# NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN 2 SAMUEL 11



ROY G.W. BUNGAY

# NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

# IN

# 2 SAMUEL 11

BY

Roy G.W. Bungay

A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Religious Studies

Memorial University of Newfoundland

June/ 1995

St. John's Newfoundland

ISBN 0-612-13883-6

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of 2 Samuel 11 from a literary perspective and is considered as a complete and coherent unit with its own inner logic. A narratological methodology is employed to ascertain the relationship between structure and content in the character development of David in 2 Samuel 11. By using narratological techniques to examine the parallel, surface, and plot structures, the methodology demonstrates the manner in which form and content are equal partners in the shaping of character. The structure of the David-Bathsheba narrative is divided into two distinct but dependent episodes that form a double-plot structure. By focusing upon the relationship between the two plots it is evident that the motifs, key-words, themes, and narrative situations portray two symmetrically parallel structures that serve to shape the character of David. In essence, this study seeks to understand 2 Samuel 11 through the questions that arise from the use of a literary-critical methodology.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express a deep sense of appreciation to all the staff of the Religious Studies Department who were instrumental in encouraging and advising me during this period of study in order to enable me to fulfill the requirements of the Master's program. It is with a great deal of appreciation that I thank Dr. Kim Parker, my supervisor, for his professional advice, disciplined encouragement, and untiring patience during the research and writing of this thesis. Especially has this been so in the past year when, because of my appointment to South Africa, we were forced to communicate by post. I also want to thank The Salvation Army of Canada for their financial support for the whole of the Master's degree studies.

## DEDICATION

To my wife Joy, who has been a constant, and devoted friend, motivator, and source of encouragement during these years of study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to engage in a literary study of 2 Samuel 11 with a view to understanding it both as a distinctive structural unit, and as a representative study on literary character. It employs recent literary theory to analyze the relationship between narrative form on the one hand, and literary content on the other. More specifically, the study seeks to understand how the form and content of 2 Samuel 11 contributes to an understanding of the enigmatic character of David.

The thesis begins with an introduction to a variety of critical methods that have been employed in the study of biblical narrative in general, and to 2 Samuel 11 specifically. In this introduction (chapter one), I will examine the purposes and assumptions of the three major historical-critical methodologies (i.e. source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism). In contrast to these methods of analysis, the approach adopted in chapters three and four of this study will be a literary-critical one which seeks to "let the text speak fully for itself through intrinsic study".[1] It assumes that a narrative can be understood on its own without necessarily trying to uncover the text's literary history.

In choosing to study this chapter of the Hebrew Bible, I was intrigued by the manner in which its representation of David contrasts with the more idealised perception prevalent both intra-textually and extra-textually. While there has been much written concerning the significance of 2 Samuel 11 to David's character, little attention has been paid to the way the

---

[1]J.P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel, Volume 1 (Assen: Van Gorrcum, 1981), p. 1.

narrative's structure and literary form operates as meaning in the characterization of David. In a 'close reading'[2] of this text, one cannot escape the daunting reality of the darker side of David's character in spite of the esteem with which David is traditionally held in both the Jewish and Christian traditions.

This thesis contains four chapters. The first investigates the 'state of the question'. Here I focus on and review source, form, and redaction critical studies of 2 Samuel 11. Chapter two describes the literary-critical methodology I use to analyze the David and Bathsheba narrative. The goal is to demonstrate how a narratological study of form and content can be used on a biblical text. Chapter three uses techniques developed by Bar-Efrat to analyse the form and parallel structures of 2 Samuel 11. Chapter four, the final chapter, will demonstrate how the meaning of the narrative is derived from the manner in which the development of the character of David is a function of the plot-structure and literary devices.

The presentation of Chapters three and four primarily focus on the intrinsic meaning of the biblical text as it is presented in the Bible rather than taking excursions into the text's past in order to reconstruct its earliest stages of development. I will attempt to show how the parallel patterns, motifs, and surface structure form the essence of the text's meaning and cast a shadow over the enigmatic character of David. The goal of this 'close reading' of the text is not to polarize the evidential darker side of David's character per se, but to discover

---

[2]The term 'close reading' means a detailed analytic interpretation of the words on the page rather than to the contexts which produced and surround them. It implies a limiting as well as a focusing of concern.

the kind of character that the form and structure of the received text conveys. Thus this study assumes that the text is coherent and unified in its present form regardless of the history of the text's development. The question uppermost is, what is the function of the narrative as it now stands in shaping (or re-shaping) the character of king David?

# CHAPTER 1

## STATE OF THE QUESTION

### Introduction

Over the years historical-critical methods such as source, form, and redaction criticism have been applied to the study of 2 Samuel 11 in an effort to determine the history of the transmission of the text, and thus account for its past. Hans-Georg Gadamer states that the historical critic is always seeking in the text something that is not the text, something the text of itself is not seeking to provide.[1] To most historical critics the content of 2 Samuel 11, namely, the David and Bathsheba incident, the account of the wars that frame it, and the speech of Uriah concerning the Ark, have had a history and function prior to their being redacted into the biblical text. In this chapter I will examine how each of the methods of historical criticism (source, form and redaction criticism) treats 2 Samuel 11.

### A. Source Criticism

Source criticism is concerned with the "identification of linguistic and stylistic peculiarities, theological or conceptual variations, logical hiatus or digression"[2] within a text with a view to finding their original source. This quest seeks to discover the different literary

---

[1]Hans-Georg Gadamer, in Truth and Method; see Frank Kermode, "The Canon", in The Literary Guide to the Bible, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, eds. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 607.

[2]Kendrick Grobel, "Biblical Criticism", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, (New York: Abingdon press, 1962), p.412.

layers of composite works, and then to associate them with relative dates of the different layers within the written tradition. Thus, source criticism presumes that the varieties of motifs, sayings, and expressions, had a previous history prior to their inclusion in the final form of the text. In other words, source criticism detects a composite character, or an amalgamation of many authors and many works within the text, and suggests that the document came together from a variety of sources.[3] Source criticism's role is therefore an attempt to divide these sources into their component parts while at the same time assessing their meaning in terms of the intentions of the author in the original socio-historical context.[4]

Source criticism began in the eighteenth century and was first applied to the Pentateuch. It was based upon five criteria: the use of different divine names; language and style; contradictions and inconsistencies in the text; repetition of material; and evidence that different accounts have been combined.[5] The historical-critical work done by Julius Wellhausen on the Pentateuch in the late nineteenth century set the standard for source criticism for years to follow. He adopted a developmental approach that regarded the Pentateuch as essentially of composite origin, consisting of a Jehovistic source (J), dated in the ninth century B.C.; an independent Elohistic document (E), coming from the eighth

---

[3]John Barton, Reading the Old Testament: Method in Bible Study (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1984), p. 23.

[4]Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 2.

[5]J. Hayes, An Introduction to Old Testament Study (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 118.

century B.C.; the basic content of the book of Deuteronomy (D), which was assigned to the time of king Josiah (640/39-609 B.C.); and a Priestly source (P), from about the fifth century B.C.[6] At a subsequent period the entire corpus was revised and edited to form the extant Pentateuch.[7] Thus over the years, the socio-historical setting of a particular segment of a text has been identified by associating it with one of the "JEDP" sources.

Applied to the books of Samuel, source critics followed Wellhausen's lead, but came up with a variety of conclusions concerning the process and identity of the sources involved. Hugo Gressmann viewed the Samuel material differently from Wellhausen, as is evident in his proposal of a fragmentary hypothesis rather than a 'documentary', or developmental hypothesis to explain its composition. Gressmann argued that, "apart from 1 Samuel 17:1-18:5, 20:1-21:1 and 2 Samuel 1, 'sources' are nowhere to be found".[8] His thesis was that the material of the books of Samuel was composed of a loose collection of short individual component narratives which only yield value when we call attention to the traditions represented by them, "inasmuch as we consider them individually".[9] With this in mind, we

---

[6]R.K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p.21.

[7]Julius Wellhausen, Die Komposition des Hexateuchs (1877) quoted in R.K. Harrison, Introduction To The Bible.

[8]Hugo Gressmann, "The Oldest History Writing in Israel," in Narrative and Novella in Samuel: Studies by Hugo Gressmann and Other Scholars 1906-1923. Trans. David E. Orton, ed. David M. Gunn (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1991), p. 22.

[9]H. Gressmann, Die alteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israel (Gottingen, 1921), quoted by A. Robert An Introduction To The Old Testament, p. 209.

can better understand Gressman's position in viewing the private affair of David and Bathsheba (11:2-27a) as an independent narrative which was inserted between the Ammonite war frame stories which served to form the introduction and conclusion to the episode. He asserts this position on the basis of the style, theme, and linguistic differences between this section and the frame story which covers the war between Israel and the Ammonites (10: 1-11:1). Gressmann argues that the war material reports political events in a concise factual form, whereas the characters and events in the personal story are recounted in rich biographical and descriptive detail. Gressmann fails, however, to account for the personal aspects of the story apart from the war frames. There is some ambiguity between his view that the stories are loosely independent, and his statement that "the middle piece is completely incomprehensible without that framework, and cannot have been circulated without it; thus the piece must be younger than the history narrative of the Ammonite war."[10]

Source critics such as K. Budde, who was the first to divide the material of 1 and 2 Samuel into two parallel strands, J and E, argued that these strands were a continuation of the sources in the Pentateuch.[11] This meant that the composition of the material passed through several stages which, he claimed, continued the work of the Yahwist and the Elohist. This emphasis on sources is also evident in the source-critical work done by Otto Eissfeldt, who proposed a three-source hypothesis for the Samuel books. According to Eissfeldt,

---

[10]Hugo Gressmann, "The Oldest History Writing in Israel, p. 26.

[11]K. Budde, quoted by Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 697.

Samuel is "the combination of three parallel strands, which are presumably continuations of the three narrative strands of the Heptateuch, the L, J and E".[12] Further, Eissfeldt attributed a section of the Yahwist document to a much older source which he called L or Lay-source. Eissfeldt maintained that in 1 Samuel the sources were interwoven, but in 2 Samuel the sources were written consecutively.

Other source critics have divided the material differently. A.R.S. Kennedy is practically alone in proposing that no fewer than five sources contributed to the books of Samuel: an infancy source, a history of the Ark, a positive and a negative chronicle of the monarchy, and a court history of King David.[13] Representing the mainstream of this analysis was Robert Pfeiffer[14] and George B. Caird,[15] who reject Eissfeldt's three-source theory, arguing that it is too arbitrary.[16] But from the death of Saul onwards, the "Yahwistic tradition is about the only one used."[17] Thus 2 Samuel 11, according to Caird, is drawn from

---

[12]Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 271.

[13] A.R.S.Kennedy, I and II Samuel (n.d.), p.13f, quoted by R.K. Harrison, Introduction to the Bible, p.698.

[14]Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1948), p.697.

[15]George B. Caird, "The First and Second Books of Samuel: Introduction," in The Interpreter's Bible, Volume 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 856.

[16]Caird, "The First and Second Books of Samuel", p. 856.

[17]A.Robert and A. Feuillett, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Dexclee Company, 1968), p. 209.

the earlier Yahwistic source and is part of the family and court stories of David, which are "classic examples of Israelite history writing.[18]

Further, 2 Samuel 11, was also considered as an integral part of what Leonard Rost later called the "Succession Narrative".[19] Rost was firmly of the opinion that this narrative (2 Samuel 9-20, I Kings 1-2), answered the question, "who was to succeed to the throne after David?" In Rost's view, 1 Samuel 4-6 and 2 Samuel 6,7, also belonged to the unit, maintaining that the compiler already had in his possession the Ammonite war-frame stories (2 Samuel 10:6b-11, 12:26-31) which he adapted to make suitable to the David and Bathsheba story.[20] According to Rost, in addition to the ark narrative (1 Samuel 4-6, 2 Samuel 6), the compiler added the Michal episode of (2 Samuel 6:16, 20b-23) in order to explain why the successor to David could not be a child of Michal. Further, to balance this negative feature of the narrative unit he then contrasted the positive statement of 2 Samuel 7. In so doing, the compiler made use of an old narrative concerning a promise of Yahweh given to David by the prophet Nathan concerning the duration of his dynasty.[21] Furthermore, the compiler completed the narrative of the Ammonite war in 2 Samuel 10:6b - 11:1, and

---

[18]Caird, "The First and Second Books of Samuel", p. 856.

[19]The 'Succession Narrative' concept was developed by Leonard Rost, in "Die Uberlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids," BWANT III, 6 (1926). English translation by Michael D. Rutter and David M. Gunn as "The Succession to the Throne of David" (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1982).

[20]Rost, quoted by Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, p. 138.

[21]Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, p. 138.

12:26-31 by the addition of the Bathsheba narrative (10:1-6a, 11:2-12:25). By this means the narrative was developed into a presentation which met the compiler's goal of introducing Solomon as the successor to king David, and Bathsheba as Solomon's mother.

Thus we see that Source Criticism combines an initial literary analysis with an investigation into the historical setting in which the text is believed to originate. The quest is to discover the different literary layers of composite works, and then to assess the relative dates of the different layers. As we have seen, the evidence is sought in generally parallel accounts of a common subject, in the combined accounts of a common subject, and also in the combined account of one tradition. Source critics work with the premise that "where evidence of a given style occurs, a specific set of literary idioms and terms is consistently present."[22] This constancy of style and terminology is correlated to a specific theological or world-view, and serves to provide the primary evidence for maintaining the presence of common sources in the document's final creation.

B. Form Criticism

In contrast to source criticism, form criticism focuses on the pre-literary or oral phase of the social life and institutions of ancient Israel in an effort to identify and understand the various literary forms or genre in the Hebrew Bible.[23] Form criticism assumes that the

---

[22]Norman Habel Literary Criticism of The Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p. 40.

[23]Barton, Reading The Old Testament, p. 31.

literature of Israel used a variety of fixed oral forms such as blessings, oaths, hymns, legends and commandments in order to express its relationship to God.[24] The creators and perpetuators of this form of Israel's literature were the socio-religious institutions, such as the family, the temple, the school, the courts and the state political structures. The need for such a study emphasised the inadequacies of the source-critical approach in that having focused on the discovery of documentary sources and the marks of their identification, source criticism could not provide answers to questions being asked about the setting and motivation of the texts. In his essay, "The Problem of the Hexateuch," Gerhard von Rad, a form critic, tells how the old methods of criticism failed to deal with his own critical questions: "there are signs that the road has come to a dead end...that (while) it was both necessary and important to traverse these paths (we) cannot ignore the profoundly disintegrating effect which has been one result of this method..."[25] Von Rad sought, in a form- critical analysis of the Hexateuch, to understand and recognize the early stages of the creed and faith of Israel, the circumstances of its composition, and the subsequent development that led to the final form of this development. The historical-critical questions had now shifted from the text's sources, to the text's internal organization and genre. One of the pioneers of form criticism, Hermann Gunkel, felt that "the key to understanding a given prophetic oracle, and Israelite law, or a hymn to Yahweh lay in its similarity to analogous forms from the world around Israel".[26]

[24]Habel, Literary Criticism, p. vi.

[25]Gerhard von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays (London: Oliver and Boyde, 1958), p.1.

Gunkel highlighted different narrative genre such as stories about the deities, i.e., myths, Folk-tales, Saga, Romance, Legend, and lastly, Historical Narrative.[27] Thus Form Criticism assumed that the Hebrew Bible narratives had a long oral pre-history, and its main goal is thus to isolate the "form" in which the earliest material existed, and determine its function within its particular social setting or Sitz im Leben.

The premise that the original setting of the narrative unit could be recovered from the determination of its genre has been approached from different orientations by different form critics. For example, George W. Coats suggests that narrative genres in the Hebrew Bible fall into three recognizable groups. The first group develops its narrative under the control of a cause-effect sequence where the focus is on the event itself. This group falls under the category of anecdote or tale, report, biography, autobiography, and history writing. A second group develops its narration under the control of a concern to describe events in an interesting pattern, and not necessarily sequentially. An example of this type is the novella. A third group shifts the focus of the narration away from the event towards the characterization of one or more principal figures. A prime example of this type is the

---

[26]Cited in Carl E. Armerding, The Old Testament and Criticism (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), p. 45.

[27] Hermann Gunkel, "Fundamental problems of Hebrew literary history," in What Remains of the Old Testament. pp. 59-60. Cited in Gene M. Tucker, Form Criticism of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). p. 24.

legend.[28]

The methodology that bases meaning on genre identification encounters a number of difficulties when applied to 2 Samuel 11. First, there is no consensus among scholars concerning the identification of the genre of 2 Samuel 11. Secondly, even for those who accept that the narrative is incorporated within the so-called "Succession Narrative," there remains a number of choices in defining its genre. The problem of consensus concerning genre identification of this literary unit (2 Samuel 9-20, + 1 Kings 1-2) among scholars, is indicative of the problems associated with genre classification. David Gunn points out that von Rad characterized the story in terms of history writing; Rost, Whybray, Delekat, Wurthwein and Langlamet classified it as political propaganda, and Whybray and Hermisson have viewed it as didactic or wisdom literature.[29] In addition to those listed by Gunn above, Hugo Gressmann identified the genre as "Saga" when he observed that, "although the narrative fully gives the impression of being drawn from life, it still has to be deemed a saga."[30] In accepting the premise that the identification of the genre of a particular narrative describes its Sitz im Leben, it is obvious that the wide variety of possible classifications of 2 Samuel 11 would logically require a different social setting, or a different function within the

---

[28]George W. Coats, "Tale" in Saga, Legend' Tale' Novella, Fable: Narrative Forms in Old Testament Literature, ed. George W. Coats (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), p. 63-64.

[29]David. M. Gunn, The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978), p. 13.

[30]Gressmann, "The Oldest History Writing in Israel", p. 28.

setting for each position. A couple of examples will illustrate this observation

According to Gerhard von Rad the "setting in life" of 2 Samuel 11 is in the court of David, and was possibly written by a conscientious secretary of the court, in a manner that was, "mature and artistically fully developed to an extent which makes it impossible to envisage further development."[31] R.P. Gordon agrees with von Rad that the narrative falls within the 'court-history' genre on the basis of its deliberate preoccupation with "personalia".[32] It is obvious, according to Gordon, that the writer is not seeking to provide the reader with a political perspective on David's reign. It may be a `court history', Gordon states, but "it is a reflective court history in which the author plays a keen interest in human psychology and despite his aversion to political analysis, senses an awareness of historical causation."[33] The fact that God does not speak in this narrative suggests to form critics such as von Rad that this document is a decidedly secular or humanistic work. This observation could suggest that the current use of the document was not the intention of its original author, and that this theologising of the document has given it a second life.

Another example of the variety of genres associated with 2 Samuel 11 comes from the perspective of Whybray who identifies the story as belonging to the 'wisdom' genre. This is

---

[31]Gerhard von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel" in The Problem of the Hexeteuch and Other Essays. Trans. E.W. Trueman Dicken (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1966), p. 193.

[32]R.P. Gordon, Old Testament Guides, 1 and 2 Samuel (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), p. 84.

[33]Gordon, Old Testament Guide, p. 84.

based on the observation that the instructions in the narrative compares to the various Egyptian texts dated from the second millennium B.C. in which political and wisdom interests are combined.[34]

This notwithstanding, others such as Delekat also view the document as political and argue that it originated in the form of an anti-royal and anti-David propaganda story.[35] Gunn records that some historical critics suggest that the narrative belonged to the promotional material of the Adonijah party as a piece of political innuendo in their attempt to succeed David to the throne.[36]

It is well to understand that not only is form criticism concerned with genre in an effort to determine the socio-historical setting, it also depends upon the forms within the language employed in the narrative. For example, Gunkel in applying his form-critical methodology to 2 Samuel identified motifs and expressions similar to those used in other 'profane' literature. He mentioned specifically the motif where a victim is required to carry his own death-warrant, as is the case with Uriah (11:14). Gunkel mentions Homer's account of a character in Iliad, Belleraphon, who was entrusted with a death-warrant letter from

---

[34]R.N. Whybray, The Succession Narrative (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 11-19.

[35]L. Delekat, "Tendenz und Theologie de David-Salomo-Erzahlung," in Das Ferne und nahe Wort, ed. F. Maas (Berlin: Topelmann 1967) quoted by Gunn, The Story of King David, p. 22.

[36]Gunn, The Story of King David, p. 22.

Proteus which would seal his own fate.[37] Further, the 'secret love' motif of 2 Samuel 11:2-4 also occurs in The Additions to Daniel.[38] This motif is also implied in the inscription, "So he takes away wives from their husbands, to whatever he wants, whenever the fancy takes him",[39] which was found in the pyramid of the Egyptian king Una. This 'taking of a women' motif is also employed in Genesis where the text records a similar event on three separate ocassions (12:15, 20:14, 26:1f).

Thus according to form criticism, the themes and motifs expressed in the ancient writings of the Hebrews, while possibly being influenced by other sources, demonstrate a distinctive form that encapsulates Israel's religious and political history. Martin Noth explains that during Israel's cultic celebrations the tradition complexes were remembered and repeated in their earliest form by the recitation of certain credal formulae. These were collated by the Yahwists and attached to the worship of the different Hebrew shrines and sanctuaries.[40] Thus form critics presuppose that all Israelites over many centuries contributed to the making of the Hebrew Bible as a result of their communal existence.

---

[37]Hermann Gunkel, Folktale in the Old Testament, Translated by Michael D. Rutter (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1987), p. 145.

[38]Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, p.576, 590.

[39]E. Meyer, Geschichte des Altertums, 2nd edition 1.2, p. 142, quoted by Gressmann, "The Oldest History Writing in Israel" p. 26.

[40]M. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch (Stuttgart, 1948), p. 207, ET A History of Pentateuchal Traditions (London:Oxford Press, 1968), p. 190. Quoted by Patricia G. Kirkpatrick in The Old Testament and Folklore Study (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), p. 37-41.

One of the benefits of form criticism to the study of 2 Samuel 11 (at least from a literary point of view), is the manner in which the question addressed to the text changes from a preoccupation with the text's source to one focused on the text's internal organization. Specifically form criticism is concerned with structure, vocabulary patterns, and motifs that identifies with a specific genre as we have seen above. The presumption that the text was narrated by a class of professional story-tellers who were practiced in the art is predicated upon an identification of the form and structure of the genre, and the establishment of the Sitz im Leben for the genre. For example, a form-critical study of 2 Samuel 11 identifies what seems to be a deliberate pairing and paralleling of motifs which express cultural and religious meanings. Martin Noth explains that Israel's cultic celebrations served to perpetuate and enshrine the faith of the Hebrews by frequent recitals of certain credal formulae. These were collated by the Yahwist and attached to the worship of different shrines and sanctuaries.[41] Thus the uniting of the "Ark" and the "house" motifs in Uriah's speech (2 Samuel 11:11), suggest that a subtle authorial motivation brought a pre-Davidic, and a post-Davidic motif together.

This juxtaposition may have been motivated in order to identify the motif and traditions of the "Ark" to the reign of king Saul, and the motif and traditions of the "house of David" to the reign of David. Once David moved the Ark to Jerusalem, the "house" theme

---

[41]M. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch (Stuttgart, 1948, p. 207; E.T. A History of Pentateuchal Traditions (London: Oxford Press, 1968), p. 190. Quoted by Patricia F. Kirkpatrick in The Old Testament and Folklore Study (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), pp. 37-41.

became more prominent in contrast to the "Ark" theme which became significantly diminished.[42] In the dialogue between David and Uriah we seem to see a soldier who exhibits a lingering attachment to the Ark. On the other hand, in David's decision to remain in his "house" in Jerusalem away from the Ark which was at the war front, we see that the "prominence of the Ark diminishes while the importance of the house to the deity and monarchy increases."[43] Form criticism thus elicits questions concerning the preoccupation of Uriah with the traditions of the Ark, and the prominence that is placed upon the "house of David", and the significance of the two different orientations upon the religious and political history of Israel. As such, the identification of the religious (Ark motif), and the political (House motif) is characterized in a "court history" genre. In this case, form criticism contributes to an understanding that the mixture of motifs marks points of tension that exist during periods of political and religious transition. Specifically, form criticism facilitates a functional definition of the way in which the literature works in the context of its original place in the daily life of people. The text is thus seen as expressions of people's reactions in certain situations to information available to them, whether personal stories, religious acts, or beliefs. This may be seen to have positive aspects in terms of a literary understanding of religion and politics, but it is less satisfactory insofar as there is the danger that preoccupation with the Sitz im Leben become of greater importance than the content of the text itself.

---

[42]James W. Flanagan, David's Social Drama: A Hologram of Israel's Early Iron Age (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1988), p. 229.

[43]Flannagan, David's Social Drama, p. 232.

C. Redaction criticism

Redaction criticism is interested in the contribution of the final writer or compiler to the document we now have. It compares the final form of the work with its sources to identify the editor's or author's participation. Redaction critics take the compiler seriously and investigate "every minute verbal nuance".[44] Questions relating to the selection of material, or changes in the material after it was chosen is of great importance to redaction criticism. According to Edgar Krentz, redaction criticism is in essence a "form of tendenzkritik (or bias critique) that uses the editorial techniques of the final writer to determine the special interests and concerns that motivated his work".[45] Thus redaction criticism aims at understanding what occurred in the editorial process of compilation with full view of exposing the individual editor's theological position. As such, redaction criticism views the textual documents as a whole in order to ascertain the theological motive in the choice of one textual fragment over another. In this view the text continues to be seen as a collection of sources, however, unlike source criticism, the focus of attention is on the redactor and the specific theological point of view brought to bear on the redactional experience.

Redaction critics are also interested in the attempts made by the compilers to gloss

---

[44]Barton, Reading The Old Testament, p. 52.

[45]Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method, p. 51.

over or knit together the literary seams that inevitably occur when doing a 'cut and paste' exercise. This necessity stems from the fact that writers come with their distinctive style, and each piece of literature comes with its distinctive language or internal structure. Without the editorial commentary, the secondary work would be difficult to read or understand because of the sudden changes in mood, style, focus, and perspective. Thus the redaction critic's prime goal is to detect the chosen blocks of material and to identify the theological bias associated with their inclusion in the finished product. The Sitz im Leben, of original oral traditions are of minimal importance to redaction critics because their work is essentially concerned with the final document in an effort to discover the theological agenda of its compiler.

Although form critics on the whole had accepted that there was a Deuteronomistic redaction of the books from Genesis to Kings about 550 B.C.,[46] redaction critics argued that the Deuteronomistic revision made to the books of Samuel was not as thorough as it was with the other books. The Deuteronomists found that their religious tenets were already adequately presented in the later sources, of which 2 Samuel 9-20 was a major part. In other words, they were reasonably satisfied that "the Deuteronomic doctrine (that) failure to worship Jehovah exclusively and correctly brings national disaster, was not applicable to the history of the first two kings of Israel".[47] Thus there was little scope for Deuteronomistic

---

[46]Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 365.

[47]Ibid.

moralizing of Jewish history in that both Saul and David, whatever their faults, were wholeheartedly devoted to the national God.

Additionally, K. Budde, who also used redactional techniques in his study of the books of Samuel, notes that redactional summaries (1 Samuel 7:13-17; 47-51 and 2 Samuel 8), which he attributes to the Deuteronomists, mark the end of the biographies of Samuel, Saul and David. Budde concludes that the material after chapter 8 must have been left out of the Deuteronomic edition of 550 B.C. and added at a later date.[48] The reason for the first omission, according to Budde, is that the material was unworthy of a religious book that might endanger the morals and piety of the reader.[49] Furthermore, A. Robert and A. Feuillet conclude that the somewhat shortened books of Samuel remained an apology for the Davidic monarchy, in that David was idealized when he desecrated the sanctuary of Gibeon (2 Samuel 21) and sanctified the future site of the temple (2 Samuel 24).[50] But having said this, the manner in which the collections of textual fragments is grafted and shaped by the Deuteronomists may in fact have been quite different from what their original authors intended. In this sense, the redactor is perceived both as a collector/redactor and an author, because a new focus and perspective is brought to bear upon the collated text as a whole.

---

[48]That is, Saul's war against Agag, the king of the Amalakites (I Samuel 15), and David's family history which follow the concluding remarks of Saul and David respectively (2 Samuel 9-20; 21-24).

[49]K. Budde, Die Bücher Richter und Samuel, in Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 367.

[50]A. Robert and A. Feuillet, Introduction to the Bible, p. 210-211.

In the case of 2 Samuel 9-20, the Deuteronomic school may have taken over an existing traditional complex about David and virtually incorporated it without change in a second Deuteronomic redaction.[51] This view is consistent with the belief that the detection of multiple redactions in biblical narratives is not uncommon for redaction criticism. Multiple redactions are usually evident where there is a shift in a theological or philosophical point of view within a given unit. It could either indicate that a time-lapse had occurred between two or more redactions where the difference in perspective demonstrates a shift of theological or ideological orientation within the same 'school' over time. Further, it could also be possible that different groups within the 'school' may have worked on different parts of the document simultaneously which resulted in various shades of theological difference in the finished product.

With respect to 2 Samuel 11, R.A. Carlson argues that the Deuteronomists were not neutral to the material used as evident in the way they redacted it according to Deuteronomistic specifications. In other words, the moral and theological tenets of the Deuteronomists resulted in a text that reflected a critical and antagonistic attitude to the presence of the monarchy in Israel.[52] The seemingly anti-royal or anti-Davidic redactional bias of the material, according to Carlson, is fostered by the idea that David's actions were

---

[51]R.A. Carlson objects to this view on the grounds that the Deuteronomists were very meticulous in choosing their material, and would have wanted to put their theological and philosophical marks upon it before giving it their approval. David The Chosen King , Trans., Eric Sharpe and Stanley Rudman, (Stockholm: Almqvist Wiksell, 1964), p. 22, 24.

[52]Carlson, David the Chosen King, p. 24.

seen as an act of faithlessness to Yahweh and consequentially this was judged as the cause of Israel's trouble and misfortune.[53] Another redaction critic, A.A. Anderson, disagrees with this position noting that the presence of this story in 2 Samuel does not necessarily mean that there was an anti-royal or anti-David redaction. To him the narrative demonstrates that while David was indeed punished for his crimes in the death of Bathsheba's child (2 Sam. 12:15-18), Yahweh continued to accept David.[54] According to Anderson, the inclusion of the David and Bāthsheba affair reflects the intention of the redactor to demonstrate that David was not under a curse, even in spite of his indiscretion with Bathsheba. Thus the linking of the units of 2 Samuel 10-24 makes the figure of David serve in a didactic role, demonstrating that it is possible for the nation to turn again to Yahweh after a fall by renewing its devotion to Him.

According to redaction critics, the editor brought his chosen texts into conformity with his own ideological and theological principles. Thus the method seeks to understand the inner workings and motivation of the editorial process of compilation while simultaneously bearing in mind that the selections and grafting of texts serve to identify the theological orientation and world-view of the individual editor. To the redaction critic, a document is viewed as a whole in order to ascertain the theological motive in choosing one textual fragment over another. The text, ironically, also continues to be viewed as a

---

[53]Ibid. p. 25, 31.

[54]A.A. Anderson, Word Biblical Commentary, 2 Samuel, Volume 11 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), p. xxxiii.

collection of sources but, unlike source criticism, the focus of attention is the redactor and his specific point of view evident in the crafted text. The Sitz im Leben is of minimal importance to redaction critics because they work with the received document and deductively seek to determine the agenda of the final redactor.

From Historical to Literary Criticism.

From this brief overview of source, form, and redaction criticism we can observe that historical criticism has viewed 2 Samuel 11 mainly against an underlying historical reality. Thus the historical-critical method, or diachronic approach, does not view the document synchronically in the sense of its intrinsic meaning and value, but seeks to rediscover the various components of the text, and to reconstruct them into a socio-historical context. According to such criteria, the interpretation of the narrative is only possible when an understanding of a previous stage of development is determined. Further, the endless debate over the socio-traditional setting, authorial identity and authorial intention tend to rob the individual text of its intrinsic meaning. D.M. Gunn argues that questions as to how we read a story will not be answered by "intensifying the search for extrinsic evidence or pursuing the original social setting, or audience of the story."[55] Consistent with this point of view is that of the literary critics Wimsatt and Beardsley who argues that extrinsic inquiries are of no consequence in determining meaning and that "the design or intention of the author is neither

---

[55]D.M. Gunn, The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation (Sheffield: JSOT, 1978), p. 87.

available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art."[56]

How then does literary-critical methodology view the text? The approach taken in chapter two for the study of 2 Samuel 11 is a narratological one. Generally the literary critics' approach is to accept the text as received and to minimize the historical concerns which centre around the origins of the composition of the text. A narratological interpretation of the Bible aims to bring to light the "artistic and rhetorical characteristics, their inner organization [and], their stylistic and structural features."[57] I will seek to demonstrate that 2 Samuel 11 is a well constructed literary unit that is internally coherent, balanced, unified and meaningful as a self-sufficient biblical narrative. The focus of the narratological approach is an holistic one which serves to uncover the text's internal meaning and unity. This methodology seeks to do "justice to the integrity of the text apart from its diachronic reconstruction."[58] In other words, it will not examine the text's origins, development, or history, but will adopt a synchronic approach which will study the text in its received form. This approach has affinities to a method of literary criticism known as New Criticism. New Critics place "emphasis on the text itself, not on its historical and textual backgrounds, not on the circumstances that brought the text to its present form, not on its religious and cultural

---

[56]W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley, The Verbal Icon (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954) p. 3.

[57]S. Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative". Vetus Testamentum, Volume xxx, No. 2 (1980), p.155.

[58]Barton, Reading The Old Testament, p. 142.

foundations. The literary critic assumes unity in the text."[59] As David Robertson argues,

> not every part is of equal importance, [but] every part is integral to the whole and each part modifies the meaning of the whole. Thus the text is not interpreted until all parts have been brought into meaningful relation to the whole.[60]

This requires a "close reading" of the text in order to ascertain its structural shape and specific relational devices used by the author to unify the various elements in the narrative. Central to this analysis will be an examination of the tension created in the various plot situations and its consequential influence on character development, character interaction, and plot resolution. This means that the structure, content, and internal literary devices are composite elements in the narrative strategy employed by the author to give the text its meaning. According to Hans Frei, we "cannot extract the 'message' from a narrative text, and then throw away the text itself; a narrative is its own meaning."[61] I have included two examples of the strategies employed in narrative analysis which demonstrate that literary criticism is concerned with such things as "the artful use of language, to the shifting play of ideas,

---

[59]Kenneth R.R. Gros Louis, "Some Methodological Considerations", in Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives, Vol. 2. eds. Kenneth R.R. Gros Louis, James S. Ackermann and Thayer S. Warshaw (New York: Abington Press, 1974), p. 14.

[60]David Robertson, The Old Testament and the Literary Critic (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 6.

[61]Hans Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics (London: Yale University, 1974), p. 13.

conventions, tone, sound, imagery, syntax, narrative viewpoint [and] compositional units."[62]

Menahem Perry and Meir Sternberg in, "The King Through Ironic Eyes",[63] are concerned with the gaps in the story that deliberately engage the reader in making choices about various aspects of plot, and the motivation of characters. They examine the ironic tension between a tale's mode of presentation and the action itself. They refer to the fact that even though the king's actions of murder and adultery are cruel, the narrator does not explicitly name the crimes as such. The reader is engaged to fill the gaps left by the narrator. This technique of suppressing essentials means that for the most part the main story is implied rather than stated thus presenting the reader with a narrative of "ironic understatement"[64] that serves to keep the story interesting.

Gale A. Yee, in "Fraught with Background" uses 2 Samuel 11 to demonstrate literary ambiguity as a deliberate stylistic device to engage the reader in the process of constructing meaning.[65] She demonstrates how narrative ambiguity is employed to denote the tension between character action and motive. This is accomplished by emphasising the stylistic technique the author employs in applying identical word motifs to different characters in

---

[62]Robert Alter, The Narrative Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), p. 12.

[63]Menahem Perry, and Meir Sternberg, "The King Through Ironic Eyes", Poetics Today, Volume 7, Number 2 (1986), p. 275-322.

[64]Perry and Sternberg, "The King Through Ironic Eyes", p. 283.

[65]Gale A. Yee, "Fraught with Background." Interpretation, Volume XLII, No. 3, (1988), P. 240-253.

order to produce character contrast, and highlight the variations between narration and dialogue. Yee demonstrates how the style of presentation of the David and Bathsheba story in 2 Samuel 11 engages the reader in a manner that forces an interaction with the characters in the story. The ambiguous motivational gaps in the story, particularly in the actions and reactions of David to the narrative situations, set the pattern for the whole narrative. A study of narrative ambiguity calls for an examination of every word, phrase, repetition, and parallelism in the narrative. Yee demonstrates this methodology when she draws attention to the manner in which the same verbal phrases are used interchangeably in parallel patterns of two diametrically opposed characters in the narrative, namely, David and Uriah. The literary critic is thus interested in what the author has given in terms of the physical text, and not what lies behind it, nor the sociological context or form of the original rendition.

## Conclusion

Thus in this chapter we have seen that the dominant mode of biblical studies for more than a century has been the historical-critical method. This method seeks to reconstruct the history of Israel and the growth of its oral and written traditions through an objective, scientific analysis of biblical material. Source criticism attempts to delineate the sources that the writers used in the composition of the text. Form criticism concentrates on defining the Sitz im Leben that individual units of tradition may have had before they came to be encorporated into the Bible. Redaction criticism seeks to discern the theologies and

intentions of the compilers by observing the manner in which they edited their sources and arranged the individual units of tradition. These disciplines share a common desire to shed light upon significant periods in the transmission of the text. The major limititation of all of these approaches, as argued by Hans Frei, is that they fail to take seriously the narrative character of the text.[66] If the focus of the historical-critical method was mainly on the documentary status of the biblical books, the narratives are understood not so much for their intrinsic value, but for the historical circumstances behind them.

By 1969 however, the need for a more literary approach to the biblical text was expressed by William A. Beardslee.[67] He suggested that analysis of biblical forms should provide insight not only into the character of the communities that shaped these texts but also into the literary meaning and impact of the texts themselves. Beardslee also recommended that if the writers or compilers of biblical texts are to be regarded as authors, then their work must be studied in the same manner as other authors are studied. The search for a more literary approach to biblical studies did not arise from the perception that historical criticism had failed or that the goals were invalid, but that something else should be done to address the meaning of the received text. In other words, the Bible needed to be studied in the same manner as other literature was, asking such questions as: what is the plot? how are characters

---

[66]See Hans W. Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative. A Study in Eighteen and Nineteenth Hermeneutics (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974)

[67]See William Beardslee, Literary Criticism of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

developed? what effect does the story have on the readers and why does it have this effect?

Literary criticism however, is a broad field that encompasses quite a number of different methodologies and theories such as structuralism, Rhetorical Criticism, Reader-Response Criticism, and Narrative Criticism. How do we then examine 2 Samuel 11 in literary terms? For the purpose of this study I will adopt the literary methodology known as narratology (explained in chapter two). This means that only in the analysis of the total literary design of the text will we discover its intrinsic meaning, and as such fulfil the thesis requirements of this paper. We need now to examine this methodology and the manner in which it will be applied to 2 Samuel 11.

# CHAPTER 2

## METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The interpretative strategy of 2 Samuel 11 will be a narratological one. This means that the intrinsic character of the text is treated seriously. This approach will have the advantage of being based on considerations arising from qualities inherent in the text rather than from interests brought to it from some other sources. In other words, it is a text-centered approach that seeks to discover the means through which a work achieves a particular effect. Such an approach calls for an examination of the manner in which the material is arranged, and the way in which it is presented. Thus the characters, events, objects, setting, and relations within the text must receive careful 'close reading'. Specifically, a 'close reading' of 2 Samuel 11 will lead to an understanding of the form or shape of the text.

In essence, narratives have two aspects: story and discourse.[1] The term story refers to the content of the narrative, that is, "what" it is about. The term discourse refers to the rhetoric of the narrative, or "how" the story is told. Narrative criticism is therefore interested in an analysis of the content of the narrative and the manner in which the story is communicated. In view of the fact that only the text is directly available to the reader, it is crucial to understand as much as possible about the basic mode of presentation used in the

---

[1]Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 3

Hebrew Bible.

Because narrative is a medium that biblical texts share with other literary works, biblical narrative can be studied according to the principles of general literary criticism. I will thus explore some of the writings concerning the techniques of narratology in this chapter in an attempt to isolate and systematize the features that characterize 2 Samuel 11, and ascertain "how phrases and sentences form literary units which combine to produce characters, plots, (and) thematic structures".[2] I will then address the formal properties of 2 Samuel 11 in order to answer the question of how narrative form and content functions to delineate character development.[3] In summary, this means asking and answering specific questions like:

> How is the story structured? What are the unifying narrative principles by which the storyteller has selected his material? How does the story unfold sequentially, and what is important about this ordering of events? What are the plot conflicts, and how are they resolved? How does the protagonist develop as the story progresses? How is the thematic meaning of the story embodied in narrative form?[4]

In this chapter I will persue two main goals in preparation for a narratological study of 2 Samuel 11, namely, to study narratological form or structure in terms of the methodological and theoretical concerns that emerge from the literature in the field of

---

[2]Jonathan Culler commenting in the "Forward" to Todorov"s, Poetics of Prose, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 10.

[3]I agree with Lynn Poland, Literary Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics: A Critique of Formalist Approaches ( Chicago: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 122, who argues that form and content not only manifest but also constitute meaning.

[4]Kenneth R.R. Gros Louis, Literary Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives, Vol 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), p. 28.

narratology; and, second, to examine the methodology implied in the term "narrative transaction" as it relates to narrative content.[5] This approach will serve to provide both an understanding of narratological theory, and a methodological model for the study.

## NARRATIVE FORM

### Introduction:

While form and content ultimately cannot be separated, it is however necessary to begin with an understanding of the narrative's global structure or form. This is necessary because the essence of meaning is inextricably related to an understanding of the overarching structural configuration of the text. Lyle Eslinger reaffirms this principle when he states that "this existing text cannot be truly interpreted until it has been read in the light of its exact literary structure."[6] Thus in this section of the chapter, I will explore narrative form. Specifically, I will first define what a narrative is, second, describe the role and importance of narrative sequence (text-continuum), third, discuss and outline the basic elements of narrative shape or structure.

---

[5]Robert W. Funk, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative (California: Polebridge Press, 1988), p. 3. The components of a "narrative transaction" (the received final textual product), are the narrative discourse, story, and the act of telling, performing or narrating. Funk describes the action of the transaction as a "net that permits certain things to pass through while restricting others", p. 5.

[6]Lyle Eslinger, Into the Hands of the Living God (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989), p 3

What is a Narrative?

The term narrative refers to three elements: story, expression, and performance. Narrative story refers to the content of the narrative in terms of what it is about. A story consists of such elements as chronological events, characters, settings, and the interaction and communication of these elements comprise the plot. Rimmon-Kenan describes narrative story as "someone does something to someone, somewhere, at some time. The 'something' that is done is the event, the 'somebody' and `someone' are characters, and the 'somewhere' and `sometime' are the settings".[7] Narrative expression refers to the rhetoric of the narrative, or the linguistic medium used in the telling of the story.[8] This means that the sequence or narrative order of the text is determined by the perspective brought to it by the author, and the rhetorical selection of the words and sentences in the telling of the story means that the story is filtered through some prism or perspective focalizer which insists that the reader

---

[7]Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Art: Contemporary Poetics (New York: Routledge, 1983), p. 35.

[8] Gerard Genette, (Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, trans. by Jane E. Lewin [New York: Cornell University Press, 1980], p. 25) , refers to narrative expression as "narrative statements" of which there are two types, those that express an action or happening; and those that express the status of a participant or other element. The former type consists of "do" statements; the latter of "is" statements. On the other hand, Seymour Chatman in Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (London: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 147ff, refers to "narrative expression" as discourse. Rimmon-Kenan Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics (New York: Routledge, 1983), p.3, refers to "narrative expression" simply as narrative text. I use the term to refer to all that the given text expresses as a creative linguistic medium used in the telling of the story. Thus everything in the text has its expressive role: words, phrases, structure, forms, etc

(implied reader)[9] adopt a specific point of view consistent with the narrative. The "evaluative point of view"[10] guides the real reader through the devices intrinsic to the process of storytelling with respect to the norms, values, and the general world view that is established as operative in the story. In other words, by adopting this intrinsic "evaluative point of view" of the implied author[11] often means that we must suspend our own judgments, belief or disbelief during the act of reading. Wayne C. Booth points out that there is an implicit contract between author and reader in which the reader agrees to trust the narrator.[12]

The third element in our definition of narrative is performance. Narrative performance refers to the manner by which all narrative is mediated or is produced. The mediator for all biblical narratives is a narrator who functions as the reader's guide and thus has a closer relationship to the reader than any of the characters in the story. The biblical narrator gives us all we need to know and can know about the story world. In the Bible, the

---

[9]This term, coined by Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), refers to the reader that the author had in mind when he wrote the text. It is a construct inferred and assembled by the real reader from all the components of the text. The text thus structures "its" (implied reader's) response.

[10]This term refers to the standards of judgment by which readers are led to evaluate the events, characters, and settings that compromise the story. Mark Allan Powell, What is Narrative Criticism? (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 23.

[11]Rimmon-Kenan, (Narrative Art: Contemporary Poetics, p. 86), states that the implied author is a construct of the text, and is the governing consciousness of the work as a whole, and functions as the source of the norm embodied in the work. The ideas, beliefs, and emotions are often not identical to the real author, thus in different works by the same real author, it is possible to exhibit a different set of norms and emotions.

[12]Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 3-4.

majority of narrators are impersonal observers who report only what they see and rarely draw attention away from the story onto themselves or the existential situation from which they tell their story. According to Eslinger, this is one of the appeals of the biblical narrative.[13] This external, unconditioned narrator can shift about in space and time depending on the narratorial purpose. Thus the narrative is told from what Mieke Bal refers to as an "external focalization".[14] We need now to consider the sequence in which the narrator tells what "it" sees.

Narrative Sequence

One of the characteristics of a narrative is that it represents a succession of events. This means that events are combined into sequences that together form a story line. The two basic components of the combination of events and sequences are temporal succession and causality.

In the preparation of a methodology for the study of the David and Bathsheba story in 2 Samuel 11, it is now necessary to draw upon some of the prevailing literary scholarship concerning the narrative ordering of the story. One of the prime aspects of narrative

---

[13]Eslinger, Into The Hands, p.12.

[14]Focalization has both a subject and an object. The object (focalizer) is the agent of the narrative's perception that orients the presentation. The subject (focalized) on the other hand, focuses upon what the focalizer perceives. The "external focalizer" is thus felt to be closer to the narrating agent as a "narrator focalizer". Mieke Bal, Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.105. Similar views are expressed by Genette, Narrative Discourse, pp. 185-94, and Chatman, Story and Discourse, pp.166-95.

sequence is the `landscape of action' which could otherwise describe events as being "temporally patterned, and expressed by the narrator in the third person with a minimal amount of psychological information of the characters".[15] In this sense, events are reported as they might have appeared to anyone present. In such a 'landscape', the concern of the narrator is not how things are perceived, felt, intended, or imagined, but how things have happened. This landscape of action is held in sharp contrast to the landscape of consciousness (as in modern and postmodern fiction) which is devoted precisely to how the world is perceived or felt by various members of the cast of characters, each from their own perspective.[16] Whereas in landscapes of action, the verbs are verbs of action, in stories that include the landscape of consciousness, the language is marked by a heavy usage of mental verbs, of thinking, supposing, feeling, and believing. This notwithstanding, most modern narratives employ both 'landscapes', putting them into an ambiguous relation to each other. The narrative form of biblical stories, however, is predominately a landscape of action rather than a landscape of consciousness. In other words, the form of the story is marked by a series of events which involve changes from one state or set of circumstances to another.

Seymour Chatman describes the series of 'events' that constitute the action plane of narrative form as being of two kinds: those that advance the action by opening an alternative

---

[15]See Carol Fleisher Feldman, Jerome Bruner, Bobbi Renderer, and Sally Spitzer, "Narrative Comprehension", in Narrative Thought and Narrative Language, Ed. Bruce K. Britton and Anthony D. Pellegrini (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990), p. 2.

[16]Carol Fleisher Feldman, "Narrative Comprehension", p.2.

('kernels') and those that expand, amplify, maintain or delay the former ('satellite').[17] By kernels, Chatman means the narrative action or moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events. They are nodes or hinges in the structure, branching points which force a movement into one of two (or more) possible paths. Thus, in narrative form, proper interpretation of events at any given point is a function of the ability to follow these ongoing selections, and to see later 'kernels' as consequences of earlier ones. In this way, once a succession of events involving a particular character establishes itself as the predominant story element of a text, as in the case of David in 2 Samuel 11, it becomes the main story-line in this 'landscape of action'. Logically, a succession of events which involve another character would be considered a "subsidiary story-line" on this action plane.[18]

In all narrative form, the movement or narrative sequence of the text-continuum can only work when the statements representing actions and states are linked together.[19] In other words, the narrative must consist of the succession of events involving participants who are related to each other in time and place and circumstance. Thus this narrative-form exercises restraint on the narrative discourse and is indicative of one of the basic principles in a poetics

---

[17]Chatman, Story and Discourse, pp. 53,54. The term satellite is a transliteration and translates the French structuralist form "catalyse". According to Chapman , "the English equivalent 'catalyst' would suggest that the cause-and-effect enchainment could not occur without its supervention, but the satellite is always logically expendable."

[18]Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction, p. 16.

[19]Chatman (Story and Discourse, p.19), called such linkages "existents" and identified them as space, character, and setting, whereas Funk (The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 57), labels these linkages in a more pragmatic manner as succession of events or sequentiality, continuity of participants, temporal linkages, and spatial connections

of narrative discourse, namely, that the linear character of language in literature means that a text cannot yield its information all at once, it thus must be grasped successively. This fact is very important in determining textual meanings. Drawing on reader-response criticism, Menakhem Perry argues that the ordering and distribution of the elements in a text may exercise considerable influence on the nature, not only of the reading process, but of the resultant whole as well. As Perry notes, "a rearrangement of the components may result in the activation of alternative potentialities in them and in the structuring of a recognizably different whole".[20] Thus, the sequence of events is justified by its effect on the reader where its function is to control the reading process and to channel it in directions 'desireable' for the text. The desired effect is to induce the reader to choose for the realization of certain potentialities (i.e., impressions, attitudes) of the material rather than others in places where there might be more than one possibility. Thus the distribution of material may require some modification by the reader in order to determine its meaning. This process is defined by Perry as retrospective replacement, or retrospective re-patterning.[21] In other words, while a textual sequence appearing earlier in the narrative may suggest one shade of meaning, new verbal clues or ideas which are added at a later stage open up the possibility that a completely different conclusion exists.

Consistent with this principle of the order to which a text might conform, is the

---

[20]Menakhem Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates its Meanings", Poetics Today, Volume 1, Number 1-2 (1979), p. 35.

[21]Perry, "Literary Dynamics", p. 32.

postponement of information about a character. A delayed disclosure of information could come in the form of defamatory remarks, or in information which promotes sympathy. The focus is thus on the perceptual process of the text, or on the process of determining which meaning the implied author intended for the implied reader. Thus, in the beginning, questions may still be left open for the reader to make linkages, establish hierarchies, and fill in the gaps in the hope of subsequent solutions. In this sense it is even possible to entertain several hypothesis as mere possibilities, with no material yet available to establish whether or not to retain them.[22] In this sense Perry provides a good summary for our study of Narrative Sequence when he proposed that;

> every word in the text remains open, pending termination of the reading process. The fact remains that while the text releases its material only by stages, the reader does not wait until the end in order to start understanding. Even if some dubious qualities or actions of a character occur at the begining of a text, they are not prominent enough to be considered counter-instances, at most they present the character as a creditable person with a few weaknesses.[23]

Narrative Shape

While the principle of ordered sequence functions to a large extent to give shape to the narrative, there is much more to a literary understanding of narrative shape. Shimon Bar-

---

[22]Meir Sternberg points out that this process takes place in 2 Samuel 11 where several hypothesis are possible, viz., did Uriah know what David had done, and if Uriah did know, did David know that Uriah knew? In Poetics of Biblical Narrative (Indiana· Indiana University press, 1985), pp. 209-213.

[23]Perry, "Literary Dynamics", p. 47.

Efrat advocates that narrative structure can be studied under a number of narratological strategies.[24] He states that the elements of narrative structure may be analysed with regard to four different levels: (1) the verbal level; (2) the level of narrative technique; (3) the level of the narrative world; (4) the level of the conceptual content. On the verbal level, structure is established by stylistic features such as metaphors, similes, and unusual grammatical and syntactical constructions that are based in words and phrases. On the level of narrative technique, analysis is based on "variations in narrative method, such as the narrator's account as opposed to character's speech (dialogue), scenic presentation versus summary, narration as against description, explanation, comment".[25] On the level of narrative world, the two chief components are characters and events. This is the level at which the mutual relationships between characters, events and settings are temporally and causally connected and make up the plot. On the level of conceptual content, the reader is confronted with the prevailing themes and ideas that knit the narrative together and give it its coherence. These themes identify the central issues of the narrative, and provide its essential focal points.

B.W. Newman's outline of the features of the narrative as a structured event, is particularly helpful in understanding narrative shape. He states that a narrative must have:

(1) Markers for beginning and the end
(2) Markers for internal transitions since discourse cannot consist of an undifferentiated flow of words and sentences.
(3) The temporal, spatial, and logical relation of the various parts must be

---

[24]See Shimon Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative." Vetus Testamentum 30 (1980), pp. 157-173.

[25]Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations", p. 158.

indicated in some way, and the discourse will provide for variation in successive references to the same objects, events, or qualities in order to avoid excessive repetition.

(4) There will be ways to indicate what in the narrative is the focus and what is not, what is in the foreground and what belongs to the background.[26]

This summary means that in analysing narrative shape it is essential to detect the cohesive grouping of certain happenings into clusters of events that are, in turn, arranged in hierarchical sequences along a plane of action. Since a narrative is often made up of more than one sequence, some structural means is required of indicating the grouping of segments. Funk proposes that a segment (group or cluster of events) may consist of, "introductory statements, story nucleus, and concluding statements."[27] A variety of linguistic and structural devices are employed by the author to link these 'islands' of events together as a temporal sequence (i.e., x happens, then y happens), such as thematic interlocking, recapitulation, analepsis, or prolepsis to indicate the interconnection of events.[28] Funk argues that in this way, the segment sequence and linkage become a set of restraints on a narrative when telling a story. He calls this the essential "focusing process" that brings a finite set of participants together in a specific time (or times) and a particular place (or places).[29] In the term focusing

---

[26]B.W. Newman, "Discourse Structure", in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 237.

[27]Funk, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 21.

[28]Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics (London: Methuen, 1983), p. 48-49.

[29]This process must be distinguished from what Genette (Narrative Discourse, p. 94) and Rimmon-Kenan (Narrative Fiction, pp. 71-85) call "focalization". By focalization, Genette and Rimmon-Kenan refer to the answer to the question, who sees? In other words, through

process, Funk means an answer to the question, what is seen?

Not only is the story introduced by a focusing process, or marker, but it must also reverse the focusing process in order to bring the story to a fitting conclusion. This defocusing process, as Funk refers to it, is achieved by "dispensing the participants, expanding the space, lengthening the time, or introducing what is felt to be a terminal note."[30] He states that the fairytale ending "and they lived happily ever after," illustrates this point by serving as a "terminal function" in that time is extended indefinitely.[31]

Having thus established that the shape of the narrative includes a focusing process which introduces the story and a defocusing process which serves as closure, the remainder or middle must necessarily be seen as the heart or body of the narrative. In Funk's view of narrative poetics:

> The narrative nuclei [is defined as] a narrative segment consisting of a cluster of actions or happenings that constitute an event. This is inextricably linked to the whole segment as the central part, or body of the narrative segment; remembering that the narrative segment consists altogether of introduction, nucleus, and conclusion.[32]

The action that is central to a nucleus or narrative segment is the theme of that segment. All the actions, happenings, descriptions, and the like in the segment should contribute to the

---

whose eyes is the story perceived?

[30]Funk, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 23.

[31]This rounding off of the story is what Todorov calls returning to a "state of equilibrium" (Narrative Discourse, p. 51), or what Shimon Bar-Efrat refers to as a state of "relaxation or tranquility" (Narrative Art in the Bible [Sheffield: Almond press, 1989], p. 23).

[32]Funk, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 23.

depiction of the theme event, that is, if the event is in sharp focus. If the narrative has one nucleus, the theme of the nucleus and the theme of the story will be identical. If the narrative consists of more than one nucleus, the narrator has the task of making the themes of the individual segments serve the theme central to the body of the narrative as a whole. It is Newman's opinion that markers for internal transitions must be evident in the text. This underlines the fact that one cannot discuss narrative shape without discussing narrative plot.

The narrative shape of a story is thus a work of art that is seen to have a structured character (the plot) which is made up of separate components, each having the potential of forming networks of internal relations. In 1927, E.M. Forster divided narrative structure into "story" and "plot". He states that:

> we have defined story as a narrative of events arranged in time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. "the king died and then the queen died" is a story. "The king died and then the queen died of grief" is a plot.[33]

He argued that in order for there to be a plot, the events must be related to each other in some meaningful fashion by the introduction of causality. Bar-Efrat places the emphasis in his definition on the orderly system of events that are arranged in temporal sequence. He claims that the plot serves to organize events in such a way as to arouse the reader's interest and emotional involvement, while at the same time imbuing the events with meaning. While the succession of events or the principle of order on a text-continuum is inextricable to the plot, his analysis views the plot as a pattern that is structured from these events and not vice versa.

---

[33]E.M.Forster, Aspects of the Novel (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1953 [1927] ), p. 80.

In this sense, Bar-Efrat compares the events in the plot to building blocks that are of different kinds and sizes, which, when placed in a building have no meaningless blocks. The connections and relationships of events that compose the narrative plot are held together by the "principles of cause and effect, parallelism, and contrast."[34] Bar-Efrat observes that the classic pattern of the biblical plot is:

> that a plot line ascends from a calm point of departure through the stage of involvement to the climax of conflict and tension, and from there rapidly to the finishing point and tranquillity.[35]

Bar-Efrat's structure of the narrative, viz., 'tranquillity-involvement-climax-tranquillity', which forms a pyramid shape will be the prime tool used in my study of the narrative shape of 2 Samuel 11. In this definition of the plot-structure, the prime factor for change is at the stage of "involvement," or the place of central occurrence. This is where the tension between situations and characters, and characters with characters converge to create chaos, confusion, and conflict which is central to the plot. Frequently, in many narrative situations more than one episode occurs in the story. In such cases the initial plot-structure outlined by Bar-Efrat above is replicated in the succeeding ones. Todorov states that where two episodes are dependent upon one another to bring out a central theme (as in 2 Samuel 11), linking is often done by a process of "embedding."[36] That is, the causal 'trigger' for one episode is

---

[34]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 93.

[35]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 121.

[36]Tzvetan Todorov, Introduction to Poetics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), p. 53.

'embedded' within the previous one. This obviously influences the shape of the narrative. Thus from these structural techniques we can see that the focus of the narrative is not just on the reporting of events, although the narrative doubtlessly assumes a reporting function, "the focus is rather on construction of the sequence so that the narrative will attract the attention of the reader and hold it until the narrator is ready to release it."[37] We can observe that the manner in which the reader is regarded by the author is in evidence by the manner in which the content of the narrative is presented. A study of narrative content will now occupy our attention for the remainder of this chapter.

## NARRATIVE CONTENT

### Introduction

An interest in the content of a narrative implies an interest in the narrative world of the characters. An understanding of this literary world is usually provided through an analysis of the language and literary techniques of narrative content employed in the depiction of characters, settings, and events that are axiomatic of narrative discourse. Thus a study of content means focusing on the characters' actions, dialogue, relations and motives within a particular setting. Fernando Ferrara agrees that:

> the character is used as the structuring element: the objects and the events of fiction exist - in one way or another - because of the characters and, in fact,

---

[37]George W. Coats, Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable: Narrative Form in Old Testament Literature (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), p. 64.

> it is only in relation to it that they possess those qualities of coherence and plausibility which make them meaningful and comprehensible.[38]

Since an understanding of the way in which form and content functions in the development of the character of David in 2 Samuel 11 is the main thrust of this thesis, this section will concentrate on the relationship between content and character development. Specifically, I will elucidate two main topics: first, the manner by which ideas and issues occupy focal points throughout the narrative as narrative themes; second, the manner in which the development of the characters in the narrative is dependent on both the text and the engagement of the reader.

Narrative Themes

It is the presence of special narrative themes that define the central issues of the narrative and serve as the focal points as well as the unifying and integrating principle in narrative content.[39] In other words, the reader's interest is piqued by the interconnections made between events, characters, and settings which are simultaneously enhanced with key-words, motifs, and ideas which create a network of meaningful relationships. Major themes such as war, violence, exploitation or peace, reconciliation, and affirmation are common in biblical narratives. The reader is thus interested in how these narrative elements such as

---

[38]Fernando Ferrara, "Theory and Model for the Structural Analysis of Fiction," New Literary History, No. 5 (1974), pp. 245-268. Quoted in Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction, p. 35.

[39]S. Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative", Vetus Testamentum, Vo. xxx, No. 2 (1980), p. 169.

character, setting, events, motifs, and ideas are organized around prevailing themes to produce meaning.

In Hebrew literature, themes that form the content of the narrative are often emphasized by the use of repetition, parallelism, and analogy. In my analysis of 2 Samuel 11, I will be highlighting the narrative's use of these formal properties particularly as they relate to character development. Repetition functions as a linking device at different points along the plot sequence in order to relate one event or action to another. Repetition involves a recurrence of similar or idential motifs or it may work as an inclusio in having the thematic elements replicated at the beginning and end of a unit. Thus the device serves to ensure coherence and further reinforce the unity of the narrative. The use of parallelism suggests that repeated themes are "structured on relationships of equivalence or opposition".[40] This constructive element will be seen operating as a link between the two main episodes of the David-Bathsheba narrative where it is essential to maintain a strong thematic relationship. The use of analogy serves to employ markers such as key-words, and motifs that have affinities with other texts, or with separate sections within a given text in order to re-emphasise a point or provide supporting commentary. It is well to note that these literary elements are usually implied in the text and need to be abstracted by careful analysis and interpretation. Robert Alter cautions the reader to pay close attention to every detail of each action because each word is chosen and used carefully to make its contribution to the meaning

---

[40]Meir Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 439.

of the whole narrative.[41]

Character Development and The Reader's Engagement

One of the most crucial elements in analyzing narrative content is the manner in which characters are developed within the textual world. It is through the skilful development of character that the reader is engaged. Meaning is brought by such literary vehicles as tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity. Prior to our study of how the form and structure of 2 Samuel develops the character of David, some of the literary theory concerning character will be examined. In other words, we need to be aware of the indicators in the content of the text which are distributed along the text-continuum that describe and shape character.

Bar-Efrat felt that the views embodied in the narrative are expressed through characters by their speech and fate.[42] This means that the values and norms within the narrative are mediated through characters, in the decisions they are called upon to make, and in the relationships in which they were engaged. We see this in the sense that on the level of the story, characters differ from each other in that they are individual. In other words, one character is perceived to be different from another by the reader in terms of action and function. The characters in literature, of course, ought not to be regarded as real people. Mieke Bal states that

---

[41]Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), p. 12.

[42]Bar-Efrat, Narrative, p. 47.

> they are imitation, fantasy, fabricated or creatures: paper people, without flesh and blood. The character is not a human being but resembles one. It has no real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act, but it does possess characteristics which make psychological and ideological description possible.[43]

The way we encounter a character in a text is different from real life in that we are not actually spatially in their presence to interact with them. Our only contact is a literary one which does not permit us to see facial expression, body language, or hear the inflections in their voice. Forster points out that our relationship is one that is totally verbal, detached, and intellectual. However, we do have one advantage of which we have no counterpart in real life, we are able to get 'inside' a character because "fiction allows both intrinsic and contextual knowledge of others."[44] In literary terms, then, a character is a literary phenomena who is an autonomous individual within the confines of the narrative world, and who gives the reader the illusion of individuality.

Given that narrative character develops cumulatively along the text-continuum, the question arises as to whether characteristics of character can be classified or whether character conforms to a certain universal system of traits?[45] A trait is sometimes explicitly mentioned in the text, while at other times it is implicit. The identifying traits marked by such

---

[43]Mieke Bal, Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative, trans. Christine van Boheeman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 80.

[44]Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 64.

[45]Chatman argued for a "paradigm of traits" that was relatively stable. This means that in the reading of a text, the behavioural indicators of a character are interfaced with stock classifications of traits to determine a particular character-trait that fits the action. Story and Discourse, p. 126.

descriptions of a character as kind, generous, considerate, boastful, arrogant, and ruthless, may be explicitly mentioned as adjectives, but they may also be inferred from the actions of the character within the relational interaction of the plot. The reality is that a reader can reach a point in the story where an earlier ascribed trait no longer is compatible with the character construction on the text-continuum. The implication would seem to be that either the generalizations established earlier in the story have been mistaken ( a mistake which the text may have encouraged), or that the character has in fact changed. This experience argues for a developmental biography of character rather than Chatman's "paradigm of traits". Nevertheless where explicit behaviour is repeated, the character may well be said to have a character-trait. Other characters, according to Abrams are labelled as "stock characters" who act in a perfunctory role in the story.[46] Characters can thus be categorized as either static or dynamic depending on whether their basic profile changes over the course of the narrative.

Whichever way we approach the meaning of character, we cannot avoid the fact that characters are constructs of the implied author, created to fulfil a particular role in the story. Chatman encourages the view that characters are best regarded as "open constructs" whose existence sometimes transcends the purpose for which they are created.[47] This being so, it follows then that the narrative can reveal characters either by telling the implied reader about them, or by showing the reader what the characters are like within the story itself. This

---

[46]Meyer Howard Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1981), p. 185.

[47]Chatman, Story and Discourse, p. 116-121.

action of demonstrating rather than articulating is a technique that, while less precise, is nevertheless usually more interesting and powerful. This happens because the reader must work harder, and be especially sensitive in collecting pertinent data from the various intrinsic literary clues and nuances of the narrative or dialogue to do a fair characterization of the character in question. Alter agrees that

> characters can be revealed through the repeat of actions; through appearance, gestures, posture, costume; through one character's comments to another; through direct speech, either summarized or quoted as interior monologue; or through statements by the narrator about the attitude and intentions of the personages, which may come either as flat assertions or motivated explanation."[48]

Such indicators come in two categories, those that show and those that tell. It will be seen that 2 Samuel 11 demonstrates or shows more than it tells.

Bar-Efrat proposes that character conditioning by "showing" and "telling" is accomplished in the narrative by direct as well as indirect shaping. By direct shaping, Bar-Efrat does not mean the precise detailed description of physical appearance, because in biblical narrative very little is said about how a character looks. If there is any such description, it is expressed simply in the interest of advancing the plot and may not necessarily describe character.[49] By direct shaping, Bar-Efrat means the inner and mental states of character. He also contends that there are very few instances of direct characterization by the narrator in biblical narratives. Thus, if there is a direct characterization it is often done at

---

[48]Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, p. 116-117.

[49]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 48.

crucial points in the plot, and is most often done by one character who passes judgment on another. Usually these traits are of a moral nature in biblical narratives. On the other hand, the indirect shaping of character, according to Bar-Efrat, is evident in the external features such as speech or actions, which indicate something about the individual's inner state. This is a task which is not undertaken for the reader by the narrator, thereby increasing the active participation by the reader in the narrated events.[50]

The narrative content, character identity, and character trait are additionally influenced by other characters in the story. Mieke Bal argues that in articulating and defining a character's trait "a narrative may have different subjects who are in opposition: a subject and an anti-subject."[51] She describes an anti-subject not so much as an opponent of the subject, but rather as one who pursues its own object, and this pursuit is, at a certain moment, at cross purposes with that of the first subject. Thus the anti-subject plays a structural role, paralleling and highlighting the main ones, whether through correspondence or contrast. Mieke Bal argues that the positive or negative parallel between the anti-subject characters is not enough to shape the characters, but it provides emphasis and colour. The minor character serves as background against which the personality of the main one stands out. Sometimes, as in 2 Samuel 11, the reverse occurs where a minor character (Uriah) becomes the standard of excellence in moral and ethical action which, by virtue of its proximity to the questionable behaviour of the main character (David), creates competition for central

---

[50]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 64.

[51]Bal, Narratology, p. 32.

attention in the mind of the reader, which serves both to maintain interest and to bring out traits in the main character that might otherwise be hidden.[52] In effect the reader is thus given more options in determining meaning in a particular narrative. In any case, the author will focus on the aspect of the character that most exemplifies its role in the plot.

In biblical narrative, deeds do in fact serve as the "foremost means of characterization, and we know biblical characters primarily through the way they act in varying situations."[53] A double duty is performed by characters in that they also serve as building blocks of the plot. Thus, as building blocks of the plot, they ought not to be regarded merely as a means for getting the story going. In biblical narrative, the individual character is as important as the events themselves. Of course, the relationship between plot and character is not an either/or proposition, but is in fact and inextricably reciprocal one.

## Conclusion

This study is interested in demonstrating how the form and content of 2 Samuel 11 functions in the development of the character of David. In view of the fact that 2 Samuel 11 is a narrative, the logical starting point for this chapter was to examine the components of the relatively new literary science of "narratology." With the introduction in this chapter to some of the dynamic elements of narratology, it was essential to outline the methodological approach of Bar-Efrat which are applied to this study. Specifically I presented and explained

---

[52]Bal, Narratology, p. 80.

[53]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 77.

his four-stage plot-pattern, which will be used as the literary 'map' to chart the plot analysis structurally in chapter three, and interpretatively in chapter four. Since the thesis analysis requires an examination of the prevailing themes of the narrative, it was necessary to describe the Hebrew literary devices such as repetition, parallelism, and analogy which demonstrate such themes. In light of the fact that chapter four will focus on the interdependence of narrative form and content in the development of the character David, it was essential to include an analysis of some of the narrative discussion surrounding characterization in terms of "traits", and character shaping. The predominant methodology employed in this thesis will take its direction from Bar-Efrat's narrative plot analysis, and as such, will promote an intrinsic, autonomous, and 'close reading' of the text that will both answer the thesis question and serve to retain the integrity of the text.

# CHAPTER 3

## THE PARALLEL STRUCTURE OF THE UNIT

In conducting a literary approach to the study of 2 Samuel 11 it is of primary importance that the boundaries of the narrative be determined. Bar-Efrat's definition of plot structure outlined in Chapter two will be the principal theory employed to help define the parameters of the unit and elucidate its parallel form and verbal structure.

If a text such as 2 Samuel 11 is to be regarded as a coherent whole, it must have the capacity to answer a literary question in terms of its own internal structure and semantic features. In this study, I am working with the thesis that 2 Samuel 11 forms a coherent narrative unit that answers a question concerning the interdependent function of form and content in the dynamic character development of David. It will be shown that the story unit has a meaningful pattern which is organized around a central theme that is expressed in motifs, symbols, and other literary devices.

### Defining the unit

In this study I will argue that 2 Samuel 11 has an inner logic through which the events of the narrative are formed into a coherent unit, a unit that has distinct boundaries and illustrates the way in which form and content work to define and shape its main character David. Once this inner logic is recognized, a definite global structure will become perceptible and will serve to underline the self-sufficiency of the unit.

The structure for the David-Bathsheba narrative is divided into two distinct but inter-dependent episodes. The movement of the plot in each episode can be adequately described and analyzed by using Bar-Efrat's four-stage structure for biblical narratives (see figure 1, p.58). First is a state of "tranquillity" which is followed by a movement to a state of "involvement" where the tranquillity is broken by tension and anomalous action. This state of tension requires and finds a point of resolution in stage three which is the point of "climax". Finally, the narrative seeks to re-establish the 'status quo' of tranquillity in the fourth stage which, in this narrative at least, represents an uneasy return to the first stage of tranquillity once again.[1]

In 2 Samuel 11, however, there are two types of narrative transactions: those which describe a state of tranquility (**A**, **A1**, **A2**), and those which describe movement or passage (**B**, **B1**, **C**, **C1**). The former set is static, and the latter is dynamic. Bar-Efrat acknowledges that a number of biblical narratives reveal a somewhat different, or modified narrative structure to that outlined above. He explains that

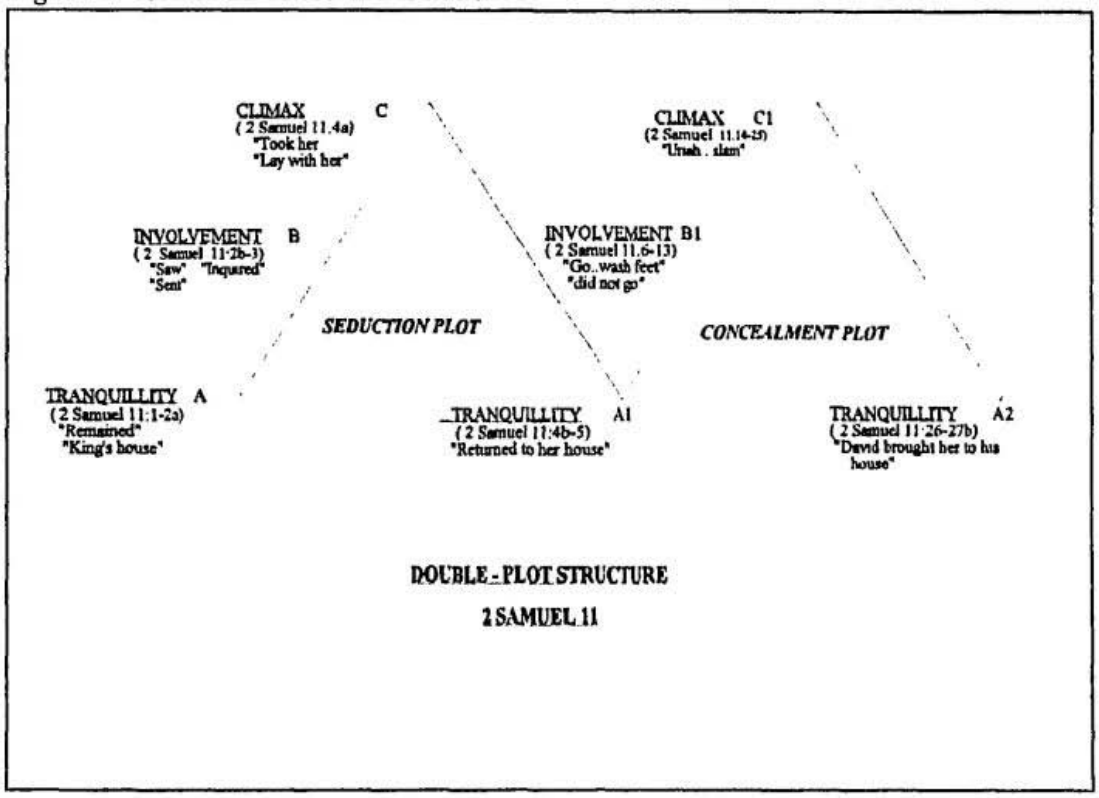
> instead of rising to the climax and afterwards descending quickly to the tranquil end, they [the narratives] ascend to the climax, descend, but then they rise again to a second climactic point, and only afterwards do they finally fall off to the equilibrium of the end.[2]

---

[1]Shimon Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), p. 121.

[2]Shimon Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative", in Vetus Testamentum, Vo. XXX April (1980), p. 166.

**Figure 1**. Global Structure of 2 Samuel 11




We will see in the analysis of 2 Samuel 11, that this repeated pattern is employed in such a way that one sequence is linked or embedded in the other with the result that a double-plot structure is formed. It is this double-plot structure that acts as the primary indicator for the delimitation of the text and gives 2 Samuel 11 its autonomy as a narrative unit. Bar-Efrat's description of the dynamics of the double plot structure is in agreement with the one proposed by Todorov who argues that the distinctive sub-structures are all "embedded" or connected within each other by temporal causality.[3] In other words, the plots consist of an orderly

[3]Tzvetan Todorov, Introduction to Poetics, Trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), p. 53.

system of events, arranged in temporal sequence. Thus the sequential order of the component parts of the double-plot structure of 2 Samuel 11 follow rising and falling in terms of "tranquillity", "involvement", "climax", and "tranquillity". The events of the story in their mutual relationships compose the structure of the two plots. In other words, the incidents succeed one another chronologically as well as in causal sequences, one incident being the outcome of the previous one and the cause of the one that follows it. While most biblical narratives have one plot, 2 Samuel 11 has a more complex structure with two plots. The second plot is utterly dependent upon the first plot, but it also serves to underlay and reinforce the central theme of the first one. Both plots culminate by casting David in a dubious light.

Structurally the two plots show a similar subject and a similar structure. The subject matter deals with David's seduction and "rape" of Bathsheba, and his consequent murder of her husband Uriah. The plot structure is also formulated by a system of degrees of emotion and action that moves chronologically through four distinct stages of varying intensity. Bar-Efrat defines this emotional "building up and relaxation of tension" as dramatic structure.[4] Bar-Efrat notes that "from a peaceful initial situation the action rises towards the climax where the decisive step determining the outcome of the conflict is taken, and from there it drops again to a more or less tranquil situation at the end".[5] Every character, incident, phrase

---

[4]Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative", p. 165.

[5]Bar-Efrat, Ibid.

or word receives its significance from its position and role in the system as a whole. As Bar-Efrat puts it, "contrary to real life, no accidental and irrelevant facts are included and the incidents are connected with each other both temporally and causally".[6] The principal relations between the various units comprising the narrative systems are those of cause and effect, parallelism and contrast. In the structure outlined above, cause and effect form a meaningful chain of interconnected events while the elements of parallelism and contrast mark the two plots as belonging together, and serve to reinforce the subject-matter and overarching theme as a whole. Thus one can discern a line of development which creates a specific interconnected pattern. The first indication of this pattern becomes evident in the focusing material at the beginning of the narrative referred to by Bar-Efrat as "exposition".[7] This exposition serves to highlight anything of an informational nature about the characters, events, places, and circumstances needed to understand the story. Bar-Efrat points out that the importance of this information is to hint at later developments in the plot and by so doing awaken the reader's sense of anticipation. Bar-Efrat also points out that the initial information of the narrative

> connects immediately and organically with the account of the events themselves. In other words, there is a direct and smooth transition from the exposition to that part of the narrative which is concerned with the actual developments.[8]

---

[6]Bar-Efrat, Ibid. p. 163.

[7]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 111.

[8]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 115.

Often in biblical narrative there is a re-focusing on the expositional material later in the narrative which serves to reinforce its paramount importance, as we shall see in the parallel structures. In regard to this re-focusing technique, Sternberg points out that

> from the viewpoint of what is directly given in the language, the literary work consists of bits and fragments to be linked and pieced together in the process of reading: it establishes a system of gaps that must be filled in. This gap-filling ranges from simple linkages of elements, which the reader performs automatically, to intricate networks that are figured out consciously, laboriously, hesitantly, and with constant modifications in the light of additional information disclosed in later stages of the reading.[9]

Thus, rather than supplying all the knowledge required to understand the story at the initial stage of the plot, the information supplied hints at possible meanings. In the case of 2 Samuel 11, Bathsheba is introduced to David at the same time as she is introduced to the reader. But Uriah is introduced "in person" to David much later at the place where he becomes involved in the action, even though the reader may have already learned that he is the husband of Bathsheba.

The narrative begins by implicitly posing the question which gives clear focus to the first plot, "what is David doing in Jerusalem while his whole army is off to war?" The narrator does not answer the question but leads the reader through various stages of development where the answer may be found. On this level of "conceptual content",[10] the reader's analysis of structure is based on the themes of the narrative units or ideas contained therein. Thus,

---

[9]Meir Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 186.

[10]Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations." p. 168 On this level the analysis of structure is based on the themes of the narrative units or the ideas contained therein.

in each of the stages of the plot the central issues when defined serve as focal points in unifying and integrating the narrative. Although these central issues are seldom stated explicitly, their detection and interpretation become the role of the reader.[11] In the present example, the "nucleus" or "central occurrence"[12] is clearly defined in two of the four stages, the "Involvement stage" and the "Climax stage". The narrator informs the reader of David's and Bathsheba's activity in the first plot, and of David's dilemma and the role of Uriah in the solution to this dilemma in the second. There are precise turning points in both plots that occur at the "involvement" stages that lead to an uneasy resolution of tension in the "Climax" stages **C** and **C1**.

The plot normally concludes by moving from the climax of conflict and tension to the concluding stage of tranquillity (**A1**). 2 Samuel 11, however, rises once again to another pinnacle (**C1**), only then descending to another conclusion (**A2**). The tranquillity resulting from Bathsheba's return to "her house" creates uncertainty which becomes the primary cause of suspense in the narrative (**A1**).

The tension rises again when Bathsheba informs David that she is pregnant. This precipitates another question: what will David do now? This question serves to give focus to the second "Involvement" stage (**B1**). The working out of this answer occupies the second

---

[11]See also Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) for his discussion on reader-response, and how it relates to "gap filling".

[12]Robert W. Funk. The Poetics of Biblical Narrative (California: Polebridge Press, 1988), p.8. See also chapter two of this thesis where this concept is explained.

section of the narrative. We observe that what David ultimately does in this section (stage **C1**), is determined by what Uriah does not do (stage **B1**). When Uriah refuses to "go down" to his house and sleep with Bathsheba (**B1**), David takes the tragic action of sending the letter to have Uriah killed (**C1**). This second plot is cast in the tone of dramatic irony where one wonders whether Uriah knows as much as the reader knows about David's affair with Bathsheba[13]. In addition, the unwavering and steadfast allegiance of Uriah to God and his solidarity with is fellow soldiers is held in sharp contrast to David's disloyalty and irreverence to the law. This dramatic irony occupies a central place in the 'Concealment plot'.

The ending and conclusion in 2 Samuel 11 is clearly marked. The beginning of the narrative has signalled several possible scenarios for the ending. The separate houses of David and Bathsheba in stage **A** which were temporarily united when Bathsheba was taken to David's house, will be permanently united in stage **A2** when David takes Bathsheba as his wife. The ending or defocusing devices used in each of the two plots are clearly parallel. In stages **A1**, and **A2** the house motif is clearly dominant. The movement from separate houses to a common house is the ending on which the author settles. According to Bar-Efrat, the objective is

> to bring the narrative to a clear and unequivocal end. The explicit statement that the principal character has gone on his or her way, returned home, or died, clarifies to the reader that the narrative is concluded or that a stage in

---

[13]This kind of gap-filling is an example of Sternberg's argument for the essential involvement of the reader in the narrative experience. See The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, pp. 186-190.

the plot has terminated.[14]

In this case, one character is murdered, and the other two in the "love" triangle "returned home".

This structural analysis of 2 Samuel 11 serves to argue for its unity as a self-contained narrative which has clearly defined borders[15]. The overarching goal of the analysis is to demonstrate how the structure itself is part of the meaning of the narrative as a whole. The meaning extracted from the narrative will be drawn specifically from the manner in which form, structure, and content combine to reflect on the character of David.

But does Bar-Efrat's structural formula fully incorporate this principle of unit definition? In considering such a question, Bar-Efrat concluded that a variety of special structures were employed by the original authors or redactors to mark out specific smaller units like 2 Samuel 11 that were among other things, characterized by symmetry. He points out that the main structures to be found in biblical narratives are the parallel (A-A'), ring (A-X-A'), chiasmic (A-B-B'-A') and concentric (A-B-X-B'-A') patterns.[16] From the above analysis we have seen that a narrative unit often have a plot structure that is causal and a story that makes use of theme, character, foreshadowing, dramatic irony, climax, and suspense in

---

[14]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 132.

[15]The reference and incidents of the Ammonite - Israel war serve as the focusing and defocusing elements in the narrative and form the frame of the unit (11:1; 11:16-25).

[16]Shimon Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations", p. 156.

order to be viable.[17] It is now important to analyze the structural parts that compose it, in order to see the global picture.

Parallel Structure of 2 Samuel 11

As we have seen, the visual depiction of Bar-Efrat's four-stage structure of the plot resembles an inverted 'V' shape. It expresses the action of the narrative plot in terms of ascent and descent. Thus the visual depiction of the structure functions to describe the dynamic action of the plot in terms of its interest level, and momentum or pace, rather than as a chart to map the character's (David's) degenerating moral behaviour. In fact, such a rendering of the inverted 'V' shaped structure would not work in this particular case because David does not ascend by making any moral improvement at all in this narrative. Thus the inverted 'V' plot-shape will be used as a chart of the parallel elements working in both plots that describe structural symmetry, and patterns of coherence that in and of itself participate in the dynamic development of the central character David.

When applied to the narrative at hand, stage A in the seduction plot is marked by a tranquil domestic setting. Both David and Bathsheba are quietly relaxing within their own spatial contexts with David walking about on the roof of "the king's house" after arising from an afternoon nap, and Bathsheba is taking a bath. The biographical sketch of Bathsheba and the emphasis on the "house" motif, gives the impression of domestic security and tranquillity.

---

[17]Leland Ryken, "Literary Criticism of the Bible: Some Fallacies", in Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives, ed. Kenneth R.R. Gros Louis, James S. Ackerman, Thayer S. Warshaw (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), pp. 25,26.

The action of "Involvement" in stage **B**, disturbs this idyllic setting when David's sexual advances towards Bathsheba bridges the distance between their two spatially distinct contexts when he "sent" for her. David's obvious desire for Bathsheba must of necessity deal with the prohibition of sexual activity implicit in the biographical "wife" and "daughter" designation given by the messenger.[18] How was David going to handle this obvious tension between intense desire on the one hand, and the strict laws of sexual propriety concerning another man's wife on the other? Would David give any consideration to the loyalty of the husband fighting for the king on the battle front? Does David not have some modicum of respect for the father and grandfather of this woman ("daughter") who was also a loyal soldier and counsellor? This tension between sexual desire, the prohibitions of the law, and loyalty, was resolved in stage three when "he took her and lay with her". This forms the climax/resolution stage (**C**) of the plot. The employment of a literary defocusing device in the statement, "and she returned to her house", restores the tension of the plot to its "tranquillity" stage (**A1**) once again. As indicated above, this latter stage of tranquillity is an uneasy one, and functions both as a closure to the 'Seduction Plot', and as a focusing device for the 'Concealment Plot'. This is evident in the stark statement from Bathsheba, "I am with child", which serves to catapult the narrative into the 'Concealment Plot'.

In terms of the structural linkage of the events of the two part plot, Todorov's

---

[18]Bathsheba was the wife of one of David's elite warriors, Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 13:39). She was also the daughter of Eliam, the son of Ahithophel. Ahithophel was also one of David's loyal warriors (2 Samuel 23:34).

proposition concerning the "embedding" or temporal causality[19] connects the two episodes in the narrative in such a way that the closure devices in the `seduction plot' (**A - A1**), "then she returned to her house", and "I am with child" (11:4b, 5), become the focusing device which introduces and makes possible the 'Concealment Plot' (**A1 - A2**). The major turning point, or 'axes' on which the double-plot structure turns is the conjunction **waw** ("so" v. 6). In other words, the author's use of the `embedding' device required that the pregnancy announcement by Bathsheba receive a circumstantial "so" response ( **wayyišlaḥ** "so he sent" v. 6) from David when he sent for Uriah. This effectively makes Siamese twins of the two plots. With the words, "I am with child" (vs.5c), the seduction plot is essentially completed having contained the essential components of a story, which is a beginning, a middle and an ending. The inclusion of the reactive circumstantial phrase "so he sent" (v. 6), begins a consequential 'Concealment Plot' which is inextricably connected to the 'Seduction Plot'.

Thus we see that stage **A1** serves not only as the closure or defocusing point of the 'Seduction Plot' where "tranquillity" is restored once again, but it also functions as the point at which the 'Concealment Plot' is launched. Bathsheba is now back in "her house" (vs. 4d), and David remains at the "king's palace". This tranquillity is radically disturbed again by the movement of action from Bathsheba's house to David's house in the announcement to David that Bathsheba is pregnant. This message initiates the intrigue of 11:5-13 which composes the first part of the 'Concealment Plot'. There seems to be an attempt by the narrator to draw attention to the legitimate spatial distance between David and Bathsheba in the movement of

---

[19]Todorov, Introduction to Poetics, p. 9.

Bathsheba to "her house" and the sending of an implied messenger to David, even though the announcement serves to unite them as parents of the unborn child. The focusing question that emerges now is related to the potential options open to David in resolving this moral, and paternal dilemma. David responds by immediately sending a messenger to Joab to have Uriah, Bathsheba's husband sent to the king for an audience. Will David effect a full disclosure of his involvement with Bathsheba? The question hangs in the balance as Uriah arrives.[20]

This stage of "Involvement" (**B1**) is quite intricate compared to its counterpart in the 'Seduction Plot'. David begins his audience with Uriah by making a threefold reference to the welfare of those at the battle front. This repeated reference seems to be designed to make Uriah feel more comfortable and to allay any suspicions as to the purpose for his summons. Uriah is asked by David about the affairs of the war, Joab, and the soldiers, but curiously he is not given a chance to reply. The triple use of **šālōm**, in the context of war, and the reader's knowledge of David's own violence to Bathsheba and Uriah's marriage makes the irony of the situation tangible. In the difference in the verbal structure of David's questions in vs.7 (concerning the welfare of the war), which is rendered in indirect speech, and the instruction in vs. 8 (to "go home"), which is given in direct speech, we see that the degree of force implicit in vs. 8 expresses the degree of anxiety with which David approaches this dilemma. The phrasing of the cordial welcome (in the triple **šālōm**), on the surface

---

[20]This again is consistent with Sternberg's argument concerning "Gap-filling" or "reader-response". See The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, pp. 201-213.

seems to be consistent with the arrangements for Uriah's comfort in the statement, "go down to your house and wash your feet". The statement could suggest to the reader that the journey for Uriah has been dusty and wearying, but in all probability it points out what David wants of Uriah and serves the intrigue as a metonymy: take leave with all its pleasure. The rather over-familiar and lavish treatment of Uriah is further emphasised when Uriah is given a gift from the king (vs. 8d). Fokkelman points out that the gift's movement, "went after him" (**watteṣē**), accompanies Uriah's movement "out of the house of the king" (**wayyeṣē**), and that this statement referring to Uriah's movement, must be accompanied by the statement, "to his own house" in order for David's plan of concealment to work [21] But the plan fails, David does not "go down" to his house.

Thus the "Involvement" stage of the plot is marked by frustration as David's command, "go down" is effectively met by the resolute triplicate, "he did not go down to his house" (vs. 9b, 10b, 10e). Instead, Uriah slept at the palace gate "with the king's servants". On being questioned by David for his actions, Uriah gives an elaborate and patriotic speech that inadvertently depicts David as even more culpable and leaves him with no choice but to figure out another plan of action. David's last resort was to inebriate Uriah in the hope that his resolve would weaken and he would "go down to his house" and sleep with his wife. The levity of the evening left Uriah undeterred in his convictions, thus the deadlock continued. The action of David in this section of "involvement" has done nothing but serve to enhance

---

[21] J.P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art And Poetry in the Books of Samuel, Vol. I ( Assen,:Van Gorcum, 1981), p 54.

the characterization of the two antagonists and the elucidation of the moral aspect of their characters.

The movement from the "Involvement" stage (B1) to the "Climax" stage (C1) comes about in a sinister manner. Uriah is now required to go on another journey, his last one. David, in utter frustration, sends Uriah back to Joab carrying his own death warrant with him. This was not only to be a premeditated murder, but was also to be the cynical concealment of David's violence to Bathsheba, and his paternal responsibility for her unborn child. The dynamic involvement of Joab as the executioner and the deceptive manner in which the murder was to be done further reflects on the character of David.

The resolution of the 'Concealment Plot' and the conclusion of the narrative is captured in stage A2 which again seeks to restore a state of tranquillity. The news of Uriah's death, and the end of the mourning period for Bathsheba set up the final resolutionary act by David in bringing Bathsheba into "his house" where she is to be "his wife". Effectively, the two houses that were illegitimately united in the 'Seduction Plot' during the adultery scene, are now legitimately united in marriage in the 'Concealment Plot'. Tranquillity seems to have been restored. But the narrator leaves an uneasy tone to this new state of "tranquillity" when he stated that "the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (11:11d). The 'Concealment Plot' obviously had not concealed David's sins from everyone.

The task now is to examine the parallel similarities and contrasting aspects of each of the corresponding sections of the double plot-line to determine its symmetry, plot themes and motifs. As stated in chapter two, this study, which is a text-oriented approach, will seek to

identify the Hebrew literary devices of parallelism, repetition, and analogy in determining the text's focus and themes as they contribute to a shaping of the character David.

Stages A, A1, and A2: A Study in Parallels

A study of this double-plot structure must begin with an analysis of the similarities between the parallel stages of the two plots, (**A, A1** and **A2**; **B** and **B1**; **C** and **C1**). This section analyses the repetition of literary elements, the symmetry of movement, and the way in which key words determine the movement of the plot towards the climax and resolution of tension. It is thus imperative to examine the "tranquillity" stage **A**, and note the elements that change, or are affected subsequently by the "involvement" stage **B**, and the "climax", stage **C**. A study of the parallel sections of Bar-Efrat's structure also means observing the elements that have remained unaffected.. In this sense, the parallel stages of **A1** and **A2** must account for the consequences of stages **B, B1**, and **C, C1** respectively that result in effectively creating a new state of tranquillity. In this section I will analyze the corresponding "tranquillity" stages of the 'Seduction Plot' and the 'Concealment Plot'.

In analyzing the three "tranquility" stages ( **A, A1** and **A2**) of the plot structure, we observe parallel linguistic similarities as well as parallel structural similarities (see table 3.1, p. 71). The parallels are evident in the relationships established through the repetition of key words and phrases in the two plots. While the connections implied in the table above are not necessarily represented in the exact order in which they occur in the two plots, they do make the same or similar claims upon the attention of the reader thematically. For example, the

parallel relationship between the key words, "house" and "sent", the leitmotifs of cleansing ("bathing", and "purifying"),[22] the time demarkation, and the death-life motifs, establish a strong connection between the two plots. These words not only serve as focusing devices, but they also serve as effective de-focusers or closures as well.

**Table 3.1 Parallel Linguistic and Thematic Similarities**

| A | A1 | A2 |
|---|---|---|
| "David **sent** Joab" v. 1c | "She **sent** and told David" v.5b<br>"So David **sent** word to Joab" v.6a | "David **sent** and brought her" v.27a |
| "David remained...king's **house**" v. 1d, 2b | "The woman returned to her **house**" v.4e | "David ... brought her to his **house**" v. 27b |
| "and he saw a woman **bathing**" v. 2d. | "She was **purifying** herself of her uncleanness" v.4e. | "She **mourned** for (Uriah) him" v. 26b.[23] |
| "In the **spring** of the year at the **time** when kings go forth to war.." v. 1. | "She was purifying herself from (the **time** of) her **uncleanness**" v. 4e. | "and when the (**time** for) mourning was **over**" v. 26c. |
| "They **ravaged** (caused **death** of) the sons of Ammon" v.1d. | "And the woman **conceived**" v.5a. (cause life of)<br>"I am **with child**" v. 5c. | "Uriah her husband is **dead**" v. 27a.<br>"and she **bore** him a son" v. 27d. |

The parallel correspondence in the narrative between the three stages of "tranquillity" (**A, A1, A2**) interconnect with the principal theme of the story, that is, the immoral character of David which struggles to maintain a state of "tranquillity". For example, in the first stage

---

[22]Sternberg notes the connection between the bathing and purifying motifs and points out that the seeming pointlessness of the parenthetic statement concerning Bathsheba's "purifying" herself, only takes on new meaning when viewed retrospectively from verse 5 which contains Bathsheba's pregnancy. Thus the interpretation of the initial "bathing", and parenthetic "purifying" statements cumulatively establishes David's paternity when "he lay with her". See The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 198.

[23]This concept of cleansing through mourning is known as cartharsis and will be explained later.

of "tranquillity" (**A**) David and Bathsheba are in their separate and individual houses in Jerusalem. In the meantime, David has already "sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel" against Rabbah (11:1b). There is an immediate relationship established between the fact that everyone was "sent" (**wayyišlaḥ**) away from their houses, "but David remained in Jerusalem" (11:1c) in the "king's house" (v.2b). It is the use of the "house" motif that establishes the stable condition of "tranquility" in **A, A1** (11:4e), and **A2** (11:27b). These interlocking parallels establish in the mind of the reader that a stable condition exists primarily when everyone is in their rightful "house" where the moral and legal spatial distance is clearly defined and validated. In the analysis of stages **B** and **B1**, we will see that the tensions in the plot are due to a threat to invalidate this spatial distinction between the two houses, viz., "the king's house", and "her house". Attempts to overcome this tension, and to circumvent the spatial legitimacy of this distinction, leads to new states of "tranquillity" that will also be threatened. In other words, once the original "tranquility" is broken, any similar state that evolves comes with its own sense of uncertainty and unease.

The "home" motif, which is the symbol of tranquillity, is key to understanding the double-plot structure, and is the goal towards which the plot continually moves. The "home" motif in stage **A** is viewed from a different perspective when it reaches stages **A1** and **A2**. In the first stage of "Tranquillity" the house motif is used to emphasize that there was one house for David known as the "palace/house of the king" (**bêt-hammelek** v.2), and one for Bathsheba known as"her house" (**bêtā** v.4). Later Uriah would implicitly draw attention to these two houses and remark that Joab, the Ark of the Covenant, and the men in the field are

without a house (v. 11). The 'house' becomes the locus of attention in that while the house (stage **A**) is used to signal that everyone is in their proper place[24], in stages **B** and **C** it signals that the spatial distance between "her house" and the "palace/house of the king" has been violated and serves to foreshadow trouble and distress for the two houses. This effectively shatters the tranquillity of stage **A**. Further, in stage **A1**, Bathsheba returns to "her house", but she brings something of the "king's house" with her which is evident in the circumstantial phrase, "and she conceived" (**wattahar** v. 5). The restored tranquillity of stage **A1** is now obviously quite different from that in stage **A**, even though on the surface all seems normal because "the woman returned to her house" (v.5).

In stage **A2** a radical change takes place in the application of the 'house' motif. Instead of the spatial distinction that existed in stages **A** and **A1** that defined each person's status, we see the complete breakdown of the textual distinctions, "her house" and "the king's house" as they merge to become one house. The process and circumstances of this breakdown of spatial distinction reflect unfavourably on the character David. Thus the house motif is presented at different stages on the text-continuum as a place of tranquillity, rest, and relaxation (stage **A**). But this place of security is often threatened by the power of exploitation.

The geographical positioning of Bathsheba in comparison to David in the narrative

---

[24]While the thrust of the introduction would suggest that David was not in his proper place by being in Jerusalem while the war was being fought, he is however, in his proper place while he is in Jerusalem.

seems to suggest some metaphorical significance in terms of status and power. The reader is allowed to observe Bathsheba through the amorous eyes of David. As such, his position on the "roof" seems to suggest that Bathsheba was below him in order for such a detailed description of her beauty and activity to be observed. Thus the plot movement intimates that Bathsheba ascends from her lower position at her house (which was "down" vs. 8, 9, 10), to David's higher position at his house (which was symbolically up, i.e., "roof" v.2). This effectively focuses attention upon David as the locus of control early in the plot. While in this narrative the authority to "remain" (vs.1, 12) resides with David, so also does the authority to go ("sent" vs.1, 3, 4, 6a, 6b, 6c, 14, 27), the culpability of David in the twin sins of adultery and murder will be evaluated on the basis by which this authority was employed. When David "sends" out and "gets", he effectively changes the spatial status of others while he himself chooses to "remain" in the same place. When Bathsheba returned to her house and did not "remain" with David, the consequences of the temporary merging of the two houses are not yet apparent. Thus the use of a journey motif serves as a literary device to chart the changes that occur in the status of the characters. It is these movements, or journeys between the house of David and Bathsheba's house, and between Jerusalem and the battle front that signal the changes that occur in the character of David in the text continuum.

Not only does the leitmotif "house" unite the three parallel "tranquility" stages of the double-plot structure, but the use of the dynamic verb **šālaḥ** ("to send") plays an equally significant role in bringing a sense of correspondence between the episodes (see table 3.1, p.71). **Šālaḥ** is repeated 10 times in the narrative, and its use represents authority, prestige

and power when used by king David. The verb "to send" is employed as the temporal dynamic for change, and draws attention to the anomalous elements and situations in the narrative as a whole. For example, David "sent" Joab and all Israel away to battle while, in contrast, he "remained" at home (vs. 1c, 1d); he also "sent" for Bathsheba to be brought to the "king's house" (vs.2); in stage **A1**, Bathsheba "sent" word to David informing him, "I am with child" (vs.5c), which necessitated David having to counter with a **šālaḥ** of his own in sending for Uriah. Thus we see the verb **šālaḥ** as having several literary functions in stages **A** and **A1**, as the catalyst that destabilises "tranquility". Secondly, the verb acts as a cause-effect dynamic to effectively launch the 'Concealment Plot', noted in the transition from **A1 - B1.** Thirdly, the verb **šālaḥ** is used to re-establish "tranquillity" (stage **A2**) after the death of Uriah, when David "sent and brought her...to his house" (v. 27a).

Another element bringing correspondence to the three "tranquillity" sections is the cleansing motif (see table 3.1). From the roof, David sees a beautiful woman bathing (vs.2c **rāhas**). This is the first introduction of Bathsheba to both David and the reader. This state of "Tranquillity" is evident in this secure and seemingly unthreatened act of washing as there is a sense of innocence and trust implicit in this act. In stage **A1** there is an implied connection between the initial bathing (**rāhas** vs. 2) and the purifying (**qādaš** vs. 4) motif. This "purification" is implicitly viewed as a ritualistic act associated with menstruation.[25] This is a crucial structural point because its inclusion implicates David and not Uriah as the

---

[25]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 198

father of Bathsheba's child. In stage **A2**, the parallel cleansing motif is seen in a metaphoric sense as Bathsheba lamented (**sāpad**) over the death of "her husband Uriah" (vs. 26b). In other words, the cleansing motif of mourning for Uriah which acts as Bathsheba's catharsis, effectively cleanses her of her sorrow, and fulfils the customary rites of seven days of mourning.[26] In connecting these three parallel stages we see that the 'bathing' in stage **A** incites David's passion which leads to the sending (**šālaḥ**) for Bathsheba. In stage **A1** the "cleansing" implicates David in his paternal responsibility, a situation which also results in his "sending" (**šālaḥ**) for Uriah. In stage **A2**, the mourning (**sāpad**) removes the grief, and effectively clears the final obstacle for David to "legitimately" send (**šālaḥ** vs. 27) for Bathsheba, thus conclusively invalidating the spatial distance between the houses and re-establishing "tranquillity" one again.

Two other leitmotifs, the time motif, and the death/life/death/life motif are present in the "tranquillity" stages as well, and emphasize the parallel symmetry and correspondence of the double plot (see table 3.1). The "time" or season when the "kings go forth to war" in the introduction to stage **A** is effectively held in contrast to the "tranquillity" that prevails at home in Jerusalem. In stage **A**, the phrase, "it happened late one afternoon", also designates a significant "time" when two characters in different spatial locations intersect each other through visual perception. This synchronization of time (for David and Bathsheba) is a

---

[26]According to Sir. 10:12 mourning lasted seven days, a custom that seems to have been in effect throughout the biblical period (Gen. 50:10, Judith 16:24; cf. I Sam. 31:13. There was a thirty-day period of grief for Moses (Deut. 34:8), and Aaron (Num. 20:29), but these seem to be exceptional.

structural necessity for the success of this narrative. In stage **A1**, the "time" or season implicit in the parenthetic circumstantial statement, "now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness", serves to anticipate the ill-fated pregnancy announcement which disrupts the "tranquillity" of David's leisure in Jerusalem.

In essence, stages **A**, **A1**, and **A2**, create coherence through symmetrical parallels, linguistic repetitions, and analogy. This analysis shows clearly how structure can illuminate the primary themes and ideas of the story in terms of character analysis. These parallels bear a relationship to the principal character, David. We see how the theme of the abuse of authority is reflected in the act of exploitation that violated the social and legal spatial distance between the "king's house" and "her house". Integral and crucial to this systematic development of the plot is the manner in which the character David is portrayed as the one who either causes or reacts to situations that bring change and suspense to the plot line. This character dynamic, as we have seen, marks key points of transition in the narrative. In the analysis of this plot development in the next chapter, I will show how this state of "tranquillity" is violated, dismantled, and re-established again.

Stages B, and B1: A Study in Contrasts

In this section I will analyze the corresponding "Involvement" stages of the "Seduction Plot" and the "Concealment Plot". Unlike the static stages of **A**, **A1**, and **A2**, which pertain to the condition of "tranquility", stages **B** and **B1** record dynamic action on the one hand, and inaction on the other. We will see that a state of tension exists in both stages which

determines a course of action that is both dynamic and sinister.

In stages **B** and **B1** the interactive "involvement" of the characters creates tension that disturbs the "tranquillity" or status quo of the narrative. While this is true of both stages **B** and **B1**, they are nevertheless contrasted in terms of pace. Stage **B** is rife with curt, impulsive, and decisive action. The sequence of rapid-fire verbs moves the plot along very quickly as if to keep pace with the quickening passion of David's obvious attraction for Bathsheba.[27] The verbs of vs.2 and 3, i.e.,"he saw", "he inquired", "he sent", leads to the "climax" ( vs. 4ab, stage **C**) in which he "took her", "and he lay with her". The literary structure suggested by the economical and succinct nature of the verbs, and the impersonal manner in which the narrator expresses the action gives the impression that the 'affair' was an inconsequential act (for David, not for Bathsheba) that was over just as quickly as it started. In contrast, however, stage **B1** moves at a considerably slower and more deliberate pace.

While it is evident from the narration that David acted quickly to summon Uriah, and wasted little time getting to the heart of his agenda once Uriah arrived in Jerusalem, it was Uriah's resolute intransigence in refusing to "go down" to his house that slows the action and pace of this 'Concealment Plot'. Thus we see that while in stage **B** David may have 'had his way' with Bathsheba, in stage **B1** David is thwarted in 'having his way' with Uriah. The point may be that acts of stealth, coercion and deceit take more time. The contrasting pace may indicate that power and authority are effective in the face of traditionally weaker groups, but

---

[27]Walter Brueggemann, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, First and Second Samuel (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1990), p. 273.

are ineffective in the face of traditional loyalty and the discipline of commitment. It will be evident on further examination that David's power allows him to rule over Bathsheba, but it is not effective against a resolute, idealistic Uriah. We will see that a 'command-response' pattern determines the pace (table3.2).

**Table 3.2 The Command-Response Pattern .**

| PLOT ONE - THE SEDUCTION SCHEME | | |
|---|---|---|
| COMMAND | | RESPONSE |
| Stage **A** | David "sent" Joab ... and all Israel (11:1) | Obedience: "they besieged Rabbah" (11:1c) |
| Stage **B** | David "sent" ..."inquired" (11:3a) | Obedience: "One said, Bathsheba... wife.. " (11:3b) |
| Stage **C** | David "sent" messengers (11:4a) | Obedience: "... and (they) took her" (11:4b) |
| Stage **A1** | The woman "sent" word to David | Obedience: "I am pregnant" |
| PLOT TWO - THE CONCEALMENT SCHEME | | |
| COMMAND | | RESPONSE |
| Stage **A1**[28] | The woman "sent" word to David | Obedience: "I am pregnant |
| Stage **B1** | David "sent" to Joab (11:6b) | Obedience: "And Joab "sent" Uriah (11:6c) |
| | David said. "go down..wash your feet" (11:8) | **Disobedience:** " But Uriah slept at the door.. **and did not go down to his house"** (11:9a) |
| | David said.."remain here" (11:12a) | Obedience: "So Uriah remained" (11:12b) |
| | David "invited him" (11:13a) | Obedience: "and he (Uriah) ate in his presence and drank" (11:13b)<br>**Disobedience: "But he did not go down to his house"** (11:13c) |
| Stage **C1** | David "sent" letter by ...Uriah (11:14) | Obedience: "Uriah the Hittite is dead also" (11:24c) |
| Stage **A2** | David "sent" and brought her (Bathsheba) (11:27b) | Obedience: "she became his wife" (11:27c) |

Parallel contrasts are also extended to the comparison of the objects of David's

[28]Stage **A1** serves as a causal link between the two plots and is common to both.

attention, namely Bathsheba (stage **B**) and Uriah (stage **B1**). Bathsheba is presented as passive and acquiescing, whereas Uriah is presented as intransigent and naively resolute. This obviates another contrast between the two stages that highlights the reason for the change in pace, and reflects on the character of David, namely, the need for deception. The manner in which the servants/messengers and Bathsheba acquiesced to David's commands and wishes in stage **B** did not require any contingency plans requiring deception. David's relationship with the other more static characters was based on exploitation rather than deception.

In stage **B1**, the command-obedience-response pattern began the sequence, but the introduction of the recurrent command-disobedience-response pattern, challenged and defied David's authority, and demanded a contingency plan of deception which required careful planning and diplomacy. As we can observe in table 3.2., there is a logical sequence of commands and responses that moves through each of the two plots. The narrator seems to draw an inordinate amount of attention to the "command-obedience" pattern of interaction between David and the other characters. This serves to make the anomaly of the "command-disobedience" response blatantly obvious, thus setting up a parallel contrast between the two plots in the "involvement" stages **B** and **B1**.

Another parallel contrast between the two stages ( **B** and **B1**) which contributes to the change of pace and reflects on the character of David is the kind of speech employed. First we notice that in the whole of the first plot there is no direct speech recorded between David and Bathsheba. Any speaking that is done is between David and the messengers in the

inquiry about Bathsheba, and in Bathsheba's message to David mediated through a messenger. In stage **B1**, however, there is a considerable amount of attention given to Uriah in direct speech, especially for such a short narrative. We observe that there are patterns of verbal interchange where David talks with Uriah, Uriah responds with an elaborate speech, and then David talks again with Uriah. The author employs the technique of direct speech to slow the pace of the narrative. This permits the reader time to sort out the issues at stake, and allow for any reversal in roles or verbal nuances needed to be established in the reader's mind.

The author of the narrative in addition to the above parallel devices employs the technique of using the same words and applying them to different characters and situations. Thus in this narrative the device provides subtle contrasts between stages **B** and **B1.**[29] A series of polysemous words perform a double function by having different sets of meanings active in contrasting applications. Yee points out that Bathsheba is interchangeably referred to as "woman" and "wife" even though the same Hebrew term **ʾiššâ** is used of her. In 11:2b Bathsheba is referred to as "the woman (who) was very beautiful", and who is the object of David's desire. In 11:11c, Bathsheba is referred to by Uriah as "my wife". David makes inquiry about "the woman" (11:3a), and in reply gets a biographical sketch of Bathsheba as "wife of Uriah the Hittite" (11:3b). In all cases the same root word **ʾiššâ** is used. David chose to ignore the "wife" status of **ʾiššâ**, and preferred to treat Bathsheba as an undifferentiated and uncommitted "woman", thus in his mind giving him full access to her as

---

[29]This is reflected in a study done by Gale A. Yee in "Fraught with Background: Literary Ambiguity in II Samuel 11", Interpretation Vol. XLII, No. 3 (July 1988), pp. 240-253.

the object of his passion. The author points out in the contrasting nuances of the word **issa** that Bathsheba's beauty was more arresting to David than was the announcement of her marital status by the messengers. David thus objectified her as a woman who not only was desirable, but one who was simply there to be "taken". In other words David's abuse of power and ruthless abuse of Bathsheba is emphasised He sees nothing more than a beautiful bathing woman, and what he heard afterwards is of no avail. Here we see the impersonal side of passion which has the capacity to reduce the other person to a mere object of desire. What David did, he did with unmitigating cynicism, both in his treatment and exploitation of Bathsheba, and in his deception and elimination of Uriah.

The use of the "washing" motif is also contrasted in stages **B** and **B1** and reflects on David's character negatively. The purification washing by Bathsheba (11:4c) serves to establish David's paternity in the affair. While Bathsheba does her "washing" voluntarily as part of her ritual cleansing, by contrast Uriah is commanded to "go down to your house and wash your feet". The author is doing more than just establishing a contrast between the voluntary and compulsory aspect of the washing motif. A more profound contrast is evident in that in stage **B**, David is implicated by Bathsheba's "washing" in his paternal responsibility, whereas in stage **B1**, David seeks to vindicate himself by commanding Uriah's "washing" in having Uriah sleep with Bathsheba his wife. The same words intend different meanings, one that implicates, the other if followed would exonerate.

Related to the "washing" motif is one of the most active words in the whole narrative, the verb "to send" as we have seen above. In stage **B** David "sends" messengers to inquire

about Bathsheba, and then he immediately "sends" for Bathsheba and she comes to him (11:4). In stage **B1**, David also "sends" a messenger to Joab to have Uriah come to David (11:6,7). The parallel contrast between the motivations for the two sendings is of great importance to the inter-relatedness of both plot structures. David's motivation for sending for Bathsheba was for the purpose of having sex with her. By contrast, the motivation for sending for Uriah was that Uriah might have sex with Bathsheba as well. One "sending" was designed to satisfy David's passion, and by contrast the other "sending" was designed to satisfy the claims of paternity by implicating another. Both incidents are replicated in parallel, but they are contrasted in terms of motivation. The first actions results in exploitation, and the second repeat pattern seems to suggest that the same exploitation will follow. However, this does not happen even though the pattern is repeated precisely. This second pattern merely serves as an action anticipator which does not fulfil its expectations. Uriah is not exploited by David, thus deception is called for. Gale A. Yee provides a graphic outline of how the contrasting implications of the "sending" and "washing" motifs inter-relate is provided in Table 3.3.[30]

**Table 3.3 Motivational Contrasting Action**

| ACTION | INTENTION |
|---|---|
| 1. David *sends* for Bathsheba | to have sex with Bathsheba |
| 2. David *sends* for Uriah | to persuade him to have sex with Bathsheba |
| 3. Bathsheba *washes* herself ritually | insuring David's paternity |
| 4. Uriah is encouraged to "*wash* his feet" | to relieve David of his paternity |

[30]Yee, "Fraught with Background", p. 246.

The action of "1" is related to the action of "3" in that Bathsheba's washing confirms that David's sex with Bathsheba renders him paternally responsible. Similarly, the actions of "2" is related to the actions of "4" in that the intended washing commanded of Uriah meant that having sex with Bathsheba would serve to exonerate David from his paternity.

The "bed" or couch motif is quite strong in both stages **B** and **B1**. In the "tranquillity" stage (**A**), we saw that "in the evening, David rose from his bed" ( **miškābô** 11: 2a) and walked on the balcony of the palace. Following David's passionate observation of Bathsheba bathing, and his sending for her (stage **B**) the "bed" motif is repeated again when it is said of David, "and he slept with her" (11:4, stage **C**) . The next occurrence of the "bed" motif is in stage **B1** when "in the evening, Uriah went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord" (11:13b). There is thus a parallel between the two frames of time, "evening", and the two occurrences of the "bed" motif. The explicit statements, "lay with her", and to "lie on his bed with the lord's servants", obviously refers to David's actions with Bathsheba and with Uriah's inaction with Bathsheba respectively. There is thus a contrast between the **miškābô** of David and the company he kept, and that of Uriah and the company he kept. In fact, the contrast between the two men is illustrated in the fact that Uriah was willing to die on the strength of an oath not to go to bed with the woman that David had already slept with. This ambiguous "thing" (11:11d) spoken of by Uriah in his speech ("to lie with my wife"), and specifically mentioned by the narrator (11:27), which seems so

detestable and resistible to Uriah , is in contrast presented as so inviting and irrestible to David.

Stages C and C1: A Study of Parallels and Contrasts

In my analysis of 2 Samuel 11 it became apparent to me that a parallel structure existed between David's actions in verse 4a, and in verses 14-25. In this section I will describe the corresponding 'Climax' stages (**C** and **C1**) of the 'Seduction Plot' and the 'Concealment Plot' to determine their structural parallels and verbal contrasts. Of particular interest will be the consistent manner in which David is portrayed in his efforts to resolve the conflict in each of the two stages. Stage **C** portrays David as impulsive and ruthlessly decisive as evident in the curt manner in which David's actions toward Bathsheba are reported: he saw, inquired, sent, took, and "lay with her". There is no evidence that her status as "wife" was of any consequence to him. Similarly, in stage **C1**, David matter-of-factly writes a letter to Joab for Uriah's execution, and sends it (**šālaḥ**) "by the hand of Uriah" ( vs. 14). There is no indication of any remorse or consideration for the consequences of his actions for both Uriah and Bathsheba. His actions cast a dark shadow over his character especially in view of the fraternization that had taken place the night before Uriah was sent away with his own death warrant.

The elaborate and intricate detail of the structure of stage **C1** serves to underline the seditious nature of David's character. This is seen in the manner in which he responds to insubordination. For example, in stage **B** where the messengers and Bathsheba relate in a

pattern of "obedience-response" to David's commands and wishes (see table 3.2) his needs are met (stage **C**), Bathsheba is released back to her own home, and the narrative returns to a stage of "Tranquillity" (**A1**). In stage **B1** however, where the "command-obedience" pattern is broken by Uriah who does not obey David's commands, David reacts seditiously by sending Uriah to an executioner (stage **C1**). Thus a plan of transference, and a plan of elimination had emerged as a result of David's frustration. When one failed the other was swiftly and finally implemented.

The contrasting parallels evident in stages **C** and **C1** are also drawn out graphically in terms of a life and death motif. In stage **C** there is the potential for new life ("and the woman conceived" vs. 5), whereas the actions occurring in stage **C1** results in death ("Uriah the Hittite is dead" v.24). Both acts, sexual intercourse and murder, by their nature ought to take place in contrasting settings, one in a context of love, the other in a context of violence. The context does not suggest such a dichotomy because, as Cheryl Exum points out, the sexual encounter takes place in the context of aggression and violence - war with Ammon during which David stays at home. Exum states that the "association of war with rape" indicates that David's actions are indeed rape.[31] The violence implicit in David's actions "and he took her" (**wayyiqāhehā** vs. 4) highlights his position of power, and her position as a passive object. By contrast, Uriah has convictions that are demonstrated and heard. He has objections to the king's command and naively presents these to his commander-in-chief in a

---

[31]Cheryl Exum, Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1993), p. 173.

stinging and idealistic speech. Bathsheba, on the other hand, is objectified as a sexual servant with no voice, or mind of her own. Her total identity comes from her relationship to the men in her life, namely her husband, her father, and her king. Even in her own home she was not safe from the invasive exploitation of the voyeuristic lust of an idle king. Exum also points out, that although Bathsheba is not given a voice in the narrative as is Uriah,

> she has a speaking body [that] gives Bathsheba power over David: she sends word to David, informing him of her condition. The king must act because he cannot ignore the witness her body provides against him. ...it makes visible a crime that otherwise would remain hidden.[32]

The body that arouses David's desire, and leads to involvement on the part of the voyeur when "he took her" (stage C), now speaks out against him. The violence against Uriah would remain a secret (except, that is, to Yahweh vs. 27b), but the violence done against Bathsheba could never be concealed even though to David she continues to be nameless, in spite of the knowledge of her name and marital status given by the messengers. Bathsheba's only guilt was to be the object of David's desire. Similarly, Uriah's only guilt was to be the object of David's frustration when he refused to fulfil his agenda. Both persons were expendable once the purpose for their "sending" had run its course. The tragedy is even more outrageous when it is considered that Bathsheba was "taken" probably on the pretext of love, while Uriah was killed on the pretext of being a hero of war. Thus we have seen in this section the contrasts evident in the acts of sex and war, concealment and murder, the exploitation of a wife, and the elimination of the wife's husband in the abuse of power.

---

[32]Exum, Fragmented Women, pp. 190-191.

Conclusion

In summary, the contrasts between the parallel phases of plot one and plot two demonstrate points of tension that serve to enhance the story. The dual-plot's symmetrical structure connects the stages of the narrative together and shows a clear design, and pattern that not only is evident in the stages outlined by Bar-Efrat, but is evident in the word and plot motifs that connect the two plots. Additionally, the structural movement of action and counter-action around the literary motifs creates tension that disrupts the 'status quo' of "tranquillity" and moves the plot along to a stage of resolution with a view to re-establishing "tranquillity". These literary relationships form a web of interconnectedness illustrated in the causal or "embedding" link between the two plots. This link is located at stage **A1** where the uneasy "tranquillity" that ends the first plot, becomes the starting place for the second plot. The "So David sent word to Joab" consequential phrase (v. 6) is the axes that provides the causative conjunction that means that the two plots are in effect one plot. The second phase in sending for Uriah is set in motion as a consequence of the first, namely, by Bathsheba's pregnancy. The goal is concealment. David's encounter with Uriah renders David powerless and his action is negative. His only activity consists of avoiding responsibilities. The pregnancy and the subsequent murder are to be displaced onto others, Uriah and Joab. Thus we see that a parallel symmetry exists between the component parts of this narrative as demonstrated by Bar-Efrat's structural definition of a plot and confirms its unity as a narrative whole in its portrayal of the seditious nature of David's character in the story.

Having examined the parameters and parallels of the double-plot structure of 2 Samuel 11 in this chapter, it is now necessary to analyse how other literary elements are arranged into a motivational and causal sequence in the narrative's surface structure. Thus in chapter four I will concentrate on the sequential stages of Bar-Efrat's scheme focusing mainly on the manner in which the themes, motifs and double-plot structure impact upon the character of David.

CHAPTER 4

## SURFACE STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to focus upon the development of David's character and the manner in which the structural formation of the two plots in the narrative serves to give meaning to that character. This means synthesizing or unifying the elements that we have already observed in the parallel structural analysis of the narrative in chapter three. My goal will be to analyzed the connections between character development and narrative structure by using Bar-Efrat's four-stage pattern of Tranquillity, Involvement, Climax, and Tranquillity. I will also argue that integral to this four-stage pattern are other structural patterns that also elucidate the inner dynamics of these stages.[1] These patterns draw attention to special themes and motifs that clarify the role that each character plays in the story-world of the narrative. It will be shown that these patterns, set within the framework of a double-plot structure, operate on a text continuum that charts the degeneration of the character of David under such themes as idleness, exploitation, the objectification of women, the abuse of power, the invalidation of legitimate moral and social boundaries, lack of responsibility and integrity, deception, and murder. In essence, the main emphasis of this study is to understand 2

---

[1]These other patterns are referred to under the section "Defining the unit" in chapter three, namely, the ring pattern, the chiasmic pattern, and the concentric pattern . Bar Efrat, "Some Observations on the analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative," p. 170.

Samuel 11 through the questions that arise from the use of a literary methodology. An analysis of the surface structure helps to highlight narrative themes and often draws attention to specific character traits. Thus it will be necessary to emphasize the verbal signposts which act as "marks of segmentation"[2]. The underlying principle is that "the verb is the essential item since a narrative consists of a series of actions and status statements." [3] Thus a change in the structural pattern or rhythm of the text will be seen to alert the reader to changes of focus, incident, location or character role. As such, these 'marks of segmentation' are structurally integral to an understanding of the inner organization and meaning of the narrative's themes.

In doing such a study it will be necessary to trace the central character David through the various stages of the principal plot segmentation outlined by Bar-Efrat. First, David must be placed in his geographic and domestic setting in relationship with the other characters in the narrative. It will be crucial to the analysis to clearly identify the political, social, and domestic character boundaries which mark out the introduction to the narrative. We will see Joab and Israel's army at the battlefront fighting the Ammonite kings while in contrast David is at the "king's palace" relaxing and enjoying the view of a woman (Bathsheba), who is in her house bathing. Second, this "Tranquillity" stage will be disrupted by the consequential tension created as David engages in actions that collapse the spacial moral and social

---

[2].Robert W. Funk, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative (Sonoma:Polebridge Press, 1988), p. 70.

[3]Funk, Poetics, p. 62.

distinctions between the "king's house" and "her house". This set of events corrseponds to the "Involvement stage" of the plot. Third, we will analyze how David seeks to resolve this conflict between his passionate attraction to this woman, and the conventions of social order when he "took" her and slept with her in what is the "Climax" stage of the plot. Fourth, we will observe Bathsheba in a reversal pattern of movement back to "her house". This phrase, "her house" appears to be the closure cue that serves to re-establish the stage of "Tranquillity" again. This reversal movement will end the analysis of the first of the double plot structures. It will then be necessary to follow the sudden rise in interest as the "Tranquillity" is once again broken with the words of Bathsheba to David, "I am with child". This effectively becomes a pre-condition for the second plot where Bar-Efrat's four-stage pattern for narrative structure is repeated again. Fifth, we will examine the consequential "Involvement" stage where David reacts to the announcement by sending immediately for Uriah. It will be seen that the actions that follow in this "Involvement" stage that will further darken the already tainted image of David's character. Central to the analysis will be the manner in which David degenerates step by step as he devises a deadly web of deception in trying to escape paternity by getting Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba. The immoral actions of David will be analyzed in the light of the transparently loyal and idealistic character of Uriah who refused to be exploited. Sixth, I will examine in the "Climax" stage of this second plot the manner in which David sought to resolve the problem of an intransigent Uriah who would not acquiesce to his commands. Seventh, it will be necessary to analyze the depths to which the character David has fallen in seeking to restore "Tranquillity" on his own terms. I will show that while the

stylistic manner in which the narrative is brought to a conclusion leaves the character David in a state of "tranquillity" in "his house", the fact remains that David is not in a state of "tranquillity" in his standing with Yahweh. Integral to this analysis will be questions which will help to focus on how 2 Samuel 11 is stylisticly shaped around the characterization of David: Does the narrative give the reader insights or an understanding of his character from the form and structure of the double-plot construction of the narrative? Does Bar-Efrat's sequential pattern of tranquillity-involvement-climax-tranquillity for biblical narratives help us in understanding the character of David in this narrative?

Seduction Plot: Tranquillity (Stage A, 11:1-2a)

Ironically, the "Tranquillity" stage is created by David who sends "Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel" off to do battle with the Ammonites. We are alerted immediately to the anomaly that this action suggests in its contrast with the opening statement of the narrative that this was "the time when kings go forth to battle.... but David remained in Jerusalem". It will become apparent that this decision by David is key to the development of the story where there is tension between David's desire to exist in an environment of "Tranquillity" on the one hand, and the inability for David to maintain this "Tranquillity" on the other. While David may have attempted to separate himself from the political battlefront in an effort to create an oasis of quietude and peace, the reality of a new internal battle ensues as David's tranquillity is disrupted by his failure to remain within the borders of this solitude, trangressing its limits by pursuing Bathsheba. Tension thus develops between his

quest for "Tranquillity", and his responsibility to respect the sexual boundaries of Hebrew tradition, and the convention of marriage.

In analyzing this first stage of the plot structure we see that the opening statements are arranged in a ring pattern (**AXA'**) which relates to the manner in which the character of David is reflected.

**A** In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle,

**X** David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah.

**A'** But David remained at Jerusalem.[4]

In **X**, the action of the verbs "sent", "ravaged", and "besieged", contrast what kings should do (**A**), to what David is doing (**A'**). The theme highlights the incongruity between the actions of the kings (**A**) and of David (**A'**). Thus **A** and **A'** are asymmetrical and emphasise the anomaly pointed out above concerning David's implicit desire to remain in a state of "tranquillity" in Jerusalem. In a 'close reading' of the introduction (vs.1), our attention is drawn to a number of interesting observations in so far as the choice of words, phrases, and the manner in which they are arranged is concerned. The central section (**X**), which seems to have an excessive amount of detail in it for a narrative that is essentially focused upon the private life of David, contrasts sharply with the minimal amount of information in **A**, and **A'**. The syntactical contrast also gives great force to the phrase "but David remained".

If the narative works by a process of cumulative build-up through a means of adjustments and readjustments in the biblical narrative, then the ideas and motifs are meant

---

[4]The RSV will be used in this analysis unless otherwise stated.

to be grasped successively.[5] Thus certain potentialities or impressions are subtlety suggested in the manner in which the introductory verse of the narrative is arranged. Thus, while the reader's comprehension of the implications of **A'** are unknown, there will be a renewal of this first impression in what Perry calls a "modification or even retrospective replacement, or retrospective re-patterning of elements of an earlier stage on the text-continuum to accommodate new insight only now revealed."[6] In other words, the reader will return time and again to the information in **A'** in order to re-shape earlier impressions formed concerning David's motivations for "remaining" in Jerusalem. The expositional data included in the verse, viz., time of the year, customs of war, location of characters, and activity of the characters, provide valuable and crucial information that will be the subject of re-patterning at a later stage in the text-continuum.

To be noted as well is the irony between sections **A** and **A'** . The generalization "at the time when kings go forth to battle", stands in contrast to the actions of a particular king, "but David remained in Jerusalem". The separation of these two statements by the elaborate expository material provides in Sternberg's words, "an oblique incongruity which the reader must suspect by keeping those two statements apart".[7] The multiple use of the **waw** ("and") as a repeated coordinate to link all the information in the introduction is also used in the

---

[5] From the studies done by Menakhem Perry in, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Test Creates its meanings", Poetics Today, Volume 1, Number 1-2, (1979).

[6]Perry, "Literary Dynamics", p.40.

[7]Meir Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narratives: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 194.

expression **w ᵉ david yôšhēb** ("and David stayed") as if the **waw** were just another coordinate used simply to add more information to the expository material already given [8] It will become apparent, however, that this **waw** ("and") in the introduction radically changes in context to become a circumstantial and emphatic **waw** ("but David") as it is employed as the embedding device between the two plots. [9]

The central section of the ring pattern **X** around which the other two statements (**A** and **A'**) revolve gives the first clues to the ironic contrast between what other characters in the narrative are doing compared to what David has chosen to do. The verbal phrase "ravaged ...and besieged Rabbah", compares sharply to David's "remaining" ( **yāšab**)[10] at Jerusalem". The elaborate list of those gone to war seems to leave the impression that few people remained in Jerusalem besides David and Bathsheba. This impression serves to sharpen the focus on their clandestine activity. As such, this provides a very effective introduction to a story where the central irony is: "What is the king doing in a city while the nation is fighting in the field?" Sternberg argues that this anomaly is "in inverse proportion to the solidity of the cultural norms to which this phrase, 'remained in Jerusalem' appeals"[11]

---

[8]As it is used, for example, in other instances of verse 11:1 "and it was", "and he sent", "and men of him", "and with him..Israel", "and they destroyed", "and they besieged".

[9]When the **waw** is attached to a verb it means "and", but when it is attached to a noun (David) it means "but David".

[10]This verb **yāšab** could also literally be interpreted as "sitting".

[11]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 194.

In other words, the credentials of the king were inextricably linked to his prowess in battle. This is evident in 1 Samuel 8:19 where the role of the king is predicated upon his success as one who would "go out before us and fight our battles". As it stands, the introduction is a tightly arranged contrast that is highly suggestive of something that is not right. This serves the purpose of prospective conditioning in demonstrating David's character.

Having established the fact that David decided to "remain" in Jesursalem in isolation from the battle front, we now move to the tranquil setting in which he has secluded himself. It is interesting that 11:2 is arranged in a parallel pattern (**AA'BB'**) which draws attention to the two sets of pleasures available to David in this setting of "Tranquillity".

**A** It happened late one afternoon when David arose from his couch
**A'** And was walking upon the roof of the king's house

**B** That he saw from the roof a woman bathing
**B'** And the woman was very beautiful

The phrases of **A** and **A'**, emphasise David's personal activity of sleeping and walking around inside the palace, while the phrases of **B** and **B'** emphasise the activity outside of the palace that obviously offers another kind of pleasure. David has just arisen from an afternoon siesta and is casually walking on the roof of his house. Somewhere within the range of the king's wandering eyes, a beautiful woman is taking a bath. The question now arises, will he also isolate himself from this activity outside of the palace as he did with the war? The answer is not long coming. David becomes interested in this woman and makes an inquiry concerning her. The stylistic structure of the parallel pattern (**AA'BB'**) emphasises the idyllic state of "Tranquillity" in the manner by which both David and

Bathsheba are enjoying a quiet time of solitude represented by sleeping and walking on the one hand, and bathing on the other. We need to examine this activity

The introduction of the "stationary motif" **yāšab** in 11: 1b ("remained"), focuses attention on two important motifs in 11: 2, namely the "walking" (**hālak** ), and sleeping ("from his couch", **mē'al miškabo**). These motifs describe specifically the activity of David in this tranquil setting as opposed to his possible activity in a conflict setting of war where the verbs "ravished" and "besieged" dominate the description. Further, the use of the hitpa'el of **hālak** ("and he walked"), indicates that this walk was actually a casual stroll.[12] However, most usage of this particular verb refer to more positive events such as God's "walking" the country side (Deut. 23:15, 2 Samuel 7:6), or Enoch, Noah, Samuel, and Hezekiah "walking with Yahweh" (Gen. 5:22, 6:9: 1, Samuel 12:2; 2 Kings 20:3). One should note too that when this verb is used of David, it is employed in the negative sense, viz., as he roamed the countryside with his band of men while in a running battle with the authorities of Judah (1 Samuel 23:13; 25:15; 30:31).[13] Fokkelman points out that the possibility that the negative sense of this verb in 2 Samuel 11:2 functions as a literary device to indicate that some questionable behaviour concerning David was about to happen.[14] As we have observed, the structure is arranged with careful attention to balance and symmetry.

---

[12]J.P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: King David Vol. 1, (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), p. 51.

[13]Randall C. Bailey, David in Love and War: The Pursuit of Power in 2 Samuel 10-12 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), p. 86.

[14]Fokkleman, Narrative Art and Poetry, p. 51.

The introduction of Bathsheba to the reader is rather ironic. The first 'glimpse' of her is as a conspicuously exposed woman, yet she is assigned a deceptively inconspicuous role in this narrative. This is evident in the precise manner in which the narrator connects her to the main action of the first plot by relaying only selective and indispensable information about her to the reader. David as the focalizer of Bathsheba's beauty (vs.2) is immediately influenced by his vision. To see her is, for a man in his position, to possess her. Although the statement, "she was very beautiful to behold" (11: 2e), is that of the narrator's, the reader is "forced" to see Bathsheba from David's point of view, and thus renders motivation to David's actions. The word **mar'eh** is a Hebrew expression that is reserved for people of striking physical appearance, i.e., Rebekah (Gen. 24:16; 26:7), Queen Vashti (Esther 1:11), Esther (Esther 2:7).[15] The use of this expression makes the reader aware of David's obvious attraction for Bathsheba, and gives a motive for the ensuing action.

The expression, "from the roof" (11:2d), where David is spatially positioned above Bathsheba, projects the image of a despot who is able to survey and choose as he pleases anything within his kingdom.[16] In literary terms, this expression "from the roof" might metaphorically contrast with the depths to which David would later fall. The higher-lower motif also symbolizes the inequality of power as evident in the unilaterial focalization of Bathsheba. These spatial specifications are important to the narrative meaning, especially as

---

[15]Ronald Youngblood, "1, and 2 Samuel" in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, Volume 3 (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1992), p.928.

[16]Fokkelman, Narrative Art and Poetry, p. 51.

we survey the changing character of David.

The "tranquillity" scene has now been established with the characters having been introduced, placed in their specific spatial locations, and identified as to what their temporal activity is. Activity outside of the "king's house" is polarized by two extremes, namely, the activity of "ravishing", and the activity of "bathing". The activity within the "king's house" is marked by solitude in walking and sleeping and gazing at a beautiful woman taking a bath. The potential for this state of "Tranquillity" to be disrupted in conflict has been introduced through the eyes of David where he is attracted to this beautiful woman bathing. We see here the seemingly innocent beginnings of a challenge to the character of David. While he has chosen to shut himself off from the external activity of the " ravishing" of Rabbah, he is now in danger of engaging in another external activity that will be equally as brutal and disruptive to his state of tranquillity, namely, a "ravishing" of this beautiful woman.

Seduction Plot: Involvement ( Stage B, 11:3-3b)

David is now poised to cross the spatial distance between the "Tranquillity" of his seclusion in his house, to the house of the "beautiful woman". The section that marks the transition from the stage of "Tranquillity" to the stage of "Involvement" is arranged in a chiasmic pattern (**ABB'A'**).

**A** And David sent (messengers) and inquired about the woman
  **B** One said, "is this not Bathsheba,
  **B'** daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"
**A'** So David sent messengers and took her.

**A** and **A'** emphasises the similar action of "sending", one to "inquire", and the other

to "take". The phrases in **B** and **B'** function to announce not only to David the name of the beautiful woman that has attracted his attention, but also to give a biographical sketch in precisely two prohibitive words, "wife", "daughter". The "sending" took place in full knowledge of the wife and daughter designation (**B**). Verse 3 depicts two verbs which indicate David's attraction to Bathsheba, i.e., "and he sent" (**wayyišelaḥ**), "and inquired" (**wayyiderōš**). In the nucleus of the plot we are twice reminded of the spatial distance between Bathsheba and David in the use of the verb, "and he sent" ( **wayyišelaḥ**, vs. 3a). First, David spans the distance between him and Bathsheba by gathering information about her, "and he inquired" (**wayyiderōš**, vs. 3a ). We observe how David takes the next crucial step in bridging that distance when "he sent messengers and took her" (vs. 4a), and in so doing, invalidated the spatial separation between them. It is well to note that Bathsheba was not sent to the palace as a gift for David by her father, or husband, and that she did not go of her own accord. D.M. Gunn observes that this act of sending messengers to take Bathsheba sets up an ironic contrast with 2 Samuel 2-4 where David is given the kingdom as a gift. Gunn states that David has seized by force a wife by acting against the marriage of Uriah and Bathsheba and ultimately against the good pleasure of God (v. 27c). [17] This action by David in invalidating the spatial distance between "his house" and Bathsheba's house effectively moves David away from the insufficiency of the solitude and "Tranquillity" of the pleasures available in his own "house" to that which was offered prohibitively in another man's house,

---

[17]D.M. Gunn, The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation ( Sheffield: JSOT, 1978), p.95.

namely, Uriah's wife. David's full knowledge of the name and status of this woman leaves him morally in an indefensible position concerning his exploitative actions.

Two aspects of David's actions thus far reflect negatively on his character. First we observe Bathsheba through David's voyeuristic eyes. Cheryl Exum asks the question, "is not this gaze a violation, an invasion of her person as well as her privacy? Exum further observes, "nakedness makes her more vulnerable, and being observed in such a private, intimate activity as bathing, attending to the body, accentuates the body's vulnerability to David's and our gaze".[18] David is obviously viewed in a position of power in contrast to Bathsheba's position of vulnerability. The second negative aspect of David's actions is the manner in which he acted upon what he saw when he "sent messengers and took her" (vs. 4). There are obvious overtones of force in the use of this verbal phrase "took her".[19] The connection between the dark violent backdrop of the Ammonite war is not lost on the use of the verb. Exum makes a case for David's "rape" of Bathsheba in the manner in which Bathsheba is presented in the narrative represented by the verbs of which she is the subject "came" and "returned".[20] Her argument is that these verbs project Bathsheba as a passive object of sexual extortion. "The denial of subjectivity", she argues, "is an important factor

---

[18]Cheryl Exum, Fragmented Woman: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1993), 174.

[19]A parallel may be drawn between this use of the phrase "took her" and that used in Gen. 6:2 where the "sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and they took wives for themselves, whom they chose". The overtones of aggression are evident.

[20]Exum, Fragmented Woman, p. 172.

in rape, where the victim is objectified and, indeed, the aim is to destroy subjectivity".[21] Bathsheba's point of view, feelings, marital status, nor family placement in her society are of any consequence to David. He "remained" in Jerusalem, it seems, to have a time of rest and relaxation, and Bathsheba became the third part of the pleasures of sleeping and strolling. The obvious tension engendered by his obsessive passion for this "beautiful woman" demands a resolution. Either David has to act on his passionate desire for her, or he must be ruled by the unequivocal marital status of the woman and turn away from "her house" to the pleasures afforded him within "his house". The decision by David to become 'involved' by "sending" for and "taking" Bathsheba was a blatant violation of the sanctity of the "wife" designation that legitimately separated both David and Bathsheba. This "Involvement" risked breaking the "Tranquillity" of David's 'rest and relaxation' by adding to the pleasures of sleeping and strolling the pleasure of sexual intercourse with the "beautiful woman".

Seduction Plot: Climax (Stage C, 11: 4c)

Having summoned Bathsheba to the palace, little time is lost in fulfilling David's uncontrollable passion for this woman. The arrangement of vs. 4c in a parallel pattern (**AA'BB'**) serves to highlight, in two succinct parallels, the unceremonious manner in which the 'affair' was conducted. While **B** and **B'** provide two parallel pieces of expositional detail that seem completely irrelevant, it will prove to be a very damaging piece of information which will have devastating results in the narrative.

---

[21]Exum, Fragmented Woman, p. 173.

A And she came to him
A' And he lay with her

B Now she was purifying herself
B' From her uncleanness

Having recently arisen from his bed, David now returns to it yet again, but this time in the company of a woman. The Hebrew word **š-k-b** used in the expression "bed of him" (vs. 2b) and "and he slept with her" ( vs. 4c), demonstrates a possible inner connection between the idleness that led David to his bed for an afternoon sleep, and later to the bed for an act of adultery. But the bed motif does not only function as the focal point of David's life, more importantly, it represents the active centre around which the rest of the narrative revolves. In other words, the literary use of the "bed" motif represents the collapsing of the spatial distance between David and Bathsheba in the first plot, and ironically, becomes a forbidden object (for Uriah) in the second . Thus the use of the Hebrew root word **š-k-b** in 11:2 and in 11: 4, 24, seems to question the morality of David's actions.

The juxtaposition of the climactic sentence, "and he lay with her", and the circumstances concerning her "uncleanness", dramatize the contrast between them. It is essential therefore to inform the reader that Bathsheba was clearly not pregnant when she came to David. The fact that Bathsheba had to send messengers to David advising him of her pregnancy further underscores the notion that David may have thought he could get away with it. Brief though this indirect speech is, the words set in motion a course of action which ultimately results in tragic irony: the new found life within her would ultimately mean the loss of life for her husband.

The fourfold sequence of events, i.e., David's leisure (v. 1e), the woman's beauty (v. 2e), her being married (v. 3e), and her having purified herself (v. 3d) provide the decisive viewpoints for the action's evaluation.[22] The first two actions are presented as having causal overtones, whereas the second two are circumstantial, and are structurally significant for this study. For the plot to work, it is critical for David to ignore Bathsheba's status as a "wife". Thus the link between her bath at her house, and her purification ritual, establishes David's culpability. The fourth element in this sequence of focusing action, is cast in a tone that reflects religious connotations. The words chosen to express Bathsheba's purity have, according to Sternberg,

> Torah connotations (that) contrast sharply with the surrounding plain words of everyday life. This stylistic effect points out to us that David is acting impurely and that his actions are a desecration".[23]

In this sense the verbal phrase "purifying herself" ( **mitqodeš̆et** ), stands in close relationship to her "bathing" (**roḥeṣet** ).[24] This beauty and cleanness is strategically placed in the narrative in order for it to stand in contrast to the impulsive brutality of the man who would

---

[22]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narratives, p. 198.

[23]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 198.

[24]The parenthetic statement concerning Bathsheba's purification falls within the style of biblical narration where, according to Robert Alter, there are three general kinds of functions served. These are: the conveying of actions essential to the unfolding of the plot, the communication of data ancillary to the plot, and the verbatim mirroring, confirming, subverting, or focusing in narrative statements. In this case what seems "ancillary" proves to be vital. The Art of Biblical Narrative, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), p. 77.

prey upon it. The text seems not to be interested in the possibility that Bathsheba shared the responsibility of this adulterous act. It presents her merely as an object of desire (11: 2-4, 27).

The literary structure of this first plot lays emphasis on the "spatial opposition that underlies the text"[25]. David's staying in Jerusalem, where he is idle and thus ready for mischief, obviously contrasts with the army's life at the front. Within the city, the palace and its elevated roof, from which David sees Bathsheba, contrasts with the house of the couple, where Bathsheba is focalized. In terms of David's character we find that he is irresponsible, and blatantly exploitative in his dealings with Bathsheba.

Seduction Plot: Tranquillity (Stage A1, 11:4g-5)

The consequential statement " Then she returned to her house", serves to defocus the "Seduction Plot", while simultaneously providing the setting and circumstances which focus on the "Concealment Plot". The reverse journey from the "king's house" to "her house" effectively signals that the legitimate spatial distance between David and Bathsheba has been restored and her return serves to re-establish the state of "Tranquillity" once again. This means that the narrative sequence of tranquillity-involvement-climax-tranquillity has run its course.

On the surface it would seem that this 'journey' by Bathsheba to the "king's house" is

---

[25]Mieke Bal, Lethal Love: Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 23.

without consequence now that she has returned to "her house". This is evident in the matter-of-fact manner in which the informational statement, "then the woman returned to her house" is presented. It seems to emphasize that the purpose for her visit had been fulfilled, and that there was no other function for Bathsheba at the palace. The adultery that now connects "her house" with "his house" will not so easily be dismissed, and things will never be the same again irrespective of how David regards Bathsheba. Once the spatial boundary between the two opposites has been crossed, a reversal in geographic terms by a "return to her house" does not necessarily mean a reversal in the moral and personal inertia of the action that has been initiated.

With the stark unembellished statement, "and the woman conceived", the reality of the consequences of David's action sets in. The implications are clear, the house of David and the house of Bathsheba will now and for all time be inextricably connected. The narrative is poised on the precipice of decision. What will Bathsheba now do? This turn of events effectively disturbs the illusion of a second "tranquillity" and serves to launch the "Concealment Plot". This means that the narrative pattern of tranquillity-involvement-climax-tranquillity will once again be repeated. The verbal form of the re-focusing elements which inaugurate the "Concealment Plot" have an interesting pattern that serves to focus on a change in the locus of control. Its verbal structure (11:5) that begins a second 'journey' back to the "king's house" again from "her house" is arranged in a ring pattern (**AXA'**).

**A** And the woman conceived
  **X** And she sent and told David
**A** "I am with child"

The statements in **A** and **A'** contain the message, whereas the statement **X** indicates the subject and object of the message. We are now introduced to a cluster of verbs that serve to change the subject of the verbs from David to Bathsheba, "and she sent", "and she told", "and she said". This set describes the action taken by the woman once she became aware of her pregnancy. We see that both David and Bathsheba are accorded the same type of syntactical presentation in these verbal complexes.[26] As Bailey points out, "in each one of these verbal triplets (from 11:1-5) there is a key word which functions as a code for setting the tone of the narrative and foreshadowing the events to follow."[27] This key word is the verb "to send". We have seen that the two previous groups of triple verbs contain the verb שׁ-ל-ח ("to send") but that in each case David is the subject of the verb. In this new context, where Bathsheba is the subject and David is the object, we see a radical change in the locus of action. Thus the circumstantial statement "then the woman returned to her house" takes on a new meaning. It seems that the reality of her pregnancy seems to empower Bathsheba to initiate a journey back to the palace. To 'initiate' action is a new role for Bathsheba in this narrative. It seems likely that in linking the verb "to send" with Bathsheba as its subject the author is signalling that the locus of control is about to move out of the hands of David. This observation is based on the frequent use of this authoritative verb in 2 Samuel 10-12 (27 times). By ascribing this verb to both Bathsheba and David, the narrator suggest that perhaps

---

[26]Previously David sent, and took Bathsheba, now the action is accorded to Bathsheba. Bailey, David in Love and War, p. 86.

[27]Bailey, David in Love and War, p. 86.

it is Bathsheba's social familial status, rather than her association with David which gives her this authority.[28] It is not without significance that the two verbs "to send" and "to say" is associated with women of authority in the Deuteronomic History. These women of influence and power are Rahab (Joshua 2:21); Deborah (Judges 4:6), Delilah (Judges 16:18), and Jezebeel (1 Kings 19:2). Since Bathsheba came from a politically influential family[29], and since Ahithophel was noted as one of David's key advisors prior to the revolt of Absalom,[30] it begs the question as to whether David was more interested in Bathsheba for her political connections than for her transient beauty. Precedent is already established for this in the liaisons where David has already had with high society women such as Abigal and Michal (1 Samuel 19,25, 2 Samuel 3:2-5). While these may be plausible arguments, one cannot overlook the irresistible power of Bathsheba's very beautiful appearance. While sex may possibly be a tool of political ambition in this narrative, it may also be more an indication of David's weakness in the face of such beauty.

Thus at the conclusion of the "Seduction Plot", the construction of the text implies

---

[28]Richard G. Bowman, "The Crises of King David: Narrative Structure, Compositional Technique and the Interpretation of II Samuel 8:15-20:26", unpublished Ph.D dissertation, quoted by Bailey, David in Love and War, p. 86.

[29] As the wife of a respected member of David's special elite security force identified as the "Thirty"(2 Sam. 13:39), being the grand-daughter of Ahithophel, a trusted counsellor and loyal soldier of David (2 Sam. 23:34 ), and having a house in such close proximity to the palace seems to suggests some measure of familial and political influence.

[30]This may suggest that there could be a connection between the change of allegiance to David and the Bathsheba-Uriah situation, 2 Samuel 16:23)

that the locus of authority is changing. Previously David was the one who did the sending and commanding, and Joab, the army of Israel, the messengers, and Bathsheba did the obeying. Until this point in the narrative the pattern of "command-Obedience" has been clearly established as the symbol of David's authority and confidence.

Concealment Plot, Involvement (Stage B1, 11: 6-13)

We have seen that in the Involvement stage of the first plot Bathsheba was "sent" for and "taken" by David, but Bathsheba also does some unsolicited "sending" of her own and David is its object. The force of her message causes David to react and take remedial action. David's actions changes to being more reactive rather than proactive. Thus the events at the end of the "Seduction Plot" signal a veiled threat to David's absolute control over his destiny. His main pre-occupation in the "Concealment Plot" will be one of damage control. This apparent challenge to David's authority, will give us new insights into how David behaves while in a position of personal vulnerability.

David's first reaction is immediately to send word to Joab to have Uriah the Hittite sent to him. It is interesting that David makes no reference to Bathsheba in terms of the ratification of her condition or consultation concerning possible solutions to their dilemma. It seemed that David viewed this situation as his exclusive problem which needed a swift resolution. The arrangement of 11:6 in a ring (AxA') pattern where A and A' express the urgency to get Uriah (X) to Jerusalem underlines David's state of mind.

A So David sent word to Joab
X Send me Uriah the Hittite
A' And Joab sent Uriah to David

The narrative time in which the three 'sendings' occur, two of David and one of Joab, is reflective of the authority of David, and of the manner in which people respond to the king's decree. The structural outline demonstrates how David's yet unknown plan was set in motion. While the reader is thus led to question what will happen to Uriah in Jerusalem, the summons is obviously related to the pregnancy announcement. Thus the 'embedded' technique is successful in linking the circumstantial clause "I am with child", with the consequential clause, "so he sent" (11: 6a).

On arrival, David asks Uriah how Joab, the soldiers, and the war fared (11:7). The solicitous and cordial manner in which David greeted Uriah with the three-fold **š-l-m** concerning the welfare of certain things functions ironically: while David tries to stress **š-l-m** (welfare), it has nothing to do with Uriah's welfare. Ostensibly then, David seeks to give the impression of being interested in the welfare of Joab, the soldiers, and the war. But the reader may well be asking, to what end was all of this solicitous action directed, is David going to confess to Uriah, is he going to ask for forgiveness? Or perhaps he will bully or bribe Uriah with a military promotion to accept the child as his (Uriah's) own? The villain (David) is here being portrayed as meritorious.

The reader is not given an immediate answer to those questions because David's immediate concern is for his paternity and this concern circumvents any sense of feeling for

anyone else's personal welfare. Thus David's preoccupation with his own dilemma sets the mood of the text and gets to the heart of his reason for bringing Uriah from the battle front. This reason was not to inquire about the **š-l-m** of his army, but to get Uriah to go down to his house and have sexual intercourse with his wife Bathsheba. This section (vs. 8, 9) is arranged in a chiasmic pattern (**ABxB'A'**) in which **A** and **A'** are represented as opposing forces in the initial interchange between David and Uriah.

**A** Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house
**B** and wash your feet"
**X** and Uriah went out of the king's house and there followed him a present from the king.
**B'** But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord.
**A'** and did not go down to his house

Uriah refused to obey the command to go down to his house, and consequently chose to sleep instead at the door of the king's house (**B'**). Thus the desired result **(B)** of Uriah going to his wife did not materialize. The significance of the present from the king **(X)** as the coercive element, was obviously a failure.

The phrase "wash your feet" may well be intended as a double entendre given the euphemistic use of "feet" where David would be suggesting to Uriah that he "enjoy his wife sexually."[31] Thus the same Hebrew verb used for Bathsheba's washing, **r-h-s** (11:2), is also used for Uriah's washing. It seems that both connotations of the " washing" verbs have an association with co-habitation by practice and by intent.[32] This refusal by Uriah to acquiesce

---

[31]Gale A. Yee, "Fraught with Background", Interpretation: A Journal of Biblical Theology, Volume XLII, No. 3, (July 1988), p. 245.

[32]Yee, "Fraught with Background", p. 245.

to David's command breaks the 'command-obedience' pattern established in the "Seduction Plot" which has served to symbolize David's authority. A new 'command-disobedience' pattern is now being established which is consistent with the subtle change in David's status of authority as indicated at the end of the "Seduction Plot". At any rate, if the "washing your feet" command is interpreted euphemistically for Uriah to sleep with his wife (cf.v. 11), then for Uriah to instead sleep in the company of "the lord's servants" is an obvious defiance of David's authority. This act serves to break the narrative's literary pattern of control by changing the 'command-obedience' pattern to the 'command-disobedience' pattern. This spirit of noncompliance by Uriah in the 'command-disobedience' pattern contrasts sharply with the prevalent 'command-obedience' pattern. What David meant as an order is taken as an offer that can either be accepted or rejected. Mieke Bal points out that "Uriah believes in his own freedom of choice, while David, like chiefs in the film *the Godfather*, thinks he has made 'an offer he can't refuse'".[33]

The urgency implicit in David's actions is also evident in the manner in which the narrator uses indirect speech in the triple **š-l-m** which is held in contrast to the direct speech employed in the command to "go down...". This suggests that David operates with ulterior motives. The change in the mood of the speech from indirect to the imperative mood signals its urgency for David. On the surface, the king's concern for a weary soldier seems genuine enough, and the affection normally afforded gift-giving also seems genuine, especially as it is given by a superior to an inferior in the context of a triple **š-l-m**. But why does Uriah not

---

[33]Miek Bal, Lethal Love, p. 28.

get a chance to answer David's questions concerning something that was of so great importance to the welfare of the nation? David instead seems very pre-occupied with enacting his plan as quickly as possible. At this point in the narrative Uriah has made no protest, and the narrative simply states, "And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. And Uriah lay...". For the moment it seems that the king's plan is going to work, but the text immediately takes an unexpected turn. The ambiguous conjunction "**waw**" that begins the phrase "But Uriah slept..." (**wayyiškab'ûrîyâ**), must therefore be rendered adversatively because Uriah steadfastly refused to "go down to his house"[34] Sternberg points out that the triplicate, fully written out, deliberate and emphatic manner in which the report is given to David, i.e., "He did not go down to his house" (vs. 9b, 10b, 10e), effectively thwarted David's diabolical scheme.[35] This technique of inversion employed by the author is especially effective in this narrative where the king is presented as desiring one thing, while his subject (Uriah) desires the opposite.

Under the natural process of coherence, Uriah's reason for not acquiescing to the king's wishes, even in the face of the solicitous greetings and gifts of favour, is at the moment without answer. We know why David would be anxious for Uriah to "go down". The ironic turn of events in Uriah's refusal to comply is heightened by the fact that David has not given any reasons for Uriah's stay in Jerusalem other than those included in the initial rhetorical

---

[34]Verses 9,10 and 13 carry the same Hebrew expression **'el-beto**, meaning "to his house" and underlines by repetition the steadfastness of Uriah's resolve in the face of the king's commands on the one hand, and his coercion and deception on the other..

[35]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p.200.

greeting. The consciousness of the heightened frustration of David is correlated with the king's increasing solicitude for this soldier. This incremental release of clues on the text-continuum serve to retain the reader's interest. The statements in 11:10, are arranged in a ring pattern (AxA) which highlights in **X** the new tactic used to effect the **A** and **A'** in getting Uriah to go down to his house.

**A** When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house."
**X** David said to Uriah, "have you not come from a journey?
**A'** Why did you not go down to your house?"

In this case, David is providing a legitimate and obvious reason (tiredness) resulting from a journey, to reinforce and justify the command for Uriah to comply with his wishes. Further, the **hăl**ô**' midderek** ("not from-distance" v.10) or literally, "way" is also a term used of a military campaign (cf. Judges 4:9, 1 Sam. 21:5).[36] David, as commander-in-chief attempts to make the decision an easy one for Uriah by encouraging an unrestrained visit with his wife. Uriah's reaction to the favours offered to him, it seems, catches David off guard.

Uriah's speech is in fact an elaborate answer to what amounted to a rhetorical question by David. This parallel pattern (**AA'BB'**) reinforces the spatial boundaries and distance between the people at war and those in Jerusalem introduced expositional in v.1.

**A** Uriah said to David, "the Ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths.
**A'** and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field.

**B** Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife?
**B'** As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."

The double emphasis in **A** and **A'** as in vs.1 concerns the people that David sent out to do

---

[36]Youngblood, "1, and 2 Samuel" in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, p. 933.

battle, but Uriah emphasizes the addition of the Ark. The Ark is somewhat personified as effectively sharing the same plight as the soldiers in being devoid of the comforts of a dwelling. The force of logic for a soldier is paralleled in **B** and **B'** where Uriah asks his own rhetorical question "shall I...?", and gives his own answer, "...I will not".

It seems that out of a sense of solidarity to his fellows soldiers, and deep reverence for the Ark of the Covenant, Uriah refrains from going home. In this respect, Sternberg comments that he was an "exemplary soldier, a man of noble spirit and possessing an uncompromising conscience".[37] Thus we see two diametrically opposed characters caught in a web of sinister deception. In the one we see a struggle to maintain his reputation, but in the other we see an oblivious struggle to save his life. In 11:11, Uriah's refusal to obey David is presented in three infinitives **ʾ-k-l** (to eat), **š-t-h** (to drink), and **š-k-b** (to sleep). Thus the luxury, safety, and pleasures of the domestic setting is rejected in favour of the austere battle setting. Uriah's rhetorical question is not answered by David (vs. 11d), although David's rhetorical question was answered rhetorically by Uriah (11:11). Uriah's question "and I, how can I go home to eat, drink, and sleep with my wife?" implies that to do so would be unthinkable. Thus the moral and spatial distance that David had violated in plot one when "she (Bathsheba) came" (**bō'**), and "he (David) slept with her" (**š-k-b** vs. 4bc), is maintained by Uriah when **bō'** plus **š-k-b** is refused. The ironic contrast between the two men's actions is made more acute by the fact that Uriah does not know that David has already 'gone down' and slept with his wife, and that the underlying reason for his own coming to

---

[37]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 203.

Jerusalem, and "remaining" there was because of David's illicit actions. Thus the distinct difference between the character of the king and this naively idealistic, but loyal soldier is tragically amplified.

The location of the Ark, Israel, Joab and his servants at the war front (v.11b), i.e., the Ark in a booth, Israel in booths, and Joab and his servants in the field, stand in abrupt contrast to the y-š-b ("remained") motif that connects David with the pleasures of his palace and of his bed. While the different dwellings associated with the three groups may be descriptions of their position in the battle strategy, i.e., Joab and his servants at the front in the open field, and the reserve support units of Israel including the Ark housed in tents or booths, Carlson suggests that this is meant as a stylistic comment on a known fact to draw attention to the harsh difference between their dwelling or "house" and the king's "house" in Jerusalem. He further suggests that it was meant to emphasize that the Ark could have been housed in a booth during the cultic field rites associated with war.[38] Uriah's oath, ironically, is almost a paraphrase of the oath attributed to David by the tradition reflected in Psalm 132:3-5:

> I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids' until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the mighty one of Jacob.

David is now perfectly content to "remain" in his house while being reminded by the one he has wronged that it is not right to lie on one's bed when the Ark of Yahweh is in the field. Also, the eating and drinking and sleeping motifs are paralleled by Uriah who "ate and drank

---

[38]R.A. Carlson, David the Chosen King, Trans., Eric J. Sharp and Stanley Rudman (Stolkholm: Almqvist Wiksell, 1964), p. 149.

before him (David)", and... lay on the mat with the servants of his lord" (vs.13b). Nevertheless, the bedding of the soldier (**mšḵb,** v. 13) has little in common with the bedding (**mšḵb,** v. 2b) of David. All three verbs (ate, drank, lie) would once again be used with telling effect in the 'disclosure scheme' in Nathan's rebuke (12:3). One might also be reminded of the Song of Songs, "eat, drink and become drunk of making love" (5:1) where the same verbs **ʾ k-l, š-t-h, š-k-b,** predominate. Similarly, just as David had Bathsheba come to him (**bôʾ**), and sleep with her (**š-k-b**), so Uriah now refuses to **bôʾ** ("go") to his house and **š-k-b** ("lie") with his wife. That Uriah now calls Bathsheba "my wife" reminds the reader of the significance of David's adulterous actions. Uriah's emphatic oath matches his emphatic resolve not to violate the legitimate distance between a loyal soldier's vow and the pleasures offered to him if he would only "go down". This oath, taken on the life and soul of the man who had violated the sacredness of Uriah's relationship with his wife Bathsheba, drives home the ironic contrast between the integrity of the two men.[39] The contrast is ironic in that David had refused to go the long legitimate distance (to war), but instead chose to go the short illegitimate distance sending messengers to Bathsheba's house. Uriah's refusal to "go down" maintains the legitimate distance dictated by his soldier's oath. Uriah is modeled here as a man of principles.

In dramatic fashion, this section (11:12,13) is preoccupied with convincing Uriah to

---

[39]Fokkelman discusses the chiastic distance (vs. 10d + 12c and vs.10e + 12d) in the structural presentation. Uriah, who has come from far away to refuse to go such a short distance from the "king's house" to "her house", was a distance that David had already invalidated. Fokkelmann, op.cit. p. 57.

go to his house and sleep with Bathsheba. The two adjuncts of time, "today" and "tomorrow", that provide the closure for the solicitous actions of David towards Uriah are depicted in sharp contrast to the persistent tone of the questions concerning motion, i.e., "journey", and "not go down" in 11:10. David's seeming acquiesence to Uriah's inadvertent condemnation in the speech seems to indicate a ploy on David's part to finally induce Uriah to relax, and accept that his king has recognized his loyal principles. This would presumably disarm Uriah psychologically so that the desperate measures of the 'wining and the dining' (11:13b), would have a better chance of securing the desired goal. The "Involvement" stage of the "Concealment Plot" has now turned from the overt actions of assertiveness and exploitation to the covert actions of stealth and deception. The entreaty by David to "stay here" instead of the command to "go down" reminds the reader that the change in the locus of control first indicated when David was represented as the object to Bathsheba's message (11:5), is now well in hand. David, while obviously frustrated by the intransigence of this soldier, may in fact be somewhat relieved by the knowledge that "Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next".

David's further attempts to get Uriah to "go down" suggests that he thought that Uriah's resolve could be broken with alcohol (v. 13b). The fact that inebriation did not weaken Uriah's resolve points out that what Uriah said in his speech, was indeed sincere, and was not a kind of grandstand performance for his commander-in-chief. By way of contrast, an inebriated Uriah ironically displays a more noble character than does a sober David. David's deceptive actions in getting Uriah drunk in an effort to get him to sleep with his wife

end with a deliberate and emphatic, "he did not go down". The servant's not Bathsheba's couch remains the bed of choice for a non-compliant Uriah (v. 13b).

This choice of beds by the characters in the narrative reminds the reader of the contrast between the conditions and circumstances in the city, and the conditions and circumstances of the nation at war (v.1). The erosion of David's character is continually being emphasised by these ironic contrasts with other kings, with Joab and David's army, and with Uriah's loyalty and discipline. Uriah's retort in 11: 11 thus becomes more emphatic as a double trenchant, that is, if we take it not as an open defiance of David but as an indirect, unconscious rebuke.[40] Uriah is not ready to do legitimately what David has already done illegitimately. This fact is only palpable to David and the reader. The emphatic statement "he did not go down" ( 11: 13c), provides a fitting closure to the first attempt by David to solve his paternity dilemma. He now has to come up with a more subtle contingency plan.

Concealment Plot: Climax (Stage C1, 11:14-25)

David's failed attempt to coerce Uriah to go home to Bathsheba suggests that David was loosing control of the situation. We have seen several faces of David in the actions that he has taken thus far in the narrative. We have seen the idle side of David that while the kings are off fighting the war, he is at home sleeping and taking casual strolls. We also witness his lack of discipline in his voyeuristic intrusion into the private life of an innocent

---

[40]U. Simon, "Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb, an Example of a Juridical Parable." Biblica 48 (1967), p. 214.

woman bathing and in his inquiry concerning her. We are privy to the sharp decisive commands that brought Bathsheba into his bedroom where she was exploited, and "raped". In his knowledge of Bathsheba's pregnancy and his own obvious paternity responsibility, David's reaction continued to be one of cold disdain. David is by now operating in a mode of deceit and stealth as he seeks to get this soldier to break his sacred oath by co-habiting with a woman during a holy war. David also tried to inebriate Uriah with the hope that the wine would loosen his resolve. With failure on all counts to escape paternity, it became apparent that the one thing left was for David was to accept paternity. It seems that a new and macabre realization now emerges in the drama. David now knew that his plan to reject paternity responsibility by coercing Uriah into sleeping with Bathsheba was a complete failure. It remained therefore for David to accept paternity responsibility, but, in so doing, Uriah must die. The crystallization of this fact in David's mind was now final and without argument. So "in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah" (11:14).

This section brings Joab into central focus as the one to administer the contents of the letter and deal with its bearer in a manner which David was not willing to do. This sending of the letter literally means "sent by the hand of" (**š-l-ḥ bəyād**). This adds a poignant moment to the narrative which becomes a further tragic indictment on the character of David. In this, David was once again defying tradition as Deut. 27:24 stipulates, "cursed is the man who kills (**n-k-h**) his neighbour secretly (**bassāter**). The same verbs will be used of David when he orders Uriah to be struck down (**n-k-h,** 11:15), and when he took his wife

"in secret" (**bassāter**, 11:27). The implication is obvious: David's heinous actions are punishable under the "divine curse".[41]

The structural content of the letter is arranged in a ring pattern (**AxA'**) which describes the content and motivation for the letter.

**A** In the letter he wrote, set Uriah in the front of the hardest fighting.
**X** and then draw back from him.
**A'** that he may be struck down and die.

We observe that **A** describes the plan for the execution whereas **A'** describes the anticipated result (11:15b). Section **X** suggests that others would be used to spring the trap when they were ordered to withdraw from the fighting without notifying Uriah. This special assignment for Joab, to kill Uriah, is further evidence of the king's cynicism in this premeditated murder. David has now crossed the border from persuasion to force. Uriah on the other hand, has crossed the border of inactivity in the city, towards ultimate danger at the battle front. Uriah is "between the reassuringly clear positions of the husband and the soldier, both belonging to a group, Uriah is here isolated. Between secrecy and publicness, Uriah carries the sealed but written, and hence potentially public, secret of David's crime".[42]

Thus vs. 14-15 are structurally the counterpart to v. 25 where David seeks to soften the reality of death for a soldier, and where Joab is given "absolution" for his murderous actions. The proximity of the double reference "he wrote a letter" to each other, and the short separation between them serves to sharpen its literary use as a medium of death. In addition

---

[41]Carlson rightly identifies this phase of David's life as being "under Curse" in David the Chosen King, p. 141.

[42]Mieke Bal, Lethal Love, p. 30.

to this, we notice that the personnel involved in conveying messages has changed, instead of the court messengers, Uriah is used. Thus technically and logically, it was essential that the death command be written down and not conveyed orally as in all the other cases in the narrative. By this means the author adds poignant cynicism to the concealment plot.

The implementation of the execution plan goes on in David's absence, but the intent of his sinister command continues under an equally ruthless executioner, Joab.

> And as Joab was besieging the city he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite was also slain (11:16-17).

The manner in which this is narrated makes it seem like any regular battle in that we are given the time and place of designation, the battle report of the actions of the enemy and of Israel's soldiers, and the casualty report. The key item of interest is that the objective is fulfilled, viz., "assigned Uriah" and "Uriah...slain" respectively. Joab fears that the flawed battle plan submitted by David would cast suspicion on David's motives, hence the improvements to the plan.[43] It was thus implemented in spirit rather than by the letter. Joab realised that the saving in casualties, however desirable in itself, is also the weak spot in the king's plan. Joab's loyalty to the king led him to conclude that it was better for many to fall than for the conspiracy to stand revealed.[44] The hidden opposition to the king's plan by Joab

---

[43]Notice the similarity between the actions of David towards Uriah and Joab's actions towards David in the modification of the battle-plan. Both include concealment, a counter-deception, and a plan for a greater concern.

[44]See also Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 214.

is predicated upon the difference between the order of execution given by David, and the execution of the order as determined by Joab. The narrator merely intimates the reasons that David's plan was not followed to the letter. So it is in this sense that the soldiers are sacrificed so that a relatively unnoticed one might die. There seems to be a delicate reflection on the ineptitude of David's plan, thus further implicating David's lack of judgment yet again. First Uriah (11:11), and now Joab casts suspicions on David's state of mind. The erosion of David's character continues. However, the narrator only allows Joab's modified enactment of David's plan to be the judgment given of David in the narrative. It is not without notice that the doleful refrain of the death announcement has its own effect as it reverberates through the rest of the chapter, "your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead" (v. 21, 24, cf. also v. 26). The irony of this feature is that "the king's plan appears, for a moment, the more humane of the two".[45] We only retain this irony for a moment until it is realised that an innocent man is the object of David's death warrant. The poignancy of Uriah's death is not lost in the matter-of-fact manner in which it is expressed, almost as an addendum, as the sense of the repeated word **gam** suggests , viz., "moreover" (vs. 17), "also" (vs. 21), "moreover" (vs. 24), is used.[46] Neither is it lost against the fitting brutal backdrop of the battle-front where death is a matter of due course.

From verses 18 - 21, we catch a glimpse of the esteem with which Joab held David his king and commander-in-chief. In this section Joab's worries get more attention and space

---

[45]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 214.

[46]Youngblood, "I and II Samuel", Expositor's Bible Commentary, p. 936.

than does the report of Uriah's death which only receives nine lines of direct speech out of the twenty. This fact is evident in both the adjustments to the battle plan and to the manner in which the messenger is instructed to report it to David. It is imperative that Joab also conceal the motivation for this ill-advised battle from the messenger. This preoccupation opens a window of understanding on how Joab is portrayed as knowing the mind of David, and on how similar David and Joab were in their thinking and action. In like manner David also knew the mind and loyalty of Joab. Thus the command of David and the compliance by Joab ensures the plot's success. It is somewhat ironic that the deception motif employed in David's dealings with Bathsheba, Uriah, and possibly with "all Israel" (vs.1) is now replicated in Joab's dealings with the army, Uriah, the messenger to David, and now David himself. Joab not only knew the mind of David, but behaved like him. We see how Joab's message to David, like David's instructions to Uriah, skilfully smuggled into it subtle clues crucial to Uriah's death. Joab knew that the high casualty count would arouse David's anger. Sternberg suggests that in David's hypothetical words we have a "picture of a general who not only gives his messengers the contents of the king's anticipated response, but also acts the part of the king, expressively mimicking the intonations and speech patterns of royalty in rage".[47] The coaching scene makes it possible to reconstruct the methodology employed by the author to get the characters further his own ends.

The casting of the account of the death of Uriah in dialogue form renders a touch of novelty. The questions ascribed by Joab's hypothetical anticipation of David's reaction work

---

[47]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 219.

perfectly as a re-patterning or reflective technique in drawing a parallel to another killing that causally had a women at the centre. Does this clever parallel suggest to the reader that somehow Bathsheba was to blame for this whole debacle? Whatever our answer is to that question, it is interesting to note the ironical contrast that Abimelech at least was at the head of his army in battle when he was felled by the woman, whereas David was playing truant from the battle when he was 'struck and smitten' by a woman's beauty.[48]

The skill with which Joab has framed the report to David has effectively veiled the real purpose of the exchange from the messenger. In fact, this is also a surprise to David as well, because in the original instructions there was no ordering of other deaths in such a strategically flawed battle. The goal of the report, it seems, is to elaborate on the casualties and the facts concerning the abortive battle. David would not have made the link between this report and his order until the delicate moment when, almost as an addendum, the messenger stated that, "Uriah the Hittite is also dead". This technique by the author effectively relays the fact that in Joab's estimation, the king would be extremely upset by the many casualties of this abortive battle until he realises that it is deliberately mismanaged to solve his own personal affairs. In this sense, by the seeming superfluous detail of Joab's action, the narrator has the capacity to effectively depict David as being even more ruthless, and more culpable without ever having to utter a word of judgment. It was thus not necessary for David to react in the manner that Joab had anticipated, because technically, the seed of Joab's judgment of David had already been sown in the reader's mind. Thus, if Joab,

---

[48]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, pp. 221-22.

who knew David so well believed that he would react in this way, given what had already transpired, it was relatively easy for the reader to concur.

The phrase, "all that Joab had sent him to tell" (v. 22), on the surface seems redundant until it is realised that not all the message given by Joab was delivered by the messenger. The messenger made some modifications to the report by changing the identification of those who initiated the attack from Israel, to the people of the city. The messenger stated that it was only in a counter-attack that Israel drove the enemy back to the wall of the city. In this way, the messenger cleverly set up a legitimate reason for the army's proximity to the wall and rendered redundant the hypothetical retort from David, "Why did you go near the wall?" Thus the report of Uriah's death is not separated as such from the casualty report. Obviously, the messenger does not understand the psychological reason for Joab's formula of delaying Uriah's death announcement until after David had become angry.[49] It made more sense to the messenger both in terms of the logical transition of information, and for his own safety and survival, that if he could avoid the king's rage he would be foolish not to. The key pacifier for king David was the knowledge of Uriah's death. Thus we see in the text three versions of the fighting, one of the actual fighting (vs. 16-17), one in Joab's rehearsal with the messenger (vs. 19-21), and finally the messenger's report to David (vs. 23-24). But how did David respond?

David's response is a subtle reminder of the depth to which David had fallen when he told the messenger to tell Joab not to let this "matter trouble you" (11: 25), and further to

---

[49]Fokkelman, Narrative Art and Poetry, p. 63.

"encourage him". The manner in which David casually dismisses the results of the "sword that devours" indicates that David treated death, even murder as a normal state of affairs. David's reaction is that of a "cold fatalist"[50] (v.25). This is reinforced by the similarity between vs. 17, and 24 where the double expression, "servants of the king", and "servants of David", indicates that even more loyal soldiers have become victims of the king's plan.[51] In these summary words "so encourage him" (vs.25), David assumes a patronizing attitude as a caring and empathetic leader who is concerned for the welfare of his field commander. The king's fit of rage that Joab had anticipated had not happened, and seemed to refute the impression that Joab had projected in his rehearsed message. Yet the reader must reconcile Joab's feelings of dread, fear, and uncertainty. It could be, of course, that both Joab and David were fighting to preserve their own credibility, Joab fearful of condemnation for his battle tactics, and David obviously fearful of complicity in murder. The irony in this for Joab is that he has allowed "the very David, the man who consistently acts in chapter 11 as though he has no conscience, to be the voice of his own bad/good conscience".[52] This notwithstanding, these obviously negative feelings that stand in sharp contrast to the view of the David portrayed here as an encourager, wrestles for a place in the reader's mind. To the reader this portrait is completely antithetical because we can see behind the mask of this

---

[50]Harry Hagan, "Deception as Motif and Theme in 2 Samuel 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2", Biblica, Vol. 60 (1979), p. 305.

[51]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 63.

[52]Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, p. 68.

ruthless and cynical conspirator who seeks, without any evidence of remorse, to give absolution to a partner in murder. The sharp contrast between David's reaction to Uriah's death and Yahweh's reaction to David's sinister activity underlines the fact that David was oblivious to the divine displeasure when he uttered the platitude, "the sword devours now one and then another" (cf. 2:26). One wonders if the platitude is not addressed to David's own conscience. Yet, in the anonymous "this one, then that one" statement, we see how the deception motif is continued when David uses this message of encouragement to Joab to perpetuate the cover-up. This phrase is completely devoid of the object of the execution command to Joab seeing that Uriah is the only one mentioned for execution. It seems that everything is expendable if it stands in the way of David's desires.

Concealment Plot : Tranquillity ( Stage A2, 11:26-27)

The structuring of this defocusing section does not in any way change the central focus of the double-plot structure, even though the re-emergence of Bathsheba is significant. David's actions continue to dominate. The sequence of events and combination of characters in the narrative is framed by the coming together of David and Bathsheba at both the focusing and closure stages. In vs. 26 we see both David and Bathsheba paired together for the third and final time (cf. 11:3c, 11d).

Implicity, vs.26 is a posthumous tribute to Bathsheba's marriage which condemns David with the three fold reference to the husband-wife relationship between Uriah and Bathsheba. We observe that the "wife" designation in David's inquiry (vs.3), which was

ignored by him when he "took" Bathsheba, is ironically of urgent significance to him. Now the narrator's parallel repetition of the designations, "wife" and "husband" serve to refocus the narrative upon the "house" motif that has played so significantly in the structuring of the plot. This works to link both plots together and have the effect of signaling to the reader that there is more going on than meets the eye. This allusion is activated by the deployment of synonymous terms, or even the same term in a different context.[53] The point is that the double use of the designation "wife" while referring to the same person (Bathsheba), now belongs to a different "husband" (David).

This being the final "Tranquillity" stage of the "Concealment Plot" it would seem appropriate for the narrator to refer to Bathsheba by her name, but this is not the case. Instead she is once again identified by her relationship to the men in her life as she was in the "Seduction Plot", namely, Uriah and David. The devastating consequences of the "sending" and "taking" actions of David in invalidating the legal and moral spatial distance between Bathsheba is about to be repeated again (vs. 27). In this final sequence we sense that the reader is once again left with an uneasy sense of tranquillity in that while the merging of the two houses may seem legitimate on the surface now that Uriah is dead, there will not be peace in the "king's house", even though the affair ends in marriage. This is confirmed in the final closure statement, "but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord"[54] (vs.27e). In this

---

[53]The allusion here to the "wife" and "husband" connotation is reflected in three aspects mentioned by Robert Alter in The World of Biblical Literature, that is, "similarity in phrasing, in motif, or in narrative situation". pp. 110-111.

[54]Literally translated "... was displeasing in the eyes of the Lord".

sense a new protagonist emerges into the narrative and these words confront David's words to Joab, "let this thing not be evil in your eyes" (vs.25). David's actions and his words were impermissible to Yahweh. It is ironic that this is the only reference to "Yahweh" in the entire chapter. Yahweh does not act in either of the two plots. In the course of David's downward slide from temptation to murder, David manages to disobey three of the commandments of the Torah: "you shall not covet your neighbour's wife"; "You shall not commit adultery", "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:17,14,13). The emergence of this other player in the drama serves to threaten the equilibrium of this 'homely' tranquillity, and foreshadows through the "embedding" technique, that a Disclosure Plot was imminent. It seems that David will not have the last word, it will belong to Yahweh.

## Conclusion

As we have seen, the development of the character of David in the David-Bathsheba story is clearly dependent upon the form and verbal structure of the narrative. Through the analysis of 2 Samuel 11 we have been aware of a clearly defined incremental pattern of tranquillity-involvement-climax-tranquillity as it appears on the text-continuum of the double-plot structure of the narrative. As we have seen throughout, the change in David's character is utterly dependent upon the stages through which the character passes during the course of the narrative experience. Mieke Bal remarks that

> David is, within an actantial analysis, the subject of action. His lust sets the action in motion, and, with the help of his servants, his power decides the positive fulfilment of his narrative program: to possess Bathsheba (2-4). Significantly, there are no opponents. But a program so utterly successful is narratively uninteresting: the resulting fabula is too short. Hence, in the next phase, a new program has to be more difficult to fulfil. The second phase is set in motion as a consequence of the first, that is, by Bathsheba's pregnancy. The goal is concealment, and again David's absolute power is invested with the feature of a positive *destinateur*. This time, however, there is an opponent: Uriah. How can this "servant of the king" make the mighty David nearly fail as a narrative subject? Powerless, he can only negatively (that is, by refusal) provoke David's own weakness as an agent. David's action itself is negative. His only activity consists of avoiding his responsibilities. ... power makes its objects passive, since the powerful use other agents as instruments.... the superman of verse 4 comes to resemble a non-man in the rest of the fabula.[55]

David's development in the narrative is one that is always in tension. There is the tension between what other kings are doing and what he ought to be doing; the tension between what he should not be doing (regarding Bathsheba), and what he ended up doing with her; the tension between what he was forced by Bathsheba's circumstances to do (her pregnancy), and what he could not do ( to get Uriah to sleep with her); the tension between doing what was right in his own eyes, in contrast to what was regarded as displeasure in the eyes of Yahweh. It is this tension that moves the double-plot structure through the sequential patterns that serve to systematically demarcate this tension dynamic. The double-plot structure also serves to give a double reinforcement to the themes and literary motifs that are common to both which have arisen in this analysis: idleness, pleasure, sexual exploitation,

---

[55]Mieke Bal. Lethal Love: Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 29.

paternity responsibility, deception, idealism, loyalty, commitment, evil, abuse of power, command-obedience versus command-disobedience, loss of control, justification, manipulation, and the pleasure-displeasure motif. These themes have the effect of joining the two plots into a network of interconnected meaning that serve to shape and reshape the dynamic character of David.

Summary and Future Research

This study of 2 Samuel 11 focused through the literary-critical methodology has concentrated on the interpretation of narrative art for its understanding of the David-Bathsheba story. In this respect the study has been productive and shows that literary-criticism is clearly relevant to the contemporary interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. This thesis shows that the narrative has a definite structural unity and form that is artistic in both appearance and entertainment. By a skilful employment of patterns, 2 Samuel 11 demonstrates a parallel, surface, and double-plot structure that directs the story-line through two pyramids of four-fold movement. This pyramid pattern of tranquillity-involvement-climax-tranquillity forms the essence of the unity of the double-plot story presentation, and serves to emphasize the dynamic and beauty of narrative art.

A study of 2 Samuel 11 focused through the traditional historical-critical method has not dealt with the distinctive artistic features of the narrative. In adopting a narratological approach to this study I have demonstrated the advantage of the literary-critical method in focusing on the intrinsic literary dynamics of the story. This approach seeks to understand

and interpret the finished form of the text, and not to discover the process by which the text has come into being. In this sense, I have not been concerned about the significance of the compositional history of the narrative, but have instead focused on the literary unity of the text. In other words, it meant discerning the connecting thematic threads of the double-plot structure, and the systematic manner in which the story moves through a pattern of clearly defined stages of development. In this sense, I have demonstrated that the narrative is a coherent whole, and that the design of the individual sections plays a discernable role in contributing to character development and meaning. The text, having been viewed as an end in itself, required that the poetic function of the text and not its referential function be addressed. In other words it meant appreciating the story apart from any considerations of the extent to which it reflects reality. This study thus approaches the David-Bathsheba story as a world that can be entered and experienced. Bar-Efrat states that

> anyone who wishes to study its [biblical narrative's] being must use the manner of literary analysis, for it is impossible to appreciate the nature of biblical narrative fully, understand the network of its component elements or penetrate into its inner world without having recourse to the methods and tools of literary scholarship.[56]

In this thesis I have demonstrated the inextricable relationship between form or structure on the one hand, and character development on the other. This process involved two converging points of analysis. First, the literary design of the narrative structure and the narrative sequence were examined step by step playing particular attention to details of the double-plot's parallel design. Second, the literary stylistic characteristics of the narrative as

---

[56]Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art, p. 10.

a whole were examined in terms of the themes, motifs, word-order, pace, repetition, pervasive irony, and subtle interactions between the narrator and the reader that combined to shape the degenerating character of David.

The literary effect of the narrative's stylistic and structural design on the shaping of the character of David is emphatic. What is remarkable about this effect, as I have demonstrated, is that its power of persuasian does not come from any disparaging words from the narrator about David, but instead comes from the artistic skill and effectiveness of the surface structure of the plot. A discerning reader will discover that in 2 Samuel 11, form and content not only manifests meaning, but also constitutes it in this negative portrayal of King David.

The adoption of a structural methodology to study the narrative shaping of the character of David in 2 Samuel 11 demonstrates a number of advantages. This methodology allows the reader to track the changing character of David along the pattern of Bar-Efrat's narrative plot-stages. Thus this approach projects, what might be called, a literary picture of David in a 'frame by frame' portrayal at precise points within the plot structure. In other words, at any given point in the narrative structure David can be observed in a tranquil mood, a state of tension or unrest, manipulative, coercive, exploitative, or unfeeling. Thus the structural placement of David in the text continuum combines with the literary stylistic content in determining the kind of character projected to the reader at that precise moment.

In view of the fact that the development of the character of David in terms of judgmental evaluation does not come about by any information given by the character about

itself (David), or to itself in self-analysis, or from the narrator. It thus remains that the reader must rely on other means to assess character. In other words, the actions and reactions of the character must be part of the metigating evidence for implicit evaluations. We have seen that while it is true that it is the function of the character that gives it its identification, meaning and characteristics, it is equally true that the surface structure of the plot provides the subtle network of relationships that permits the character to 'perform' and develop. As such, the transformations which a character like David undergo alter the perception of the character incrementally at various defining moments in the narrative. Specifically, I have shown that the concept of place and space in the surface structure of the plot are crucial to the shaping of David's character. With the inclusion of appropriate and inappropriate spatial distinctions in the surface structure of the plot, the character is 'forced' to either recognize or ignore them. David's response to these structural boundaries implicitly becomes the judge and jury concerning his character. The narrative ensures that location or places are notably linked to certain plot stages and become defining character indicators in the narrative.

This methodology of using Bar-Efrat's plot-structure to study the degenerating character of David in 2 Samuel 11 provides a different approach to that offered in other literature available on the subject of character development.

The double-plot structure, namely the "Seduction Plot", and the "Concealment Plot", while functioning together as a self-contained unit, can however provide the basis for further study of 2 Samuel 12. The methodology employed in this thesis could be applied to an

analysis of what might be called a "Disclosure Plot" in 2 Samuel 12, where David is confronted by Nathan the prophet with the devastating consequences of this seditious episode in David's life.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


Abrams, Meyer Howard. A Glossary of Literary Terms. 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1981).

Ackroyd, Peter R. The Second Book of Samuel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Alter, Robert. "Biblical Imperatives and Literary Play," In Not In Heaven: Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative (Jason P. Rosenblatt and Joseph C. Sitterson, Jr. eds. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991).

Alter, Robert. The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1981).

Alter, Robert and Frank Kermode, eds. The Literary Guide to the Bible (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1987).

Anderson, A.A. Word Biblical Commentary, 2 Samuel. Volume 11 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989).

Armerding, Carl E. The Old Testament and Criticism (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983).

Bailey, Randall C. David In Love and War: The Pursuit of Power in 2 Samuel 10-12 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

Bal, Mieke. Lethal Love: Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Bal, Mieke. Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative. Translated by Christine van Boheeman (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 1985).

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. Narrative Art in the Bible (Sheffeld: Almond Press, 1984).

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative". Vetus Testamentum, Volume xxx, No. 2 (1980), pp. 155-173.

Barthes, Roland. "The Imagination of the Sign," In Debating Texts ed. Rick Rylance (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

Barton, John. Reading the Old Testament: Method in Bible Study (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1984).

Beardslee, William. Literary Criticism of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

Ben-Amos, Dan. "Themes, Forms, and Meanings: Critical Comments," Poetics Today, Volume 7 (1986), p. 129-148.

Berlin, Adele. "Literary Exegesis of Biblical Narrative: Between Poetics and Hermeneutics." In Not in Heaven: Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative, eds. Jason P. Rosenblatt and Joseph C. Sitterson, Jr. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991).

Booth, Wayne. The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961).

Britton, Bruce K. and Anthony D. Pellegrini. eds. Narrative Thought and Narrative Language (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990).

Brueggemann, Walter. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, First and Second Samuel (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1990).

Burnett, Fred W. "Postmodern Biblical Exegesis: The Eve of Historical Criticism," Semeia 51 (1990), p. 51-80.

Caird, George C. "The First and Second Books of Samuel: Introduction," in The Interpreter's Bible, Volume 2 (New York: Abington Press, 1953).

Callous, Jean. "A Few Comments of Structural Semiotics: A Brief review of a Method and Some Explanation of Procedures," Semeia 15 (1979), p. 51-83.

Carlson, R.A. David The Chosen King. Translated by Eric J. Sharp and Stanley Rudman, (Stolkholm: Almqvist Wiksell, 1964).

Chatman, Seymour. Coming to Terms: The Thetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).

Chatman, Seymour. Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (New York: Cornell University Press, 1978).

Chatman, Seymour. "Characters and Narrators," Poetics Today, Vol. 7:2 (1986), p.189-204.

Clines, David J.A. "Story and Poem: The Old Testament as Literature and as Scripture," Interpretation xxxiv, No. 2 (1980), p. 115-127.

Coats, George W. ed. Saga Legend Tale Novella Fable: Narrative Forms in the Old Testament, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985).

Crenshaw, James L. Old Testament Story and Faith: A Literary and Thelogical Introduction (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992).

Cuddon, J.A. Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory. (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

Culpepper, Alan R. Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

Damrosch, David. The Narrative Covenant (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987).

Detweiler, Robert. "What is a Sacred Text?," Semeia 31 (1985), pp. 213-230.

Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

Epsom, William. Seven Types of Ambiguity (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963).

Eissfeldt, Otto. The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

Eslinger, Lyle. Into the Hands of the Living God (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989).

Exum, Cheryl. Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1993).

Feuillett, A. and A. Robert. Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Dexclee Company, 1968).

Flanagan, James W. David's Social Drama: A Hologram of Israel's Early Iron Age (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1988).

Feldman, Carol. Jerome Bruner, Bobbi Renderer, and Sally Spitzer, "Narrative Comprehension", in Narrative Thought and Narrative Language, Ed. Bruce K. Britton and Anthony D. Pellegrini (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1990).

Fokkelman, J.P. Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel, Vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981).

Forster, E.M Aspects of the Novel (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1953).

Fowler, Robert M. "Who is 'The Reader' in Reader-Response criticism?", Semeia 31 (1985), p. 5-23.

Freedman, David Noel ed. The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 5. (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

Frei, Hans W. The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics (London: Yale University Press, 1974).

Friedman, Richard Elliot and H.G.M. Williamson, eds. The Future of Biblical Studies: Hebrew Scriptures. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).

Frye, Northrop. Anatonomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1957).

Fuchs, Esther. "The Literary Characteristics of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible", Semeia 46 (1989), p. 151-166.

Funk, Robert W. The Poetics of Biblical Narrative (California: Polebridge Press, 1988).

Gaebelin, Frank E. ed. The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 3. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

Genette, Gerard. Narrative Discourse: Essays in Method, Jane E. Lewin trans. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974).

Gerhart, Mary. "The Restoration of Biblical Narrative," Semeia 46 (1989), p. 13-28.

Gordon, R.P. Old Testament Guides: 1 and 2 Samuel (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

Gressmann, Hugo. "The Oldest History Writing in Israel," in Narrative and Novella in Samuel: Studies by Hugo Gressmann and Other Scholars 1906-1923. Trans. David E. Orton, ed. David M. Gunn (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1991).

Grobel, Kendrick. "Biblical Criticism," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962).

Gros Louis, Kenneth R.R. and James S. Ackerman, eds. Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives, Volume II (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982).

Gros Louis, Kenneth R.R., James S. Ackerman and Thayer S. Warshaw, eds. Literary Interpretation of Biblical Narratives, Volume I (New York: Abington press, 1974).

Gros Louis, Kenneth R.R. "The Difficulty of Ruling Well: King David of Israel," Semeia 8 (1977), p. 15-33.

Gunkel, Hermann. The Folktale in the Old Testament Translated by Michael D. Rutter (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1987).

Gunn, D.M. The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation (Sheffield: JSOT, 1978).

Gunn, David M. "David and the Gift of the Kingdom," Semeia 3 (1975), p.14-45.

Habel, Norman. Literary Criticism of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1973).

Hagan, Harry, "Deception and Motif and Theme in 2 Samuel 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2," Biblica Vol. 60 (1979), pp. 301-327.

Harris, W. Homiletical Commentary on the Books of Samuel (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1958).

Harrison, R.K. Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969).

Hayes, J. An Introduction to Old Testament Study (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).

Hertzberg, Hanns Wilhelm. I and II Samuel: A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964).

Hirsch, E.D. Validity in Interpretation (London: Yale University Press, 1967).

Iser, Wolfgang. The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978).

Knight, Douglas A. "Moral Values and Literary Traditions: The Case of the Succession Narrative (2 Samuel 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2)," Semeia 34 (1985), pp. 7-23.

Krentz, Edgar. The Historical-Critical Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

Lanser, Susan Sniader. The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1981).

Lentricchia, Frank. After the New Criticism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,1980).

Maier, Gerhard. The End of the Historical-Critical Method. Translated by Edwin W. Leverenz and Rudolph F. Norden (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974).

Margolis, Joseph. "The Threads of Literary Theory," Poetics Today Vol. 7 (1986), p. 95-110.

McCarter, Kyle P. Jr. "Plots, True or False: The Succession Narrative as Court Apologetic," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology Volume xxxv. No. 4 (1981), p.355-367.

McConnell D. The Bible and the Narrative Tradition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

McKane, William. Torch Bible Commentaries: I and II Samuel, Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press, 1963).

Miscall, Peter D. "Literary Unity in Old Testament Narrative," Semeia 15 (1979), p. 27-50.

Mooij, J.J.A. "The Nature and Function of Literary Theories," Poetics Today Vol.1:1-2 (1979), pp. 111-135.

Morgan, Robert and John Barton. Biblical Interpretation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Mosher, Harold. "A New Synthesis of Narratology," Poetics Today Vol. 1:3 (1980), pp. 171-186.

Newman, B.W. "Discourse Structure", in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 237.

Owens, John Joseph. Analytical Key to the Old Testament. Vol. 2 Judges - Chronicles (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992).

Parker, Kim Ian. Wisdom and Law in the Reign of Solomon (Lewiston:The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

Payne, David F. I and II Samuel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982).

Perry, Menahem and Meir Sternberg. "The King Through Ironic Eyes," in Poetics Today, Vol. 7:2 (1986), pp. 275-322.

Perry, Menahem. "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates its Meanings", Poetics Today, Vol. 1 (1979), pp. 34-64.

Pfeiffer, Robert H. Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1948).

Poland, Lynn. Literary Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics: A Critique of Formalist Approaches ( Chicago: Scholars Press, 1985).

Hamilton, A.C. Northrop Frye: Anatomy of His Criticism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Phillips, Gary A. "Exegesis as Critical Praxis: Reclaiming History and text from a Postmodern Perspective," Semeia 51 (1990), pp. 8-49.

Pulos, C.E. The New Critics and the Language of Poetry (Nebrasks: The University of Nebraska Press, 1958).

Ransom, John Crowe. The New Criticism (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1968).

Richards, I.A. Practical Criticism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Word, Inc., 1929).

Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics (New York: Routledge, 1988).

Robert, A. and A. Feuillett. Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Dexclee Company, 1968), p. 209.

Robertson, David. The Old Testament and the Literary Critic (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

Robey, David. "Anglo-American New Criticism," In Modern Literary Theory (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1982).

Rosenberg, Joel. "The Institutional Matrix of Treachery in 2 Samuel 11," Semeia 46 (1989), pp. 103-116.

Ruthrof, Horst. The Reader's Construction of Narrative (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

Ryken, Leland. "Literary Criticism of the Bible: Some Fallacies", in Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives, ed. Kenneth R.R. Gros Louis, James S. Ackerman, Thayer S. Warshaw (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974).

Rylance, Rick. "Versions of Formalism," in Debating Texts, Rick Rylance ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

Schwartz, Regina M. "Adultery in the House of David: The Metanarrative of Biblical Scholarship and the Narratives of the Bible," Semeia 54 (1992), pp. 35-55.

Simon, U. "Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb, an Example of a Juridical Parable." Biblica 48 (1967), p. 214.

Smith, Samuel. The International Critical Commentary: The Books of Samuel (Edinburg: T. and T. Clark, 1977).

Spencer, Richard A. ed. Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism Presented in Honour of William A. Beardslee, Pittsburg Theological Monograph Series 35 (Pittsburg: The Pickwick Press, 1980).

Sternberg, Meir. The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Sternberg, Meir. "Double Cave, Double Talk: The Indirections of Biblical Dialogue," in Not In Heaven: Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative. Jason P. Rosenblatt and Joseph C. Sitterson, Jr. eds. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991).

Sternberg, Meir. The Poetics of Biblical Narrative. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

Thompson, Leonard L. Introducing Biblical Literature: A More Fantastic Country (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall., Inc., 1978).

Todorov, Tzvetan. Introduction to Poetics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981).

Tomkins, Jane P. ed. Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

Tucker, Gene M. Form Criticism of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

von Rad, Gerhard. Genesis: A Commentary. Translated by John H. Marks (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961).

von Rad, Gerhard. The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (London: Oliver and Boyde, 1958).

Whybray, R.N. The Succession Narrative (London: SCM Press, 1968).

Williams, James G. "Irony and Lament: Clues to Prophetic Consciousness," Semeia 8 (1977), pp. 51-74.

Wimsatt, W.K. Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley. The Verbal Icon (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).

Wittig, Susan. ed. Structuralism: An Interdisciplinary Study Pittsburg Reprint Series No.3 (Pittsburg: The Pickwick Press, 1975).

Yee, Gale A. "Fraught with Background," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology, Volume XLII, No. 3 (July 1988), pp. 240-253.

Youngblood, Ronald. 1, and 2 Samuel, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, Volume 3 (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1992).