *sine qua non* existence of a narrative. Otherwise there is no narrative at all. Characters change and development varies from one narrative to another. Characters can be static or dynamic. If there is any change in a character it is important to map out the aspect of the character that undergoes the changes.

2.3.1.4 The logic of possible ending

The ending of a narrative is the most meaningful part of the story. A narrative's structure is dependent on its ending. It is the end that governs the series of all previous actions (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:16). It is here where authors have to make a crucial choice for a particular ending. It is this possibility to decide on the ending which results in the logic of eventuality. The writer makes a decision to choose whether the end will be a success or a failure, for the subject (Bremond, 1973:131; 1981:67). This possible choice for the ending of a story can be illustrated as follows in

Figure 3:

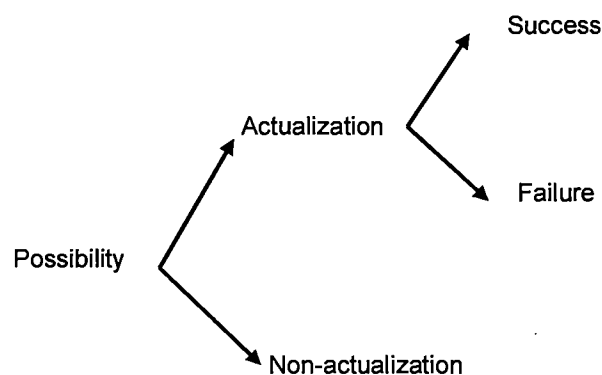


Figure 1.3
Illustration of the possible choice in endings for a narrative.

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The adoption of a particular ending is an important clue in the interpretation of a narrative. It is emblematic of the message the author intended to convey.

2.3.2 SEGMENTATION

In many cases, narratives are complex and include more than one sequence. In this case the interpretation of narrative texts requires first their segmentation into episodes. The division of texts in simple episodes simplify the interpretation. Simple stories do not always require dividing into episodes. The story of Susanna does not have a complex structure. Its segmentation may be optional or compulsory, depending on the nature and objectives of the investigation.

The segmentation of narratives can sometimes be a complex exercise. In general, it can be achieved by observing spatial, temporal, actorial, grammatical or logical disjunctions (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:25-26; Greimas, 1976:19-21).

Segmentation is but a prelude to the three steps of the semiotic analysis that are discussed below, viz. the figurative, the narrative and the thematic.

2.4 THE FIGURATIVE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

The figurative level is, as said before, one of the three main steps of the semiotic approach of analysis. This level deals with the aspects of natural languages in which a narrative is written (Greimas & Rastier, 1987:48). This step focuses on figures and how they are constructed by the author. The concept 'figure' here is a technical term. Figures are elements of a text related to the natural world and can be experienced with five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:28). The figurative world is "where human or personified actors would accomplish tasks, undergo trials and reach goals" (Greimas, 1987:48, 70). At this level the discourse is said to be *figurativized*.

Figurativization contrasts with thematization, concerned with abstract notions at the cognitive level. Figurativization of a discourse means constructing these abstract ideas or values (viz. love,

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freedom, joy) with figures of the natural world (viz. things or people) to make them concrete (Hénault, 1983:136).

Actors, spaces and time are main figures of a text. This level is investigated by gathering figures and observing their courses. These two traditional steps are respectively aimed at analyzing figurative oppositions and configurations or motifs recurring in a narrative (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:30).

Apart from these two traditional elements (figurative oppositions and motifs), this study also examines the plot of the text. Two reasons account for the addition. Firstly, the figurative level of analysis is the less satisfactory and not yet finished part of the semiotic approach, according to Greimas and his followers. Greimas (1989: 556) declares that "this level of discourse is extremely important and is probably the least studied of all in Semiotics. It is also the least organized since we have only a very few ideas and projects to create models to account for it". For this reason this step is often skipped in many semiotic studies (Courtés, 1976:43). Everaert-Desmedt is one of the rare scholars to apply Greimas' approach in full. When introducing the figurative level, Everaert-Desmedt (2007:30) declares that "nous ne disposons pas, pour structurer le figuratif, d'hypothèses aussi fortes que celles qui nous permettrons d'organiser les narratif".¹³ Since principles for dealing with the figurative level are not yet established unanimously, it is then possible to adapt the existing principles to the particularity of a study.

Secondly, in the Semiotic approach of plot analysis, which is one of the most important elements of narrative, is not given due attention. As a matter of fact, the word plot does not even appear in the catalogue of key words of Greimassian semiotic, written by Greimas and Courtés (1979). According to Paul Ricoeur (1985:801), it is not by chance that this word was left out. It was an intentional choice. In response to Ricoeur, Greimas (1989:558) insisted that "Semiotics is not a science but

¹³ We do not yet possess, for the study of the figurative level, strong hypotheses as those we have for the study of the narrative level (Translation by DM Kanonge, 2009).

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rather a scientific project, still incomplete or unfinished; and I leave the task of completing and transforming it, starting from a few theoretical principles that I have attempted to establish, to future generations of semioticians". Plot is taken into account in this study because "[t]he mode of emplotment is hence the soul of the narrative, its intentional design or horizon of meaning" (Breslauer, 1997:158).

2.4.1 FIGURATIVE OPPOSITIONS

This step focuses attention on the relations between figures in the text. According to the elementary structure of meaning, no figure can produce meaning by itself. Meaning always presupposes the existence of a relation (Greimas, 1986:19). Comparison between figures (Hénault, 1979:47)¹⁴ from different parts of the text produces meaning from the display of their differential relations (Calloud & Genuyt, 1982:23).

From the standpoint of narratives' authors, storytelling consists of choosing appropriate actors and locating them in consequential places and at a significant moment of time. This process of establishing figures (actors, place and time) in a narrative is termed correspondingly as *actorialisation*, *spatialisation* and *temporalisation* (Hénault, 1983:131-134).

• **Actorialisation.** It is the process of establishing actors in a narrative. Actors are constructed by individuation (their actions and names) and/or by identification (their specific traits across the text). Proper names belong to the individuation of an actor. They are called anthroponyms (Greimas & Courtés, 19, 187). "They contribute to the creation of an illusion or simulacrum of the real. They are, therefore, a key component of the process of figurativization" (Martin & Ringham, 2000:25). The construction of actors can be expository (the author reveal them through the narrator) or dramatic

¹⁴Hénault notes that "Les éléments de signification sont définis de façon formelle par leurs oppositions réciproques" (The elements of meaning are defined precisely by their reciprocal oppositions: Translation by DM Kanonge)

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(their own actions and speech) (Dietrich & Sundell, 1974:76-77). Oppositions between actors are intentionally designed to convey meaning.

- **Spatialisation.** It refers to where the places are organized in order to contribute to the program of a narrative (Martin & Ringham, 2002:20). Oppositions such as: above/below, front/behind, close/distant, left/right, north/south, east/west, in/out, center/periphery are not semantically neutral in the course of a narrative (Chandler, 2002:87). In many narratives, change of place constitutes a narrative strategy. The name of a specific place is a toponym. Like anthroponyms, toponyms serve to create an illusion of reality (Greimas & Courtés, 1979:397). Spaces are named in relation to the main transformation in the narrative. In general, there exist a heterotopic place and a topic place. The heterotopic space is the space out of the action of the subject. It is the space from where the subject starts her action. Generally, the moving of the subject from this space, symbolizes the beginning of the quest (Hénault, 1983:133). The topic space is where the transformation takes place (Martin & Ringham, 2000:135). In the David and Goliath heterotopic and topic places are respectively Bethlehem and Ephes Dammin (1 Samuel 17). In Judith they are respectively Bethulia and the Assyrians' camp.

- **Temporalisation.** Time is an important element in a narrative. Insistence on specific times is as important as is the choice of locations. Oppositions in time, moments or seasons serve to advance the narrative program of a story. A chrononym is a specific moment of time in a narrative. Chrononyms "help to create the referential illusion and are associated, therefore, with the figurative level of meaning" (Martin & Ringham, 2000:33).

2.4.2 CONFIGURATIONS OR MOTIFS

The course of some figures creates motifs or configurations. A motif is a theme, "a subject ... repeated and developed in a work of literature" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2006:956). The concept motif is close in its meaning to the German word *leitmotif* (Abrams, 2009:205). Motif can refer to a word, idea, expression, image, and symbol, theme which an author exploits

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repeatedly and purposely, in a text, for the sake of his message. Particular motifs are confirmed by the presence of some specific figures.¹⁵

Motif, culture and intertextuality are closely related. According to both Courtés and Greimas, as indicated by Everaert-Desmedt (2007:33):

« Le motif (ou Configuration) relève moins des structures discursives que d'un découpage, d'une organisation socio-culturelle du monde.

Le motif n'est motif dans un texte que parce qu'il réfère à un autre texte, celui-ci le renvoyant de nouveau à un ailleurs quelconque: son mode d'existence n'est pas celui d'une unité discursive réalisée, mais d'une virtualité inscrite dans une sorte de « mémoire » transtextuelle ».¹⁶

The evidence of the presence of a particular motif has an interpretative effect on the audience. A text may develop more than one motif. In this case, the generation of meaning will take into account these different motifs. Talmon (1966:3) offers a very comprehensive and operating definition for the study of biblical motifs. According to him:

A literary motif is a representative complex theme which recurs within the framework of the Old Testament in variable forms and connections. It is rooted in 'an actual situation' of anthropological or historical nature. In its secondary literary setting, the motif gives expression to ideas and experiences inherent in the original situation, and is employed to reactualize in the audience the reactions of the participants in that original situation. The motif represents the

¹⁵ Everaert-Desmedt states that: «Un motif ou configuration est un ensemble organisé de figures, que l'on rencontre habituellement quand il est question de tel ou tel **type d'événement**, dans un genre textuel donné ... ou, de façon plus générale, à travers une culture...» (A motif or configuration is an organized set of figures one habitually encounters when a type of event is in view, in a given textual genre...or generally through a culture)

¹⁶ "The motif is a motif in a text because it refers to another text, this last referring it again to another somewhere else: its mode of existence is not of a discursive realized unity, but of a virtuality inscribed in a kind of transtextual 'memory' "

check that you use these all throughout the thesis in the footnotes – there was a problem in Chapt 4 with this too [Greimas and Courtés quoted by Everaert-Desmedt(2007:33)] (Translation: DM Kanonge)

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essential meaning of the situation, not the situation itself. It is not a mere reiteration of the sensations involved, but rather a heightened and intensified representation of them.

In view of the composite quality of a motif, its adaptability to new settings, and its compatibility with other themes, its ultimate forms may be far removed from the initial form. Therefore, often a minute analysis will be required to establish their connection and derivation, and to retrace the intermediate stages of development.

Because of its complexity (by definition), a literary "motif" cannot be fully evaluated in isolation. It should be viewed against the background of 'other, synonymous and antonymous, themes with which it can be linked in recurring and modifiable patterns. This apposition and opposition will help to clarify the focal meaning of the motif under review and to delineate the limits of its significance within a given body of literature.

The task at this stage will be to find out as many underlying motifs as possible in the Susanna narrative. The use of a motif does not mean necessarily that the author approves and perpetuates its original meaning. A motif can be used to reject its original use in the society. For example the story of Judith accentuates Judith as "daughter of Merari" (16:6). The motif of daughter has a negative connotation in *Ben Sira* (22:3; 42:9-11). Here however, contrary to *Bes Sira*, Judith, "a daughter of Hebrews" (Judith, 10:12) "is no loss or worry to her father" (Di Lella, 1992:44).

2.4.3 EMPLOTMENT

Story-tellers do not put events in a narrative just by chance. "Plot is built of significant events in a given story-significant because they have important consequences" (Dibell, 1988:5). Emplotment is the way events are ordered in a narrative, in a specific structure of plot. The word emplotment is used by White to refer to the intentional choice and arrangement of events by an author, in order to impact his community. White (1978:83) explains emplotment as follows: "by emplotment I mean simply the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicles as components of specific kinds of plot structures". Emplotment is important for the study of narrative for a number of reasons. These can be summarised as follows:

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a) It is the intention of the author of stories to win over his community. To achieve this goal, storytellers often shape their stories according to "one or another of the story type" people conventionally invoke to make sense of their own life-history (White, 1978:87). The story type that serves as a model to other stories is known as, *archetype* (Dietrich & Sundell, 1974:117-118). The word archetype here is used technically to denote a previous narrative used as model for writing another narrative. According to later writers, "if his archetype is truly rendered, the writer may strike deep into the mind and heart of his reader" (Dietrich & Sundell, 1974:117-118). The archetype or the model plot that inspired the author is crucial in the uncovering of meaning from narratives. One of the aims of this study is to identify the archetype of the story of Susanna. Stories of women, in the LXX Apocrypha, are likely modelled on stories of men heroes in Israel. Judith is a rewriting of the David and Goliath story (Esler, 2002), Esther and Mordechai's roles in *Esther* parallel Moses and Aaron in the Exodus (Le Roux, 1993:314). Susanna is the new Joseph (Nickelsburg, 2005:23). A careful exploration of archetypes can save scholars from easy and arbitrary conclusions in their study of women in Jewish narratives. The comparison of women to their male compatriots can help to reveal the intention of the author and thus the meaning and roles of women in these narratives.

b) Some narratives are used by the author "to endow unfamiliar events and situations with meaning" (White, 1978:88). 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. Narratives may serve a subversive purpose. It reveals "the type of community identity the narrative seeks to shape". (George, 1999:394). Jeremy Tambling however (1991:66) contends that "narratives are shaped by the dominant discourse of a society, a discourse which interpellates both writer and reader, making them a subject of that discourse, that society". This view is not accepted unanimously. Foucault however, argues that

[d]iscourses are not once and for all subservient to power or against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby

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discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault, 1978:100-101).

c) Many biblical narratives are concerned with the redefinition of the identity of their communities. It has been demonstrated convincingly that some of LXX narratives seem to have been recorded to serve this purpose. This is at least what Esler (2002:138-139)¹⁷ and George (1999:411)¹⁸ respectively think of *Judith* and the story of David and Goliath. Gruen (1998:xvii) links Jewish literature of the second temple period to “the issue of Jewish self-definition in the circumstances of a Hellenic cultural world”. If this is the case with *Susanna*, then it will be one of the tasks to find out the issue of identity it seeks to address.

Emplotment reveals the ideological implication of a narrative (Chandler, 2002:138). This reading of *Susanna* will be interested, at this stage, in the ideology the author seeks to establish or to reject. The genre of the narrative and dominant tropes will play an important role in revealing the ideology of *Susanna*. 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, its worldview and its ideology as follows:

¹⁷ Esler (2002:138-139) is of the opinion, regarding the book of *Judith*, that “the author of the book, an individual creatively seeking to rework traditional understandings of Israelite identity, went further than the dominant voices of his or her ethnos could accept ... So perhaps, after all, we may on balance conclude that the author of this ludic history was seeking to reinvent Israelite identity around issue of gender”.

¹⁸ According to George (1999:411) David and Goliath’s story shows that: “In the exilic and postexilic periods, the former ways of defining Israel’s identity had to be given up if Israel was to respond to the challenge facing it. The community had to construct its identity not simply in military and political terms, but in terms of its identity as YHWH’s covenant people”.

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Trope	Genre (mode of emplotment)	Worldview (mode of argument)	Ideology (mode of ideological implication)
Metaphor	Romance	Formism	Anarchism
Metonymy	Comedy	Organicism	Conservatism
Synecdoche	Tragedy	Mechanism	Radicalism
Irony	Satire	Contextualism	Liberalism

Table 1.1 Relationship between tropes, genre, worldview and ideology (cf. Chandler, 2002:138 and Korhonen, 2006:11).

This study pays attention to dominant tropes and genres, irony in particular, in the story of Susanna. The story is assumed to be a satire (Dunn, 1981:19), using irony as the main technique. This genre serves the author's purpose to censure Jewish community (cf. Gruen, 1998:173-176).

In the present study, the figurative level focuses on figures and emplotment. The aim is first to map out main oppositions in the text by comparing main actors. In addition, this level investigates motifs that the author uses across the narrative. The figurative level of analysis also examines the emplotment of the text of *Susanna*. The aim is to reveal the archetype of the story. The figurative step of analysis finally helps to reveal the ideological implication of the story of Susanna.

Figurative oppositions (paradigmatic perspective), as well as configurations (syntagmatic perspective), contribute to the generation of meaning of a narrative, depending on themes expressed (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:35). In brief, protagonists and antagonists at the figurative level, with the subsequent ideals they fight for in a story, correspond directly or indirectly to the core of values that prompted the author to tell his history to the community. The figurative level of analysis then is the first important step toward the construction of the semiotic square, in view of revealing and tracking these values in the unfolding of the narrative. Between the steps, the figurative and the thematic, however, lies the narrative step of analysis, discussed below.

2.5 THE NARRATIVE LEVEL

The narrative level of analysis examines the organization of the text as discourse. This step of the analysis helps to reveal different functions of actors (called actants) and track the course of the subject (main character) across the narrative. It is here that narrative grammar shows its importance. The tools for analysis at this stage are the Actantial Model and narrative syntax. Each is now considered in more detail.

2.5.1 THE ACTANTIAL MODEL

The Actantial Model is the best known and the most quoted element of Greimas' theory (Czarniauska-Joerges, 2003:41). This model provides a new perspective of the character (Pavis, 1998:469). The role of the Actantial Model is to reveal different functions and activities performed in a narrative by actants (Neemann, 1999:126). An actant is what produces or undergoes an action (Greimas and Courtés, 1979:3). According to Tesnière (Quoted by Greimas & Courtés, 1979:3), an actant can be a being or a thing. Greimas' Actantial Model, presented below in Figure 1.4, consists of six actants (Ubersfeld, 1999:37-40).

2.5.1.1 *The Configuration of the Actantial Model*

Greimas' Actantial Model with its six units is a legacy from Propp (1976:10), Lévi-Strauss¹⁹, Tesnière, Sauriau and Michaud (Greimas, 1976:10; 1986:172-190)²⁰. It is a result of an interdisciplinary research involving Folktales, anthropology, theatre and linguistics. Behind the Actantial Model lies Greimas' contention that, like sentences, narratives have their own grammar and syntax²¹. According to him all narratives comprise six constant functions, viz.: the subject, the object, the addresser, the addressee, the helper and the opponent. A story always gives an

¹⁹ According to Perron "[i]t should be noted that Greimas found the inspiration and the sources of his work in two of the great twentieth-century scholars of anthropology and folklore: Claude Lévi-Strauss provided Greimas with the paradigmatic aspect the theory and Vladimir Propp with the Syntagmatic or syntactic one" (1990:ix).

²⁰ For the origin of these six units see also Madray-Lesigne & Richard-Zappella (1995:192).

²¹ Many scholars agree with this Greimas' point of view (Barthes, 1981:9); cf. also Coggins & Houlden (1999:652).

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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 pursuit while the **opponent** raises obstacles to his mission (*axis of power*). The relations between actants, in a narrative, can have the following representation:

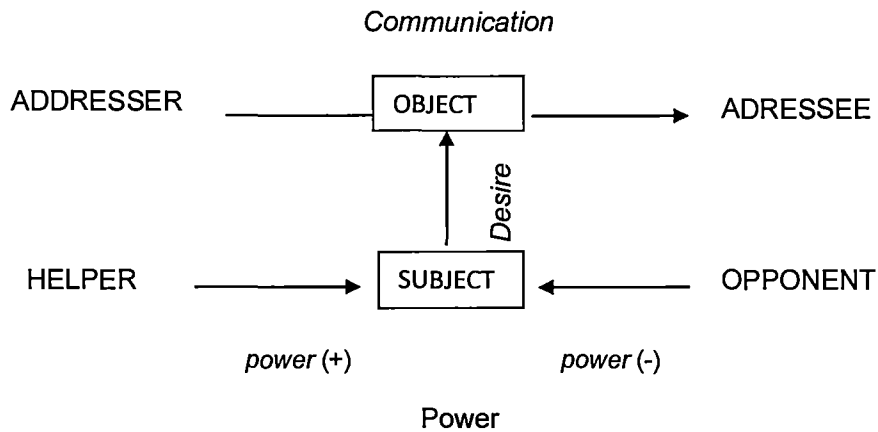


Figure 1.4

An Actantial Model illustrating different relationships between actants in a narrative

The use of the word 'actant' merits the following explanations:

- a) An actant is not a character, but a unit of the narrative grammar. A character belongs to the figurative level of analysis, 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, an animal (cf. Greimas, 1976b:96).
- b) A character can assume different actantial functions, simultaneously or successively.
- c) An antactants is an actant with a function opposed to another actant. For example, an anti-subject is opposed to the main subject of a narrative.

As said above, the Actantial Model consists of six actants organized in three couples on three axes. These axes are now discussed in more detail.

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A. The Axis of Desire: The relation between subject and object

The subject and the object are the two primordial actants (Hénault, 1983:46). Their relation is placed on the axis of desire. The course of the narrative is the description of the quest of the subject for the object (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:40). The subject and the object are the *sine qua non* of every narrative. They are essential to the narrative. All other functions in a narrative are determined from their relation to the subject and the object. Hénault (1983:48) maintains that the subject is literally called into existence by the object of his quest.

a) *Types of relations between the subject and the object*

The relation between the subject and the object is called a **narrative utterance**. It can be either an **utterance of state** (stipulating that the subject is either in conjunction with the subject or not) or an **utterance of doing** (denoting the attempt of the subject to be in conjunction with the object or indicating the transition from a state to another).

- There are two utterances of state: the conjunctive utterance of state (stating that the subject is in conjunction with the object: **SAO**) and the disjunction utterance of state (stating that the subject is not in conjunction with the object: **SVO**).
- The transition from a state to another or vice versa implies a transformation in terms of **utterance of doing** which requires the intervention of a **subject of doing** (or a **subject operator**) and can be written as follows:

$$[S1VO] \longrightarrow [S1\Lambda O]$$

According to this formula, the subject (**S1**) was first separated from the object (**O**) but is afterwards conjoined to it by an intermediary transformation. The transformation is caused by a transforming doing **F** (*Faire transformateur* in French) of an operator meta-subject **S2**:

$$F_{(\text{transformation})}[S2 \longrightarrow (S1\Lambda O)].$$

This reads: **S2** causes **S1** to be in conjunction with the object. **S2** is a subject operator and **S1** is a subject of state. If **S2=S1** there is a **reflexive doing** but if **S2 ≠ S1** there is a **transitive doing**.

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b) *Anti-subjects*

In many cases there are two or more subjects with opposing quests in a narrative. The anti-subject is a subject (S_A) who, in order to reach the object of his quest (O_A), must frustrate the object of quest (O_B) of another subject (S_B). Anti-subjects appear in narratives in three different ways²²:

- Two (or more) subjects (S_A and S_B) compete to obtain the same object ($O_A = O_B$). If S_A succeeds in his quest, he frustrates S_B in his and vice versa. S_A and S_B are anti-subjects one to another:

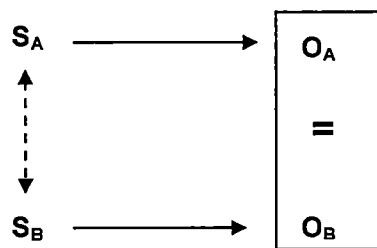


Figure 1.5
Illustration of two subjects competing for one object, in a narrative

A good illustration of this can be found in Chapter 2 of the book of Esther. She is prepared to ascend to the throne, by getting married to the king. The goal for her marriage is to secure a place in the empire, for her people. There are many candidates, but only one of them will become queen.

- 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 . The success of one is the failure for the other and vice versa.

²² Almost all schemata are from Everaert-Desmedt (2007).

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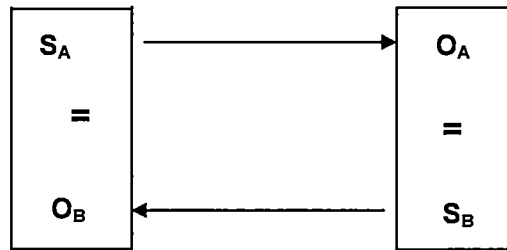


Figure 1.6
Illustration of two subjects taking each other as object, in a narrative

The story David and Goliath (1Sam.17) is a good example in this case. The defeat of either David or Goliath implies that his people become slaves and had to worship the deity of the victorious one.

- A subject (S_A) takes as object (O_A) another subject (S_B) who pursues another object (O_B). In engaging in the pursuit of O_B , the subject S_B refuses to be the object of S_A and therefore is opposed to the quest of S_A .

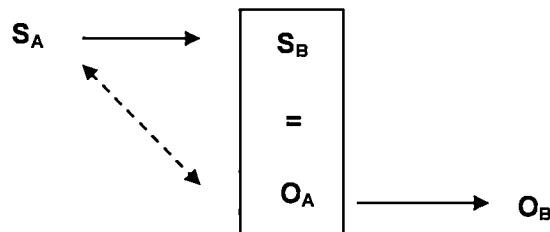


Figure 1.7
A subject taking another subject as his object

The story of Susanna and the elders illustrates this scenario. Two conflicting quests are evident. The two elders aim to have intercourse with all beautiful women (Susanna 19, 56 and 57) but Susanna is striving to please God and not to sin against him (Susanna 2, 3 and 23).

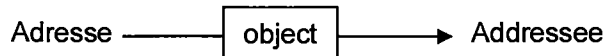
B. The Axis of Communication: The addresser, the object and the addressee

The second couple of actants is the bond between the addresser and the addressee. As Tochon (2002:52) puts it, “the sender is the person (or feature, or event) responsible for initiating the quest; the receiver is the actant for whose benefit the quest is undertaken”. The addresser imparts the

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object to the addressee and the addressee receives it. The mission of the addresser includes three roles (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:47):

- The communication of the object takes the form of the **narrative utterance** (énoncé narratif)



The schema indicates the attempt of the addresser to create the need for the object in the subject. For this reason, the addresser is called **subject of state**, for he longs for the object.

- The addresser is said to be a **subject manipulator**: He/She doesn't act himself/herself, but he/she makes the subject act, by transmitting him modalities for the acquisition of the object: knowledge about the object, or a duty to provoke the wanting of the addressee.
- The addresser represents values into play in a narrative. He/She can judge the action accomplished by the subject operator. For this reason he/she is called **subject adjudicator**.

C. The Axis of Power: Helper, subject and opponent

The last couple acts on the subject, either to help him reach his goal or distract him from it (Groupes d'Entrevemes, 1977:21). An anti-subject is always an opponent but every opponent is not always anti-subject (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:52).

2.5.2 THE NARRATIVE SYNTAX

The Actantial Model is a paradigmatic structure because it consists only in the classification of "roles" found in narratives. The narrative syntax is a syntagmatic mechanism because it describes actions of actants in narratives.

A Narrative Program (NP) is the action of the subject to transform his state or the state of another subject. It is a set of actions to be performed by the subject to reach the object. In a narrative the main narrative program can be achieved by the medium of many narrative programs called

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narrative programs of usage. The **narrative course** of a subject is a syntagmatic connection of narrative programs of usage.

2.5.2.1 The Canonical Narrative Schema

The semiotic narrative analysis focuses on the action of the subject for the quest of the object. The course of a subject in a narrative is called canonical narrative schema. The journey of the subject across the narrative comprises of four steps: the contract, the acquisition of competence, the performance and the sanction. The fulfillment of the narrative program or the acquisition of the object requires the willing and the competence of the subject. The subject is to possess qualifications that can stimulate and enable his action. These qualifications are called modalities. "A modal expression is one that communicates attitude" (Taylor & Van Every, 1999:50). There are six basic modalities: *being, doing, wanting, having-to, knowing* and *being-able-to* (Greimas, 1983:80-81). These six modalities can be divided into two groups, one corresponding to the competence and the other to the performance of the subject as follows:

COMPETENCE		PERFORMANCE
<i>virtualizing modalities</i>	<i>actualizing modalities</i>	<i>realizing modalities</i>
devoir (having to) vouloir (wanting)	pouvoir (being-able-to-do) savoir (knowing)	être (being) faire (doing)

Table 1.2 The six main modalities in narratives, according to Greimas.

When a subject acquires modalities, this is written: **(S \wedge Om)**, meaning the subject (S) possesses modalities (Om). The rest of the thesis uses Greimas' original French terms to refer to these six modalities. The aim is "to highlight and preserve their status as part of a metalanguage and also in order to avoid endless inverted commas. So being and doing are *être* and *faire*; wanting and

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having-to, *vouloir* and *devoir*, knowing and being-able, *savoir* and *pouvoir*" (Pankhurst, 2004:46-47; cf. also Taylor & Van Every, 1983:51-52).

A. The Contract

As a **subject manipulator**, the addresser exerts, on the addressee, a persuasive doing about the object. The addressee responds by an interpretative doing: he appreciates the value of the object that the addresser offers him. This process corresponds to the **contract**. Depending on his appreciation of the object, the addressee can accept or reject the contract. In case he accepts the contract, he acquires the modality of **wanting-to-do** (desire) and/or **having-to-do** (duty) and he becomes a subject, a **virtual subject**. There are three kinds of contracts in narratives:

- **Injunctive contract**. The addresser communicates a **having-to-do**. If the future subject assumes it, he acquires the **wanting-to-do**.
- **Permissive contract**. The subject may possess himself, a certain wanting-to-do he could abandon if he could not obtain the permission from the addresser.
- **Contract by seduction**. It is the most frequent contract. In this case, the addresser communicates to the future subject, **knowledge about** the existence and the value of the object. He suggests to him that the object is worth acquiring. The causing-to-know (*faire savoir*) and the causing-to-value (*faire valoir*) of the addresser create the **wanting-to-do** (*vouloir faire*) of the subject.

B. The Acquisition of Competence: The qualifying test

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

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C. The Performance: The decisive test

A story is about the action of at least one subject aiming to be in conjunction with an object. The final action of the subject in a narrative is called performance, the “doing” (le faire) of the subject or the decisive test²³. By the performance, the subject acquires the object of his quest and has therefore the status of the **realized subject**.

D. The Sanction: The glorifying test

After achieving his performance, the subject comes back to report his achievement to the addresser. In many narratives, there is a word of praise in recognition of the performance of the subject. The addresser, as subject adjudicator, judges the performance of the subject according to the system of values he represents. 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**.

2.5.2.2 The Encounter of Subjects and the Transfer of the Object

A. The Fate of Subjects

In a narrative, the subject undergoes successive phases of ameliorations and degradations on his narrative way (Bremond, 1981:67-82; 1973:96-121). These changes depend on the position of the subject to the object of his quest.

B. The Confrontation of Subjects

When there are competing subjects in a narrative, they first follow independent courses. At a given moment, however, they have to meet. This encounter of subjects constitutes a decisive moment in the unfolding of the narrative. It ends in the transfer of objects, brings to an end some NP, and launches others. It is at this turning point where the transfer of objects happens.

a) *Transfer of Objects*

The transfer of objects happens in three ways: by gift, trial or exchange.

²³ The decisive or qualifying test can be replaced by a transfer of information (Bastide, 1985: 674).

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The transfer by gift is done on the initiative of the subject having the object to the one missing and longing for it. There must be renunciation and attribution. Consequently, the situation is reversed. The transfer by trial is done by force or by ruse. There must be deprivation and appropriation. The situation is reversed.

The transfer by exchange implies the presence of two subjects and two objects. Each of the subjects desires the object of the other and is ready to give the object he possesses in exchange.

b) The Interruption of the Narrative Program of One Subject

When the object desired by a subject S_A is another subject S_B the encounter will have as consequence the interruption of the NP of S_B and his integration in the NP of S_A . This change of programs can occur by force or by persuasion. In the case of two subjects taking one another as object, the confrontation will end up with the termination of the NP of the defeated subject and his acceptance of the role of object on the NP of the winner.

2.5.3 THE VERIDICTORY SQUARE

In some narratives it is difficult to judge actions of competing subjects. What actors seem to be may not be what they really are. This is the case of Susanna and the elders. The elders seemed to be right until the intervention of Daniel (45). This is also the case with the story Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39). Joseph was deemed guilty of having attempted to rape the Potiphar's wife. Apart from Joseph and Potiphar's wife, no one knew the truth. In this case a mechanism called veridictory square is used. *Être* (being) and *paraître* (seeming) constitute the two basic modalities of the veridictory square. It has the following configuration (Courtés, 1991:11-119; 1995:81-84 and Hénault, 1983:61-62) shown in Figure 8 check this:

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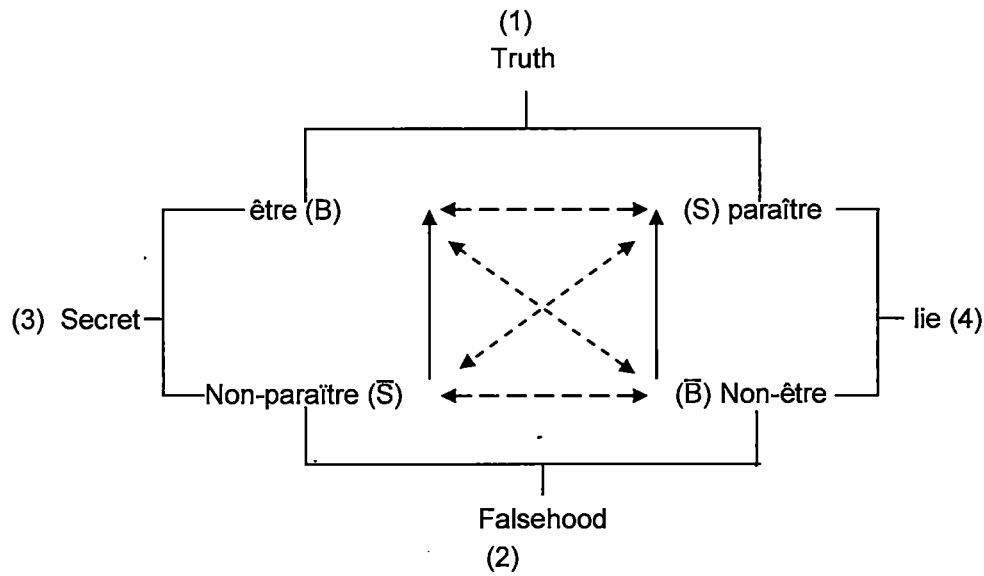


Figure 1.8
Illustration of a veridictory square in a narrative

In this case, truth and falsehood, secrets and lies are revealed only at the end of the narrative. The interpretation of the schema seems sometimes complicated and puzzling. Drawing conclusions using this chart will depend on each narrative. In general, it can provide the reader of a story with the following insights:

- There was truth, if what “seemed to be true” (seeming) from the start is proved to be true (being) at the end of the story. In this case, the initial “seeming” corresponds perfectly to being ($B=S$).
- There was falsehood when what “seemed not to be true” (nonseeming) is finally proved “not to be” true (nonbeing) at the end of the narrative, when the nonseeming of the beginning corresponds finally to the nonbeing to the end of the narrative ($\bar{S} = \bar{B}$).
- There was a secret if what “appeared to be” (being) is confirmed not to be towards the end of the story. In this case ‘being’ corresponded to nonseeming ($B = \bar{S}$)
- There was a lie or illusion when what “seemed to be the truth” (seeming) is revealed “not to be” (nonbeing), when seeming comes to correspond to nonbeing at the end of the story ($S = \bar{B}$).

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In brief, the narrative level will focus on the action of actants (paradigmatic perspective) and their courses (syntagmatic perspective) in the unfolding of the narrative. In the first phase, the Actantial Model will play a determining role in revealing the role of the actants. The narrative syntax aims at observing the course of the subject. The results of analysis here, with the results of the preceding step (the figurative level), will be important for the thematic level of analysis. The actors of the figurative level become the actants at the narrative level. At the thematic level, the actants will allow for abstracting values such as love, freedom and joy.

2.6 THE THEMATIC LEVEL

The thematic level “is the abstract or conceptual syntax where the fundamental values which generate a text are articulated” (Martin & Ringham, 2002:12). A narrative generally expresses this core of values, implicitly. This core of values, encoded in the text, constitutes the vital clue of the message of a narrative. The attempt to discover the core of values in narrative adopts two perspectives.

From the Paradigmatic perspective, values into play in a semiotic universe, are classified 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. In both steps, the semiotic square (discussed below) is used. It is important to notice that the uses of the semiotic square are numerous. Mapping out opposed values is only one of these. This section discusses the Paradigmatic and the Syntagmatic perspectives in more detail.

2.6.1 A PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE: THE OPPOSITION OF VALUES.

One of the axiomatic principles of Semiotics is that each text offers a judgment of values. Some values are deemed good, therefore approved by the narrator, while others are judged bad, and rejected categorically by him. With regard to values, there is no neutral text. Story-telling is a discriminating process. It divides the world of the narrative into two sharply opposing groups. The discovery of the opposed values that play a role in a narrative is important for the interpretation.

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To help sort values in a narrative text, Greimas (1970:136-154) introduced a mechanism called the *semiotic square*. Binary opposition constitutes the foundation of the semiotic square. It has, as basic constituent, a semantic axis connecting two opposed (**contrary**) values, S1 and S2. If, for example, S1 stands for white, S2 will represent the contrary, which is black, and vice versa. The two values can stand in opposition on the semantic axis as shown in Figure 9:

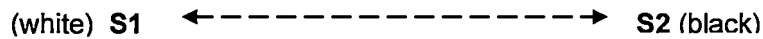


Figure 1.9

Illustration of a semantic axis connecting two contrary values

A second axis of contradictory values to these has the following configuration:



Figure 1.10

The second semantic axis connecting two contradictory values

The semiotic square is built using these two axes of values as follow:

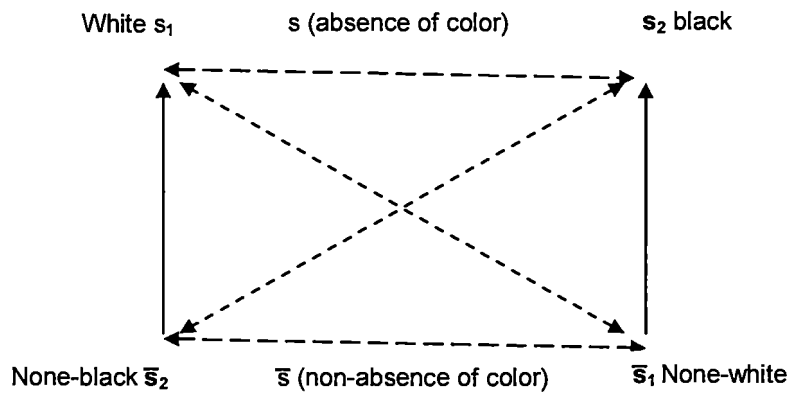


Figure 1.11

Illustration of the Semiotic Square

The semiotic square generates three kinds of relations related to active values in a given semiotic universe.

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- A $\leftarrow \text{-----} \rightarrow$ Relation between contrary (axes): S_1 and S_2 & \bar{S}_1 and \bar{S}_2 . According to Greimas and Courtés (1976:69), two values are contrary when the presence of one of them presupposes the existence of the other. Between two opposing values there exists a relation of presupposition.
- B $\leftarrow \text{-----} \rightarrow$ Relation between contradictory (schemata): S_1 and \bar{S}_1 & S_2 and \bar{S}_2 . Contrary values exclude each other.
- C \longrightarrow Relation of implication (deixis): \bar{S}_2 implies S_1 & \bar{S}_1 implies S_2

The semiotic square allows visualizing the deep organization of meaning by means of these three logical semantic relations. The first step in using the semiotic square is to look for opposing values. Mapping out opposing values depends on the text under study. Some texts expose opposing values easily, while others reveal these values, making it complicated to discover them. Data from the figurative and narrative analyses can help uncover them by paying attention to the following:

- a) Figurative oppositions in the text: Repetitions of some opposed equivalent expressions.
- b) Different actants in the text. The addresser is the adjudicator in the text. His condemnation or commendation reveals the existence of opposed values. Distinction between a **subject** and **anti-subject** and their quests correspond to contrary values.

The discovery of values and their location on the semiotic square is not an end in itself. The important step consists of observing their course in the text. This goal is achieved using the semiotic square in a syntagmatic perspective.

2.6.2 A SYNTAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE: THE THEMATIC ITINERARY

Narrative is an algorithmic structure of transformations (Hénault 1983:28). These transformations (from the initial situation to the final situation) take place at each level of analysis. At the deep level transformations are observable with the semiotic square.

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At this stage, the semiotic square is no longer static. $S1$, $S2$, $\bar{S}1$ and $\bar{S}2$ are no more conceived only as opposing, contradictory or complementary values, but also as transformation of values from one state to another. The course of values on the semiotic square is therefore different from their paradigmatic location (Courtney, 1999:76).

According to Everaert-Desmedt (2007:75), there is a universal logic of circulation in nearly all narratives. This logic functions in the following sequence:

- (1) a narrative lay down a value;
- (2) the narrative denies, doubts or questions the value laid down;
- (3) the proceeds to the contrary value; it may stop here or
- (4) deny the contrary value and;
- (5) return 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:

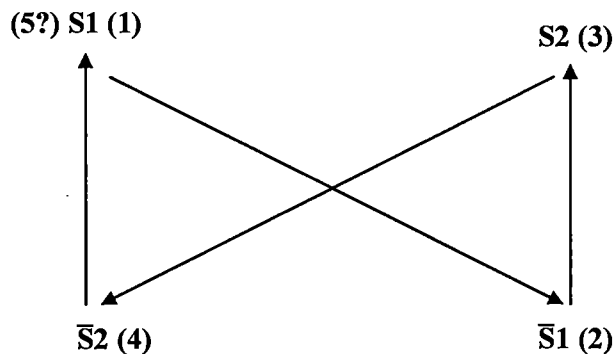


Figure 1.12

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:

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a. A text asserts a value, then questions it and confirms the opposed. Its thematic path has the following configuration:

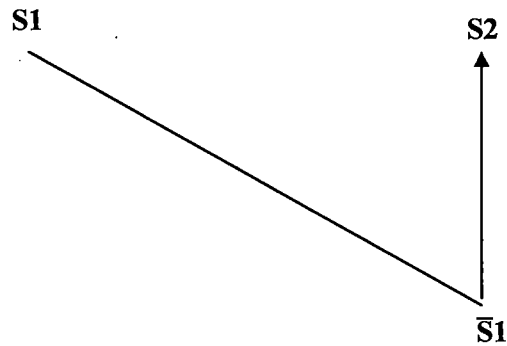


Figure 1.13

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

In this case, there is a plea for the reinstatement of the opposed value and the rejection of the current value.

b. A text asserts a value, then rejects it to assert the opposed. It rejects the opposed as well to reassert the first value. Its thematic path is the following:

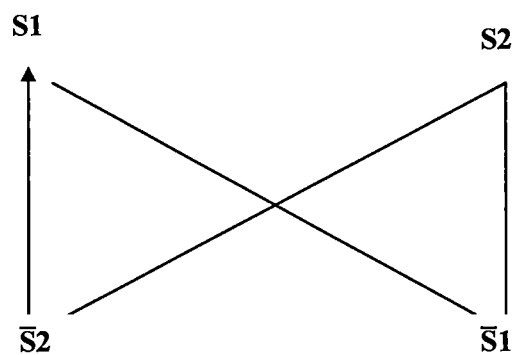


Figure 1.14

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

In this case there is a plea for the reinforcement of that value in the society.

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The thematic level is the deep and abstract level of a text. This level of analysis is concerned with the fundamental values which account for the generation of a text. These values are studied by means of a semiotic square, paradigmatically or syntagmatically.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The principles outlined in this chapter constitute the approach followed in the study of the Theodotion version of the story of Susanna. The approach consists of three levels: figurative, narrative and thematic. Levels are investigated paradigmatically (by gathering and comparing data) and syntagmatically (by observing itineraries).

The figurative level of analysis focuses on the aspects of natural languages (Greimas & Rastier, 1987:48). This step focuses on figures and how they are constructed by the author. Main figures in a text, according to the semiotic approach of analysis, consist of *actors, spaces and time*. The figurative level is investigated by gathering figures and observing their courses. The first step is aimed at analyzing figurative oppositions in a text while the second will deal with configurations or motifs recurring in Susanna (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:30). Particular attention is also given to the emplotment.

The narrative level of analysis examines the organization of the text as discourse. This step of analysis helps reveal different functions of actors (called at this stage actants) and trace the course of the subject (main character) across the narrative. The tools for analysis at this stage will be the Actantial Model and the narrative syntax.

At the thematic level, the researcher will strive to uncover fundamental values which generated the text. The core of these values is generally expressed implicitly by a narrative. It is that core of values, encoded in the text that constitutes the vital clue of the message of a narrative. The attempt to discover the core of values in narrative is achieved in two perspectives. From the paradigmatic perspective, values into play in a semiotic universe, are classified according to the cultural axiology (good versus bad; acceptable versus not acceptable). The syntagmatic perspective will be

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concerned with the circulation of these values across the text. In both steps, the semiotic square is used.

Finally, the individual three levels of the analysis will not generate meaning from the text. It is imperative that results from all three levels be put together. The production of a text proceeds from the thematic to the figurative level. The interpretative process then constitutes a backward movement to the generation. The socio-cultural facts surrounding the production and the reception of a text are important in its interpretation.

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The generation of meaning from a text can be condensed in the following schema (Everaert-Desmedt, 2007:85):

ENUNCIATION: socio-cultural circumstances surrounding the production and the reception of a text						
UTTERANCE: TEXT	Content	Steps in the generation of a text	↓	Paradigmatic perspective	Syntagmatic Perspective	
		1	Deep level + abstract	Thematic	Thematic articulations: opposition of values (semiotic square)	Thematic itinerary (semiotic square)
		2	↓	Narrative	Actantial relations	Narrative courses
		3	Surface level +concrete	Figurative	-Figurative opposition (Gathering figures: actors, spaces and time) -Emplotment	-Configurations or motifs (Courses of figures)
Expression: Language (Greek)						

CHAPTER 3: THE FIGURATIVE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the figurative analysis of the story of Susanna. It is the first of the three steps of analysis. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the main figures featuring in the story in terms of actors, space and time.

The study of the figurative level here takes into account three key elements: figurative oppositions, emplotment and motifs. The first section discusses figurative oppositions between figures. The second section discusses the emplotment of the story in terms of archetype, tropes and genre. The consideration of motifs is interwoven with these sections.

3.1. FIGURATIVE OPPOSITIONS

The objective of this section is to examine main oppositions between figures. Before comparing figures, however, it is crucial to examine their construction by the author. This process, as said in the preceding chapter, is called figurativization.

3.1.1 THE FIGURATIVIZATION OF THE STORY OF SUSANNA

Susanna comprises only a few figures. The figurativization of the story is, nevertheless, ingenious. It comprises a few actors, a few places and only one significant moment in time. These figures are discussed below in terms of actorialisation, spatialisation and temporalisation.

3.1.1.1 Actorialisation

Actorialisation, as said in the former chapter, denotes the way the author constructs his actors in order to convey the message. *Susanna* is a short story. Short stories consist of "a limited number" of actors (Hendry, 1991:106-107). The actors here are Joakim, Susanna, Susanna's father, Helkias, the two elders, God, the Jewish people, Susanna's maids, Joakim's household servants,

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Susanna's children, the fictive young man, the unnamed daughters of Israel, Daniel, and the angels.

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

ACTOR	FREQUENCY (in number of verses)
SUSANNA	48 (vv2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 54, 56 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63)
THE ELDERS	41 (5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62)
JEWISH PEOPLE	18 (4, 5, 6, 7, 28, 29, 34, 41, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 57, 60, 61, 62, 64)
DANIEL	17 (45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 64)
GOD	16 (2, 3, 5, 9, 23, 35, 42, 43, 44, 45, 50, 53 55, 59, 60, 63)
JOAKIM	8 (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 28, 29, 63)
THE FICTIVE YOUNG MAN	7 (21, 37, 38, 39, 40, 54, 58)
SUSANNA'S MAIDS	6 (15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 36)
HELKIAS (with his wife)	6 (2, 3, 29, 30, 33, 63)
JOAKIM'S SERVANTS	2 (26, v27)
ANGELS	2 (55, 59).
SUSANNA'S CHILDREN	1 (30)
THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL	1 (57)

Table 3-1 The frequency of actors in the story of Susanna

Statistical figures such as these indicate the relative importance of actors by their participation in the story. They show that there are major and minor actors in the story. Major actors tend to be referred to more often than minor actors. The information in this table can be represented figuratively as follows (Figure 3.1):

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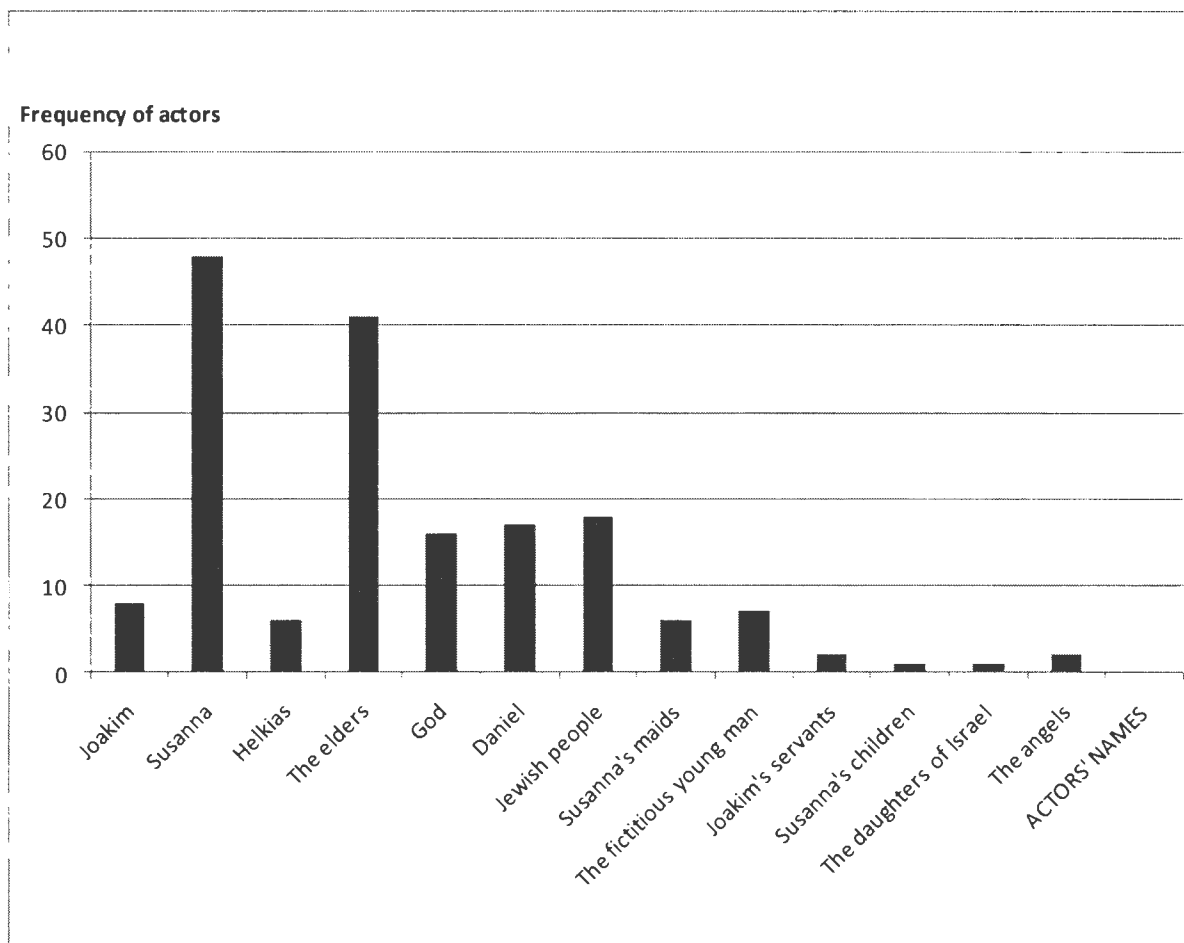


Figure 3.1 The frequency of the appearance of actors in the story of Susanna

Figure 3.1 presents the frequency of actors according to the number of verses where they are referred to, either directly or indirectly. The information is provided in order of actors' appearance in the story.

The frequency of actors in the story, however, does not describe their respective roles. Figure 3.1 clearly indicates that the characters who are introduced first in the story, Joakim and Helkias, are not the most prominent. The author reveals the true functions of actors through individuation and/or identification (cf. Chapter 2), as said in the Chapter on method. Distinctive traits of each character in this story are now discussed. Each of the major actors – Joakim, Susanna, Helkias, the elders,

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God and Daniel – are discussed in the order in which they are introduced in the story, followed by a short discussion of the minor characters.

A. Joakim

Joakim, Susanna's husband, appears first in the narration. He is an influential person in the Jewish community. His role in the story, however, is secondary he surfaces only in the speech of the narrator. Joakim posits no action and takes part in no dialogue. Only two action verbs denote his presence in the story: "(he was) living in Babylon" (ἦν οἰκῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι) and "he took a wife" (ἔλαβεν γυναῖκα). These two actions establish the background of the story. In fact, Babylon and Susanna are very important in the unfolding of the story.

Babylon, as will be demonstrated later (cf. 3.1.1.2. on spatialisation), is the origin of the crisis *Susanna* seeks to address: the inception of wickedness (the danger of Jews losing their Jewishness in the Diaspora). Susanna – a woman – on the other hand, represents the unique chance for her people to escape the crisis. Whereas living in Babylon was problematic for Jews, women like Susanna, totally committed to the Law, constituted an antidote to the problem.

The expression λαμβάνειν γυναῖκα (to take a wife) is a key concept in patriarchal practices and traditions prominent in that time. It describes a matrimonial relationship (cf. 3.2.1.) in terms of ownership and property. Joakim is the owner and Susanna his property. As the story unfolds, however, Susanna is portrayed as challenging and reverses the established order without any intervention from Joakim. Susanna is introduced by her relation to Joakim, but at the end, however, the relation is reversed.

The narrator mentions Joakim's name repeatedly (verses 1, 4, 6, 28, 29, and 63) to attract his readers' attention. In this story, anthroponyms such as Σουσαννα (Susanna), Ιωακίμ (Joakim), Χελκίας (Helkias) and Δανιήλ (Daniel) are part of the author's strategy of communication. Anthroponyms reveal different roles actors play in the narrative (2.4.1) and, are all rooted in Israel's traditions and history.

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ιωακίμ is a direct transliteration of the Hebrew יהויקים (Daniel 1:1-2), derived from the conflation of the noun יהוה (the Lord) and the verb קום (to establish). It means “the Lord will establish” (Kay, 1913:647). This name seems to refer to Susanna’s husband’s exceeding wealth. In fact, the verb קום, (to establish) has the meaning of “to strengthen” or “to increase his power”. It connotes prosperity, success or victory (Brown et al., 2000:877-879; Holladay, 2000:315; Harris, 1980:793). Joakim’s wealth increases his power and reputation in the Jewish community of Babylon. Clearly, he is well established in Babylon. In the history of Jewish people, however, this name has a negative connotation. It is the name of wicked kings of Judah (2 Kings 24:8-9). The attribution of such a name to an actor in a story believed to be fictitious (deSilva, 2002:232; Moore, 1977:84-89; Metzger, 1957:110; Pfeiffer, 1947:448), is deliberate. Fictional literature “contains a figurative expression of life” (Dietrich & Sundell, 1967:1). Fiction refers “to modelling and shaping pre-existing material” (Korhonen, 2006:16).

The association of Joakim, Daniel and Babylon in the story calls to mind the sad events of the Exile. In fact, the Exile happened during Joakim’s reign (2 Kings 24:8-17). Daniel was one of the young deportees (Daniel 1:2-6). The author of *Susanna* portrays Daniel as a “very young boy” (παιδαρίου νεωτέρου v45). He assumes that Joakim is still alive, in accordance with 2 Kings 25:27-30.

According to the above passage, Evilmerodach, king of Babylon, freed Joakim from his prison. He even gave him a throne above other conquered kings. The statement “καὶ ἤσθιεν ἄρτον διὰ παντός ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ” (and he ate his bread during all the days of his life before him) (v29), however, has a negative implication for a Jewish king. “Ἐσθίω ... ἐνώπιον (κατέναντι) τινος” (eat before someone) denotes a privilege of sharing meals with a high ranking authority such as a king (2 Samuel 11:13; 1 Kings 1:25). It means Joakim shared meals with the Babylonian king (Beaulieu, 2009:275). In fact, according to Sharon (2002:196), the eating motif seems to be very important in 2 Kings 25:27-30. Nevertheless, Joakim’s sharing of meals with the Babylonian king can sound like a covert blame.

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The depiction of a Jewish king sharing meals with a gentile king could not escape notice, and thus criticism, in some Jewish circles. This meant adoption of the Babylonian way of living at the expense of Jewish identity. In fact, books from the exilic and post exilic period express their concern about eating gentiles' meals. Daniel (1:8-21), Tobit (1:10-12), Esther (Additions C 28) and Judith (12:1-5) regard food from gentiles as polluted and polluting (cf Cheung, 1999:41-59; Cowley, 1913:261 and Gregg, 1913:678). Indeed, "[m]eals ... functioned as boundary markers, helping to define who was in the community and who was not. Jewish dietary laws especially functioned to define boundaries, for those who strictly followed these laws could not dine at a gentile table (Daniel 1:8; Tob.1:10)" (Freedman, 2000:876). Brenner (1999:xi) is of the view that: "dietary practices as well as cooking practices serve as social differentials, delimiting the boundaries between the "us" and the "them" (cf. Tomson, 1999:193; Reinhartz, 1999:228).

The most obscure period of Israel, with regard to identity, was likely under Ahab's reign (1 Kings 16-22). The alteration of Israel's identity under Ahab, according to Apple (1999:55-71), was manifest in dietary habits in Israel, under the influence of Jezebel. During this period, Appler (1999:55) argues that "the boundaries that maintain social order – boundaries separating foreigner and Israelite ... consumer and consumed, and the sacred and the profane – have become distorted".

The main concern of the Jewish literary works of the Second Temple period was indeed the maintenance of Jewish identity (Gruen, 1998:xv-xvii). The fact that Daniel, a young boy, refused a king's meals, but that Joakim accepted the offer as a privilege, is quite antipodal. The body of a king represents his people (George, 1999:393). A captive king represents a conquered people. A Jewish king sharing meals with a Babylonian king signifies a compromising situation of some Jews in Babylon.

The name of Ιωακίμ thus functions ambiguously in the story. The recourse to Joakim as an anthroponym, in a story concerned with Jewish distinctiveness, seeks to attract the attention of the

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reader. The danger of acclimatization to the Babylonian way of life and thus forgetting their distinctiveness was a real threat.

The narrator accentuates Joakim's wealth. The expression πλούσιος σφόδρα (very rich) appears only three times, in this exact combination, in the LXX. In Genesis 13:2 it refers to Abraham's unparalleled wealth. In 1 Maccabees 6:2, it denotes the fabulous riches of the temple of Elymas which caused Antiochus IV's frustration and death (Antiquities XII.ix.1; cf. Oesterley, 1913:87). Joakim and Susanna are linked to Abraham and Sara by this intertextuality. The large number of servants, as well as his wife Susanna's maids and the ownership of "the most glorious garden of all" (ἐνδοξότερον πάντων) attest to Joakim's wealth.

The way the couple is introduced in the story, however, does seem to attribute Joakim's riches to the presence of the righteous Susanna. First, until the narrator evokes Susanna's fear of the Lord, Joakim's wealth remains unknown. Second, in the wisdom literature riches constitute an external sign of the blessings of those fearing the Lord, namely the just (Psalm 111:1-3). Westermann (1985:128) concludes from Psalm 1 that in the Old Testament theology, "la bénédiction est destiné à l'homme pieux, par opposition à l'impie"²⁴. In the context of *Susanna*, however, there is no indication whatsoever as to whether Joakim feared the Lord. Third, the dependence of the story on Joseph and Potiphar's wife (cf. 3.2.1) seems to confirm this assumption. Fourth, as said above, the expression πλούσιος σφόδρα (exceedingly rich) suggests an intertextual link between Susanna and the story of Abraham. Abraham's wealth is described as resulting from Pharaoh because of Sarah (12:10-20).

Joakim is thus an ambiguous personage. He posits no action and participates in no dialogue. He is not explicitly depicted as good or bad in the story. His wealth is remarkable, which could appear as God's favour. The bad connotation of his name in Jewish history, however, tarnishes his image. As Gruen (2002:173) argues, he "does not ... emerge as an admirable figure" in the story. This study

²⁴ "Blessing is destined to the pious man, contrarily to the impious" (Translation by Kanonge, 2009)

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argues that he stands for the *compromising Jew of the Diaspora*, less concerned with his own distinctiveness. This ambiguous position, his *laissez faire* however, allows his house and his garden to play determining roles in the story as will be revealed later.

B. Susanna

Susanna is the second actor to be announced. The reader learns that she is beautiful, is married and has children. Emphasis is placed on the fact that she is God-fearing. She comes from a godly family and has a high education of the Torah. She has an unflinching trust in the Lord, has an exceptional knowledge of God and is a woman of prayer. She has authority and Joakim's servants have much respect for her. She appears as an unconventional and self-determined woman, as is discussed below.

The first aspect of Susanna that interests the narrator is her anthroponym. It emerges repeatedly in the story. Σουσαννα, as a personal name, however, does not appear elsewhere in the LXX. It comes from the transliteration of the Hebrew שושנה (Moore, 1977:95; cf. Fisch, 1996:37), which can be translated with *lily* or *lotus flower*. In 1 Kings 7:19, 22, 26 and 2 Chronicles 4:5 שושנה refers to the decoration of the temple. In fact, the two pillars (Jakin and Boaz) in Solomon's temple "were topped with elaborately decorated, lily-shaped capitals" (Carson, 1994). In likely manner, the rim of the big bronze basin called "the Sea" was made like that of a cup shaped like a lily blossom. In these two passages, the lily probably symbolizes beauty and purity (Goodspeed, 1939:70).

In Song of Songs (2:1-2, 16; 4:5, 13; 6:2-3; 7:2) the lily also represents beauty and love (Exum, 2005:112). Finally, in Hosea (14:5) שושנה (lily) stands for Israel. The last passage echoes Psalm 1 where the just is compared to a tree planted by the streams of water. Lily, here, is likely the symbol of righteousness (Farbridge, 2003:46).

The name of Susanna is thus symbolically rich. It stands for beauty, purity, righteousness and is a metaphor for Israel. שושנה matches main characteristics ascribed to Susanna, in the story, as revealed below.

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Susanna is married to Joakim, as pointed out above. Her association with Joakim, an influential person, calls to mind other Jewish heroes and heroines, such as Joseph and Esther. In these stories, Jews took advantage of royal courts to help their compatriots. The presence of Susanna in Joakim's house highlights the possibility of using this high position to influence the destiny of her people (Genesis 50:19-20; Esther 4:13-15). In these kinds of narratives, Mills (2006:413) insists, "a successful individual act ... illustrates the possibility for social survival of the whole group so represented".

Susanna is therefore, like *Joseph*, *Esther* and *Judith*, a story of preservation of God's people. The contrast, however, is the absence of any outside menace facing Jews. Jewish identity is jeopardised by Jews' own attempts to conform to the Babylonian way of life (Nickelsburg, 2005:24). Susanna's heroic achievement consists of preserving the Law of Moses, the unique token of the distinctiveness of Jews. As Tkacz (2006:189) writes, at the end of the story, "Susanna's heroism has initiated the purification of the Jewish community in exile".

In this regard, the story echoes Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). In both stories Israel's identity is at stake. The rejection of the Law stems from the ruling class. In 1 Kings, as in *Susanna*, there is no threat facing the Jews from the outside. In both stories wickedness threatens the community (1 Kings 16:29-33; *Susanna* 5). In both narratives wickedness is manifested as an external influence on the ruling class (Jezebel 1 Kings 16:31-32; *Susanna* 5). In the two stories the wicked kill – or threaten to kill – the just (1 Kings 18:4; 19:1-2; *Susanna* 41); on both sides God intervenes after prayer (1 Kings 18:36-39; *Susanna* 44-45); and in both, the people seize the vectors of wickedness to kill them (1 Kings 18:40; *Susanna* 62). While Elijah flees to save his life (1 Kings 19:3), *Susanna* waits serenely on the Lord for vindication (*Susanna* 35).

Susanna is portrayed as "extremely beautiful" (καλή σφόδρα) and "fearing the Lord" (φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον v2). These two qualities are central to her action in the narrative (Bohn, 2001:259). The first places *Susanna* in the Jewish heroic traditions and history (Steyn, 2008:164). Like in *Joseph*

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(Genesis 39:6), David (1 Samuel 16:12), Esther (2:7), Daniel (1:4) and Judith's (8:7) stories, good appearance has become emblematic of the intervention of the Lord in Israel.

Here, the beauty motif plays a testing role. First, beauty attracts the elders' attention toward Susanna. Daniel's statement that "τὸ κάλλος ἐξηπάτησέν σε, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία διέστρεψεν τὴν καρδίαν σου" (beauty has deceived you and sexual passion has perverted your heart) indicates that Susanna's beauty functioned as bait to entice the corrupted Jewish leaders. The use of beauty to lure and kill the wicked is unique to Susanna and Judith. The unique difference, however, lies in the fact that Susanna achieves this goal passively while Judith acts purposely.

In the latter story Judith's beauty gives Bethulia's elders the assurance that through it, the God of their fathers will accomplish Judith's purposes "to the glory of the children of Israel and to the exaltation of Jerusalem" (εἰς γαυρίαμα υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ὑψώμα Ἱερουσαλημ) (Judith 10:7). The impression Judith's beauty makes in the Assyrians' camp is that with such beautiful women, Jews "shall be able to deceive the whole world" (δυνήσονται κατασοφίσασθαι πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν) (10:19).

The use of beauty in these stories is intended to show that it is not at all natural. God intensifies the heroines' beauty irresistibly to achieve his purposes. In the book of Judith the purpose is to defeat the enemies and in *Susanna* it is to save the community from wickedness. In both cases, however, the objective is to preserve Israel's distinctiveness. In both stories the protagonist attains this goal successfully.

In addition, beauty exposes Susanna's commitment to the Law to be tested. The end of the story reveals that Susanna passes her test successfully. According to the author, "οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα" (no shameful deed was found in her). ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα refers to sexual immorality. There is intertextuality between Susanna and Dinah (Genesis 34). Both Dinah and Susanna go out (Susanna 6; Genesis 34:1); in both case women are subject are envied by men in power. In Genesis, Dinah succumb easily. She does not even care about her identity. No reference to Israel/God is made. The ending of the Dinah account supports women seclusion. Here, Susanna

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offers an alternative position. When women are fully educated according to the Law of Moses, seclusion becomes irrelevant. Susanna goes out, she is proposed but firmly resists.

This verdict simply means that both Susanna and the elders were tested. Sexual perversion as natural impulse was found in the elders (men), but not in Susanna (a woman). The 'intrinsically corrupted female nature' thesis, put forward in *Ben Sira* (cf. Jordaan & Kanonge, 2006) with regard to sexuality, is ironically proven irrelevant by Susanna's chastity.

Susanna is also described as φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον (fearing the Lord). The verb φοβέω appears about four hundred and fifty times in the LXX, with various nuances. A systematic analysis of how it is used in all instances falls beyond the scope of this study. The concern here is the connection between φοβέω and the Law.

Φοβούμενος (present participle passive, or middle, of φοβέω is used, instead of φοβοῦν, present participle active) literally means "being frightened" (Liddell & Scott, 2003:1946). Φοβούμενος refers to the threatening nature of God. The fear of the Lord appears here not as an optional choice but as a categorical imperative. With this nuance, φοβέω calls to mind the theophany of Sinai (Exodus 20:10-21). The objective of the encounter was not only to give Israel the Law but also to provide Jews with a right attitude towards God (v20).

God appeared in a terrifying way, said Moses to Jews, "so that his fear may be in you so that you may not sin" (ὅπως ἂν γένηται ὁ φόβος αὐτοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν, ἵνα μὴ ἁμαρτάνητε) (Exodus 20:20). As Keil (1884:124) argues, "God desired to inspire them with the true fear of himself, that they might not sin through distrust, disobedience or resistance to His guidance and commands". The last part of verse 18 (φοβηθέντες δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἔστησαν μακρόθεν), can read as follows: "frightened, all the people stood at a distance" (cf. Durham, 1987:303).

According to this passage, the fear (ὁ φόβος) of the Lord became, at this meeting, the essential ingredient for the people of the covenant to keep their distinctiveness. The participle φοβηθέντες is

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an ingressive (inceptive) aorist (Robertson, 1919:834; Dana & Mantey, 1927:196; Burton, 1898:20; Moulton, 1908:130 note 1). It singles out Sinai as the inaugural moment when Israel entered a new state of existence based on the fear of the Lord. From then on, in Jewish traditions, ὁ φοβούμενος τὸν κύριον means “the one who respects God”, “the one who keeps the covenant”, “the religious person,” “the true Israelite.” The verb φοβέω is thus closely related to the covenant of Sinai.

Φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον, the feminine form of φοβούμενος τὸν κύριον, occurs only once in the entire LXX. The corresponding masculine formula appears about ninety four times, chiefly in Psalms (30 times) and in *Ben Sira* (24 times). φοβουμένη is meaningfully important here.

First, it is only here, as said above, where it depicts a woman. The dominance of the masculine formula (ninety to one) suggests that the fear of the Lord was traditionally considered as men’s religious capacity alone. It also gives the impression that the covenant of Sinai was more concerned with men than with women. The feminine form functions rhetorically as an attempt to reject the established masculine dominated tradition. It sounds just like a reinterpretation of Israel’s traditions of exclusivity, aimed at the reinsertion of women in the covenant.

Second, as a present participle of φοβέω, φοβούμενος depicts the fear of the Lord as an enduring and permanent quality. Susanna’s fear of the Lord is thus an unalterable quality. This is unusual because the fear of the Lord is manifested in keeping the Torah. In Jewish traditions women were “not even bound to keep the whole Torah” (Oepke, 2000:781). This special derogatory disposition to the Law given to women was not at all to their advantage. It meant that they were incapable of fully observing the Law. Consequently, they were not considered as fully Jews as men. Here, however, Susanna’s depiction as Φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον (fearing the Lord) reverses this discriminatory tradition.

Susanna’s fear of the Lord is produced by the influence of her righteous parents (v3 οἱ γονεῖς αὐτῆς δίκαιοι: her parents (were) righteous and the teachings “according to the Law of Moses” (v3 κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ). Verse 3 echoes Deuteronomy 11:19 (cf 4:9-10; 6:6-7). Here, parents are

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commanded to teach their children the Law. The Law of Moses was established as the centre of the Jewish life and as the token of Jewishness. In fact, Deuteronomy 6:6-9 declares:

⁶ καὶ ἔσται τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, ὅσα ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαί σοι σήμερον, ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ σου, ⁷ καὶ προβιβάσεις αὐτὰ τοὺς υἱούς σου καὶ λαλήσεις ἐν αὐτοῖς καθήμενος ἐν οἴκῳ καὶ πορευόμενος ἐν ὁδῷ καὶ κοιταζόμενος καὶ διανιστάμενος, ⁸ καὶ ἀφάψεις αὐτὰ εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς σου, καὶ ἔσται ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου, ⁹ καὶ γράψετε αὐτὰ ἐπὶ τὰς φλιὰς τῶν οἰκιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν πυλῶν ὑμῶν²⁵

In the above text, Jews are commanded to impress the Ten Commandments on their children (verse 7). Furthermore, they have to tie the commandments on their hands and bind them on their foreheads (verse 8). Tying the commandments to their hands and foreheads was “a public demonstration of the person’s commitment to God’s Law” (Bratcher & Hatton, 2000:139). According to Merrill (1994:167), the bearing of the commandments would “identify their bearer as a member of the covenant community”. In other words membership in the Jewish community had to be dependent on the practice of these commandments. Out of them there could be no Jewishness.

Consequently, the teaching of the Law can be compared to the act of initiation to life in other societies. It was the obliged way to becoming a true Jew and preserving and perpetuating Jewish identity. With regard to this integrating process, however, women were excluded (Clanton, 2006:55; cf. Ilan, 1996:190-204 for an extensive discussion on the subject). According to the Mishnah (quote from Oepke, 2000, 1:781), it was believed that “[t]he man who teaches his daughter the Torah teaches her extravagance”. In other words, Jews thought it imprudent to involve women too much

²⁵ ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (TNIV).

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in religious matters. The depiction of Susanna as fully educated in the Law is exceptional. It contrasts with the rabbinic traditions of the Second Temple period referred to above.

Susanna's fear of the Lord comes to light in her reaction to the elders' proposal in the garden (v22). The phrase "Στενά μοι πάντοθεν" (I am in straits on every side) appears only in Susanna 22 and in 2 Samuel 24:14 (with its parallel in 1 Chronicles 21:13). Steussy (1993:155) points out this intertextuality, but does not elaborate on it. In brief, in 2 Samuel 24:1-14 David orders a census which displeases God. As a result, God decides to punish the action. David has to choose one of the three following penalties: seven years of starvation, three months of defeat before his enemies or a three day plague on his people from God himself. David expresses his perplexity by the phrase "Στενά μοι πάντοθεν".

David's census and its context are obscure. Some commentaries see David's ordering of the census as a deed of arrogance and "self sufficient proud" (Baldwin, 1988:294; Selman, 1994:205; Lange, 1960:603-605). Thompson (1994:160), however, is of the opinion that David's sin is in not observing ritual precautions such as "offering of sacrifices and prayers". Be it as it may, the concern here is not to elucidate the mystery but the intention of the author in linking the two stories. Similarities exist between the two incidents. In both stories there is a coercive choice to make. In both stories the choice involves death. Semantically, similar words such as χεῖρ (hand), κύριος (Lord), ἐμπίπτω (fall) are found (2 Samuel 24:14; Susanna 22-23). The author probably intended to equate David with Susanna with regard to prioritizing God in their choices.

Bergen (1986:474) contends that, by the census, "the author demonstrates the necessity of having leaders obedient and sensitive to the Lord. In fact, according to *Ben Sira* (46:8-11), David is the best king in Israel's history. David's choice to love God with all his heart (*Ben Sira* 45:8) emerges as the unique secret of his successful leadership in Israel.

As with David, Susanna fears God even to the extent of losing/ giving up her life. Susanna, by her fear of God, as Craven (2001:282) puts it, "is a teacher of right behaviour" in Israel. "Στενά μοι

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πάντοθεν” is likely used here to suggest that Susanna ranks and even surpasses David in her trust and purity.

Susanna’s “lifting of eyes to heaven” (ἀνέβλεψεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν) reveals her trust in God (v35 ὅτι ἦν ἡ καρδία αὐτῆς πεποιθυῖα ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ, because her heart relied firmly on the Lord). πεποιθυῖα (participle perfect active of πείθω) occurs in the classical and NT literature with the meaning of persisting “in a state of confidence” (Kittel, 2000, 6:4 Cf. Liddell & Scott, 1996:1353). It is translated by Liddell and Scott (1996:1354) with “in sure confidence”.

According to Liddell and Scott (1996:1354), the perfect of πείθω (πέποιθα) generally takes a personal dative. Thus πεποιθυῖα coupled with τῷ κυρίῳ implies that Susanna conceived God as a living entity. Furthermore, the association of ἐπὶ and κύριος is used with the dative with a verb expressing trust or confidence to refer to persons of authority (Liddell & Scott, 1996:621). Here the implication is that Susanna thought of the Lord as the final authority, the highest court of appeal. That is likely why Daniel, meaning “God is my judge”, is introduced in the narrative, as discussed below.

Susanna’s view of God dominates the story. Apart from her fearing the Lord, Susanna believes in the omnipresence of God. In fact, ἐνώπιον κυρίου (23) (in the presence of the Lord) appears more than hundred times in the LXX. This expression means “before the Lord”, face to face with the Lord or in the presence of the Lord (Liddell & Scott, 1996:579; Lust, 2003). The lifting of the head in the LXX also evokes God’s transcendence and His control over the entire universe (Traub, 2000, 5:519). Susanna’s view of God also emerges from her prayer (42-43). Her God is eternal (Ὁ θεὸς ὁ αἰώνιος), omniscient (knowing hidden things, ὁ τῶν κρυπτῶν γνώστης), and the one who knows everything before the genesis (foreknowledge) (ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ πάντα πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν).

Daniel’s involvement in the unfolding of the story also resulted from Susanna’s prayer (44). It is important to note that public prayer was forbidden to women. Oepke (2000, 1:781) contends that

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Jews prohibited a wife to pray, even at the table. Therefore, portraying Susanna as a woman of prayer in such a context is challenging and revolutionary.

Susanna's walking in the garden, and even intending to bath there, is a significant event in the story. It is described as being special (cf. 3.1.1.2.). The practice of women going out freely is in contrast with the ideology of the semiotic universe of the story, as demonstrated later in the section on Spatialisation (cf. 3.1.1.2). The emphasis on this event shows its peculiarity. It is a sign of unconventionality (cf. Joakim's garden).

The bathing motif of the story has led some scholars to link Susanna with the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)²⁶. The connection between the two stories, however, was intensified by the eroticist mentality of the Renaissance (Tkazc, 2008:181; Bohn, 2001:259). Semantically, apart from the verb λούω (to bath) and the expression καλή τῷ εἶδει σφόδρα (exceedingly beautiful to see) the two stories do not have much in common.

Firstly, the elders are portrayed as anti law (παράνομοι) while David is not. Secondly, David sees Bathsheba "in the middle of washing herself" (εἶδεν γυναῖκα λουομένην) (naked). It is doubtful that Susanna is naked when encountered by the elders. The verb λούω, in *Susanna*, refers not to an actual action of bathing (indicative mood) but to a potential action [ἐπεθύμησε λούσασθαι (infinitive) (she desired to wash herself) and ὅπως λούσωμαι (subjunctive) (so that I may wash myself)]. Furthermore, verse 19 says that, "at the same time as the girls (maids) went out and the two elders stood up and ran to her" (ὡς ἐξήλθοσαν τὰ κοράσια, καὶ ἀνέστησαν οἱ δύο πρεσβῦται καὶ ἐπέδραμον αὐτῇ). The simultaneousness of the two clauses introduced by ὡς (Cf Dana & Mantey, 1927:279) means that the going out of the girls on one side and the standing and running of the elders on the other, takes place simultaneously. This means Susanna didn't have time to take off her clothes. Thirdly, Susanna resists the advances of the two elders, whereas Bathsheba did not resist David. Fourthly, the elders make an arrangement to meet Susanna in the garden, but David's

²⁶ The story of David and Bathsheba is discussed at length by Van der Bergh (2008).

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seeing Bathsheba bathing happens by chance. Fifthly, David sees Bathsheba at sunset (ἔσπερα), whereas the elders encounter Susanna at noon (μέσον ἡμέρας).

Finally, Susanna's narrative is a praise of her behaviour (v63) while the David and Bathsheba's story is a disapproval of David's criminal misconduct (2 Samuel 11-12). Bathsheba is never condemned as instigator of the action. Her listing with Tamar, Rahab and Ruth in the genealogy of Matthew (1:1-17) reveals that her memory was not negative in Israel.

The link between Bathsheba and Susanna, with the exaggeration of eroticism, as said above, stems from the Renaissance perceptions of social rules. It is aimed at victimizing women as vectors of sexual depravity. This is a typical example of distortion of the intended meaning of biblical stories. In early Christianity, Susanna was considered as a model of virtue, even as a figure of Christ (cf. Boitani, 1996:7-19; Halpern-Amaru, 1996:21-34).

The intertextuality between the *Susanna* and the David and Bathsheba narrative, if any, is not at all aimed at highlighting women's wickedness. On the contrary, it underlines the corrupted sexual morality of Jewish leaders, namely that of David and the two elders. Singling out women as sexually corrupted and thus dangerous to the community is an ideological stance of the Second Temple period (cf. 4.1.3.2.).

In linking the elders to David, the author of *Susanna* is precisely aiming at rejecting such a victimisation of women as a late developing ideology of the Second Temple period. It is quite absent from the history of the fathers of the Jewish nation. Stories of Jewish women indulging in sexual activities for self-enjoyment are rare in Jewish history. Women such as Tamar and Ruth longed after men only as the unique way of fulfilling their maternal duties. They are never blamed for their actions.

The bathing motif also connects Susanna to Exodus 1 and 2. Λούσασθαι, to wash oneself (infinitive middle aorist of λούω, I wash, occurring fifty times in the LXX), appears only in these two texts in

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the exact syntactic construction. Such an exception suggests an intentional intertextuality between Susanna and Exodus 2:5.

The latter passage recounts the birth of Moses and his providential adoption by Pharos' daughter. Both Pharos' daughter and Susanna go out accompanied by their maids (Exodus 2; Susanna 17). In both texts men are either passive or negatively active. In Exodus, Pharos (ruler) decrees the killing of Jewish male babies (Moses is put in danger) while in *Susanna*, the elders (ruling class) endeavours to get rid of the Law of Moses. In both cases, the future of the people of God is jeopardised. While Moses' mother takes initiative to save her son, her husband is totally absent from the account. According to Reiss (2005:127), "[i]t is notable that Moses was both nurtured and protected by women. This, I would suggest, contributed greatly - perhaps even essentially - to his unique greatness" (cf. Also Kessler (2005:329) who views Sephora circumcising her son as a transgression of fixed gender boundaries). As noted before, Susanna is described as actively concerned about Jewishness while her husband is totally absent.

In both texts, the prevalence respectively of Moses and his Law depends totally on women (Exum, 1983:63) such as Moses' mother, Moses' sister, the daughter of Pharos and Susanna for preservation. In both texts, women challenge men's authority and their commands. In Exodus, a Pharos' daughter adopts Moses contrarily to her father's decree of annihilation. Susanna rejects women's seclusion and dares to resist the elders' proposal. The unconventionality of women in these two texts is clear. With regard to the emancipative ideology of these introductory chapters of Exodus, Tribble makes argument worth quoting extensively. According to Tribble (Tribble, 1973:34),

The Exodus speaks forcefully to Women's Liberation. So compelling is this theme of freedom from oppression that our enthusiasm for it may become unfaithfulness to it. Yet the story does teach that the God of Israel abhors slavery; that Yahweh acts through human agents to liberate (agents who may not even acknowledge him; agents who may be *personae non gratae* not only to rulers but also to slaves); that liberation is a refusal of the oppressed to participate in an unjust society and thus it involves a withdrawal; and that liberation begins in the home of the oppressor.

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More especially, women nurture the revolution. The Hebrew midwives disobey Pharaoh. His own daughter thwarts him, and her maidens assist. This Egyptian princess schemes with female slaves, mother and daughter, to adopt a Hebrew child whom she names Moses. As the first to defy the oppressor, women *alone* take the initiative which leads to deliverance (Exod. 1:15-2:10). If Pharaoh had realized the power of these women, he might have reversed his decree (Exod. 1:16, 22) and had females killed rather than males! At any rate, a patriarchal religion which creates and preserves such feminist traditions contains resources for overcoming patriarchy.

The author of *Susanna* appeals to Exodus to advance his emancipative ideology. According to him, the maintenance of the Law of Moses, in the Jewish community, depended totally on women's actions as did Moses' survival.

Susanna is called progressively θυγάτηρ Χελκίου (daughter of Helkias v 2, 3 and 29), θυγατέρα Ισραηλ (daughter of Israel v 48) and θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (daughter v57). These identifications are not unintentional. They disclose the progressive revelation of her identity. The first designation, θυγάτηρ Χελκίου, is intended to give credit to Susanna as a legitimate member of the community, on the basis of genealogy. Her connection with a religiously outstanding family (οἱ γονεῖς αὐτῆς δίκαιοι) is intentional. In Jewish tradition, righteousness and wickedness are sometimes conceived as a heritage from parents. Kings such as Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha and Ahaziah, to name a few, are said to resemble their fathers or mothers in their attitude toward the Law (1 Kings 15:3, 25-26, 33-34; 22:53-54).

The phrase θυγάτηρ Χελκίου (daughter of Helkias) also rejects patriarchal discrimination between sons and daughters in Jewish families. Without a doubt, sons and daughters were not valued equally. Fohrer (2000, 8:342) is of the opinion that "[o]nly to a sinner does it happen that he has just daughters and no son". Daughters were considered as less important and more problematic.

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Ben Sira (22:3) maintained that “the birth of a daughter was a loss” (θυγάτηρ δὲ ἐπ’ ἐλαττώσει γίνεται) and that “a daughter (was) to a father a hidden cause of insomnia” (42:9, Θυγάτηρ πατρὶ ἀπόκρυφος ἀγρυπνία). In support to this ideology, the Mishnah (quote from Oepke, 2000:781) writes: “Happy is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females”.

The ending of the story, however, reveals quite an opposite stance. Susanna’s parents will praise the Lord happily for their daughter. Contrarily, the elders’ parents, could they be alive, would have been bitterly disappointed about their sons. The view that women bring “shame and dishonour” (Sira 42:14) and thus must be under strict watch (Sira 26:10-12) is singled out and addressed ironically.

The expression θυγάτηρ Χελκίου (daughter of Helkias) is closely associated with γυνὴ Ἰωακίμ (Joakim’s wife). Here again patriarchal traditions are in view. In fact, in these traditions, a woman has no identity of her own. She is linked either to her father or husband. According to the story however, Susanna goes beyond the boundaries of the patriarchal system. She moves from her father and husband’s control toward new horizons. She is no longer only the domesticated daughter of Helkias and wife of Joakim, but she also aspires to become the daughter of Israel (θυγατέρα Ἰσραὴλ).

The second designation, θυγατέρα Ἰσραὴλ, is probably used to indicate that Susanna was a legal member of the Jewish community, as men were. The designation is used by Daniel when contesting Susanna’s sentence to death (v48). The statement: “Οὕτως μωροί, οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ; οὐκ ἀνακρίναντες οὐδὲ τὸ σαφὲς ἐπιγνόντες κατεκρίνατε θυγατέρα Ἰσραὴλ”; (are you such fools, sons of Israel? Would you condemn a daughter of Israel without first cross-examination and discovering its accuracy?) appears to be a deliberate blame.

Daniel argues that Susanna was treated as an outsider. As a daughter of Israel, she merits an equitable judgment. This second designation, θυγατέρα Ἰσραὴλ, addresses gender discrimination in the Jewish community, namely the idea that women were inferior members of the society. With

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regard to choice for marriage, for example, Sira contended that “a woman shall accept any man (as husband) but there is a girl preferable to another” (36:21 πάντα ἄρρενα ἐπιδέξεται γυνή, ἔστιν δὲ θυγάτηρ θυγατρὸς κρείσσων). Josephus (Apion 2.201) was of the opinion that: “A woman is inferior to her husband in all things.’ Let her, therefore, be obedient to him; not so, that he should abuse her, but that she may acknowledge her duty to her husband; for God hath given the authority to the husband”. According to Genesis Rabah (45 on 16:5), women were “greedy, inquisitive, lazy and vain” (quote from Oepke, 2000:781). Rabbi Hillel was of the opinion that with “many women, much witchcraft” (quote from Oepke, 2000:781; cf. also Archer, 1983:273). Such examples are available *ad infinitum*.

The image of Susanna contrasts sharply with the above mentioned stereotypes of women during the Second Temple period. God’s providing for Susanna reveals the concern of the story for the abuse of women’s rights by Jewish institutions of the Second Temple period. The author of *Susanna* depicts Daniel’s intervention as God launching a campaign for promoting women’s rights in the Jewish community. Susanna’s journey does not end here; she enters the religious sphere of Israel as daughter of Judah.

The last designation, θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (daughter of Judah v57), is used by Daniel to distinguish Susanna from other women in the community. It is related to Susanna’s practice of the Law. This name is thus linked to the religious aspect of the Jewish community. Biases in the community’s religious views are addressed here. Rabbi Eliezer said that “they shall burn the teachings of the Torah rather than convey them to women” (quoted by Ilan, 1996:191). About attending the assembly, Ilan (1996:191) says “women attend only as listeners whereas men come to study”. Θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (daughter of Judah) is an attempt to rehabilitate women in the Jewish religion. In fact, Gutbrod (2000, 3:370) says that, in the Second Temple period the term Ἰουδαῖος (Jew from Ιουδα) was used to refer particularly to the religious aspect of Jews. That Susanna is characterised

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as fearing the Lord even more than men is purposely subversive. Women were denied this ability according to the Jewish religious customs.

Verse 63 announces the last verdict on Susanna's true identity: "οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα" (no shameful affair was found in her). As said above, the author challenges the established assumption that women were sexually corrupted. This conclusion establishes Susanna's chastity. This verse is also important because Susanna is prioritised at the expense of her husband. First, Joakim is inserted in Susanna's family. Second, the familial order is changed with the reading as follows: Σουσαννας μετὰ Ἰωακίμ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς (Susanna with Joakim her husband). This order is unusual in patriarchal traditions where the husband is supposed to take the lead in everything.

Finally, the brave resistance of Susanna paves a way for Daniel's glorious destiny (64).

The portrait of Susanna that emerges from the story is totally at odds with the image of women of the time during which the story was written. Like in other stories such as Judith and the Additions to Esther, the heroine contrasts sharply with the conventional representation of women of her time (Jordaan, 2009:1-6). The whole Jewish community depends totally on her for the preservation of its traditions and thus of its identity. Unconventionality of a woman in the story is subtly linked to ancient Jewish traditions and hailed with applause as a new direction to be taken by the nation.

C. Helkias

The third actor is Χελκίας, Susanna's father. His role seems to be minor in the story, but his influence on Susanna is decisive. His name means "the Lord is my portion" (Kay, 1913:647). His name has a positive connotation in Jewish traditions and history. It calls to mind a certain Helkias, the high priest who played a key role in the religious and moral reform of Josiah's time (2 Kings 22-23; cf. 2 Chronicles 34-35). This change earned Josiah the honour of being one of the only three kings of Judah highly commended for their zeal for the Law of Moses (Ben Sira 49:4-6).

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The name of Helkias suggests an intertextual link between the two stories. The concern of the story of Susanna is the intrusion of wickedness (sexual perversion) into the Jewish community (v5). This concern requires restoration. For this reason, the author of the story connects Susanna's father to the moral reformatory traditions of Josiah's time (2 Kings 22-23; cf. 2 Chronicles 34-35). In both stories, a certain Helkias influences the Jewish community indirectly with the Law. In the story of Josiah, Helkias gives the king the Law (2 Kings 22:8-12) and thereby the community is saved from idolatry. In the story of Susanna, another Helkias teaches his daughter the Law and the community is saved from wickedness. The author places Susanna in the traditions of religious reformers in Israel. Helkias is used to underline the imperious necessity of teaching children the Law of Moses, without gender discrimination. This is the only way for Israel to survive as distinctive people of the Lord. It is expressive that, to reveal their frustration, the two elders refer to Susanna as "Σουσανναν θυγατέρα Χελκιου, ἥ ἐστὶν γυνὴ Ἰωακὶμ" (Susanna daughter of Helkias who is the wife of Joakim). The emphasis on Helkias is a covert blame. It reveals their disapproval of Helkias' religious influence on Susanna. Susanna, with her knowledge of the Law, has become a potential danger to and exposé of the elders' evil practices.

D. The two elders

The two elders are the fourth actors (collective actor) to appear in the story. The absence of their names is their first prominent characteristic. According to Herodotus, to be without a name is abnormal (Bientenhard, 2000:243). In the Bible and Jewish traditions, lacking a name means to be without identity (cf. Cornwall & Smith, 1998:vi). According to Delcor (quoted by Steussy, 1993:109) the word elders, πρεσβύτεροι (plural), rather seem to be an allusion to the institution than to the age of the individuals. In fact, elders constituted an important institution in Israel (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30) (Bornkamm, 2000:654). Matthew 15:2 and Mark 7:5 link the elders to the word παράδοσις (tradition) (ἡ παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, the tradition of the elders) as opposed to the Law. The elders in *Susanna* represent *Jewish traditions of the Second Temple period* (Josephus, Ant., 10:51; 13:297, 409).

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The elders are associated with wickedness and sexual perversion, inspired by Babylon (v5). Their portrait is incompatible with their function of judges as the protectors of people's rights (Jordaan, 2008:121). Their main aim is to have a Jewish community without the Law and thus without God. This twofold project is revealed by their designation as παράνομοι [anti Law or Law-breakers (Dancy, 1972:233)] (32), as well as by their metaphorical gesture of "turning their eyes against heaven" (9). According to Dancy their "injustice is seen as a form of practical atheism: "It involves the rejection of God's will" (1972:227). Susanna thus does more here than saving the Jewish community; she actually saves the presence of God.

Daniel's declaration of "οὕτως ἐποιεῖτε θυγατράσιν Ἰσραηλ, καὶ ἐκεῖναι φοβούμεναι ὠμίλουν ὑμῖν" (So did you do with daughters of Israel and them being frightened had sexual intercourse with you) reveals that Susanna was not their first victim. Wickedness already penetrated the Jewish community. This deduction can be made from various facts. Firstly, the reference to various women, "the daughters of Israel ... being scared had sexual intercourse with them" (θυγατράσιν Ἰσραηλ ... φοβούμεναι ὠμίλουν ὑμῖν). Secondly, wicked judgments – thus "condemning the just" (v53 ἀθώους κατακρίνων) (according to the context those rejecting their advances) and "absolving the guilty" (v53 ἀπολύων δὲ τοὺς αἰτίους) – were introduced in Israel. These examples give the idea that having intercourse with women was a practice (perhaps a common one) of the elders.

Further, the elders are portrayed as "seed of Canaan" (Σπέρμα Χανααν). The metaphor emphasizes their deviation from the Law of Moses, with regard to sexual morality. In fact, in the context of the story, wickedness (5) means illegal sexual intercourse. The word ἐπιθυμία (desire) appears five times in the story. In all of these instances it means sexual desire and is exclusively associated with the elders (8, 11, 14, 20 and 56). Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδα (seed of Canaan but (you are) not Judah) also emphasizes the fact that the rejection of the Law invalidates any claim to Jewishness. The execution of the two elders is recounted as a proof of Susanna's innocence (62).

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The actorialisation of the two elders in the story is striking. In Israel, as said above, elders symbolised wisdom resulting from the fear of the Lord. Their portrait here, however, is contrary to their authentic image and mission in Israel. They are not only corrupt, but also in total disobedience to the Law of Moses. Their incurable sexual desire matches the depiction of women in the Second Temple period. This inversion of roles is likely aimed at rejecting the victimization of women as corrupted members of the society.

E. God

The fifth actor mentioned in the story is God. His first appearance here relates to the inception of wickedness in the Jewish community. He is called respectively ὁ θεὸς, (God), ὁ δεσπότης (the Lord) and ὁ κύριος (the Lord). 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. ὁ θεὸς (God) is generally used for the deity in a monotheistic view, or for supernatural beings in a polytheistic conception of reality (Kleinknecht, 2000:64-78). In Jewish traditions it refers to the God of Israel, assumed to be recognised as the only one and true God (Stauffer, 2000:89). ὁ δεσπότης and ὁ κύριος can both be translated as “master” or “Lord” with different nuances not evoked here (cf. Liddell & Scott, 1996:381, 1013; Rengstorf, 2000:43-49; Foerster, 200:1039-1058, 1081-1098; Quell, 2000:1058-1081). The title ὁ δεσπότης also translates as “master of the house”, “absolute ruler” or “owner” (Liddell & Scott, 1996:381). When the title refers to the God of Israel in the LXX, his absolute supremacy is in view (Rengstorf, 2000:46).

Though ὁ κύριος is a translation of other Hebrew names of God, such as יהוה, it occurs mainly in the LXX as a Greek translation of the Hebrew YHWH (Liddell & Scott, 1996:1013). This is likely to be the case in *Susanna*. Some of the names in the narrative such as Helkias or Joakim are a combination of the short form of YHWH (Ya). The origin of the name YHWH is obscure (Meagher, 1979b:3791; Achtemeier, 1985:506; Bromily, 1982:507). YHWH “is God’s covenant name revealed to the Israelites alone” (Meagher, 1979a:1510; Bromiley, 1985:685). ὁ κύριος occurs in the story five times (2, 23, 35, 44, 53). It is remarkable that all the occurrences are exclusively connected

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with Susanna, either directly or indirectly. The author uses this name to suggest that God pays special attention to Susanna. God is not biased toward women.

In the narrative, God is mainly revealed through Susanna's point of view, specifically in her prayer²⁷ as discussed above (cf. 3.1.1.1). This likely suggests that among all the actors, Susanna is the one who knows God better than other actors. Furthermore, in the story, God acts as if He is the initiator of Susanna's action, either directly or indirectly. Firstly, Susanna's resistance to the elders' advances stems from her commitment to the Law and the Law is from God. Secondly, the story refers to "an unknown prophetic saying" (Metzger & Murphy 1991:180) (v4 ἐλάλησεν ὁ δεσπότης, the Lord spoke) which is found nowhere.

Many scholars have tried to map out this quote from the Scripture, but to no avail (TOB, 2004:1758). The concern for historical evidence, however, does not take into account the fictional nature of the story. The concern here is that a historical fact is given by pointing to possible existing scripture, but without explicit indication. The quote may have "the rhetorical function of giving authority to the text, by posing as real Scripture to the reader", as Jordaan (2008:122) argues. Here, however, it is likely an imitation of prophetic traditions of Israel. It reveals God's concern for the intrusion of wickedness. He is the addresser, the initiator of Susanna's action, as discussed in the Chapter 4.

F. Daniel

Daniel is the last major actor to appear in the story. His name means "God has judged" (Moore, 1977:108). His introduction is presented as a special act of God's intervention on behalf of Susanna. The narrator declares that God aroused the Holy Spirit of a mere child whose name is

²⁷ ⁴² ἀνεβόησεν δὲ φωνῆ μεγάλη Σουσαννα καὶ εἶπεν Ὁ θεὸς ὁ αἰώνιος ὁ τῶν κρυπτῶν γνώστης ὁ εἰδῶς τὰ πάντα πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν,

⁴³ σὺ ἐπίστασαι ὅτι ψευδῆ μου κατεμαρτύρησαν, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀποθνήσκω μὴ ποιήσασα μηδὲν ὧν οὗτοι ἐπονηρεύσαντο κατ' ἐμοῦ.

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Daniel. The expression ἐξήγειρεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα (God aroused the spirit) appears in other books such as 2 Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1, 5 and Haggai 1:14 with minor differences to *Susanna*. In each of the mentioned passages, God raises a person to act as His instrument and achieve His will. In *Susanna*, it serves to highlight the instrumentality of Daniel and to accredit God as the subject of the action.

Daniel indeed assumes an important function in the story. His role, however, has been much exaggerated by some scholars as to make him the central figure of the story. McDowell (2006:72) assumes that “the primary purpose of *Susanna* seems to be a story about the wisdom of Daniel”. In the same way, Schiffman (1998:323; 1991:123) argues that “the tale is intended to show the wisdom of Daniel even as a youth”. This view is shared by a various other scholars, mainly feminists, as Tkacz (2008:181-196) argues.

An alternative view is held by Moore. Daniel, Moore (1977:90-91) contends, “is not the hero here but *Susanna* is”. Moore’s view seems to be supported by data from the text. Firstly, Daniel’s intervention is clearly presented by the narrator as an answer to *Susanna*’s prayer (44 Καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς αὐτῆς, and God heard her voice).

Secondly, the verb ἐξεγείρω (I raise up) reveals that Daniel is used passively as an instrument. Although the verb is in active form, it is not simple active, but a causative active. The better translation in this case is “I cause to raise up” (Dana & Mantey, 1927:156; Robertson, 2006:801). It means that God is the cause of Daniel’s intervention.

Thirdly, the use of puns (wordplay) (Ὑπὸ σχίνον ... σχίσει σε μέσον and Ὑπὸ πρίνον ... πρίσαι σε μέσον, “under a mastic tree ... he (the angel) shall cut you in the middle” and “under a holm tree ... he shall cut you in the middle”) suggests that Daniel acts under inspiration. Doran (2008:245-247) formulates this as follows: “Wordplays are generally part of dream and omen interpretation. The wordplay Daniel uses reveals his position as an interpreter”.

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Puns also play an important role in the book of Daniel (Arnold, 1993:479-485) and in the story of Joseph (Wilson, 2004:118). In these books, however, it is not the ability of the interpreter that is important but the action of God. With regard to the Daniel and Joseph narratives Fox (2001:40) contends that:

The book of Daniel shares and elaborates the Joseph story's idea that the wisdom of dream interpretation is a divinely communicated message rather than a talent or a learned competence. The Joseph story and, more deliberately, the book of Daniel, create a rank of dream interpretation beyond the ordinary. Decoding by inspiration trumps decoding by expertise yet keeps the status of wisdom (*hokmäh, bīnah*). Oneiromancy is displaced by prophecy.

Puns in *Susanna* have the same function as in the stories of Joseph and Daniel. They reveal that Daniel judges by inspiration. He acts like Daniel and Joseph in the interpretation of dreams. They depend on God; not on natural human capacity.

Fourthly, Daniel's affirmations in the story presuppose direct revelations rather than common knowledge. His finding out of the elders' lie (ψευδῆ γὰρ οὔτοι κατεμαρτύρησαν αὐτῆς, for they have testified lie against her), his knowledge of the elders' wicked judgments and their arbitrary "condemning of the innocents" (v53 τοὺς μὲν ἄθώους κατακρίνων), and his knowing of the elders' forced sexual intercourse with Jewish women (οὕτως ἐποιεῖτε θυγατράσιν Ἰσραηλ, καὶ ἐκεῖναι φοβούμεναι ὠμίλουν ὑμῖν) are found nowhere in the story.

Fifthly, Daniel is introduced in the story as παιδαρίου νεωτέρου (a mere young boy) (45). The word παιδαρίον with the adjunction of the superlative νεωτέρος has a depreciatory connotation (Dunn, 1982:25). It depicts Daniel as a "mere mere child" (Liddell & Scott, 1996:1286) with no expertise in judicial affairs. The use of νεωτέρος in this story echoes the story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17). In the latter story, Saul doubts David's capability to confront Goliath (1 Samuel 17:32-33) as David is but a mere child.

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One may notice from the double negation (v33 οὐ μὴ by no means) that Saul finds it impossible for David to stand against Goliath (Οὐ μὴ δυνήσῃ πορευθῆναι πρὸς τὸν ἀλλόφυλον τοῦ πολεμεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ, you shall by no means be able to go to the Philistine to fight against him). The impossibility of the confrontation stems from David's immaturity (ὅτι παιδάριον εἶ σύ, because you are a child), and his lack of military experience compared to Goliath's reputation as a professional warrior from his youngest age (καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ πολεμιστῆς ἐκ νεότητος αὐτοῦ, but him is a warrior man from his youth). παιδάριον doubled with νεωτέρος here indicates that Daniel is even younger than David and, thus, less experienced to judge as he did.

Sixthly, *Susanna* is a story of persecution and vindication of the righteous (Nickelsburg, 2006:66, 74). These kinds of stories abound in the biblical traditions and have their own structure. According to Nickelsburg (2006:66, 74) the structure of these stories comprises, among other elements, *reason* (for persecution), conspiracy, choice, accusation, trial, condemnation, protest, the intervention of a helper, rescue, acclamation, exaltation, vindication and punishment. Daniel is not the "suffering just" in this story. He can fit into the story as a helper, as suggested by Nickelsburg (2006:66, 74). To assume that Daniel is the hero of the story, as Cornelius (2008:100) does, only because of his intervention to the rescue of Susanna, is thus questionable.

This logic falls short when applied to other stories in the book of Daniel. Habakkuk, for example, must also be considered as the hero of the story of Daniel and the Dragon (cf. Craven, 1998:313). The angel must be considered as the hero of the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3). In the same manner, the hero of the story of Daniel into the lions' den (Daniel 6) will be the angel and not Daniel. All these stories, as DiTommaso (2005:61) demonstrates, have structures similar to *Susanna* and must thus be studied in the same way.

Halpern-Amaru (1996:22) is of the opinion that Daniel's role in the story is not central: "In spite of the celebration of youth at the end of the story, the reader is quite aware that it is divine intervention, not Daniel's wisdom, that brings the narrative to resolution". Arguing from the similarity

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of *Susanna* with stories in Daniel, Mendels (1992:426) concludes that: "in the book of Susanna, Daniel plays a secondary role (the real hero is Susanna) whereas in Daniel 1-6 he is the main character".

Finally, one way of avoiding arbitrary attribution of roles is to consider the pattern of heroism in Biblical stories. In other words, what makes a character become a hero in a story? Heroism does not have universal characteristics. It is, in many cases, a contextual construction. It depends on the axiology of each society. The notion of good and bad values is not consensually universal. A good illustration may be drawn from Biblical stories. In Daniel 6, Daniel is thrown into the lions' den because he rejects idolatry. From the Jewish ontology, Daniel is right but from the Babylonian view he is not. The adoration of statues is integral part of the Babylonian culture. The same reasoning can be applied to 2 Maccabees where issues at stake are eating pork (2 Maccabees 7:1) and male circumcision (2 Maccabees 6:10-11). These issues would not be worth dying for in all ancient societies. In this respect, Malina and Neyrey (quoted by deSilva, 1996:434) contend that "what might be deviant and shameful for one group in one locality may be worthy and honorable for another".

An actor is a hero only with regard to the values he struggles for. In most apocryphal stories, the central issue is Jewish identity (Gruen, 1998:292), built around the Law of Moses. In stories dedicated to constructing national or ethnic identity, heroism depends on central values. The hero's struggle aims at maintaining the core values of the ethnic group. The central issue in *Susanna* is obedience to the Law of Moses with regard to sexual morality. Susanna is sentenced to death not because she is a woman but because she champions the resistance to the anti Law. To interpret the story with gender as central issue is to miss the point. Moreover, the story was not written from the perspective of postmodern gender debates. Otherwise such a hermeneutics becomes a falsification of ancient ideologies propagated by ancient stories.

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G. Other actors

Apart from these main actors, there are other minor actors such as the unnamed Susanna's mother, the Jewish people, Joakim's servants, Susanna's maids, the fictitious young man, Susanna's children, the daughters of Israel and the angels.

The Jewish people, as a collective actor, play an important role in the story, despite the fact that they appear as minor actors in the story. They appear here as recipients of the message of the narrative (cf. Chapter 4). They are the addressees or receivers.

Susanna's mother is associated with Helkias to show that, in accordance with the Jewish traditions, she was explicitly involved in her daughter's education, and that education is both intellectual, to judge from Susanna's action and word, accurately assimilated by her" (Brown Tkacz, 1998:35)

Joakim's servants and Susanna's maids are used stereotypically to underline Joakim's wealth. Besides, Susanna maids serve a patriarchal mechanism of women's control (cf. 4.1.4). Susanna's children, together with her parents and her husband, serve, as will be seen later (cf. 4.1.1), to reject the wisdom motif of a loose woman which is falsely ascribed to Susanna. The angels (God's messengers) represent the presence, the authority of God and his justice, his abhorrence of wickedness.

The daughters of Israel are likely used to show that the community was already invaded by wickedness. They may also contrast with Susanna to underline their lack of knowledge of the Law and God as their reason for accepting the elders' advances. Daniel notes that a daughter of Judah, contrary to a daughter of Israel, cannot tolerate wickedness. If a daughter of Judah is characterised by the fear of the Lord as a result of the knowledge of the Law, it is then true that the acceptance of wickedness by the daughters of Israel must be their lack of the knowledge of the Law.

The discussion in this section focussed on the main actors in *Susanna*. Among these, Susanna and the elders are directly related to the main concern of *Susanna*, namely the intrusion of wickedness

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in the community. The narrator contrasts a woman with the two elders around the observance of the Law of Moses. The outcome is striking. The assumed inherent wickedness of womanlike nature was found inconclusive. However, the wisdom of the elders, their fear of the Lord, proves purely illusionary. As a consequence, with regard to the observance of the Law, the token of Jewishness, men and women are equal.

Actorialisation serves to investigate the construction of actors in a narrative. The environment or space in which the actors are placed contributes to the meaning of the story in terms of spatialisation, as discussed in the following section.

3.1.1.2 Spatialization

The story of *Susanna* is set in Babylon. Noticeable places where actions take place are Joakim's house and Joakim's garden. According to the narrator, Babylon and heaven play determinant roles in the story.

A. Babylon

Babylon, according to the story, does not only represent the setting, but it has an ideological connotation. In fact, as Ryken (199:68) assumes, "Babylon is one of the dread images of the Bible". The narrator says that wickedness came from Babylon, Ἐξῆλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος. According to Kittel (2000, 1:514), "[t]he historic city and empire of Babylon were always depicted by the prophets as the ungodly power *par excellence*." Porter (1998:35) shares Kittel's opinion, namely that:

Babylon becomes in the Bible more than a historical reality. After Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and exiled many of its inhabitants (see pp 110-113) it was viewed as the embodiment of all evil, a kingdom of wickedness set against God and his chosen people, a powerful and complex symbol of pride, oppression, wealth, luxury, sexual license and idolatry.

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Babylon is the power that inspires wickedness. It is directly opposed to God (cf. Chapter 4). God is the addresser and Babylon is the anti addresser.

B. Heaven

Heaven also plays an important role in the story. It is the direct opposite of Babylon and plays the role of inspiring an ideology opposite to Babylon's. Heaven, for the elders, is a place to avoid but for Susanna, it is the place where her help comes from. To accomplish their missions, the elders have to turn their eyes against heaven. Susanna on the other hand succeeds in opposing them only when she turns her eyes to heaven.

C. Joakim's house

Joakim's house is the place where Susanna's action starts. In the semiotic approach it is the heterotopic space (cf. 2.4.1). Heterotopic means other than the place of action. Moving from this space symbolises the beginning of the quest for the protagonist (Hénault, 1983:133). It is important that Susanna goes from the house to the garden, from inside towards the outside. She swings between "in" and "out", assuming a liminal position, with advantages and disadvantages pertaining to each, as discussed below (cf. Joakim's Garden). "In" is a symbol of "conventionality", i.e. the recognition and adherence to established boundaries. "Out" is a symbol of "unconventionality", i.e. as will be discussed in following paragraphs. Apparently Susanna goes out unveiled, otherwise the elders could not have noticed her beauty (31). Being unveiled outside her house adds to her unconventionality. In fact, verse 31 seems to suggest that the normal regulation for women was to be veiled in order to avoid seducing men (cf. Ilan, 1996:129-130).

D. Joakim's garden

The second place, the scene of action, is the garden. It is the place where Susanna confronts the elders. This is generally called "topic space" in the semiotic tradition and considered as a strange place (Greimas & Courtés, 1979:214-216). The choice of this space in *Susanna* is expressive of its strangeness. The garden motif is an evocation of Eden as discussed below.

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First, it is set outside (v7). For a woman, moving outside (as is mentioned in the story) is emblematic of unconventionality. By moving outside, she moves into men's area, thus breaking established social boundaries. In fact, "the ideal was that a woman would remain concealed in the house and not show her beauty in public" (Ilan, 1996:128).

Evidence from the text suggests that Susanna's moving into the garden is an unconventional action. To start with, the imperfect tense (εἰσεπορεύετο²⁸ and περιεπάτει²⁹) is used in Greek for continuous actions in the past (Dana & Mantey, 1927:186; Robertson, 2006:883-884; Moulton, 2006:128-129; Goodwin, 1900:268; Burton, 2003:12). Here the author uses the iterative imperfect to "describe action as recurring at successive intervals in the past time" (Dana & Mantey, 1927:188). The best translation can be: *she had the habit of going out ... every day* (v8 καθ' ἡμέραν), *at noon* (v7 μέσον ἡμέρας). The habit of going out everyday, for a woman, is contrary to Jewish custom according to the traditions of the Second Temple period (Ilan, 1996:129).

Furthermore, that Susanna went outside only after people went away for lunch (καὶ ἐγένετο ἡνίκα ἀπέτρεχεν ὁ λαὸς μέσον ἡμέρας) shows that her movements, as a woman, were subjected to social regulations.

In addition, the expression that "she had the habit of walking in her husband's garden" (v7 περιεπάτει ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς) seems to serve as an excuse to justify violation of established conventions. What could have been a serious blame for her behaviour is made even more acceptable with the idea that she certainly went outside, but not too far. After all "the garden was neighbouring his (Joachim's) house" (v4 καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ παράδεισος γειτνιῶν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ).

Secondly, the garden is called expressively παράδεισος (paradise). As Nelson (2006:22) declares,

²⁸ v7 she made it a habit of moving out

²⁹ v7 she used to or made it an habit of walking

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[A] person's reading of the Eden story will likely reveal something about his or her mindset concerning relationships between women and men. Our deep seated feelings about sexuality, human self-sufficiency, and free will, will be reflected back at us when we read about Adam and Eve, the snake and the tree of knowledge.

The word παράδεισος (paradise) came to acquire a negative connotation when associated with women. In Jewish traditions, παράδεισος invokes Eden, which is a synonym for sin, and sin comes from Eve. In the Wisdom of Ben Sira, Eden is evoked indirectly, in relation with women as source of sin. In fact, Ben Sira declares: "ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας, καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ἀποθνήσκομεν πάντες" (from a woman (is) the beginning of sin, and because of her, we all die). From this passage woman is Eve who represents all women (cf. 1Timothée 2:14).

1Tim 2:14, reveals that *Ben Sira's* emphasis on women's responsibility, as vehicle of sin and death, was an established tradition among Jews. The fact that Susanna's false accusation of adultery by the elders is believed without questioning, even by her husband, is emblematic of this prejudice (Box, 1913:402).

Eve's association with sin in Eden resulted in her becoming the prototype of all women. Nelson (2006:35; cf. Aschkenasy, 1986:40) argues that:

[T]he three traits of the biblical Eve that were assumed to prefigure the essence of womanhood are productivity for evil, a destructive sexuality, and a demonic-deadly power." There is no direct reference to sexuality in the account of Eden. Sexuality, however, "is suggested in their attempt (Adam and Eve) to cancel out their nakedness by making loincloths, that is, something to cover their genitals.

Thirdly, gardens, not only in Jewish traditions but also in the ancient world, were generally associated with sexuality. According to Stordalen (2000:107), "from a comprehension perspective one would say that garden activities and erotic activities were subject to analogous grammar in the semiotic web of ancient Hebrew culture." According to Wright (1938:39), "Xenophon says that the

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Persians called the garden a Paradise! For it was these Persians who gave to their gardens the romantic name which has spread through the world - eastward to India and westward to Spain".

Fourthly, Joakim's garden is an ambiguous space. It is altogether a private and public place, allowed and forbidden to women. Susanna can go into the garden only at noon. It is a liminal space. Liminality, literally "being-on-a-threshold," means a state or process which is betwixt-and-between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states and processes of getting and spending, preserving law and order, and registering structural status (Turner, 1972:465). A liminal space allows crossing social boundaries. In *Susanna*, separation between men and women is a fixed boundary. The separation is likely aimed at avoiding sexual pollution. On the other hand, it helps to maintain men's assumed spiritual and moral superiority over women. The garden, because of its ambiguity as public and private, can be an appropriate place where women and men can meet by chance. Joakim's garden is used metaphorically by the author as a battlefield where ingrained prejudices against women are deemed to be reversed.

Clearly, in *Susanna*, settings are not chosen by chance, but deliberately so by the author to contribute to the meaning of the story. Heaven and Babylon constitute two symbolic places against which actors are portrayed. These spaces influence their actions in the story. Heaven (God) stand behind Susanna's struggle for the maintenance of the Law Babylon inspires lawlessness the elders. It is only if / because Susanna turns to heaven that she can change her destiny and that of her community.

As mentioned aboe, Joakim's house and garden are two important places in the narrative. The first is the place from where Susanna starts her action. It is a symbol of conventionality, good womanhood. Susanna does not remain her inside house. No action is associated with her in her house. That means she is absent from her house. The garden [παράδεισος (paradise)], despite its negative connotation, is the physical place that is more closely connected with Susanna and her

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action. Her close connection with the garden [παράδεισος (paradise)] is emblematic of her unconventionality and the subversive endeavour of the narrative.

In *Susanna*, not only spaces in which actors move contribute to the understanding of the story, but also the time during which they move in these spaces. The use of time in *Susanna* is discussed below.

3.1.1.3 Temporalisation

The use of time in the story is limited to a unique period of time, μέσον ἡμέρας noon). There are frequent references to this moment in the text in terms of “every day”, “as usual” (καθ’ ἡμέραν, ποτε καθὼς ἐχθὲς καὶ τρίτης ἡμέρας), or “the next day” (ἐπαύριον). The time of Susanna’s encounter with the elders is described from the elders’ point of view as “an opportune time” (καιρὸν, ἡμέραν εὐθετον). μέσον ἡμέρας is a liminal time. According to Turner (1979:465) liminal time is “a time of enchantment when anything might, even should, happen”. It is the time when the garden can be accessed by Susanna and the barriers between men and women can be broken.

Further opposition in the narrative to be examined is the contrast between Susanna and the elders. The following section explores this figurative polarisation.

3.1.2 MAIN CONTRASTS BETWEEN SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

Figurative oppositions in this narrative manifests in two groups: Susanna on one side, and the two elders on the other side. The opposition depends on the main concern raised by the story, namely its actorial structure and its axiology. The major concern in *Susanna* is expressed in verse 5: “Ἐξῆλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος” (wickedness has come from Babylon). The story is designed to deal with wickedness, specifically “sexual perversion”, in the Babylonian Jewish community (Harrington, 1999:114). The importance of the issue is that sexual immorality, in the Jewish axiology, is one of the three sins, the others being idolatry and eating pork, to be avoided even to the cost of one’s life (Mackenzie, quote from Moore, 1977:91). Any attempt to read the story without taking into account its religious concern is subject to biased conclusions. Parrinder

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(1971:333) is right when he assumes that “[t]he formation of Jewish people ... is closely bound up with a divine revelation, and with the commitment of the people to obedience to God’s will. This close connection between religion and peoplehood gives Judaism a unique character”.

Magonet (1992:6) maintains that “Abraham’s descendants have been a people and a religious community, these two elements being inextricably intertwined.” In this regard, a narrative, as said in the preceding Chapter (cf. 2.6.1.), divides its population into two groups. The two groups are comprised of those committed to the Law of Moses and Jewish traditions, and of the detractors. In *Susanna*, as demonstrated in Table 3.2 below, there are men and women in each group.

Main oppositions in the story arise between protagonists in terms of faith, morals and defined requirements to be met in order to be considered a true member of the Jewish community (the ethnicity of the individuals, as to being Jewish or not). These contrasts are outlined in the table below

Data from this table are classified in terms of good versus bad, acceptable versus non acceptable, positive versus negative, according to the Law of Moses.

Main oppositions stem from the individual’s attitude to the Law of Moses: faithfulness versus unfaithfulness to the Law of Moses. These two attitudes depend on the nature of an individual’s relation with God. They constitute the determining factors in defining true Jewishness (ethnicity). Gender and age are important in the story, but not so important as to constitute its primary concern. Gender appears in the story to show that faithfulness to the Law does not depend on being man or woman. In fact, the author contrasts a woman, portraying her as totally committed to the Law, and two men, depicting them as radically corrupted.

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The following table reveals main oppositions in *Susanna*

Actors/Values	FAITH (RELIGION/MORALS)	IDENTIFICATION / ETHNICITY
<p>Elders (with daughters of Israel) Negative, bad and unacceptable values</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. παράνομοι 32, 2. ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτῆς 8, 3. ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος 5, 4. τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν 9, 5. ψευδῆς 49 6. ἐπίστευσεν αὐτοῖς ἡ συναγωγὴ ὡς πρεσβυτέρους τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ κριταῖς 7. Βαβυλῶν (Evil) <p style="text-align: center;"> UNFAITHFULNESS AND REJECTION OF THE LAW STEMMING FROM A DELIBERATE DISTRUST IN THE LORD </p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ἀνώνυμος (implied) 2. ἀγενεαλόγητος (implied) 3. οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ 4. Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδα 56 <p style="text-align: center;"> NON JEWISHNESS INCLUDING MEN AND WOMEN </p>
<p>Susanna (with Daniel and Helkias) Positive, good and acceptable values</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ 3, 2. φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον 2, 3. πεπειθυῖα ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ 35, 4. ἀνέβλεψεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν 3, 5. ἀληθῆς (implied) 6. Καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς 7. Οὐρανός (God) <p style="text-align: center;"> FAITHFULNESS AND COMMITMENT TO THE LAW STEMMING FROM AN UNBENDING TRUST IN THE LORD </p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ὄνομα Σουσαννα, 2. θυγάτηρ Χελκίου 2 3. θυγατέρα Ἰσραηλ, 4. θυγάτηρ Ἰουδα 48, 57 <p style="text-align: center;"> TRUE JEWISHNESS INCLUDING MEN AND WOMEN, OLD PEOPLE AND YOUTH </p>

Table 3.2. A summary of main oppositions in the story of Susanna.

Age is not considered as generating essential oppositions in the story. The conflict between Susanna and the elders does not occur because Susanna is younger than the elders. Age is given much attention only because Daniel (a young boy)'s judgement rescues Susanna. Consequently, it has been argued that the main concern of *Susanna* is to address the administration of an unjust

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system of justice (cf. deSilva, 2004:232). This argument, however, seems to have no strong support from the story itself.

First, as has already been argued, the main concern of the story is the intrusion of wickedness in the community. The Greek word translated by “wickedness” is ἀνομία. In the story, another word indicating “sexual lust” is referred to often as ἐπιθυμία. Neither ἀνομία nor ἐπιθυμία stands for a false judgement in the story. Second, the structure of the story involves a clash between a female protagonist, Susanna, described as exceedingly beautiful, and two male antagonists, the elders, erotically incurable. It seems to be the intention of the author to single out perverted sexuality, as it is manifested in the abuse of women by the elders (v57), as the central issue to be addressed. Third, as the plot of the story develops, a complication is attained with Susanna’s rejection of the elders’ solicitation for sexual intercourse. The biased judgement of Susanna by the elders is motivated by her refusal of adultery. It is intended to revenge their sexual frustration. Fourth, and most importantly, the ensuing judgement of the elders by Daniel stresses the sexually centred nature of the story.

The false administration of judgement is evoked in verse 53. To stop analysing Daniel’s involvement here, however, is to miss the point. Verses 56 and 57 declare:

⁵⁶ καὶ μεταστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκέλευσεν προσαγαγεῖν τὸν ἕτερον, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ιουδα, τὸ κάλλος ἐξηπάτησέν σε, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία διέστρεψεν τὴν καρδίαν σου, ⁵⁷ οὕτως ἐποιεῖτε θυγατράσιν Ἰσραηλ, καὶ ἐκεῖνοι φοβούμενοι ὠμίλουν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ’ οὐ θυγάτηρ Ιουδα ὑπέμεινεν τὴν ἀνομίαν ὑμῶν.³⁰

³⁰ ⁽⁵⁶⁾ So he put him aside, and commanded to bring the other, and said to him, you seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty has deceived you, and sexual desire has perverted your heart. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ So did you do with the daughters of Israel, and they, being scared, had sexual intercourse with you: but the daughter of Judah would not tolerate your wickedness (TNIV).

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Daniel's argument is not about the administration of justice in general. It really concerns the abuse of the court by the two judges to protect and advance their hidden agenda, namely their sexual immorality. Verse 9 supports the argument. The narrator declares: "καὶ διέστρεψαν τὸν ἑαυτῶν νοῦν καὶ ἐξέκλιναν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν μηδὲ μνημονεύειν κριμάτων δικαίων".³¹ This sentence shows that the elders were controlled by such an intense sexual desire that they were ready to sacrifice everything, God included, to satisfy their sexual desires. In view of this evidence, the administration of justice is not the main concern of *Susanna*.

In summary, based on the discussion above, it can be argued that Susanna and the elders respectively represent positive values (good) and negative (bad) values in the narrative, with regard to sexual morality. Results from this analysis reject the claim that women are sexually more corrupted than men. On the contrary, Susanna is pure while the elders are wicked. (Jordaan, 2008:122). However, this does not mean that all men in the story are corrupt, or that all women in the story are as good as Susanna is. Daniel is a man and so is Susanna's father. Neither the first nor the last is presented as corrupted as the elders. Respectively, the narrative reveals that some women (θυγατέρες Ἰσραηλ) accepted the demand of the elders.

Oppositions culminate with expressions such as ὄνομα Σουσαννα (name Susanna), θυγάτηρ Χελκίου (daughter of Helkias) (2), θυγατέρα Ἰσραηλ and θυγάτηρ Ιουδα on Susanna's side, and ἄνώνυμος, ἀγενεαλόγητος (without name) (assumed), οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ and Σπέρμα Χανασαν καὶ οὐκ Ιουδα on the elders' side. These components deal with the insertion of an individual in the Jewish traditions and history. It deals with the ethnicity of an individual, his/her being truly Jewish or not. The story seems to classify people into two groups: Θυγάτηρ Ιουδα and Σπέρμα Χανασαν.

These expressions reveal fundamental values in the story. They depict people in the narrative according to their dedication to the Law of Moses, regardless of their gender. Susanna, a woman

³¹ (9) And they perverted their own mind, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look toward heaven, nor remember just judgements.

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qualifies as θυγάτηρ Ιουδα. She is portrayed as the epitome of Jewishness in a corrupted and corrupting community. The elders' maleness does not suffice to procure them more dignity than Susanna. Gender is irrelevant in the construction of Jewish identity. The unique criterion of evaluation of Jewishness is the commitment to the Law. In this regard, Susanna's gender does not disqualify her. The elders' gender does not qualify them.

The rejection of gender as central criterion of defining Jewishness is not limited to this first section of the figurative step of analysis. The emplotment of the story seems to convey the same message. In fact, parallels between *Susanna* and the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, as well as its satiric tone seem to suggest the same conclusion. These two important modes of emplotment of *Susanna* are examined next.

3.2. EMPLOTMENT

Susanna echoes various texts in Israel's traditions and history. As argued above, it is linked with the *Garden of Eden* (Genesis 3), *Bathsheba* (1 Samuel 11), *Ruben and Bilah* (Genesis. 35:22), *Esther*, *Judith*, and *Song of Songs* (2:1) (cf. Levine, 2004:314-317; Ilan, 2001:144-150). However, the story seems to relate to the incident between Joseph and Potiphar's wife, which serves as an archetype for *Susanna*. Nickelsburg (2005:23; cf. 2006:74-77) contends that "[t]he story of *Susanna* appears to have been influenced by the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, with the male and female roles reversed." The investigation of the plot of *Susanna* focuses on this alleged similarity with the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, as well as its satiric tone.

3.2.1 PARALLELS BETWEEN SUSANNA AND THE INCIDENT OF JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR'S WIFE

The view that *Susanna* is modelled on the plot in the Joseph narrative is undisputed (cf. Bellis, 1994:217). If the story of Joseph really constitutes an archetypal narrative for *Susanna*, the meaning of *Susanna* depends on the former. Therefore, the discussion of the relation between the two stories becomes indispensable.

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Some interesting parallels can be identified between the two narratives. The two stories share some interesting traits in terms of similarities or reversals. Some of these elements are discussed below.

For example, both *Susanna* and Joseph's story are introduced by relationships of ownership. Susanna is related to Joakim by the verb λαμβάνω (to take, acquire or own; cf. Delling, 2000:15). Joseph is related to Potiphar by the verb κτάομαι (to acquire, to own). The two verbs are almost synonymous in meaning (Sira 36:24; cf. *Susanna* 2) with both expressing possession or property.

Both Susanna and Joseph are characterised by beauty (good look). Susanna is described as “τρυφερὰ σφόδρα καὶ καλὴ τῷ εἶδει” (very delicate and beautiful to sight) (31). Joseph is described similarly: “καλὸς τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὠραῖος τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα (handsome to sight and very pleasing by appearance) (Genesis 39:6). Their good appearances become the cause of their misfortune. Susanna is sentenced to death (*Susanna* 41) while Joseph (Genesis 39:20) is cast in prison.

In both stories, the protagonists rejected propositions because of their fear of God (*Susanna* 23; Genesis 39:9). In both cases the verb συγγίγνομαι (only five times in the LXX) denotes sexual intercourse (*Susanna* 11, 39; Genesis 39:10).

Joakim and Potiphar, the masters of Joseph and Susanna respectively, are recognised in their communities. The respective riches of his/her master/husband are the consequence of his/her presence. Potiphar is said to prosper because of Joseph's presence (Genesis 39:2-6). Joakim is also a wealthy and well respected personality. As said above (cf. 3.1.1.1), the structure of *Susanna* indicates indirectly that Joakim's riches are the result of his union with the righteous Susanna.

Susanna and Joseph are both falsely accused. In reaction to the accusations, they do not respond because they rely on God (Genesis 39:20; *Susanna* 35). Josephus (*Antiquity* 2.6) argues that Joseph did not defend himself because he relied on God.

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Susanna and Joseph's accusers are anonymous. Furthermore, they are associated with the lying cries [ἐβόησαν δὲ καὶ οἱ δύο πρεσβῦται (and the two elders cried also) Susanna (24); καὶ ἐβόησα φωνῇ μεγάλῃ (and I cried loudly) (Genesis 39:15, 18)]. Both the elders and Potiphar's wife first report their lying accusations respectively to Joakim and Potiphar's household servants (Susanna 26-27; Genesis 39:14).

Both characters escape death. Joseph escapes death from prison providentially when called to interpret Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41). Susanna (45-62) escapes death providentially when God raises the Holy Spirit in Daniel.

Another similarity is found in the setting of the two narratives. Both stories are set in a foreign country. Susanna is among deportees in Babylon while Joseph is a slave in Egypt.

Both narratives involve a case of harassment in which the protagonist is involved. However, some contrast is detected here since in Genesis a woman harasses a man, while in *Susanna* two men harass a woman. In *Susanna* the incident takes place outside (public place, men's domain); in Genesis it happens inside a house (private place, women's sphere of influence). Joseph deals with a foreign woman, not taught according to the Law of Moses; Susanna confronts two Jewish elders, who are supposed to teach the Law of Moses (Jordaan, 2008:122).

These striking similarities and reversals between *Susanna* and the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife are intentional. First, Joseph is considered as the Jew *par excellence*, the archetype of Jewishness. Patai (quote from Spring & Shapiro, 2007:261) contends that: "[i]n the life of Joseph, we see the quintessential Jew, the one who meets all these belief criteria and acts accordingly, the role model for hundreds of generations ... The story of Joseph is told in minute detail because he is the primary model for Jewish behaviour". In other words, Jews consider Joseph as the model of 'Jewishness'.

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Second, Joseph's encounter with Potiphar's wife is considered as the decisive event of his life. His rejection of the advances made by Potiphar's wife made him the epitome of righteousness and thus of success in Egypt (Niehoff, 1992:148).

The reworking of the Joseph's saga, to the praise of a woman, is very significant. The author seems to suggest that Susanna, a woman, surpasses Joseph, the emblematic archetype of righteousness. Therefore, with regard to the fear of the Lord, the cornerstone of Jewish identity, men and women are equal.

In addition to these intertextual parallels drawn intentionally between *Susanna* and the narrative of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, the author also intentionally exploits the mode of emplotment, in terms of techniques and genres, to achieve a particular goal.

3.2.2 *SUSANNA AS SATIRE*

The shaping of a text with a specific kind of plot is suggestive of the author's intention to deal with his readers' worldview. Often, the notion of worldview goes together with underlying ideology (Jordaan, 1996:64). This section is devoted to the study of the satiric mode of the plot of *Susanna* and its implication on the message of the story.

Abrams (2009:320) notes that "[s]atire can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation". A satiric discourse is therefore a censure using mocking expressions of language to ridicule a belief, behaviour or ideology and thus calls for change.

Susanna is considered an example of satiric discourse by some scholars. Clanton (2006:56, 57, 58, 64, 67, 75, 81, 83, 85) and Haag (1993:238) refer to irony in their studies of the story. Clanton (2006:75) even notices that the judgment of Susanna by the elders "could be read as a farce or satire of a proper judicial procedure". Dunn (1982:29) is of the opinion that Theodotion uses *Susanna* "to help achieve his satirical objectives".

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Gruen (1998:176) accepts the comic tone of the story. However, he challenges the view that *Susanna* is a social satire (2002:173). His contention is that “there is no class warfare here” (Gruen, 2002:173). In addition, according to Gruen (2002:173), the story does not change the social structure of the community.

The debate around the satirical genre of *Susanna*, however, is based on mere affirmations. Both Dunn and Gruen assert, rather than prove, their positions. The concern of this section is to consider whether *Susanna* is a satire or not on the basis of data presented in the text. In order to reach this objective, it is important to understand the nature and purpose of a satiric discourse.

The subversive message of satiric literature can be illustrated by the important role the satirists played in convincing people to overthrow the monarchy during the French revolution of the 1789 (Nygaard, 2007:146). Hamlet-Metz (1987:45) reveals that during this period it was essential that the whole population joined the revolution. However, some of the people were loyal to the monarchy and religion. Satirical discourses played an important role to deprecate the monarchy and the church.

The early stage of the satiric genre is generally associated with Juvenal and Horatio (Desan, 1987:1-2). There exist, as can be deduced from the form of the presentation of the message, two kinds of satiric discourses, namely the direct/formal satire and the indirect satire.

In a direct satire the author speaks directly to the audience in the first person. In an indirect satire the author uses “fictional narrative, in which the object of the satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous or obnoxious by what they think, say, and do, and are sometimes made even more ridiculous by the author’s comments and narrative style” (Abrams, 2009:231). The *Susanna* narrative falls into this last category.

In satire, “the writer can utilize various forms of irony, of humour, of parody, exaggeration ... and even of burlesque” (Zielonka, 1987:157). The same view is held by Tubbs (1990:174-175) who

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argues that “satire is a more extended form of expression than irony; in fact, as pointed out above, satire may use irony, sarcasm, invective, burlesque, ridicule, and other similar devices”. As is shown below, irony seems to be the main technique of the satiric tone of *Susanna*.

Satire and irony are often associated. The two concepts, however, are not synonyms (Yaari, 1987:178). Satire is a genre. Irony is a trope, a figure of speech, one of the techniques used in the composition of satiric discourses (Hutcheon, 1992:39; Defays, 1987:96).

Irony, though generally associated with Socrates (Kierkegaard, 1989:9), was employed even before it was labelled as such (Shelley, 1992:46; Madou, 1987:62). Irony is simply defined as a figure of speech meaning the opposite of what someone says (Fontanier, 1984:199; Colebrook, 2004:1). This simple definition, however, hardly covers the entire range of meaning of the trope (Madou, 1987:65). Many types of ironies exist including structural irony, Socratic irony, dramatic irony, tragic ironic, cosmic irony, romantic irony (Abrams, 2009:165-167). Irony may exist even when unnoticed (Holbert, 1975:3).

Scholars, as mentioned above, assume that *Susanna* is highly ironical. Facts for this affirmation, however, have hardly been brought to light convincingly. The attempt to confirm the ironic flavour of *Susanna* is undertaken in this study in two directions. First, irony is considered by examining the plot and characters, in accordance with the narrative structure of the story. Then, irony is investigated by considering ironic expressions in the narrative. In this case, irony can be mapped out by using specific techniques.

3.2.2.1 The ironic mode of emplotment in *Susanna*

The etymological root of the word irony is generally associated with the Greek terms “εἰρωνεία (dissimulation, i.e. ignorance purposely affected to provoke or confound an antagonist), in contrast with ἀλαζονεία (false pretension, imposture, ironic person). In ancient drama, the εἰρων (“dissembler, one who says less than he thinks” (Liddell & Scott, 1995:491)) was engaged in a

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conflict with the ἀλαζών (in comedy) or ὕβρις (tragedy) (braggart, charlatan, quack, boaster or overstepping the proper boundaries (Liddell & Scott, 1995:491; Good, 1981:14-17)).

According to Kay (1913:642), “[t]he story of Susanna is skilfully compacted ... there is an impressive reversal (περιπέτεια) of the intended effect into its direct opposite”. The word περιπέτεια Kay refers to was, according to Liddell and Scott (1995:1382), a “sudden reversal of circumstances on which the plot in a tragedy hinges”.

Susanna displays common elements with ancient tragedies. Some of these components include two main characters, namely a protagonist and antagonist (in Greek εἶρω and ἀλαζών in comic irony and εἶρω and ὕβρις in tragic irony), the conflict (in Greek ἀγών), the reversal of fortune (in Greek περιπέτεια) and a tragic flaw (ἀμάρτια). All these elements are indisputably found in *Susanna*.

Susanna and the two elders assume respectively the roles of εἶρων and ὕβρις (protagonist and antagonist). The antagonists, the two elders, can be identified with the tragic hero in ancient tragedy, but this may be debatable. The characteristics of the tragic hero are not always understood in the same way (cf. Wolmarans, 2009³²; Davidson, 1982; Knox, 1998). Consequently, applying features of ancient Greek drama to Biblical story is not accepted unamously by scholars.

Though Exum and Whedbee (1984), Good (1984), Buss (1984) and Gottwald (1984) find that tragedy and comedy can be found in Biblical literature, Zakovitch (1984:109) is of the opinion that “the terms “comedy” and “tragedy,” borrowed from the world of Greek drama, are entirely alien to biblical literature”. Despite this disagreement, scholars have demonstrated that some Biblical characters share heroic patterns common to ancient world. Wolmarans (2009), for example, argues that Jesus is a tragic hero.

³² Quoted from an unpublished lecture in 2009 at the University of Johannesburg.

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Consequently, despite elements of disagreement, there exists a common ground for agreement. Essential ingredients of a tragedy consisted of “character flaw, plot, pity, fear and reversal” (Enstrom, 1991:27; also cf. Sanford, 1985:1-2). A tragic flaw is the “defect in a tragic hero or heroine which leads to their downfall” (Cuddon, 1991:991; also cf. Irwin, 1988:-62).

Susanna is similar to ancient tragedy in plot in structure. Tragedies generally resulted in death (Abrams, 2009:268) as in *Susanna*. The indomitable sexuality of the elders, which became dangerous to the community, constitutes their flaw. It is what leads them to their deaths.

In addition, the restoration of broken morality plays an important role in *Susanna* as well as in ancient tragic irony (Good, 1981:25-26). The point of departure of *Susanna* is the assumption that Ἐξῆλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἐκ πρεσβυτέρων κριτῶν (v5 wickedness came from Babylon, from the elders judges). Its plot and the protagonist’s actions focus on eradicating wickedness introduced by the two elected judges.

The structure of the plot of the story provides some evidence to support that *Susanna* can be regarded as ironical discourse. Support for the ironic nature of the narrative can be found in the internal data of the text as well. This aspect will be discussed below.

3.2.2.2 The ironical expressions in *Susanna*

The contention of this section is that irony is not incidental in the content of *Susanna*. It depicts a technique through which the author chose to pass his message. This section demonstrates that *Susanna* is a thematically ironic story and does not discuss all ironic expressions explicitly. Instead, some of the most important ironic utterances and expressions are identified and discussed.

Good (1981:81-82) argues that, in narratives:

[i]rony may take several forms. It may be a *punctual* irony, the use of words and expressions of ironic intention at particular, more or less isolated, “points.” It may be *episodic* irony, the

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perception of an entire episode with an ironic aim or content. It may be the *thematic* irony, the conjunction of a number of episodes all of which point to an ironic theme or motif.

Good's contention reveals that the proportion of irony is not the same in literary works. Incidental irony may be found in many literary works. In some texts, however, irony constitutes the main communicational strategy of the author. This study contends that this is the case in *Susanna*.

Main ironic techniques available to authors include: the ironical use of metaphor or the ironic metaphor; the attributive use of irony or ironic attribution which consists of quoting words or attributing thoughts to others; the ironical use of various kinds of wordplay or puns; the ironical use of rhetorical questions; Ironical understatements (e.g. litotes); ironical exaggeration (e.g. hyperbole); ironical use of social conventions and traditions (Good, 1981:129; Tubbs, 1990:134-135 and Shelly, 1992:134). Ironical statements found in *Susanna* are mapped out here accordingly. For the sake of an efficient investigation, the story is segmented in four sequences, viz. Episodes 1 to 4 (Kanonge, 2009:380).

A. EPISODE 1: 1-14

The first episode constitutes the ironic introduction of *Susanna* (1-4), the ironic introduction of the elders (5-6), and of conflict (7-14).

This passage introduces Susanna, her husband and parents. The focus lies on Susanna's beauty and godliness. The first ironic expression is detected in the relation between Susanna and her husband expressed by the verb λαμβάνω (to take, to acquire). This verb portrays the conjugal relationship between husband and wife in terms of possessions, according to patriarchal traditions in Israel (Di Lella, 1984:332-334 ; 1995:39). λαμβάνω would normally indicate the insertion of the woman in her husband's family (Metzger & Coogan, 2001:339) and not the contrary. The use of λαμβάνω here, however, seems to contradict patriarchal practices. According to the story, Jewish identity is related to the Law of Moses. It is strange that nothing is said about Joakim's piety.

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Besides, Susanna³³ has a genealogy, or at least her father is named, but Joakim's father is not mentioned (Moore, 1977:94). In Biblical traditions, "genealogies can express social status, political power, economic strength, legal standing, ownership of land" (Wilson, 1979:19). To have no genealogy is to be less important. It seems, from this passage and verse 63 that Susanna is not inserted in her husband's family but that the contrary is assumed.

To elucidate the argument, the phrase ἔλαβεν γυναῖκα, with emphasis on the wife's family, is also found in 1 Kings 16:31 (Ahab and Jezebel). In both cases a woman is taken, ἔλαβεν γυναῖκα. The woman's father's name, not the man, is prominent. The woman's family is devoted to a deity. The woman promotes the cult of her deity. Jezebel leads her husband and Israel to worship her deity. Susanna's fear of the Lord saves the Jewish community from corruption. ἔλαβεν in Ahab's account ironically means that Jezebel possessed Ahab and not the contrary. Her dominant character is unanimously underlined by many scholars (cf. Douglas, 1980:596; Achtemeier, 1985:489; Meagher, 1979a, 2:1893). Social conventions are used to "convey meaning opposite to that which they normally would have conveyed and in doing so exploits their ironic potential in communicating the message" (Shelley, 1992:68-69). In both Jezebel and Susanna's accounts καὶ ἔλαβεν γυναῖκα highlights an ironic use of convention.

The combination of extreme beauty and implacable piety (καλὴ σφόδρα καὶ φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον, beautiful and fearing the Lord) illustrates another ironic paradoxical use of social conventions. The paradox is the coexistence of beauty (sexual attraction) with piety in Susanna.³⁴ According to the wisdom of Ben Sira, female "beauty" (κάλλος) is associated with sexual temptation (9:8; 25:21; 42:12-14). It is a potential threat to men's piety. In 42:12-13 for instance, Sira declares that "παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ μὴ ἔμβλεπε ἐν κάλλει ... ἀπὸ γυναικὸς πονηρία γυναικός" (Let her not show her beauty (daughter) to any man ... woman's wickedness comes from woman nature). Κάλλος (beauty) is the

³³ According to Archer (see Ilan, 1993:55), women named after their fathers were either "divorced or widowed".

³⁴ The paradoxical utterance joining two contrary terms is known as *oxymoron* (Abrams, 2009:239).

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key concept in this passage. Strikingly, here, beauty is linked to women's nature from which comes wickedness (ἀπὸ γυναικὸς πονηρία γυναικός). "Woman's wickedness" here seems to refer to a woman's sexuality (Camp, 1991:35; cf. also Trenchard, 1982:158; Box, 1913:471). The ironic flavour of this oxymoron is that this apparent deadly recipe in *Susanna* will result not in introducing wickedness (role that will be ascribed to elders) but in the saving of the community from it.

A third example of irony in the text of *Susanna* is evident in the author's association of the elders with the inception of wickedness (ἀνομία ... ἐκ πρεσβυτέρων κριτῶν: wickedness from ... elders judges). Highlighting the elders' wickedness to the praise of a woman is an ironical use of social conventions. According to Sira, "γυναικὸς ἀρχὴ ἁμαρτίας", sin has its origin in a woman (25:24). Wickedness is singled out as an enduring attribute of women and not men. The introduction of *Susanna* using the phrase φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον, as pointed out above (cf. 3.1.1.1), is not accidental. This feminine form of φοβούμενος τὸν κύριον is unique in the LXX. In Greek, the present participle portrays the fear of the Lord not as a circumstantial trait, but as a continual and enduring attribute of her character. That is unconventional in Israel since women are catalogued in general as wicked, as discussed above.

The introduction of the elders by focusing on their wickedness is also rich in ironical expressions.

Firstly, the author associates the elders with the inception of wickedness (ἀνομία ... ἐκ πρεσβυτέρων κριτῶν: wickedness from ... elders judges). In Jewish traditions, however, elders were supposed to incarnate wisdom (Ben Sira 6:34). Wisdom and the fear of the Lord are inseparable. The fear of the Lord consists in the observation of the Law. While wickedness is generally linked with the feminine, as argued above, the fear of the Lord is portrayed in Sira 6:3 as the elders' attribute *par excellence*. Here again, highlighting the elders and judges' wickedness to the praise of a woman is an ironical twist of social conventions.

Secondly, there is an ironic wordplay in the use of the verb δοκέω. Δοκέω can be used for an established reputation or a reputation which is merely imaginary (Kittel, 2000:233; Liddell,

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2000:442). According to the last meaning, the elders were reputed or seen as genuine leaders by people but in reality this was not the case. This is ironic.

The scene in Episode 1 is presented, as in many narratives, where protagonists challenge each other before the confrontation. This foreshadowing of conflict in Episode 1 also contains elements of irony.

Firstly, Susanna's daily walk in the garden (v7, 15) conveys an ambiguous message. In a context where women are catalogued as sexually insatiable, as said above, her promenade can be misinterpreted as if she was a seductress in search of sexual satisfaction. Ben Sira, for example, urges fathers to watch on their daughters diligently (26:10-12). According to him, a woman is like a "thirsty traveller" (v12 διψών ὁδοιπόρος), opening his mouth to drink "from any near water" (v12 ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδατος τοῦ σύνεγγυς). Semantically, this passage resembles Proverbs 5:15-16 (πίνε ὕδατα ἀπὸ σῶν ἀγγείων καὶ ἀπὸ σῶν φρεάτων πηγῆς. μὴ ὑπερεκχείσθω σοι τὰ ὕδατα ἐκ τῆς σῆς πηγῆς, εἰς δὲ σὰς πλατείας διαπορευέσθω τὰ σὰ ὕδατα: Drink waters out of your own cistern, and running waters out of your own well. Let not your fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets). According to Loader (2009:211), "drink water from your own cistern" (5:15) means "engage in sexual relations with your own wife". It is obvious that Sira assumes that women are irresistibly greedy for sexual intercourse (cf. Berquist, 2002:184). Susanna's daily walking in the garden, however, has nothing to do with sexual provocation. This biased judging of women will, ironically, constitute a deadly trap for the corrupted elders.

The second ironic expression relevant here is the metaphor conveyed by the sentence "καὶ διέστρεψαν τὸν ἑαυτῶν νοῦν καὶ ἐξέκλιναν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν μηδὲ μνημονεύειν κριμάτων δικαίων" (And they perverted their own mind, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments). Διαστρέφω (pervert) and ἐκκλίνω (turn away) are two key verbal metaphors in this sentence. These are verbs of action conjugated in an active voice. They emphasize the elder's active determination to persevere in

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wickedness. This evil determination is seen by the author as totally incompatible with the Law of Moses. The later is supposed to be the rule of conduct in the Jewish community. Moreover, the Law is the foundation of the just judgment in the Jewish community. That the anti Law, namely the two corrupted elders, could become a judge in Israel illustrates an ironical use of conventions.

The last part of the first episode is also ironic (13-14). First, their sexual lust was so strong that it prevented the two elders from going back home for lunch (v13). In Jewish traditions, abstention from food has the purpose of repenting from sin, not preparing for it. In addition, verse 14 presents the elders as “judging” (ἀνετάζοντες) one another and even confessing (ὁμολογέω) their lust. ἀνετάζω (to judge) and ὁμολογέω (to confess) are used ambiguously and thus used ironically here. The last denotes change in their intention or an agreement to support one another in their endeavour (Michel, 2000, 5:200).

B. EPISODE TWO (15-28)

This episode focuses on the encounter of Susanna and the elders in the garden. Irony is also evident here. Some of the ironic expressions can be underlined as presented here.

Firstly, verse 15 says that Susanna “desired to bath in the paradise” (ἐπιθυμήσασθαι ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ). The verb ἐπιθυμέω (15), which characterises Susanna’s desire for bathing, and ἐπιθυμία which characterises the elders’ sexual lust, are from the same root. In Ancient Greece it denoted sexual desire (Büchsel, 2000:168). As has already been argued (cf. 3.1.1.1), in this narrative ἐπιθυμία denotes sexual appetite and always refers to the elders. ἐπιθυμέω as related to Susanna, however, is free from this connotation. The irony resides precisely in this unconventional use of the word.

The second ironical expression is the contrast between the elders and Susanna concerning the concept “wickedness”. Verse 20 (αἱ θύραι τοῦ παραδείσου κέκλεινται, καὶ οὐδεὶς θεωρεῖ ἡμᾶς: the doors of the paradise are closed and no one watches us) reveals that God’s presence means nothing to the elders, but a lot to Susanna (v24: “αἰρετόν μοί ἐστιν μὴ πράξασαν ἐμπροσθέν εἰς τὰς

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χειρας υμων η̄ αμαρτειν ενωπιον κυριου” (it is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord) Wickedness, from the elders’ perspective, depends on the presence of men, not of God.

The third expression of irony is attributive irony. The elders’ intention is to ridicule Susanna and her fear of the Lord if she refuses to satisfy their demand. To reach their objective, the elders threaten to formulate a false accusation against Susanna. They aim at attributing their own wickedness to Susanna. Their crying after Susanna also has the same intent. There is an ironic twisting of justice. Their attributive irony seemed to work because they were believed and consequently Susanna was sentenced to death (v41).

C. EPISODE THREE (28-45)

The preceding episode (15-27) focused on the encounter between Susanna and the elders in the garden. The elders demanded sexual intercourse with Susanna or she would face accusation of adultery with a young man in case of refusal. Susanna rejects the elders’ demand and, as a consequence, the elders promise to achieve their menace. This episode elaborates on the elders’ achieving their threat by ironically attributing their wickedness to Susanna. This episode is very ironical.

Firstly, the elders attribute their intention to a fictive young man (v21, 37 νεανίσκος). According to verse 21, in the garden, the elders tell Susanna that if she does not comply with their demand for intercourse, “καταμαρτυρήσομέν σου ὅτι ἦν μετὰ σοῦ νεανίσκος καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐξαπέστειλας τὰ κοράσια ἀπὸ σοῦ”³⁵. Verses 36-38 recount how the elders achieved their menace. According to these verses,

³⁶ εἶπαν δὲ οἱ πρεσβῦται Περιπατούντων ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ μόνων εἰσῆλθεν αὕτη μετὰ δύο παιδισκῶν καὶ ἀπέκλεισεν τὰς θύρας τοῦ παραδείσου καὶ ἀπέλυσεν τὰς παιδίσκας,³⁷ καὶ ἦλθεν

³⁵ We will testify against you that a young man was with you and for this reason you sent the maid far from you.

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πρὸς αὐτήν νεανίσκος, ὃς ἦν κεκρυμμένος, καὶ ἀνέπεσε μετ' αὐτῆς.³⁶ ἡμεῖς δὲ ὄντες ἐν τῇ γωνίᾳ τοῦ παραδείσου ἰδόντες τὴν ἀνομίαν ἐδράμομεν ἐπ' αὐτούς³⁶

These verses reveal that the elders achieve their promise to Susanna (verse 21). What they tell about the young man was in fact their intention to have intercourse with Susanna. They even seem to be very concerned about wickedness in the community (v38 ἰδόντες τὴν ἀνομίαν: having seen the wickedness). This is an ironical attribution of wickedness to a chaste woman by two wicked men.

Secondly, the unveiling of Susanna (32) by the elders as alleged adulterous and the placing of hands (34) on her is presented ironically as fulfilling the Law. In reality, however, their indirect satisfaction of sexual desire is in view (ὄπως ἐμπληθῶσιν τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῆς: as being filled with her beauty). As Collins (quoted by Clanton, 2006:74) states, "the ritual of placing hands on the head occurs in three Contexts in the Bible: in the preparation of animals for sacrifice (Leviticus 8:14, 18, 22; Exodus 29:10, 16, 19); in the ritual of the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:21-22); and in the condemnation of blasphemers (Leviticus 24:14)"³⁷. The ritual is meant to punish Susanna's alleged adultery. From the elders' point of view, however, Susanna is punished for her chastity (Wills, 1995:57). The ironical use of conventions is strikingly evident.

D. EPISODE FOUR (45-64)

The last episode parallels the first (1-14). It comprises of the same elements as the first, but the sequence is reversed. This episode comprises various ironical expressions. For this study, only a few are relevant, as discussed here.

³⁶ The elders said 'we were walking in the garden, she came in with two maids alone and she shut the doors of the garden and dismissed the maids; and a young man, who was hiding, came toward her and laid with he. And us being in the corner of the garden and seeing this wickedness, we ran toward them.

³⁷ Quoted from Clanton (2006:74).

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Firstly, the rejection of the condemnation of Susanna by a παιδαρίου νεωτέρου (very young boy), questioning and rejecting the judicial decision of the elders is an ironic use of convention.

Secondly, verse 48 consists of a rhetorical irony by questions: "... Οὕτως μωροί, οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ; οὐκ ἀνακρίναντες οὐδὲ τὸ σαφὲς ἐπιγνόντες κατεκρίνατε θυγατέρα Ἰσραὴλ" (Are you so stupid, sons of Israel? Having neither examined closely, nor knowing the plain truth have you condemned the daughter of Israel?).

Thirdly, the declaration (52) "Πεπλαιωμένε ἡμερῶν κακῶν" (waxen old in wickedness) is an ironic metaphor because it presents a Jewish judge as a wicked person of old age, contrary to the tradition in Israel. One cannot be a judge, the incarnation of justice, and simultaneously grow incorrigible in wickedness.

Fourthly, the question "νῦν οὖν ταύτην εἶπερ εἶδες, εἰπόν Ὑπὸ τί δένδρον εἶδες αὐτοὺς ὁμιλοῦντας ἀλλήλοις" (Now then, if thou saw her, tell me, under what tree did you see them companying together?) (54, cf also 58) is an example of rhetorical irony. It is actually intended to ridicule the elders. It is assumed that they will not find a correct answer to the question.

Fifthly, the words σχῖνον (54) and σχίσαι (55) as πρίνον (58) and πρίσαι (59) constitute an ironic wordplay. Daniel evokes the death of the elders in a mocking way. He ironically imitates the sounds of their lie consisting of imaginary trees.

Sixthly, verse 56 abounds in ironic metaphors. The first ironic metaphor is the declaration " ... Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδα" (seed of Canaan but not Judah). The second ironic metaphor in this verse is "τὸ κάλλος ἐξηπάτησέν σε (beauty has enticed you) ... " and the last is found in the utterance "καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία διέστρεψεν τὴν καρδίαν σου" (and the lust has distorted your heart). All these examples are expressions of mockery. The first ironic metaphor is a biting mockery. Elders were considered considered as guardian of Jewish identity and traditions (Bornkamm, 2000:653 cf. Ben Sira 8:9). Here they are ironically portrayed as seed of Canaan, germ of corruption of Jewish

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identity. The second ironic metaphor is also a mockery. In the wisdom of Ben Sira (25:6), the glory of the elders is their fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is synonym of hating wickedness (Proverb 8:13). Here, ironically, they are enticed by beauty, wicked. The last ironic metaphor is also a mocking expression. Ironical here again, instead of the fear of the Lord, the elders are characterised by wickedness.

From the discussion in this section, it can be concluded that *Susanna* is essentially ironic in its structure as well as in its content. Irony, as has been argued up to here, is not incidental in the narrative. The author intentionally chose to pass his criticism of the Jewish society "through a cleansing filter of irony", as in some ancient tragedies (Mitsis, 1988:104).³⁸ Irony occurs here in the derisive use of wordplay (double meaning and puns), rhetorical questions, metaphor and social conventions. The contemptuous use of social conventions is the most ironic expression in the story. This dominant technique is aimed at highlighting the irrelevancy as well as the abuse of social conventions.

Some scholars, such as White (cf. 2.4.3), argue that when irony prevails in a discourse, the dominant genre is satire. From the above study, irony abounds in *Susanna*. The story can therefore be considered as a satirical narrative. The satiric intent of the story is discussed below.

3.2.3 THE INTENT OF THE SATIRIC MESSAGE

Satiric discourses in particular and literary texts in general are ideological vehicles in their intent. They are aimed either at challenging, and thus changing, or maintaining their audience's worldview (Jordaan, 1996:69). For the change to take place, however, the message must be read, understood and accepted by the audience. Therefore, the addressees must be convinced of the relevance of the censure. Miller (1987:145) insists that "to recognize the satire of the work, the reader must share with the author the opinion that the system is bad". When it is accepted that the system is bad, the logical conclusion is that it must be discarded. The above section revealed the satiric tone

³⁸ For the use of irony in Greek tragedies such as *Oedipus Rex* see also Pucci (1988:131-154).

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of *Susanna*. This section deals with the author's intent in structuring his story satirically. It seeks to reveal the aspect/s of the Jewish traditions the story of *Susanna* seeks to reject.

First, it is important to know that a satiric or ironic message generally involves three actants: the sender, the object and the receiver (Badir, 1987:37-38). The subject is the person who assumes the satiric or ironic function of satirizing or ironizing (generally the author/editor in many stories). The object is the person, thing or the institution toward whom or which the mockery is directed. The receiver is the person who is expected to decode the ironic or satiric message (Zielonka, 1987:157). The author/editor of *Susanna* is the subject of the satiric message of the narrative. The Jewish people are the recipients or the receivers of the message of the story. The object or the target lies behind the elders. The elders, as an institution, represent the accepted traditions in the Jewish community. In some way the Jewish people, as a whole, are in view.

The sender of *Susanna* mockingly uses the opposition between Susanna and the two elders around wickedness (sexual perversion) to challenge some accepted Jewish traditions. In fact, the word ἀνομίαν rendered by wickedness appears three times in the story (5, 38 and 57) and refers exclusively to sexual perversion, as said above. The author uses this word to reject the traditional prejudice that women were more sexually corrupted than men. Evidently, the author chose the chastity of a woman and the perversion of the elders to reject this established belief. In fact, the social structure of the Jewish community was based on the observance of the Law. Women were thought of as weaker members of the society with regard to the observance of the Law. For this reason they were assigned a secondary place after men. The author of the story put into play a woman and two men, and to make it worse, two elders and judges, just to prove the contrary.

3.3. CONCLUSION

This chapter was devoted to the first step of the structural semiotic analysis of the story of *Susanna*, namely the figurative analysis. It focused firstly on main figures appearing in the story.

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Careful attention was paid in particular to main oppositions emerging from the text, main motifs recurring in the text and the emplotment of the narrative.

Main oppositions in *Susanna* revealed that the main concern of the story is the redefinition of "Jewishness". The author rejects the structuring of the society in terms of men versus women. According to the story, Jewish society must be structured around the obedience/disobedience to the Law of Moses. In this new proposed structure, gender is deemed totally irrelevant. True Jewishness must be dependent on the observance of the Law, regardless of gender. Women, such as Susanna who holds the Law to the price of their life are true Jews. She is "a daughter of Judah" (*Susanna* 57), badge of true Jewishness. Men such as the two elders who reject the Law of Moses are not true Jews at all. They are dangerous strangers, "the seed of Canaan" (*Susanna* 56), and the emblem of non-Jewishness.

The second focus of this chapter on the investigation of the emplotment of the story was twofold. First, the communicational relationship between Susanna and its assumed archetype – the story of Joseph in general and the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in particular – was discussed. The second inquiry focussed on investigating central tropes and the genre of *Susanna*. Attention was drawn to the irony that constitutes the main tropes in the narrative. *Susanna* was established as being fundamentally ironic.

The ironical essence of the narrative was revealed firstly by the mode of emplotment which resembles the ancient Greek tragic irony, and secondly by the thematic irony in the content in the story. The dominance of irony in the narrative makes *Susanna* a satiric narrative. It was finally argued, from the structure of the story, that the satiric narrative of *Susanna* was intended to reject, in an ironic way, the assumed wickedness of women that made them second rank citizens in the Jewish community.

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The above results constitute but a partial analysis of the story. A more complete study of the story would need to take into account the two other steps of analysis: the narrative and the thematic analysis. These two steps of analysis are undertaken in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: THE NARRATIVE AND THEMATIC LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter was devoted to the figurative analysis of *Susanna*. The main concern of this first step of analysis was to investigate figures in terms of figurative oppositions, motifs and emplotment.

This chapter discusses the second and third levels of Greimassian semiotic analysis, namely the *narrative* and the *thematic* levels. The narrative step of analysis investigates the configuration of *Susanna* as discourse. The thematic level of analysis explores fundamental values that generated the story.

4.1 THE NARRATIVE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

This section constitutes the second step. The concern of this second step of the semiotic analysis is to examine the discursive organization of the story of *Susanna*. Four aspects are considered in this regard, viz. the narrative structure of the story, the actantial model, the narrative syntax and the veridictory square.

4.1.1 THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE STORY OF SUSANNA

The primary condition for the existence of narrative structures, as said in the chapter on method (cf. 2.3.1.3), is transformation. Transformations generally occur in narratives in terms of “lack versus settling of lack” or “mission given, mission accomplished”. Narratives always unfold in terms of conjunction and disjunction or *vice versa*, from the initial state to the final state. Generally, the two sequences are related in terms of inversion of content (cf. 2.3.1.2). Therefore, there is an inherent dynamic in a narrative, namely a dialectic that supplies the impetus for action.

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4.1.1.1 The initial sequence and the final sequence in Susanna

For centuries, scholars saw *Susanna* as an integral part of *Daniel*. *Susanna* is therefore forced to fit into Daniel's structure. Consequently, its structure does not receive due attention as distinctive narrative. Contrary to *Susanna*, however, narratives such as *Judith* (Craven, 1977 and 1983), *Ruth* (Bertman, 19; Bovell, 2003; Grant, 1991; Luter & Rigsby, 1996; Westermann, 1999), *Nehemiah* (Boda, 1996.), *The Maccabees* (Cousland, 2003), *Esther* (Weiland, 2002), *Amos* (Garrett, 1984; Christensen, 1974; Waard (DE),) and *Bel and the Dragon* (Nickelsburg, 2005) have been the objects of thorough investigations, with regard to their structures.

Some scholars have lauded the impeccable architectural structure of *Susanna* (Kay, 1913:642; Fisch, 1996:36). However, their assumed admiration of the narrative structure rested only on mere affirmations rather than on facts. *Susanna* has not yet been objected to careful and thorough investigation as to reveal its underlying organisation. Consequently, the structure of *Susanna* is not taken into account in the uncovering of meaning.

In brief, according to the Greimassian criteria of segmentation (cf. Kanonge, 2009:366), *Susanna* comprises four important sequences, structured as follows:

The first sequence introduces Susanna and the elders (2-14). Their contradictory religious and moral identities are affirmed. The second sequence highlights the confrontation between Susanna and the elders in the garden (15-27). Susanna is tested but resists. The third sequence focuses on the judgment and condemnation of Susanna (28-44). The elders are deemed worthy. The last sequence centres on the judgment of the elders (45-63). They are condemned but Susanna is vindicated.

In all four sequences, Susanna's identity is central. It is successively affirmed (2-3), tested (22-23), contested (42-43) and eventually confirmed (62-63). The story starts with a prologue about

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Joakim, her husband and ends with an epilogue about Daniel her helper (64) (Kanonge, 2009:366).

The investigation of the structure of *Susanna*, however, is not the main concern here. Such an endeavour falls outside of the scope of this study. Here, the relation between the initial and the final sequences is scrutinised. These two sequences respectively introduce and conclude the relationship between Susanna and the elders.

With regard to these sequences, one can read *Susanna* with a different focus each time, for instance on the community, Susanna, or the elders. Whatever the adopted perspective may be, the general structure will appear on a semantic axis as follows:



Figure 4.1 Relation between the beginning and ending in a narrative

S1 introduces the problem to be addressed, while S2 presents the solution. The problem *Susanna* seeks to address is the intrusion of lawlessness in the Jewish community (v5). A reading focused on the elders will reveal the following structure:

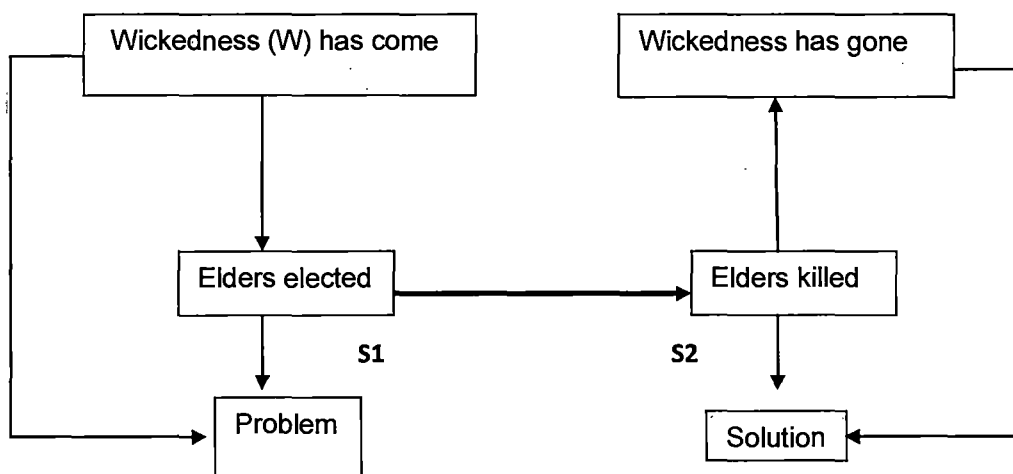


Figure 4.2 Relation between the beginning and ending in *Susanna* focusing on the elders

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The structure in the above chart shows that the elders are not only wicked, but also symbolise the presence of wickedness in the community. As Σπέρμα Χανααν 56 (seed of Canaan), wickedness is not only an integral part of their nature, but it also has the potential of corrupting the entire Jewish community. In fact, because of their position as leaders, they represent the whole community. Their option for the rejection of the Law does not stand here only as their own private matter. It involves the whole community. It is therefore an attempt to lead the community to questioning the authority of the Law and thus jeopardizing Jewish distinctiveness.

From the perspective of the Jewish community the problem presents itself as follows:

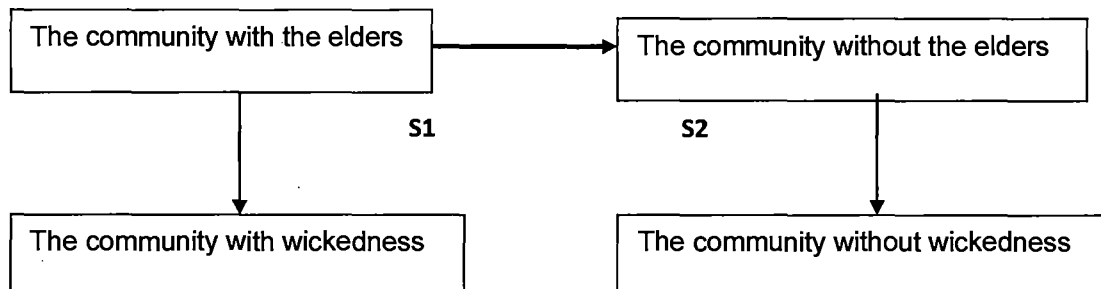


Figure 4.3 Relation between the beginning and ending in Susanna focusing on the Jewish community

The whole story of Susanna can be summarised by the following transformational function:

$$(J\wedge W) \xrightarrow{\text{Transformation}} (J\vee W)$$

This representation illustrates the transformation of the Jewish community (J) from being with wickedness to not being with wickedness. The unfolding of the story is a transformation from a state of conjunction (\wedge) to a state of disjunction (\vee). From this representation, the subject of transformation is the community.

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However, the transformation does not happen without the heroic action of Susanna. Consequently, this representation reads as "Susanna caused the Jewish community to be transformed from the state of wickedness to the state of without wickedness." In this case then, the story can be summarised focussing on Susanna as follows:

Susanna [(J)W] → (J)W]

This simply means Susanna saved her community from wickedness. Here, Susanna is characterised by a *transformational doing*. However, Susanna does not work out the transformation by herself. The intervention of the Lord, the addresser, enables Susanna to transform her community (42-45). There is a double causation here with the Lord acting on Susanna and Susanna influencing her community as follows:

The Lord {Susanna [(J)W→(J)W]}

This representation of Susanna focuses on the beginning and ending of the narrative. In fact, the initial (S1) and final (S2) sequences, propose a reading of the story centred on Susanna. The final sequence, as said formerly, provides the clue for understanding the story. οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα³⁹ (63) proposes a reading of the story focusing on "shame" and "honour (H)" motif, wickedness versus innocence and Jewishness versus Canaaniteness.

"Shame and honour" seems to be an important concern in *Susanna* in general. This is the case in the first and last sequences in particular, as is revealed by the vocabulary of shame and honour on the one hand, and the judgment of Susanna on the other.

Regarding the elders, the story states that ἠσχύνοντο ἀναγγεῖλαι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῶν ὅτι ἤθελον συγγενέσθαι αὐτῇ⁴⁰ (11). The elders' avoiding looking to heaven is also an indirect expression of their shame for not complying with the Law of God. On the other hand, verse 27 declares that

³⁹ "no shameful practice was found in her."

⁴⁰ "were ashamed telling their lust for they wanted to have sexual intercourse with her."

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“ἡνίκα δὲ εἶπαν οἱ πρεσβῦται τοὺς λόγους αὐτῶν, κατησχύνθησαν οἱ δοῦλοι σφόδρα, ὅτι πῶποτε οὐκ ἔρρέθη λόγος τοιοῦτος περὶ Σουσαννης⁴¹”. In both cases, αἰσχύνω and καταισχύνω belong to the semantics of shame and honour. Again, shame here has to do with the breaking of the Law.

Susanna's judgment unfolds according to the “shame and honour” motif, particularly in striking accordance with Ben Sira 23:22-27:

²² Οὕτως καὶ γυνὴ καταλιποῦσα τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ παριστῶσα κληρονόμον ἐξ ἄλλοτρίου. ²³ πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἐν νόμῳ ὑψίστου ἠπειθήσεν, καὶ δεῦτερον εἰς ἄνδρα αὐτῆς ἐπλημμέλησεν, καὶ τὸ τρίτον ἐν πορνείᾳ ἐμοιχεύθη καὶ ἐξ ἄλλοτρίου ἄνδρος τέκνα παρέστησεν. ²⁴ αὕτη εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ἐξαχθήσεται, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἐπισκοπὴ ἔσται. ²⁵ οὐ διαδώσουσιν τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς εἰς ῥίζαν, καὶ οἱ κλάδοι αὐτῆς οὐκ οἴσουσιν καρπὸν. ²⁶ καταλείψει εἰς κατάραν τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ ὄνειδος αὐτῆς οὐκ ἐξαλειφθήσεται, ²⁷ καὶ ἐπιγνώσονται οἱ καταλειφθέντες ὅτι οὐθὲν κρεῖττον φόβου κυρίου καὶ οὐθὲν γλυκύτερον τοῦ προσέχειν ἐντολαῖς κυρίου⁴².

Similarities between this passage and sequences of events in *Susanna* are remarkable. They suggest an evident intertextuality. Evidently, the author shaped his story according to the above text of *Ben Sira* – if not directly, then indirectly. These two texts have the following resemblances:

⁴¹ “At the time when the elders told their words, the servants were exceedingly ashamed because such a thing was never told about Susanna.”

⁴² ²² So is it also with the wife who leaves her husband and bring in an heir by another. ²³ First, she has disobeyed the law of the most High; and second, she has offended her husband; and third, she has committed adultery by fornication, and brought in children by another husband. ²⁴ She shall be brought out into the assembly, and on her children, an investigation shall be conducted. ²⁵ Her children shall not take root, and her branches shall bear no fruit. ²⁶ She shall leave curse as her remembrance, and her disgrace shall not be wiped out. ²⁷ And those who remain shall know that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and that there is nothing sweeter than paying attention to the commandments of the Lord.

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First, in *Ben Sira*, there is an invective against a woman who leaves her husband and brings forth an heir from another man (22). Susanna also leaves her husband and goes out every day (6-14). The elders report her alleged liaison with a young man (26-27). In the story, Susanna's children are directly referred to only at her judgement. There is no doubt that Joakim's fatherhood of Susanna's children is indirectly brought into question. In fact, the children are referred to as Susanna's children (30), but never Joakim's. Moreover, it is important to notice that, in this verse, children are mentioned in the context of Susanna's family with no allusion to their father.

Second, according to Ben Sira, the adulterous woman disobeys the Law of God (23); the elders report having seen Susanna committing adultery, ἀνομία (38). As said formerly (cf. 3.3), ἀνομία occurs only three times. In all three instances (3, 38, 57) it refers to sexual sin. Although the general meaning is lawlessness, in *Susanna* it means sexual sin.

Third, because of her wickedness, the adulterous woman in *Ben Sira* offends her husband (23). At Susanna's judgement, Joakim does not intervene. He is apparently convinced by the elders' lie. Therefore, he certainly feels offended.

Fourth, according to Ben Sira, the adulterous woman shall be brought to the assembly (ἐκκλησία) (24). Susanna too is brought to the assembly (ἡ συναγωγή) (41).

Fifth, in *Ben Sira* the adulterous woman's children will not take root (25) and curse shall accompany that woman's remembrance (26). The laying of hands on Susanna symbolises a curse (v34; cf. also Elwell & Comfort, 2001). Had the assembly succeeded in killing Susanna, questions could have arisen about Joakim's fatherhood of Susanna children, as said above. Consequently, they would have lost their rights as legal heirs of Joakim.

Finally, in both stories, shame stems from wickedness, i.e. the breaking of the Law. The woman brings shame to her husband and parents because adultery is the breaking of the Law (23). In like

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manner, the elders are ashamed telling each other their sexual lust because it is *ἀνομία*, unlawfulness (5).

The shame and honour motif is remarkable above all in the last sequence in verse 63. *οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πράγμα* (63 the final state) is the reverse of *ἔξηλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλώνος ἐκ πρεσβυτέρων κριτῶν* (5 the initial state).

The praising of the Lord about Susanna's blameless behaviour implies two important facts. First, it suggests that the narrative ends honourably in favour of Susanna and that her action benefits the community. Second, it implies that Susanna reverses the initial state, namely the intrusion of wickedness. In other words, Susanna, as a woman, moves from the presumption of wickedness (shame, without honour) as a normal picture of women in her culture, to the acknowledging of her innocence (praise, with honour); thus the reverse of sexist prejudice against women.

This evolution of Susanna that frees her community from wickedness is posed here as the point of departure of the narrative analysis of her story. The main structure of the story appears as follows:

(Susanna V Honour) —————> (Susanna Λ Honour)

Figure 4.4 Relation between the beginning and ending in *Susanna* highlighting shame/honor as one of the most important issues in *Susanna*.

Susanna starts her journey in the story without honour because of her being a woman. Only at the end is she honoured as daughter of Judah, the true Israel. In other words, the author sets Susanna's distinctive traits as essential criteria of true Jewishness. The most important trait is her fear of the Lord, which is the fruit of her knowledge of the Law. The portrait of a woman as a defender of the Law against the unlawfulness of the elders is resonant. It sounds like a questioning of the patriarchal traditions of the Second Temple period, which undermined the image of women.

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According to these traditions in general, and Ben Sira in particular, the survival of the nations depended totally on men. In fact, in his praise to the fathers of the nation (44-50), Ben Sira finds no woman worth mentioning. His only allusion to women is his censuring of Solomon's foible for women. Solomon's wives are alluded to as cause of misfortune in Israel (47:19-21). Here, however, the destiny of Jewish religion depends totally on the education of Susanna, a woman. She has as main mission the preservation of the Law, the token of Jewishness. By preserving Jewishness, she affirms her own identity. This structure can be modified as follows:

(Susanna \vee Jewishness) \longrightarrow (Susanna \wedge Jewishness)

Figure 4.5 Relation between the beginning and ending in *Susanna* highlighting Jewishness as main quest of the story

The narrative analysis of *Susanna* is modeled on this last structure. It represents the way followed by Susanna in her battle for the preservation of Jewish identity. Susanna's attempt is made possible only because of her knowledge of the Law.

The ending of the story reveals that Susanna's unfailing confidence in the Lord, as the fruit of her outstanding knowledge of the Law (cf. Levine, 2004:323; Clanton, 2006:55), will change her community's view of women. Verses 60, 62-63 give witness to this change. These verses read as follows:

καὶ ἀνεβόησεν πᾶσα ἡ συναγωγὴ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ εὐλόγησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ σώζοντι τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπ' αὐτόν ... ποιῆσαι κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ, καὶ ἀπέκτειναν αὐτούς, καὶ ἐσώθη αἷμα ἀναίπιον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. Χελκίας δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἤνεσαν τὸν θεὸν περὶ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῶν Σουσάννας μετὰ Ἰωακὶμ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν πάντων, ὅτι οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα⁴³.

⁴³ And all the assembly cried with a loud voice and praised God who saves those who trust on him ... To act according to the Law of Moses, they certainly killed them, and innocent blood was saved on that day. As for Helkias and his wife, they

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Jews praise "God who saves those who trust on him" (τῷ θεῷ τῷ σώζοντι τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπ' αὐτόν). This declaration implies that they learned that God is not sexist, as will be demonstrated in this Chapter.

In brief, the study of the initial and the final sequences underlines the Law as the main concern of *Susanna*. The Law is the token of Jewishness. Wickedness is presented as a redoubtable enemy of Jewishness. Susanna's attempt will consist of preserving Jewishness from men's wickedness. To entrust a woman with such a mission, however, utterly reverses Ben Sira's view of the Jewish community. According to Ben Sira, men's wickedness was tolerable (Ben Sira 42:14). In *Susanna*, however, men's wickedness merited death penalty. The ending of *Susanna* is also emblematic of reversal. It helps to clarify the intention of the author in structuring the story with an ending focusing on Susanna's success.

4.1.1.2 The logic of the ending of *Susanna*

The ending of a narrative, as said in the Chapter 3, is subject to an intentional communicational strategy of the author/editor. The ending of a narrative is generally the place where the audience learns something to practice or avoid. Success or failure at this stage is always revealing. The logical structure of *Susanna's* ending can be presented graphically as follows:

praised God concerning their daughter with her husband and all their relative, because no shameful deed was found in her.

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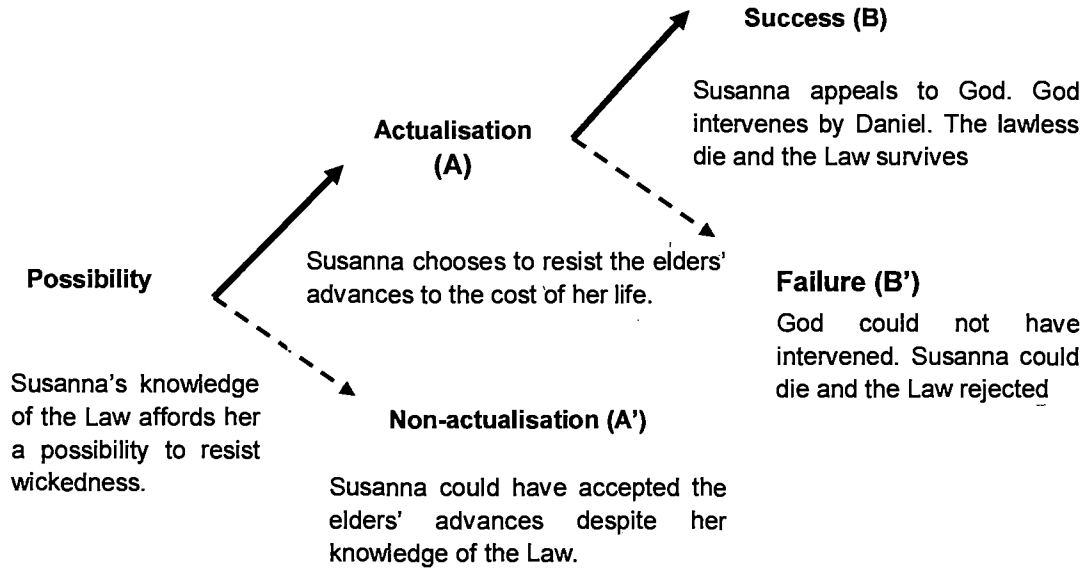


Figure 4.6 The ending of *Susanna* focusing on Susanna

From the perspective of focussing on the elders, this schema can appear as follows:

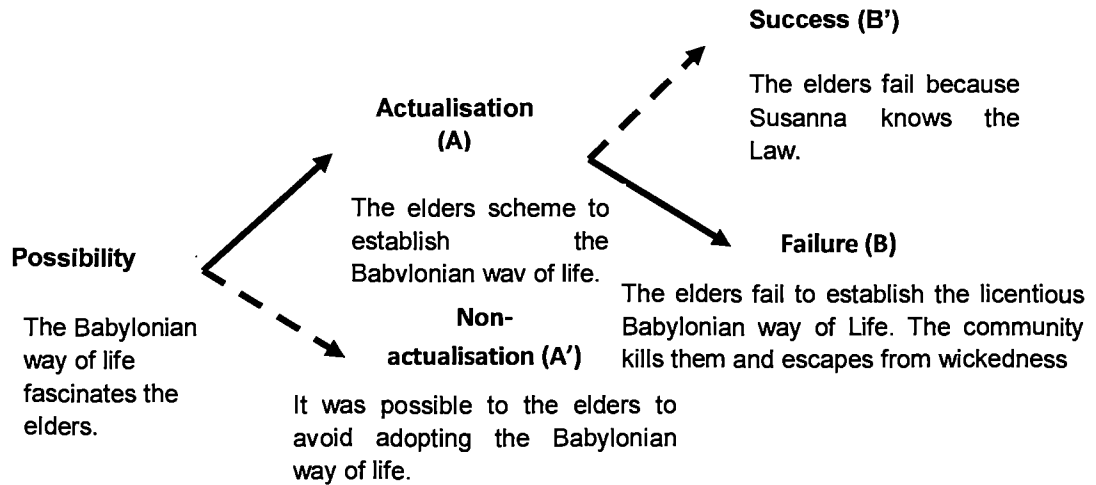


Figure 4.7 The ending of *Susanna* focusing on the elders

These two graphic presentations illustrate that the author had at least one other possibility for ending his/her story. A and B (with continuous lines) in each chart, illustrate the intentional choice

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of the author to tell the story of Susanna as we know it today. His choice reveals his motivation to urge Jews to stick to their identity.

A' and B' reveal another open possibility of telling the same story. The author could have told or modelled his story to support the elders' endeavour. Here, a few endings were possible. The author could have illustrated Susanna as easily accepting the elders' advances despite her high education according to the Law. Alternatively, Susanna could have rejected the elders' advances only to end up in death because of God not intervening. The numerous possibilities of narrative endings from which the author could have chosen suggest that the current ending of *Susanna* was an intentional design of the author.

From this discussion, it becomes clear that the structure of *Susanna* as it is was intentionally selected by the author. It was likely intended to illustrate the erroneousness of the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period against women exemplified in *Ben Sira*. The following section examines the actantial organisation of *Susanna* in order to contribute further to the semiotic exploration of the narrative.

4.1.2 THE ACTANTIAL ORGANISATION OF THE STORY OF SUSANNA

4.1.2.1 The configuration of Susanna's Actantial Model

Susanna has a dual actantial organisation. It has actants and antactants, as the following investigation shows. There is an object and anti-object, an addresser and anti-addresser and a subject with a dual anti-subject. The actantial model could focus on God as the addresser, the Law as the object and Susanna as the subject. A second possibility of representing *Susanna's* actantial model focuses on Babylon as addresser, wickedness as object and the elders as subject.

The actantial organisation of the story focussing on the Law as object of the quest, following to the first possibility, has the following configuration:

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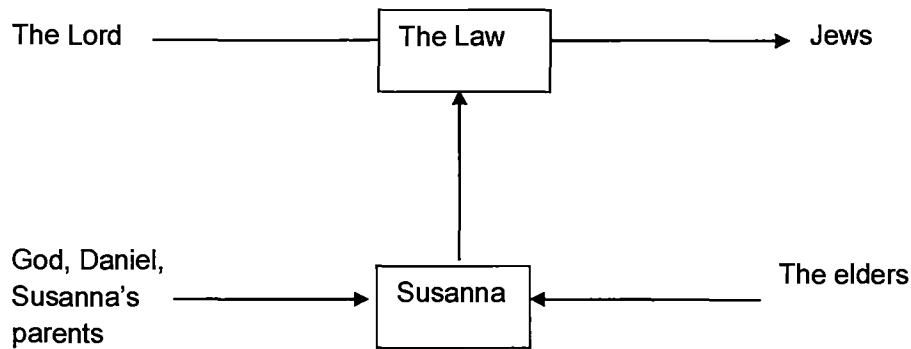


Figure 4.8 The actantial model of *Susanna* focusing on Susanna as the subject with the Law as main object of quest in the narrative

According to this chart, the Law is the central object of value in the narrative. The Law is a symbol of Jewishness. The centrality of the Law defines all relations and roles of actants. The narrator, by declaring that “ἐλάλησεν ὁ δεσπότης ὅτι Ἐξήλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος”⁴⁴, assumes that God attracts the attention of Jews to the importance of the Law. The actant whose role is to underline the importance of the object is the addresser. Therefore, God is the addresser in this structure.

Susanna exemplifies unending longing for the maintenance of the Law. The actant whose function is the pursuit of the object is the subject. Susanna is therefore a subject in this first structure. By striving for the maintenance of the Law, Susanna, a woman, becomes the quintessence of Jewishness.

Susanna does not succeed in her enterprise by herself. She learns the importance of the Law from her pious parents. Sentenced to death, she turns to God for help and God sends Daniel for her rescue. Her parents, Daniel and God play the role of helpers in the story.

However, Susanna’s commitment to the Law runs against the elders’ wickedness. The two elders are the opponents to her action.

⁴⁴ The Lord said that wickedness has come from Babylon

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The second actantial model accentuates wickedness as the elders' pursuit. The word *ἀνομία* (wickedness) means literally "lawlessness, negation, or opposition to the Law" (Liddell & Scott, 2003:148; BDAG, 2002:85). This indicates that the quest of this second configuration is to overthrow the Law. Overthrowing the Law here, however, does not mean rejection of the entire Law. The endeavour of the elders, as said above, is sexual liberty. A Jewish community without sexual restrictions is paradise in the dream of the elders.

In the Jewish worldview, however, as said in the preceding chapter (cf. 3.1.2.), sexual sin, eating pork and idolatry constituted the climax of wickedness. A devoted Jew would better die rather than commit any of these sins. With regard to sexual sin, the concern of *Susanna*, the big responsibility fell heavily on women during the Second Temple period (cf. 3.1.1.). The elders' enterprise succeeds to a certain extent because some women, *θυγατράσις Ἰσραηλ* (daughters of Israel), accepted their advances. The reason for these women backsliding appears in verse 57 as follows: "ἐκεῖναι φοβούμεναι ὠμίλου ὑμῖν" (they, being frightened, had sexual intercourse with you). Consequently, women represented sexual sin. *Susanna* incarnates the quest of the elders. She is the object in the second actantial model. Wickedness, the quest of the elders, according to verse 5, comes from Babylon (Ἐξήλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ βυλῶνος). Babylon is the addresser.

Φοβούμεναι evokes the fear of death. It recalls the technique of intimidation used by the elders to convince *Susanna* in the garden and her condemnation to death. The daughters of Israel commit adultery because they fear death. As said above, however, between death and sexual sin, a devoted Jew has to opt for death. Consequently, the daughters of Israel advance the cause of wickedness. They are the elders' helpers.

The elders' failure results from *Susanna's* resistance, as well as God and Daniel's intervention. In this second actantial model God, Daniel and *Susanna* are the opponents to the elders. The actantial model underlying the action of the elders has the following configuration:

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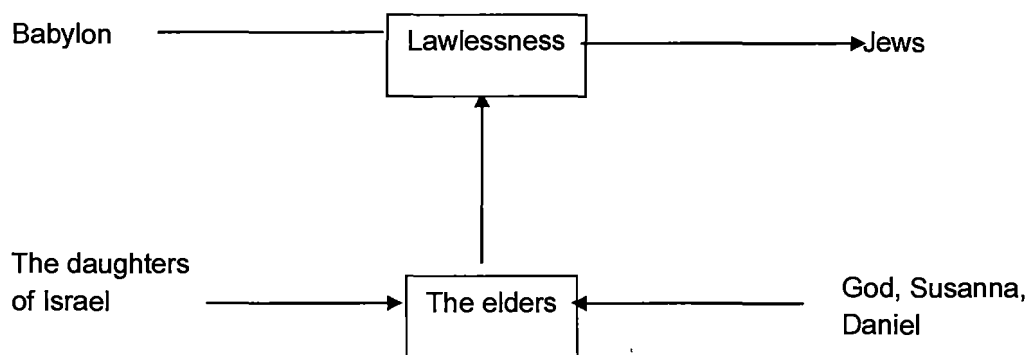


Figure 4.9. The actantial model of *Susanna* focusing on the elders as the subject and wickedness as their object of quest

The model reveals that, apart from actants, there are also antactants in the story, with a programme opposed to the main quest. Furthermore, it illustrates the roles of antactants set against actants.

The comparison of the two actantial models with Ben Sira's discourse on women reveals the subversive design of *Susanna*. It is worth noticing that Ben Sira and *Susanna* share both the same concern. As the main actantial model revealed, the Law was the central quest of *Susanna*. The Law is also the main concern in Ben Sira. In fact, according to Silva (1996:435), Ben Sira's main concern is the "emulation of the champions of Torah and the covenant" (cf. also Di Lella, 1966:140). However, *Susanna* and Ben diverge when it comes to the attribution of actantial roles. In *Ben Sira*, men are subject and the Law must be the object of their quest. Women are portrayed as opponents, source of wickedness and "men need to be careful when dealing with women" (Eron, 1991:51; cf. also Harrington, 2005; 92; Hunter, 2006:185). It is clear that an actantial model of *Ben Sira* will have the Law as object, men as subject and women as opponents. This logic is completely reversed in *Susanna*. Here, men's pursuit is wickedness while *Susanna's* pursuit is the Law. Evidently, *Susanna's* actantial model radically reverses *Ben Sira's* view of men and women in the Jewish community. This reversal of fortune is also manifest in the relationship between actants and antactants in *Susanna*. The following section discusses the relations between actants and antactants in the story in detail.

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4.1.2.2 Relations between Actants and Antactants in Susanna

Susanna is a canonical narrative when considered from the Greimasian approach of analysis. In the Greimasian approach, a canonical story comprises three axes defining different relationships between six actants. The above analysis shows that all six actants of the Greimasian model are identifiable in the story. These six actants, viz. addresser and addressee, subject and object, helper and opponent are discussed here.

A. Addresser and addressees

From the Jewish perspective, God is the addresser, as argued above. The story starts with a word of the Lord (v5 ὁ δεσπότης) and ends with praise to God (60). The communication of the Lord to the Jewish people has the following structure:

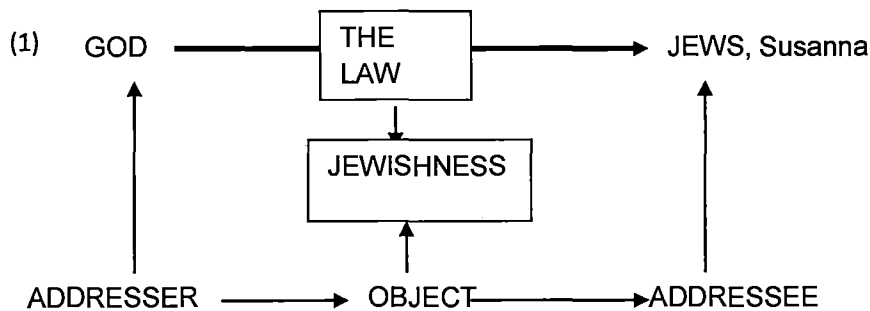


Figure 4.10 God's communication of the importance of the Law to Jews

The relation (1) is a narrative utterance as said in the chapter on method. This narrative utterance can take the following configuration:

$$\text{GOD} \longrightarrow (\text{JEWS} \wedge \text{THE LAW})$$

Based on verse 5, this narrative utterance can read: "God urges Jews to maintain the Law", to stick to their identity, to preserve their Jewishness.

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The story presents itself as a message of the Lord to Jews (5). The object of the communication is not physical but cognitive. The Law is the token of Jewishness. Jews are God's people and therefore different from other people only when the Law constitutes the centre of the community.

In the story, as the investigation will reveal shortly, God assumes all three traditional functions of the addresser (cf. Chapter 2). 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 Susanna, the subject performer (also known as a subject operator). He is himself interested in the Law. The mission Susanna assumes is the mission he would have accomplished if He was directly involved in the story. He imparts his own appreciation of the Law without letting it go.

Apart from verse 5, God does not appear directly in the story. Consequently, some scholars, like Gruen (2002:172), concludes that

God's involvement is distant and oblique, alluded to rather than directly felt. He stirred up Daniel's spirit, but the spirit, it seems, was already there. Certainly, the Lord plays no role through most of the text. Daniel performed his own task with personal energy and efficiency.

This assumed absence of the Lord, however, is but a deliberate strategy of communication of the story. In fact, God acts in accordance with his status as a subject manipulator. Manipulation denotes a remote action, but not disinterestedness. In general, manipulation has a negative connotation. Here, however, it is a technical term used in semiotic analysis.

Manipulation denotes the action of the addresser on the addressee to make him act (*faire*). It is synonymous with the word 'causation'. Linguistically, the semantics of causation includes direct and mediated causation, manipulation and direction, and coercion and permission (Kroeger, 2004:204-208).

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The expression *faire-faire* (cause to do) characterises the action of the addresser on the future subject. On the semiotic square, this expression opens four different modes of manipulation as follows (Greimas & Courtès, 1979:220):

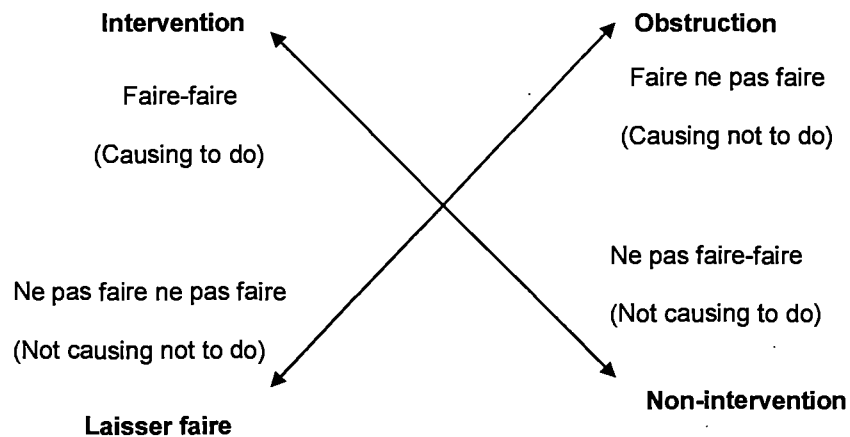


Figure 4.11. The four possible aspects of the manipulative action of the addresser on the addressee in a narrative

Intervention, *obstruction*, *non-intervention* and *laisser faire* (non-obstruction) characterise the action of the addresser. There is evidence, in *Susanna*, suggesting that God's action is in accordance with these four aspects of manipulation.

First, ἐλάλησεν ὁ δεσπότης (the Lord said), as said above, highlights the intervention of the Lord in the model of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. It is equivalent to “ἐλάλησεν ὁ κύριος.” It appears more than 600 times. It refers either to the direct communication of God to people, or his word to people via his prophets. Genesis 12:4 (LXX) for example, says, “Abram went as God said to him” (ἐπορεύθη Αβραμ, καθάπερ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ κύριος). As a communication of God to Moses, this formula abounds in Exodus (more than 20 times), in Leviticus (more than 40 times), in numbers (more than 80 times) and in Deuteronomy (more than 20). It also emerges to a lesser extent in prophetic books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah and Amos. In the NT, λαλέω appears in Hebrews 1:1-2 as follows: “Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν

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τοῖς προφήταις ἐπ' ἑσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας"⁴⁵. Here, λαλέω characterises God's speaking through the OT prophets and through his Son (cf. Ellingworth, 1993:85-90; Ellingworth & NIDA, 1983:3).

It is evident that this formula in *Susanna* highlights God's first *intervention* to make Jews conscious of the wickedness introduced by the elders. It is worth noticing that when wickedness appears, God informs the Jews. His communication here is not purposeless. Verse 5 strives to push Jews into action; it is a *faire faire* (causing to do). One reads a hidden injunctive purpose here. In fact, God enters the story as ὁ δεσπότης, "the absolute ruler" of the Jewish community (cf. Chapter 3 on actorialisation).

By naming God ὁ δεσπότης, the narrator assumes that God supremely watches over the community. God's sovereignty emerges from Susanna's prayer. God's knowledge of events even before their genesis (42-43) and his willingness to inform his people can have many implications (5). There is an implication that God knew Susanna's movement in the garden as well as the elders' wickedness and their plot against Susanna. Susanna's refusal of the elders' proposal, her ensuing judgement and sentence to death could not escape his foreknowledge. Therefore, God planned Daniel's intervention beforehand.

It is evident here that other aspects of God's causation enter the play. First, there is a *non-intervention* (ne pas faire-faire). God does not explicitly cause Susanna to go in the garden where the elders are hiding. Second, God does not stop Susanna from going out nor does He warn her of the presence of the elders in the garden (what he did with the community). There is a *laisser faire* (ne pas faire ne pas faire, not causing not to do), no obstruction here. *Laisser faire* is "a refusal to

⁴⁵In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

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interfere in other people's affairs or the practice of letting people do as they wish" (Encarta Dictionary, 2009).

After the evil judgement, God does not allow Susanna's death. There is *obstruction* to the action (*faire ne pas faire*: causing not to kill). To the end of the story, the community kills the two elders. God does not explicitly order the elders' killing. Neither does He object to it. Here again, there is, from God's initiative, a *laisser faire* (not causing not to do), non obstruction.

As an addresser, God finally plays the role of an adjudicator. This function appears to the end of the narrative and corresponds to the phase of sanction, as the study will reveal later. In brief, a superficial reading of *Susanna* may conclude that God does not appear actively in *Susanna*. Contrarily, a semiotic investigation sees His intelligence everywhere in the story. In fact, his causative action controls events and circumstances. His direct intervention (*faire-faire*) as well as his non-intervention (*ne pas faire-faire*), his obstruction (*faire ne pas faire*) as well as his *laisser faire* (*ne pas faire ne pas ne faire*, not causing not to do) serve his design. This schema of manipulation here can serve to map out different roles God plays as addresser in Biblical narratives. Some general characteristics can emerge as a model of Biblical strategy of communication.

As said above, however, God is not the only one addresser in the story. There is an opposing addresser, or anti-addresser in the story, namely Babylon. The latter, "not only institutes a system of values that opposes the original quest but also attempt to manipulate the receiver/subject to act in away contrary to the desires of the first sender" (Martin & Ringham, 2000:25).

Jews undergo two opposing manipulative actions from the Lord and from Babylon. Babylon represents an ideology totally opposed to the traditional Jewish system of values centred on the Law of Moses. Rather, there is an attempt from each side to persuade. God strives to persuade

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Jews to keep the Law while Babylon offers an ideology based on a sexual licence. The two opposing systems of values can stand on the semiotic square as follows:

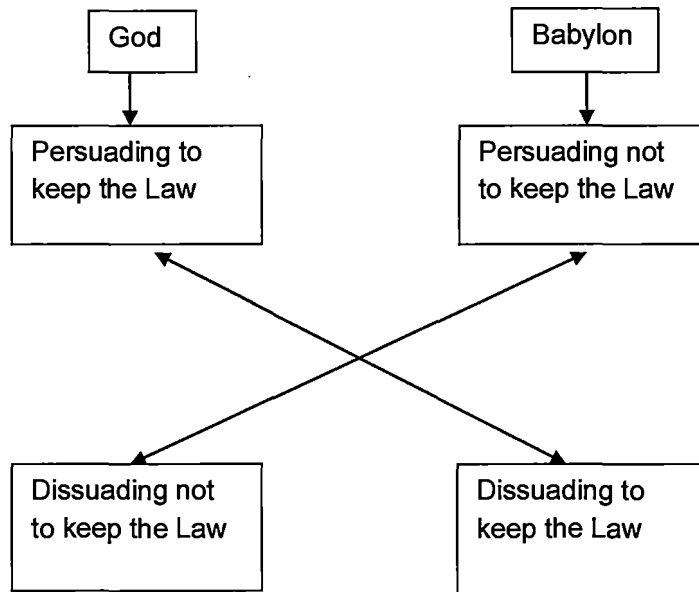


Figure 4.12. The illustration of the twofold action of manipulation of Jews respectively by God and by Babylon

The decomposition of this schema gives the two main transformations in the story. Both transformations highlight the manipulative actions of addressers, namely God and Babylon, on the addressee (Jews).

The function of transformation underlying God's action on Susanna appears as follows:

$$F [\text{God} \rightarrow (\text{Susanna} \vee \text{Law})]$$

Figure 4.13. The function of transformation underlying God's action on Susanna

This function illustrates the result of God's manipulative action on Susanna to the end of the story. God succeeds in his endeavour to push Susanna to hold on to the Law until the end of the story. On the other hand, Babylon's influence on the elders has the following configuration:

$$F [\text{Babylon} \rightarrow (\text{the elders} \wedge \text{Susanna})]$$

Figure 4.14. The function of transformation underlying Babylon's action on the elders

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This function represents the outcome of the manipulative action of Babylon on the elders. The aim of the action is to have the elders engage in sexual intercourse with Susanna and thus to overthrow the Mosaic regulation on sexuality (Law). It reveals that this endeavour totally fails as the elders die without achieving their intended goal.

The following function represents the confrontation of the two manipulative actions on Jews, at the end of the narrative:

$$F [\text{Babylon} \rightarrow (\text{the elders} \vee \text{Susanna})] \quad \rightleftharpoons \quad F [\text{God} \rightarrow (\text{Susanna} \wedge \text{Law})]$$

Figure 4.15. The function of transformation representing the confrontation of the respective twofold manipulative action of God and Babylon on Jews

As said above, God's endeavour succeeds at the expense of the elders' attempt to dissuade Jews from keeping the Law with regard to chastity.

B. Subject and object

The relation subject/object, in *Susanna*, is complex. It does not only involve Susanna as the subject, but the elders as well. The object is again the Law, but apprehended differently. From Susanna's perspective, the main purpose is to maintain the Law. Her quest is commitment to the Law with regard to sexual regulation. On the other side, however, the elders strive to reject the Law. Sexual freedom in general and sexual intercourse with Susanna in particular, is their main quest. The two elders' quest appears as follows:

The two elders \longrightarrow Susanna

Figure 4.16. Relation between the subject and the object underlying Susanna as the object of the elders' quest

The function representing their mission has the following structure:

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(The elders V Susanna) → (The elders V Susanna)

Figure 4.17. The relation between the elders and Susanna underlying the failure of the elders in their quest at the end of narrative

The elders' expectation, as they start their quest, is to have sexual intercourse with Susanna. This quest, however, results in a failure. The elders go from the initial state of disjunction to the final state of disjunction. This means there was no transformation. They failed in their quest.

Susanna's quest on the other hand appears as follows:

Susanna → The Law

Figure 4.18 The relation between the subject and the object underlying Susanna as the subject and the Law as her object of quest

The function representing Susanna's quest appears as follows:

(Susanna V the Law) → (Susanna \wedge the Law)

Figure 4.19 The relation between Susanna and the Law underlying Susanna's success in her quest at the end of the narrative

Susanna's expectation as she starts her journey is recognition of her commitment to the Law. The disjunction at the initial step does not suggest that she was not committed to the Law when the story starts. The narrator states from the beginning that Susanna feared the Lord and that she was educated according to the Law of Moses. Her piety, however, though known by her family, depends only on the narrator's assumption. As a Jewish woman, she is under suspicion of wickedness (argued in Chapter 3).

Her journey in the narrative is a trying test aimed at proving her chastity and thus her equality or even superiority over men, with regard to the commitment to the Law of Moses. To the end of the narrative, she does more than succeed.

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The two quests have two opposing subjects. The success of one is the failure of the other. Put together, the two quests stand as follows:

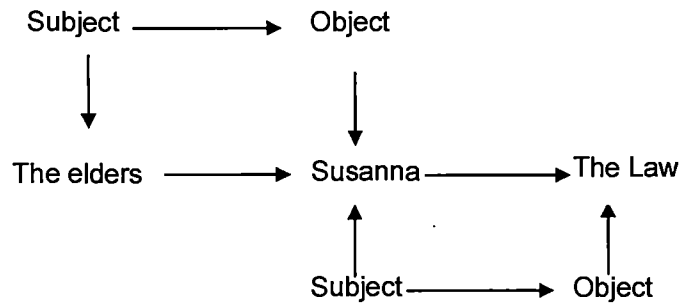


Figure 4.20 Schema representing the two actantial roles of Susanna as object and subject in the narrative

Susanna assumes two functions in this structure. She is object of the elders' quest and she is herself a subject in the pursuit of the Law. In some feminist circles, however, Susanna is not subject in this story. Levine (2004:311) is of the opinion that "although she speaks, Susanna is not (first and foremost) subject, she is object. And she is abject". Levine does not explain what it means, in her point of view, to be subject or object in a story.

Normally, the concept of subject in the semiotic analysis goes together with the concept of object. In other words, Susanna can be termed as subject only if she has an object of quest. It is here where Levine contradicts herself. Levine (2004:313-314 note 5) rejects Garrard and Glancy's allegations that Susanna's willingness to die reveals her fidelity to Joakim. According to her, "Susanna's total fidelity is to the law of Israel, not to her husband". Arguments between Garrard and Glancy, on one hand, and Levine on the other, clearly indicate that Susanna has her own quest in the narrative. Striving to remain faithful to the Law or to her husband are quests. Consequently, Susanna is a subject.

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Moreover, being subject or object does not exclude each other. An actant can assume different actantial functions in a narrative (cf. Vance, 1989:103). In *Susanna*, for example, the elders are dual subjects but they are also opponents. God is the addresser but he is also Susanna's helper. Susanna and the elders are subjects in the narrative with different objects. The elders are anti-subject to Susanna (opposing her quest, her chastity) and Susanna is anti-subject to the elders (opposing their sexual perversion).

The presence of opposing subjects is frequent in Biblical stories (1 Samuel 17). In David and Goliath's story for example, David and Goliath are two subjects with two opposing quests (cf. 2.5.1.1). The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife constitutes another good example. Potiphar's is a subject. Her object of quest is Joseph. Joseph is not only object, he is also a subject. His quest is not to sin against God.

C. HELPERS AND OPPONENTS

In the story, some actants contribute to help Susanna to succeed in keeping the Law, while others attempt to counter her enterprise. Susanna's determination to remain faithful to the Law encounters the resistance of the elders. The elders, as collective anti-subject, are the opponents. The elders' opposition is very sophisticated. Their position as elders and judges, and their gender coupled with their number make their opposition for Susanna complicated to overcome.

They are elders and in the traditions of the Second Temple period, particularly in *Ben Sira* (cf. 3.2), they are believed to be champions of the Law. Consequently, their allegiance to the Law is traditionally unquestionable. As judges, they can manipulate the judicial system, protect themselves and condemn or acquit whomever they wished. As a dual actant, their joint witness, be it true or false, is difficult to unmask. In fact, as said formerly, according to the regulation of the Law, two witnesses were enough to condemn someone to death.

It is not only impossible for Susanna to overcome their opposition, but also for the Jewish community to unmask their lawlessness. Implicitly, the story indicates that their action was beyond

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human understanding or cross-examination. In verse 45, Daniel interprets the Jews' unanimous adhesion to Susanna's sentence to death as a result of a collective delusive spell. In fact, Daniel declares: "Οὕτως μωροί, οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ; οὐκ ἀνακρίναντες οὐδὲ τὸ σαφὲς ἐπιγνόντες κατεκρίνατε θυγατέρα Ἰσραηλ⁴⁶".

His contention is that Jews did not examine Susanna's case closely because they were deluded. The word μωρός and its cognate μωραίνω, in the LXX, refer to acting foolishly as result of demonic influence (Bertram, 2000, 4:835), as in 2 Samuel 24.

The use of μωρός here suggests that the author implies that the action of the elders was beyond men's capacity. Only God's intervention could unmask the mystery. However, to a spiritual delusion corresponds a spiritual counter action. For this reason, transcendent help was indispensable. The author uses μωρός to suggest that the elders' wickedness was not a normal natural manifestation of sexual appetite. They were raised up, empowered and sustained by a deluding spiritual power. No wonder the story says that their wickedness came from Babylon (5). Babylon symbolised evil (cf. 3.1.1.2). The author suggests that the spiritual power behind Babylon intended to wipe up the uniqueness and distinction of God's people. To sustain the action of the elders, Babylon blinded Jews so that the cleverest of them was not able to unmask their evil manoeuvre. Only God is able to counter the action behind the elders. He intervenes by sending the spirit of Daniel to unmask not only the elders' wickedness but above all to counter Babylon's enterprise. Susanna succeeds in her challenge not because of Daniel's wisdom, but because she represented the ideal of Jewishness revealed by God to Jews.

God is at the same time the addresser, the initiator of Susanna's action, and He is also her helper. Daniel is a delegate helper. As in many Biblical stories, God does not act directly. He generally

⁴⁶ Are you so deluded, sons of Israel? Having neither investigated carefully nor knowing the plain truth have you condemn you have condemned a daughter of Israel.

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uses the most insignificant beings, things, events or circumstances to champion his cause. The actorialisation of Daniel as παιδαρίου νεωτέρου (mere child) (45) elucidates the point. Success does not lie in his capability, but depends on God's inspiration (cf. 3.1.). In fact, as Gruen (2002:172) declares, "Daniel convicts the elders even before questioning them and declares the first to be a lascivious perjurer even though his story had yet to be contradicted".

This section was concerned with the actantial model of *Susanna*. It was revealed from the distribution of actantial roles that Susanna had a dual actantial configuration. It had two quests. The main quest was the preservation of the Law. Susanna was the subject of this main quest. A second quest is exemplified by the elders' pursuit of wickedness. God was the addresser, the initiator of Susanna's quest. On the other hand, Babylon plays an important role in inspiring wickedness to the elders. Unmistakably, the elders act as the enemies of the Jewish identity. Susanna's is prepared to counter their action. Her liberating process constitutes the narrative syntax discussed below.

4.1.3 THE NARRATIVE SYNTAX

This third section focuses on the journey of Susanna in the narrative. It considers the narrative programme of the story, the canonical narrative schema and the encounter of the subjects in Susanna.

4.1.3.1 The Narrative Programme

The narrative programme of *Susanna* is "the representation of syntactical relationships and their transformation on the surface (narrative) level of the utterance" (Martin & Ringham, 2000:91). In other words, the narrative programme is a representation of actions in the story. The narrative programme is a series of actions related to the way Susanna transforms her initial state (disjunctive condition: without honour) into her final state (conjunctive condition: with honour). In this process Susanna goes from blame to commendation, exclusion to inclusion and from negation to recognition of her Jewishness.

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4.1.3.2. The Canonical Narrative Schema

The main narrative programme of *Susanna* highlights the quest of the story. The canonical narrative schema gives detailed steps of the evolution of Susanna in the narrative. It consists of four steps namely the contract, the acquisition of competence, the performance and the sanction. The distinction between these four steps in terms of when exactly each starts or ends is not to be considered as clearly indicated in the story.

The contract examines the manipulative action of God that leads Susanna to accept her mission, to long for the Law and get totally committed to it even to the cost her life. It depends on the modalities of *vouloir faire* and/or *devoir faire* (desire and/or duty). The acquisition of competence investigates Susanna's gaining of ability that enables her to achieve her goal. These capabilities are modalities of *pouvoir faire* and/or *savoir-faire* (being able to do and/or knowing how to do). The performance will deal with the carrying out of her mission in terms of *être* and/or *faire* (being and/or doing). The sanction consists in the recognition of her achievement in terms of praise.

Her mission consists of being totally committed to the Law with ensuing consequences such as saving her community from wickedness and, indirectly, of reversing the dominant view of women of the Second Temple period exemplified in the wisdom of Ben Sira. This negative view of women appears as strange to traditions of Israel. In fact, according to Camp (1991:5),

[N]owhere, in the Hebrew Bible is there the concentration of shame vocabulary that occurs in Ben Sira. Further, nowhere in that canon (except perhaps in Ezekiel) is there the virulent attack on women that occurs here: not only against traditionally "evil" women (harlots) but also against one's wife and daughters.

According to this view, women were more sexually wicked than men. Trenchard (1982:172) is of the opinion that Ben Sira "makes remarks about women that are among the most obscene and negative in ancient literature". Though Di Lella (1984:334) finds Trenchard's conclusion as "flawed ...

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by his pervading bias against Ben Sira”, he finally agrees that Ben Sira’s view of women was “misogynistic” but imputes his negative view to the patriarchal society of his time, thus a trait of the Second Temple period (Di Lella 1984:333-334).

It is this cynical view of women of the Second Temple period that *Susanna* reverses completely in the following canonical narrative schema. This section discusses these four stages of Susanna’s quest in detail, starting with the contract.

A. The contract

The contract describes the moment when Susanna becomes aware of the importance of the Law. It also highlights people, things, circumstances or events that contributed to her awareness. In the story, Susanna knows the Law from the teaching of her parents (2-3). From then on, she is described as “φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον” (fearing the Lord) which denotes an enduring attribute (cf 3.1.2). The teaching of the Law is certainly the most significant moment in Susanna’s life, whereas her denial of the elders may be described as the most influential moment in her life. That was the moment when she decided to stay true to God instead of succumbing to the elders’ advances.

The narrative gives an account of a prophetic utterance (5). In this prophetic communication, the Lord says sexual perversion has come from Babylon, from the newly elected elders and judges. This verse exposes the central concern of *Susanna* (cf. Chapter 2). No doubt, God’s communication has as objective to attract the attention of Jews. Semiotically speaking, God (the addresser) exerts a *persuasive doing* on Jews (the addressee) to engage them in the battle for the preservation of the Law.

In the semiotic approach, such a communication, intended to cause people to act, is a *manipulation*. Manipulation is central to the contract. Without the manipulative action of the addresser, there is no contract. The contract here is the unfailing commitment to the Law that makes Susanna even able to accept death rather than wickedness.

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In some Biblical stories, God speaks directly to an individual and gives him a mission to accomplish. Exodus 3:7-10 (according to the LXX), for example, says that:

⁷ εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν Ἰδὼν εἶδον τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου τοῦ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ τῆς κραυγῆς αὐτῶν ἀκήκοα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν, οἶδα γὰρ τὴν ὀδύνην αὐτῶν, ⁸ καὶ κατέβην ἐξελέσθαι 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, εἰς τὸν τόπον τῶν Χαναναίων καὶ Χετταίων καὶ Αμορραίων καὶ Φερεζαίων καὶ Γεργεσαίων καὶ Ευαίων καὶ Ιεβουσαίων. ⁹ καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ κραυγὴ τῶν υἱῶν Ισραὴλ ἦκει πρὸς με, κάγω ἐώρακα τὸν θλιμμόν, ὃν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι θλίβουσι αὐτούς. ¹⁰ καὶ νῦν δεῦρο ἀποστείλω σε πρὸς Φαραῶ βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἐξάξεις τὸν λαόν μου τοὺς υἱοὺς Ισραὴλ ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου⁴⁷

In the above text, God directly commissions Moses. The contract there is *explicit*. In fact, in verse 10 God's command to Moses is clear "δεῦρο ἀποστείλω σε" (go, I will send you). The contract is not only explicit but also *injunctive*, *unilateral* and *coercive*. God does not ask for Moses' consent, he has to obey. This kind of contract is not unique in the Bible. Stories of Abraham (Genesis 12) and Gideon (Judges 6) are other examples. It is based on *devoir faire* (duty) rather than on *vouloir faire* (desire).

The contract in *Susanna* is of another type. It focuses primarily on the desire of the addressee to accomplish a mission rather than on duty. In most cases, this kind of contract is implicit. God does not entrust an individual directly with a mission. It is not always easy to see exactly when the

⁴⁷ The Lord says to Moses 'I have indeed seen the suffering of my people in Egypt and I heard their cry because of their supervisors because I know their pain. Now I have come down to set them free from the power (hand) of the Egyptians and to lead them out of this country and to lead them in a beautiful and great country, in a country where overflow milk and honey, in the earth of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. And now behold the cry of the sons of has come to me and I have seen the affliction which the Egyptian cause them. Now go, I will send you to Parah and you will lead out of the land of Egypt, my people, the sons of Israel (NTIV).

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addresser gives the subject a mission. Susanna is not unique in this respect. The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) is another good illustration of this kind of contract. Nowhere is there a statement that the Lord sent David to fight Goliath. In 1 Samuel 17 verses 34-37, David explains why he is so confident to confront Goliath. According to this text:

34 καὶ εἶπεν Δαυιδ πρὸς Σαουλ Ποιμαίνων ἦν ὁ δοῦλός σου τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ποιμνίῳ, καὶ ὅταν ἤρχετο ὁ λέων καὶ ἡ ἄρκος καὶ ἐλάμβανεν πρόβατον ἐκ τῆς ἀγέλης, 35 καὶ ἐξεπορευόμεν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπάταξα αὐτὸν καὶ ἐξέσπασα ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰ ἐπανίστατο ἐπ' ἐμέ, καὶ ἐκράτησα τοῦ φάρυγγος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπάταξα καὶ ἐθανάτωσα αὐτόν, 36 καὶ τὴν ἄρκον ἔτυπεν ὁ δοῦλός σου καὶ τὸν λέοντα, καὶ ἔσται ὁ ἀλλόφυλος ὁ ἀπερίτμητος ὡς ἐν τούτων, οὐχὶ πορεύσομαι καὶ πατάξω αὐτὸν καὶ ἀφελῶ σήμερον ὄνειδος ἐξ Ἰσραηλ; διότι τίς ὁ ἀπερίτμητος οὗτος, ὃς ὠνειδισεν παράταξιν θεοῦ ζώντος; 37 κύριος, ὃς ἐξείλατό με ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ λέοντος καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς τῆς ἄρκου, αὐτὸς ἐξελεῖταί με ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀλλοφύλου τοῦ ἀπεριτμήτου τούτου. καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ πρὸς Δαυιδ Πορευέου, καὶ ἔσται κύριος μετὰ σοῦ⁴⁸.

David justifies his determination to confront Goliath by his past experiences. According to him, God gave him victory over lions and bears. He is fascinated by his experiences with God. He compares Israel with his father's flock and Goliath with beasts. In his reasoning, God gave him the might to defend his father's flock when threatened by a beast. Israel is the army of the Lord, and therefore more important than his father's flock. Israel is threatened by Goliath, an uncircumcised, a beast. No doubt the Lord will give him the power to kill Goliath.

⁴⁸ ³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you". (NIV)

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Apparently, God does not send David. However, there is no doubt here that David's motivation rests upon God's power. His prior knowledge/experience of God acts on him as kind of magical spell. This kind of influence is called contract by seduction as said formerly. Seduction here does not have a negative connotation. It is a technical word in semiotics to refer to an influence that pushes someone to act.

The contract in *Susanna* resembles the story of David and Goliath to a certain extent. The difference is only that, in *David and Goliath*, God does not speak, but in *Susanna* he does. God's speech in *Susanna* is not directly sent to Susanna but to all Jews, men and women. Another Jew could have acted in Susanna's place. In fact, as said formerly, she was not the only woman to have been the target of the elders. The unnamed daughters of Israel could have acted in Susanna's place, but they do not. Like Susanna, they hear the advice from the Lord that wickedness comes from Babylon and is embodied in the the elected elders. As said above, women were the first target of wickedness and therefore only women could contribute to its eradication.

In the story of David and Goliath, any man was supposed to respond to Goliath's challenge. In fact God didn't appoint anybody to face Goliath. However, there is no way of concluding that God was an uninterested party in the proceedings.

In all these stories the knowledge of God and the Law of Moses constitute the main reasons for the subject to undertake his/her mission. David gets involved in the struggle against Goliath on the basis of his knowledge of the capability of God and the uniqueness of his people. Judith confronts Holofernes on the same basis. God causes them to act, *faire faire* (causing to act). On the semiotic square, *faire faire* reveals four aspects of manipulative actions that are *intervention*, *non-intervention*, *obstruction* and *laisser faire*. The action of the addresser on the addressee can consist of one of these four aspects of manipulation.

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In *Susanna*, God's manipulation is indirect. There is no *intervention* and no *obstruction*. *Manipulation*, in *Susanna*, consists of *laisser faire* (not causing not to do). In this kind of causative model, as Kroeger (2004:207) contends, "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". In general, *laisser faire* can be assimilated to permission though the two are not exactly the same.

Susanna's engagement to resist wickedness starts with her learning of the Law from her parents. Her knowledge of the Law produced the fear of the Lord. The second stage is the prophetic word of the Lord mentioned in verse 5. This prophetic utterance didn't concern only Susanna, but all the Jews. Being beautiful and a God-fearing woman, she was at the same time the object of the elders' lust and the subject in pursuit of the Law. She was more involved in the programme of the narrative than any other Jew, man or woman.

Susanna is aware of the elders' wickedness because God speaks about them in verse 5. In fact, there is no reason to believe that the prophetic utterance of verse 5 is intended to warn men only. The Lord spoke to the Jewish community at large, not only to men. Moreover, Susanna's plea that God knows everything before their genesis (42) is certainly an allusion to this prophecy. There is no indication that she feels she has a mission to save her community. Like David, she finds herself on the battlefield and because she is already aware of the elders' wickedness, she can help resist them with her knowledge of the Law and the Lord.

In brief, in *Susanna*, the contract is established between God and Susanna first by her education according to the Law. The teaching of the Law produced the fear of the Lord in Susanna. The fear of the Lord became a kind of natural duty, a *devoir faire* (having to do). The second stage of the contract corresponds to the prophetic utterance from the Lord (5). This utterance helps Susanna to kindle her fear of the Lord. It moves her from duty to desire *vouloir faire* (wanting to do). She moves from the state of addressee to a virtual subject. She is now ready to resist any kind of wickedness

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and thus reverses the established negative view of women. At this stage, Susanna is a virtualized subject.

Susanna's moving out every day towards the garden (paradise) reveals her unconventionality (cf. Chapter 3). In fact, Susanna knows that the elders are sexually wicked because of the prophetic utterance of the Lord (5). In fact, as said above, the prophetic utterance is intended to warn Jews. Therefore, there is no reason to suppose that only men were the recipients of God communication. Besides, Susanna is just too much involved in religion. Such an utterance certainly merits her attention.

Going out regularly, particularly in the garden (paradise), implied being a wicked woman, i.e. a whore. According to the semiotic approach, all these going out here were part of God's manipulation. In other words, He knew the consequences of her going out. He did not stop her and that is *laisser faire* (not causing not to do) because he wanted the confrontation to take place. In fact, according to *Susanna*, God is omniscient and prescient. Therefore, He knew the outcome of the confrontation, namely Susanna's victory over wickedness.

B. The acquisition of competence

The contract examined the awakening of Susanna as to become a potential subject to fight wickedness and prove that women are not wicked. Her virtualisation happens as a result of the teaching of the Law that produces the fear of the Lord (duty), and the prophetic utterance that moves her from duty to desire to get ready to engage in battle against wickedness.

At this second step, however, Susanna needs more than just virtualising modalities [(*devoir faire*) (duty) and/or *vouloir faire* (desire)]. She must be in possession of actualising modalities to enable her to achieve her mission successfully. In other words, duty and desire were not sufficient to accomplish her mission.

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Two modalities play an important role in this respect: *pouvoir faire* (being able to do: power) and/or *savoir faire* (knowing how to do: skill). In other words, the interest here is to know what made Susanna able to resist the wicked and thus free her community from wickedness. Her irresistible beauty, her knowledge of the Law (fear of the Lord), her unfailing trust in the Lord and her appeal to Him in prayer emerge from the story as the *sine qua non* of her success. These attributes help her to resist and expose the elders' wickedness. This section considers each of them briefly.

Susanna's beauty is an innate capacity. As said formerly (Chapter 3), beauty as an actualising attribute plays a determining role also in *Esther* and *Judith*. In these two stories, beauty serves as a key to the heroine to enter the high spheres of authority and avert physical destruction facing her people. In all three cases, Jews risk destruction because of their attachment to God and the Law (their Jewishness).

In the *Additions to Esther* for example, Jews are described as “δυσμενῆ λαόν τινα τοῖς νόμοις ἀντίθετον πρὸς πᾶν ἔθνος” (a certain full of ill-will people standing in opposition to every nation by its laws) (LXX, Addition B, verse 13^d). The allusion to ἔθνος (nation as ethnic entity with its distinctiveness) (cf. Bertram & Schmidt, 2000, 2:364-372) and τοῖς νόμοις reveals that Jewish identity is the major concern in the story.

The same conclusion emerges from the story of Judith. Achior's discourse (Judith 5) about the Jews centres on their relation to God based on the Covenant. His conclusion (Judith 5:21) is that if “wickedness is not found in their nation” (εἰ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνομία ἐν τῷ ἔθνει αὐτῶν), the Jews will not be conquered. Here again Law and ethnicity (identity) are put together.

In both *Esther* and *Judith*, beauty is the central power that preserves Jewishness. In a similar manner, beauty is one of the capacities that help Susanna to reinstate the Law, preserve Jewish identity and prove that women are not more wicked than men. Esther, Judith and Susanna's beauty does not constitute a menace to the Law *per se* (cf. Chapter 3).

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Beauty, either in Susanna or in Judith and Esther, becomes a source of deliverance only when it is exposed. To be exposed, Susanna must move out unveiled. Beauty constitutes a deadly threat only to the anti-Law and non-Jews. No true Jew, committed to the Law, is trapped by Susanna's beauty here. Contrary to this view, some scholars consider Susanna's beauty as the origin of the elders' fall. Bal (quoted by Levine, 2004:313) is of the opinion that "it was because Susanna exposed herself unknowingly that they (the elders) became inflamed".

This reading of the story, which sees Susanna's beauty as source of the elders' misfortune, does not take into account the ideology of the text. This happens generally with readings of *Susanna* focussing on the bathing scene. There is no doubt that the majority of works on Susanna have this view. On the contrary, if one takes verse 5 as point of departure, then such arbitrary conclusions lack support from the text. According to verse 5, καὶ ἀπεδείχθησαν δύο πρεσβύτεροι ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ κριταὶ ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ ἐκείνῳ, περὶ ὧν ἐλάλησεν ὁ δεσπότης ὅτι Ἐξήλθεν ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἐκ πρεσβυτέρων κριτῶν, οἱ ἐδόκουν κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν.⁴⁹

In this verse, the elders' wickedness is presented as a menace to the community even before Susanna's moving outside. Jumping directly to the bathing scene without considering verse 5 is a glaring bias.

Nowhere in the story does Susanna's beauty emerge as a threat to the community. Apart from the two elders (Canaanites), no Jew succumbs to Susanna's supposed seduction. Verse 27 reveals that Joakim's servants never heard of any misconduct by Susanna.

On the contrary, the story reports the elders' raping, by intimidation, the daughters of Israel (57). Nowhere in *Susanna* is there an indication that those daughters of Israel were victims of rape

⁴⁹ And two elders were elected judges by people. In that year, concerning them the Lord that wickedness has come from Babylon, from the elders judges, who appeared to lead people.

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because of having seduced the elders. There is no doubt that the story uses them as Susanna's foils. Unfortunately, those daughters of Israel are generally left out in interpretations of *Susanna*.

In brief, Susanna's beauty does not emerge as negative attribute in the story. No male member of the Jewish community, apart from the elders, feels threatened by Susanna. The Lord accentuates the elders' wickedness, but Susanna's going outside does not concern Him. On the contrary, as said formerly, Susanna's exposition of beauty is an aspect of God's manipulation in terms of *laissez faire* (not causing not to do). Beauty is an integral part of Susanna's equipment in her liberating journey. The only obstacles in her way are the two elders because of their being seed of Canaan. In fact, according to the story, they are not true Jews.

The second actualising capability of Susanna is her fear of the Lord. She considers the allegiance to the Law more important than her life. With this as a driving force, the elders' intimidation and threats to kill could not succeed in bending Susanna's determination. It is important to notice that the daughters of Israel failed to resist because of their fearing death (57). They were not equipped to die for the Law.

Nonetheless, for some scholars, the determination to die for the Law constitutes Susanna's weakness rather than her strength. Glancy (2004:295) is of the opinion that:

Readers can recognize Susanna's courage and still reject her moral code, which implies that the preservation of women as intact property is more important than the preservation of women lives. According to this ideology Susanna's choice preserves the real (though not the perceived) integrity of Joachim's household; she will remain unpenetrated by any other men.

Gruen (2002:172) also shares Glancy's view. According to him, Susanna's "choice of death over adultery reconfirms the conventional morality imposed by a patriarchal society rather than questioning its ethical basis".

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It is obvious that, according to Glancy, having sex with the elders in order to preserve her life would have been better for Susanna than to accept dying for the Law. Dying for her chastity would do nothing more than to prove that she was Joakim's property.

Glancy's view is very controversial. Even feminists disagree with her. Haag (1994:238) for example, contends that:

Susanna, by refusing to submit the will of social respectable men of ruling class, counteracts the silent submission to male force ranging from petting and molesting in offices to incest, seen by some as an established right. She acts as a human being when others intend to use her as an object.

Glancy's view is questionable for a number of reasons. Firstly, Glancy does not take into account the religious character of the story. She views Susanna's refusal of sexual intercourse only in terms of allegiance to her husband, irrespective to the clear declaration of the story. Levine makes a convincing case against Glancy's view. According to Levine (2004:312-313; cf. note 5), "Susanna's total fidelity is to the Law of Israel, not to her husband. Her cry in the garden concerns 'sin' (23), not marital honor".

Secondly, Glancy does not even take into account the relation between *Susanna* (23) and Genesis 39:9. A comparison between "ἀμαρτεῖν ἐνώπιον κυρίου"⁵⁰ and "ἀμαρτήσομαι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ;"⁵¹ reveals a perfect correspondence between the two texts. The first text, as said above, depends on the second. To pretend that Susanna acted out of duty to her husband, but Joseph did it out of duty to God, is a sexist bias.

⁵⁰ to sin in the sight of the Lord

⁵¹ will I sin in the sight of God?

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Thirdly, Glancy's view assumes that apart from marriage, women have no higher ideal worth dying for. Susanna's rejection of the elders' proposition emerges as her affirmation of her freedom. In many societies, freedom is considered worth dying for.

The third actualising capacity of Susanna is her unfailing trust in the Lord. Her trust emerges from the story through the verbs πείθω (to be convinced) (35) and ἐλπίζω (to trust) (60). There is evidence from the story, and also from Jewish traditions, suggesting that Susanna knows that the Lord always intervenes to save those who remain faithful to the Law, namely those who trust Him. In fact, after God's intervention on her behalf, the story (verse 60) recounts that "καὶ ἀνεβόησεν πᾶσα ἡ συναγωγή φωνῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ εὐλόγησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ σώζοντι τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπ' αὐτόν"⁵².

It is important to notice from this verse that God's intervention on behalf of those who trust Him is expressed here as an axiomatic truth. It is presented as a general truth in Israel. ἐλπίζοντας is a participle used ascriptively. According to Dana and Mantey (1927:224-225), in the ascriptive use "the participle ascribes some fact, quality, or characteristic directly to the substantive, or denotes the substantive as belonging to a general class". In this use it can be attributive, predicate or substantive (Dana & Mantey, 1927:224). Here it is used substantively.

The phrase τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπ' αὐτόν (those who trust Him) thus denotes a class of Jews, including men and women, having as general characteristic their trust in God. Here it is used in the context of Susanna's salvation from death. Its use in this context implies that God's salvation is not discriminatory. It does not depend on gender. God is not a sexist. In addition, God's intervention in favour of those trusting him is presented as an unfailing truth. This can be observed in the use of σώζοντι (present participle of σώζω) which is a customary present. Dana and Mantey (1927:183) say the following about such a use:

⁵² And all the assembly cried loudly and praised the Lord who saves those who trust him

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The present tense may be used to denote that which habitually occurs, or may be reasonably expected to occur. In this use, the temporal element is remote, even in the indicative, since the act or state is assumed true in the past or future, as well as the present.

The use of the present tense here proves that the community believed that God always intervenes in favour of those trusting him, those sticking to the Law. This interpretation has its precedents in Jewish traditions. In many Biblical texts, God's salvation (expressed by σώζω or its cognate such as σωτηρία (salvation) (cf. e.g. Ps 7:2; 41:6, 12; 42:5; 43:7; 85:2), its synonyms such as ρύομαι and cognates (cf. e.g. Ps 7:2; 21:5, 9; 36:40; 90:14; 113:17, 18) and βοηθέω and cognates (cf. e.g. Ps 27:7; 36:40; 61:9; 113:17, 18) is closely linked with trusting Him (ἐλπίζω). This association is not accidental. It reveals that the belief that God unfailingly intervenes in favour of those trusting Him was an established truth in Jewish traditions.

Most importantly, *Susanna* (60) has an intertextual connection with *Daniel* 3:38. The later text reads as follows:

ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ναβουχοδονοσορ ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπεν Εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Σεδραχ, Μισαχ, Αβδεναγω, ὃς ἀπέστειλε τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσωσε τοὺς παῖδας αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἐλπίσαντας ἐπ' αὐτόν, τὴν γὰρ προσταγὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἠθέτησαν καὶ παρέδωκαν τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν εἰς ἔμπυρισμόν, ἵνα μὴ λατρεύσωσι μηδὲ προσκυνήσωσι θεῷ ἑτέρῳ ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ θεῷ αὐτῶν⁵³

In both stories, a Jew refuses to comply with the demand of the ruling authority because it is contrary to his/her allegiance to the Law (*Daniel* 3:13-18; *Susanna* 23). She/he is sentenced to death (*Daniel* 3:19-23; *Susanna* 41). God sends a helper to prevent him/her from dying (*Daniel*

⁵³ Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God (TNIV).

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3:49-50; Susanna 45-50). God is praised for his intervention on behalf of the Jew (Daniel 3:28; Susanna 60).

Semantically, the two also correspond perfectly. In both passages one finds similar words such as εὐλογέω/εὐλογητός (Daniel 3:28; Susanna 60), σώζω (Daniel 3:28; Susanna 60) and ἐλπίζω ἐπ' αὐτόν (Daniel 3:28; Susanna 60).

As said above, verse 60 reveals that Jews in the story believe that God always intervenes in favour of those who trust Him. Susanna's prayer reveals that she knows the traditions of her people. Consequently, there is no doubt that she knows that God will intervene to nullify her death sentence. The assurance of God's intervention helps Susanna to brave the elders' intimidation to death.

Last, but not least, of Susanna's capabilities is her prayer. Susanna's prayer plays a central role in her achievement. Her fear of the Lord helped her to resist wickedness without compromising. Her unbending trust helps her to wait for the unfailing help from the Lord.

However, without the Lord's intervention, which resulted from prayer, Susanna's beauty, her fear of the Lord and her trust in Him could not have amounted to anything. Consequently, the end of the narrative could read as a disaster. Susanna's death could mean the end of Jewish distinctiveness. Susanna's prayer and her cry emerge as her *savoir-faire* (knowing how to do).

Some scholars, including Gruen, see no optimism in Susanna's prayer. Gruen (2002:171-172) contends that:

Susanna fails to qualify as a paragon of virtue. Her faith in the Lord falls short of unequivocal. Though confident in the rectitude of her decision, she surprisingly holds out no hope of rescue. Once Susanna elected to stand trial, she was certain that death would follow. Even her prayer to the omniscient God who knows of her innocence expresses the readiness to die.

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According to this view, Susanna's prayer reveals her weakness rather than her strength. Glancy here offers an alternative view of Susanna's prayer. According to Glancy (2004:3002), Susanna's "prayer, on one level an illustrate manifestation of piety, shapes the direction of the plot". In a similar manner, Harrington (1999:116) considers Susanna's prayer as "the great turning point in the story". Whatever position one takes, Susanna's prayer constitutes one of her actualising modalities.

Beauty, the Law, trust in the Lord and prayer emerge as the driving forces behind her success. Beauty is innate. However, in view of the resemblance between *Susanna*, *Esther* and *Judith*, one can argue that God intensifies her beauty to trap the wicked (cf. Chapter 3). Prayer and trust stem from the teaching of the Lord. The performance consists in Susanna's use of beauty, her fear of the Lord and her trust in the Lord and prayer. The elements helped her to resist wickedness and indirectly, save her community from wickedness and prove that women were not as wicked as it was believed in the Second Temple period.

C. The performance

As Martin and Ringham (2002:100) declare, "the term performance designates the principal action of the subject, the event to which the story has been leading. It is by carrying out the performance that the subject acquires (or fails to acquire) the object of value". At this step, the subject uses his/her power skills to achieve his/her mission. Here, Susanna uses the abilities discussed above to achieve her mission.

In some stories, the performance is instantaneous while in others, it happens progressively. In the David and Goliath story for example it happened instantaneously that David killed Goliath. In the story of the Exodus, it took time for Moses and Aaron to get Jews out of Egypt.

Susanna's victory over wickedness and sexist prejudices happens in two steps: the garden episode (παράδεισος) (15-27) and the court episode (τὸ κριτήριον) (45-63). The two correspond

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respectively to the encounter of subjects and the transfer of the object of value, as will be revealed shortly. Both are important in *Susanna*.

Susanna's first and decisive step in achieving her mission is her encounter with the elders in the garden, (paradise). This setting is evocative (cf. Chapter 3). In fact, as has been stressed repeatedly, the concern of *Susanna* is wickedness, namely sexual perversion. As said in the preceding Chapter (cf. 3.1.1.1 & 3.1.1.2), paradise in the traditions of the Second Temple period in general, and in the wisdom of Ben Sira (3.1.1.2), evoked sin generally associated with Eve, the first woman. For this reason, women came to symbolise sin, specifically sexual perversion. The choice of a woman to resist wickedness in the paradise is not mere chance. It reveals the ideology of the author. The intention is likely to reverse the existing traditions in favour of women.

In fact, contrary to the above-mentioned traditions, Susanna enters the garden (paradise) not to seduce men, but to counter-act men's wickedness. This reversal sounds like the central concern of the story. It is important to notice that it is highly unlikely that a conventionally patriarchal-oriented Jew would have written such a reversing story. The author also does so deliberately.

Here, Susanna overcomes the elders' wickedness by her fear of the Lord and her knowledge of the Law. She gives proof that commitment to the Law was not beyond women's capacity. Susanna's cry (24) is meant to be in conformity with the Law. In fact, according to the regulation of the Law (Deuteronomy 22:23-27), when there is an attempted rape or seduction, the woman must cry out. In case she remains silent, she shares the responsibility of sin with the perpetrator. She will die with him. At this stage, Susanna has given proof of her innocence. Ben Sira's allegation (cf. 3.3.) that women are like a thirsty traveller in search of sexual intercourse, is dismissed. Furthermore, Susanna reverses the allegation that women must not go out alone. They always have to be under supervision of male guardians or at least, for the women of high class such as Susanna, in the company of their maids. Susanna is found alone in the garden, yet she acts responsibly; not as according to humans, but before the Lord.

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Susanna's rejection of the elders' advances, however, does not solve the problem of wickedness in the community. In fact, Susanna herself risks death. Her death could have had bad consequences for the community. The encounter of subjects necessarily implies the interruptions of some narrative programme. If the narrative ended with Susanna's death, the programme of preserving the Law championed by Susanna would have been destroyed.

Susanna's death could mean Israel ceases to be a distinctive people of God. Furthermore, the elders are free to do whatever they want to. No woman will try again to resist them. Her death could then be used as a dissuasive weapon to women trying to question the elders' behaviour and demand. The institutions of the Jewish community would be under their manipulation. It became impossible to discover their imposture and break their power. Susanna is brought to court under their false accusation.

At the first round of judgement, Susanna appears as the big loser. She is condemned to death but she remains silent. Her silence, however, is the expression of trust in the Lord (35), rather than weakness. Trust in the Lord, as said above, is one of her four capabilities [*savoir faire* (knowing how to do)]. Susanna is sentenced to death but rejects the decision of the court and has recourse to her last modal capability; she lodges an appeal to God and changes her own destiny and that of her nation.

It is here that God enters the scene to side with Susanna, no longer as a distant addresser, but directly involved as Helper. He causes a young man called Daniel to question the decision and reopen the investigation. The role of Daniel in the narrative is discussed at length in the third Chapter (cf. 3.1.1.1). Here, the focus is on his actantial function as a helper.

A helper can be an agent or an instrument. An agent can be a human being, a spiritual being such as an angel, or a demon (cf. story of Tobit). An instrument can be used either naturally or supernaturally. The nature of the helper depends on the problem the subject has to address. For

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example, Judith and Esther need to engage the attention of their partners. To address this concern, a stunning beauty must enter the play. In *David and Goliath* the challenge involves physical confrontation. Physical capacity is needed.

Susanna is a kind of detective story aimed at revealing hidden mystery. It resembles the explanation of the dreams of Pharaoh (Genesis 41) and those of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2) in a certain sense. Susanna's concern is beyond human capacity. Susanna and the elders know the truth. Susanna cannot give her version of truth, being a woman. The elders cannot tell the truth because they themselves risk a death sentence. Only God, the transcendent addresser, can disclose the mystery because he knows everything before their genesis.

However, God does not act unless Susanna knows how to involve him. Susanna does not involve Him until the conflict reaches the climax. It is here where Susanna chooses to appeal to her modal capability (cf. 2.5.2.1.B). This last modality depends totally on her *savoir-faire* (knowing how to do). Moore (1977:106) translates the last part of her prayer as follows: "you know that they framed me. Must I now die, being innocent of what they have so maliciously charged against me?" (43). According to Moore then, Susanna formulates her prayer not as an affirmation but as a rhetorical question. To such a question, the answer is "certainly not". This means Susanna's prayer expresses assurance rather than despair as some scholars tend to suggest (Gruen, 2002:172).

Daniel's intervention reveals God's intention to expose wickedness and dismiss all prejudices against women. In semiotic jargon it is a *faire-savoir* (causing to know). It is the moment of the transfer of the object of value and the interruption of the narrative programme of the elders. It is here where the elders are called seed of Canaan (anti Jew); and Susanna's identity emerged as daughter of Judah which is the epitome of Jewishness. The programme of wickedness championed by the elders was interrupted in favour of the maintenance of the Law of Moses, championed by Susanna, a woman.

D. The sanction

This last step of the canonical narrative schema focuses on the assessment of the mission of the subject. The sanction may be negative (blame) or positive (praise). It depends on what is accepted or rejected as good or bad values. Susanna's achievement is sanctioned by words of praise. Verses 60 and 63 read as follows:

⁶⁰ καὶ ἀνεβόησεν πᾶσα ἡ συναγωγὴ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ εὐλόγησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ σώζοντι τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας ἐπ' αὐτόν ... ⁶³ Χελκίας δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἤνεσαν τὸν θεὸν περὶ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῶν Σουσαννας μετὰ Ἰωακίμ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν πάντων, ὅτι οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα.⁵⁴

Normally, the sanction is the verdict of the addresser. He acts here as a subject adjudicator to acknowledge the accomplishment of the subject. In these verses, God does not speak. However, He is the object of praise from the Jews because of His intervention on behalf of Susanna. Indirectly, their praise reveals that Susanna's achievement was according to norms established by God, namely the Law of Moses. The most important verdict, in accordance with Susanna's mission is "ὅτι οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα" (because no shameful practice was found in her) (63). ἄσχημον (πρᾶγμα) appears in Genesis 34:7 and Deuteronomy 24:1 with a sexual connotation (BDAG, 2002:147). According to Moore (1977:113), οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα (no shameful practice was found in her) implies that "Susanna was not just found innocent of the act of adultery: her conduct was found above reproach, i.e. she had in no way encouraged the lecherous men or been responsible for their advances toward her".

⁵⁴ (⁶⁰) And the entire assembly cried with a loud voice and praised God who always saves those who trust Him ... (⁶³) As for Helkias and her wife they praised God about Susanna their daughter with Joakim her husband, together with their own relative because no shameful practice was found in her.

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It emerges from the sanction that the story makes a strong case against sexist prejudices according to which women were wicked and responsible for sexual perversion.

4.1.4 THE VERIDICTORY SQUARE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERSUASIVE TRUTH IN SUSANNA

The concern of storytellers in general, and *Susanna* in particular, is persuasion about truth and falsehood, i.e. veridiction. The production of truth corresponds to exercising a particular *cognitive doing* or a *causing to appear as true*. The purpose of such manipulation of truth is “causing to believe”. This technique of persuasion characterises Biblical stories in particular. In the story of Abram in Egypt (LXX, Genesis 12:10-20) for example, Abraham worries about his security and his well-being. Genesis 12:12-13 recounts Abraham’s words as follows:

ἐγένετο δὲ ἡνίκα ἤγγισεν Ἀβραμ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, εἶπεν Ἀβραμ Σαρα τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ Γινώσκω ἐγὼ ὅτι γυνὴ εὐπρόσωπος εἶ, ἔσται οὖν ὡς ἂν ἴδωσίν σε οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι, ἐροῦσιν ὅτι Γυνὴ αὐτοῦ αὕτη, καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσίν με, σὲ δὲ περιποιήσονται. εἶπὼν οὖν ὅτι Ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ εἰμι, ὅπως ἂν εὖ μοι γένηται διὰ σέ, καὶ ζήσεται ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕνεκεν σοῦ⁵⁵.

The ending of the story reveals that Abraham succeeded in his persuasive manoeuvre. He *caused* the Egyptians to *believe* that his story was *true*. The story of Joseph’s bothers *causing* their father to believe that “θηρίον πονηρὸν κατέφαγεν αὐτόν, θηρίον ἤρπασεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ”⁵⁶ (Genesis 37:33) is another example of *causing to appear as true*. Stories of Tamar and Judah (Genesis 38), Yael and Sisera (Judges 4:17-23) and Judith, to name a few, offer inspiring insights on technique of persuasion in Biblical stories in particular and most narratives in general.

Veridiction is particularly important in *Susanna*. As the story starts, unfolds and ends, veridictory modalities, *être* and *paraître* (*being* and *appearing*) of Susanna, the elders and even God constitute

⁵⁵ (12) When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.

⁵⁶ a bad beast has devoured him, a beast has carried off Joseph (Translated by Kanonge, 2009)

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the most influential mode of persuasion in the story. The end of verse 5 declares of the elders: “they seemed to guide people” (οἱ ἐδόκουν κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν). The verb δοκεῖν means *to seem* or *to appear* (cf. 3.2.2.2). The verb κυβερνάω is a metaphor. It originally meant to steer a ship. Later on it came to mean *to give a right direction* (Beyer, 2003:1035). Unfortunately, the elders do not provide a right direction here.

Δοκεῖν coupled with κυβερνᾶν means that the true nature of the elders, namely their wickedness, escaped notice of the people. Their illusive appearance weighs heavily in the judgement and condemnation of Susanna. In fact, verse 41 declares that “καὶ ἐπίστευσεν αὐτοῖς ἡ συναγωγή ὡς πρεσβυτέροις τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ κριταῖς καὶ κατέκριναν αὐτὴν ἀποθανεῖν” (Consequently, the assembly believed them as elders of the people and judges and condemned her [Susanna] to die).

Jews approve of Susanna’s condemnation only because her accusers are “elders and judges of people” (verse 41). The two elders use the reputation of their office to influence the outcome of the judgement. However, the intervention of Daniel helps to expose their lie (imposture) and reveal their true nature; they are the “seed of Canaan”.

On the other hand, Susanna, as a woman starts her journey under the assumption of wickedness. Her going outside gives the elders evidence for a convincing argument that she was preparing for a romantic rendezvous with a young man (νεανίσκος). Evidence seems to weigh heavily against her. Firstly, the presence of two witnesses is compelling enough, according to the Law, to condemn Susanna to death. According to Deuteronomy 17:6 “ἐπὶ δυσὶν μάρτυσιν ἢ ἐπὶ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθανεῖται ὁ ἀποθνήσκων, οὐκ ἀποθανεῖται ἐφ’ ἐνὶ μάρτυρι⁵⁷”. Secondly, the sending away of

⁵⁷ “On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness”.

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maids accentuates the illusion of truth narrated by the elders. Glancy (1996:78-79) argues as follows:

The elders tell Susanna that they will interpret the attendants' absence as a condition of her liaison with her lover. Implicit is the notion that the presence of female slaves guards a woman's honor. (This notion is elaborated in Joseph and Aseneth, where Aseneth's chamber is surrounded by the chambers of seven virgins — her slaves, with whom she has been raised.) Like the walls of the garden, Susanna's maids are part of a symbolic buffer between her and the rest of the city, a buffer that proves ineffectual against hostile intrusion.

It is evident from Glancy's argument that maids functioned as integral part of a mechanism of control in ancient societies to ensure women's chastity. Their dismissal by Susanna creates an impression that she really has something to hide, presumably her meeting with a young man.

In brief, in *Susanna*, the rhetorical strategy of communication moves from presumption to reality. The elders start their journey as honourable leaders (seeming or appear) but Daniel reveals their wickedness. Susanna starts hers under presumption of wickedness but after Daniel's judgement, Jewish people confirm her innocence. Based on *être* and *paraître* (being and appearing), the semiotic square illustrating the persuasive strategy of *Susanna*, has the following configuration:

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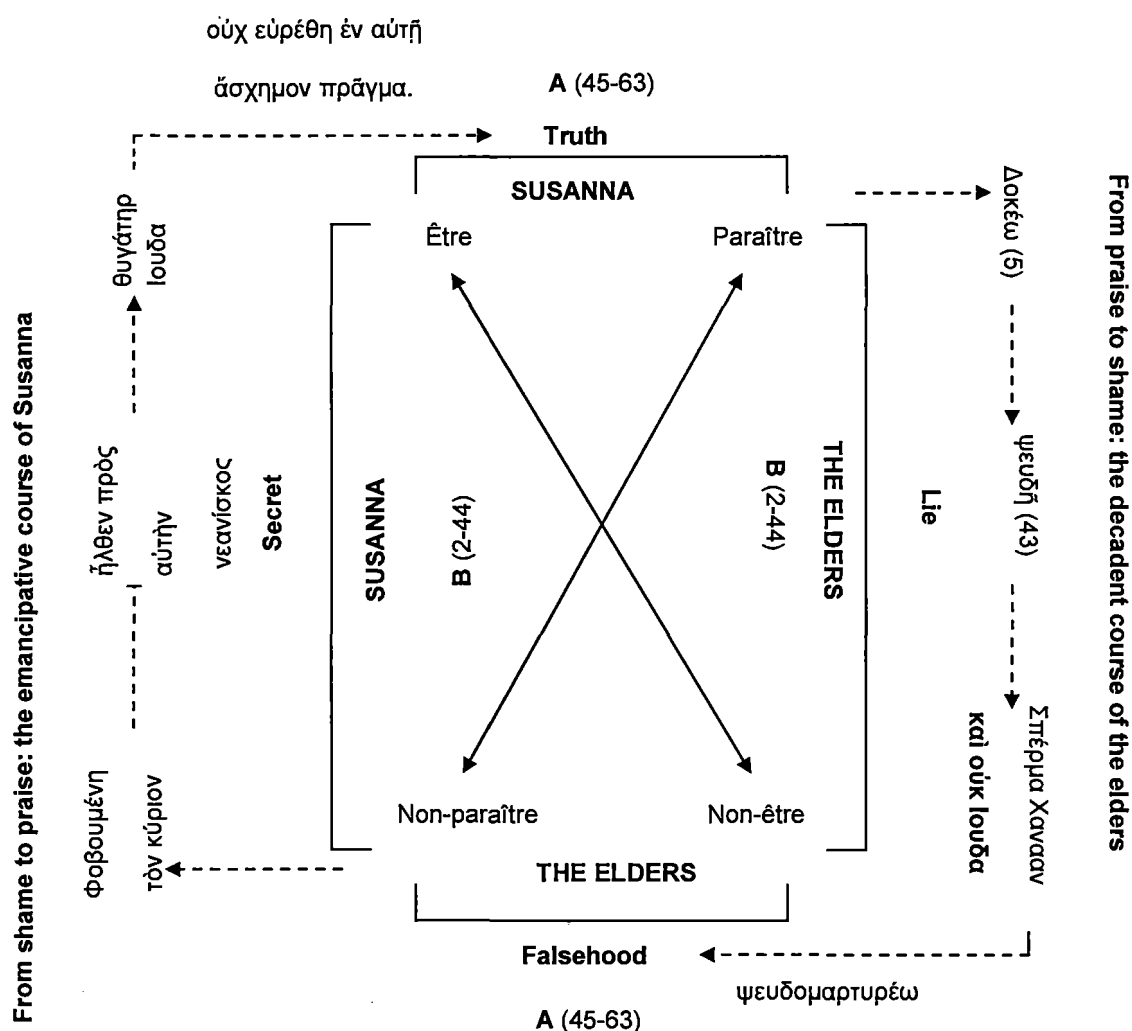


Figure 4.2. 1 The veridictory square underlying the persuasive strategy of *Susanna* based on *être* (being) and *paraître* (appearing)

The above schema illustrates the persuasive strategy of *Susanna*. This technique of communication does not aim at producing “objectively true” discourses, but efficiently persuasive discourses. The purpose of storytellers is not to produce the truth, but to construct the truth. The construction of persuasive truth may even comprise illusion. The creation of referential illusions serves to produce some effects of truth (Greimas & Courtès, 1979:418) and persuades people to act.

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Based on veridictory modalities of *être* (being) and *paraître* (appearing), the story has two main parts, A (2-44) and B (45-63). In the first part (2-44), the construction of truth about Susanna and the elders rests only on the appearances. Only the omniscient narrator and God, the transcendent addresser, knew the objective truth about Susanna and the elders.

The Jews' judgement of truth depends entirely on the *paraître* (appearance). Consequently, the elders' "make-believe" acts powerfully to deceive all the community. Susanna is displayed as appearing as a wicked woman, but this is not true. On other hand, the elders are wicked but they have the appearance of respectable leaders. In the first case, there is a secret. In the second, there is a lie or illusion. Unfortunately, this is based on the Jews' perception of truth.

In the second part (45-63), truth is based on *être* (being), the intrinsic nature of Susanna and the elders. This, however, can not happen without God's intervention. Only the addresser knows truth and falsehood. The consequence is that the community learns that established conventions might be misleading. Susanna's going outside is abhorred by the community, but it is not seen by God as against the Law. The elders represent the most respectable institution but they can be corrupted.

This section was devoted to the second step of the semiotic study of *Susanna*, namely the narrative analysis. The purpose here was to examine Susanna as discourse. The investigation focussed on the structure of the story focussing on the initial and final state, on the actantial model, canonical narrative schema and the veridictory square. Data from this second level of semiotic analysis proved without doubt that, at this stage, Susanna reverses sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the wisdom of *Ben Sira*.

This second level of analysis focused on the structure of the story, the distribution of actantial roles and the course of the subject in the narrative. The last step, the thematic level that is discussed below is aimed at tracking fundamental values that generated the story.

4.2 THE THEMATIC STEP OF ANALYSIS

The thematic step of analysis is the third stage of the investigation of *Susanna*, following the figurative and the narrative analyses. In the thematic analysis, the aim is to map out the core values that generated *Susanna*. The main device for investigating the thematic level is the semiotic square. This mechanism will serve first to classify values in *Susanna*, and second, to track their trajectory. Opposing values here will result from the two preceding steps of analysis.

4.2.1. THE OPPOSITION OF VALUES IN *SUSANNA*

The paradigmatic use of the semiotic square here depends on results from the figurative and the narrative steps of analysis of *Susanna*. Figurative oppositions from the figurative analysis of *Susanna* on one side and opposition of values incarnated by the object/anti-object, subject/anti-subject and addresser/anti-addresser on the other, reveal their importance here.

From the figurative and the narrative analyses, remarkable contrasts emerged between Susanna's side and the elders'. Main oppositions are summarised in Table 4.1. The table represents the opposition of values in *Susanna*. The first group of values depicts the attitude of Susanna and thus that of a true Jews' attitude towards the Law. The attitude of the individual towards the Law defines his attitude towards God, his faith. Opposition based on faith is established between the members of the community committed to the Law and trusting the Lord, and those rejecting the Law and distrusting the Lord.

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	SUSANNA	THE ELDERS
FAITH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ 3, 2. φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον 2, 3. πεποιθῦσα ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ 35, 4. ἀνέβλεψεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν 3, 5. ἀληθής (implied) 6. Καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς 7. Οὐρανὸς (God) <p>Commitment to the Law</p> <p>Trust the Lord</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. παράνομοι 32, 2. ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτῆς 8, 3. ἀνομία ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος 5, 4. τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν 9, 5. ψευδής 49 6. ἐπίστευσεν αὐτοῖς ἡ συναγωγὴ ὡς πρεσβυτέρους τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ κριταῖς 7. Βαβυλῶν (Evil) <p>Rejection of the Law</p> <p>Distrust the Lord</p>
ETHNICITY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ὄνομα Σουσαννα, 2. θυγάτηρ Χελκίου 2 3. θυγατέρα Ἰσραηλ, 4. θυγάτηρ Ἰουδα 48, 57 <p>Jewishness</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ἀνώνυμος (implied) 2. ἀγενεαλόγητος (implied) 3. οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ 4. Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδα 56 <p>Canaaniteness</p>

Table 4.1. Opposition of values in *Susanna*

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Opposing values, based on the commitment to the Law, from this first category, can stand on the semiotic square as follows:

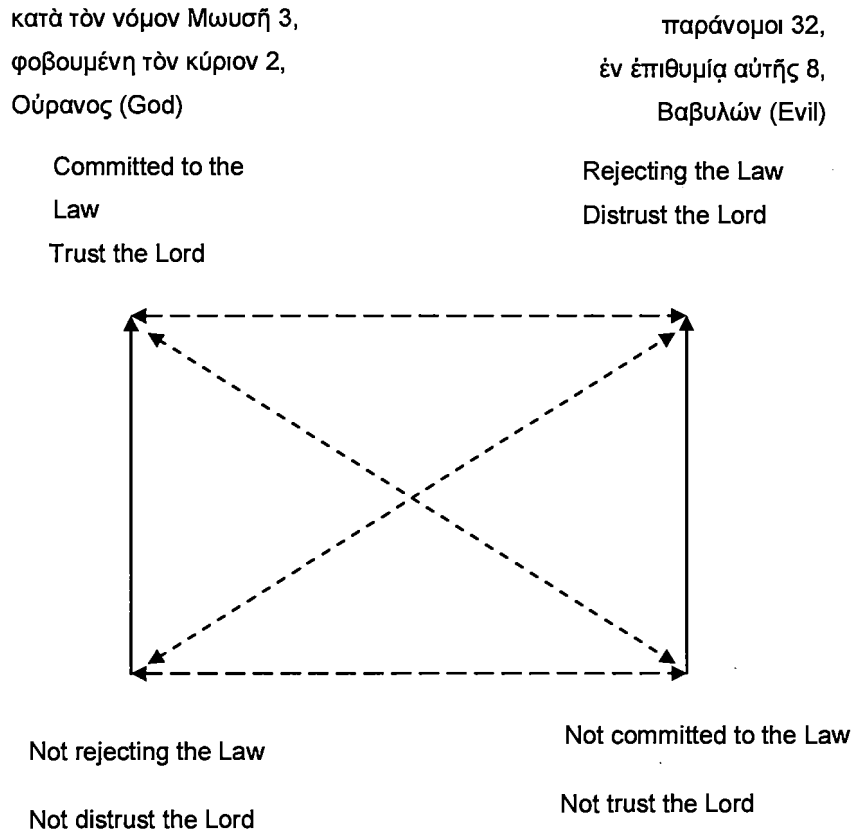


Figure 4.22 Semiotic square illustrating opposition of values in Susanna, based on faith

The second group of thematic values relate to ethnicity. It defines the place of the individual in the Jewish community as being a true Jew or not. These values depend on the former, commitment to the Law. In other words, being Jew or not, according to Susanna is not primarily a biological question, but a religious one. With regard to ethnicity, all members of the community are either true Jews with Susanna, θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (48, 57), or non Jews with the elders, Σπέρμα Χανααν (seed of Canaan) (56). Biologically, all members of the community are called Israelites. These two

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prominent tendencies among Israelites of the Babylonian community based on religious values can be placed on the semiotic square as follows:

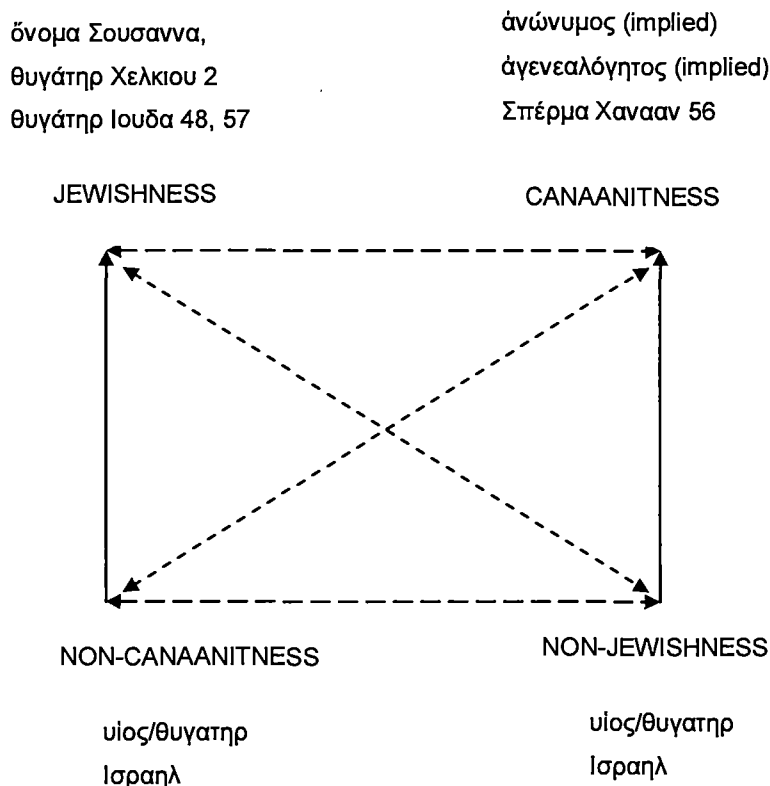


Figure 4.23. Semiotic square illustrating opposition of values in Susanna highlighting the ethnic identity (Jewishness)

According to data from *Susanna*, Jewish ethnicity depends on Jewish religion. As the above table reveals, it is impossible to reject the Law and to remain a true member of the Jewish community. Unexpectedly, the legal spokesperson of both true faith and true Jewishness is a laywoman, Susanna, depicted consequently as φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον (fearing the Lord) on one side and θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (daughter of Judah) on the other. However, the official representative of unbelief and non-Jewishness are two men and, in addition, two elders and judges, depicted as παράνομοι on one hand and Σπέρμα Χανααν (καὶ οὐκ Ιουδα) on the other.

The following semiotic square combines both Jewish ethnicity and Jewish faith.

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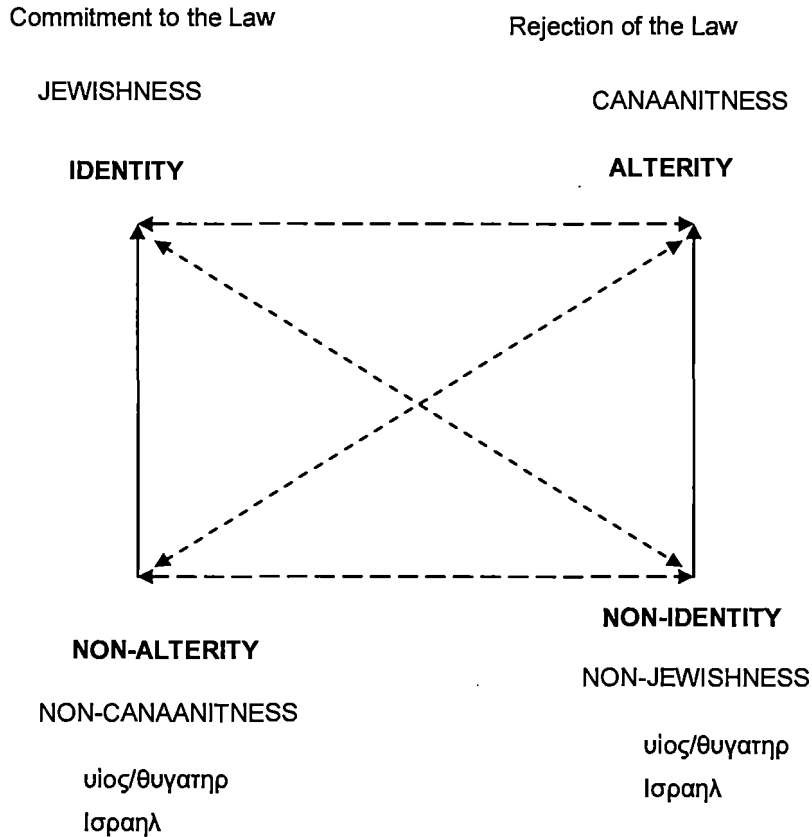


Figure 4.24. Semiotic square illustrating the opposition of values defining Jewish identity by the commitment to the Law

Susanna is evidently a discriminatory story. Discrimination here, however, is based exclusively on faith regardless of gender, age, social class or even genetics. Being a Jew here does not depend on being born in an Israeli family. Although there is no explicit statement that non-Israelites can be Jews, it is clear from the story that not every Israelite is a Jew. In other words, biological heritage does not mean being a true Jewish.

Structuring the story as to have a woman representing true faith, and thus true Jewishness in a dominated patriarchal context of the Second Temple period, cannot be without a gender agenda. Evidently, the story seeks to address gender discrimination in the Jewish community. According to the oppositions on this semiotic square, ethnicity is certainly the main issue. However, the centrality of a woman as a subject in the story reveals that the question of identity does not leave out the

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gender issue. The central concern of a story contrasting φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον (fearing the Lord) and θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (daughter of Judah) on one side with παράνομοι and Σπέρμα Χανααν (seed of Canaan) on the other is certainly the following: "Who is a true Jew?". To this question, data from the text allows an unequivocal answer: "Neither exclusively a man nor a woman, but a person male or female adhering to the law". It is clear from this conclusion that *Susanna* is ideologically "a gender equalising narrative".

4.2.2. THE THEMATIC ITINERARY

The first dimension of the thematic focused only on the classification of opposing values in *Susanna*, according to the Jewish culture and ideology. This second step uses the semiotic square, not to classify values, but to track their trajectory in the story from the initial state to the final state. 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 community. As said above, the circulation of values defines the ideology that the narrative seeks to establish or to overthrow. The itinerary of commendable values in a narrative generally implies their complete course. The itinerary of non-commendable values stops halfway (cf. Chapter 2).

Susanna comprises two opposing ideologies with regard to the observance of the Law of Moses. One category of Jews, represented by the elders, is emancipative. In other words, they aim at emancipating Jews from the observation of the Law, with regard to regulation concerning sexuality. They desire a freedom from sexual constraints like the Babylonians. They reject Jewish **identity** and opt for **alterity** (otherness).

Identity and alterity constitute two opposing ideologies in the story. As said above, the classification of individuals in *Susanna* depends on their commitment to the Law. The following part of the study focusses on the itinerary of these two values in the narrative and investigates separately, the circulation of these values in the story and their gendered implications. The investigation follows the four main segments of the story.

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I. *Alterity*

Alterity refers to the rejection of the Jewish way of life and the attempt to opt for another – in this case, Babylonian. This is the main endeavour of the elders. They are introduced in the story as agents of wickedness from the very beginning (verse 5). The following semiotic square represents the circulation of this anti-value in *Susanna*:

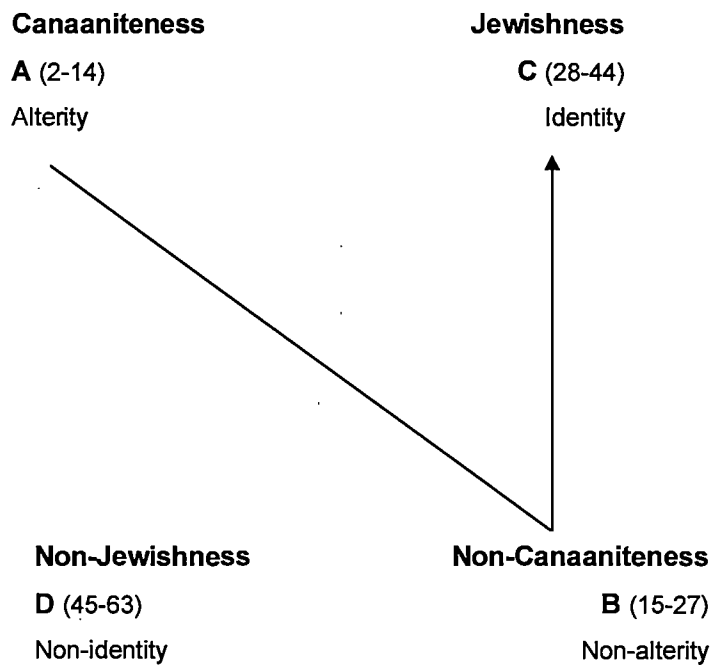


Figure 4.25. Semiotic square illustrating the course of alterity (Canaaniteness) in *Susanna*

A. *Susanna* posits the lawlessness (2-14) of the elders (5) and their determination to carry on with their common evil project (8-14). As said above, Daniel reveals that *Susanna* was not their first victim. Some women (daughters of Israel), not educated according to the Law, succumbed to wickedness because of the elders' intimidation.

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B. Susanna's rejection of the elders' proposition (15-27) constitutes the questioning of the alterity, i.e. the attempt to reject the Jewish identity based on the Law of Moses. The questioning of the alterity implies the way back to Jewish identity as the above diagram (Fig. 4.24) indicates.

C. The third episode focuses on the judgement of Susanna (28-44) and her being sentenced to death. This is an attempt to get rid of all opposition to wickedness. This attempt, however, results in nothing. As Susanna appeals to God, the elders' endeavour to kill Susanna, fails.

D. Instead of leading to the rejection of the Law, the fourth episode (45-63), with the killing of the elders, does not achieve the complete trajectory of lawlessness in *Susanna*. On the contrary, it is a way to reinstatement of the Law, as the above schema reveals.

In brief, the story asserts the intrusion of wickedness, i.e. the attempt to adopt the Babylonian way of life (2-14). Susanna questions the attempt by rejecting the elders' proposition (15-27). The questioning of the adoption of the Babylonian way of life points to the maintenance of Jewishness. To avoid to this possibility, the elders project the death of Susanna (28-44). Susanna appeals to God. God intervenes and Daniel reopens the investigation (45-63). The elders suffer execution and the community escapes wickedness.

Parallel to the trajectory of alterity is the trajectory of the assumption of women's wickedness in *Susanna*. In fact, wickedness and otherness go together in the ideology of the Jews of the Second Temple period. As said above, women suffered exclusion from the Jewish society because men thought female sexuality was the origin of wickedness. This meant that women were not regarded as true Jews because of this assumed wickedness. As Susanna starts her course in the story, she is not convicted of being wicked, nor is she viewed as innocent because of her gender. Her course can be presented as follows:

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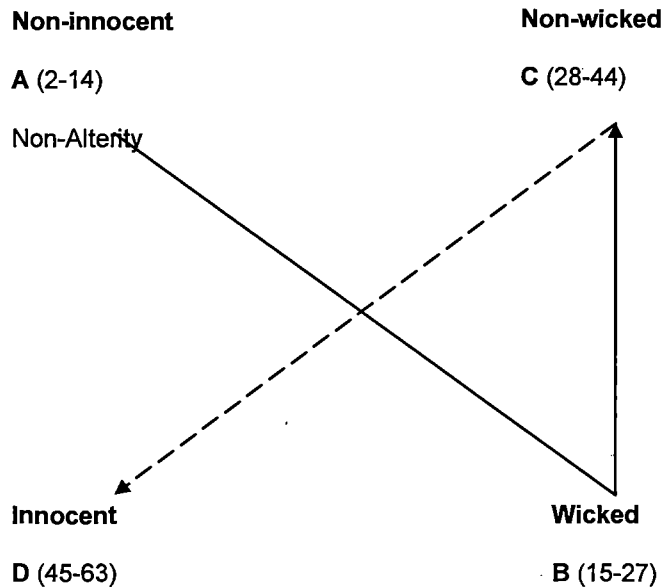


Figure 4.26. Semiotic square illustrating the course of prejudices against women in Susanna

The above semiotic square tracks the itinerary of prejudices against women, in general and Susanna in particular, in the story.

A. The first episode (2-14) starts with the Lord warning Jews against wickedness. The prophetic utterance points out the two elders as potential vectors of wickedness. Presumption of wickedness lies heavier upon women rather than upon the elders. This social prejudice was so strong, even to a level of resisting the word of the Lord. In fact, as the story unfolds Jews seem to worry more about Susanna going outside than the communication of the Lord about the elders. As the story reveals, Jews accept the report of the Susanna's alleged affair in the garden without even questioning them. Even her own parents who taught her the Law, her relatives, her husband, her servants and maids seem to find her accusation of wickedness possible. In fact, none of them protests against her death sentence. This means that Susanna starts her journey under the

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assumption of wickedness. She is neither wicked nor innocent. Thus, at the beginning she is non-innocent.

B. In the second episode (15-27), Susanna suffers the false accusation and condemnation to death. She is assumed to be wicked though she is not. There is a shift from non-innocence to being wicked (28-44).

C. Episode three (28-44) rejects Susanna's assumed wickedness.

D. Rejecting women's wickedness implies the affirmation of their innocence (45-63). The trajectory stops at non-wickedness because going to innocence would imply going back to A (2-14) which the narrative does not imply.

The fact that the course stops at non-wickedness implies innocence, the ideology of the story rejects the victimization of women. In other words, the story pleads for the change of Jews's view of women.

II. IDENTITY

The second value and the most important is Jewish identity. It is important to see how the value circulates in *Susanna*. The study tracks the trajectory of Jewishness according to the four main episodes constituting the story. While otherness stops its trajectory at the opposite of otherness, Jewish identity achieves its course where it started.

A, B, C and **D** constitute four important stages of the thematic trajectory of values, in the story.

According to the above semiotic square:

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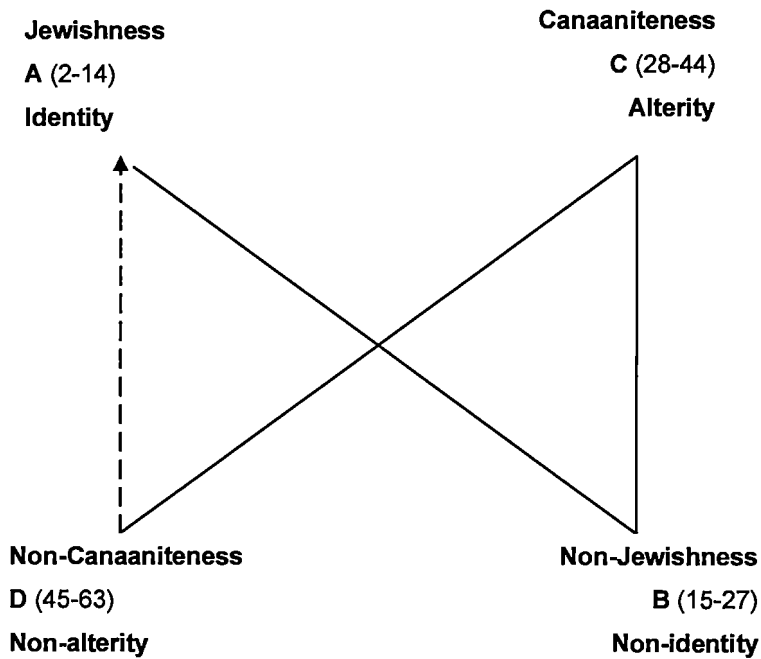


Figure 4.27. Semiotic square illustrating the course of Jewishness, in opposition to Canaaniteness.

A. The story posits the Law of Moses as the unique criteria of Jewishness (2-14). In fact, the appreciation of *Susanna* and the elders' behaviour has as exclusive criterion, the Law of Moses (κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ). *Susanna* is catalogued as φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον (fearing the Lord) precisely because, according to verse 4, "οἱ γονεῖς αὐτῆς δίκαιοι καὶ ἐδίδαξαν τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτῶν κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ" (Her parents were just and taught their daughter according to the Law of Moses). Justice and fear of the Lord here characterise a positive attitude towards the Law. The elders, on the other hand, receive God's negative appreciation (verse 5) because their depiction is pictured in antinomian (anti-law) vocabulary. In fact, ἀνομία (wickedness), means literally "without the Law". It is "state or condition of being disposed to what is lawless, lawlessness" (BDAG,

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2000:85). It depicts a negative attitude to the Law of Moses. Being a Jew or a non-Jew corresponds to accepting or rejecting the authority of the Law of Moses.

B. Having posited the centrality of Law, the story proceeds to its negation thereafter (15-27). Susanna's frequent movements out, in the first episode, constitute a gap that leads to the questioning of the Law, in this second episode. The challenge to the Law appears firstly in the proposition made by the elders to Susanna. Secondly, Susanna's refusal opens the possibility of another dimension of rejection of the Law: false witness and arbitrary murder. These two anti-values constitute the rejection of the justice of the Law. This is a step that leads to *non-Jewishness*. On the semiotic square, this is a transitional step toward Canaaniteness, a total rejection of the Law. At this stage, there is an ambivalence of identity.

C. Following the questioning of the Law is now its complete rejection (28-44). The story does not only highlight the attempt of the elders to act unlawfully, but also their manipulative design to involve Jews in their decision. In fact, Susanna undergoes a wicked judgement. Subsequently, Jews unanimously approve her sentence to death. Consequently, the Law ceases to be the centre of Jewish life. In practice, Jews disavow their Jewishness. *Canaaniteness* is now their distinctiveness. Fortunately, the thematic course of the story does not end here. The story rejects the attempt (by the elders) to establish a way of life opposing the Law, as is revealed in the last episode.

D. The last episode (45-63) accentuates the questioning of the elders by Daniel. Only this episode and the first episode refer to a direct intervention of God, evidenced by two important verbs of action, both of them implying a manipulative causation [$\nu 5$ ἐλάλησεν ὁ δεσπότης (the Lord said) and $\nu 45$ ἐξήγειρεν ὁ θεὸς (God caused to arouse)]. The two episodes constitute the positive deixis, with regard to the authority of the Law. The first episode focuses on the centrality of the Law while the last episode negates the attempt to adopt the Babylonian way of life (*Canaaniteness*). Negation of *Canaaniteness* implies an affirmation of Jewishness.

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In brief, with regard to the maintenance or rejection of the Law, the author of *Susanna* is a conservative campaigner. He uses his story to oppose the tendency of some Jews, mainly the ruling class, to mingle with the ambient culture of the Diaspora to the expense of their own identity. The ideology of the author emerges from the thematic trajectory of the story. The *alterity* (otherness or progressive ideology) or the tendency to live as other people does not make a complete course in the story. It is posited (2-14), denied (15-27) and the thematic trajectory stops at its contrary (*Identity*). The thematic itinerary does not proceed to non-Jewishness as to imply the establishment of Canaaniteness.

The identity (the conservative ideology), on the contrary, achieves a complete course in the story. The centrality of the Law is affirmed (A), questioned (B) to the benefit of its contrary (C), and its contrary is at its turn rejected (D). The rejection of wickedness implies the reinstatement of the Law (A).

This celebration of the victory of conservative over liberal sex in the story parallels subtle gender reconsideration in the Jewish community. In fact, the maintenance of the Law emerges as celebration of the victory of a woman's chastity over men's sexual incontinence, a victory of pretence over reality, truth over lie.

That a gender debate does not constitute the central issue of the story does not mean it is negligible at all. If the emplotment and characterisation in the story involved only men, *Susanna* could not remain the same story propagating the same ideology. *Susanna* succeeds to maintain her people's traditions with regard to marital chastity only because she is a woman. Unless the polemic involved homosexuality, only the intervention of a woman could solve the enigma.

To be able to face the challenge successfully, however, the providential woman has to be exactly like *Susanna* in her knowledge and practice of the Law and her unflinching trust in the Lord. In other words, to be able to stand against men's wickedness a woman has to be educated like *Susanna*,

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commitment to the Law is questioned by the elders' lying report to Joakim's servants. The reaction of Joakim's servants shows how serious the questioning of her chastity was.

C. Susanna is brought to court and publically charged with adultery (28-44). This section shows that her Jewishness is contested publically. A woman cannot be unfailingly committed to the Law.

D. As Susanna appeals to God, Daniel is sent to contest the refusal of Jewishness to Susanna (45-63). It is here where Daniel declares Susanna publically as θυγάτηρ Ιουδα (daughter of Judah), the archetype of Jewishness. Her Jewishness is confirmed publically before Jews. The Jews publically praise the Lord for his brilliant achievement. This sounds like a ceremony for a public recognition of women dignity as true Jews.

In brief, the story is concerned with proving Susanna's identity. Her Jewishness is respectively:

- a. privately affirmed (2-14),
- b. privately tested (15-27),
- c. publically contested (28-44), and finally
- d. publically confirmed (45-63).

Unless one chooses to ignore the evidence, the story makes a strong case for gender equality.

The thematic study of Susanna aimed at mapping out the core values that generated the narrative. The mechanism of analysis here was the semiotic square used paradigmatically and syntagmatically. Paradigmatically, the semiotic square was used to sort out opposing values in the story. Main contrasts in the story arose around faith and have direct implication on ethnicity.

Consequently, Susanna was evidently catalogued a discriminatory story. Its discrimination is the definition of Jewishness based exclusively on faith regardless of gender, age, social class or even genetics. In fact, being a Jew here does not even depend on being born in an Israelite family. There is certainly no explicit statement that non-Israelites cannot be Jews. However, it is clear from the

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story that not every Israelite is Jew. In other words biological heritage does not mean true Jewishness.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter comprised steps two and three of the Semiotic analysis, viz. the narrative and thematic analysis.

From the narrative analysis, it became clear that the structure, the actantial configuration, the veridictory square and the canonical narrative schema of Susanna were purposely designed to address the structuring of the Jewish community around gender. All these mechanisms of analysis here radically reverse the claim that women were more wicked than men. The ending of the story sanctions the wickedness of the elders to the praise of Susanna. The actantial model and the relation between actants and antactants revealed that Susanna was the subject of the story. Her object was the Law of Moses. Her mission was to maintain the Law while the elders' quest was wickedness. The canonical narrative schema shows that in the achieving of her mission, Susanna parallels men subjects in the Jewish narratives. It is designed to mean that God uses men and women in the same way, without gender discrimination.

From thematic analysis, in consideration of the opposition of values and their embodiment in Susanna, a woman and the elders, two men, it became evident that the story seeks to address gender discrimination in the Jewish community. According to the oppositions of values on this semiotic square, ethnicity is clearly singled out as the main issue Susanna seeks to address. The story strives for the conservation of Jewish identity exemplified by the commitment to the Law (identity) in opposition to the attempt to adopt a Babylonian way of life (alterity).

However, the centrality of a woman depicted as epitome of Jewishness, in the story, reveals that the question of identity does not leave out gender discrimination. In fact, the central concern of a story contrasting φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον and θυγάτηρ Ιουδα on one side, with παράνομοι and Σπέρμα Χανααν (καὶ οὐκ Ιουδα) on the other is certainly the following: "Who is a true Jew?". To this

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question, data from the text allows an unequivocal answer: "Neither exclusively a man nor a woman". It is clear from this conclusion that Susanna is ideologically speaking "a gender equalising narrative".

The following chapter concludes this study. It proposes recommendations regarding the acceptance of the hypothesis of this study, based on the three-step analysis described in Chapters 3 and 4, the hypothesis.

CHAPTER 5: THE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

This study was devoted to the investigation of women in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, especially those books termed as Apocrypha, contained in the LXX. The corpus comprised the books of Tobit, Judith, Greek Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, 1, 2, 3 and 4 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, the Prayer of Manasseh and Psalms 151.

The driving impetus behind the study was the remarkable emergence of women in these books. It was observed that female characters frequently appear in this corpus and are portrayed as playing decisive roles for the sake of the Jewish nation.

The prominent appearance of women in this corpus gave good reason for the title of the study: *The Emergence of Women in the Septuagint Apocrypha*. It appeared significant that there was no doubt that stories of extraordinary women were found in the Jewish environment and in the Greco-Roman world. However, the ideal status of women proposed by the authors of the Apocrypha sounds unique and unknown to both Hebrew and Greco-Roman traditions (Esler, 2002:129), in consideration of a predominantly patriarchal social structure.

Women constantly appear in a conflicting way in the Septuagint Apocrypha. In narratives, they emerge as leading heroic figures in Israel, as well as in the Diaspora. However, in the wisdom of Ben Sira, they are the subject of bitter criticism and disapproval. These books were written in overlapping periods of time between the third century and the first century BCE and they circulated in the same period among Jews. Although these books all notably refer to women, they compose two sets of discourses with two totally different views of women.

THE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

On the one hand, *Ben Sira* represents a totally negative and pessimistic view of women. He is fundamentally exclusive and describes women as dangerous and deserving no credit. In fact, he is nothing less than a misogynist. In this study, however, it was established that Ben Sira's view of women had no exact precedent in the Jewish tradition. It must have been influenced by Greek thought (cf. chapter 1).

On the other hand, *Tobit*, *Judith*, 1, 2, 3 and 4 *Maccabees*, *Esther* and *Susanna* draw on material from the Jewish tradition to reconstruct the images of women positively. They are portrayed even higher than male heroes of the Jewish nation, such as Moses, Joseph and David. These books portray the females as commendable partners embodying the hopes for the survival of the nation in hard times.

The aim of this thesis was to explore this phenomenal emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha. However, due to the abundance of the material on women in the LXX, it was impossible to deal with all relevant cases in this investigation. Consequently, only the narrative of *Susanna* constitutes the focus of this study. *Susanna* was not investigated out of its historical and sociological background of the Second Temple period. A semiotic analysis was done, taking into account the patriarchal ideology of the Second Temple period, exemplified in the wisdom of *Ben Sira*.

The central theoretical statement was formulated as follows: The emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha, in general and *Susanna* in particular, gave 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.

The main research problem was therefore formulated as follow: Does *Susanna* reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudice of the Second Temple period against women, exemplified in the

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wisdom of Ben Sira? To answer this main research problem, a number of subsidiary questions were investigated:

First, the current state of studies of *Susanna* and how it accounts for new investigations was evaluated. The second consideration was what would constitute a valid method for the study of the view of women in the LXX Apocrypha in general and *Susanna* in particular. Furthermore, the question was considered whether the semiotic analysis, that is the figurative, narrative and/or thematic analysis of *Susanna* reverse or reinforce the sexist prejudice of the Second Temple period against women as exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*. Finally, the view of women that emerges from the results of the Greimassian semiotic analysis of *Susanna* was established, as well as how it reverses or reinforces the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period against women as exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

The most debated issue in *Susanna's* scholarship is gender role. In fact, there is no agreement among scholars to whether *Susanna* undermines or reinforces patriarchy. Most scholars, mainly feminists, are pessimistic and even suspicious about the subversive nature of *Susanna*. They are of the opinion that *Susanna* serves patriarchy rather than undermining it. Bal (cf. Levine, 2004), Clanton (2006), Cornelius (2008), Glancy (2004), Gruen (2002), Ilan (2001), Levine (2004), MacDowell (2006), Sered and Cooper (1996), and Steussy (1993) are among proponents of this position.

The alternative view of the narrative is not supported by many scholars, viz. Craven (1992; 1998; 2001) and Tkacz (1998; 2008). The latter argues that *Susanna* "constitutes real evidence against the idea that Judeo-Christian tradition is inherently sexist. Therefore, feminists find it expedient to deny that *Susanna* speaks, and thus they silence *Susanna*" (Tkacz, 1998:36).

It was the contention of this study that *Susanna* radically reverses the sexist bias of the Second Temple period against women, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

THE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The analysis of *Susanna* aimed at testing this hypothesis in view of the evidence. The investigation of *Susanna* adopted the structure controlled by the approach of research. It consisted of three levels of analysis. The results of the study are summarised below.

5.1 RESULTS OF RESEARCH

As said above, the results of *Susanna* are given according to the three levels of the semiotic approach of analysis: the figurative, the narrative and the thematic.

5.1.1 THE FIGURATIVE LEVEL

This level focused on main figures appearing in the story. Careful attention was paid in particular to main oppositions emerging from the text, main motifs recurring in the text and the employment of the narrative. The aim here was to establish whether figurative oppositions, motifs and employment reverse or reinforce sexist prejudice of the Second Temple period against women, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

Main oppositions in *Susanna* resulted from the commitment to the Law. Expressions such as κατὰ τὸν νόμον Μωυσῆ on one hand, and παράνομοι and Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ιουδα on the other, illustrate this point. *Susanna* rejects the structuring of the society in terms of men versus women. According to the story, Jewish society must be structured around the obedience/disobedience to the Law of Moses. In this new proposed structure, gender is deemed totally irrelevant. There is no way such a conclusion from the figurative oppositions could reinforce sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*. Some motifs underlying *Susanna* add to this evidence.

The consideration of motifs and intertextuality went beyond the figurative level. *Susanna* is a network of subtle motifs and intertextual allusions. In fact, the author purposely uses expressions, words, names or incidents embedded in the Jewish traditions to root *Susanna* in the Jewish tradition of the past. The appeal to the past is difficult to detect unless one pays careful attention.

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Israel's memory in terms of motifs and intertextual allusions serves three purposes here. First, it is meant to suggest that Susanna ranks and even surpasses male heroes of the Jewish nation and thus, men and women in Israel are equal. Second, it serves to reverse the view according which women are more sexually promiscuous than men. Third, it means that women's seclusion was a strange habit unknown to Israel.

For example, "Στενά μοι πάντοθεν" suggests that Susanna equals and even surpasses David in loyalty to God. As for the "Λούσασθαι" and "φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον", both belong to the Exodus motif, the root of the Jewish identity. They link Susanna to the Exodus and evoke the role women plays in the preservation of Moses' life and Law. Their function is to address the exclusion of women from Jewish religion.

The same verb, λούω, also links Susanna to Bathsheba in a subtle way. It reveals that the elders parallel David in sexual perversion. Consequently, vectors of moral decay in Jewish traditions are Jewish leaders, traditionally men rather than women.

The appeal to Helkias as an anthroponym for Susanna's father and the children teaching's motif, rejects the discrimination between daughters and sons. According to the author, since moral decay is Jewish leaders' lot, the survival of Jewishness depends on the education of daughters of Israel according to the Law of Moses.

"πλούσιος σφόδρα" links Susanna to Abraham and Sarah in Egypt. It suggested that Joakim's riches were due to the Susanna's fear of the Lord.

The use of παράδεισος links Susanna to Eve. Susanna is the new Eve who enters Eden to reverse sexist bias against women. These few examples showed that Susanna was written to address the victimisation of women during the Second Temple period. They reverse, more than reinforce, the sexist prejudice of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

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This second focus of the figurative level of the investigation on emplotment in the story was twofold. First, the communicational relationship between Susanna and its assumed archetype – the story of Joseph in general and the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in particular – was discussed. It was revealed that Susanna is modelled on the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

The reworking of the Joseph's saga to the praise of a woman is significant. The author seems to suggest that Susanna, a woman, surpasses Joseph, the emblematic archetype of righteousness. Therefore, with regard to the fear of the Lord, the cornerstone of Jewish identity, men and women are equal.

Then, the author also intentionally exploits the mode of emplotment, in terms of techniques and genres, to achieve a particular goal. Attention was drawn to the irony that constitutes the main tropes in the narrative. *Susanna* was established as being fundamentally ironic. The dominance of irony in the narrative makes *Susanna* a satiric narrative. The satiric mode of emplotment of *Susanna* ironically reverses the sexist prejudice of the Second Temple period against women, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

5.1.2 THE NARRATIVE LEVEL

The investigation, at this stage, focussed on the structure of the story and in particular on the initial and final state, on the actantial model, canonical narrative schema and the veridictory square. The aim here was to test whether the structure, the actantial configuration, the canonical schema and the veridictory square reverse the sexist prejudices of the Second Temple period, against women, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

The investigation of the structure of the story focused on the initial and the final state, on one hand, and the logic of the ending on the other. In consideration of the structure of *Susanna*, it becomes evident that the story seeks to address gender discrimination in the Jewish community. The story ends to the disgrace of the elders (males), but to praise of Susanna (a female). It is expressively

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recounted that “Χελκίας δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἤνεσαν τὸν θεὸν περὶ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῶν Σουσαννας μετὰ Ἰωακὶμ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν πάντων, ὅτι οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα”. On one side, Σουσαννας μετὰ Ἰωακὶμ reverses the patriarchal tradition about men and women. In the initial sequence, Susanna is introduced as Joakim’s property. Here however, Susanna becomes the reference; the head of the family. There is no proof for Susanna’s domestication here. On the other side, ὅτι οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα wipes out all suspicious assumptions of wickedness against Susanna, a woman, as merely a male’s trumped-up story.

The numerous possibilities of narrative endings from which the author could have chosen suggest that the current ending of *Susanna* is an intentional design of the author. In fact, the story of Dinah, suggested by scholars as one of the Susanna’s intertexts, does actually support women seclusion. Its ending is meant to suggest that women shouldn’t be allowed to go out alone; they need to be under men’s control. As she moves out alone, Susanna reverses the Dinah’s motif.

The consideration of the actantial model examined the distribution of actantial roles in the narrative. The actantial model and the relation between actants and antactants revealed that the main object of the story is the preservation of the Law of Moses, and the identity of Jewish people. The subject entrusted with this mission is Susanna, a woman. The two elders are the anti-subject and the opponent to Susanna’s quest. God is the addresser, the initiator of Susanna’s quest. Babylon is the opposing ideology inspiring the elders. The elders are enemies of Jewish identity. Here again the reversal is remarkable compared to *Ben Sira*. In fact, an actantial model having the Law as object, would imperatively have men as subject and women as anti-subject and opponents, in Ben Sira’s view.

The canonical narrative grammar examined the course of Susanna from her awakening to the achievement of her mission. It consists of four steps: the contract, the acquisition of competence, the performance and the sanction. The contract examined the awakening of Susanna as to become

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a potential subject. Her *vouloir-faire* (desire), the acceptance of her mission is motivated by her knowledge of the Law from her parents and an utterance of the Lord to Jewish people. This prophetic utterance constitutes God's manipulation, his endeavour to push Jews to act *faire-faire*, (causing to do). God's manipulation on Susanna consists mainly of *laisser-faire* (not causing not to do). Susanna's competence for the achievement of her mission consists of her beauty, her unflinching fear of the Lord, her trust in God and her knowing to pray. The performance focused on Susanna's achievement of her mission. Susanna achieves her mission in two stages. She first resists the elders' advances, just to prove that women are not as wicked as was believed in the Second Temple period. Paradise, as symbol of women's wickedness, becomes a place where a woman saves her community from men's wickedness. She thus turns around the Eden episode of Eve. Susanna's second stage in the accomplishment of her mission is the intervention of Daniel to expose the elders' wickedness and Susanna's innocence. This does not happen until Susanna uses her last capability: prayer. The killing of the elders means the prevailing of Susanna's narrative programme at the expense of the elders'. Finally, the sanction is the appreciation of Susanna's achievement. The addresser does not appear directly on stage in the story. Nonetheless, the praise of God in verses 62 and 63 suggests that Susanna accomplished her mission in accordance with God's norms, the Law of Moses.

In terms of the veridictory square, the construction of persuasive truth in Susanna using modality of *être* (being) and *paraître* (appearing) was examined. The Jews' judgement of truth, until Daniel's intervention, depends entirely on the appearance (*paraître*). Manipulation and twisting of truth are pointed out mockingly as the mode of leadership in the community. Consequently, Susanna in particular, and women in general, has the appearance of, and is arbitrarily charged with, wickedness. Because there is not a word to defend their case, the secrecy endures until God intervenes by sending Daniel. On the other hand, the elders' appearance gives the impression of holy and respectable leaders until they are manifestly revealed as enemies of the Jewish nation.

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5.1.3 THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The thematic study of Susanna aimed at mapping out the core values that generated the narrative. This level depended on the results from figurative opposition of the figurative analysis. The aim here was also to establish whether the opposition of values and their course on the semiotic square reverses or reinforces prejudices against women.

Main opposition in *Susanna* results from the commitment to the Law. Oppositions between expressions such as θυγάτηρ Ιουδα and Σπέρμα Χανααν καὶ οὐκ Ιουδα prove that ethnicity is certainly the main issue. It is opposition between preserving Jewish **identity** and opting for **alterity** (otherness). However, the centrality of a woman as a subject in the story reveals that the question of identity does not leave out gender discrimination. In fact, those two fundamental values are respectively exemplified by Susanna and the elders. It is Susanna, a woman, who stops the alteration of Jewish identity by the two Jewish leaders, who are men.

In consideration of these oppositions of values emerging from the text, it became obvious that the central concern of the story is the following: "Who is a true Jew?" To this question, data from the text allows an unequivocal answer: "Neither exclusively a man nor a woman".

True Jewishness is depicted as dependent only on the observance of the Law, regardless of gender. Women, such as Susanna, who hold the Law to the price of their life are true Jews. She is "a daughter of Judah" (*Susanna* 57), i.e. carries the badge of true Jewishness. Men, such as the two elders, who reject the Law of Moses, are not true Jews at all. They are dangerous strangers, "the seed of Canaan" (*Susanna* 56), and the emblem of anti-Jewishness. It is clear from this conclusion that, ideologically speaking, *Susanna* appears as "a gender equalising narrative".

The course of **identity** and **alterity**, the fundamental values of the story, depend totally on Susanna's and the elders' obedience/disobedience to the Law. The course of Jewish identity in the story is bound to Susanna's fate. The otherness is bound to the elders' destiny. Here again, with regard to Jewishness, gender is deemed irrelevant.

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The author condemns the attempt by the elders to introduce the Babylonian way of life by highlighting their death. On the contrary, he uses God's intervention on behalf of Susanna to urge Jews to stick to their identity without gender discrimination.

5.2. CONTRIBUTION

This study provides a contribution to research on the phenomenal emergence of women in the LXX Apocrypha, and in particular the interpretation of *Susanna*. Results from this study support the hypothesis that *Susanna* radically reverses the sexist bias of the Second Temple period against women, exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*. The figurative, narrative and thematic analysis of *Susanna* provide support for this alternative interpretation of the narrative.

This investigation of women in the LXX Apocrypha accentuated the efficiency of Greimassian semiotics for reading narratives. It was the contention of the author that unless coupled with a rhetorical method, the grammatical historical and the historical critical are limited.

5.3 RECOMMANDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The conclusions presented above are the consequence of rigorous application of the semiotic method. No close reading alone can lead to the same level of insight. The study does not pretend to have addressed all issues surrounding the study of women in the Apocrypha. In fact, only *Susanna* was investigated here. It is then obvious that other issues wait to be addressed.

Some issues are related to the emergence of women in the apocryphal narratives on one hand, and the relation between the Apocrypha and the authors of the New Testament on the other. Some of these concerns may be formulated as follows:

The author of *Susanna* assumes that, with regard to Jewishness, men and women are equal. Can the semiotic studies of other narratives in the Apocrypha such as *Judith*, *the Additions to Esther*, *Tobit*, and *Maccabees* lead to the same conclusion?

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If the study proves conclusive, two problems need to be addressed. First, Galatians 3:28 stipulates that "there is longer neither male nor female, for all of you are one in Jesus". This is stated implicitly in *Susanna*. Besides, according to Romans 9:6, "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel". This is also stated implicitly in *Susanna*. Thus the following questions may be asked: Is there an intertextual relation between the Apocrypha and the New Testament?; Were the New Testament's authors influenced by the Apocrypha?

Second, was there a debate on the status of women among Jewish thinkers, just before the Common Era? Can the authors of these books be considered as forerunners of the women's emancipation movement?

Other issues are related to the use of method for studying women in the Apocrypha by feminist scholars. This may be raised here in view of recommendations. First, there is a tendency to use texts to advance ideology rather than understand what texts say by themselves. There is no pretention that one can be 100% confident in the use of his method. "No value-neutral position exists, nor ever has" (Tolbert, 1982:118). This, however, does not mean there is no minimum agreement in the claim to objective knowledge. It is here where some readings of Biblical narratives on women are questionable. Without question, texts are used as pretext, out of their context to serve ideology.

For example, Gruen (2002) is of view that *Susanna* is not an emancipator story. According to Gruen (2002:173), after the judgment "the young matron (Susanna) returns to the home of her husband – who, so far as we can, had not even been present at her trial. The *Susanna* tale unambiguously ratifies the status quo". Returning home is what is thought of as domestication. Such a conclusion, however, is but a mere affirmation. The story ends with Susanna's family praising the Lord and Daniel growing in reputation. No allusion is made to Susanna's home. Another example comes from Livine (2004:312; cf. note 4). According to her, women do not attend the judgment of *Susanna*, possibly because they are secluded. Among those women not present at

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Susanna's trial is Daniel's wife. This statement is made irrespective of the data of the text. In fact, in the story Daniel is "a mere child" (παιδαρίου νεωτέρου) (Susanna 45).

Second, the Renaissance's performance of *Susanna* is now considered by scholars as the true version and the normative interpretation of the story. For this reason the most highlighted intertext of *Susanna* is taken to be *Bathsheba*, though most scholars think *Susanna* is modeled on the incident of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

Third, the religious dimension of Jewish texts is generally forgotten or ignored. There is a tendency to believe that all texts seem to come from a universal context with the same concern. In the same way there is a confusing use of unexplained vocabulary. For example, it is assumed that *Susanna* is an object, not a subject. The concept of object and subject still waits to be defined.

These issues are some, but not exclusively so, that still wait for clarification.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter constituted the summary of the results of the semiotic study of *Susanna*. The point of departure was to establish the view of women that would emerge from the result of the study. At each of the three levels of the analysis – figurative, narrative and thematic – results were conclusive. This study supports the hypothesis that *Susanna* radically reverses the sexist bias of the Second Temple period, against women, as exemplified in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.

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