ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative analysis of three ancient Near Eastern tales in order to illuminate the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah in Judges 16. The tales selected – *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Aqhat Epic*, and *The Tale of Two Brothers* – contain expressions of Stith Thompson's K2111 motif, also known as the "Potiphar's Wife Motif" and are often grouped together due to their similar features. Based upon the key components of these tales featuring an encounter between a male hero and a female, the Judges 16 scene should also be included as an exemplar of the motif. This comparative study explores the ANE expression of the motif and makes a case for refining the description of the motif as the "Hero and His Temptress Motif." This description more accurately accounts for each of the individual tales by underscoring the literary elements that unite these tales together. By drawing attention to these shared elements, the study demonstrates how Judges 16 is elucidated by its incorporation in this group of narratives.

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE HERO AND HIS TEMPTRESS: A RE-ANALYSIS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN EXPRESSION OF THE K2111 "POTIPHAR'S WIFE MOTIF" IN LIGHT OF JUDGES 16

A Dissertation

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CHAPTER 1
A SURVEY OF BIBLICAL FOLKLORE SCHOLARSHIP AND THE SAMSON SAGA

This study presents a comparative analysis of three ancient Near Eastern tales in order to illuminate the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah in Judg 16. The tales selected contain expressions of Stith Thompson's K2111 motif, also known as the "Potiphar's Wife Motif." This comparative study explores the ANE expression of the motif and argues that the motif is more accurately described as the "Hero and His Temptress Motif." This study is situated at the broad intersection between folklore studies and biblical studies. Thus, it is pertinent to first explore how these two fields of study intersect and the major research trends therewithin.

Early Biblical Folklore Scholarship

The study of folk literature is a broad field that intersects with many other fields of study like anthropology, sociology, psychology, and biblical studies. Sir James George Frazer was one of the early, important scholars to recognize a relationship between biblical literature and folk literature. His work, originally published in 1918 in three volumes, assessed the Pentateuch and historical books in light of various folk literature motifs. Frazer perceived folklore to be literature that reflects the traditional beliefs and customs

of the culture that has collected and preserved them.[1] Like most early folklore scholars who were influenced by scientific evolutionary theory, Frazer believed that folklore developed in an early stage of a culture's evolution; a stage that is often associated with barbarism, savagery, or "a lower level of culture."[2] Frazer utilized a comparative method to trace the intellectual and mental evolution of a particular people group.[3] By comparing the biblical text to other known folktales, Frazer identified the relics of an earlier Israelite culture preserved within the biblical text. The field of folklore studies has come a long way from Frazer's view that folk literature arises from barbaric, primitive cultures; however, his application of folklore to biblical literature sparked a new field of inquiry to which many scholars have dedicated their careers.

Hermann Gunkel has also had a profound impact upon the scholarly interest in folklore and biblical literature. His work was originally published in German in 1917 but was not translated into English until much later.[4] Like Frazer, Gunkel also took a comparative approach in order to identify folktale motifs that occur in the Hebrew Bible. Gunkel defined folktales, along with myths, sagas, and legends, as "poetical stories."[5] Gunkel stated that historiography is a learned literary genre but poetical stories are an

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[1] James George Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law (London: Macmillan, 1923), ix.

[2] Frazer, *Folk-Lore*, ix.

[3] Frazer, *Folk-Lore*, ix.

[4] Hermann Gunkel, *The Folktale in the Old Testament*, trans. Michael D. Rutter (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1987).

[5] Gunkel, *The Folktale*, 21.

innate genre, thereby making them the normative form of literature. Poetical stories tell the types of tales that audiences enjoy hearing by combining facts with constructs of the imagination.[6] Since folktales, as a form of poetical story, originate in the author's imagination, Gunkel concludes there are no folktales in the Bible. He does however recognize that the writers and readers of the Bible were familiar with the cultural folktales of their time; thus, he suggests that biblical literature preserves some of the motifs from these popular folktales.[7] Therefore, Gunkel examines the various folktale-like material that is present in the biblical text. Gunkel utilizes one of two criteria when selecting material for analysis: either the folktale quality of the literature is obvious, or it resembles parallel material from other folk literature.[8]

Gunkel and Frazer were both exploring the connection between the Bible and folk literature at a time when comparative methodology was on the rise. However, in light of Friedrich Delitzsch and the *Babel und Bibel* debate, comparative approaches moved away from the forefront of biblical scholarship for a period of time. It was not until the works of William Albright, Frank Moore Cross, and more recently William Hallo, that the comparative method experienced a resurgence in biblical scholarship.[9] Many of the more

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[6] Gunkel, *The Folktale*, 22.

[7] Gunkel, *The Folktale*, 33.

[8] Gunkel, *The Folktale*, 35.

[9] William W. Hallo, "Compare and Contrast: The Contextual Approach to Biblical Literature," in *The Bible in Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III*, ed. William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly, Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990), 1–30; Brent A. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and Image of God," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards, Resources for Biblical Study 56 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 117–42.

recent studies addressing folklore in the Bible rely upon a foundation in the comparative method while also applying other folklore methodologies.

Development of Folklore Scholarship

Folklore scholarship contains a plethora of studies with various goals and methods; however, most folklore scholarship can be categorized into one of three major foci: descriptive studies, transmission studies, and functional studies. Descriptive studies seek to understand the form of a specific piece of folk literature and then classify that tale among other like types.[10] Transmission studies are concerned with the methods of folktale composition and transmission, placing a strong emphasis on the oral nature of folk literature. Lastly, functional studies examine how a particular tale is used in its context and the interpretation that the context brings to the tale regardless of its origin.[11] These varied research goals may influence how an individual scholar defines folklore since there is no agreed upon standard definition, as attested in the twenty-one different entries for folklore in *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*.[12] Despite a perceived lack of uniformity in the way in which folklore is defined, most definitions make reference to the means by which the tale has been transmitted and a traditional element that is present in the tale.

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[10] Susan Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 1.

[11] Niditch, Underdogs and Tricksters, 1.

[12] Maria Leach and Jerome Fried, eds., *Funk & Wagnalls' Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, 2 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1949), 1:398–403.

Many biblical scholars who utilize folklore methodologies are influenced by descriptive studies; this is due in part to the works of Frazer and Gunkel, which are concerned with identifying folktale features in the Bible and comparing them to other traditions. Descriptive folklore scholarship has been influenced profoundly by the work of the brothers Grimm. The brothers Grimm collected an array of European folktales and in that process they identified three main categories of prose narrative: myth (*Mythus*), legend (*Sage*), and folktale (*Märchen*).[13] However, the definitions that the brothers Grimm provided for these three genre categories are vague at best, leaving subsequent folklorists alone in the dark forest with wolves and evil step-mothers.

A more detailed example of descriptive study is found in the work of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson. These two scholars have produced catalogs of various folklore types and motifs. The catalog of folklore types was originally produced by Aarne and was later translated and expanded by Thompson.[14] Aarne's classification system deals with mostly European folktales and categorizes the various character and story types that are repeated in those folktales. Thompson later produced his own *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, which is more comprehensive than Aarne's work.[15] Thompson's six volume motif-index attempts to categorize the common material found in the folk-literature of the world. To

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[13] Patricia G. Kirkpatrick, *The Old Testament and Folklore Study*, JSOTSup 62 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 76. These three categories of narrative are reflected in the brothers Grimm's three major publications of folk narrative collections titled; *Kinder- und Hausmärchen, Deutsche Sagen,* and *Deutsche Mythologie.*

[14] Antti Aarne, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, trans. Stith Thompson, 2nd ed., FFC 184 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1961), 4–9.

[15] Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabilaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955).

conduct an international categorization, Thompson utilizes the motif, defined as "the smallest element in a tale having the power to persist in tradition," as his point of comparison.[16] Upon identifying which motifs are present in a tale, Thompson categorizes them within his letter and number system. The motifs are divided into broad categories labelled with a letter A–Z; for example, motifs under B deal with animals, those under D deal with magic, and category K contains motifs of deception. Within each of these letter categories the motifs are then further differentiated with a numbering system; for example, D0–699 are magic motifs dealing with transformation and K2100–2199 are deception motifs dealing with false accusations.[17] For each specific motif, Thompson names the motif and lists various example stories which demonstrate the motif. This allows a researcher to examine each of those folktales individually in order to fully understand the unique features of each motif.

Thompson's motif-index is modeled upon the scientific classification of biological phenomena. Akin to the scientific categorization of biological material into species, Thompson seeks to categorize literature into various motifs.[18] However, there are some shortcomings with his categorization system. Although Thompson identifies the motif as the smallest element of a tale, there is much subjectivity in determining what is and is not a motif. Some motifs are described as plot elements or actions taken within a story, like death or injury by magic (motif D2060); while other motifs are simply

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[16] Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: Dryden, 1946), 415; Thompson, *Motif-Index*, 1:10, 19.

[17] Thompson, *Motif-Index*, 1:29–35.

[18] Thompson, *Motif-Index*, 1:10.

characteristics of the actor, like magic strength that resides in one's hair (motif D1831). As a result, most stories contain multiple motifs, which makes them difficult to categorize based upon Thompson's classification system. Thompson is also concerned with the universality of motifs and includes literature from around the world, often comparing literature steaming from two unrelated cultures or unrelated time periods. Although some motifs may have universal themes, others may be limited to a particular culture; therefore, a localized approach should be utilized to first assess the features of the motif before moving to a universal comparison.[19] The motif-index continues to prove beneficial as a resource and starting place for many researchers interested in descriptive folklore studies; however, its limitations must be taken into consideration.

Other descriptive approaches to folklore are less concerned with categorizing motifs and more concerned with identifying the structure of folktales. Two examples of such approaches are found in the work of Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Both of these scholars are concerned with the various elements of which a folktale is comprised and the relationships between those various elements. Propp's work focuses on the narrative level of the tale while that of Lévi-Strauss is concerned with deeper paradigmatic relationships within folk literature. However, each of these scholars has had a wide influence upon subsequent research in both folklore studies and biblical studies.

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[19] Alan Dundes, "Structuralism and Folklore," in *Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2007), 123–53; Strawn, "Comparative Approaches," 128–29; Shemaryahu Talmon, "The 'Comparative Method' in Biblical Interpretation – Principles and Problems," in *Congress Volume Göttingen, 1977*, ed. Walther Zimmerli, VTSupp 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 320–56. Strawn's discussion of comparative studies notes that there are times in which cross-cultural comparisons are preferred. However, he does mention that these comparisons should consider both what is similar and what is different about the texts in question. Thompson's motif-index provides no assessment of the motif, it simply lists tales that contain the motif leaving it up to the subsequent interpreters to determine how alike or different the individual tales are.

In *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp applies a formalist method to the structural analysis of Russian fairytales.[20] Like Thompson, Propp's ultimate goal is to be able to classify folktales and, like in science, the first step to correct classification is correct description.[21] In a critique of Aarne's classification system, Propp indicates that a classification system should not be built upon plot since plots are often interwoven, making their separation difficult. Therefore, Propp focuses his analysis on the dramatis personae and the function of their actions in the tale. The focus is upon the function not the action itself because two individuals may behave differently but their differing behavior can still serve the same function within the story. Thus, a function is determined by the action and is bound to its place in the process of narration.[22] Propp surveyed hundreds of Russian fairytales and concluded that for these tales there is a set number of potential functions that could occur within the tale and those functions tend to occur in a particular order. Overall, Propp's work seeks to decompose the fairytale into its component parts in order to allow for better classification and comparison of tales.

Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* has had a lasting effect on both folklore studies and biblical studies as many scholars have applied his methodology to other forms of folk literature. In biblical studies, Propp's approach is utilized to describe the structure of biblical narratives. This structural model can provide biblical scholars with a

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[20] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), vi.

[21] Propp, *Morphology*, 4–5.

[22] Propp, *Morphology*, 18–19.

new perspective apart from form criticism.[23] Although form criticism is concerned with narrative forms, it is much more focused upon the *Sitz im Leben* in which the text was generated. Propp's formalist model is only concerned with the narrative form of the tale. Although Propp's model has much to offer, it is not without its limitations. The model was developed on one specific genre of literature, namely, the Russian fairytale. Therefore, a direct application of Propp's method can only determine if the literature in question fits the Russian fairytale model or not.[24] Scholars who utilize Propp's method must be aware of these limitations and must set out a clear purpose for the use of Propp's method of analysis.

The work of the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss is similar to Propp's formalist approach. Although Lévi-Strauss considers his work to be a structuralist approach, which is different than the formalist method, both Propp and Lévi-Strauss build upon a foundation rooted in the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.[25] Propp and Lévi-Strauss take Saussure's fundamental idea, that language can be decomposed into structurally related, concrete units, and they apply it to narrative texts. Saussure likens language to a chess game since it is the combination of different pieces or units in opposition, based upon the rules of the system, that defines meaning.[26] Thus, Saussure's linguistic approach is focused upon identifying the constituent units of a language and the

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[23] Pamela J. Milne, Vladimir Propp and the Study of Structure in Hebrew Biblical Narrative, BLS 13 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 10.

[24] Milne, *Vladimir Propp*, 174.

[25] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Monique Layton, vol. 2 (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 115; Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *Journal of American Folklore* 68 (1955): 428–44; Milne, *Vladimir Propp*, 24; Propp, *Morphology*, 14.

[26] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 107.

rules that govern how those units can be combined. Both Propp and Lévi-Strauss apply this underlying theory to the folktale by stating that folktales, like language, are made up of constituent units and it is only through the combination of those elements that meaning is produced.[27] In Propp's formalist approach, the constituent unit of a tale is the function and the focus of his research is determining the rules that govern the combination of functions.[28] In contrast, Lévi-Strauss is concerned with the relationship between the constituent units and the folktale as a whole. To state it in linguistic terms, Propp is focused solely upon the syntax; while Lévi-Strauss is concerned with how the syntax produces the meaning of the whole.[29]

In order to examine how the syntax of the tale contributes to meaning, Lévi-Strauss identifies and separates the various constituent units of a tale. He asserts that meaning is found in multiple levels of a tale so he categorizes the units in two different ways; chronologically and conceptually.[30] Based upon this categorization system, two units of the tale may be unrelated in the chronological progression of the narrative, but they may be conceptually related if they address the same underlying theme. The conceptual relationship between units of a tale drives Lévi-Strauss' concern for the deep, abstract relationships found in folktales. These deep relationships often consist of binary oppositions and reflect the ways in which humans perceive their world.[31] In his concern

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[27] Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Study," 431; Propp, *Morphology*, 19.

[28] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 115, 131; Propp, *Morphology*, 20.

[29] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 141.

[30] Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Study," 431

[31] Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, 161

for the multiple levels of meaning within a folktale, Lévi-Strauss uses every variant version of the tale in his analysis and assumes that a tale consists of all its versions.[32] Lévi-Strauss' view of myth, as all the versions tied up into one, reflects the oral nature of these tales. Therefore, Lévi-Strauss makes a clear distinction between an oral tale given at a specific time and a written tale that has been subject to alteration as it is preserved. In light of this distinction, Lévi-Strauss concludes that a written tale no longer preserves the original structure of the tale and therefore cannot be analyzed in the same way as an oral tale.[33] This view becomes problematic when applying Lévi-Strauss' methodology to biblical scholarship since the biblical text is no longer preserved in an oral form.

The works of Propp and Lévi-Strauss together set the tone for the scholars who succeeded them. Their work has dictated a trend of decomposition in the study of folk literature. The main goal of studies following the models of Propp and Lévi-Strauss is to identify the component parts of the tale. These component parts are then used either to determine the sequence of events considered standard for a particular tale type or to explore the larger binary themes that the tale seeks to discuss.

Biblical Folklore Scholarship since Propp and Lévi-Strauss

The trend that emerged from the work of Propp and Lévi-Strauss was not contained to folk literature alone. Many biblical scholars have attempted to apply Propp's and Lévi-Strauss' methodologies to biblical literature. One such example is Jack Sasson's 1979

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[32] Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Study," 435.

[33] Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Study," 430; J. W. Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation*, BZAW 134 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), 107–8.

commentary on Ruth, which presents a Proppian analysis of the biblical text.[34] Sasson proposes that the biblical authors, like the authors of all other types of literature, unconsciously followed patterns of writing with pre-established rules and regulations.[35] Therefore, he applies Propp's functions and his description of actors or tale roles to the story of Ruth. He concludes that Ruth fits into Propp's model of functions and therefore must be a folktale. However, he does not call it a folktale proper because Sasson asserts that folktales must have been orally transmitted at some point in time and there is no way to definitively determine that Ruth was originally an oral composition. Instead he proposes that Ruth was created upon a folktale model by "scribally oriented intelligentsia."[36] Although Sasson has applied Propp's model with no adaptation, he notes that further use of Propp's model for biblical and ANE literature would require refining or restructuring.[37] All in all, Sasson's work does demonstrate that describing biblical stories by the roles that the characters and their actions play in the narrative is a helpful tool for analyzing underlying narrative features and structures.

Another example is the work of Dorothy Irvin. Irvin credits her model to the work of Herman Gunkel; although, she too is influenced by Propp and Lévi-Strauss in her concern with the description and classification of folktales.[38] Although Irvin uses

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[34] Jack M. Sasson, Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979).

[35] Sasson, *Ruth*, 197.

[36] Sasson, *Ruth*, 214.

[37] Sasson, *Ruth*, 214–15.

[38] Dorothy Irvin, Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East, AOAT 32 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), xiv.

Thompson's motif-index as the starting point for her study, she finds the index to be inadequate for biblical studies and seeks to improve upon that system of classification.[39] Rather than use the motif as the comparative element in a tale, Irvin uses the literary unit of the plot-motif, defined as "a plot element which moves the story forward a step."[40] Once the methodological foundation has been laid, Irvin analyzes multiple stories in the book of Genesis by identifying the various plot-motifs present in those stories and comparing them to tales with similar plot-motifs from Thompson's index. Irvin concludes that biblical literature contains traditional episodes that mirror those in ANE tales. The traditional episode functions like a traditional epithet in the works of Homer, which tells a standard tale and can be inserted at particular points in a narrative.[41] Although Irvin's study requires more methodological precision, especially where the identification of traditional episodes is concerned, she joins the long line of scholars who have identified similarities in the tales of the ANE and those found in the Bible.

One scholar who has done extensive work in the field of biblical folklore is Susan Niditch. Although she takes her own approach in the analysis of folktales, her methodological framework is influenced by the work of Propp. In order to examine biblical folklore, Niditch has developed what she calls an "overlay map technique."[42] Through this overlay map, Niditch is able to assess the various constituent parts of a narrative while allowing for several different layers of specificity concerning the content

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[39] Irvin, *Mytharion*, xiv-xv.

[40] Irvin, *Mytharion*, 2.

[41] Irvin, *Mytharion*, 9–11.

[42] Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 28; Susan Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, GBS, ed. Gene M. Tucker (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 21.

of those constituent parts. Niditch looks at four different layers of the narrative: the generic, the specific, the typological, and the individual. The generic features are the "lowest-common-denominator" features of a tale like the problem, plan, and outcome.[43] Each layer beyond the generic adds a level of specificity to the analysis until one reaches the individual level, which identifies the features that are unique to the particular story. The benefit of this style of analysis resides in its ability to address a particular narrative on multiple levels, allowing both the type and the individual story to be addressed in their own right.

Niditch has applied this overlay map model to various tales within the biblical narrative. The model is first demonstrated upon contents of Genesis; specifically the three wife-sister tales and the stories of Jacob and Joseph.[44] In these stories, Niditch is able to use the various layers of specificity to point out both their similarities and differences. Niditch also applies her overlay map technique to the examination of the motif of court success stories by comparing the tale of Joseph with those of Daniel and Esther.[45] In this case, Niditch also compares these tales to Aarne and Thompson's motifs. In doing so, Niditch demonstrates that the motifs are present in each story and also addresses the cultural slant that each story contributes to the motif.[46] Niditch has also done extensive work in the book of Judges with particular attention given to the character of Samson in

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[43] Niditch, Underdogs and Tricksters, 28.

[44] Niditch, Underdogs and Tricksters, 23, 70.

[45] Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, "The Success Story of the Wise Courter: A Formal Approach," *JBL* 96 (1977): 179–93; Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 126.

[46] Niditch and Doran, "Success Story," 182.

light of folktale motifs.[47] Niditch compares the Samson saga to the hero pattern in which the stories of the hero's birth, adventures, and death are recounted.[48] In addition to establishing Samson as a trickster and social bandit, Niditch also likens the story of Samson to Thompson's motifs of "Magic Strength Resides in Hair" and "Secret Source of Strength." Niditch concludes that these motifs do occur in the story of Samson; however, the writer uses them in a particularly Israelite way by coupling his hair with the Nazirite vow and indicating that the source of his strength is Yahweh.[49]

A recent study by Dolores Kamrada is also interested in the folktale motifs present in the Samson saga, as well as those in the stories of Jephthah and his daughter, and Saul.[50] Kamrada explores the use of the motifs and symbols in these tales as ideas that produce a theological framework for the society. Therefore, she attempts to reconstruct the possible myths that are at the core of the biblical narrative and contrast these underlying myths with the final version of the tale, essentially she conducts a diachronic analysis of a synchronic text.[51] In order to identify the motifs and symbols in each tale, Kamrada relies upon Thompson's motif index. For example, in her analysis of the Samson saga Kamrada focuses upon the hair motif as the essential theme of the

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[47] Susan Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero, Trickster, and Bandit: The Empowerment of the Weak," *CBQ* 52 (1990): 608–24; Susan Niditch, *Judges*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 141–71.

[48] Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero," 609.

[49] Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero," 613, 616.

[50] Dolores G. Kamrada, Heroines, Heroes, and Deity: Three Narratives of the Biblical Heroic Tradition, LHBOTS 621 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), xvii.

[51] Kamrada, *Heroines*, xvii, xxvii.

narrative.[52] It is her use of the motif-index however that proves to be one of the weaknesses in her study. Kamrada seems to assume that a listing in the index implies that a motif is utilized throughout all the folklore of a particular culture; however, the motif-index lists tales from all over the world and is highly influenced by scholarship on European folktales. Kamrada does not seem to examine where else the motifs occur and, particularly in the case of the hair motif, seems to assume that the motif is an ANE literary commonality. Also, her focus on the hair motif causes her to overlook other major features of the story. This led one reviewer to suggest that her analysis could have benefited from insights from gender studies, particularly in regard to the death of the heroes who are emasculated and feminized.[53]

Folkloric Studies of the Samson Saga

As noted in this survey of scholarship, many of the folkloric inquiries into biblical literature have revolved around the accounts of the patriarchs in Genesis.[54] However, the book of Judges has also been a subject of interest in folkloric study. The narratives in the book of Judges are perceived by many scholars to be a strand of tales that are related to epic literature and are suggested to be representative of a type of Israelite lore or folk

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[52] Kamrada, *Heroines*, 67.

[53] Peter J. Sabo, review of Dolores G. Kamrada, *Heroines, Heroes, and Deity: Three Narratives of the Biblical Heroic Tradition*, RBL [http://www.bookreviews.org] (2018).

[54] Frank Moore Cross, "The Epic Traditions of Early Israel: Epic Narrative and the Reconstruction of Early Israelite Institutions," in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism*, ed. Richard Elliott Friedman, HSS26 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 13–40. Cross suggested that many of these stories reflect Homeric epics by recounting the events of the nation's normative past through the use of patterns from traditional myth. This connection is what has led to the centrality of the patriarchal stories in biblical folklore scholarship.

tradition.[55] Of all the judges, Samson has drawn the most attention from folklore studies due to his great strength, hair, and wild adventures.[56] However, as noted by Kamarada's study, folkloric approaches to Samson are mostly concerned with his hair and strength, giving little attention to his shenanigans with Delilah. In fact, the lack of attention given to Delilah is indicative of the larger lacunae of research concerning the interaction between the male warrior and the warrior goddess that is commonly found in the heroic literature of the ANE.[57]

Since Samson is the male hero character of the tale and the representative of the people of Israel, he is the character of interest for most studies. The focus upon Samson's hair in particular began with the folkloric studies of Frazer and Gunkel, both of whom note the significance of Samson's power being associated with his hair. Frazer indicates that there is a long standing tradition in folk literature for one's power to dwell in their hair.[58] Gunkel specifically associates Samson with the tales of individuals whose soul resides in different parts of their body including their hair.[59]

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[55] Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, AB 6A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 30–32; Lawson G. Stone, "Judges," in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Cornerstone 3, ed. Phillip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2012), 185–494; Frazer, *Folk-Lore*, ix; Gunkel, *The Folktale*, 33–35; Jack M. Sasson, *Judges 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 6D (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 14; Niditch, *Judges*, 3.

[56] Robert Alter, "Samson Without Folklore," in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*, ed. Susan Niditch (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 47–56; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Some Notes on the Saga of Samson and the Heroic Milieu," *Scripture* 11 (1959): 81–89; Kamrada, *Heroines*, xvii; Othniel Margalith, "The Legends of Samson/Heracles," *VT* 37 (1987): 63–70; Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero," 609.

[57] Mark S. Smith, Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 130.

[58] Frazer, *Folk-lore*, 272.

[59] Gunkel, *The Folktale*, 123.

The focus on Samson is maintained in modern research. For example, in his work on Israelite hero culture Gregory Mobley takes an interest in the Samson saga. He briefly mentions the role of Delilah and the other women as the division markers of the tale surrounding Samson's interactions with the women. He notes that Delilah in particular functions to domesticate the wild man.[60] However, his main focus is upon the heroic character of Samson, who he compares to the chaos monster in the *Enumma Elish* based upon the fact that he wears his long hair in braids and battles beasts.[61] In his dissertation on Samson, Mobley does identify a parallel connection between the encounter of Samson and Delilah and the encounter of Gilgamesh and Ishtar; however, since his focus is on the entire Samson saga he does not fully explore this parallel.[62]

Othniel Margalith takes a more comparative approach than Mobley; however, his comparative work focuses upon the connections between the Samson saga and Greek mythology. Margalith draws connections between the various characteristics of Samson and those of the Greek hero Hercules.[63] Although Margalith does explore the similarities between Samson and Hercules with regard to their encounters with women, the focus remains on the motif of the hero who meekly allows himself to be bound only to demonstrate his strength.[64] The life and adventures of the hero as a whole dominate

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[60] Gregory Mobley, *The Empty Men: The Heroic Tradition of Ancient Israel*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 193.

[61] Mobley, *The Empty Men*, 203.

[62] Gregory Mobley, "Samson, The Liminal Hero: A Comparative Study of Judges 13–16 and Ancient Near Eastern Heroic Tradition" (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 1994), 156.

[63] Othniel Margalith, "More Samson Legends," *VT* 36 (1986): 397–405; Othniel Margalith, "Samson's Riddle and Samson's Magic Locks," *VT* 36 (1986): 225–34; Margalith, "The Legends of Samson," 64.

[64] Margalith, "The Legends of Samson," 64.

Margalith's comparisons between Samson and Hercules; thus, this renders the hero's encounter with a woman a small, less significant portion of the story. Like other heroic analyses of Samson, Margalith draws attention to Samson's hair. In the case of his powerful hair, Margalith expands his comparison to all Greek mythology by looking at characters, other than just Hercules, who also maintained their power by having uncut hair.[65]

In her work on Judges, Niditch describes Samson as a bandit culture hero, that is, a hero whose tales involve challenging the power establishment on behalf of the weaker individuals.[66] Niditch notes that Samson represents an Israelite expression of the folklore motif of "Magic Strength Resides in Hair" and his encounter with Delilah represents the type-scene of "Secret of Strength Treacherously Discovered."[67] Although Niditch discusses the encounter with Delilah, her main focus is upon Samson as the hero and she concludes that the scene has more to do with Samson's hubris than it does Delilah's deception.[68] Niditch takes a folkloric approach to the Samson saga and she even notes that the tale of Samson and Delilah is the most traditional part of the saga; however, her focus is upon the Israelite tale alone with little to no comparative notes concerning the scene of Samson and Delilah.[69]

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[65] Margalith, "Samson's Riddle," 232–33.

[66] Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero," 609.

[67] Niditch, *Judges*, 144.

[68] Niditch, *Judges*, 167.

[69] Niditch, *Judges*, 169.

Niditch's focus upon Samson and his hubris is indicative of the larger trend within Judges research of giving most of the attention to Samson when discussing Judg 16. Even though some scholars mention Delilah and the aesthetics of the narrative, the main focus is upon Samson and his actions as a representative of Israel.[70] Overall, studies of Samson, particularly those with a folkloric interest, pay close attention to Samson and his hair while giving little discussion to his encounter with Delilah and her role in that scene. The comparative approaches to the Samson saga also focus upon the hair imagery by drawing connections other heroes who have uncut hair. These comparisons tend to extend broadly into Greek mythology and either overlook or do not fully expound the comparisons between the Samson saga and other ANE literature, while Delilah is rarely considered in these comparisons.

Studies that do give adequate attention to Delilah are more focused upon the gendered nature of the text rather than the folkloric nature of the narrative. For example, Mieke Bal takes a feminist approach to biblical love stories. In her analysis of Judg 16, Bal takes a psychoanalytic approach to the narrative and is also concerned with the reception history of the tale.[71] Her narrative analysis, which forms the basis of her further psychoanalysis, demonstrates that often Delilah's point of view is presented over against Samson's.[72] She points out that this is contrary to the expectation that the male hero should dominate the story. Based upon this narrative analysis, Bal concludes that Delilah

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[70] Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC 6 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 392, 451; Trent Butler, *Judges*, WBC 8 (Nashville: Nelson, 2009), 356–60; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 392–408.

[71] Mieke Bal, Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 9.

[72] Bal, *Lethal Love*, 39.

is the subject of the narrative, which makes the acquisition of information the object and Samson the arbiter since Delilah's success in her quest is dependent upon him.[73] Bal clearly demonstrates the important role that Delilah plays in the scene presented in Judg 16; however, her narrative analysis is simply the means to support her discussion of gender and history of reception rather than an analysis of the narrative as a whole and any connection it may have to other similar tales.

Cheryl Exum approaches the Samson saga with a concern for the gender ideology of the text and its role in promoting a patriarchal worldview.[74] Given this concern, Exum gives much attention to Delilah and her contribution to the scene; however, her ultimate goal is to demonstrate how the Samson saga reinforces the patriarchal values of the ANE through the binary oppositions that are presented in the text rather than the ways that Delilah contributes to an understanding of the scene.[75] Building upon the foundation laid by Bal and Exum, more recent gender studies of the Samson saga have turned the focus back to Samson to explore the role of his masculinity in the tale.[76] For example, Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska explores the connection between Samson's behavior and masculinity with a particular interest in the contribution made by male honor to the narrative's ideology.[77] Stephen Wilson examines Samson's masculinity from the lens of

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[73] Bal, *Lethal Love*, 56.

[74] J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*, JSOTSup 163 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 9, 32.

[75] Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 62, 72–73.

[76] Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, "Samson: Masculinity Lost (and Regained)," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creangă, The Bible in the Modern World 33 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 171–88.

[77] Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, "Samson," 172.

the male coming-of-age theme.[78] He concludes that the Samson saga presents a failure to come-of-age tale, which functions within the broader Israelite social context as a cautionary tale to young boys about the dangers of disobedience.[79] The movement in gender studies from a focus upon Delilah to an emphasis upon Samson further demonstrates how Delilah's role in the scene has been underemphasized in the scholarship on Judg 16.

A Different Approach to Samson: The Hero and His Temptress

This brief overview of the scholarship on the Samson saga demonstrates that in specifically folkloric approaches Thompson's motif of magic residing in the hair has caught the attention of many biblical scholars. However, another motif has also been of interest to biblical scholars due to its appearance in the Joseph saga, namely, the "K2111 Potiphar's Wife Motif."[80] Thompson categorizes the motif under false accusations and broadly defines it as "a woman makes vain overtures to a man then accuses him of attempting to force her."[81] John Yohannan has defined more specifically the plot of this motif as a handsome man, of upright character is sexually approached by his older stepmother. He recoils with horror from her advance and states his loyalty to his father.

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[78] Stephen M. Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child: Failing to Come of Age in the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 133 (2014): 43–60; Stephen M. Wilson, *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 134–45

[79] Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 57; Wilson, *Making Men*, 142.

[80] Susan Tower Hollis, "The Woman in Ancient Examples of the Potiphar's Wife Motif K2111," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 28–42; Thompson, *Motif-Index*, 4.474.

[81] Thompson, *Motif-Index*, 4.474.

The stepmother, angered by the rejection, accuses the man of rape. Although the father wants to believe in the man's innocence, he subjects the man to punishment; however, in the end the man is found innocent and is promoted to a greater position of honor.[82]

Yohannan's synthesis of the narrative features in this motif relies upon the stories listed in Thompson's index, which includes Greek tales, medieval romances, European folktales, and Persian tales. The breadth of space and time that these tales cover can make for difficult comparison and little can be said about the relationship between these various folktales. The all-encompassing nature of the listings in the motif index can result in focusing upon one feature of the text, which may or may not be the main feature. For example, the tales in Yohannan's description of the "Potiphar's Wife Motif" focus upon the incestual nature of the sexual advance of the stepmother. However, this excludes the chief tale, Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39, because the text makes no reference to a familial relationship, genuine or fictive, between Joseph and Potiphar's wife. These studies, which have a broad range of tales, attest to the ubiquitous nature of the motif themes. However, more localized approaches are preferable for detailed analyses of the contents of the motif, because they are better able to take into consideration the specific cultural milieu from which these tales derived.

More localized approaches to the "Potiphar's Wife Motif" often juxtapose the story of Joseph and *The Tale of Two Brothers* with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and *The Tale of Aqhat*.[83]

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[82] John D. Yohannan, ed., Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature: An Anthology of the Story of the Chaste Youth and the Lustful Stepmother (New York: New Directions, 1968), 1.

[83] W. F. Albright, "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph," *JBL* 37 (1918): 111–43; W. F. Albright, "The 'Natural Force' of Moses in Light of Ugaritic," *BASOR* 94 (1944): 32–35; Michael C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica: An Ethic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 258–60; Delbert R. Hillers, "The Bow of Aqhat: The Meaning of a Mythological Theme," in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cryus H. Gordon on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., AOAT 22 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 71–80; Hollis, "Woman in Ancient Examples," 28; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 106; Dorothy Irvin, "The

Yohannan's description of the "Potiphar's Wife Motif" does not seem to align with the narratives found in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and *The Tale of Aqhat* as well as it aligns with the Genesis account and *The Tale of Two Brothers*. By focusing exclusively on the ANE stories related to the "Potiphar's Wife Motif," Delbert Hillers and Susan Tower Hollis both arrive at a different set of narrative criteria for the motif. Hillers and Hollis both state that the motif pattern begins with a young man, usually a hunter, who is sexually approached by a woman, either human or deity. The young man resists the approach in some way but is still punished or killed in a manner that almost always features the emasculation of the man and is occasionally followed by his final resurrection.[84]

Although Hillers and Hollis arrive at a similar description of the motif, they each have different focuses in their analysis. Hillers approaches the tale as a seduction scene focusing upon the hero's emasculation. Hollis views the tale as part of a rite of passage from one social status to another. Her analysis focuses on the contribution of the "negative" women in bringing about a positive change in the life of the men. Even with a localized approach, these two scholars arrive at two different conclusions concerning the main goal of the motif. Thus, their studies function as a starting point for a study of the localized expression of the "Potiphar's Wife Motif." However, there is still a need for further study to explore the core features and theme of the generalized motif as well as the local variations upon that core theme.

A more localized approach to the motif also creates space to incorporate other tales that can be overlooked in the broader approaches to the motif. For example, the

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Joseph and Moses Stories as Narrative in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Narrative," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM, 1977), 180–202.

[84] Hillers, "The Bow of Aqhat," 71–77; Hollis, "Woman in Ancient Examples," 29.

traditional, non-localized "Potiphar's Wife Motif" focuses upon the sexual, and often incestual nature of the woman's approach. However, that excludes the majority of the ANE expressions of the motif. The localized descriptions of the motif presented by Hillers and Hollis move away from this traditional focus and present the interaction as an encounter between a warrior and a woman, in which the woman functions as some sort of temptress. This general description corresponds to a story type that Dorothy Irvin suggests is typical in hero tales. She suggests that when telling a story about the adventures of a young hero there should be lulls between events when sirens attempt to seduce the young hero.[85] In light of these descriptions of this particular story type, the title "The Hero and His Temptress" seems to more accurately describe the motif than the "Potiphar's Wife Motif." This generalized description of the encounter between a hero and a temptress figure also lends itself to the inclusion of the story of Samson and Delilah in Judg 16 as an example of the motif. This is particularly true when one recognizes the importance of the feminization of Samson as well as the role that Delilah plays in his demise, both of which are features that Hillers and Hollis emphasize in their analyses of the motif.[86]

I propose that the traditional descriptions of the motif in question are too narrowly defined, to the exclusion of a key exemplar of the motif found in the story of Samson and Delilah. I suggest that the ANE warrior culture features a folkloric motif concerning a particular type of interaction between the warrior and the warrior female, in which the

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[85] Irvin, *Mytharion*, 106.

[86] Caroline Blyth, *Reimagining Delilah's Afterlives as Femme Fatale: The Lost Seduction*, LHBOTS 652 (London: T & T Clark, 2017), 69–70; Butler, *Judges*, 352; Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, "Samson," 177–78; Niditch, *Judges*, 165–67.

female character is featured as a temptress. This motif, which I entitle “The Hero and His Temptress,” is a more accurate description of the particular ANE expression of the “Potiphar’s Wife Motif” listed in Thompson’s motif-index. The purpose of this study is to articulate a more generalized description of the features of the ANE expression of this motif and to demonstrate it is more accurately described as the motif of “The Hero and His Temptress,” which appears in the biblical example of Judg 16 and in the ANE examples of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Tale of Aqhat*, and *The Tale of Two Brothers*.

CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

By examining the ANE expression of the K2111 "Potiphar's Wife Motif," this study presents a more generalized description of the ANE motif as "The Hero and His Temptress," which allows for the incorporation of the tale of Samson and Delilah as an example of the motif and thereby situates Samson and Delilah among the cast of the heroic literature of the ANE. The methodology used to accomplish this goal finds its home at the junction between folklore studies, comparative studies, and narrative studies. Therefore, this chapter will outline some of the prominent approaches in each of these fields and establish the methodology of this study, which encompasses a conglomeration of techniques from these three fields.

Folklore Methodology

Folklore studies are commonly associated with the study of fairytales; however, the material categorized as folklore is much broader than the fairytale alone. For this study, the literary material of interest will be categorized as folklore or folk literature based upon Susan Niditch's definition of folklore as the "traditional." She notes that much of

biblical literature is traditional-style literature in the sense that it is not traceable to a single author and has repeated patterns of thought, content, and language.[1]

The particular methodology from the field of folklore studies that will be incorporated into this study is the structural analysis of narrative. Alan Dundes defines structuralism as the "the study of the interrelationships or organization of the component parts of an item of folklore."[2] This study will use a structuralist approach in order to identify and describe the narrative scene based upon its component parts.

The structural study of folklore finds its roots in the works of Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss. At its core, structural studies are concerned with the interrelationships between the component parts of a tale. The initial step of a structural study is the identification of the component parts. For Propp, the smallest unit of the tale is the "function."[3] A function is determined based upon the actions of the dramatis personae within the tale. The various functions are then combined together to create the framework of the tale. Propp's functions describe the action of the dramatis personae within the flow of the narrative and are thereby bound to their place within the narrative sequence.[4] By limiting his analysis to the linear relationship between functions and

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[1] Susan Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), xiv–xiii; Susan Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, GBS, ed. Gene M. Tucker (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 9.

[2] Alan Dundes, "Structuralism and Folklore," in *Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2007), 123–53.

[3] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 18–19.

[4] Propp, *Morphology*, 20; Vladimir Propp, "Structure and History in the Study of the Fairy Tale," trans. Hugh T. McElwain, Semeia 10 (1976): 57–84, originally published as Vladimir Propp "Struttura e storia nello studio della favola," 201–27 in *Morfologia della fiaba*, Nuovo Biblioteca Scientifica Einaudi 13 (Turin: Einaudi) 1966.

character roles, Propp's approach focuses upon the compositional scheme of the tale on the narrative surface.[5] For example, Propp describes one particular type of folktale that beginnings with the function titled "absence." In the absence function, one of the family members is absent from the initial scene. The specifics of this function can vary from tale to tale. For example, the family member could be a parent, a grandparent, or a child, who could be absent due to a business endeavor, a trip, or death; the specific possibilities are endless.[6] The absence function is followed by the function titled "interdiction," where a prohibition is given to the hero.[7] As in the previous function, there are endless possibilities for the specifics of the prohibition. The giving of the prohibition inevitably leads to the breaking of the prohibition and the introduction of the problem that will drive the rest of the folktale. Thus, the action in each function paves the way for the action of the next function, creating a linear progression.

By contrast, Lévi-Strauss examines the constituent parts of a narrative on multiple levels.[8] He focuses upon the binary oppositions that are presented in the tale and draws meaning from those oppositions, even if the tale must be read out of narrative sequence to identify those oppositions.[9] For example, in his analysis of the Oedipus myth, Lévi-Strauss divides the sections of the story into columns and lines, similar to a musical

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[5] Pamela J. Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales: An Evaluation of Two Proppian Analyses of Biblical Narratives," *JSOT* 34 (1986): 35–60.

[6] Propp, *Morphology*, 24–25.

[7] Propp, *Morphology*, 26–28.

[8] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *Journal of American Folklore* 68 (1955): 428–44.

[9] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Monique Layton, vol. 2 (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 65; Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Study," 431.

score. He places the events of the story into lines as they happen chronologically and groups thematically corresponding events together in columns. As a result, the events should be read according to the lines to understand the sequence of events, but according to the columns to understand the meaning of the myth.[10] So in the Oedipus myth the first column lists the events that have to do with overrating blood relationships, while the second has do with underrating blood relationships, and the third column are events in which monsters are slain. By dividing the events of a myth in this manner, Lévi-Strauss' approach is concerned with the abstract relationships among the elements within a tale rather than the linear development of the plot. Although Propp and Lévi-Strauss take two different approaches to determining and assessing the component parts of a narrative, both agree that isolating the component parts of a tale is the first step to a structural study.

Almost all structural analyses find their origin in the work of Propp or Lévi-Strauss; however, there is no standard method for applying their work. Many practitioners use the same terminology as Propp for the constituent parts: the function and tale role.[11] But as critics have noticed, these studies do not apply Propp's method in a standard fashion even though they are using the same terms and definitions. The works of Jack Sasson and Joseph Blenkinsopp provide two examples of how biblical scholars in particular have applied Propp's approach. However, as Pamela Milne has pointed out,

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[10] Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Study of Myth," 433.

[11] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Biographical Patterns in Biblical Narrative," *JSOT* 20 (1981): 27–46; Ilana Dan, "The Innocent Persecuted Heroine: An Attempt at a Model for the Surface Level of the Narrative Structure of the Female Fairy Tale," in *Patterns in Oral Literature*, ed. Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 13–30; Rina Drory, "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves: An Attempt at a Model for the Narrative Structure of the Reward-and-Punishment Fairy Tale," in *Patterns in Oral Literature*, ed. Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 31–48; Jack M. Sasson, *Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 200–14.

neither Sasson nor Blenkinsopp fully emulate Propp's method when they applied it to their narratives.

A complication with employing Propp's method is the interrelationship between the constituent units of the tale. Propp's method dictates that the tale role derives from the function. For example, the function of villainy describes the action of harm coming to a character. In this function, the character causing the harm is the villain and the recipient of the harm is typically the hero or a member of the hero's family.[12] Thus, the villain enters the scene as the character who disturbs the peace. However, later in the tale the character identified as the villain can fulfill a different role in a different function. For example, the villain who disturbed the peace can also be the donor who gives a required item to the hero. Therefore, one character can be involved in multiple spheres of action and fill more than one role in the tale.[13] Hence it is the actions taken by an individual character that determine the role that character plays within each function.[14] In other words, it is the functions that determine the tale role of each character. However, Sasson's study prescribes tale roles to characters rather than allowing the functions to determine the tale role.[15]

The interrelationship between the consistent units of the tale demonstrates another complication with applying Propp's method; namely, it was constructed specifically for

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[12] Propp, *Morphology*, 29.

[13] Propp, *Morphology*, 72–73.

[14] Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales," 45; Propp, *Morphology*, 18, 72.

[15] Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales," 44–45.

the Russian heroic fairytale.[16] Propp developed his list of possible functions by analyzing a group of tales from a single genre. Thus, his method cannot be applied directly to other genres of literature because the set list of functions may be different. For example, Blenkinsopp's study applies Propp's method to the genre of biography. In his analysis, he draws a number of correlations between the biography and Propp's functions; however, the description of these correlations is vague and does not support the conclusion that Propp's method can be applied to biographical elements in narrative.[17] Thus, the studies of Sasson and Blenkinsopp confirm that Propp's methodology is tailored to the Russian fairytale and requires some form of alteration before it is applied to other narrative genres.[18]

Working off a foundation built by Propp, Heda Jason analyzes the narrative structure of oral literature in light of its two constituent units: the tale role and the action.[19] These two units combine together to create the function, so that the function is comprised of one action and two tale roles in which one tale role serves as the subject and the other as the object of the action.[20] For example, one function is titled "the donor tests

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[16] Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales," 36–38.

[17] Blenkinsopp, "Biographical Patterns," 38–41; Dan, "The Innocent Persecuted Heroine," 27; Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales," 49–50. One study that seems to appropriately apply Propp's method is Ilana Dan's study on the female fairy tale. Although Dan's study lacks a clear synthesis and analysis of the findings, so the broader application and implications of the study are ambiguous.

[18] In his study, Sasson notes that even though he applied Propp's model with little to no adaptation, the model does need to be refined in order to apply it to the literary material of the Bible and the ANE. Of this material, Sasson identifies the *Tale of Two Brothers*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and the *Tale of Aqhat* as examples of ANE tales that could benefit from a Proppian style analysis. Sasson, *Ruth,* 214.

[19] Heda Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure in Oral Literature," in *Patterns in Oral Literature*, ed. Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 99–139.

[20] Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure," 101–102.

the hero." In this function, the character of the donor is the subject who performs the action of testing and the object of the action is the character of the hero.[21] Jason then combines these functions into groups of three to create "moves." A move consists of a stimulus function, a response function, and a result function.[22] For example, the first function of a move could be the donor tests the hero, this function is the stimulus that initiates the action sequence. The stimulus function is then followed by the response function: the hero responds to the test. The third and final function of the sequence is the result function; in this case, the donor compensates the hero. These three-part moves are connected to one another to compose an entire tale. In this model of tale composition, the function and move are the abstract, constructed units of a tale that get filled with narrative specifics from what Jason refers to as the "lexicon" of the narrative repertoire.[23] For example, returning to the move cited earlier the three functions are the donor tests the hero, the hero responds to the test, and the donor compensates the hero. The narrative specifics in one instance could be Elijah tests the poor woman to see if she has prepared food, the woman responds that she is poor and has no food, and Elijah gives financial compensation to the poor woman.[24] Thus, each individual tale will have different items to fill the abstract roles of hero and donor as well as different specifics to fill out the nature of the test, response, and subsequent compensation. This lexicon of narrative specifics is culture bound and contains the explicit characters and events that complete the tale by

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[21] Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure," 101–102.

[22] Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure," 102.

[23] Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure," 106.

[24] Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure," 102.

fulfilling the function. Thus, Jason's study contains many elements that were developed by Propp, but she makes some adjustments to begin finding ways to apply his method to literature beyond the Russian fairytale.

Another complication when implementing Propp's methodology is the confusion of the constituent units since many scholars use different terminology to describe the constituent parts of the tale. Propp uses the terms function and tale role to describe his two major units of folk literature; however, many scholars use different terms and descriptions of these units. One such confusion of terminology is the use of the term "motif." Stith Thompson has done extensive work in the area of motif classification and defines a motif as "the smallest element in a tale having the power to persist in tradition."[25] The motif is Thompson's constituent unit of study but there are inconsistencies in what constitutes a motif. For example, at times he presents a motif as a particular trait of a character, like motif D1831 "Magic Strength Resides in One's Hair." While at other times a motif can be an entire narrative event, like motif D830 "Magic Object Acquired by Trickery" or motif K2111 "Potiphar's Wife." The vagueness in Thompson's definition of motif leads to inconsistencies in studies that follow his definition. For example, Dolores Kamrada's study utilizes Thompson's motif index and his definition of motif in a study of the Samson saga. Therefore, like Thompson's Motif Index, some motifs she identifies are character traits, like hair, while others are actions, like barrenness magically cured.[26] The larger inconsistency comes when comparing these

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[25] Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: Dryden, 1946), 415.

[26] Dolores G. Kamrada, *Heroines, Heroes, and Deity: Three Narratives of the Biblical Heroic Tradition*, LHBOTS 621 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 72–74.

motifs across various tales. For example, Kamrada compares the hair of Samson with the hair of Humbaba in the Epic of Gilgamesh. In these stories, Samson and Humbaba fulfill different roles in the tale, hero and villain, which raises the question does the role of the character influence the motif? Kamrada's analysis seems to imply that the motif is not bound to aspects of the narrative since a motif can be found in both the hero and the villain.[27] However, this is contrary to the tale role in Propp's model which is limited by its relationship to the function, and that function is then bound to its place in the narrative sequence. So, according to Propp, the hero and the villain by definition cannot fulfill the same role in the same function. Consistency in terminology is important since, as Alan Dundes notes, determining the component parts of a tale is an important first step before comparative work can take place.[28] A trustworthy comparison can be conducted only if the comparative units are clearly defined.

Dundes emphasizes the need for carefully defined units in comparative folklore studies and he states that Thompson's motif and tale type are not precise enough.[29] Dundes defines units as "utilitarian logical constructs of measure which, though admittedly relativistic and arbitrary, permit greater facility in the examination and comparison of the materials studied in the natural and social sciences."[30] The unit therefore, when applied to folk literature, is a standard item that will be compared across tales. Although conceived by the researcher, a clearly defined unit allows for

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[27] Kamrada, *Heroines, Heroes and Deity*, 88–89.

[28] Alan Dundes, "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales," *The Journal of American Folklore* 75 (1962): 95–105.

[29] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 99–100.

[30] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 96.

standardized comparison. Dundes states that units must be standards of quantity and they must be something that can be broken down into smaller units or combined in to larger units.[31] In this case, Dundes' description of the unit is similar to Propp's functions in that they can be combined into larger units and broken down into smaller units like the tale role.

However, Propp's functions are limited in that they cannot be defined apart from their location in the story.[32] Thus, a comparison is difficult to make since each function is bound to its place in the narrative. Therefore, Dundes suggests using the categories of etic and emic to describe folktale units. The etic element, which he terms the motifeme, is a nonstructural, classification category applied to the text to aide in productive comparisons. The emic element, which Dundes calls the allomotif, is related to the structure of a text and defines how the specific motifeme is expressed in the text.[33] In other words, the motifeme is represented by the generic action and the allomotif is the specific action occurring in a specific tale. For example, if one motifeme is "the hero is sent on a quest," then the allomotifs would be all the various types of quest or all the various characters that could send the hero on a quest. Thus, the allomotifs that could fill the spot of a motifeme are unlimited. Essentially, Dundes' motifeme is similar to Propp's function or Thompson's motifs, while the allomotif is more closely related to Jason's lexicon of the narrative repertoire. What sets Dundes' work apart is, in his estimation, the identification of motifemes and allomotifs is not the end of a structural study. He sees this

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[31] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 96.

[32] Propp, *Morphology*, 18–19.

[33] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 101.

type of structural analysis as a precursor to interpretation. The identification of the units of a tale is just the first step before interpretation and cross-cultural comparison, the true goals of the study, can be accomplished.[34]

While many studies utilize Dundes' theory of etic and emic units, there are still major differences in terminology for the etic and emic units. For example, Erhardt Güttgemeanns also uses the terminology of motifeme but he defines it as the relationship between a narrative action and the characters performing the act.[35] Using grammatical terminology, Güttgemeanns describes the motifeme as the verb plus a subject, or an action and an acting character. For example, one motifeme is titled "interdiction;" in this motifeme an actor gives a prohibition. The actor is the subject of the motifeme, and the verb is the act of giving a prohibition. Within the larger narrative framework, these motifemes are combined and organized in a logical sequence.[36] So that the motifeme of interdiction is often followed by the motifeme of violation, in which an actor violates the given prohibition. Based upon this definition, Güttgemeanns' motifeme is the same thing as Propp's function since it includes both the action and the dramatis persona and is bound to its place in the narrative sequence. In fact, Güttgemeanns uses the same titles for his motifemes that Propp uses for his functions. Even though he uses the same terminology, Güttgemeanns' motifeme is slightly different than Dundes' motifeme, which is not as concerned with the relationship between the action and the actor.

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[34] Dundes, "Structuralism and Folklore," 124.

[35] Erhardt Güttgemanns, "Fundamentals of a Grammar of Oral Literature," in *Patterns in Oral Literature*, ed. Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 77–98.

[36] Güttgemanns, "Fundamentals of a Grammar," 81–82.

Another iteration of Dundes' principle of motifemes and allomotifs is demonstrated in the work of Susan Niditch. Niditch uses Dundes' theoretical foundation as she creates a new approach which she terms "the overlay map technique." In this approach, Niditch utilizes four different levels of assessment: the generic, the specific, the typological, and the individual.[37] This four-level approach is based upon the underlying concept that the motifeme is a general unit that can be applied to all tales, while the allomotif consists of the specific way the unit is expressed. Niditch's generic level looks at the generic features of a story like problem, plan, and resolution, making this level much broader than Dundes' motifeme.[38] However, she relies on the same underlying concept; namely, the generic features can be applied to any tale. In the specific layer of the tale, Niditch fills out the basic details that comprise the generic features. For example, in her analysis of the wife-sister tale in Gen 12:10–20, Niditch lists the first generic element of the tale as the problem. In her specific elements, the problem is described as the marginal status of the protagonists. This gets elaborated in the typological elements where the problem is described as the husband and wife face famine and become sojourners in a foreign land. Finally, the specific elements identify Abram and Sarai as the husband and wife, while Egypt is listed as the foreign land.[39] The material that Niditch places in the specific layer is similar to what Dundes includes in the motifemes. Niditch adds two more levels of specificity to the tale through the typological and individual elements. So, in the case of Gen 12:10–20 the typological layer describes

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[37] Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 42–43; Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 21.

[38] Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 28.

[39] Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 28.

the problem as the marginal status of the protagonists, while the specific layer identifies the protagonists as Abram and Sarai. Thus, Niditch's specific layer best corresponds to Dundes' allomotif since allomotifs fill out the details contained in a specific story.

Like Dundes, Dorothy Irvin notes that Thompson's definition of motif is too broad, particularly when applied to the limited corpus of the ANE literature; therefore, she suggests a stricter method. Irvin narrows Thompson's definition of the motif to "a plot element which moves the story forward a step."[40] Irvin terms this motif "the plot-motif"; its more narrow definition helps to distinguish between motifs and events since not all elements of a tale contribute to the movement of the plot.[41] In order to demonstrate the plot-motif, Irvin provides an example analysis of Gen 16 in which she identifies four plot-motifs: strife between wives which results in persecution; prediction of child's characteristics before birth; the naming of the child; and the explanation of the origin of a well or spring.[42] Although Irvin narrows Thompson's definition of motif to her plot-motif, she still compares the various plot-motifs she identifies with Thompson's motifs, implying that functionally the two items are the same, despite the fact that they are defined differently.

By limiting the plot-motif to elements that contribute to the plot, Irvin focuses her attention on characteristics of narratives that are distinguished from other literary forms.[43]

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[40] Dorothy Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories as Narrative in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Narrative," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM, 1977), 180–202; Dorothy Irvin, *Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 32 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 2.

[41] Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories," 183; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 2–3.

[42] Irvin, *Mytharion*, 5.

[43] Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories," 183.

Irvin's broader goal is to explore the larger narrative element of the traditional episode. The traditional episode is a series of events within a narrative that form a set part of the tale and functions like a Homeric traditional epithet to fill a section of narrative and move the plot forward.[44] Using again the example of Gen 16, Irvin discusses the traditional birth episode, in which the birth of the hero is told in a highly stylized way.[45] The focus of Irvin's study is on the traditional episode in order to draw conclusions concerning the history of composition for her passages of interest.

In a similar study, David Jaeger examines the theme of the initiatory trial of the hero. He uses the term theme or thematic unit based upon Albert Lord's theory of thematic composition for oral literature.[46] Although the terminology is different, Jaeger's theme is similar to Irvin's traditional episode. As for the smaller narrative units that comprise the larger theme, Jaeger calls them motifs or "conventional clusters."[47] These motifs, which are Jaeger's main focus in describing the larger theme, are similar to what Irvin terms the plot-motif which is akin to Thompson's motif. Thus, Jaeger identifies eighteen motifs within the theme of the initiatory trial of the hero, including the hero's humble background, the divine initiation of the heroic trial, and the assigning of a companion to the hero.[48] Although the standard theme contains eighteen motifs, all

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[44] Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories," 183–84; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 9–10.

[45] Irvin, *Mytharion*, 10–11.

[46] David Kenneth Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial of the Hero in Hebrew Bible Narrative" (PhD Dissertation, The University of Denver, 1992), 23, 52–53; Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 65.

[47] Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial," 53.

[48] Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial," 79.

eighteen may not occur in each specific version of the theme, as demonstrated by some of the stories that Jaeger examines. His study provides another example of an approach to the constituent units of folk literature, particularly within the Hebrew Bible.

Despite the perceived lack of uniformity in the structural study of folk literature, there are general trends of similarity that undergird these various approaches. The main point of similarity is a conceptual framework that is rooted in Propp's model. Each of these studies is concerned with identifying the constituent units of the text and describing how those constituent units are combined to form a tale. Thus, structural approaches to folktales are concerned with the underlying grammar of the tale, and often follow development in the field of linguistics with regard to the relationship between the constituent units and the meaning of the text.[49] A second point of continuity between these various approaches is the dual-layered analysis of the constituent units. Each of the studies detailed above describe the constituent units of the text in at least two different layers — a general and a specific. This trend recognizes that folktales often contain similar features and provides a means for comparison across different tales.

Approach of this Study

This study will follow the collective trend in the structural study of narrative by examining the selected narratives on two levels. The first level will be termed the general elements of the tale. The goal of this initial analysis will be to determine the general elements that comprise the tale. The general elements of the tale will be discussed in

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[49] Erhardt Güttgemanns, "What Is 'Generative Poetics?' Theses and Reflection Concerning a New Exegetical Method," *Semeia* 6 (1976): 1–21; Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal, "Introduction," in *Patterns in Oral Literature*, ed. Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 1–10.

terms of the constituent unit of "event." The event will be composed of an action performed by an actor or actors. This layer of the general elements is similar to Propp's function, as well as Jason's function, Dundes' etic unit or motifeme, Güttgemanns' motifeme, and Niditch's generic and specific elements.[50] As Robert Culley notes, all structural analyses are selective in nature due to the extensive effort that a full structural analysis would require; therefore, the selected units of study must be relevant to the purpose of the study.[51] In this case, the purpose of the general elements is to establish a means of comparison between different tales. Thus, the events, or the actions performed by an actor, will be used evaluate the contents of each tale, compare the sequence of events, and to identify similar trends among the four tales of interest.

The second level of analysis will be the specific elements of the tale. The specific elements will examine the constituent unit of the event in terms of the specific, individual characters and their behavior. This layer of study is similar to Dundes' allomotif, Jason's lexicon of narrative repertoire, and Niditch's typological and individual elements.[52] Dundes notes that structural analyses should be analytical tools used for the ultimate goal of interpretation.[53] Therefore, the specific elements of the tale will be examined with regard to their contributions to the meaning of the tale as a whole. Although the general elements will be the most prominent unit of comparison between the tales, the specific

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[50] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 101; Güttgemanns, "Fundamentals of a Grammar," 80; Jason, "A Model of Narrative Structure," 101–102; Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 28; Propp, *Morphology*, 19.

[51] Robert C. Culley, "Structural Analysis: Is It Done With Mirrors?," *Interpretation* 28 (1974): 165–81.

[52] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 101; Jason, "A Model of Narrative Structure," 106; Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 29.

[53] Dundes, "Structuralism and Folklore," 124.

elements will still be considered in a comparative light. The interpretation of each scene, based upon the specific elements, will determine if each story has unique features allowing it to say something the other stories do not, while also determining if the four stories as a whole convey a message together that cannot be conveyed individually.[54]

A final term that needs defining for this study is the larger narrative unit of interest. As pointed out, the term motif is vague since scholars use this term to mean different things. The flaws with Thompson's motif as the smallest unit of a tale have been pointed out by the many scholars who try to redefine this unit.[55] Based upon Propp's analysis, Claude Bremond suggests that the larger narrative unit or archetypal situation should contain a compound sequence of functions.[56] In light of these various definitions and terms, this study will refer to the larger narrative unit as "the scene." The scene is comprised of a string of events and will be delimited within the larger literary work based upon the singular location of the interaction and the consistency of characters present in the scene.[57] Thus, when characters enter or exit the narrative frame or the narrative location changes a new scene will begin.

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[54] Culley, "Structural Analysis," 179.

[55] Irvin, *Mytharion*, 10–11; Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial," 52–53; Heda Jason, *Motif, Type and Genre: A Manual for Compilation of Indices & A Bibliography of Indices and Indexing*, FF Communications 273 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 2000), 25; Thompson, *The Folktale*, 415.

[56] Claude Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," *Communications* 4 (1964): 4–32.

[57] Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure," 104. This concept of a singular location and consistency of characters is derived from Jason's work on narrative structure. Jason identifies two categories of units within a narrative. The first is the function which is comprised of one action and two tale roles, while the other is the connective unit. A connective unit occurs between two parts of the narrative. There are two varieties of connective units: an information connective which gives new information and a transfer connective which relates a transfer in state, time, or space. In Jason's narrative structure, these connective units serve to break up the larger moves that occur within a tale.

Narrative Methodology

The structural study of folk literature is inherently interwoven with narrative methodologies since it is through the process of reading the narrative that the general elements of the tale emerge. Therefore, this study will rely upon various narrative methodologies in order to identify and describe the general and specific elements of each tale. The main purpose for including insight from narrative methodologies in this study is to guard against the fragmentation of the text. Structural studies divide the narrative into multiple layers of units and sub-units, which can lead to the loss of the unified nature of the tale. Thus, maintaining a literary framework will allow for each constituent unit to be connected to the main plot of the scene and for each scene to be situated within the tale as a whole. In other words, a literary approach maintains the coherence of the text by asserting that each constituent element directly contributes to the overall communicative design of the narrative.[58] This assertion on the part of literary studies echoes Dundes concern for interpretation. Dundes maintains that structuralism is not an end in itself; instead, it leads to the final goal of interpretation.[59] Thus, in this study, the main purpose for identifying the general and specific elements is not to decompose the tale into smaller pieces, but rather to examine how each element contributes to the narration of the tale.

In order to couple a literary approach with a structuralist approach, this study will examine the poetics of each scene, by considering the literary techniques utilized in each tale. A concern for the narrative poetics will assist with integrating the various

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[58] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 2.

[59] Dundes, "Structuralism and Folklore," 124.

component parts into the scene as a unified whole and assessing the contribution of each part to the meaning of the scene. Adele Berlin notes that poetics is a way of looking at how a narrative is constructed; thus, poetics and structuralism naturally go hand in hand.[60] Structuralism provides a means for measuring the constituent units in a scene, while poetics provides a means for interpreting the significance of the constituent units. In fact, David Jobling suggests that a structuralist approach is a helpful counterbalance to a purely narrative approach to texts.[61] In his review of Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative,* Jobling notes that since Alter focuses solely upon the literary artistry of the narrative, it would be beneficial to couple Alter's approach with another methodological framework, like structuralism, due to the complex array of features within narratives.[62] Thus, this study seeks to couple a literary approach to the text with a structuralist approach. The specific contributions of a literary approach to this study are a concern for characterization, point of view, and narration within each scene.

Literary approaches to characterization examine how characters in a tale are presented. The degree to which a character is described helps to categorize the character as either an agent, a type, or a full-fledged character.[63] The portrait of a specific character is determined by how the character is described in the narrative, the presentation of the character's inner life through their thoughts, speech, and actions, as well as through contrast with other characters. The combination of these narrative techniques make up the

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[60] Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, BLS 9 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 15.

[61] David Jobling, "Robert Alter's, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*," *JSOT* 27 (1983): 87–99.

[62] Jobling, "Robert Alter's," 92–93.

[63] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 32.

characterization of a character.[64] In this study, each event will be assessed in terms of the actor in that event; therefore, characterization techniques will aide in the identification of actors and their specific traits.

The narrative point of view is related to the model of narration used in a tale: each event within a tale is presented from the point of view of a specific character and this point of view can alter how the events of a tale are interpreted.[65] The narration technique used in a tale determines whose point of view is presented; since most tales are told from the point of view of the omniscient narrator, the point of view often gives the audience more knowledge than is possessed by the individual characters.[66] Tales are often told by using a combination of narration and direct speech. Therefore, noting who is showing or telling the content of an event will influence how an event is interpreted. In this study, the narrative point of view will be important in the movement from identifying constituent parts to interpreting the tale. The use of direct speech over and against narration in a tale contributes to how the relationship between the actions and actors are perceived.[67] Thus, the relationship between narration and direct speech will directly contribute to the interpretation of the actor's role within the tale for this study.

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[64] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 32–41.

[65] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 43.

[66] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 43; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 75–78.

[67] Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 64.

Comparative Methodology

The study of folklore is rooted in the comparative method since a large portion of folkloric studies is concerned with cross-cultural trends in folk literature, as evidenced in the formulation of folklore type indices and the application of those indices to various textual traditions.[68] These comparative endeavors often focus on what this study will refer to as the scene, that is the larger literary unit. These larger scenes are comprised of smaller units in a specific order; therefore, the comparison of scenes involves a consideration of the constituent units that occur in similar narrative situations.[69] Classical studies of the Homeric epic have identified these scenes as recurring units that are associated with the composition of tales.[70] In other words, a composer can draw upon a stock repertoire of recurring units to fill generic scenes when composing a tale. Yet these recurring scenes, or type-scenes as they are often termed, are not limited to the Homeric corpus; they are also present in other forms of narrative literature.[71] These recurring scenes have a direct relationship to the task of tale composition, causing these type-scenes to be often embedded with an inherent meaning.[72] Thus, comparing the use of

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[68] Dundes, "From Etic to Emic," 95; Patricia G. Kirkpatrick, *The Old Testament and Folklore Study*, JSOTSup 62 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 13; Hermann Gunkel, *The Folktale in the Old Testament*, trans. Michael D. Rutter (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1987), 35; James George Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law* (London: Macmillan, 1923), ix.

[69] Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," 23.

[70] John Miles Foley and Justin Arft, "The Epic Cycle and Oral Tradition," in *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception: A Companion*, ed. Marco Fantuzzi and Christos Tsagalis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 78–95.

[71] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 51; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 106; Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 30–35; Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, xiii.

[72] Foley and Arft, "The Epic Cycle," 84.

these scenes is a way to gain insight into the underlying values of the tale-tellers or the audience when dealing with the interpretation of folk literature.[73] In this study, the analysis of the specific elements of each tale will explore the meaning embedded in each variation of the scene to determine how each culture uses the scene in their own way.

In the ongoing discussion concerning the use of the comparative method in biblical studies, many scholars have noted the importance of context when making comparisons so that comparisons of phenomena within the same historic context are preferred over grand scale comparisons.[74] In developing his scripture in context method, William Hallo also notes that the comparative method must be wedded to the contrastive method. This coupling accentuates that the goal of a comparison is not just to find points of continuity, but to also assess the points of discontinuity.[75] These conclusions about comparative methodology address many of the weaknesses of the folkloric motif and type indices. The Aarne and Thompson indices did not stress historical continuity when generating their lists of like motifs. Also, the narrative unit being compared was not

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[73] Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories," 184.

[74] Jack M. Sasson, "About 'Mari and the Bible,'" *RA* 92.2 (1998): 97–123; Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 47–49; Brent A. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and Image of God," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen,* ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards, Resources for Biblical Study 56 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 117–42; Shemaryahu Talmon, "The 'Comparative Method' in Biblical Interpretation - Principles and Problems," in *Congress Volume Göttingen, 1977*, ed. Walther Zimmerli, VTSupp 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 320–56.

[75] William W. Hallo, "Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Apporach," in *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method*, ed. Carl D. Evans, William W. Hallo, and John Bradley White, PTMS 34 (Pittsburg: Pickwick, 1980), 1–26; William W. Hallo, "Compare and Contrast: The Contextual Approach to Biblical Literature," in *The Bible in Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III*, ed. William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly, Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990), 1–30.

clearly defined; thus, the similarities between tales were often over emphasized and the points of dissimilarity were not addressed.

In light of the comparative trends in both folkloric and biblical studies, this study will assess tales from similar historical frameworks, have clearly defined comparative units, and will consider both the points of continuity and discontinuity within these tales. In order to have a more accurate comparison, it is best to have at least three items to compare.[76] Thus, this study will look at four different tales: the Samson and Delilah narrative in Judg 16, *The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Aqhat Epic,* and *The Tale of Two Brothers*. These four tales have been selected because they all feature an encounter between a male hero character and a female and these tales, with the exception of Judg 16, have often been grouped together based upon their similar features.[77] The specific comparative unit for this study will be the larger narrative unit of the scene. The scenes will be compared in light of the smaller constituent unit of the event, which is comprised an actor and their actions. Each event will be analyzed on two levels, that of the general and the specific. Since all comparisons are hermeneutical, the purpose for the comparison must be kept at the forefront of the study.[78] The goal of comparison in this study is to

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[76] Smith, *Drudgery Divine,* 51; Strawn, "Comparative Approaches," 129.

[77] W. F. Albright, "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph," *JBL* 37 (1918): 111–43; W. F. Albright, "The 'Natural Force' of Moses in Light of Ugaritic," *BASOR* 94 (1944): 32–35; Delbert R. Hillers, "The Bow of Aqhat: The Meaning of a Mythological Theme," in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cryus H. Gordon on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday,* ed. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., AOAT 22 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 71–80; Susan Tower Hollis, "The Woman in Ancient Examples of the Potiphar's Wife Motif K2111," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel,* ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 28–42; Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories," 186–187; Irvin, *Mytharion,* 106; Simon B. Parker, "Death and Devotion: The Composition and Theme of AQHT," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope,* ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 71–83; Sasson, *Ruth,* 215.

[78] Smith, *Drudgery Divine,* 52; Strawn, "Comparative Approaches," 129.

clarify which events are indispensable to the content and structure of the scene in order to refine the description of the ANE expression of the "Potiphar's Wife Motif." The refined, more generalized description of the "Hero and His Temptress" allows for the inclusion of Judg 16 as an example of the motif and further illuminates the key features of the motif that unite these four tales.

Overall, this study will conduct a literary assessment of each of the four chosen tales in order to determine the general and specific elements of each event within the scene. The general elements will serve as the comparative unit between the various tales. The specific elements will be discussed utilizing insights from literary studies and will serve to describe each scene's unique contribution to its tale. Once these elements have been identified for each tale, a comparison will be conducted in order to determine if these four tales belong to a common type-scene. In the comparison, I will also determine which elements are consistent elements of the type-scene and which are free to be in flux. Finally, based upon the comparison, an interpretation of the type-scene as a whole will be presented, taking into consideration the combined meaning of the tales and their individual contributions to the type-scene, specifically considering how Judg 16 is elucidated by its incorporation in this group of narratives.

CHAPTER 3
THE UGARITIC STORY: AQHAT AND ANAT

Found among the texts at Ras Shamra, the three tablets of *The Tale of Aqhat* tell the story of how Danil received a son from the gods, named Aqhat. At the heart of the story there is a banquet, where Aqhat receives a special bow, most likely a birthday gift as he reaches the age of manhood. His bow, handcrafted by the god Kothar-wa-Hasis, catches the attention of the goddess Anat who tries desperately to obtain the bow. Her attempts to bribe Aqhat to give her the bow fail as he refuses her offer and questions her suitability to own the bow. Yet, her longing for the bow remains strong as she storms out of the banquet and into the house of El.

In the presence of El, the head of the pantheon, she recounts her grievances against Aqhat and seeks permission for her revenge. El tells her to seize what is in her heart, so she devises her final plan to murder Aqhat. Anat approaches Aqhat and proposes that he come with her under the pretense that she will teach him the finer points of hunting. Before the hunting trip commences, Anat seeks out Yatpan and enlists him to assist her as her murder weapon. While on the hunting trip, Anat executes her plan by taking Yatpan, like a hawk, and sending him down upon Aqhat. Yatpan strikes and kills Aqhat, allowing Anat to descend upon his body and retrieve the bow. However, for reasons that are unclear due to the broken nature of the text, the bow is destroyed leaving Anat to mourn for her losses.

The murder of his only son leaves Danil again with no successor and the ramifications of Aqhat's death are felt by the community as a drought plagues their land. Crippled by his mourning, Danil can do nothing to avenge his son. So, in the end, his daughter, Pughat, rises to avenge her brother's wrongful death by killing Yatpan.

The focus of this analysis will be on the scene located in column VI of KTU 1.17, which recounts the interaction between Aqhat and Anat as she first tries to secure possession of the bow via bribery. The scene of interest is contained in lines 15–47 of column VI. The first fourteen lines are too broken to conduct a reliable analysis or translation. Although the column contains about 65 lines of text, the scene proper will end in line 47 because Anat leaves Aqhat and travels to the home of El, thus with the change in location a new scene begins. A full translation of the scene is given the appendix.[1]

General Elements of the Scene

This analysis will begin with a presentation of the general elements of the scene. The general elements give an overview of the content of the scene that can be used to compare the events of this scene to those in other literary works in order to establish the presence of a type-scene and its consistent elements.

The scene is comprised of a total of five events. In the first event, the woman approaches the hero in an attempt to acquire his property. The hero responds to this

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[1] The text for this narrative is found in Jesús-Luis Cunchillos, Juan-Pablo Vita, and José-Ángel Zamora, *Ugaritic Data Bank: The Texts* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2003); Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places: KTU*, 2nd ed. (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 51–52.

approach in the second event when he rejects the woman's offer. Subsequently, these two events are repeated in events three and four as the woman approaches the hero for a second time and the hero rejects her again. In the fifth event the woman rejects the hero and leaves, concluding the scene.

Table 1. General elements of the scene from KTU 1.17 VI 15–47

Event	Line	Description
Event 1	15–19	Woman approaches hero
Event 2	20–25	Hero rejects woman
Event 3	25–33	Woman approaches hero
Event 4	33–40	Hero rejects woman
Event 5	41–46	Woman rejects hero and leaves

Specific Elements of the Scene

Turning now to the specific elements of the scene, I will examine some of the features that are unique to the *Tale of Aqhat* and that fill in the general components of the scene. Although the first 14 lines of the scene are too broken for a reliable translation, some scholars have attempted to reconstruct these lines due to their significance in the following scene. Despite the vagueness of these lines, it is clear that they serve to introduce the characters present in the scene, namely, Aqhat and Anat. These lines also introduce the bow. Although it is not an actor in the scene, the bow is at the center of the action because it is the coveted object that Anat is trying to obtain.

In the midst of the broken text, lines 9 and 13 are important because they establish the relationship between the two characters and the bow. Some scholars have read line

13, *tṣb qšt*, as "she coveted the bow."[2] Baruch Margalit indicates that this line is critical to the understanding of the dramatic action in the following scene because this line describes Anat as one who is overcome by uncontrollable passion for the bow.[3] Scholars who read *tṣb* as "covet" suggest that this *hapax legomenon* comes from the verbal root *ṣby* and is related to Akkadian, Arabic, and Aramaic cognates meaning "to desire". However, other scholars suggest that *tṣb*, in line 13 is the same verb as *yṣbt* in line 9, that is, they are both from the root *yṣb* meaning "to load or draw a bow."[4] In my opinion, this second option is more viable since it relates the two lines together, it does not require the construal of a *hapax*, and it brings the bow into the center of the action since it is being physically manipulated. Thus, in line 9 Aqhat draws the bow, most likely showing off his new weapon to the banquet guests. This is followed in line 13 by Anat envisioning that she would also draw the bow. Even without reading *tṣb* as "she coveted," the context of the scene indicates that Anat has a strong desire and longing for the bow. Hence these lines, despite their broken state, are important in setting the stage for the following events and establishing the relationship between the characters, namely, that Aqhat is the new,

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[2] Kenneth T. Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative: A Study in the Narrative Structure and Composition of an Ugaritic Tale*, JSS 13 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 43; H. L. Ginsberg, "The North-Canaanite Myth of Anath and Aqhat, II," *BASOR* 98 (1945): 15–23; "The Tale of Aqhat," trans. H. L. Ginsberg (*ANET*, 151); Baruch Margalit, "Lexicographical Notes on the Aqht Epic (Part I: KTU 1.17-18)," *UF* 15 (1983): 65–104; Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, WAW 9 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 60; Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed., Biblical Seminar 53 (New York: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 271.

[3] Margalit, "Lexicographical Notes," 82–83; Baruch Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT: Text, Translation, Commentary*, BZAW 182 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 300.

[4] Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition Part Two*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson, 3rd ed., HdO 112 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 941; Meindert Dijkstra and Johannes C. de Moor, "Problematical Passages in the Legend of AQHATU," *UF* 7 (1975): 171–215.

proud owner of a bow which Anat desires to own. These lines establish the narrative problem which will drive the action of the scene, Anat covets Aqhat's property.

Line 15 opens the scene and confirms Anat's all-consuming passion for the bow as she abandons her activities, pours out the contents of her cup, and addressed Aqhat. The goddess approaches the hero with a proposition. Specifically, she proposes that they make a trade as Anat tries to bribe the bow away from Aqhat. The heart of her proposition, lines 17–18, is a very clear example of the poetic parallelism found in Ugaritic literature.

[17] .... i]rš . ksp . w atnk	Ask for silver and I will give it to you,
[18] [ḫrṣ . w aš]lḥk .	(ask for) gold and I will send it to you.
w tn. qštk . ʿm [19] btlt . ʿnt .	But give your bow to Maidan Anat,
qṣʿtk . ybmt . limm	(give) your arrows to *Ybmt-Limm*.

The main verb *irš* is stated once and is then implied in the second line by ellipsis. The two objects of the verb *irš* are parallel entities, *ksp ḫrṣ*, "silver and gold." The second clauses of each line, in which Anat states her half of the bargain, are also in parallel since she uses two synonymous verbs for giving. With this initial offer Anat places a sense of power and control in Aqhat's hands. Rather than requesting the bow, first she allows Aqhat to ask for as much wealth as he would like and she will give it to him. It is not until the second half of her proposition that Anat makes it clear that the deal is predicated upon Aqhat surrendering his bow to her.[5]

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[5] Margalit suggests that the use of the verb *ytn* with the preposition *ʿm* to mark the indirect object indicates that Anat is requesting that the bow be given to her for permanent possession. Whereas, if she used the preposition *l* to mark the indirect object, which Margalit states is more common with *ytn*, she would have been asking to see the bow. See Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem*, 185. Anat's speech is the only case when *ytn* occurs with *ʿm* where there is no reference of someone turning to face a person or a direction. Thus, it is correct to point out this case as a unique use of the preposition; however, there is not enough evidence to support Margalit's conclusion that the grammar indicates Anat's desire to own the bow.

The second event contains Aqhat's response to Anat's offer. In his response, Aqhat does not acknowledge the offer of wealth that was given, in a sense he refuses to entertain her proposition and tells her instead how to get her own bow. Aqhat uses the word *adr* as he lists the various components required to construct a bow in lines 20–23.

[20] w yʿn . aqht . ǵzr .	Aqhat Hero answered:
adr . ṯqbm [21] b lbnn .	"Mighty is the wood from Lebanon,
adr . gdm . b rumm	mighty are the sinews of wild oxen,
[22] adr . qrnt . b yʿlm .	mighty are the horns of an ibex,
mtnm [23] b ʿqbt . ṯr .	(mighty are) tendons from the heels of a bull,
adr . b ǵl il . qnm	mighty are the reeds from *Gl'il.*

Scholars have proposed two different roots for the word *adr*. Some have suggested that this is a first-person verb from the root *ndr*, "to vow."[6] However, this changes the nature of the response from a flat rejection to an amicable reply. If Aqhat is vowing these objects, it implies that he is willing to help Anat in her quest for a bow despite the fact that he does not want to surrender his own bow. This depicts Aqhat as responding positively to Anat's advances, which does not fit the tone of Anat's next offer and Aqhat's second response. Thus, is it unlikely that the verb is from the root *ndr*.[7] It is more likely that this comes from the verbal root *adr*, "mighty." This still raises the question of the form of the word, whether it is an adjectival form or a verbal form. It is unclear

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[6] W. F. Albright, "A Vow to Asherah in the Keret Epic," *BASOR* 94 (1944): 30–31; W. F. Albright and George E. Mendenhall, "The Creation of the Composite Bow in Canaanite Mythology," *JNES* 1 (1942): 227–29; "The Tale of Aqhat," (*ANET*, 151); "The Aqhatu Legend," trans. Dennis Pardee (COS 1.103:346–47); Yigael Sukenik, "The Composite Bow of the Canaanite Goddess Anath," *BASOR* 107 (1947): 11–15.

[7] Ginsberg suggests that grammatically this verb cannot be from the root *ndr* since, as he states, *ndr* does not take a concrete object. Therefore, an individual can vow a vow but cannot vow objects. This suggestion is tentative since Ginsberg does not provide evidential support for this grammatical claim, but it does lend further support to the contextual reading against *ndr.* Although Ginsberg asserts this cannot mean vow, he retains the verb vow in his translation of Aqhat in ANET. See Ginsberg, "North-Canaanite Myth," 19; "The Tale of Aqhat," (ANET, 151).

because in either case we expect *adr* to match the subsequent nouns in gender and number, which it does not.[8] However, whether *adr* is understood as a verb or adjective, there is a focus on the quality of the subject rather than the objects themselves.[9]

Aqhat's response does not seem to please the goddess since she makes a second attempt to secure his bow.[10] Even before taking into account her second proposition, the fact that she is unpleased with Aqhat's rejection says something about the nature of Aqhat's bow: Aqhat has suggested that if Anat gathers objects of very high or even the highest quality, then Kothar-wa-Hasis will make her a bow of her own, which will presumably be a high quality item based upon the nature of its component parts; and yet, she still has her eyes set on Aqhat's bow. The beginning of this column is broken so there is no description of the bow itself but based upon Anat's unwavering desire, it is of incomparable quality since even a bow made of high quality materials would fail to substitute for Aqhat's bow.

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[8] Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, eds., *Stories From Ancient Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 40; Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 60–61; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 272–73. Coogan and Smith translate *adr* as an attributive adjective so that each of the modified noun phrases function as objects of the verb *tn* in line 24. However, if this were the case the form *adrm* or *adrt* would be expected to match the plural nouns in gender and number. Both Parker and Wyatt translate *adr* as an adjective; however, they both understand it as a superlative adjective.

[9] If *adr* is interpreted as a verb, then it is a stative verb that makes an assertion about the quality of the object described. Dijkstra and de Moor take this stance by suggesting that the simplest solution to the problem is to read *adr* as a third person plural verbal form of *'dr*. However, if it is interpreted as an adjective there are few possibilities for its form. Parker and Wyatt take it as the superlative which by its nature focuses on the quality of the object by noting it is above all others. If instead it is understood as a predicate adjective, then the word order draws attention to the quality of the subject by placing the predicate first. Dijkstra and de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 186–87; Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 60–61; Daniel Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language*, HdO 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 202–203; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 272–73.

[10] Albright and Mendenhall suggest that Anat was pleased with Aqhat's response since she offers him life as a reward for his positive statement. However, they seem to have missed the point. Aqhat has clearly rejected the goddess and she understands it as such. He has refused to relinquish his bow and she is infuriated by that. See Albright and Mendenhall, "The Creation of the Composite Bow," 228.

Turning now to the contents of Anat's second offer, her tactics of persuasion remain the same as she offers Aqhat the power to ask something from her. This time Aqhat is encouraged to ask Anat for immortality. Anat's second offer, lines 25–33, contains both syntactic and lexical repetition.

w tʿn. btlt [26] *ʿnt .*	Maiden Anat answered:
irš . ḥym . l aqht . ġzr	"Ask for life, Aqhat hero,
[27] *irš . ḥym . w atnk .*	Ask for life and I will give it to you.
blmt [28] *w ašlḫk .*	(ask for) deathlessness and I will send it you.
ašsprk . ʿm . bʿl [29] *šnt .*	I will make you count years with Baal,
ʿm . bn il . tspr . yrḫm	with sons of El you will count months.
[30] *k bʿl . k yḥwy . yʿšr .*	Like Baal, when he revives, feasts:
ḥwy . yʿš [31] *r. w yšqynh .*	he gives a feast to the living one and gives him drink
ybd . w yšr . ʿlh	
[32] *nʿm[n . w t]ʿnynn .*	he sings a song in his honor,
ap ank . aḥwy [33] *aqht[.*	with pleasant tune they respond.
ġz]r.	So, I will make Aqhat Hero live."

She uses the same verbs for asking and giving that were used in the first offer, *irš*, *ytn*, and *šlḥ*. In terms of syntax the two offers are the same construction, an imperative followed by an object and a verb with an attached pronominal suffix. The imperative is then elliptically supplied in the second, parallel line of the offer. After the first offer, Anat states the action that she requires of Aqhat; however, after the second offer Anat goes on to further elaborate upon the nature of the life that she would give to Aqhat. This elaboration functions as a heightened rhetorical device to make the offer sound more appealing to Aqhat, and thus persuade him to give his bow to her. David Wright suggests that the reference to Baal and his life is not just an offer of immortality, but it is also an

offer of divinity.[11] The five occurrences of a form of the root *ḥwy* makes it clear that Anat is offering life; specifically, the kind of life that she is offering is like that of the god Baal.

This second offer begins in the same manner as the first, Anat tells Aqhat to ask for life and she will give it to him. However, the first offer included a secondary imperative, for Aqhat to give his bow to Anat. This time, Anat describes in detail the type of life that she is offering and concludes the offer with the assertion that she will make Aqhat live, *ap ank. aḥwy aqht. ġzr*, without ever mentioning the bow. It is assumed that Anat is asking for the bow again, thus the imperative from the previous offer (*wtn qštk. ʿm btlt. ʿnt.*) is implicitly carried over to this offer as well since it remains unfulfilled.[12] Alternatively, the lack of a demand for the bow could indicate that in his hasty response Aqhat has cut off Anat before she could even finish repeating the offer. The highly repetitive nature of the Aqhat epic specifically and Ugaritic epic literature in general makes the absence of the missing element more apparent and gives the impression that the goddess has been abruptly interrupted. Understanding the conversation in this way fits well with the increasing rancor of the encounter. Aqhat refuses Anat's first proposal but the goddess still makes a second attempt to strike a deal. Although she may not be

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[11] Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 108–109; David P. Wright, *Ritual in Narrative: The Dynamics of Feasting, Mourning, and Retaliation Rites in the Ugaritic Tale of Aqhat* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 109.

[12] Albright and Mendenhall, "The Creation of the Composite Bow," 228; Ginsberg, "The North-Canaanite Myth," 19. Albright and Mendenhall assume that Anat is pleased with Aqhat's first response since she does not ask for the bow again. They assume that Anat is freely offering to give Aqhat immortality; however, Ginsberg has demonstrated that this is a misinterpretation as the demand for the bow still stands.

pleased with Aqhat's refusal, she is still civil by continuing the conversation.[13] However, it is Aqhat's second response that offends Anat and causes her to storm off in anger.[14] In his second response Aqhat does more than refuse the goddess, he insults her. His words are the key indicator of his insult, but the lack of a demand for the bow from Anat and the overall tone of Aqhat's response suggest that he may have interrupted the goddess, thereby, offending her before he even spoke his insult.

Anat's second offer is characterized by life, noted by the references to life and related terms. In contrast, Aqhat's response is characterized by death, since he uses words from the sematic field of death, *mwt*.[15] This contrast serves to set the two individuals apart and may also serve to foreshadow Aqhat's impending doom. The contrast of Aqhat's response is further heightened when examined in light of his first response. In his first response, Aqhat makes no mention of the offer of wealth; his focus is solely on the bow. However, he begins his second response, with a refusal of Anat's offer of life. The mention of the bow comes as an addition or after thought. Aqhat's focus upon the offer for life as opposed to the bow further supports the reading that he has interrupted the goddess. Eager to reject this offer, he does not even allow her time to mention the bow again.

In his response, Aqhat characterizes Anat's offer as a lie, *šrg*, but it is unclear precisely why he thinks this is a lie. One option is to assume that Anat is actually offering

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[13] Ginsberg, "North-Canaanite Myth," 18–19; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 118.

[14] Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT*, 300–301; Shirly Natan-Yulzary, *The Aqhat Epic: An Ancient Narrative Poem from Ugarit A New Hebrew Translation*, (Hebrew) Biblical Studies (Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2015), 22–23; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 114; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*; 118.

[15] Shirly Natan-Yulzary, "Contrast and Meaning in the Aqhat Story," *VT* 62 (2012): 433–49.

immortality or possibly divinity, but that Aqhat thinks this offer is too good to be true. A second interpretative option renders the offer to be not as appealing as Anat makes it out to be. Baal is often referred to as a rising and dying god, who follows the changing seasons as he dies and is then resurrected.[16] Therefore, Anat could be offering Aqhat a life that is only obtained via death so that he too will be caught in a perpetual cycle of life and death. The parallelism presented in lines 28 and 29 with years followed by months builds up to an anti-climax in a sort of reverse parallelism since the common trend in these kinds of parallel lines is to build up to the larger item in the second line.[17] This anti-climax could indicate Anat's offer is not as appealing as she suggests, implying Aqhat would be given immortality but an immortality that is only achieved through death. A third option is simply that Anat is unable to provide the type of immortality she is describing. Mark S. Smith understands Anat's offer as everlasting life without death. This type of afterlife is a kind of afterlife that only heroic figures are able to have and therefore is something that she is unable to grant.[18] Alternately, Stephaine Lynn Budin demonstrates that there is no evidence to suggest that Anat cannot grant immortality; however, Aqhat may naïvely be under the impression that she does not have that power.[19] Either way, this third interpretive option assumes Anat is unable to provide what she offers.

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[16] Dijkstra and de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 187–88.

[17] Dijkstra and de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 187–88; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 273.

[18] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 109–110.

[19] Stephanie Lynn Budin, "Gender in the Tale of Aqhat," in *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 51–72.

Although there is ambiguity concerning the precise nature of Anat's offer, it is clear based upon Aqhat's response that it not desirable enough to warrant surrendering the bow to her. Aqhat characterizes of the offer as both a lie and rubbish, *ḫḫm*; something Aqhat wants nothing to do with. In his analysis of the scene, Margalit suggests that the root *šrg* refers not just to a lie but to a fairytale.[20] Although there is nothing in the word itself to suggest that this a fairytale, the nature of the conversation suggests that Anat is crafting a tale to entice Aqhat into a future that is not as promising as she suggests.[21] Aqhat distances himself from this offer in two ways. First, he refers to the offer as detestable, garbage to a hero like himself. Secondly, he constructs his response around death rather than life making his response an opposing contrast to her offer.

After rejecting her offer, Aqhat adds an additional comment to his response, almost as an after-thought, in which he brings up the bow again. This statement confirms that Anat is still seeking the bow even though she did not explicitly mention it. It also indicates that Aqhat is maintaining his refusal to surrender it. In drawing upon normalized gender roles, Aqhat insults Anat, the goddess of the hunt, by suggesting that she, a woman, is unfit to wield the weapon. This is not the only insulting comment that Aqhat hurls at the goddess. At the beginning of his response, he refers to Anat as *ybtltm* using only her epithet. When Anat speaks to Aqhat, even after this second, more aggressive reply, she always refers to him as *aqht ġzr* using both his name and epithet. Aqhat however only refers to Anat with both her name and epithet at the end of his first reply to her in line 25 when he says *qšt. lʿnt qṣʿt. l ybmt. limm.* The act of dropping the

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[20] Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT*, 302.

[21] del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language,* 831.

proper name and only using the epithet characterizes his second response as a disrespectful insult which he uses to arouse an emotional response from the goddess.[22]

Aqhat was successful in his endeavor to elicit a response from the goddess as indicated by the narrator's comment and her emotionally charged reply. Thus far, the narrator has made minimal contributions to the action of the scene, simply introducing the speech of each character as they converse with one another. However, here the narrator steps in to grant the audience insight into Anat's emotional state.

[41] *[b hm g] m . tṣḥq . ʿnt . w b lb . tqny*	Anat laughed but in her heart, she plots

Her physical response to Aqhat is to laugh while inwardly she begins to plot, *wblb tqny*. Interpreters often take the lines 42–45, which follow the narrator's introduction, as spoken aloud to Aqhat. Thus, in the public eye of Aqhat and the banquet attendees, Anat laughs off the insult but then turns to Aqhat and states her intentions for revenge. However, in the broader context it is more suitable to interpret lines 42–45 as internal dialogue, as Shirly Natan-Yulzary does.[23] Understanding lines 42–45 as inner dialogue makes it clear that the reference to Aqhat as a wise, strong man in line 45, *nʿmn. ʿmq. nšm,* is a sarcastic comment meant to belittle Aqhat as Anat's anger towards him builds.[24] This reading, as an internal monologue, is further supported by the next scene involving Anat and Aqhat. In KTU 1.18, Anat tells to Aqhat that she will teach him to hunt and

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[22] Ginsberg, "The North-Canaanite Myth," 20.

[23] Shirly Natan-Yulzary, "Characterization and Text Texture in Ancient West-Semitic Literature from Ugarit," (Hebrew) *Shnaton - An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 17 (2007): 161–97.

[24] Natan-Yulzary, "Characterization and Text Texture," (Hebrew), 169–170.

proceeds to lead him to the area where they will hunt together. Aqhat seems to naïvely follow the goddess to this secluded location. If the previous threat was spoken aloud to Aqhat, then the intelligence level of our hero would be in question as he chooses to go off alone with the goddess on a hunting trip knowing she intends to destroy him. However, as an internal dialogue Aqhat would be unaware of the goddess' ill intentions and would have no reason to distrust her. Thus in lines 42–45, the narrator provides foreshadowing for the audience since they alone are granted access to the goddess' inner thoughts.[25] This reading presents Anat in a state of defeat with regard to this verbal duel since Aqhat gets the last word as the goddess storms off with no response. However, the act of storming off in anger suits the character of Anat since she is one who is prone to give into her emotional desires as noted in El's description of her later in the tale as one who is ruthless of heart, *ḫnp. lbk.*

Position of the Scene within the Tale

Based upon the criteria of this study, namely a singular location and consistency of characters, the scene is limited to lines 15–47. The narrative problem introduced at the beginning of the scene is Anat wants the bow. Thus, from her perspective she needs to obtain the bow to solve the problem. However, at the end of the scene Aqhat maintains his ownership of the bow and the problem is left unresolved. With the problem unresolved, Anat's act of storming off without a word of response provides a clear but abrupt end to the scene. The abruptness of the end of the scene is also made apparent

[25] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 163–72.

against the backdrop of the audience's potential expectation for a third or even fourth offer from Anat based upon the ubiquitous nature of three-fold repetition within traditional literature.[26] In this repetition style an event is repeated three times with the final third or fourth sequence deviating from the pattern to create a climactic moment of reversal. Repetition is a major feature within the *Tale of Aqhat*, typically used to create symmetry and balance within the story, but at times it is also used to increase tension and suspense.[27] Thus, it is not unreasonable for the audience to expect this sort of climactic repetition in the dialogue between Anat and Aqhat. With this expectation, the audience would be eagerly awaiting for Anat to make another attempt to bribe Aqhat to surrender his bow, raising the possibility that Aqhat would acquiesce after this final climatic proposition. However, the scene is cut short after the second attempt as Anat storms off in anger leaving the audience in their state of suspense waiting to see what will happen next.

In her anger, Anat flees to the home of El, the head of the pantheon, in order to persuade him to assist her in her quest for the bow. There are strong parallels between Anat's conversation with Aqhat and her subsequent conversation with El.[28] These

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[26] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 95; Shimeon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 154–73; Claude Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," *Communications* 4 (1964): 4–32; Pamela J. Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales: An Evaluation of Two Proppian Analyses of Biblical Narratives," *JSOT* 34 (1986): 35–60; James Muilenberg, "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," in *Congress Volume Copenhagen 1953*, VTSupp 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 97–111; V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 67; Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative,* 137, 391–93.

[27] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 146; Shirly Natan-Yulzary, "Divine Justice or Poetic Justice?: The Transgression and Punishment of the Goddess 'Anat in the 'Aqhat Story A Literary Perspective," *UF* 41 (2009): 581–99.

[28] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 164–68; Ginsberg, "North-Canaanite Myth," 22; Simon B. Parker, "Death and Devotion: The Composition and Theme of AQHT," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East:*

parallels have led some scholars to read the scene with El as a continuation of the preceding scene rather than a new scene. In her conversation with El, Anat has to persuade El to take action against Aqhat just as she had previously attempted to persuade Aqhat into action. Unlike Aqhat, El eventually gives in to Anat's offer and gives her permission to destroy the hero. If these two scenes are read in tandem, then the conversation with El could be understood to complete the three-fold repetition, with a reversal in the fourth, climatic element of the sequence. In this light, Anat receives three responses of refusal with a fourth, final response of acceptance. The final acceptance gives Anat the means to secure ownership of the bow; namely, she is allowed to kill Aqhat. The plan for the resolution of the narrative problem is in place; but, the full resolution will not come until a later scene when Anat, along with the help of Yatpan, completes the task and takes the bow momentarily before it is broken.

With regard to the tale as a whole, the encounter between Aqhat and Anat functions as a pivotal scene. In his analysis of the tale, H. L. Ginsberg divides the narrative into eight major sections and notes that the encounter between the hero and the goddess is crucial for the interpretation of the tale as a whole.[29] Likewise, Kenneth Aitken notes that Anat's attempt to secure possession of the bow is at the center of the narrative and functions as the main conflict within the story.[30] In his Proppian style analysis, Aitken identifies the opening moves of the narrative as preparatory actions that introduce Aqhat, via the birth narrative, and explain how he came into possession of the

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Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 71–83.

[29] Ginsberg, "The North-Canaanite Myth," 15.

[30] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 141.

bow. The central move introduces the conflict as Anat seeks to gain possession of the bow and ultimately fails in that endeavor. The final three moves contain the consequences of the conflict as Aqhat's death brings famine upon the land and his sister seeks to avenge his wrongful death.[31] The centrality of the scene is further emphasized by the structural parallelism created by the surrounding scenes. The events narrating Aqhat's birth and his death follow similar structural patterns as sacrifices are offered to the gods, blessings are bestowed, news is received, ritual responses are enacted, and a figure approaches.[32] The parallel repetitive nature of the opening and closing scenes brings the central scene to forefront by its placement in the compositional structure. Shirly Natan-Yulzary also demonstrates the centrality of Aqhat's encounter with the goddess and his subsequent murder by showing how this scene sits at the center of a chiastic structure encompassing the whole *Tale of Aqhat*.[33]

Beyond being the structural centerpiece of the tale, the encounter between Aqhat and Anat is thematically central to the tale as a whole. As Natan-Yulzary indicates, "it is natural for an epic work to include a certain significant passage that reflects the main theme or meaning of the work."[34] Thus, as a central scene within the *Tale of Aqhat*, the encounter with Anat presents a main theme of the narrative, namely, the theme of life and death.

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[31] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 26–78, 141.

[32] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 169.

[33] Natan-Yulzary, *The Aqhat Epic*, (Hebrew), 18–19.

[34] Shirly, Natan-Yulzary, personal correspondence, November 22, 2019.

The centrality of the theme of life and death is most clearly developed in Anat's second offer and Aqhat's second response. Anat's offer in exchange for the bow is constructed around language in the semantic field of life, while Aqhat's rebuttal features the opposite, the semantic field of death, as demonstrated in the above analysis. Using vocabulary pertaining to death, Aqhat rejects Anat's offer of immortality by making a strong philosophical statement concerning the nature of the human condition; namely, humans are mortal and thus destined for death.[35] Mark S. Smith suggests that Aqhat's response is indicative of the values of hero culture, noting that heroes typically have a heightened concern for honor which is coupled with a willingness to risk their own life.[36] Although heroes seek to gain honor and glory in their adventures, they remain aware that they are mortal and will eventually die. This awareness increases the risk of heroic behavior since heroic deeds typically place the hero in situations that will result in death. Yet, the hero takes the risk and is willing to die because he knows that an honorable death, for example dying on the battlefield fighting for the sake of the people, brings heroic valor and fame. Aqhat's reflection on mortality is predicated on his characterization of Anat's offer as a life. As mentioned above, it is unclear why he thinks her offer is a lie; but, his heroic values and cultural expectations may explain why Aqhat responds as he does.

As an aspiring hero, Anat's offer for immortality or even divinity might have been enticing for Aqhat, since the glory that comes with immortality is the ultimate heroic prize. If Anat could give Aqhat immortality like Baal, then a share in the portion of a

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[35] Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqhat*, 305–306; Natan-Yulzary, "Contrast and Meaning," 445.

[36] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 20, 131.

deified, heroic afterlife would be available to Aqhat. However, Anat's offer removes the heroic risk from Aqhat's life. By agreeing to the offer for immortality Aqhat would no longer live as a mortal hero who knows death is coming; therefore, there would be no risk in his behavior. Aqhat could put himself in harm's way confidently knowing that he would not die. Part of the heroic valor comes in the risk as the hero moves closer to death than most mortals. Thus, by partaking in dangerous behavior, the mortal hero lives in a liminal position between life and death. Therefore, if Anat gives Aqhat immortality she removes him from this heroic, liminal position and sets him securely on the side of life. By removing the tension and risk created by this liminal position Anat threatens to remove Aqhat's honorability, an offer which no hero would accept. If, however, Anat is offering immortality via death, then Aqhat's honorability is threatened in a different way. To the hero, death is not the enemy; dying a heroic death is what brings heroic valor and fame, even immortality itself in the form of literary remembrance. However, death at the hand of a woman is a dishonorable way to die. Therefore, Aqhat refuses the offer of immortality via death at Anat's hand because there is no heroic fame in that afterlife. Finally, if Anat is unable to provide the type of immortality she is offering, then Aqhat would be surrendering his bow with no reward and there is no heroic honor in surrendering one's weapon for no reason. Each of these interpretative options can be described as a threat to Aqhat's heroic status. Therefore, no matter the nature of the threat, Aqhat is unwilling to surrender his bow and lose his perceived heroic status, so he chooses to stand on the side of the mortal hero destined to die.

The centrality of the life and death theme is further noted by the difference between Aqhat's two responses to Anat's offers. Anat initially offers wealth in the form

of silver and gold. In his response Aqhat does not mention either silver or gold and instead focuses his attention on the bow. But when Anat offers immortality, Aqhat is quick to counter the offer with an existential reflection on mortality.[37] Aqhat's focus on the offer of life rather than wealth brings the theme of life and death to the forefront. The importance of this contrast between Aqhat's two responses is illustrated by comparison with the analysis of Aitken. In his analysis, Aitken focuses only upon the fact that Anat delivers an injunction and Aqhat violates that injunction, rather than assessing the contents of each exchange.[38] This is due to the fact that Aitken follows Propp in his analysis of the narrative and Propp suggests that only one function in a repetitive sequence is necessary to the structural development of the plot.[39] Therefore, in his choice to not assess both repetitive encounters, Aitken misses the theme of life and death that is developed throughout the narrative and is central to the encounter. He also notes that Anat's first attempt to trade with Aqhat is important because Aqhat's refusal drives her to malicious intent.[40] However, as demonstrated above, it is the second rejection that elicits the emotional response from Anat and sends her down the path of vengeance.

Although, the theme of life and death is at the forefront of the encounter between Aqhat and Anat, it is not restricted to this scene alone. Life and death function as a major theme throughout the entire tale. As Natan-Yulzary demonstrates, Danil's movement within the narrative from a state of having no son, to having a son, and back to having no

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[37] Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqhat*, 302.

[38] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 42–56

[39] Propp, *Morphology*, 90.

[40] Aitken, *The Aqhat Narrative*, 93.

son develops around the contrast between life and death.[41] It is through life that Danil is granted a son and it is through death that his son is taken away. Aqhat's death also brings death to the land as a famine arises after he dies. The bird which ingested Aqaht's remains suffers a similar fate of death as Danil searches for the evidence of Aqhat's death.[42] However, life is also restored to the land through death. After Pughat arises to avenge her brother and murders Yatpan, the land is restored and the famine ends. There is also evidence that Danil's state of lacking a son is reversed as Pughat takes on the role of son and restores a sense of life to Danil.[43]

The lives of the humans within the narrative are not the only thing tied to the life and death theme, the bow is caught up in the theme as well. It is presented after Aqhat's birth and is broken at his death.[44] As a weapon of the warrior, the bow often symbolically represents masculinity and male virility.[45] The bow is created by one of the gods shortly after the gods grant Danil his request for a son. Thus, symbolically the bow comes to represent Danil's fertility via its association with his male progeny and the ability to continue his family line. The bow, a gift from the gods, is given to Aqhat, who is Danil's gift from the gods; therefore, the two are intimately connected. The bow is Aqhat's

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[41] Natan-Yulzary, "Contrast and Meaning," 443.

[42] Natan-Yulzary, "Divine Justice," 592–93.

[43] Budin, "Gender in the Tale of Aqhat," 66.

[44] Natan-Yulzary, "Contrast and Meaning," 446.

[45] Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*, HSM 62 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 32–33, 57; Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 33; Harry A. Hoffner Jr., "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity: Their Use in Ancient Near Eastern Sympathetic Magic Rituals," *JBL* 85 (1966): 326–34; Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqhat*, 484; Natan-Yulzary, "Contrast and Meaning," 446.

weapon and, as a warrior, his weapon is an extension of his being.[46] Consequently, when Aqhat dies, his bow "dies." As representative of male virility, the bow is broken when Danil's son and his hope for successors dies. Moreover, in the narrative battle between the symbolic forces of life and death, the bow is the weapon of life.

Role of Anat within the Scene

Although Aqhat is the hero and protagonist of the narrative, Anat is the main actor in the scene. She initiates the action of the scene and controls the outcome as the one who initially approaches Aqhat and the one who leaves to end the scene. As the main actor and driving force of the scene, Anat plays a critical role by contributing to the theme and function of the scene. As presented above, the main theme of the scene is life and death. The dominance of this theme speaks to the prevalence of a concern for mortality within the culture of the text's audience. Themes like life and death are common topics in traditional literature because it is known for having a tendency to discuss topics that are often not represented in more elevated styles of literature. Thus, traditional literature can be described as counter-cultural because it openly confronts culturally taboo topics.[47] Along with its ability to discuss indecorous topics, traditional literature is also frequently used to shape the behavior of the audience via warnings, especially when the target audience is children or adolescents. As for the encounter between Aqhat and Anat, some have suggested that it serves as a caution against male pride and female treachery, by

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[46] Brian R. Doak, *Heroic Bodies in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 122; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 17.

[47] Jack M. Sasson, "Literary Criticism, Folklore Scholarship, and Ugaritic Literature," in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 81–98.

warning young men to avoid the unwanted advances of women.[48] This instructional agenda develops from of the scene's secondary theme of concern for normative gender roles, in which Anat is a central figure.

Within the Ugaritic pantheon, Anat functions as a goddess of war and hunting.[49] As such, although she is female, Anat often partakes in these culturally male activities of violence. Her role as goddess of war sets her up to be a liminal figure who can transgress gender boundaries and participate in activities from which women are often excluded. By their nature, liminal figures embody a blurring of cultural categories; therefore, they are often perceived as threatening and are frequently at the center of conflict.[50] For Anat, the confusion of cultural categories has to do with the category of gender and the behavior deemed appropriate for each gender. Some scholars have gone as far as to present Anat as an androgynous figure who physically represents both genders.[51] However, it is more likely that she is simply a female who often participates in male culture. Peggy Day suggests Anat's ability to participate in male culture is enabled by her description as *btlt*.

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[48] Parker, "Death and Devotion," 77.

[49] Peggy L. Day, "Why Is Anat a Warrior and Hunter?," in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. David Jobling, Peggy L. Day, and Gerald T. Sheppard (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991), 141–46; Peggy L. Day, "Anat: Ugarit's 'Mistress of Animals,'" *JNES* 51 (1992): 181–90; H. L. Ginsberg, "The North-Canaanite Myth of Anath and Aqhat," *BASOR* 97 (1945): 3–10; Neal H. Walls, *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth*, SBLDS 135 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 2–10.

[50] Day, "Why is Anat a Warrior," 145; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 68; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 95; Walls, *The Goddess Anat*, 217; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 115.

[51] Day, "Why is Anat a Warrior," 144; Dijkstra and de Moor, "Problematical Passages," 193; Walls, *The Goddess Anat*, 83–86. Dijkstra and de Moor support understanding Anat as androgynous; however, both Day and Walls demonstrate that Anat should be viewed as a female who embodies certain male characteristics and behaviors rather than a sexually androgynous character.

As a *btlt*, Day suggests that Anat is an adolescent who is permanently caught in the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood.[52] Since she has not become an adult woman, Anat is able to cross the gender-role boundary and participate in male culture.

Anat's liminality is not restricted to gendered classifications. She is also considered a liminal figure with regard to her position in the Ugaritic pantheon. Comparing Anat to the other divine warriors, Mark S. Smith notes that she does not fit the category well, because she does not act in the same manner as the other divine warriors.[53] One key difference is that her conflicts are most often against humans on earth rather than against other divine warriors.[54] This unconventional behavior often places Anat in tension with the rest of the pantheon as she operates within both the divine and mortal realms.[55] This is exemplified in the Aqhat narrative as Anat creates a conflict with Aqhat. She appeals to El in the heavenly realm for assistance in the issue, as though she needs permission to act. When she decides to act, the attack is launched in the earthly realm against the mortal Aqhat.

Anat's unique position between the divine and human realms as well as between male and female gendered behavior affect the progression of events in the narrative scene. David Wright examines the scene from the lens of ritual studies and notes that Anat's liminal position makes her a "wild card" at the banquet since she does not

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[52] Day, "Why is Anat a Warrior," 145.

[53] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 173.

[54] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 174.

[55] Walls, *The Goddess Anat*, 217; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 126.

conform to the social norms expected of her.[56] Wright views the banquet as a type of ritual that functions to establish a social structure and set the boundaries of relationships. He labels this specific scene as an "infelicitous ritual" since the feast fails to establish a relationship and does not conform to the general expectations for a feast that are instituted by the initial three feasts in the narrative.[57] In the conversation with Aqhat, Anat asserts power in an attempt to acquire his bow. This power move initiates the negotiations between the two characters. However, these negotiations are unsuccessful since Anat was unable to obtain her heart's desire and therefore the scene is labelled a failed ritual. Wright suggests that one reason why the negotiations failed is that Anat overstepped her bounds and was overly assertive in her demands.[58] In light of the gender role theme of the scene, Anat's assertiveness is not only related to her unreasonable request for the bow but is due to her movement into male culture.

By demanding the bow, a key symbol of masculinity and male, warrior culture, Anat steps into male territory in a display of manly power. This display of power is further exemplified by Anat's initiation of the negotiations for the bow. In directing the conversation, Anat places herself in the position of control, the position most often assumed by men. Anat's transgression of the gender boundary creates a sense of male anxiety as reflected in Aqhat's response to the goddess. Aqhat rejects Anat's movement into male culture through his rebuke that bows are not for women and hunting is not the proper task for a woman. However, his rejection of the goddess also contributes to the

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[56] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*¸ 116.

[57] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 47, 114.

[58] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 117.

failure of the negotiations. Through her initial request, Anat asserts her power in this relationship but Aqhat refuses to submit to her and offends her with his final remark.[59] On a symbolic level, Aqhat's rejection of Anat's movement into male culture reflects the general anxiety that male warriors may have felt around a woman's participation in traditionally male roles. From a different perspective, Aqhat's statement could simply reflect his youthful ignorance of Anat's important role in warrior culture as the goddess of hunting and war.[60] As a divine warrior, Anat is often depicted bringing success to hunters and warriors in their pursuits. Thus, as a young hunter Aqhat should desire to gain her favor rather than reject her authority.

Due to the reference to his first hunt prior to this scene and the recent presentation of the bow, many scholars understand this scene to be a banquet celebrating Aqhat's coming of age through his first hunt.[61] The first hunt functions as a rite of passage for Aqhat as he enters into manhood. Rites of passage typically follow a three-fold process that involves rites of separation, transition, and incorporation.[62] Rites of passage frequently occur in traditional literature because it is used to educate and socialize the younger generations, as well as give a voice to cultural concerns that are often left

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[59] Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 118.

[60] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 132.

[61] Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 33; Malcolm Davies, "The Hero and His Arms," *Greece & Rome* 54 (2007): 145–55; Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqhat*, 299; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 130–31.

[62] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika A. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11.

unaddressed in other literary genres.[63] These coming-of-age scenes function to provide a literary image of ideal masculinity. These stories are particularly crucial for societies lacking rites of passage for men. Rites of passage provide a clearly defined movement into manhood; a lack of this clarity can result in insecurity surrounding one's status as a man. Thus, these narratives provide an example of masculinity to be emulated while also addressing insecurities in a way that is relatable for the audience.[64] Therefore, this whole scene is centered upon the masculine image of Aqhat the warrior becoming a man and the bow is critical to that image.

The banquet scene functions as the initiation of Aqhat's rite of passage. The banquet, most likely celebrating his birthday, marks when Aqhat will separate himself from society, undergo a transitory rite, and finally be incorporated back into society with a new identity as a man. There is a possibility that this banquet is celebrating the end of his rite of passage, implying that Aqhat has hunted and became a man; however, since Anat later offers to teach Aqhat how to hunt, it makes better sense contextually to understand the banquet as the pre-rite of passage celebration.

Since Anat was unable to bribe Aqhat to give her the bow, she takes a more aggressive approach and asserts herself into Aqhat's rite of passage. As a hunter goddess, Anat is able to guide Aqhat in his first hunt and help him successfully move into manhood. However, she plans instead to disrupt this process and uses this moment to take

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[63] Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 3–15; J. C. L. Gibson, "Myth, Legend, and Folk-Lore in the Ugaritic Keret and Aqhat Texts," in *Congress Volume*, VTSupp 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 60–68; Hermann Gunkel, *The Folktale in the Old Testament*, trans. Michael D. Rutter (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1987), 22; Sasson, "Literary Criticism," 85, 95; Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 57.

[64] Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 6; Stephen M. Wilson, *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 14–21.

the bow. Thus, Anat's ability to transgress gender boundaries, which could help him on his journey into manhood, instead has dire consequences. Throughout the ANE, the goddesses of war are represented as the ones who have the ability to take away the warrior's bow, effectively emasculating them and turning them into women.[65] Typically this power is directed toward the enemy of goddess or the opposing army of the goddess' worshippers. By withholding the bow, Aqhat has become the recipient of Anat's rage as she forcibly takes his bow and destroys his masculine image. Thus, by taking the bow Anat symbolically emasculates Aqhat.[66] Not only does she undermine his masculine image she prevents his maturity by disrupting his rite of passage and killing Aqhat before he is able to complete his hunt. Therefore, in her act of killing Aqhat and taking his bow, Anat leaves Aqhat in a liminal state between boyhood and manhood. In his death, Aqhat's liminality mirrors that of Anat who is perpetually a *btlt*, caught between girlhood and womanhood.

Anat's act of killing and symbolically emasculating Aqhat brings the two narrative themes of gender roles and life and death together. Sherry Ortner gives a sociological analysis of the cultural assumptions surrounding the differences between males and females.[67] She concludes that women are viewed as closer to nature than men,

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[65] Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare*, 50–58; Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 66–68; Walls, *The Goddess Anat*, 201; Ilona Zsolnay, "Ištar, 'Goddess of War, Pacifier of Kings': An Analysis of Ištar's Martial Role in the Maledictory Sections of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," in *Language in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Vol. 1, Part 1* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 389–402.

[66] Day, "Anat," 183; Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare*, 32–33, 57; Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 33; Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity," 329; Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqhat*, 484; Natan-Yulzary, "Contrast and Meaning," 446; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 133–34.

[67] Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?," in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 68–87.

and consequently they are often subordinated to men.[68] In their connection to nature, women are capable of giving life while men, who are associated with culture, create technology which brings death instead of life.[69] This difference between men and women could contribute further understanding to the dialogue between Anat and Aqhat. Anat offers to give life to Aqhat, but Aqhat focuses on death. However, Anat resides in a liminal space between male and female. So, she may offer to bring life to Aqhat but in reality, she is just as capable of bringing death. Thus, the narrator depicts Anat weeping over Aqhat's broken body because all she brings is death and destruction when she could have brought life.

Conclusion

In general terms, the encounter between Aqhat and Anat can be described as an attempt by a woman to take something from the hero. In order to accomplish her goal, the woman asserts her power over the hero and tries to overcome him. The specifics of the tale are that Anat, the goddess of war and hunting, wants Aqhat's bow. She tries to get the bow from him by offering him riches and immortality, but each time Aqhat refuses her offers. Infuriated by Aqhat's insults, Anat storms off and ends the scene.

Though pivotal, this is not the end of Aqhat's interactions with her. She plots revenge and takes the young warrior on a hunt under the assumption that she will assist him in his coming-of-age process. Instead, she kills Aqhat and takes his bow in an act

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[68] Ortner, "Is Female to Male," 72–73.

[69] Ortner, "Is Female to Male," 75.

that symbolically emasculates him and leaves him unable to come of age. Thus, the woman who offered to give life to Aqhat in exchange for his bow ends up bringing him death.

CHAPTER 4
THE MESOPOTAMIAN STORY: GILGAMESH AND ISHTAR

The exploits of the hero and king Gilgamesh are part of one of the best-known works of Mesopotamian literature. The adventures of Gilgamesh and his partner-in-crime Enkidu have captured the imagination of both its ancient and modern audiences. Gilgamesh's relentless pursuit for immortality speaks to all of humanity who grapple with the reality of mortality. Amongst the various scenes, adventures, themes, and motifs narrated within the epic, there is one episode that is of interest to this study, namely, Gilgamesh's encounter with the goddess Ishtar.

The story of Gilgamesh and Ishtar is located on Tablet VI of the Standard Babylonian Version of the epic. The events of this tablet are situated in the middle of the epic, just after Gilgamesh and Enkidu had ventured into the Cedar Forest and had slain the beast Humbaba. Thus, the tablet opens with Gilgamesh washing himself of the debris from the battle. The goddess Ishtar notices Gilgamesh while he is bathing, and she proposes that he marry her. In a lengthy monologue, Gilgamesh insults the goddess, recounts the ill-fated lovers of her past, and rejects her offer. The emotionally wounded Ishtar flees to her father Anu and pleads with him for access to the Bull of Heaven so that she can murder Gilgamesh in revenge. Anu acquiesces her request allowing Ishtar to release the Bull of Heaven. The bull proceeds to ravage the city of Uruk; so, Gilgamesh and Enkidu defend the city and destroy the Bull of Heaven.

After destroying the bull, Gilgamesh and Enkidu slaughter the animal and present its heart to Shamash as an offering. However, this enrages Ishtar since her plot did not unfold as planned. As she bemoans her loss, Enkidu hurls a leg from the bull at Ishtar's feet and declares he would have done the same to her if given the opportunity. After the slaughter of the beast, the townspeople rejoice and celebrate Gilgamesh's victory. However, the tablet ends ominously as Enkidu is awoken by his dream of the gods plotting together.

In the subsequent tablets, the interpretation of the dream reveals the gods' plan to kill Enkidu because he offended Ishtar. The death of his beloved companion sparks an existential crisis for Gilgamesh as he wanders the steppe contemplating his mortality. His confrontation with mortality initiates a new heroic quest for Gilgamesh, namely, the search for immortality. The remaining tablets recount Gilgamesh's experiences while on his quest for immortality.

Based upon the narrative criteria of this study, the scene for this narrative analysis is delimited to lines 1–81 of Tablet VI. These lines contain the interaction between Gilgamesh and Ishtar. In line 82, Ishtar leaves the scene and the narrative location changes to the realm of the gods as Ishtar takes counsel with Anu. Select sections of the scene will be translated below and a full translation is provided in the appendix.[1]

[1] The text for this narrative follows that found in A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 618–31.

General Elements of the Scene

Described in terms of its general elements, the scene in lines 1–81 is comprised of three events. In event 1, lines 6–21, the woman approaches the hero and makes a proposition. In response, the hero rejects the woman in event 2, lines 22–79. Finally, in event 3, lines 80–81, the woman in turn rejects the hero and leaves. In the first five lines of the scene, the narrator sets the stage by describing the solitary actions of the hero. At this point there is no interaction with other characters and the description by the narrator contains a level of narrative distance. The hero is perceived from afar, alone before any character interactions take place.

Table 2. General elements of the scene from GE VI 1–81.

Event	Line	Description
Setting	1–5	Narrator sets the stage for the following interaction
Event 1	6–21	Woman approaches hero
Event 2	22–79	Hero rejects woman
Event 3	80–81	Woman rejects hero and leaves

Specific Elements of the Scene

Turning to the specific elements of the scene, I will explore how the *Epic of Gilgamesh* describes these three events. The narrator uses the first five lines of this scene as a means of transition from one scene to another. Previously, Gilgamesh and Enkidu had slain the beast Humbaba in the Cedar Forest. Now, as a new scene unfolds, the narrator describes the image of Gilgamesh alone, beside a body of water, washing away the dirt from the battle.

In these first few lines, the narrator uses interesting syntax. It is well attested that Akkadian is a verb final language.[2] However, on occasion the verb is moved to the initial position. The use of verb initial clauses is attested as a narrative feature in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.[3] Scholarly descriptions of this deviation from the standard word order have assigned it to the vague category of emphasis.[4] In his discussion of emphasis as a general linguistic feature, Giorgio Buccellati defines it as the "strengthening, stressing, or intensification of an element that is already present in the sentence."[5] This however provides little illumination into the interpretative significance of verbal fronting in specific cases. Rather, contextual clues provide the strongest evidence in discerning the narrative purpose of verb movement.

In this case, the position of the verb within the clause seems to identify the verb as the focus constituent of the clause. Topic and focus constituents are a universal feature of language; however, languages may encode these elements in various ways. In written discourses, languages may syntactically mark focus and topic elements by placing them in a prominent position within the clause.[6] Thus, Akkadian may use verb initial clauses to

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[2] Giorgio Buccellati, *A Structural Grammar of Babylonian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 394; John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 3rd ed., HSS 45 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 19; Wolfram von Soden, *Grundriss Der Akkadischen Grammatik*, AnOr 33 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995), 227.

[3] George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 433.

[4] Buccellati, *Structural Grammar*, 394; von Soden, *Grundriss Der Akkadischen*, 227.

[5] Buccellati, *Structural Grammar*, 383.

[6] Jeanette K. Gundel and Thorstein Fretheim, "Topic and Focus," in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward, Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics 16 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 175–96.

mark the verbal element as the focus of the clause. In lines 1–3, the verb is at the beginning of each of the clauses.

[1] *im-si ma-le-šu ub-bi-ib til-le-šu*	He washed his filth, and he cleaned his equipment.
[2] *ú-na-si-is qim-mai-su e-lu ṣe-ri-šu*	He shook his hair upon his back.
[3] *id-di mar-šu-ti-šu it-tal-bi-šá za-ku-ti-šu*	He cast aside his dirty things, he clothed himself with his clean things.

Each of these five clauses lacks an overt subject, relying upon the verbal inflection which indicates a third-person, masculine, singular entity, contextually known by the reader to be Gilgamesh. These five, short, verb initial clauses generate a sequence of events to describe Gilgamesh's washing with minimal descriptive detail. The lack of an overt subject coupled with the focus fronted verb draws the narrative attention to the events themselves rather than the one doing them. Thus, these lines answer the question what is he doing, rather than the question who is washing. The attention to the actions creates a sense of anonymity to the scene. The narrator creates in the audience a sense that they have just stumbled upon a person washing and the only thing the audience knows is that the person is indeed washing, they do not know who the person is. The last focus-fronted action in this sequence of events is the putting on of clean things. The next two clauses, in lines 4–5, particularize this action by detailing what clean things he puts on.

[4] *a-ṣa-a-ti it-taḫ-li-pa-am-ma ra-kis a-gu-uḫ-ḫu*	In cloaks he wrapped himself, tied with a sash.
[5] *GIŠ-gim-maš a-ga-šú i-te-ep-ra-ami-ma*	Gilgamesh placed his crown

With these two, more descriptive clauses, there is a return to the expected word order. The final clause includes the overt subject Gilgamesh. Since the preceding context

clearly implicates Gilgamesh as the subject of the verbs in lines 1–5, there is no need for an overt subject here. So the inclusion of the proper name at the end of the description is redundant and contributes to slow the narrative tempo.[7] The descriptive nature of lines 4–5 also decelerates the tempo of the action and draw the audience's attention away from the actions and towards Gilgamesh himself as he replaces his royal attire after the battle.[8] By using syntax and narrative tempo, the narrator creates a sense of anticipation in lines 1–3, which is released in line 5 when the audience receives clear confirmation that the individual washing is indeed Gilgamesh. Thus, lines 1–3 are literarily subordinated to lines 4–5. Lines 4–5 contain the main story line of the narrative while lines 1–3 draw the audience in by creating anticipatory tension. Thus, in lines 4–5, the narrator invites the audience to gaze upon Gilgamesh and savor the image.

In these lines, the narrator presents Gilgamesh the way Ishtar sees him, so that the audience becomes just as captivated by his image as she is. The narrative technique of presenting an unmediated view of a character through the eyes of another objectifies the character of interest by highlighting their otherness. This technique serves to focus upon the effect that an encounter with "the other" may have upon the involved parties.[9] This tactic is present throughout the Gilgamesh Epic and generates the theme of the effect of confrontations with the other.[10] Gilgamesh, branded as the one who has seen everything,

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[7] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 368–69, 438–39.

[8] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 4–5.

[9] Keith Dickson, "Looking at the Other in Gilgamesh," *JAOS* 127 (2007): 171–82; Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 129.

[10] Dickson, "Looking at the Other," 174.

often becomes the object of sight for other characters throughout the narrative, as seen here as Ishtar beholds him.[11] Line 6 states that Ishtar is explicitly gazing upon the *dumqu* of Gilgamesh. Often translated as beauty, interpreters suggest it denotes an erotic quality that objectifies Gilgamesh's masculinity.[12] While the description in lines 4–5 focuses upon her attraction to his refined status as king, Gilgamesh's masculinity is evident in lines 1–3, as his warrior physique is clearly on display as he bathes, presumably in the nude. Nudity aside, the act of washing after battle is an overtly masculine practice that attests to Gilgamesh's victory in battle.[13] However, the focus in this scene is on his post-battle return to royal status.[14] Thus, Ishtar's attraction to Gilgamesh's royal status overtakes her initial attraction to his physical masculinity. The narrative makes this clear by quickly passing by Gilgamesh's act of bathing but describing in great detail the adornment process as Gilgamesh places the clothing representing his royal status upon his body. Thus, the narrator suggests that this is the image Ishtar sees and this is the act to which she is drawn. The range of meaning for the noun *dumqu* further supports this reading. Most often it is rendered beauty in this context, but in other contexts the term is used to refer to fortune, profits, treasures, and wealth.[15] Thus, it seems from the context

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[11] Dickson, "Looking at the Other," 177.

[12] Neal H. Walls, *Desire, Discord, and Death: Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Myth*, ASOR Books 8 (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2001), 39–40.

[13] Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 19.

[14] Rikva Harris, *Gender and Aging in Mesopotamia* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 47; Dominique Prévot, "L'Épopée de Gilgamesh: Un Scénario Initiatique?," in *Les Rites d'initiation*, ed. J Ries, Actes Du Collège de Liege et de Louvain-La-Neuve (Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d'Histoire des Religions, 1986), 225–41; Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 19.

[15] A. Leo Oppenheim and Erica Reiner, eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, vol. 3 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1959), 180–83.

that Ishtar is at least as attracted to Gilgamesh's status and wealth as to his physical beauty.

Based upon this image of Gilgamesh, clean and clothed as befitting of royalty, Ishtar approaches him with a marriage proposal. Thus, Ishtar initiates the action in the scene. Although Ishtar is the main actor in this event, the narrative focus remains on Gilgamesh.

[6] *a-na dum-qi ša GIŠ-gim-maš i-ni it-ta-ši ru-bu-tú ištar*	Upon the beauty of Gilgamesh, Queen Ishtar lifted her eyes.
[7] *al-kám-ma GIŠ-gim-maš lu-ú ha-ʾ-ir at-ta*	"Come Gilgamesh, you be the groom.
[8] *in-bi-ka-ia-a-si qa-a-šu qí-šam-ma*	Give your fruits to me, I insist.
[9] *at-ta lu-ú mu-ti-ma ana-ku lu-ú áš-šat-ka*	You will be my husband and I will be your wife."

In line 6, the clause opens with the prepositional phrase *a-na dum-qi ša GIŠ-gim-maš.* By placing this phrase at the front of the clause, the narrative topic remains Gilgamesh and his *dumqu* rather shifting to the main actor Ishtar. This continues in line 7 by the use of the vocative *GIŠ-gim-maš* at the beginning of the line, again bringing attention to Gilgamesh. Ishtar continues with four second-person directive verbs. It is not until the end of line 9 that Ishtar places herself in the spotlight by stating what she will do in this bargain. Not only has the narrator chosen to subvert the expected word order of Akkadian grammar, the formulaic introduction of speech is also lacking. Benjamin Foster suggests this is a literary device to stress the abruptness and the passionate excitement of Ishtar which cannot be contained long enough for formulaic introductions.[16]

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[16] Benjamin R. Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love and the Ascent of Knowledge," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 21–42.

Alternatively, the lack of an introduction may also serve to keep the narrative attention on Gilgamesh. If there was a formulaic introduction (*iš-tar pâ(ka)-šú īpuš(dù)-ma i-qab-bi*), it would place Ishtar as the focal point of the narrative by stating her name at the beginning of the clause and making her the subject of attention. Instead, the writer has chosen to keep Gilgamesh as the focal point, even though Ishtar is the one speaking.

As Ishtar goes on to describe for Gilgamesh what will happen once they are married, it is clear that Ishtar's level of participation will be minimal. The only action that she will take is detailed in line 10; she will harness a chariot for him. This and the implied copula in line 9 are the only cases of first-person verbs in her proposition. All the other benefits of the marriage that Gilgamesh will receive will be passive benefits (the fertility of his animals) or given by others (the tribute from other kings).

Tucked within her proposition are a few oddities that may serve to foreshadow Gilgamesh's rejection. In her offer, Ishtar seems to suggest that Gilgamesh will benefit from the marriage, but she will not be the one to bestow those benefits. On some level, Ishtar displays a non-committal disposition toward the marriage in her proposition, something that Gilgamesh may have noticed. Ishtar is very clear in demonstrating to Gilgamesh that he will prosper from the marriage. She paints for him a picture of prosperity and invites him to accept the image she is creating. The level of attention she gives to Gilgamesh's benefits insinuates the offer is actually a bribe. Her offer is all the more peculiar when one considers the numerous poetic praises elsewhere that tell of Ishtar's irresistible beauty.[17] If Ishtar is as irresistible as she is described, then a bribe

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[17] Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love," 34; "To Ishtar" (Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 3rd ed. [Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2005], 85–88); "Love Lyric of Ishtar of Babylon" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 947–48).

would be unnecessary, Gilgamesh should be dying to marry to her without any promise of a reward. When combined, Ishtar's non-committal nature and her bribe suggest that her offer is not as great as she lets on and may serve to foreshadow Gilgamesh's rejection.

As Gilgamesh opens his mouth to speak in line 22, it is unclear at this point what the audience should expect him to say. As demonstrated above, there are some suggestions that her offer may not be as good as she makes it sound, implying that Gilgamesh should refuse. However, the audience may initially believe that Gilgamesh will accept her offer. She is a goddess, who is described as irresistibly beautiful; thus, her offer could be viewed as his reward for defeating Humbaba.[18] Throughout the epic, Gilgamesh has been described as a rash warrior, who does not turn away from a fight; so, even if he is aware of the underlying danger in her offer, Gilgamesh may want to take on the challenge.[19]

Once he speaks, it is clear that Gilgamesh is skeptical about her offer. He noticed that in the proposal she promised to do very little herself. Thus, Gilgamesh asks if she really would perform all the duties of a good wife.[20] But given her reputation, he already

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[18] Tzvi Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal and Gilgamesh's Refusal: An Interpretation of 'The Gilgamesh Epic', Tablet 6, Lines 1-79," *HR* 26.2 (1986): 143–87; Rikva Harris, "Images of Woman in the Gilgamesh Epic," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller, HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 221–30

[19] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 147.

[20] In ancient Mesopotamia, women were expected to be good housekeepers, which includes making sure their husband was cared for by providing him with decent clothing and food. Gilgamesh holds these expectations and expects Ishtar to fulfill them with the utmost grace; however, the rhetoric of the question implies he knows she will not. Julia M. Asher-Greve, "Decisive Sex, Essential Gender," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th RAI, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, CRRAI 47 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 11–26; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 472.

knows that the answer is no; she does not fit the profile of good wife. Thus, he continues to answer his own question by berating the goddess. Gilgamesh reveals Ishtar's true nature in an extended simile where he compares her destructive nature to eight destructive or malfunctioning items.[21] Each of these items could be described as a primitive technology, something used or created to make life more convenient for humanity. For example, a door offers protection from intruders and the elements; waterskins provide an easy means for transporting water; and shoes protect the wearers feet and allows for longer journeys.[22] In this case each of these items, which were originally meant for good, malfunctions causing destruction or even death.[23] The same is true of Ishtar. As the goddess of war and the hunt, she could be a valuable ally for the

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[21] Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love," 34–35; Benjamin R. Foster, "Humor and Cuneiform Literature," *JANES* 6 (1974): 69–85; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 473; Brigitte Groneberg, "'The Faithful Lover' Reconsidered: Toward Establishing a New Genre," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th RAI, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, CRRAI 47 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 165–83; Harris, "Images of Woman," 227; E. A. Speiser, "Gilgamesh VI 40," *JCS* 12 (1958): 41–42.

[22] Each of these items is created or built by humanity to ease their daily work. The only exception is line 36 in which the noun *pi-i-ru* is commonly rendered elephant. Speiser states that elephant is not appropriate in the context and renders it as turban. However, if elephant is the correct noun, it still fits the nature of these common elements. Even though an elephant is not a human made object, it is capable of being utilized by humans for domestic purposes, but it includes a high risk since an elephant is wild and capable of much destruction. Thus, Ishtar is like an elephant in that she has potential to be helpful to humanity, but also has the potential to inflict extreme damage and destruction if she chooses. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 621; Martha T. Roth, ed., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, vol. 12 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2005), 418–20; "The Epic of Gilgamesh," trans. E. A. Speiser (*ANET* 84).

[23] For most of these items the destruction caused is clear and significant. However, some items cause subtle destruction, but destruction nonetheless. For example, in line 37 "a pitch that stains its bearer" causes destruction to the bearer's clothing. Also, in line 38 "a waterskin that cuts it's bearer," seems at first glance to be minor, but a cut has potential to be devastating if it is deep enough or if it leads to infection. Finally, the metaphor of the shoe that bites may be reminiscent of a divination text that refers to Amar-Sin of Ur who dies of "shoe-bite." The implication is that he died of a foot infection that may have been prevented with a properly fitting or properly functioning shoe. Thus, Gilgamesh implies that Ishtar's love is as lethal as a shoe bite. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 473; Albrecht Goetze, "Historical Allusions in Old Babylonian Omen Texts," *JCS* 1 (1947): 253–65.

king by bringing prosperity to his endeavors.[24] However, her character is also one of destruction, prompting Thorkild Jacobsen to say "an aura of death and disaster surrounds her."[25] Like these various items, she has potential to bring success to those involved with her, but instead she brings destruction.

As if his point was not clear yet, Gilgamesh carries on by describing exactly how destructive Ishtar is as he recounts the fates of her previous lovers. Gilgamesh introduces this next section of his speech with another rhetorical question. He asks her which of her lovers lasted forever, to which the implied response is none of them. As Gilgamesh lists off each of Ishtar's lovers, there is a change to the expected Akkadian word order that seems to supply a rhetorical force.

[46] *a-na dumu-zi ḫa-mi-ri ṣu-uḫre-ti-ki*	To Dumuzi, the lover of your youth:
[47] *šat-ta a-na šat-ti bi-tak-ka-a tal-ti-meš-šú*	Year to year you have destined him to weeping.
[48] *al-la-lá bit-ru-ma ta-ra-me-ma*	The many colored allallu-bird you loved.
[49] *tam-ḫa-ṣi-šu-ma kap-pa-šu tal-te-eb-ri*	You struck him and broke his wing…
[51] *ta-ra-mi-ma nēša ga-mi-ir e-mu-qi*	You loved a lion, perfect of strength…
[53] *ta-ra-mi-ma sīsâ na-ʾ-id qab-li*	You loved a horse, trustworthy of battle…

[24] As a goddess of war, Ishtar is invoked to bring curses upon one's enemies, but also to bring military success and heightened displays of masculinity to the king. "Kurigalzu and the Ishtar Temple" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 365); "Self-Praise of Ishtar" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 679); "Psalms to Ishtar for Assurnasirpal I" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 327–30; 331–3); Ilona Zsolnay, "Ištar, 'Goddess of War, Pacifier of Kings': An Analysis of Ištar's Martial Role in the Maledictory Sections of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," in *Language in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Vol. 1, Part 1* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 389–402. Ishtar also played a role in the sacred marriage ritual in which she bonded with the king and created a bridge by which he could commune with the gods, effectively bringing prosperity to the king and his kingdom. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 58–62; Philip Jones, "Embracing Inana: Legitimation and Mediation in the Ancient Mesopotamian Sacred Marriage Hymn Iddin-Dagan A," *JAOS* 123 (2003): 291–302.

[25] Thorkild Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 143.

[58] *ta-ra-mi-ma re-ʾ-a na-qid-da ú-tul-lum*	You loved a shepherd, a herdsman, the chief shepherd…
[64] *ta-ra-mi-ma i-šu-ul-la-nu nukaribbi abi-ki*	You loved Ishullanu, the gardener of your father…

At the beginning of the list, in lines 46 and 48, the word order follows the traditional structure with the verb at the end of the clause and the object preceding. However, when the rest of the lovers are introduced, in lines 51, 53, 58, and 64, the verb is placed at the beginning of the clause. As mentioned previously, the pragmatic significance to this change in the word order must be contextually determined. If it is meant to assert anew that she loved these individuals, then it seems redundant because it is clear from the beginning of Gilgamesh's list that each of these individuals were loved by Ishtar. If it indicates an increased level of love, then it raises the question, did Ishtar not love Dumzi and the allallu-bird as much as these since the verb is not fronted there?

Understanding focus to elicit a contrast, the focus fronted verbs highlight that, despite their ill fate, she did love them, as opposed to any other disposition towards them.[26] In this case, the focus constituent in each clause is the same word, *ta-ra-mi-ma*, which creates a commonality between each of those statements and heightens the attention given to her love. This contrastive focus on the verb generates a rhetorical effect of Gilgamesh's questioning her love. He implies if that is what Ishtar calls love then he wants nothing to do with it. The repetitive pattern of verbal fronting also draws attention to the length of the list, indicating that Ishtar's mistreatment of her lovers is not a fluke but is part of her nature. She mistreats everyone she has a close relationship with, no

[26] Gundel and Fretheim, "Topic and Focus," 181.

matter how much she loves them. Thus, the movement of the verb to the front of the clause here draws attention to the destructive nature of Ishtar's "love."

The continued focus upon the verbal element accentuates the progression of the list, which builds up to Gilgamesh as the potential climax of her love life. The progression occurs along two axes of categorization. The first is a temporal movement from past to present.[27] Gilgamesh begins his list with the lover of her youth Dumuzi. By identifying him with a proper name and giving him the title of "lover of your youth," Gilgamesh sets him apart from the other lovers as the beginning of her story. The list then moves forward in time to the second named lover, Ishullanu. The culmination of the list is reached in the present moment as Gilgamesh imagines himself among this cast of lovers. The second axis contains a movement from nature to culture.[28] Among the three animal lovers, the allallu-bird, the lion, and the horse, there is a movement towards culture as the animals become less wild in nature. The shepherd stands at the junction between animal and human; he is a human, but he lives on the fringes of society spending most of his time among the animals. Ishullanu is another step towards society and culture since he is named. Like the shepherd, the gardener spends most of his time outside, but he is less connected with the animals. This gradual movement closer to civilized human society sets Gilgamesh as the climax of the list because as a king he represents the height of cultured society.

Although Gilgamesh is well suited to be Ishtar's next lover, as the apex of the list he is also prepared to reject her. As a steady pattern is created concerning Ishtar's

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[27] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 164.

[28] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 163.

treatment of her lovers, the audience comes to expect disaster will happen to the next person she loves. However, narrative repetition is often used to build up to a climactic moment where the expected outcome is reversed, as is the case here.[29] Throughout his speech, Gilgamesh has indicated that he is skeptical about the nature of Ishtar's proposal. Thus, the audience may already be expecting Gilgamesh to reject her offer. But by placing himself at the climax of his list, Gilgamesh draws attention to his rejection of Ishtar in a dramatic way. Rather than rejecting her and walking away, Gilgamesh drives the dagger home by adding rhetorical flourish and drama to his rejection.

At this point, the audience would expect a reply from Ishtar, but she does not reply. By refusing to reply to Gilgamesh, Ishtar effectively rejects him. Although she might have chosen to persuade him further, and as a goddess and the more powerful party she has the means to convince him to do her will, she storms off in a fit of anger. This could be understood as an admittance of defeat; Gilgamesh won the verbal battle. But as the one who first proposed, by abandoning her pursuit she chooses to reject Gilgamesh as a potential lover and refuses to be rejected.[30]

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[29] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 172; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 95; Claude Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," *Communications* 4 (1964): 4–32; Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 67.

[30] In an examination of the Babylonian love poem "The Faithful Lover," Brigitte Groneberg suggests there is a connection between the poem and the scene between Gilgamesh and Ishtar. In the poem there is a debate between two parties as the woman tries to seduce the man. In their conversation, the man rejects the woman based upon her past misdeeds. Then the woman responds to the man's initial rejection before he gives his final reply. This creates a sort of seduction game where the woman approaches the man, he draws away, but she continues to pursue him. If there is a connection with the encounter between Gilgamesh and Ishtar, then this would lend support to the audience's expectation that Ishtar respond to Gilgamesh in some way. Groneberg, "'The Faithful Lover' Reconsidered,"170–174.

Position of the Scene within the Epic

Although there is a rich history recording the development of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, this study is a synchronic approach, concerned with the final form of the text. In its final form, the encounter with Ishtar in Tablet VI is the midpoint of the tale. It also serves as a major pivot point in the overall plot. The first five tablets establish Gilgamesh as a heroic figure, reaching its climax in his heroic battle and victory over Humbaba in the Cedar Forest. The final tablets, VII–XI, recount Gilgamesh's quest for immortality spurned on by his grief and desperation at the death of his beloved friend Enkidu. Tablet VI serves as the turning point, narrating how a hero can go from the peak of his heroic valor to the depths of despair.[31]

In a Proppian approach to the text, Joseph Blenkinsopp identifies three major moves in the story. The first move concerns Enkidu as the solution to Gilgamesh's restless heart; the second move is how Gilgamesh makes a name for himself; and the final move is the climax.[32] The encounter with Ishtar derives out of the second move and functions as the catalyst for the climax. The second move begins with a state of lack: Gilgamesh has not yet made a name for himself, so he journeys out to solve this problem. It is the liquidation of this lack that triggers the encounter with Ishtar since Blenkinsopp suggests it is Gilgamesh's prowess in battle that attracts Ishtar.[33] However, this encounter

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[31] Liesbeth Korthals Altes, "Gilgamesh and the Power of Narration," *JAOS* 127 (2007): 183–93; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 48.

[32] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Search for the Prickly Plant: Structure and Function in the Gilgamesh Epic," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 58 (1975): 200–20.

[33] Blenkinsopp, "The Search for the Prickly Plant," 208.

has negative consequences in that it leads to Enkidu's death which is the catalyst for Gilgamesh's quest for immortality.

Prior to the encounter with Ishtar, Gilgamesh's defining characteristic was his heroism. It was due to his overzealous, heroic behavior that he wreaked havoc on his kingdom at the beginning of the epic. His heroism gave him success in battle and made him a warrior; however, it did not help him learn how to be a king in times of peace.[34] Gilgamesh sought and found an outlet for his heroic impulses in the Cedar Forest. At the beginning of the encounter with Ishtar in Tablet VI, Gilgamesh has completed his battle and must now return to his place as king. He must find a way to set aside his heroic tendencies and learn to be king by accepting his role in society.[35] Thus, the entire epic contains a coming-of-age theme that is concerned with how Gilgamesh "grew up" and became king.[36] This coming-of-age theme exemplifies the tension that Gilgamesh experiences.[37] Due to his desire to live a life of heroic glory, Gilgamesh seeks to achieve immortality via the legacy of his name. However, his heroic driving force is incompatible

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[34] Tzvi Abusch, "The Development and Meaning of the Epic of Gilgamesh: An Interpretive Essay," *JAOS* 121 (2001): 614–22.

[35] Abusch, "The Development and Meaning,"622.

[36] Blenkinsopp, "The Search for the Prickly Plant," 217; Harris, *Gender and Aging*, 32; Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 219; Gary D. Miller and P. Wheeler, "Mother Goddess and Consort as Literary Motif Sequence in the Gilgamesh Epic," *Acta Antiqua* 29 (1981): 81–108; Jack M. Sasson, "Some Literary Motifs in the Composition of the Gilgamesh Epic," *Studies in Philology* 69 (1972): 259–79; Stephen M. Wilson, *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 12; Hope Nash Wolff, *A Study in the Narrative Structure of Three Epic Poems: Gilgamesh, The Odyssey, Beowulf*, Harvard Dissertations in Comparative Literature (New York: Garland, 1987), 3–8.

[37] Rites of passage can be used in two senses. The first sense refers to biographical rites of passage in which children or adolescents move into adulthood, often accompanied by a ritual ceremony. The second sense refers to any change in status that can occur throughout an individual's life span. In Gilgamesh's case, this coming-of-age theme or rite of passage refers to a change in status and a change in his self-identity regarding his role within the society. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika A. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 3–4.

with the civil life of rulership.[38] Therefore, Gilgamesh embodies the tension between heroic values and existential values.[39] Gilgamesh cannot be both hero and mortal king.

In terms of coming-of-age tales, or rites of passage, Gilgamesh is in a liminal period.[40] As mentioned in the previous chapter, rites of passage are comprised of three stages; separation, transition, and incorporation. These three stages are also referred to as the pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal rites. The liminal phase is when the individual is caught between two positions, they have left their old identity but have not fully assimilated into their new role.[41] Individuals in this stage often embody ambiguous characteristics since they do not hold a stable position within the social structure of the culture. At the beginning of the scene, Gilgamesh is washing off the dirt of the battle and clothing himself with dignified attire. The act of washing functions as a civilizing act that is representative of moving through a liminal stage.[42] He is leaving behind his identity as warrior and preparing to enter his identity as king. Ishtar asserts herself into this liminal

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[38] In his commentary on Judges, Lawson Stone notes that "within the heroic tradition, one often finds poignant portrayals of the hero no longer fitting into his culture." As typical of heroic figures, Gilgamesh's heroic driving force makes it difficult for him to find a sense of ease in civilized culture. Lawson G. Stone, "Judges," in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Cornerstone 3, ed. Phillip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2012), 202.

[39] Abusch, "The Development and Meaning," 614; Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Gilgamesh Epic: Romantic and Tragic Vision," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller, HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 231–49.

[40] van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 11; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 95.

[41] Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 95.

[42] Harris, *Gender and Aging*, 43–47; Sara Mandell, "Liminality, Altered States, and the Gilgamesh Epic," in *Gilgamesh: A Reader*, ed. John Maier (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1997), 122–30; Prévot, "L'Épopée de Gilgamesh," 234.

phase and takes advantage of Gilgamesh's conflicting roles with her offer by making him choose between heroism and mere mortality.

There are a variety of proposed reasons for why Gilgamesh rejected Ishtar; however, each reason is derived from the conflict between Gilgamesh's heroic desires and his societal duties. For example, in light of his warrior nature it is suggested that Gilgamesh's rejection is a symbol of his heroic devotion to sexual restraint.[43] If this is the case, his rejection of Ishtar reflects the rejection of women from the male realm of heroic battle.[44] The rejection of women from the male-centric hero culture creates a strong bond between male warriors, which often develops into a sort of "substitute" for the lack of female companionship in battle.[45] Thus, Gilgamesh's rejection of Ishtar could also be an assertion of his relationship with Enkidu over against his potential relationship with her.[46] Similarly, Hope Nash Wolff suggests that Gilgamesh's rejection of Ishtar is an assertion of his self-sufficiency.[47] As the hero, Gilgamesh seeks to make his own name; thus, he does not need any of the potential gifts or fame that she would offer him.

In light of Gilgamesh's role as king, Ishtar represents Gilgamesh's civic responsibility. Ishtar played a key role in the Babylonian sacred marriage ritual, which

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[43] W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 99.

[44] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 21.

[45] Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 79–80.

[46] Foster, "Gilgamesh: Sex, Love," 34; Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 219; Andreas Wiebel, "Phänomenologie Der Liebe: Darstellung Einer Ur-Erfahrung Im Gilgamesch-Epos," in *Liebe, Tod, Unsterblichkeit: Urerfahrungen Der Menschheit Im Gilgamesch-Epos*, ed. Manfred Negele (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), 123–44.

[47] Hope Nash Wolff, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Heroic Life," *JAOS* 89 (1969): 392–98.

provided a means for the king to participate in the cultic life and create a connection between the kingship and the gods.[48] Due to Ishtar's notoriously destructive behavior, this ritual may have been less than desirable. Her mythological relationship with Dumuzi implies this could be dangerous to the king and her aggressive disposition may force the king into a humbled, feminine role in the marriage ceremony.[49] By refusing Ishtar, Gilgamesh is not simply refusing to be her lover; he is refusing to participate in the city cult and refusing to fulfill one of his responsibilities as king.[50] Zainab Bahrani evaluates the scene without reference to any heroic theme and suggests that Gilgamesh refused out of fear which is representative of a generalized Mesopotamian fear of the destructive power of feminine sexuality.[51] He saw how Ishtar's love destroyed her previous lovers and he wanted nothing to do with her.

Taking each of these interpretations into consideration, Fumi Karahashi and Carolina López-Ruiz suggest an aggregate interpretation: Gilgamesh refuses Ishtar's offer because she impedes his way of life and leads to destruction.[52] In the eyes of the hero, destruction at the hand of a woman is dishonorable and humiliating. Thus, destruction by Ishtar threatens his heroic valor and fame; and by proxy, the immortality that he is seeking through that fame. Accepting her offer is not a heroic act because she

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[48] Fymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddess*, 76–77; Jones, "Embracing Inana," 291; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002), 174–75.

[49] Jones, "Embracing Inana," 292.

[50] Blenkinsopp, "The Search for the Prickly Plant," 216.

[51] Zainab Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 153–154; Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 68.

[52] Fumi Karahashi and Carolina López-Ruiz, "Love Rejected: Some Notes on the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh and the Greek Myth of Hippolytus," *JCS* 58 (2006): 97–107.

will take his fame from him by humiliating and abusing him like she has done to her previous lovers. For the hero, his driving force is his valor and fame; when that is lost, he ceases to be a hero and experiences a type of death.[53] Thus, Ishtar represents the death of Gilgamesh's fame, which he perceives as a form of actual death. Gilgamesh, the man concerned with immortality, vehemently rejects the goddess because he wants to be as far away from death as possible.

After his rejection of Ishtar, Gilgamesh remains in the liminal stage of his rite of passage, living in the tension between his heroic life and his civic life. He has completed his battle with Humbaba and must either continue in his heroic pursuits or return home. The narrator does not provide any insight into Gilgamesh's mind immediately following his rejection of Ishtar, as the narrative focus has moved to Ishtar as she flees the scene. However, his rejection sets off the subsequent events that bring Gilgamesh face to face with his mortality and the fragility of the heroic life.

Role of Ishtar in the Scene

At a liminal moment in Gilgamesh's rite of passage, the events in this scene have the potential to usher Gilgamesh into his role as king; however, at this liminal stage Gilgamesh is in a socially vulnerable position, caught between his two identities. Ishtar seizes this opportunity and asserts herself into this vulnerable moment to exploit Gilgamesh's insecure identity by proposing a different option. As the initiator of the

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[53] Albert B. Lord, "Gilgamesh and Other Epics," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller, HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 371–80; Wolff, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Heroic Life," 393.

action in this liminal moment, Ishtar takes on the role of change agent. Her actions contribute to the coming-of-age theme in two ways.

First, because of her actions, the encounter becomes a failed rite of passage. As mentioned previously, rites of passage include a three-fold movement of separation, transition, and incorporation. When Ishtar encounters Gilgamesh, he is already in the transition stage of a rite of passage. Having achieved victory in battle, he is washing and preparing himself to return to society and assume his role as king, if he so chooses. Ishtar however offers him a different trajectory to complete his rite of passage through her marriage proposal. Marriage involves a time of separation from one's biological family, a time of transition into the new life of marriage, and a time of incorporation as the new role is accepted. Ishtar's proposal reflects this process. She articulates what Gilgamesh's new role will be by stating he will be her husband. She also describes the transition and incorporation that Gilgamesh will experience as he enters her house and receives the benefits and gifts of what could be his new identity.[54] Thus, in this liminal period, Ishtar offers a different pathway to kingship; she offers an avenue for Gilgamesh to become her husband and connect the divine realm with the royal.

If Gilgamesh accepted her offer, then Ishtar would function as an intermediary who assists Gilgamesh through the rite of passage and into his new identity.[55] Gilgamesh goes through multiple liminal phases throughout the epic, in each of these phases he

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[54] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 158.

[55] Mandell, "Liminality, Altered States," 126; Gregory Mobley, *Samson and the Liminal Hero in the Ancient Near East*, LHBOTS 453 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 101; Prévot, "L'Épopée de Gilgamesh," 227; Wolff, *A Study of Narrative Structure,* 5.

encounters someone to assist him in the rite of passage.[56] A character who has the necessary experience functions as a teacher to lead him into his new identity. For example, as a woman who knows relationships, Siduri teaches him how to be a man and Utnapishtim, an immortal king, teaches him about immortality and kingship.[57] Ishtar, however, is a false teacher. On the surface she seems to offer Gilgamesh a relationship and thus a way to move into his new identity; but in reality, that is not what she offers. She has a long history of abusing her lovers, indicating that she will not successfully bring Gilgamesh into the identity she is offering. As a proper teacher and agent of change, Ishtar would escort Gilgamesh through the rite of passage and bring him fully into his new identity as her husband. However, as a false teacher who does not intend to provide what she offered, Ishtar abandons Gilgamesh in a state of liminality so that he stands alone with no identity or place of belonging.

Secondly, Ishtar contributes to the coming-of-age theme by unintentionally launching Gilgamesh on a new coming-of-age journey. At the conclusion of the scene, Ishtar leaves Gilgamesh is a state of liminality caught between his identity as hero and king. However, this is not the end of Gilgamesh's interaction with Ishtar. Ishtar brings the Bull of Heaven to take vengeance on Gilgamesh. In the process, Enkidu offends Ishtar and he is put to death as a consequence of his rash behavior. Although it is not immediate, Enkidu's death is a direct result of Gilgamesh's run-in with the goddess. Gilgamesh, still caught between his identity as hero and king, embraces his state of liminality and begins a trajectory towards a new identity and goal, namely, immortality.

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[56] Abusch, "The Development of Meaning," 622.

[57] Abusch, "The Development of Meaning," 622.

Although it is not the intended change, nonetheless Ishtar is an agent of change.[58] She sought to tame and destroy Gilgamesh but instead she launched him on a journey that would return him to his kingdom a changed man.

Not only does Ishtar function as an agent of change in this scene, she is also a subversive character who inverts narrative and social expectations. From the moment she approaches Gilgamesh, her actions are disconnected from what would be expected. The scene opens with Ishtar gazing upon Gilgamesh before she approaches him. Her gazing upon Gilgamesh and his *dumqu* objectifies him and places her in a masculine role.[59] As a woman, it would be expected that she would use her feminine allure to attract Gilgamesh; however, her well-attested beauty and allure are not mentioned. Instead, she gazed upon him and then abruptly approaches him with a marriage proposal, again taking the traditionally masculine position.[60] This masculine behavior is not novel for Ishtar, Mesopotamian literature frequently depicts Ishtar as the female embodiment of masculine behavior.[61] Due to her femininity, there is a tendency to view her as a fertility goddess of

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[58] John A. Bailey, "Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3," *JBL* 89 (1970): 137–50.

[59] Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*, 154; Walls, *Desire, Discord, and Death*, 40.

[60] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 149, 153; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 470; Harris, "Images of Women," 227; Jones, "Embracing Inana," 292; Miller & Wheeler, "Mother Goddess and Consort as Literary Motif," 97; Walls, *Desire, Discord, and Death*, 38.

[61] Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*, 146; Jean Bottéro, "La Femme, L'amour et La Guerre En Mésopotamie Ancienne," in *Poikilia: Études Offertes À Jean-Pierre Vernant*, Recherches d'histoire et de Sciences Sociales 26 (Paris: Éditions de L'école des Hautes Études, 1987), 165–83; Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 29; Brigitte Groneberg, "Die Sumerisch-Akkadische Inanna/Ištar: Hermaphrodotos?," *Welt Des Orients* 17 (1986): 25–46; Harris, "Images of Women," 226; Harry A. Hoffner Jr., "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity: Their Use in Ancient Near Eastern Sympathetic Magic Rituals," *JBL* 85 (1966): 326–34.

love. At times she does represent love and female sexuality; however, her main realm of behavior and authority is within warrior culture.[62] Most notably, she is praised as having the ability to turn men into women on the battlefield.[63] As a female who embodies the characteristics of warrior culture, Ishtar represents a blurring of the gender-role boundaries and undermines the cultural definitions of male and female behavior.[64]

In this scene, Ishtar's behavior reflects that which is expected of men. By stepping into the male role, Ishtar constricts Gilgamesh to the feminine role and threatens his masculine, warrior image by removing his male dominance.[65] As noted above, her offer of marriage threatens Gilgamesh's heroic valor and potential immortality via fame. Thus, by making this offer Ishtar also threatens Gilgamesh's masculinity by attempting to remove his defining characteristic and motivating force.[66] For the heroic warrior, the loss of his valor is experienced like defeat and emasculation since he is left weak and

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[62] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 66–67; Zsolnay, "Ištar, 'Goddess of War,'" 389; "The Agushaya Poem" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 97–106); "Great Prayer to Ishtar" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 599–601); "Greatness of Ishtar" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 674–76); "Ishtar, Harasser of Men" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 281–85); "Self-Praise of Ishtar" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 95).

[63] Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*, HSM 62 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 56; "Erra and Ishum IV" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 904); "Ishtar, Harasser of Men" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 281–85); "Ishtar Queen of Heaven" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 592–98); Zsolnay, "Ištar, 'Goddess of War,'" 391. A Hittite prayer to Ishtar implores her to "Take away from the men manhood, courage, vigor…For those place in the hand the distaff and spindle of a woman and dress them like women." "Ritual and Prayer to Ishtar of Nineveh," trans. Billie Jean Collins (COS 1.65:164).

[64] Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*, 149–150; Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 58; Groneberg, "Die summerisch-akkadische Inanna/Ištar," 42–43; Harris, "Images of Women," 226; Rikva Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites," *HR* 30 (1991): 261–78; Herbert B. Huffmon, "Gender Subersion in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th RAI, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, CRRAI 47 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 245–53.

[65] Asher-Greve, "Decisive Sex, Essential Gender," 18; Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*, 154; Jones, "Embracing Inana," 299; Walls, *Desire, Discord, and Death*, 39.

[66] Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare*, 23–25; Jacobsen, "The Gilgamesh Epic," 239; Karahashi & López-Ruiz, "Love Rejected," 102; Lord, "Gilgamesh and Other Epics," 372; Wolff, *A Study in the Narrative Structure*, 85. Lord

helpless.[67] Through her marriage offer Ishtar has inverted the gender roles and values that she and Gilgamesh would have been expected to fill. This however leads to a secondary inversion of expectations; it would not have been expected for Gilgamesh, a mortal, to reject the goddess.[68] However, her act of threatening his masculinity and placing Gilgamesh in the feminine role could be a contributing factor in his rejection. By rejecting her and inverting the expected way to respond to a goddess, Gilgamesh reasserts his authority and begins to reclaim his threatened masculinity.[69] He pushes back against Ishtar the change agent by refusing her plans for him and embracing his own desires.

Conclusion

In summary, the general features of the scene depict a woman approaching the hero with a proposal that he rejects causing the woman to leave. The specifics are that Ishtar is a subversive change agent, and her goal is to overpower Gilgamesh by threatening his heroic masculinity. She asserts herself into the liminal period of his rite of passage and proposes a new trajectory, to become her husband. Although the offer looks appealing on the surface, Gilgamesh's reply reveals that the offer is not what it appears. He knows that her destructive nature will overpower him in the end. Ishtar's proposal threatens Gilgamesh's heroic valor, so he vehemently refuses the offer and insults the goddess.

The scene fits into the epic's overall coming-of-age theme. Ishtar interjects herself into Gilgamesh's rite of passage, by which he is preparing to return to his role of king

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[67] Walls, *Desire, Discord, and Death*, 40.

[68] Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal," 147; Harris, "Images of Women," 227.

[69] Miller & Wheeler, "Mother Goddess and Consort," 90; Walls, *Desire, Discord, and Death*, 40.

after battle. Ishtar exploits this vulnerable, liminal moment to present her proposal which has the potential to function as a new rite of passage for Gilgamesh. She would provide him a way to come of age and accept his role as king by marrying her. Although Gilgamesh refuses to come of age in this manner and rejects the goddess' offer, the scene still functions a transition moment for Gilgamesh. His encounter with Ishtar directly results in a change of path for Gilgamesh as he desperately searches for immorality.

CHAPTER 5
THE EGYPTIAN STORY: BATA AND HIS BROTHER'S WIFE

The Papyrus D'Orbiney contains the story of Bata and Anubis, which is often touted as the oldest fairy tale in the world. This story, known as the *The Tale of Two Brothers*, is dated to the Egyptian 19th dynasty and recounts the adventures of the two brothers Bata and Anubis. The story goes like this: Bata resides in the home of his older brother Anubis and his wife. The three form a family unit, in which Bata serves as a son by working in the fields and completing other household chores. Bata is described as a good worker, unlike any other. The evidence of his good work is displayed in the livestock and crops which prosper under his care. The ebb and flow of daily agrarian life is broken by a minor crisis: the brothers run out of seed while planting. Anubis sends Bata to get more seed and while on his way to get the seed, Bata meets Anubis' wife who is braiding her hair. As he leaves with the seed, the wife approaches Bata and proposes that they lay down to presumably engage in wanton sexual behavior. Bata rejects the offer and returns in a storm of anger to his work in the fields. Terrified from Bata's reaction, the wife takes fat and makes herself look like the victim of an attack. When Anubis returns home, he finds his wife looking as if she was beaten. She tells Anubis that Bata attempted to seduce her and beat her when she refused. Anubis believes his wife's tale and seeks vengeance against his brother.

Warned of his brother's anger, Bata flees and prays to Pre-Harakhty, who creates a crocodile infested river to separate the two brothers and protect Bata. Bata declares he is innocent and reprimands his brother for not hearing him out before seeking justice. To further demonstrate his innocence, Bata takes a knife and emasculates himself throwing his phallus into the river where a fish devours it. After this, Bata declares he will no longer reside with his brother but will live in the Valley of the Pine. However, Bata tells his brother that he will place his heart on the top of a pine tree and when it is cut down Anubis will know Bata has died and he should go and find the heart to revive Bata. The brothers then part ways. Upon returning home, Anubis seeks vengeance on his wife by killing her and then he mourns for his brother.

Bata thrives in the Valley of the Pine and the gods create a beautiful wife for Bata to end his solitude. Bata warns his wife to stay away from the sea while he is out hunting; but she disregards his warning, and through a series of events, she is brought to Egypt and becomes the wife of pharaoh. The pharaoh inquires after Bata and she discloses that his heart resides in the pine tree and cutting down the pine tree would kill Bata. So that is exactly what pharaoh did, leaving Bata dead.

After being made aware of Bata's death, Anubis seeks out Bata's heart, places it in water, and resurrects Bata in the form of a bull. After arriving in Egypt to avenge his death, Bata speaks with his wife while still in the form of a bull. Frightened from the conversation, she asks that the bull be killed for a feast. During the slaughter, two drops of its blood fall upon the door posts causing them to grow into large trees. Bata speaks with his wife from the trees and in response she asks that the two trees be cut down and made into furniture. While crafting the furniture, a splinter of the tree flew into the mouth

of Bata's wife, she became pregnant, and gave birth to a son, who was Bata. Bata was appointed the Royal Son of Kush and became king of Egypt. As king, he bought justice to his wife and appointed his older brother Anubis as his heir. The tale concludes with a colophon citing the scribe Inna as the author and threatening that anyone who speaks against the manuscript will become an enemy of the god Thoth.

There is much to discuss in this complex tale and many studies focus on the mythical elements of the text of which there are plenty. This analysis will focus on the interaction between Bata and Anubis' wife at the beginning of the tale. Select sections of the scene will be translated throughout the analysis; a full translation of the scene is provided the appendix.[1]

General Elements of the Scene

The scene proper is contained in 3,4 – 4,2. The scene is delimited by the consistency of location and characters present. In this case, the scene takes place in the house and there are two characters, namely, the man and the woman. The scene has five events and opens with the woman posing a general question to the man, which he answers in the second event. In the third event, the woman makes a proposition to the man which he rejects in the fourth event. After rejecting the woman, the man leaves in the fifth event and concludes the scene by triggering a change in narrative location.

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[1] The text utilized for this story follows that found in Alan Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 1 (Bruxelles: Foundation Égyptologique Reine Élisabath, 1932); Charles E. Moldenke, *The Tale of the Two Brothers: A Fairy Tale of Ancient Egypt* (Watchung NJ: The Elsinore Press, 1898).

Table 3. General elements of the scene from P. D'Orbiney 3,4 – 4,2.

Event	Line	Description
Event 1	3,4	Woman approaches man with a question
Event 2	3,5	Man replies
Event 3	3,5 – 3,8	Woman approaches man with a proposition
Event 4	3,8 – 4,1	Man rejects woman
Event 5	4,2	Man leaves

Specific Elements of the Scene

Although the scene begins in line 3,4, the opening lines of the story are crucial in understanding the relationship between the various characters. The beginning of the story introduces two brothers: Bata and Anubis.[2] Anubis is the elder brother, and he has a wife and is the head of his household. Bata, the younger brother, resides with Anubis and his wife and fills the role of son (*mj sḫr šrj*). There is no mention that Anubis and his wife have any other children. Thus, Bata may be fulfilling in the role of son because the couple has no other son. Bata's realm of responsibility within the household is wide and diverse: he makes clothing, tends the cattle, ploughs the field, and does other fieldwork. The breadth of his responsibilities further supports the idea that Bata may be filling the role of only child in the life of Anubis and his wife. Moreover, at the least Bata's vast responsibilities testify to his integral role in the life of the household.

[2] The divine determinative on their names suggests the brothers are correlated to Egyptian gods; thus, some analyses of the tale have focused upon the nature of these two individuals as deities and their relationship to other myths. Though insightful, this area of research is not relevant for this study. For information on the identity of Bata and Anubis as deities see, Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers:" A Mythological, Religious, Literary, and Historico-Political Study*, 2nd ed. (Oakville, CT: Bannerstone Press, 2008), 47–87.

Although Anubis is the older brother and the family patriarch, the beginning of the tale identifies Bata as the protagonist. After detailing Bata's various responsibilities, the narrator notes that there was no other worker in all the land as good as Bata. The narrator goes on to describe his strength like that of a god. The uniqueness of Bata's qualities and the attention the narrator gives to Bata at the beginning of the tale indicate he will be a key character as the plot unfolds. The wide variety of work and the skill that Bata possesses prompted Wolfgang Wettengel to describe Bata as a cultural hero.[3] Thus, Bata is the protagonist or hero in our scene of interest.

The scene commences in line 3,4 with Anubis' wife posing a question to Bata, asking how much grain he is carrying. This opening action provides two pieces of information about the scene. First, Anubis' wife is the main actor in the scene because she is the character who initiates the action and drives the scene forward even though Bata is the protagonist. Secondly, her question indicates that this scene is embedded in the larger scene that begins in line 2,9. Given the relationship between the two scenes, we will briefly turn our attention to that larger scene.

This larger scene begins with the two brothers out ploughing the fields in preparation for planting when they run out of seeds, so Anubis sends Bata back to the storehouse to obtain more seeds. This scene can be described as having four general actions, Anubis sends Bata to get seeds, Bata goes to get seed, Bata finds the seed, and Bata returns with the seeds. However, it is while he is looking for the seeds that Bata encounters Anubis' wife and a secondary set of actions takes place. Thus, the encounter

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[3] Wolfgang Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern: Der Papyrus d'Orbiney und die Königsideologie der Ramessiden*, OBO 195 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 34.

with Anubis' wife interrupts Bata's search for more seed and the results of the two events run parallel to one another.[4] This broader scene, in which the encounter with the woman is embedded, provides the context and the reason for the encounter: the lack of seed sends Bata into the house during the day to gather more supplies for his work.

At the initial encounter, Bata speaks first and asks the woman to give him more seed since his older brother sent him. The woman then tells him to go into the storehouse and get it himself because she is occupied with her hair. As Bata goes to retrieve the grain, the narrator provides insight into Bata's plan stating that:

(3,3)… jw jb.f r jṯ prt qnj It was in his heart to carry off much grain.

Although we know that Bata intends to get a large supply of grain, we are left in the dark concerning his motivations for this intention. Does he want to get a large supply of grain because, as a worker who is better than all others, it is in his nature to exceed expectations? Or does he want to impress his brother or even impress his brother's wife by the amount of grain that he can carry? The narrator leaves the question of his intentions unanswered as Bata gathers the grain and leaves. As Bata leaves the storehouse and encounters the wife of Anubis again, the embedded scene of the interaction begins.[5]

As we return to the scene in 3,4 – 4,2, there are two pieces of information from the preceding portion of the larger scene that have import in this embedded scene. First,

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[4] Jan Assmann, "Das Ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen (Papyrus d'Orbiney)," *ZÄS* 104 (1977): 1–25.

[5] Beginning the scene here in 3,4 rather than at the first encounter with the woman in 3,2 follows the guidelines for scene selection this study, specifically the singularity of location. Since Bata leaves the room to enter the storehouse after their initial interaction that will be counted as a separate scene. It functions as stage setting for the core interaction, but it is not part of the scene proper because there is still movement of characters between two different locations.

we are told that Bata was planning on getting a large supply of grain so we have context for why the woman would proceed to ask him how much stuff he is carrying. Without this information it seems strange that she would start a conversation in this way, but in the broader context her question seems valid. Second, we have suspicions concerning the sensual nature of the scene. When Bata first encounters Anubis' wife, she is tending to her hair. In Egyptian culture, a woman's hair is directly tied to her erotic nature and is often a point of sexual attraction.[6] At the least, by stumbling upon the wife while she is tending to her hair, Bata has found her during a private moment creating a level of tension between the characters because Bata would not typically be there at this time. The hair could also function to foreshadow the attempted seduction that is soon to follow.[7]

In the first event of the scene, the woman questions Bata concerning how much grain he is carrying. Based upon the nonchalant way that she sent him into the storehouse, we have little reason to believe she is actually concerned with documenting the amount of grain. Rather, it seems that she is assessing Bata's strength. Right before her question, the narrator discloses that Bata was loaded down with the amount of grain he was carrying. He was pressed to the limits of his strength, which did not go unnoticed by Anubis' wife. In a statement of fact, Bata answers her question. He had three bushels of spelt and two bushels of barley for a total of five. The woman then speaks again stating:

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[6] Philippe Derchain, "La Perruque et Le Cristal," *Studien Zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 2 (1975): 55–74; Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers,"* 95; Gay Robins, "Hair and the Construction of Identity in Ancient Egypt c. 1480-1350 B.C.," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 36 (1999): 55–69. Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 57.

[7] Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers,"* 95.

wn pḥ.tj (3,6) ꜥ3 jm.k	"Great strength is in you,
ḫr-tw.j ḥr ptr nꜣy.k ṯnr m-mnt	and I am seeing your strength daily."

This statement confirms that Anubis' wife was not concerned with the exact amount of grain that Bata was carrying, rather she was assessing him and his strength.

In the first dialogue, the narrator employs an interesting framing technique to draw a distinction between this first interaction and the second. In line 3,4 the narrator chooses one of the typical constructions for introducing direct speech for both the question of Anubis' wife and Bata's reply.[8] However, in line 3,5 after Bata's statement, the narrator also includes a closing statement.

(3,4) wn jn.s ḏd n.f…	Then she spoke to him…
wn jn.f ḏd n.s…	Then he spoke to her….
(3,5)…jy nf ḥr ḏd n.s.	Thus, he spoke to her.

The use of both an introductory and concluding remark for identifying direct speech is an atypical form in Egyptian.[9] As an atypical form there is little evidence for why it is here, but stylistically it may signal to the audience something of the nature of the following interaction.[10] Fintz Hintze suggests that it may express a sort of "emotional participation" on the part of the narrator, who sees this part as particularly dramatic or exciting.[11]

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[8] James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 318–20; James E. Hoch, *Middle Egyptian Grammar*, SSEA 15 (Mississauga: Benben Publications, 1997), 221–22; Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 174.

[9] Allen notes that direct quotations are usually introduced, as seen in P. D'Orbiney. Occasionally the reference to the speaker is after the quotation, but the two are not used together. Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, 318–20; Fritz Hintze, *Untersuchungen Zu Stil Und Sprache Neuägyptischer Erzählungen*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952), 168.

[10] Fritz Hintze, *Untersuchungen Zu Stil Und Sprache Neuägyptischer Erzählungen*, vol.1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1950), 2.

[11] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 168.

Contextually, the narrator could be signaling Bata's desire to end the conversation. Bata is loaded down with grain and his only goal at this moment is to return to the field and continue his work. He does not have time to engage in conversation with Anubis' wife, so he answers her question curtly and is ready to move on. Interestingly, this speech frame, which concludes Bata's first speech, triggers the use of a new, longer introductory formula within the narrative. When both the woman and Bata speak a second time, the narrator introduces their speech with the phrase:

(3,5)…wn jn.s ḥr zdt mdy.f m ḏd…	Then she spoke with reference to him with the words…
(3,9)…wn jn.f ḥr zdt mdy.s m ḏd…	The he spoke with reference to her with the words…

After the conclusion of this scene the narrator returns to using the shorter, more typical construction for direct speech, *wn jn.PRON ḏd n.PRON* (Then PRON spoke to PRON). Allen Gardiner suggests that the use of *m ḏd* at the end of the line, as in 3,5 and 3,9, rather than *r ḏd* is used for insistence upon the exact wording of a statement.[12] If this is the case, the narrator could be using this change in introductory formula to underscore that this is how the seduction interaction actually happened because later in the narrative the woman distorts the story to suit her needs. These longer introductions in lines 3,5 and 3,9 also set this second section of the scene apart from the first by highlighting and drawing attention to the stark difference between the two interactions. In her first speech, the woman questions Bata concerning the amount of grain he has. In her second speech

[12] Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 174.

there is a shift in tone; the woman is no longer asking a question of Bata, rather she asserts herself over him with her proposal that they lie down together. The encounter is no longer an innocent conversation between Bata and the mistress of the household but rather is a sexual, taboo encounter between a man and someone else's wife. The change in narrative framing signals to the reader that the nature of the scene has changed.

After the woman states her observations about Bata's great strength and before her proposition, the narrator interrupts the scene to grant the audience insight into the woman's mind. The narrator states:

(3.6) … jw jb.s r rḫ.f	It was in her heart to know him,
m rḫ n ꜥḥ3w.tj	as one knows a man.
wn jn.s ḥr (3,7) ꜥḥꜥ	Then she rose.
jw.s mḥ jm.f	She was enamored with him.

This assessment informs the audience that her previous observations about Bata's strength are not objective facts but are statements about her desire. Bata's strength is an attractive quality, drawing her in and igniting her desire. Fritz Hintze notes that her use of the verb *rḫ* "to know" is euphemistic here, but also that this is an unusual form of the euphemism because typically the masculine entity is the subject of the verb and the feminine is the object or recipient of the action.[13] Therefore, the narrator could be implying that by asserting herself over Bata she is overstepping her bounds by taking on a masculine role in this situation. In this context, her next statements are to be understood as her attempt to satisfy her desire.

(3,7)… jw.s ḏd n.f	She was speaking to him,
mꜥj jry.n n.n wnwt sḏr.w	"Come, let us make for ourselves an hour to recline.

[13] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*," 78.

ꜣḫ n.k pꜣy	This will be good for you.
kꜣ jry.j (3,8) n.k ḥbsw ntf.w	Certainly, I will make good clothes for you."

Based upon the euphemistic use of *rḫ* and her desire for Bata, the woman's proposal that they make time to recline implies a sexual activity, not a time for Bata to rest his weary muscles (he may still be holding all his grain). Her offer to make clothing for him is interesting because earlier in the narrative making clothing was one of Bata's household duties. Traditionally, textiles and making clothing was woman's work in Egyptian culture.[14] Keeping the household in order was the duty of the mistress of the house, and a sign of a good wife was that she had everything in order.[15] Thus, the offer to make clothing could be a way to indicate that she will keep the house in order by making certain Bata has nice clothing to wear. Furthermore, Anubis' wife may be offering more than just a one-time fling; she may be offering a marital relationship with Bata. Either way her offer is inappropriate, and Bata responds in kind. Bata becomes enraged. The narrator describes Bata's anger as that of a southern panther, and notes that his anger causes fear in the woman. The narrator also specifically indicates that it is the woman's "bad speech" (*smj bjn*) that has caused this animalistic outburst.

After the narrator describes Bata's reaction to the proposal, Bata gives a verbal rejection stating:

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[14] Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 103–104; Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 32.

[15] Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 176. Robins specifically cites the wisdom text *Instruction of Any* to indicate that a well-ordered house was a sign of a good wife. The text states, "Do not control your wife in her house when you know she is efficient. Do not say to her: 'Where is it? Get it!' When she has put it in the right place."

ḫr mᶜk tw.j (3,10) mdy.y m sḫr n mwt	"Now to me, you are like a mother.
ḫr pȝy.t hȝy mdy.y m sḫr jtf	As for your husband, he is to me like a father.
ḫr pȝ ᶜȝ r.j mnt.f sḫpr.y	For he is older than me and he supported me.
jḫ (4,1) pȝy btȝw ᶜȝ j.ḏd n.j	Oh! This great wickedness which you have spoken to me,
m jr ḏd.f n.j ᶜn	Do not speak to me again.
ḫr nn jw.j r.ḏd f n wᶜn	For I am not going to speak to one person,
ḫr bn jw.j r dj.t pr.f m rȝ.j n rmṯ (4,2) nb	I am not going to let it come out from my mouth."

Bata's reasoning for rejecting the offer is the nature of his relationship with his brother. Bata views his older brother as a father figure and his brother's wife as a mother figure because his older brother has provided for him as a father would. So not only would it be wrong to engage in such an act with one's mother, Bata would also offend his "father" who has provided for him.[16] Bata is loyal to his position within the household, so he is appalled that the wife and mistress of the house would be willing to disrupt the social order of the house.

The fictive familial relationship between these characters is described at the beginning of the story. However, this is the only other context where this relationship is mentioned. Prior to the scene, Bata and Anubis' relationship is described in terms of brotherhood. Yet, this moment of crisis demonstrates that their fictive father-son relationship is prioritized over their brother relationship.[17] Bata's relational responsibility as son causes him to respond in anger to the woman, who is less concerned about her role as mother.

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[16] Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 68–69.

[17] Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 34.

After insuring no one will find out what happened in the storehouse entrance, Bata takes the grain and returns to the field. As Bata leaves, the scene ends due to the change in location.

Position of the Scene within the Tale

As noted previously, the scene of interest begins in line 3,4 when Anubis' wife approaches Bata. However, the scene is embedded within a larger scene beginning in line 2,9 which is about the lack of seed while the brothers are sowing the field. The scene has been limited to lines 3,4–4,2 based upon the singularity of narrative location and consistency of characters. Thus, the location change at the beginning and end distinguish this scene from the surrounding events.

Jan Assmann and Wolfgang Wettengel both offer narrative analyses of this text, and they both define the scene based upon the red ink within the text.[18] Throughout Papyrus D'Orbiney certain phrases are written in red ink, a deviation from the typical black ink. The use of duo-tone ink is a common practice in Egyptian literature, in which the red ink serves as punctuation notation in poetic texts.[19] In narratives, what the red ink indicates is less certain, but it may be used to mark paragraph breaks, highlight certain phrases, or differentiate the text in some other way.[20] By interpreting the red ink to denote a new section of the tale, Assmann and Wettengel have identified 24 "rubrums" or

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[18] Assmann, "Das Ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen," 5; Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von Den beiden Brüdern*, 29.

[19] Georges Posener, "Sur l'Emploi de l'Encre Rouge Dans Les Manuscrits Égyptiens," *JEA* 37 (1951): 75–80.

[20] Posener, "Sur l'Emploi de l'Encre Rouge" 77.

chapters in the tale. Wettengel connects these twenty-four sections to the 24-hour day and the movement of the sun in order to connect the narrative to Egyptian solar worship.[21] Assmann points out that the sections according to the red lettering are not even; therefore, he states that the red lettering is a temporal marker throughout the narrative and the broader narrative structure should be understood based upon the change in location from Egypt to the Cedar Forest and then back to Egypt.[22]

In his style analysis of the text, Fritz Hintze also examines the divisions within the text based upon the red lettering.[23] He notices that the text written in red ink often includes the phrase *ḫr ir mht*, "after this." This formula is commonly used in Egyptian narrative literature to indicate a new event that occurs some unspecified amount of time after the previous section of narrative.[24] Along with this narrative formula, there are two other formulas that are frequently used to introduce new events in narrative: *ʿḥʿn sḏm.n.f* and *wnjn.f ḥr sḏm*.[25] Hintze notes that originally the *ʿḥʿn sḏm.n.f* formula was used to introduce a new event that was not a direct consequence of the previous events.[26] Thus, it typically indicated a new chain of events. In contrast, the narrative formula *wnjn.f ḥr sḏm* was used to signify an event that functions as the conclusion of a chain of events.[27]

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[21] Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von Den beiden Brüdern*, 191–93.

[22] Jan Assmann, "Textanalyse Auf Verschiedenen Ebenen: Zum Problem Der Einheit Des Papyrus d'Orbiney," in *XIX. Deutscher Orientalistentag Vom 28. September Bis 4. Oktober 1972*, ZDMGSup 3 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 1–15.

[23] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 7, 21.

[24] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 26.

[25] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 31.

[26] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 34.

[27] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 34.

Although Papyrus D'Orbiney utilizes the *ʿḥʿn sḏm.n.f* formula, the *wnjn.f ḫr sḏm* formula dominates. Hintze notes that the *wnjn.f ḫr sḏm* formula is preferred in later literature and there is an emptying of these stereotypical formulas by which the two collapse together in meaning and are used generally to introduce a new action.[28]

Based upon the macrostructure of the tale which follows the twenty-four rubrums, the encounter between Bata and Anubis' wife begins in line 2,7 with *ḫr ir mht* written in red ink. This depicts the encounter as a side development within the sequence of events directed toward solving the problem of insufficient grain. However, the phrase *wnjn.f* is also written in red and subdivides these large rubrums into smaller actions.[29] In this specific section, 2,7–4,2, the phrase *wnjn.f* occurs in lines 2,8; 2,10; 3,1; 3,2; 3,4; 3,5; 3,6; 3,8; 3,9; 4,2. Thus, the encounter with Anubis' wife is introduced in 3,4 with *wnjn* written in red ink. Each subsequent event within the scene is also introduced by *wnjn*: 3,4 the woman approaches the man (*wnjn.s)*; 3,5 the man replies (*wnjn.f*); 3,5 the woman approaches the man with proposition (*wnjn.s*); 3,9 the man rejects the woman (*wnjn.f*); and 4,2 the man leaves (*wnjn.f*). These narrative framing devices indicate the author of Papyrus D'Orbiney intended the encounter to be understood within its broader context while still maintaining the scene as a significant event in its own right.

Considering the narrative arc of the tale, the encounter between Bata and Anubis' wife functions as a pivotal moment because it introduces a conflict into the tale. Prior to this moment, the narrative presents an idyllic life. The three characters live together in harmony, carrying out their various household duties. Bata's encounter with Anubis' wife

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[28] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 34.

[29] Assmann, "Textanalyse auf verschiedenen Ebenen," 2.

breaks that harmony by straining the relationships between the three characters.[30] The encounter introduces the elements of anger and fear as motivating factors. In his anger, Bata vows that he will not tell anyone what happened and commands the woman to do the same. In her fear, the woman disregards Bata's command and manipulates the situation so that her husband thinks that Bata is the one who attempted to seduce her. Their encounter and respective reactions trigger the sequence of events that follow. It is the wife's manipulation that causes Anubis' anger and his pursuit of Bata. Anubis' reaction causes Bata to flee, and so on as the narrative unfolds. Thus, this one interaction between two characters functions as a catalyst for the entire story by breaking the peaceful situation and creating a conflict that requires a resolution.

The resolution comes as Bata journeys from living with his family and working in the field, to the Cedar Forest, and then to Egypt where he becomes king. Bata's journey to kingship is frequently described as a coming-of-age tale, or a rite of passage.[31] A rite of passage involves a time of separation, a time of transition, and a time of incorporation.[32] The story arc of *The Tale of Two Brothers* follows this three-fold pattern. Initially, Bata resides in Egypt with his brother and sister-in-law. However, he leaves this situation after his encounter with Anubis' wife. When he leaves Egypt, Bata takes up

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[30] Assmann, "Das ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen," 19; Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers,"* 94; Martin Pehal, *Interpreting Ancient Egyptian Narratives: A Structural Analysis of the Tale of Two Brothers, The Anat Myth, The Osirian Cycle, and the Astarte Papyrus* (Brussels: EME, 2014), 89.

[31] Assmann, "Das ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen," 24; Susan Tower Hollis, "The Woman in Ancient Examples of the Potiphar's Wife Motif K2111," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 28–42; Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers,"* 190; Pascale Marie Teysseire, "The Portrayal of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Tale" (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1998), 165; Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 64.

[32] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika A. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11.

residence in the Cedar Forest for a time of separation. In this time, Bata is isolated from his former life and stripped of his identity as "son" and best worker. Through his isolation, Bata enters into a time of transition as he builds a new life for himself. Finally, at the end of the tale Bata returns to Egypt and is reincorporated into civilization with a new identity as the king with his brother serving as his heir. Bata's encounter with Anubis' wife functions as the catalyst for Bata's rite of passage. This scene disrupts the social balance in the family, creates the crisis that sends Bata into the Cedar Forest, and initiates his time of separation.

In his assessment of the tale, Thomas Schneider concludes that the tale is concerned with political ideology; thus, its purpose is to legitimize a new model of kingship in Egypt.[33] This new model is one "of royal coexistence and consecutive succession of collateral relatives – as opposed to the traditional Egyptian model that only allowed a king to be succeeded by his son."[34] If the purpose of the tale is concerned only with kingship, then the encounter with Anubis' wife has little function in the narrative arc, other than as the catalyst for the rite of passage. When seeking a catalyst, the writer of the tale could have used a variety of tension creating actions. Thus, the choice of the attempted seduction by the woman as the catalyst is significant. Interpreting the encounter with Anubis' wife as the beginning his rite of passage sets Bata up as the hero who has overcome the temptation of the woman and gives the woman a critical role in Bata's journey, to which we will now turn.

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[33] Thomas Schneider, "Innovation in Literature on Behalf of Politics: The Tale of Two Brothers, Ugarit, and 19th Dynasty History," *AeL* 18 (2008): 315–26.

[34] Schneider, "Innovation in Literature," 320.

Role of Anubis' Wife in the Scene

Since she is left unnamed, Anubis' wife is easily overlooked as a minor character of little importance. However, she has a critical role in the narrative and is the main actor in the scene. In this scene, Anubis' wife is the first person to act and she initiates the sequence of events which follows. If she had not spoken to Bata, he would have taken the grain out to the field and the narrative would have continued along in its idyllic state. Her short tenure in the narrative is crucial and has a long-lasting effect on the outcome of the story.

In his analysis of the story, Assmann categorizes actions as either intentional or reactive.[35] Assmann defines intentional actions as those which drive the narrative action forward, while reactive actions are defined as actions that give the narrator space to explore the motivations and characterization of the actor. [36] Since the narrator provides insight into the woman's thoughts, Assmann classifies the woman's actions as reactive. She is presented with the temptation of Bata as he passed by with the grain, giving her two options: either resist temptation or succumb to it.[37] However, I think Assmann's two categories create a false dichotomy between the types of actions a character can take. Although the narrative provides insight into the woman's thoughts, her action drives the narrative forward; thus, it could be perceived as an intentional action as well as a reactive one. Assmann's assessment of the woman succumbing to temptation paints her as a

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[35] Assmann, "Das ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen," 13.

[36] Assmann, "Das ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen," 16.

[37] Assmann, "Das ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen," 15–16.

victim of her own desires; however, the narrator's description of her desires portray her as a woman who knows what she wants and actively chooses to pursue it.

The beginning of the narrative describes the woman as part of the fictive mother-son relationship. She appears to be aware of the relationship because at the beginning of the tale she sits at the table with her husband while Bata serves them food. Her attempted seduction disrupts this balance. Since she is aware of the balance and pursues Bata anyway, her actions demonstrate a level of disregard for the social order and the establishment of the family.[38] Thus, the woman is depicted as a creator of chaos. Her status as an unnamed character invites the audience to generalize her and to view her as representative of all women and thus evaluate her based upon Egyptian expectations for women.[39] These expectations are derived from the Egyptian view of goddesses.

In the pantheon, Isis exemplifies the ideal wife and mother while Hathor represents the embodiment of female sexuality.[40] Hathor is often depicted as having a dual nature: due to her role within the realm of fertility and birth she is depicted as benevolent and life-giving; but she was also considered dangerous because she is capable of bringing great destruction.[41] This dual nature is frequently applied to women, creating a sense of both allure and caution surrounding them.[42] Hathor's seemingly contrasting

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[38] Teysseire, "The Portrayal of Women," 77.

[39] Sally L. D. Katary, "The Two Brothers as Folktale: Constructing the Social Context," *JSSEA* 14 (1994): 39–70; Pehal, *Interpreting Ancient Egyptian Narratives*, 121–22.

[40] Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 18.

[41] Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 18.

[42] Katary, "The Two Brothers as Folktale," 53; Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 18; Teysseire, "The Portrayal of Women," 45, 107.

traits derive from her balance between life and death. Thus, her destructive nature is not described as a force of evil, but rather as a counterbalance to life.[43] This does not seem to hold up for Anubis' wife. She is not presented as the counterbalance to life but rather as a character who embodies lust, ambition, and deception.[44] The plotting, deceptive character of Anubis' wife prompted Sally Katary to provide this assessment of the women in the tale: "The wives of Anubis and Bata do not in fact embody essential Hathoric traits, but rather serve to indicate what *can happen*, even in the case of a divinely created being, when Hathoric traits get out of control."[45] By taking the darker side of Hathor and distorting it in the image of Anubis' wife, the author presents the woman as someone to avoid and be weary of. She becomes the contrast to Bata, who represents purity and nobility of heart as he serves his brother with great skill and resists temptation and immorality.

As the embodiment of out-of-control Hathoric power, Anubis' wife is a herald of destruction in the tale.[46] She brings three types of destruction in the tale. First, she destroys the social structure of the family.[47] The family is only capable of functioning properly when everyone fulfills their respective roles. As the mother and mistress of the house, the wife has a responsibility to the well-being of the household. However, she

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[43] Katary, "The Two Brothers as Folktale," 53.

[44] Teysseire, "The Portrayal of Women," 66.

[45] Katary, "The Two Brothers as Folktale," 54.

[46] Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 212.

[47] Teysseire, "The Portrayal of Women," 77.

neglects this role by busying herself with her cosmetics and pursuing an inappropriate relationship with Bata.

Secondly, she destroys Bata's self-identity as a masculine figure. From the outset of the tale, Bata is presented as a hyper-masculine character. He is described as having the strength of a god and he brings fertility to the livestock in his care.[48] He is also described as a physically attractive individual, which is most clearly demonstrated by the wife's lust for him. Anubis' wife intentionally subverts Bata's masculinity in her approach of him. By taking the initiative and making a sexual advance toward Bata, the woman takes control of the situation and assumes the typically masculine position of power. Hintze further supports this by noting the idiomatic phrase "to know someone" expects a masculine subject.[49] When the woman approaches Bata, she threatens him on two fronts: socially she threatens his position within the household; and personally, she threatens his masculine position of power and authority. The woman also unintentionally destroys Bata's masculinity because her advancement and lie directly lead to Bata's self-emasculation: Bata cuts off his phallus in order to prove his innocence which is in question because the woman lied to Anubis. Although the woman may have not intended to emasculate Bata in this way, she directly contributes to this consequence, which removes Bata's strength and renders him a woman.[50]

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[48] Assmann, "Das ägyptische Zweibrüdermärchen", 18, 20; Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers,"* 92.

[49] Hintze, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Sprache*, 78.

[50] After Bata emasculates himself, the narrator informs the audience in line 8,1 that Bata became weak and feeble. Later in the narrative, while he is residing in the Cedar Forest, Bata informs his wife in line 10,2 that he is unable to protect her from the threat of the sea because he is a woman like her.

Finally, the woman brings about her own destruction. Her death comes at the hand of her husband as a result of her own actions. Anubis kills his wife in an act of justice for her attempted seduction of Bata. His anger was first directed at Bata, assuming that it was his fault, but once he discovered that his wife lied and it was all her fault, he turned his anger to her. Out of all the destruction the woman brings, the first two types — destruction of the household and threatening Bata's masculinity — are intentional actions. In her choice to seduce Bata, she knew she was bringing destruction. The second two types, destruction of Bata's masculinity and her self-destruction, were unforeseen consequences. She could not have foreseen these final destructions, but they are directly related to her choice to pursue Bata. Thus, the woman is best described as creator of chaos and bringer of destruction.

Although she is characterized as a negative, destructive character, Anubis' wife is crucial to the story. She creates chaos in the family structure, but that chaos is what pushes Bata into his time of separation and begins his rite of passage, which is narrated throughout the tale as his social status changes and he rises to kingship. Thus, she is a mediatory figure who launches Bata on his rite of passage and journey to kingship. Without her Bata would not have become king. Thus, she is Bata's aid in his rite of passage in the form of the temptation that he must overcome and destruction that he must avoid.

Conclusion

In general, the scene can be described as a woman approaches a man and he refuses her offer. More specifically, the woman exerts a display of power by approaching Bata and

proposing they engage in inappropriate sexual behavior. By making this advance the woman demonstrates a level of indifference or even disdain for the established social equilibrium of her household by undermining her role as wife and mother and asking Bata to disregard his role as brother and son. Her actions introduce conflict into the tale and bring destruction to the family unit, the man, and herself. However, this scene plays a crucial role in the plot of the tale. The woman's advancement and subsequent lie are the catalyst for Bata's rite of passage. The following events of the narrative follow Bata through his time of isolation, transition, and ultimately his incorporation back into Egyptian society as the king. Therefore, this scene is the first trial the hero must overcome on his journey to greatness.

Excursus: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

The parallels between the events in *The Tale of Two Brothers* and the events in the biblical Joseph narrative are striking. Since the two narratives are so similar and the Potiphar's Wife Motif is named after the Joseph narrative, it is prudent that we take a brief look at the Genesis account.

The narrative scene is located in Gen 39:7–12 and contains six events. The general events are described below.

Table 4. General elements of the scene from Gen 39:7–12

Event	Line	Description
Event 1	39:7	Woman approaches man
Event 2	39:8–9	Man refuses
Event 3	39:10	Woman continuously approaches man
Event 4	39:10	Man continuously refuses
Event 5	39:11–12a	Woman approaches man
Event 6	39:12b	Man flees

Although the number of general events differ from that in *The Tale of Two Brothers*, the general events are similar in that a woman approaches a man with a sexual proposition and the man refuses, which eventually leads to the man fleeing the situation.

As we turn to the specifics of the Genesis account, the similarities with *The Tale of Two Brothers* become clearer. Joseph has become a servant in the house of Potiphar and has full charge over everything in the household. Although Joseph has no familial ties to Potiphar like Bata and Anubis, Joseph, like Bata, has great responsibility in the house while remaining subordinate to the head of the household.[51]

[51] Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 34.

Although Joseph is the hero and main character of the narrative, he is the not main actor in the scene. The woman is the main actor and the initiator of events. She first approaches Joseph and proposes they lie together. In the act of approaching Joseph, the woman attempts to place herself in a position of control over Joseph by trying to get him to bend to her will. As Robert Longacre states, by her proposal she "makes the initial thrust in the verbal duel and Joseph is obliged to parry that thrust the best he can."[52] The narrator of the tale provides two pieces of information in the description of events that demonstrate the unwavering determination of Potiphar's wife.

First, the narrator hints at her desire for Joseph as her motivation for the pursuit. In 39:7 the narrator describes the scene as follows:

וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּשָּׂא אֵשֶׁת־אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ אֶל־יוֹסֵף וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁכְבָה עִמִּי׃	After these things, the wife of his master lifted her eyes to Joseph. She said to him "Lie with me."

In the act of "lifting her eyes," Potiphar's wife gazes upon Joseph and takes notice of him. In the previous verses, which describe Joseph's current situation, the narrator describes Joseph's success by the hand of God and his attractiveness.[53] Therefore, the narrator implies that, in gazing upon Joseph, Potiphar's wife sees his beauty and success, which generates a sense of urgent desire in her. Her curt proposition, "lie with me," seems to convey this sense of urgency.[54] Second, the narrator informs the audience in 39:10 that this is not a one-time event; she relentlessly pursues Joseph day after day.

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[52] Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39-48*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 184.

[53] Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1982), 313.

[54] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 91.

וַיְהִי כְּדַבְּרָהּ אֶל־יוֹסֵף יֹום׀ יֹום וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֵלֶיהָ לִשְׁכַּב אֶצְלָהּ לִהְיוֹת עִמָּהּ׃	Thus she spoke to him day after day, but he would not heed her to lie with her nor to be with her.

The narrator informs the audience of the resilience of both characters. Potiphar's wife is fixated on her goal to be with Joseph, while Joseph is firm in his resistance to her.

Joseph's explanation for why he will not acquiesce her request is perceived as quite lengthy in the context of her short request that he lie with her (שִׁכְבָה עִמִּי).[55] In 39:8–9 he states,

וַיְמָאֵן׀ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֵשֶׁת אֲדֹנָיו הֵן אֲדֹנִי לֹא־יָדַע אִתִּי מַה־בַּבַּיִת וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יֶשׁ־לֹו נָתַן בְּיָדִי׃ אֵינֶנּוּ גָדֹול בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה ׀ מִמֶּנִּי וְלֹא־חָשַׂךְ מִמֶּנִּי מְאוּמָה כִּי אִם־אוֹתָךְ בַּאֲשֶׁר אַתְּ־אִשְׁתֹּו וְאֵיךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה הָרָעָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחָטָאתִי לֵאלֹהִים׃	He refused and said to the wife of his master, "Look, in regard to me, my master is not concerned with what is in his house. Everything that belongs to him, he has placed in my responsibility. There is no one greater than me in this house and he has not withheld anything from me expect for you because you are his wife. How could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

Joseph informs her that she and only she is the one thing that Potiphar has said he cannot have free rein over. She is Potiphar's wife and is therefore off limits for Joseph. Joseph also notes the moral issue at hand: by partaking in sexual activity with her, he would be violating the trust of his master, which is such an offensive action to Joseph that he equates it with sinning against God himself.[56] Joseph is loyal to his social position within the household and his loyalty is connected to his morality; thus, in Joseph's eyes to remain loyal is to remain upright.

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[55] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 137; Longacre, *Joseph*, 184, 220–27.

[56] George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt: Structural and Theological Context for the Joseph Story*, CBQMS 4 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976), 21; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 365.

In terms of the broader narrative arc, this scene marks a pivotal moment in Joseph's story. After the initial crisis of being sold by his brothers, Joseph finds success in the house of Potiphar, the man who bought him. The narrator describes Joseph's situation in Potiphar's house as successful and peaceful. Without the exploits of Potiphar's wife, Joseph could remain in Potiphar's house the rest of his days. However, the story of Joseph recounts his rise to power in Pharaoh's court which cannot happen if he remains in Potiphar's house. Therefore, the actions of Potiphar's wife function to break the narrative peace, introduce a conflict, and send Joseph on a trajectory that will lead to his final position in Pharaoh's court.[57]

The entire Joseph narrative functions as a rite of passage or coming-of-age tale, since describes how Joseph experienced a change in status and became second to Pharaoh in Egypt. The story follows the three-fold pattern common in these tales with a time of separation, transition, and incorporation.[58] The scene with Potiphar's wife introduces the narrative conflict that will initiate a time of separation for Joseph and launch his rite of passage to a new, higher social position.[59]

In this process, Potiphar's wife is a generator of conflict and represents the temptation that Joseph must overcome on his journey. As an unnamed character, Potiphar's wife is marginal, yet this marginal woman is crucial to the narrative action. Alan Aycock places her in a line of female characters throughout Genesis who "interpose

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[57] Alan Aycock, "Potiphar's Wife: Prelude to a Structural Exegesis," *Man* 27 (1992): 479–94; J. Robin King, "The Joseph Story and Divine Politics: A Comparative Study of a Biographic Formula from the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 106 (1987): 577–94; Longacre, *Joseph*, 22–23.

[58] van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 11.

[59] Aycock, "Potiphar's Wife," 487; Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers,"* 106; King, "The Joseph Story and Divine Politics," 487.

themselves, willy-nilly, between the aspirations of men and the strictures of God as contrapuntive agents who decentre male covenants and thus render them at least temporarily problematic."[60] Aycock identifies a trend within the book of Genesis by which women are used to represent chaos that men must resist. Potiphar's wife fits this trend because she represents disloyalty and is a temptation Joseph must resist if he is to maintain his image as a loyal, morally upright character.[61]

Although there are some variations in the details of Joseph's story and Bata's tale, the main purpose of the tales is the same. Both men are presented with unwanted sexual advances from taboo women. This encounter functions for both men as the beginning of their rite of passage. The women both place the blame on the men and disrupt the household equilibrium, which results in the men either leaving or being rejected from the home. Their exile from the household unit functions as a rite of separation. The two women remain unnamed, but they are cast as critical characters who send the men on their rise to power. They both function as catalysts for the narrative action because the narrative cannot progress without them.

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[60] Aycock, "Potiphar's Wife," 482.

[61] Gerhard von Rad, "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (London: SCM, 1984), 295. Von Rad notes that Potiphar's wife represents the strange woman against whom proverbial wisdom warns.

CHAPTER 6
SYTHESIS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TALES

Having explored the ANE tales typically associated with the K2111 "Potiphar's Wife" Motif, this chapter will assess and describe the motif as expressed in these three tales. As noted in the first chapter, Delbert Hillers and Susan Tower Hollis have both provided a description of the ANE variation of the "Potiphar's Wife" Motif. They both describe the motif in the following way: a young man is sexually approached by a woman; the man resists the approach, but in the end is punished or killed in a way that features his emasculation and is followed by his final resurrection.[1] However, their description of the motif includes some specifics that are not met in every tale. For example, Anat's approach to Aqhat is not overtly sexual: she wants to obtain his bow. *The Tale of Aqhat* does not include a final resurrection. In the *Tale of Two Brothers*, Bata's punishment and emasculation are self-inflected, creating a different situation than that found in the other tales. Thus, their descriptions of the motif imprecisely account for these three tales. Given that the descriptions proposed by both Hillers and Hollis include scene-specific features not included in every tale, I propose instead a definition of the motif based upon the core

[1] Delbert R. Hillers, "The Bow of Aqhat: The Meaning of a Mythological Theme," in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cryus H. Gordon on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., AOAT 22 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 71–80; Susan Tower Hollis, "The Woman in Ancient Examples of the Potiphar's Wife Motif K2111," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 28–42.

actions, or general elements, of the scene that more precisely describes the ANE expression of the motif as observed in these three tales.

General Elements of the Motif

By comparing the general elements identified in each tale, a unifying trend emerges in the sequence of events. There are two events in the scene that are consistent across each tale: the woman approaches the hero, and the hero rejects the woman. At their core, each of these three scenes depict an encounter between the hero and a woman.

Table 5. General elements of the three ANE tales

The Tale of Aqhat	The Gilgamesh Epic	The Tale of Two Brothers
Event 1: woman approaches hero	Event 1: woman approaches hero	Event 1: woman approaches hero
Event 2: hero rejects woman	Event 2: hero rejects woman	Event 2: hero replies
Event 3: woman approaches hero	Event 3: woman rejects hero and leaves	Event 3: woman approaches hero
Event 4: hero rejects woman		Event 4: hero rejects woman
Event 5: woman rejects hero and leaves		Event 5: hero leaves

The approach by the woman is the opening event of each scene. In her approach, the woman presents a proposition to the man. The only variation in this pattern is the *Tale of Two Brothers*. In this case, the woman presents her proposition in the second approach, event three; while in the initial approach, she starts the conversation that will provide the context for her proposal. Simon Parker notes that the stable features of motifs are found

in the narrative structure, plot, and sequence of events, not in the number of events.[2] Thus, the definition of the motif expects and leaves room for variation in the amount of repetition, or trebling, present in each scene. In the case of these three tales, there is variation in the number of times the woman approaches the man. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* presents a minimalistic version of the motif since the woman only approaches Gilgamesh once. The *Tale of Two Brothers* and the *Tale of Aqhat* present more elaborate versions of the motif since there is a dialogue between the hero and the woman. In the latter tale, the woman presents her offer twice which results in the hero rejecting her twice.

By definition, the scene concludes with one character leaving the scene; however, there is variation in which character leaves. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Tale of Aqhat* the woman leaves the scene in an action that demonstrates her retaliatory rejection of the man. In contrast, the man in the *Tale of Two Brothers* is the one to leave the scene making his rejection the final word on the matter. This variation is reflective of the personalities of the specific characters in the scene. The two women in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Tale of Aqhat* are goddesses who are prone to violent and emotionally driven outbursts; thus, they are less inclined to allow the men's rejections to go unanswered. Whereas the woman in the *Tale of Two Brothers* has a less developed personality, so she is content to not respond to Bata as he rejects her offer and storms off. Overall, the variation in this final event concerning who exits the scene is inconsequential to the structure of the scene. Thus, the general elements dictate that the essential events of

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[2] Simon B. Parker, *The Pre-Biblical Narrative Tradition: Essays on the Ugaritic Poems Keret and Aqhat* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 57.

the scene are the woman approaching the hero with an offer, and the hero's rejection of that offer.

Specific Elements of the Motif

In each of these scenes, the woman is the initiator of events and the main actor who propels the scene forward, while the men are the main protagonists or heroes in each tale. Although Aqhat, Gilgamesh, and Bata have different social roles in each story, they are all described as having masculine attributes: Aqhat possesses a god-made bow, a symbol of his masculine virility as a hunter; Gilgamesh, the warrior, conquered the beast Humbaba in a masculine display of power; Bata's strength is described as godlike, there is no other man like him. Thus, they can each be identified as the masculine hero.

The woman's approach in each scene is coupled with her presentation of an offer to the hero. In the approach, each woman overtly situates herself in a position of power as the character directing the action of the scene. From this position of relative authority, each woman attempts to overpower the man in the scene by enticing him to submit to her will. Anat wants ownership of Aqhat's bow, so she offers Aqhat wealth and immortality in an attempt to get him to submit and surrender the bow to her. Ishtar wants Gilgamesh to become her husband, so she describes the perceived benefits he will acquire if he will only submit to her will. Anubis' wife attempts to overpower Bata to get him to surrender his sexual virtue to her by telling him that submission will be good for him, bringing him pleasure and refreshment.

Each woman presents her offer in a positive light, as something the heroes should be more than willing to partake in. However, the glowing positivity that the women try to

project does not cover the true, dark nature of their offers; it only exposes the offers for what they truly are, bribes. In each case the woman's offer is not as beneficial as she presents it. Aqhat identifies the flaw in Anat's offer and calls it a lie. The exact nature of the lie is unclear, but, as detailed in chapter three, it is clear her offer was not what she presented.[3] In the case of Ishtar's offer, she focuses on Gilgamesh and the benefits he would receive in her presentation of the offer while neglecting to detail what she would do as his wife. Her non-committal attitude toward the marriage offer, coupled with her past reputation, signal to Gilgamesh that marrying Ishtar would not be advantageous for him.[4] As for Anubis' wife, she is aware of the relational dynamics within the household and knows that her offer has the potential to disrupt the harmony they were experiencing. Thus, she entices Bata by describing how good her offer will be for him. She even sweetens the deal with the addition of her willingness to serve him by providing clothing. Each of these examples illustrate the various ways these women try to lure the men into accepting an offer that is too good to be true. Aqhat could speak on behalf of all the heroes when he says in KTU 1.17 34–35 "Do not lie Maiden, for to a hero your lies are rubbish."

In this light, the scene becomes a reflection upon the hero and his character. The audience wonders will the hero surrender to the woman or will he refuse? In these three scenes, the heroes all refuse to submit to the desires of the women. Thus, the heroes are depicted as the ones able to withstand the temptations of the women. However, the scene itself is not the end of the interactions between the two characters; the women are not

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[3] See pages 60–62 for the various interpretive options.

[4] See pages 91–93.

finished with their pursuits. In the following scenes, these women try different ways to assert power over the men. Anat and Ishtar both direct their efforts to violence to do away with the heroes. Anat is successful, but Ishtar's plans are thwarted. Anubis' wife does not use physical violence, but her lie functions as a form of violence against Bata and is the catalyst for Anubis' violent response on his wife's behalf.

Dissimilarities

On the surface, these tales have some obvious differences in the cast of characters, the nature of the women's offers, and the general setting of the scene. These differences reflect the different repertoire of narrative options at the disposal of each culture when applying the motif to their context.[5] Apart from these surface-level differences, each culture also can employ the motif to address the issues and values that are important to both the composer of the tale and the audience.[6] In the case of these three tales, each scene presents a different thematic interest that may be a reflection of the varying culture milieux in which they were produced.

In the *Tale of Aqhat*, the narrator uses the scene to illuminate the theme of life and death. This theme is developed throughout the entire tale; however, it is most prominent in this scene.[7] The second time she approaches Aqaht, Anat characterizes her offer by the

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[5] Heda Jason, "A Model for Narrative Structure in Oral Literature," in *Patterns in Oral Literature*, ed. Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 99–139.

[6] Dorothy Irvin, "The Joseph and Moses Stories as Narrative in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Narrative," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM, 1977), 180–202; Jack M. Sasson, "Literary Criticism, Folklore Scholarship, and Ugaritic Literature," in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 81–98.

[7] See pages 67–71 for the development of this theme.

life she will give Aqhat, while his response reflects the death he will one day experience.[8] This section of the dialogue functions to develop the contrast between the two characters and foreshadows Aqhat's untimely death at the hand of Anat. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the scene elucidates Gilgamesh's concern with mortality, which is tied up in the tension between his heroic inclinations and his royal obligations.[9] This tension is clearly displayed in the scene: Ishtar steps into the moment in which Gilgamesh has just completed a heroic victory and must now return to his civic duties, and she presents him with an offer that plays upon his two conflicting identities.[10]

Although both the *Tale of Aqhat* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* make references to mortality, they have two different perspectives on the topic. Aqhat is aware of his human mortality and has embraced his fate. In contrast, Gilgamesh is hyper-aware of his mortality and refuses to embrace it; hence, the entire epic recounts Gilgamesh's relentless pursuit of immortality. In one tale, the scene provides Aqhat a moment to display his acceptance of death; while in the other, the scene brings Gilgamesh face to face with the fragility of life as the potential recipient of Ishtar's destructive love.

In the *Tale of Two Brothers*, the scene is played out solely in terms of the human realm since it has two human characters instead of a man and a deity. The humanization of the scene changes its thematic interests since Anubis' wife is not capable of offering immortality or divine marriage like Anat and Ishtar. Also, Anubis' wife is not as deadly of a threat as Anat or Ishtar; nonetheless, she still poses a threat by jeopardizing Bata's

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[8] See pages 58–59 for this contrast.

[9] See page 97–98.

[10] See pages 97–103 for Ishtar's role in the development of this tension.

relationship with his brother. The scene is thematically concerned with familial obligations. Anubis' wife is a mother figure to Bata and is fully aware of the disruption she may cause.[11] In his refusal, Bata draws upon the fictive father-son relationship he has with his brother as the reason for rejecting her advance.[12] Thus, the scene highlights the role each character has within the family and the behavioral expectations that accompany said role.

These variations in thematic interest may be reflective of the different social contexts of Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. However, conclusions concerning this matter are beyond the scope of this study since an assessment of the broader literature of each culture would be required to attest to the importance of these issues for each culture. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates how different tales can use the same scene in different ways to address the thematic concerns of the tale at large.

Function of the Scene within the Tale

Although each scene has a unique thematic interest, they all serve a similar function within the tale as a whole: they initiate the hero's rite of passage. Joseph Campbell described the standard path of heroic adventures as a rite of passage, because heroic tales typically follow the pattern of separation, initiation, and return.[13] Rites of passage are also frequently found in traditional literature since these traditional tales are often used to

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[11] See page 126.

[12] See page 119.

[13] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 2nd ed., Bollingen 17 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 30.

educated younger generations by presenting warnings against various temptations and depicting ideals to emulate.[14] Each of these three tales narrates a rite of passage that incorporates the encounter between the hero and the woman.

Both the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Tale of Two Brothers* may be described as coming-of-age tales that follow the three-fold pattern for rites of passage.[15] In these two tales, the encounter between the hero and the woman initiates the rite of passage. In the *Tale of Two Brothers*, Anubis' wife introduces a conflict to the once peaceful situation, which serves as the catalyst for Bata's rite of passage that separates him from his role as son within the family unit.[16] For the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the scene is at the middle of the tale and functions as a pivot point in the narrative trajectory.[17] Before encountering Ishtar, Gilgamesh already has a liminal status as he prepares to return from battle. Ishtar enters the scene and offers a different trajectory for Gilgamesh. Although he refuses her offer, their interaction functions as the catalyst for Gilgamesh's pursuit of immortality and initiates a new time of separation for Gilgamesh. The position of the scene within in the narrative timeline is different; nevertheless, both scenes function as the catalyst for the hero's rite of passage that undergirds the plot of the entire tale.

The *Tale of Aqhat* does not follow the full rite of passage pattern due to Aqhat's untimely death. However, it does contain many of the initial elements of a rite of passage,

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[14] See page 76. Simon B. Parker, "Death and Devotion: The Composition and Theme of AQHT," in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 71–83.

[15] See page 97 for the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and page 123 for the *Tale of Two Brothers*.

[16] See pages 123–24 for the development of the rite of passage.

[17] See pages 96–97.

implying that if Aqhat had lived he would have completed the rite of passage; but alas, his tale is one of a failed rite. As in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the encounter with the woman is centrally located within the tale and functions as a pivot point within the plot.[18] The use of the coming-of-age banquet as the backdrop for the scene establishes this moment as the initiation of Aqhat's rite of passage that will usher him into a time of separation as he prepares to enter into manhood. The encounter with Anat introduces a conflict into the rite of passage which will hinder his ability to complete the rite since Anat wants his bow, the object Aqhat will use to demonstrate his masculinity. In the end, the conflict results in Aqhat's death and the termination of his rite of passage. Thus, in each case the hero's encounter with the woman functions as a pivotal moment within the trajectory of the narrative and within in the life of the hero.

The Role of the Women

In each of these tales the women embody several traits that are often associated with tricksters, or their female counterpart, temptresses, in traditional literature. Traditional literature discusses issues pertinent to its culture of origin in narrative form, often blending binary oppositions together.[19] One figure who is key in this process is the trickster. The trickster is a transformer of boundaries whose key characteristics include: a dual nature, embodiment of order and disorder, the use of language of wisdom and deceit,

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[18] See pages 66–67.

[19] Naomi Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters, Their Analogues, and Cross-Cultural Study," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 1–13.

and an intertwining of good and evil.[20] The trickster's ability to bring together two dichotomous features in their personality makes the trickster a liminal figure whose ambiguous nature allows them to move across the boundaries between these opposing features.[21]

The women in each of these tales can be described as tricksters due to their use of deceit, their embodiment of order and disorder, and their liminality. As mentioned above, each of these women present their offers in a positive light. They attempt to convince the hero that submitting to their request will be profitable for the hero; however, in reality, their offers will lead to the hero's destruction. One thing that stands out in their proposals is the specific use of language to entice. Tricksters, specifically female tricksters or temptresses, use language to lead men into the false anti-worlds they have constructed by distorting or concealing meaning.[22]

For Anat, this deceptive use of language is most clearly demonstrated in Aqhat's reaction to her offer and his identification of her offer as a lie.[23] Ishtar, frequently described as irresistibly attractive, chooses not to leverage her physical beauty, rather she relies upon her words and the description she presents of Gilgamesh's potential future to

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[20] Claudia V. Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*, JSOTSup 320 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000); Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters," 2.

[21] Claudia V. Camp, "Wise and Strange: An Interpretation of the Female Imagery in Proverbs in Light of Trickster Mythology," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 14–36; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969).

[22] James G. Williams, *Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel*, BLS 6 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), 109.

[23] See pages 60–62.

allure him.[24] Anubis' wife tries to incite Bata by telling him that laying down with her will be good for him, even though she knows that it would destroy his relationship with his brother. In lines 3,8–3,9 the narrator makes it clear that it was her deception or "wicked speech" that enraged Bata. An assessment that Bata confirms in line 4,1 by calling her offer "a great wickedness" and by telling her not to speak to him again. Thus, these three women use language to paint an image that they believe will entice the heroes to submit to their will; however, their offers prove to be distorted images rather than reflections of reality.

One reason why the women need to disguise the true nature of their offer is to draw attention away from the destructive nature of the women. As tricksters, who embody order and chaos simultaneously, these women can bring both order and chaotic destruction. This dichotomy is most pronounced in the goddesses: Anat and Ishtar. Both Anat and Ishtar are goddesses of warfare, so naturally they partake in violent actions with negative outcomes. However, they can also produce positive outcomes by bringing victory on the battlefield.[25] In the specific tales, Anat is a central figure in the tale's theme of life and death. She introduces herself as a giver of life by how she frames her offer; but, in the end, she brings death and destruction to the object of her desire.[26] Ishtar leaves a trail of destroyed and damaged lovers in her wake; Gilgamesh is aware of her track record as he draws attention to her destructive nature in his monologue.[27] Her

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[24] See pages 89–90 for a discussion of Ishtar's offer as a bribe.

[25] See page 73 for Anat and page 92 for Ishtar.

[26] See pages 68–69 for Anat's role in the development of the theme of life and death throughout the *Tale of Aqhat.*

[27] See pages 90–92 for a discussion of Ishtar's destructive nature.

destructive behavior is not confined to her past, she turns her violent anger toward Gilgamesh when he rejects her. Although Gilgamesh is physically unscathed, he still endures a life-changing injury when Ishtar destroys his close companion Enkidu.

Anubis' wife fulfills the same role as Anat and Ishtar in the scene; however, as a human, her realm of influence and power is much smaller, making her embodiment of order and chaos less pronounced. Anubis' wife does not have a known history of destructive behaviors, but in the scene, she is a bringer of chaos. She is a part of the fictive familial relationship that Bata, Anubis, and she have created amongst themselves. She lives and participates in the peaceful lifestyle at the beginning of tale, but she chooses to disregard her family and disrupt the peace by pursuing Bata.[28] Her destruction is not violent in nature like that of Anat and Ishtar, but it is destruction nonetheless. Her destructive behavior has led scholars to describe her as the human embodiment of Hathor's dual nature of fertility and destruction.[29] Thus, Anubis' wife demonstrates what a trickster's embodiment of order and chaos looks like in the life of a mortal.

The dual nature of trickster characters makes them liminal in the ways they can transgress the boundaries between opposing traits. For Anat, Ishtar, and Anubis' wife, their liminality is most pronounced in the crossing of gender boundaries. These three women each step into roles that are often filled by men. Again, this is most pronounced in Anat and Ishtar, the goddesses of warfare, who often partake in male culture.[30] One key trait for these goddesses, that derives from their ability to transgress gender boundaries, is

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[28] See page 126.

[29] See pages 126–27.

[30] See pages 73–74 for a discussion of Anat and pages 104–105 for a discussion of Ishtar.

the capacity to turn men into women on the battlefield.[31] As these women move into male culture they are able to take men and move them into female culture by subverting their masculinity, a trait which is highlighted in the scene as the goddesses symbolically emasculate Aqhat and Gilgamesh.[32] Anubis's wife models this behavior as well by causing Bata's self-emasculation.[33]

The ability to transgress gender boundaries, and to make others do so as well, may contribute to the women's participation in the heroes' rite of passage. By asserting themselves into the hero's rite of passage, these three women take on the façade of a helpful intermediary who will assist the hero in their coming-of-age process. Their ability to cross the gender boundary makes them well suited to assist the men in their rite of passage as they move from a liminal phase to a post-liminal phase. Although the women may be able to assist the men in moving from a liminal to a post-liminal phase, they themselves remain in a liminal state. Their permanent liminality in terms of gender allows them to reside somewhere between masculinity and femininity, and functions as an advantage in their ability to assist the men in their coming of age. Each woman is well positioned to assist the hero: Anat offers to teach Aqhat how to hunt and become a man; Ishtar offers marriage to Gilgamesh to make him the royal husband of the deity; Anubis' wife offers a good life to Bata and possibly a marital relationship. However, their permanent liminality also leaves the women perpetually caught somewhere between

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[31] See page 78 for Anat and page 105 for Ishtar.

[32] See pages 77–79 for a discussion of the emasculation of Aqhat and pages 105–106 for a discussion of the emasculation of Gilgamesh

[33] See pages 128–29.

order and chaos, which may function as a disadvantage for the heroes by preventing the women from successfully guiding the heroes into a post-liminal space. Although they have the power to bring order to the life the hero, in reality, these liminal women bring only chaos and destruction, proving themselves incapable of transporting the men into the post-liminal phase of their rite of passage.

The movement of these women into male culture is displayed also in their approach of the men. In each scene the woman is the dominant character who initiates the action and makes a proposal to the man. In the case of Ishtar and Anubis' wife, the way the proposal is presented is also atypical since the male character is usually the one to propose marriage or sexual engagement.[34] In their approach, these women are asserting themselves over the men in a display of power that places them in the dominant and typically masculine position. This display of dominance aligns with the identification of these women as tricksters since trickery is a form of power that is readily available to individuals who are often powerless.[35] As women, these three characters lack authority; but, by embracing their liminal characteristics as temptresses, they are able to assert their power and attempt to lure the men into submission.

Conclusion

Based upon these three tales, the description of the ANE expression of the motif should be rearticulated as a woman temptress approaches a hero with a proposition or offer of

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[34] See page 104 for Ishtar and page 128 for Anubis' wife.

[35] Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters," 6.

some kind that the hero rejects. Describing the events in this manner allows space for each implementation of the motif to reflect the specific needs and desires of the culture while maintaining a set structure and sequence of events.

In addition to this general description of the events in the scene, there are two specific features of the tale that should be included as part of the motif based upon these three tales. First, the scene functions as a pivotal moment in the larger narrative by occurring at the initiation of the hero's rite of passage. The approach by the woman in each tale is used as an assessment of the hero's character as he embarks upon his journey through his rite of passage. Secondly, the women characters are liminal trickster or temptress figures who embody a dual nature of opposing traits, most clearly seen in their transgression of gender boundaries and their embodiment of both order and disorder. The women use their position of liminality to their advantage as they approach the men in a display of dominance to try and overpower the men into submission, which results in some level of destruction.

This description of the motif, based upon the general elements of the scene, more accurately accounts for each of the individual tales. A description of the motif based upon the general elements also allows for previously overlooked tales to be considered as examples of the motif. For example, the encounter between Samson and Delilah in Judg 16 has many similar features to these three tales but has previously not been considered a manifestation of the motif due to the descriptions of the motif based upon the more specific elements of the tales. Thus, in the following chapters the Samson and Delilah scene will be examined and assessed to determine its suitability as an example of the motif.

CHAPTER 7
THE ISRAELITE STORY: SAMSON AND DELILAH

Tucked within the biblical narrative are stories from Israel's warrior culture. Many of these stories can be found in the book of Judges, which recounts the times when Yahweh raised up warrior leaders for the people of Israel in their times of distress. Amongst the heroes of these tales is the warrior Samson, whose exploits have vividly penetrated the interpretative history of the Bible. The Samson saga, Judg 13–16, follows Samson from his birth until his death. Samson was the promised son of a barren mother. In Judg 13, a messenger of Yahweh visited Samson's barren mother and told her that the son she will bear will begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines and that he must be set apart as a Nazirite from birth. The story of his birth concludes by stating that, as Samson grew, Yahweh began to stir (פעם) Samson.

After this statement, the narrator tells of Samson's various encounters with the Philistines. In his first encounter, Samson went down to Timnah and spotted a Philistine woman he wanted as a wife. On the way to retrieve his wife, Samson encountered a lion, tore it apart with his own hands, and later consumed some honey that was found in the carcass. While he was feasting before his marriage, he placed a riddle before his companions about this private encounter with the lion. Since they were unable to decipher the answer to the riddle, Samson's companions blackmailed his betrothed to lure the answer from Samson. She was successful in obtaining the answer to the riddle and the

men shamed Samson by outsmarting him. In his anger, Samson went and killed some men from Ashkelon to plunder the reward required for the men who solved his riddle.

This encounter initiated a retaliatory relationship between Samson and the Philistines. His ensuing feats of strength have led to the description of Samson as "the original Hell's Angel, rambling through Philistia like a one-man army."[1] In response to his outburst against Ashkelon, his wife was given to one of his friends. When Samson discovered this, he captured three hundred foxes, tied them to torches, and set fire to the Philistine's harvest. In retaliation for the fire, the Philistines burnt Samson's wife and her father. Samson sought vengeance by killing an undisclosed number of men. Samson then fled the scene only to be bound by a group of Judahites who handed him over to the Philistines. However, Samson broke out of the bindings, seized the jawbone of a donkey, and killed three thousand men. After this incident, the narrator states that Samson judged Israel for twenty years. However, this was not the end of Samson's exploits; two final stories are narrated.

In the first tale, Samson went to Gaza and found refuge in the arms of a prostitute. The Philistines encircled the city to wait for Samson; however, he fled the town like "a crazed orangutan escaping from a zoo" by taking the gates of the city with him.[2] The second tale details Samson's encounter with Delilah, in which she entices Samson to reveal the secret of his strength and binds him so that the Philistines can overpower him. The Philistines blinded and humiliated him, but Samson, in his final act of vengeance,

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[1] Gregory Mobley, *The Empty Men: The Heroic Tradition of Ancient Israel*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 7.

[2] Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 416.

pulled down the house upon himself and the Philistines who were with him. The narrator describes this final act as Samson's most violent, because he killed more men in his death than he did in his life. Amongst Samson's numerous heroic tasks, his encounter with Delilah in Judg 16 has remained a point of interest for biblical scholars and popular culture alike; it is to this scene that we will turn our attention.

In order to conduct a literary analysis of the Samson and Delilah story, the boundaries of the scene need to be defined. As mentioned previously, this study defines the boundaries of the scene by a singular narrative location and a consistency of characters present in the scene. Generally, scholars agree that Judg 16:4–31 should be read as a narrative unit.[3] The brief account in Judg 16:1–3 is then viewed as a separate event. Judges 16:1 recounts Samson's travels to Gaza denoting a scene separate from what occurred in 15:20; however, that scene ends briefly with the start of a new scene in 16:4, as indicated by the change of location to the Sorek Valley. Judges 16:4 is also grammatically identified as a new scene by the use of the discourse וַיְהִי followed by a temporal modifier, which functions to mark the beginning of a new scene or episode and to mark the timeline of the following discourse as a past time event.[4] The scene concludes

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[3] Louis C. Jonker, "Samson in Double Vision: Judges 13–16 from Historical-Critical and Narrative Perspectives," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 18 (1992): 49–66; Jichan Kim, *The Structure of the Samson Cycle* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 325.

[4] John A. Cook, *Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb: The Expression of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Biblical Hebrew*, Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 7 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 310–12. Christo H. J. van der Merwe "The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term ויהי: A Perspective in Terms of Its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel," *HS* 40 (1999): 83–114; Jan Joosten, "Diachronic Aspects of Narrative Wayhi in Biblical Hebrew," *JNSL* 32.2 (2009): 43–61; Daniel J. Wilson, "Wayhî and Theticity in Biblical Hebrew," *JNSL* 45 (2019): 89–118.

in Judg 16:22 as Samson is captured and brough to Gaza.[5] Although the narrative location changes in 16:21, the main actions that take place in Gaza are not detailed until 16:23, and 16:21–22 is presented as a direct consequence of Delilah's action; thus, she maintains a role in the scene through 16:22. Denoting a new scene in 16:23 is further supported by the grammatical shift away from the Past Narrative (*wayyiqtol*) verb conjugation to the use of the Perfect (*qatal*) verb form.[6] Through the shift in verbal conjugation in 16:23, the narrator provides information needed to set the stage for a new scene in a new location where Delilah no longer features as a character in the action. Therefore, this narrative analysis will examine the scene as contained in 16:4–22.

General Elements of the Scene

In terms of its general elements, the scene opens with the narrator introducing the two main characters: the hero and the woman. The first event, contained in v. 5, introduces a third-party character, who approaches the woman in order to recruit her for their cause, namely, to capture the hero. The first event introduces the conflict that will dominate the rest of the events in the scene as an enemy seeks to capture the hero.

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[5] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Structure and Style in Judges 13–16," *JBL* 82.1 (1963): 65–76; J. Cheryl Exum, "Literary Patterns in the Samson Saga: An Investigation of Rhetorical Style in Biblical Prose" (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1976), 46–48; J. Cheryl Exum, "Harvesting the Biblical Narrator's Scanty Plot of Ground: A Holistic Approach to Judges 16:4–22," in *Tehillah Le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey H. Tigay (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 39–46; Mark Greene, "Enigma Variations: Aspects of the Samson Story Judges 13–16," *VE* 21 (1991): 53–79.

[6] John A. Cook, "The Semantics of Verbal Pragmatics: Clarifying the Roles of the *Wayyiqtol* and *Weqatal* in Biblical Hebrew Prose," *JSS* 49 (2004): 247–73; Cook, *Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb*, 295–97. Robert E. Longacre, *Storyline Concerns and Word Order Typology*, Studies in African Linguistics Supplement 10 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 190. Since this study will be examining narrative discourse the term Past Narrative will be used for the *wayyiqtol* verbal form. This verbal form is the default verbal form used for narrative discourse to mark the foreground events, or the main story line, of the narrative.

The second event occurs in v. 6, in which the woman approaches the hero with a proposition. Her approach implies that she responded positively to the offer made of her in event 1 thereby making her an antagonist. In event 3, v. 7, the hero responds to the woman and answers her question. The woman tests the truthfulness of the hero's answer in the fourth event, v. 8–9a. The third-party makes another appearance in this event by providing the woman with the materials required to test the hero. They are interested in the outcome of the test since they are the ones seeking to capture the hero; however, they play the passive role of onlooker while the woman and the hero are the main actors in the scene. Thus, their entrance and exit does not alter the boundaries of the scene. The fifth event, v. 9b, reveals the result of the woman's test; her test failed, indicating that the hero lied to her and rejected her approach.

At this point the narrative enters into a cyclical pattern of repetition whereby events 2–5 get repeated in events 6–9 and again in events 10–13. The fourth repetition of this event sequence, in event 14, introduces a break in the pattern. This cyclical pattern of repetition is often referred to as trebling or triplication and is common in folkloric literature.[7] These three-fold or three-plus-one repetitive cycles slow the action of the narrative which serves to pull the audience into the scene as they watch the action unfold. This slower pace action holds the audience in suspense and heightens the sense of anticipation as they anxiously await to see if the repetitive pattern will continue or break.

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[7] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 95; Shimeon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 154–73; Claude Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," *Communications* 4 (1964): 4–32; Pamela J. Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales: An Evaluation of Two Proppian Analyses of Biblical Narratives," *JSOT* 34 (1986): 35–60; James Muilenberg, "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," in *Congress Volume Copenhagen 1953*, VTSupp 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 97–111; Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 67; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 137, 391–93.

Since this cyclical repetition creates a feeling of heightened suspense in the audience, it is often used to build up to a climactic moment in the final set of the sequence.[8] The final set of the series typically breaks the repetitive sequence and becomes the center of attention by creating an opposition with the earlier sets in the series and signifying the purpose for the repetitive series.

In his analysis of folktale functions, Propp considers these repetitive sequences to be anti-functions and he does not include them in his list of narrative components. He acknowledges that they serve the end goal of building suspense; however, he asserts they do not have a role in the structure of the tale. Therefore, he only lists the last function as part of narrative sequence since it is the one that advances the storyline.[9] In contrast, Claude Bremond advocates that each repetitive sequence is an integral component to the structure of the tale since the addition of a new sequence creates a crescendo effect leading up to the contrast that is created between the last event of the sequence and the first ones.[10] In his narrative analyses, Bremond includes each repetitive sequence as its own function in the narrative sequence. This study will follow Bremond's assessment and consider each repetitive element as an event within the structure of the tale. At this juncture in the study, only the general relationship between the final member of the set and the earlier events will be addressed, the contents of each repetitive event will be examined in closer detail in the later analysis of the specific elements of the narrative.

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[8] Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 100; Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," 12; Muilenberg, "Study in Hebrew Rhetoric," 107.

[9] Propp, *Morphology*, 90.

[10] Bremond, "Le Message Narratif," 12.

The repetitive sequence begins in event 6 (v.10) as the woman confronts the hero about his lie and approaches him again. In events 7, 8, and 9 — vv. 11, 12a, and 12b respectively — the hero answers her question, the woman tests the veracity of his answer, and she receives another failed outcome. The repetitive cycle begins a third time in v. 13a, event 10, when the woman approaches the hero. Just as in the previous cycles, the hero answers her, she tests his answer, and receives a third failed outcome in events 11–13, vv. 13b, 14a, and 14b, respectively.

Event 14 begins the fourth repetitive cycle; however, this cycle breaks the repetitive pattern. Event 14, in v. 15–16, presents the woman's heightened confrontation of the hero and her fourth approach. In event 15, v. 17, the hero answers the woman, and she realizes that the nature of his response is different than his previous three answers. At this point, the woman seems to realize that his answer is the truth; so, she prepares to deliver him to the third-party by summoning them to capture the hero in event 16, v. 18. Although the woman suspects the hero spoke the truth, she continues to test his answer in event 17, v. 19–20a. Rather than a failed outcome of the test as seen in the previous event cycles, event 18, v. 20b–22, contains a successful outcome of the test and presents the enticed and submissive hero captured by the third-party.

This sequence of events, 14–18, serves as the final series in the patterned repetition that was established in the previous events. In terms of the general elements, the major change in this fourth series is the successful outcome of the woman's test. Although events 14–17 contain hints that something different is about occur, the general elements of the events are the same; the woman entices the hero, he responds, and the woman tests his response. The final event serves as the climactic moment in the narrative

as the pattern is broken by the successful outcome of the test, indicating the hero has finally revealed his truth to the woman.

Overall, the scene narrated in Judg 16:4–22 contains 18 events. The core action of the scene is the encounter between the woman and the hero as she continually approaches him with a proposition that he continually rejects by lying to her. The third-party character is a minor actor whose actions are mostly passive observation. Their only active role is the initiation of the conflict via their proposal to the woman in event 1 and the conclusion of the conflict in event 18 when they capture the hero.

Thus, in the most general terms, the plot of the scene begins with the presentation of the conflict, that is, the desire to capture the hero. Then in a three-plus-one repetitive cycle the woman approaches the hero in the first three cycles in an attempt to entice him into being captured, but each time he evades her attempts. Finally, in the fourth repeated sequence the woman succeeds in her approach as the hero surrenders to her and is captured.

Table 6. General elements of the scene from Judg 16:4–22[11]

Event	Verse Reference	Description
Event 1	16:5	Conflict: Enemy seeks to capture the hero
Event 2	16:6	Woman approaches the hero
Event 3	16:7	Hero responds
Event 4	16:8–9a	Woman tests his truthfulness
Event 5	16:9b	Failed outcome of test; the hero lied
Event 6	16:10	Woman confronts the hero and approaches him again
Event 7	16:11	Hero responds
Event 8	16:12a	Woman tests his truthfulness
Event 9	16:12b	Failed outcome of test; the hero lied

[11] The bolded lines represent the boundaries of each repetitive cycle of events.

Event 10	16:13a	Woman confronts the hero and approaches him again
Event 11	16:13b	Hero responds
Event 12	16:14a	Woman tests his truthfulness
Event 13	16:14b	Failed outcome of test; the hero lied
Event 14	16:15–16	Heightened confrontation and approach by the woman
Event 15	16:17	Hero responds
Event 16	16:18	Enemy enters to capture the hero
Event 17	16:19–20a	Woman tests his truthfulness
Event 18	16:20b–22	Successful outcome of test; hero captured by enemy

Specific Elements of the Scene

Having examined the scene on a general level, I will now return to the scene to look at its specific elements to examine the features unique to the Samson and Delilah narrative. The scene begins in Judg 16:4 with the statement by the narrator that Samson "loved a woman in the valley of Sorek and her name was Delilah." This phrase is pivotal because it breaks the repetitive pattern the narrator has created thus far in the Samson saga, and establishes this scene as climatic.[12] The three-fold repetition that occurs within the scene of Judg 16:4–22 is also present on a larger scale within the entire Samson saga, since each scene in the saga opens in a similar fashion. In Judg 14:1, Samson goes down and sees a woman (וַיֵּרֶד שִׁמְשׁוֹן תִּמְנָתָה וַיַּרְא אִשָּׁה); in Judg 16:1, Samson goes and sees a woman (וַיֵּלֶךְ שִׁמְשׁוֹן עַזָּתָה וַיַּרְא־שָׁם אִשָּׁה); but now, in 16:4, the pattern has been broken (וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן וַיֶּאֱהַב אִשָּׁה בְּנַחַל שֹׂרֵק וּשְׁמָהּ דְּלִילָה). There is no verb of motion, the verb ראה has been replaced with אהב, and the woman is given a name. The introduction to this encounter

[12] Robert Alter, "Samson Without Folklore," in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*, ed. Susan Niditch (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 47–56.

indicates to the reader that something different is about to happen and establishes the story as the climactic moment of the entire Samson saga.

Although the text states that Samson loved Delilah, this gives little actual information about the nature of their relationship. As Caroline Blyth notes, the nature of the relationship is never spelled out in full; the text only mentions that Samson loves Delilah, which leaves the details vague at best.[13] Most interpreters however suggest that the nature of the relationship is sexual, as James Williams notes.[14] Others, like Susan Niditch and Barry Webb, go further and suggest that there is some level of emotional involvement and romance between the two characters, giving the story an air of unrequited love, since Samson is the only one said to have loved the other.[15] However, these interpretations falsely project a modern perspective of love and romance on to the ancient context. Susan Ackerman notes that the concept of love in the biblical text contains a fluidity of meaning that often leaves the nature of the relationship ambiguous.[16] She also demonstrates that the one-sided mention of love is common in the biblical text and does not necessarily imply one-sided feelings.[17] Noting that it is often

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[13] Caroline Blyth, *Reimagining Delilah's Afterlives as Femme Fatale: The Lost Seduction*, LHBOTS 652 (London: T & T Clark, 2017), 57.

[14] James G. Williams, *Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel*, BLS 6 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), 89.

[15] Susan Niditch, *Judges*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 168; Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 399–404.

[16] Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (ʾāhēb, ʾahăbâ) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52 (2002): 437–58.

[17] Ackerman, "The Personal is Political," 443. Ackerman states that the narratives attached to the one-sided statements of love indicate that there is almost always mutuality of feelings between the two parties. The only case that could be questionable is that of Delilah. Her behavior in the following narrative causes the audience to doubt her love for Samson; however, we are given no information regarding her motives for accepting the Philistine's offer to subdue Samson; therefore, little can be said about her love for

the male or the parental figure who is said to love another, Ackerman suggests that the one-sided mention of love connotes a position of hierarchical superiority, rather than one-sided feelings.[18] The person who is said to be doing the loving is typically in a position of social dominance over the other individual. Although Delilah is not associated with any male figures in her introduction, this opening statement, that Samson loved Delilah, places Samson in a position of social dominance over Delilah as the male in the relationship. Moreover, at this point in the narrative, there is no reason for the audience to assume that Delilah does not love Samson in return.

The Philistines arrive on the scene in 16:5 as the third-party character; based upon the previous encounters with the Philistines in the Samson saga, the audience can expect trouble to arise since they are Samson's perpetual enemies. Upon their arrival, the Philistines are the first character to speak. Their statement is significant because the first direct speech or dialogue typically sets the tone of the scene and reveals the nature of a character.[19] The first two words, פַּתֵּי אוֹתוֹ, harken back to 14:15 when the Philistines say the same thing to Samson's betrothed, פַּתִּי אֶת־אִישֵׁךְ. The connection between these scenes confirms the Philistines' ill intent and increases the audience's expectation that this scene will involve trickery and deception by a woman on behalf of the Philistines. This time

Samson. At this initial point in the narrative the audience knows nothing about Delilah so there are no expectations for her to behave in an unloving way towards Samson.

[18] Ackerman, "The Personal is Political," 443, 452–53. In her discussion of the one-sided mention of love Ackerman entertains the possible interpretation that love, particularly in interpersonal relationships, functions to commence the action of a scene by setting the stage for the narrative. Since the statement of love in Judg 16:4 is at the beginning of the narrative this could be a possibility. However, Ackerman concludes that the hierarchical nature of the statement is the more likely reason for only mentioning the male's love for a female.

[19] Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 74; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, BLS 9 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 64.

however, the Philistines try a different approach by offering Delilah a reward rather than the threat of punishment that they gave Samson's wife.

In the second event, the Philistines are no longer actors in the scene as Delilah approaches Samson. Implicit in her approach is the act of accepting the Philistines' proposition. In her statement to Samson, Delilah quotes the words of the Philistines, almost verbatim. The Philistines told her find out, בַּמָּה כֹחוֹ גָדוֹל וּבַמָּה נוּכַל לוֹ וְאֲסָרְנֵהוּ לְעַנֹּתוֹ and she asks Samson, בַּמָּה כֹּחֲךָ וּבְמָּה תֵאָסֵר לְעַנּוֹתֶךָ. Her quote indicates that she accepted their invitation and is now working towards their goal. This also initiates the repetitive style that will prevail throughout the scene and indicates that Samson knows Delilah's intent is to bind and humble him, even though Samson is seemingly unaware of the role of the Philistines in this proposition. Samson's awareness of Delilah's intentions draws attention to his hubris as his downfall. He knows what Delilah is after, but still he partakes in the enticement game assuming that he is strong enough not to be overpowered by a woman. The story is often viewed as one of betrayal or treachery on behalf of Delilah; however, this interpretation stems from a Samson-centric reading of the narrative.[20] Delilah's openness about her intentions indicates that this is not a story of betrayal since Samson knew her goal from the beginning even if, in his own hubris, he chose to disregard that knowledge.[21]

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[20] Betsy Merideth, "Desire and Danger: The Drama of Betrayal," in *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 81 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 63–78.

[21] Lawson G. Stone, "Judges," in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Cornerstone 3, ed. Phillip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2012), 414.

Delilah's openness with Samson creates a sense of dramatic tension in the audience as they await to see how Samson, the hero, will respond to this overt attempt to overpower and capture him.[22] This tension is released in the next event when Samson responds to Delilah and the audience realizes that he has lied to her, even though Delilah is unaware of Samson's lie. The narrator plays upon the difference in perspective between the characters and the audience. Delilah, as a character, operates within the world represented in the narrative and is only aware of information as it is presented to her. However, the audience, along with the narrator, stand outside of the represented world and thus are privy to information Delilah does not have.[23] Based upon previous scenes in the Samson saga, the audience knows that Samson has broken out of his bindings before and that his naziritic status, indicated by his long hair, is the source of his strength. Since the audience is aware of knowledge that Delilah does not have, the audience has an elevated vantage point and is thus invited to participate, alongside the narrator, in the irony this creates.[24] This irony is further highlighted by the reversal of the audience's expectations. As the temptress or trickster character, who is working for the Philistines to capture Samson, the audience would expect Delilah to be the one who lies. However, Delilah is upfront with Samson about her intentions to humble him and it is Samson who lies. This inversion of expectation creates a level of irony for the audience and leaves them wondering what other expectations will be turned on their heads in this

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[22] Merideth, "Desire and Danger," 73.

[23] Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 163–72.

[24] Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, JSOTSup 68 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 191; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 163–64.

scene.[25] Due to the difference in vantage point, Delilah expects her test to have a positive outcome, while the audience knows she will be disappointed.

As mentioned in the general analysis above, Judg 16:6 begins the three-plus-one repetitive sequence that is used to build suspense with a crescendo effect leading up to the final repetition of the sequence. This repetition with variation, or three-fold repetition sequence, is intrinsic to the structure of the Samson saga as observed in the introduction to each of his adventures as he goes and sees a woman. Furthermore, the repetitive nature of the Samson saga reflects the structure of the book of Judges, which is built upon a repeated framework.[26] Joseph Blenkinsopp adds that this repetitive pattern situates the Samson saga within the heroic literary milieu and is the key to the structural interpretation of the Samson saga.[27]

For the repetition in the encounter with Delilah, the initial pattern is set in 16:6–9 and is repeated in 16:10–12 and 16:13–14. It begins with the phrase וַתֹּאמֶר דְּלִילָה אֶל־שִׁמְשׁוֹן, which occurs in vv. 6, 10, 13. Delilah then repeats her demand to Samson with very little variation. The narrator reports Samson's statement in vv. 7, 11, 13b, which contains his formulaic answer beginning with the אִם protasis followed by the apodosis, וְחָלִיתִי וְהָיִיתִי כְּאַחַד הָאָדָם.[28] It is reported that Delilah did what Samson described, and she proclaims

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[25] Claudia V. Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*, JSOTSup 320 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 101; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 134.

[26] Alter, "Samson without Folklore," 50; Niditch, *Judges*, 169; Webb, *Judges*, 392.

[27] Blenkinsopp, "Structure and Style," 75.

[28] Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC 6 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 458; Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, AB 6A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 249; C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes*, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1920), 380–82; Exum, "Literary Patterns," 171; Kim, *Structure of the Samson Cycle*, 340–41; Webb, *Judges*, 397. Although this apodosis is lacking in 16:13, it is included in the LXX suggesting it may have been in the text

פְּלִשְׁתִּים עָלֶיךָ שִׁמְשׁוֹן to test if his answer was truthful or not. Finally, the narrator describes how Samson breaks free and escapes from the Philistines, providing a failed outcome for Delilah's test, indicating that he lied.[29]

This pattern is then repeated two more times with a significant amount of lexical continuity, allowing the audience to predict exactly what will happen next. By economizing the language as the cycles progress, the author draws attention to the repeated phrases. Each cycle is reduced in length from the preceding iteration; the first cycle has 18 clauses, the second has 16 clauses, and the third has 14 clauses. However, this reduction is not applied to the repetitive pattern which stays the same despite its non-economical features, like the explicit use of a subject in the first line and the use of proper names rather than the more economical pronoun. The retention of the repeated portions of the dialogue creates a rhetorical effect in which the repetition is brought to the forefront of the scene. The dominance of the repetition results in a stark contrast with the final cycle when the repetitive pattern is broken. Figure 1 visually depicts the three-fold repetition that appears in the dialogue between Samson and Delilah. Each character's contribution to the dialogue is labeled and the repeated elements are highlighted in grey.

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but has been lost via *homoioteleuton* in the process of transmission. Based upon the witness in the LXX and the highly repetitive nature of this story the textual emendation should be followed to restore the apodosis.

[29] Kim, *Structure of the Samson Cycle*, 336. Kim describes the events of the repeated sequence as: Delilah's question, Samson's answer, her execution of his words, and his success. I disagree with his assessment of the outcome of the test. The outcome should not be read through Samson's perspective as his success, but rather through Delilah's perspective as a failed response to her test. As the initiator of the dialogue and the one who is testing her act of binding, the outcome of the test should be understood from Delilah's perspective. Kim follows the traditional, hero-centric reading of this scene, when in actuality Delilah plays the larger role in this conversation as the initiator and sustainer of the action.

Samson – S
Delilah – D
Narrator – N

N 6 וַתֹּ֤אמֶר דְּלִילָה֙ אֶל־שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
D הַגִּ֥ידָה־נָּ֖א לִ֑י בַּמֶּ֤ה כֹּחֲךָ֙ גָּד֔וֹל וּבַמֶּ֥ה תֵאָסֵ֖ר לְעַנּוֹתֶֽךָ׃
N 7 וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
S אִם־יַאַסְרֻ֨נִי בְּשִׁבְעָ֜ה יְתָרִ֗ים לַחִ֛ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־חֹרָ֖בוּ וְחָלִ֣יתִי וְהָיִ֑יתִי כְּאַחַ֖ד הָאָדָֽם׃
N 8 וַיַּעֲל֨וּ־לָ֜הּ סַרְנֵ֣י פְלִשְׁתִּ֗ים שִׁבְעָ֤ה יְתָרִים֙ לַחִ֣ים אֲשֶׁ֔ר לֹא־חֹרָ֖בוּ וַתַּאַסְרֵ֥הוּ בָהֶֽם׃
9 וְהָאֹרֵ֥ב יֹשֵׁ֛ב לָ֖הּ בַּחֶ֑דֶר וַתֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלָ֙יו֙
D פְּלִשְׁתִּ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
N וַיְנַתֵּ֖ק אֶת־הַיְתָרִ֑ים כַּאֲשֶׁ֤ר יִנָּתֵק֙ פְּתִֽיל־הַנְּעֶ֔רֶת בַּהֲרִיחֹ֖ו אֵ֑שׁ וְלֹ֥א נוֹדַ֖ע כֹּחֹֽו׃

N 10 וַתֹּ֤אמֶר דְּלִילָה֙ אֶל־שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
D הִנֵּ֥ה הֵתַ֖לְתָּ בִּ֑י וַתְּדַבֵּ֣ר אֵלַ֔י כְּזָבִ֖ים[30] עַתָּ֕ה הַגִּ֥ידָה־נָּ֖א לִ֑י בַּמֶּ֥ה תֵאָסֵֽר׃
N 11 וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙
S אִם־אָסֹ֣ור יַאַסְרוּ֔נִי בַּעֲבֹתִ֥ים חֲדָשִׁ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־נַעֲשָׂ֑ה בָּהֶ֥ם מְלָאכָ֖ה וְחָלִ֣יתִי וְהָיִ֑יתִי כְּאַחַ֖ד הָאָדָֽם׃
N 12 וַתִּקַּ֤ח דְּלִילָה֙ עֲבֹתִ֣ים חֲדָשִׁ֔ים וַתַּאַסְרֵ֖הוּ בָּהֶ֑ם וַתֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלָ֙יו֙
D פְּלִשְׁתִּ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
N וְהָאֹרֵ֥ב יֹשֵׁ֛ב בֶּחָדֶ֖ר וַיְנַתְּקֵ֥ם מֵעַ֖ל זְרֹעֹתָ֑יו כַּחוּט׃

N 13 וַתֹּ֤אמֶר דְּלִילָה֙ אֶל־שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
D עַד־הֵ֨נָּה֙ הֵתַ֣לְתָּ בִּ֔י וַתְּדַבֵּ֖ר אֵלַ֑י כְּזָבִ֗ים הַגִּ֥ידָה לִּ֛י בַּמֶּ֥ה תֵאָסֵ֖ר
N וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙
S אִם־תַּאַרְגִּ֞י אֶת־שֶׁ֣בַע מַחְלְפ֗וֹת רֹאשִׁי֙ עִם־הַמַּסָּ֔כֶת (וְחָלִ֣יתִי וְהָיִ֔יתִי כְּאַחַ֖ד הָאָדָֽם׃):
N 14 וַתִּתְקַ֣ע בַּיָּתֵ֔ד וַתֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלָ֙יו֙
D פְּלִשְׁתִּ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן
N וַיִּיקַ֖ץ מִשְּׁנָתֹ֑ו וַיִּסַּ֗ע אֶת־הַיְתֵ֙ד הָאֶ֔רֶג וְאֶת־הַמַּסָּֽכֶת׃

Figure 1. Repetitive pattern in Judg 16:6–13

[30] This phrase is lacking in the first repetitive cycle because it is Delilah's response to the realization that Samson lied to her. In the first cycle, Delilah has had no previous interaction with Samson so the inclusion of this statement would be illogical. Although it is lacking from the first cycle, this phrase should still be considered part of the repetitive pattern due to its exact repetition in the second and third cycles, as well as the lexically similar statement made in the fourth cycle of the scene.

When it comes to 16:15, the audience would expect a continuation of the repetition with the narrator stating וַתֹּאמֶר דְּלִילָה אֶל־שִׁמְשׁוֹן. However, the narrator utilizes the shorter, more efficient phrase וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו to indicate that a break in the pattern is about to occur. Cheryl Exum points to the shortened form of the introduction and notes that although this may not be a significant feature in itself, the shortened formula, coupled with the break in the pattern that follows, is significant in that it draws the audience's attention to the change in the pattern.[31] She also indicates that the writer of the Samson saga often exploits exact repetition so that the slightest change would catch the audience's attention.[32] Since the use of the proper names and the explicit subject that have been used thus far are not grammatically required, it is significant to note that the writer chose to maintain the longer form of the introduction for the first three cycles only to utilize the more concise introduction for the final cycle.

Delilah's demand for the knowledge of Samson's strength is heightened in force as she says,אֵיךְ תֹּאמַר אֲהַבְתִּיךְ וְלִבְּךָ אֵין אִתִּי ("How can you say 'I love you', but your heart is not with me?"). This change in dialogue is significant since direct speech reveals a character's relationship to the action of the narrative and gives the audience an understanding of the character's point of view.[33] The use of the verbal root אהב draws a contrast between Delilah and Samson's wife. Including this occurrence, the verbal root is only used three times in the Samson saga. In 16:4 Samson loved Delilah and in 14:16 Samson's wife says that he does not love her in order to get him to reveal the answer to

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[31] Exum, "Literary Patterns," 174.

[32] Exum, "Harvesting the Biblical Narrator's Scanty Plot," 41

[33] Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 66; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 64.

the riddle. Delilah uses Samson's love in order to manipulate him, while his wife used the accusation of absence of love. However, both women obtain the same result. Samson declares the riddle to his wife "because she harassed (צוק) him," and he declared his secret to Delilah because she "harassed (צוק) him with her words every day." Delilah's story, being climactic and more detailed than the story of Samson's wife, includes the extra, hyperbolic detail that "she persisted harassing (אלץ) him and he became impatient to death."

Samson reveals to Delilah that the secret to his strength lies in the fact that מוֹרָה לֹא־עָלָה רֹאשִׁי כִּי־נְזִיר אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי ("a razor has never been upon my head because I am a Nazirite of God from my mother's womb"). He quotes, verbatim (allowing for the shift in person), what the divine messenger said to his mother in 13:5 (וּמוֹרָה לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ כִּי־נְזִיר אֱלֹהִים יִהְוֶה הַנַּעַר מִן־הַבָּטֶן) but does not occur again until here, on the lips of Samson. The formulaic expression that Samson has been repeating hitherto, וְחָלִתִי וְהָיִיתִי כְּאַחַד הָאָדָם, has been altered to end with כְּכָל־הָאָדָם. Furthermore, there is a change in the person of the verb of binding that Samson uses in the protasis. In the first two cycles he uses the third-person plural stating אִם־יַאַסְרֻנִי. In the third repetitive cycle he switches to the second-person, feminine singular, אִם־תַּאַרְגִי. However, in this final repeated unit Samson switches to the first-person, אִם־גִּלַּחְתִּי, indicating that the key to his humbling lies in his own agency rather than in the actions of others.[34] Although the passive verb still indicates that someone else needs to do the shaving, the movement to the first-person subject draws the narrative attention to Samson and his own surrender of his strength rather than the forceful capture of his strength implied in the use of the third and second-person verbs.

[34] Exum, "Literary Patterns," 178; Exum, "Harvesting the Biblical Narrator's Scanty Plot," 45–46.

The use of the first-person in the protasis and the changing of the formulaic apodosis seem to suggest that Samson knew that he was surrendering his power to Delilah. However, Samson's inner thoughts in v. 20, along with the reinforcement by the narrator, tell otherwise. Samson did not really believe that he would actually lose his strength by shaving his hair. It is here that the Philistines re-enter the action of the story as they seize Samson, gouge out his eyes, and capture him by taking him prisoner to Gaza. However, the narrator does not leave the story of the hero in this humbled position. The final statement of the scene foreshadows what will occur in the next scene as the narrator states that וַיָּחֶל שְׂעַר־רֹאשׁוֹ לְצִמֵּחַ כַּאֲשֶׁר גֻּלָּח ("the hair of his head began to grow").

Based upon the above analysis of Judg 16:4–22, the overarching plot revolves around the conflict between Samson and the Philistines. The problem in this scene is introduced in v. 5 when the Philistines make their proposition to Delilah. Robert O'Connell's rhetorical analysis of Judges supports this assessment since he identifies the main plot of the Samson saga as Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from the Philistines through Samson.[35] O'Connell asserts that all other plots in the narrative develop from this main plot, including the story of Samson and Delilah. Thus, this establishes the Philistines as the main antagonists of the story while Delilah functions as the means by which the Philistines attempt to overtake Samson. However, in this scene, the Philistines are relegated to the background since they play only a minor role in this scene. The only active roles they have are in v. 5 when they confront Delilah and in v. 21–22 when they capture Samson. Throughout the main events of the scene the Philistines are either

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[35] Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, VTSupp 63 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 204.

passive observers or not present. Instead, it is Delilah who is presented as the main character of the scene alongside Samson since the scene's main focus is on the dialogue and interactions between the two of them. Although the Philistines are the source of the conflict, Delilah is the character who brings the conflict into the action of the story.

Position of the Scene within the Tale

There are numerous studies that explore the narrative structure of the Samson saga. A detailed analysis of the Samson saga is outside the scope of this study; this section will focus on the climactic nature of the scene within the saga as well as the importance of the scene in Samson's heroic life.[36] As the climactic moment of the Samson saga, this scene depicts Samson's final moments before his capture and death by providing an explanation for how a strong, wild man like Samson could be captured. As mentioned above, the introduction of this scene breaks the repetitive pattern used to introduce major scenes in the Samson saga, which creates anticipation for the coming events. This anticipation is heightened by the fact that this scene also breaks the repetitive pattern of the book of Judges. There is a pattern to the introduction and conclusion of each judge, the Samson saga however breaks that pattern in more ways than one. Most notable here is that the encounter with Delilah occurs after the standard conclusion noting how long Samson judged Israel in Judg 15:20. This is the standard ending to a judge's tale, but Samson's

[36] For more detailed literary analyses of the Samson saga see, Blenkinsopp, "Structure and Style," 65–76; James L. Crenshaw, "The Samson Saga: Filial Devotion or Erotic Attachment?," *ZAW* 86 (1974): 470–504; Exum, "Literary Patterns in the Samson Saga," 46–186; Exum, "Aspects of Symmetry and Balance,"3–29; Jonker, "Samson in Double Vision," 55–66; Kim, *The Structure of the Samson Cycle*, 386–95.

story is not over. The break in this repetitive pattern increases the anticipation for the climatic events of the scene.

Taking into consideration that the standard pattern of heroic tales involves an initiation, various adventures, and a victorious return home, increases the sense of irony since Samson's climatic scene involves his downfall rather than his triumph.[37] The reversal of expectations functions as a theme throughout the Samson saga as traditional expectations are ironically inverted.[38] Moreover, the irony developed in the Samson saga functions as the peak of the Book of Judges as Samson represents the bottom of the downward trajectory in the success of the judges.[39] As the only judge with a birth story, Samson is depicted as the God-given savior, set apart as a Nazarite, who would begin (חלל) to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. However, after giving away the source of his power, the anticipation for an act of salvation dissipates as Delilah begins (חלל) to humble him.

Like most hero tales, the Samson saga contains a coming-of-age theme; the saga recounts the events in Samson's life as his moves from childhood into manhood. However, as Stephan Wilson demonstrates, the Samson saga does not depict a successful rite of passage but rather demonstrates Samson's failure to come of age.[40] Wilson

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[37] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 2nd ed., Bollingen 17 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 30; David Kenneth Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial of the Hero in Hebrew Bible Narrative" (PhD Dissertation, The University of Denver, 1992), 46; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 134.

[38] Trent Butler, *Judges*, WBC 8 (Nashville: Nelson, 2009), lxii; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 134.

[39] Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 58; Boling, *Judges*, 35–37, 240–41; Burney, *The Book of Judges*, xxxvi; Stone, "Judges," 202; Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 34.

[40] Stephen M. Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child: Failing to Come of Age in the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 133 (2014): 43–60; Stephen M. Wilson, *Making Men: The Male Coming-of-Age Theme in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 132–46.

describes Samson as a character who is caught in the transition between boyhood and manhood. In some ways Samson is described as a masculine character: he is strong, has long hair, and displays superior rhetorical skills through his use of riddles.[41] Yet, he is never referred to as a man (אִישׁ) or warrior (גִּבּוֹר חָיִל) like the judges who preceded him, rather he is referred to as a boy (נַעַר) or young man (בָּחוּר).[42] He is also depicted as having other childlike qualities like his lack of children, he impetuous nature, his relational connection to his parents, and his lack of solidarity with other men.[43]

As a person who is caught between boyhood and manhood, Samson is in a liminal phase. In rites of passage, liminal phases are temporary positions in which people reside as they move from one identity to another; it is a place betwixt and between.[44] However, for Samson liminality is a permanent condition.[45] Gregory Mobley details Samson's liminality regarding the dichotomies of field and house, agitation and rest, and male and female.[46] Wilson's work on Samson's failure to come of age adds another level to Samson' liminal nature: he is caught between youth and adulthood.

Wilson suggests that Samson's failure to mature functions within the book of Judges to reflect the Deuteronomistic concern for Israel's unstable social and political

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[41] Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 44–45; Wilson, *Making Men*, 134.

[42] Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 50.

[43] Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 45–49; Wilson, *Making Men*, 135–140.

[44] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 95.

[45] Gregory Mobley, *Samson and the Liminal Hero in the Ancient Near East*, LHBOTS 453 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 28.

[46] Mobley, *Samson and the Liminal Hero*, 63–64; 83–84; 95.

status during the period of the Judges.[47] Samson is often understood as a character who represents the people of Israel; thus, his failure to come of age is a reflection of the author's assessment of Israel's failure to come of age.[48] With regard to traditional literature in a broader sense, reading the Samson saga as a failure to come of age tale demonstrates how folk literature can be used to educate and socialize younger generations by giving them both positive models to emulate and negative models to avoid.[49] Samson's inability to achieve full manhood and become a successful judge who brings rest to the land is more apparent given Delilah's role and her masculine traits within the scene.

The Role and Function of Delilah

Upon accepting the proposition in v. 6, Delilah becomes an agent of the Philistines who is able to use her words and Samson's love to extract the secret to his great strength. Although it is Samson's love that gives Delilah an intimate relationship with Samson and makes her a prime target for the Philistines, it is not the reason for his downfall. The reason for Samson's downfall is his hubris coupled with Delilah's ability to use language

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[47] Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 57; Wilson, *Making Men*, 143–146.

[48] James L. Crenshaw, *Samson: A Secret Betrayed, A Vow Ignored* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978), 134; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 17; Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 34; Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 57; Gregory T.K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges*, VTSupp 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 233–34.

[49] Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 3–15; Hermann Gunkel, *The Folktale in the Old Testament*, trans. Michael D. Rutter (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1987), 22; Jack M. Sasson, "Literary Criticism, Folklore Scholarship, and Ugaritic Literature," in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 81–98; Wilson, "Samson the Man-Child," 57.

to achieve her goals.[50] Samson, confident in his own abilities, willingly partakes in Delilah's enticement game knowing that her intent is to overpower him. Samson is able to resist Delilah's advance initially, but in the end her skillful use of language is stronger than Samson's might. Delilah's use of her words to overpower Samson is made explicit in v.16 when the narrator describes the conditions leading up to Samson's truthful answer: כִּי־הֵצִיקָה לוֹ בִדְבָרֶיהָ כׇּל־הַיָּמִים.

Delilah's seduction tactic to discover Samson's secret is embedded in the narrative's overall theme of declaring knowledge.[51] The *Leitwort* נגד occurs 21 times in the Samson saga. Of those 21 occurrences, 6 appear within the Samson and Delilah story and are connected to the concept of having knowledge.[52] In the repeated narrative cycle, Delilah asks Samson to declare (נגד) his secret to her. But, the narrator includes the important detail that the secret of his strength was not known (וְלֹא נוֹדַע כֹּחוֹ). Therefore, the key to overpowering Samson's great strength is found in gaining possession of the knowledge of its source.[53] While Samson remains the sole possessor of this knowledge about the source of his strength, namely his naziritic status, he remains an unstoppable force; however, when he gives Delilah ownership of this knowledge, she is able to neutralize his strength. Samson seems to be unaware that the knowledge of the source of

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[50] Williams, *Women Recounted*, 90.

[51] J. Cheryl Exum, "Literary Patterns," 61; J. Cheryl Exum, "Aspects of Symmetry and Balance in the Samson Saga," *JSOT* 19 (1981): 3–29.

[52] The verbal root נגד occurs in 13:6, 10; 14:2, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19; 16:6, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18. The verbal root ידע occurs in 14:4; 15:11; 16:9, 20.

[53] Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 56; Carol Smith, "Samson and Delilah: A Parable of Power?," *JSOT* 76 (1997): 45–57.

his power is the key to his undoing. After Samson finally declares (נגד) the secret to Delilah in v. 17, v. 20 states that Samson did not know the consequences of giving this knowledge to Delilah (וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע כִּי יְהוָה סָר מֵעָלָיו). Delilah's task was to subdue his mind so that the Philistines could subdue his body, which she accomplished with great expertise.

For this scene, Delilah functions as the main actor. She initiates the conversation with Samson and takes the lead in sustaining the action by continually approaching him with the proposition that he reveal the secret of his strength to her and by confronting him when she discovers that he rejected her. Her role as the main actor led Mieke Bal to identify Delilah as the subject of the scene rather than Samson.[54] Although Delilah is the driving force of the scene, she remains underdeveloped as a character, representing a type rather than a full character.[55] A type is a flat character whose personality is built around one trait and who has a limited, stereotyped range of traits and actions.[56] In the scene, Delilah has a large portion of the direct speech, but her speech is highly repetitive and gives little information about her inner thoughts and feelings as a character. She works for the Philistines, but the narrator provides no insight into why she accepted their offer. As a character with no background or motivations she remains ambiguous. Her only role in the narrative is to reveal Samson's secret so he can be bound and humbled.

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[54] Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love*, 39, 56.

[55] J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 41.

[56] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 23.

Type-characters, like Delilah, display a stereotyped range of traits so they are often used to represent a certain class of people.[57] Delilah best represents the class of temptress, or as Susan Niditch says, she represents "the sort of dangerous traitorous woman about whom proverbial wisdom warns."[58] As a class, temptresses are a female version of a trickster, a character who uses trickery to bring about change in a situation and to accomplish their goals.[59] Most often the trickster is a powerless individual; therefore, the use of trickery becomes a form of power for the powerless.[60] As a female, Delilah is an individual with very little power, especially considering that even the leaders of the Philistines are powerless compared to Samson; hence they outsource their job to women. Delilah is described as an unattached woman since she has no familial or male connection which may give the allusion of power; but as a woman she is still limited in her power as noted in Ackerman's assessment of the phrase Samson loved Delilah discussed above.[61] In her limited position, Delilah must use the power she has to tempt and entice Samson.

The biblical temptresses, as demonstrated by Potiphar's wife and the women in Prov 2, 7, 9, are often depicted as the strange, foreign, and shadowy other.[62] Delilah fits

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[57] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 32.

[58] Susan Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero, Trickster, and Bandit: The Empowerment of the Weak," *CBQ* 52 (1990): 608–24.

[59] Susan Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), xi.

[60] Naomi Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters, Their Analogues, and Cross-Cultural Study," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 1–13.

[61] See page 150–51.

[62] Williams, *Women Recounted*, 88.

this description since she is a character wrapped in ambiguity. The narrator provides no clear evidence regarding her nationality. Interpreters assume she is most likely not an Israelite since she is a business partner with the Philistines and lives in Philistine territory.[63] Cheryl Exum challenges this assumption, suggesting that to assume Delilah is not an Israelite based upon her questionable morality is "to be lured into the ideology of the text."[64] If Delilah is an Israelite, then her ethnicity would add to the irony of the scene since Samson is humbled by a woman who is also engaged in Philistine liaisons like himself.[65] The lack of information concerning Delilah's background encourages the readers to fill the gaps with stereotypes about how women should and should not behave. In addition, the two other foreign women that Samson associates with are also described with little detail, encouraging the readers to conflate the three characters into one ambiguous, and thus dangerous, woman.[66] Even more unusual is her description, which not only gives no ethnicity but also no family ties nor any relationship to a man.[67] Her name is even shrouded in mystery since there is much debate concerning its meaning and origin.[68]

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[63] Butler, *Judges*, 348–49; Webb, *Judges*, 399.

[64] Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 48.

[65] Stone, "Judges," 413.

[66] Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 48–50.

[67] Blyth, *Reimagining Delilah's Afterlives*, 52; Butler, *Judges*, 348.

[68] The debate surrounding Delilah's name has to do with the nature of its etymology. It could be related to the Arabic word *dallatum* meaning "flirt," which is suitable considering her behavior. It could also be related to the Akkadian word *dalālum* meaning "to praise, glorify." Many also suggest it is related to the Hebrew *hallaylâ* meaning "night," which would place her in contrast with Samson, whose name means sun. The difficultly with the Hebrew name is Delilah's ethnicity. Although it is possible that she is an Israelite, based upon her behavior and her involvement with the Philistines, it is also reasonable to suggest that Delilah is a Philistine. See Webb, *Judges*, 398–9.

These shadowy temptress characters do not fit into the standard cultural norms depicted in narrative, leaving them to fill liminal spaces.[69] Liminal figures reflect transitional phases and a confusion of categories causing them to often be considered ambiguous and threatening.[70] The liminality of the temptress challenges social boundaries, defining her as a shaper of culture. This is particularly true for Delilah with regard to gender norms since she takes on many masculine characteristics throughout the scene. Her lack of connection to any male figure or family gives her agency over herself, which is typically a male prerogative.[71] She is in a sense liberated from male society and free to conduct her own business as she sees fit, which includes accepting the Philistine's proposition to entice Samson.[72]

Delilah's use of language to persuade and manipulate, a trait typical in temptresses, is another characteristic that masculinizes her. Masculinity studies identify having wisdom and the ability to persuade others as a highly coveted trait in males and a

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[69] Blyth, *Reimagining Delilah's Afterlives*, 16; Claudia V. Camp, "Wise and Strange: An Interpretation of the Female Imagery in Proverbs in Light of Trickster Mythology," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 14–36; Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy*, 99.

[70] Jennifer Johnson Williams, "Ambiguity, Liminality, and Unhomeliness in the Book of Judges: An Analysis of the Gendered Pairs and Families" (PhD Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2015), 24–25.

[71] Blyth, *Reimagining Delilah's Afterlives,* 52, 66–69.

[72] The ambiguity surrounding Delilah's nationality coupled with her accepting of the Philistine proposition makes one wonder if Delilah is a Philistine. However, before accepting the deal there is no reason to suspect that Delilah does not love Samson in return. Thus, Delilah seems to be a figure with flexible allegiances. As a character, Delilah's liminality is not limited to gender, her nationality is also in a liminal status. Steve Weitzman suggests that Delilah's liminal nationality, reflected in her altering allegiances, is meant to reflect the liminality of those living in the Shephelah during the period of the Judges. The Shephelah would have been a liminal territory somewhere between that of the Israelites and Philistines, with both groups staking a claim on the area. Thus, Delilah embodies this liminality in her allegiance with both Samson and the Philistines. See, Steve Weitzman, "The Samson Story as Border Fiction," *BibInt* 10 (2002): 158–74.

symbol of their masculinity.[73] But wisdom is not limited to males alone as noted in the various references to wisdom as a woman in wisdom literature. A better description would be to associate wisdom and persuasion with power, which is often limited to men. The ability to persuade others gives the persuader power over other individuals. Thus, it is the power that makes facility with words a coveted trait in males. The association between power and persuasion also accounts for the prevalence of this skill in temptresses.[74] As women with little to no inherent power, temptresses are left to alternative methods for procuring power; persuasion and wisdom are examples of such methods.

Delilah's masculinity and acquisition of power is heighted by its contrast to Samson's gradual loss of power and feminization. The scene depicts a gender and social role reversal between the two characters. At the beginning of the scene Samson is presented as the masculine, powerful hero; he has demonstrated superhuman strength in the previous scene by uprooting the city gates. Furthermore, Samson as a male who is higher on the social hierarchy holds a position of dominance over Delilah at the beginning of the scene. However, as the scene progresses Samson's position of power and dominance breaks down as Delilah refuses to remain in a subordinate position. Each time Delilah approaches Samson she asserts dominance in an attempt to gain the knowledge of his strength. Samson plays along by answering her question; but he

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[73] David J. A. Clines, "Dancing and Shining at Sinai: Playing the Man in Exodus 32–34," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*, The Bible in the Modern World 33, ed. Ovidiu Creangă (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 54–63; Susan E. Haddox, "Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*, The Bible in the Modern World 33, ed. Ovidiu Creangă (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 2–19.

[74] Camp, "Wise and Strange," 22; Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy*, 137–138; Smith, "Samson and Delilah," 47; Williams, *Women Recounted*, 90.

answers falsely, rejecting her assertion of dominance and reasserting his position of power. However, he does not maintain that power for long; as the scene unfolds there are numerous allusions not only to Samson's loss of dominance, but to his emasculation.

Throughout the scene there are numerous allusions to Samson's symbolic emasculation. From the beginning of the scene the Philistines are interested in binding Samson in order to humble him (לְעַנֹּתוֹ). The piel verb of the root ענה is often used in a sexual sense.[75] This word occurs three times within the scene and although it may not directly suggest sexual humiliation, the underlying implication is present. Before cutting off his hair, Delilah lays Samson upon her knees, which conjures images of childbearing, depicting Samson as an infant child rather than a mighty warrior. The image of a weakened Samson is heightened by the final occurrence of ענה in this scene. Here, in Judg 16:19, Samson is humbled, and Delilah is one who humbles him (וַתָּחֶל לְעַנּוֹתוֹ). Setting Delilah as the agent of ענה places her alongside the Philistines in a position of power over Samson.[76] This position of power, coupled with the fact that the subject of ענה is almost always a male, especially when it is used in a sexual context, masculinizes Delilah while feminizing Samson.

After the Philistines have captured Samson, they set him to grinding (טוֹחֵן) at the mill. The act of grinding is typically described as the work of women or slaves, diminishing Samson, the judge of Israel, to a lowly position.[77] In addition to all this, his

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[75] Examples of this use are found in Gen 34:2; Deut 21:14; 22:24; 29:2; 2 Sam 13:12, 14, 22, 31; Judg 19:24; 20:5; Lam 5:11; Ezek 22:10.

[76] Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy*, 102.

[77] Butler, *Judges*, 352; Stone, "Judges," 418; Niditch, *Judges*, 167. At times, the word טחן contains sexual implications. See Job 31:10; Isa 47:2; Lam 5:13.

hair has been shaven, which can be seen as an act of dominance and humiliation in itself, as in 2 Sam 10:3. For Samson, his hair is directly connected to his great strength and the source of his masculine image.[78] Thus, the loss of his hair is the same as the loss of his masculinity. At the moment of his shaving, the image of Samson passively laying in Delilah's lap being drained of his power and masculinity gives tremendous power to Delilah creating a more masculine image for her and thus highlighting her liminal status with regard to gender norms.[79]

The image of Samson as the emasculated hero is carried over into the next scene of the Samson saga. In this second scene, the Philistines demand that Samson dance (שׂחק) for them to further humiliate him. The verbal roots שׂחק and צחק, both used in this scene, can carry a sexual connotation.[80] Although the sexual implications may not be present in this scene, the image of Samson as entertainer contributes to his continued humiliation and the loss of his masculine identity. The image of Samson defeated and essentially emasculated aligns with ANE warrior culture that describes the defeated warrior as a woman.[81] The use of feminine language to describe these warriors draws on

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[78] Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, "Samson: Masculinity Lost (and Regained)," in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*, ed. Ovidiu Creangă, The Bible in the Modern World 33 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 171–88; Susan Niditch, *"My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man:" Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 67.

[79] As Camp notes, in the character of Delilah all boundaries are dissolved. See, Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy*, 134.

[80] Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, "Samson: Masculinity Lost," 180; Stone, "Judges," 419; Niditch, *Judges*, 171; Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 411. The root צחק most clearly has a sexual connotation in Gen 26:8. Susan Niditch also lists 2 Sam 6:5, 21–22; 1 Chron 15:29 as possible instances of the root שׂחק having a sexual undertone. Interestingly, the root צחק is used in Gen 39:14 by Potiphar's wife to describe Joseph's intents toward her household in her false accusation. This latter case demonstrates the negative outcome of a sexual encounter in another occurrence of the motif which is used here in Judg 16.

[81] Claudia D. Bergmann, "'We Have Seen the Enemy, and He Is Only a "She"': The Portrayal of Warriors as Women," in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames, Symposium 42 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical

the gendered stereotypes that associate men with strength and women with weakness and defeat. Using this metaphorical language suggests that the warrior has ultimately suffered defeat due to his own lack of will or courage.[82] This assessment of the warrior's failure holds true for Samson. The picture of a feminized Samson coupled with his use of the first-person verb when revealing his secret and his awareness of Delilah's goals, suggests that Samson's humiliation is by his own accord.[83]

Understanding the Samson saga as a potential coming-of-age tale as Samson leads Israel, places Delilah at a significant moment in Samson's life. As the climactic moment in the saga, the encounter with Delilah has the potential to usher Samson fully into manhood. In general, women play a role in the male coming-of-age process. Mothers educate young children in proper behavior and women, through sexual experiences, show boys how to be men.[84] But Delilah resides in a liminal space as a shadowy temptress whose sole purpose in the narrative is to create disorder, so she disrupts Samson's rite of passage. Rather than assisting Samson in becoming a man, Delilah strives for power by taking on masculine characteristics and in essence emasculates Samson. By humbling Samson, Delilah thwarts his coming-of-age journey and provides the means by which Samson, the warrior, is undone.

Literature, 2008), 129–42; Butler, *Judges*, 352; Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*, HSM 62 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 12–13; Niditch, *Judges*, 165–67; Webb, *Judges*, 406.

[82] Bergmann, "We Have Seen the Enemy," 141.

[83] See pages 10 and 15.

[84] Julia M. Asher-Greve, "Decisive Sex, Essential Gender," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th RAI, Helsinki, July 2–6, 2001*, CRRAI 47 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 11–26; Mobley, *Samson and the Liminal Hero*, 95; Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?," in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 68–87.

Heroes in traditional literature who are depicted as invincible frequently appear alongside villains to explain how the hero died by treachery.[85] The villain fills the role of providing a rationale for the death of a hero, who is otherwise depicted as invincible.[86] In this scene the Philistines fill the role of villain since they are the ones who are seeking to bind Samson. However, Delilah as the temptress is the means by which the Philistines are able to achieve their role as villain. Thus, she functions within the scene to explain how the villain was successful in capturing the invincible hero.

Conclusion

In terms of its general features, the scene revolves around the encounter between the woman and the hero as she approaches him with a proposition that he rejects three times. The repetitive sequence upon which the scene is built creates tension and accents the dramatic change in events when the hero gives into the women's proposition and reveals the secret of his strength. In this scene, the woman, Delilah, is the main character who drives the action of the narrative. The narrative centers upon her game of enticement that Samson willingly plays. Since the story is focused upon the enticement of Samson by Delilah, it can be described in more general terms as a story of the hero and the temptress.

The scene is developed as the climax of the Samson saga and the peak of his heroic career. His entire heroic career purports to function as a coming-of-age tale in which Samson undergoes a rite of passage and becomes a hero and leader in Israel. His

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[85] Orrin E. Klapp, "The Folk Hero," *The Journal of American Folklore* 62 (1949): 17–25.

[86] Klapp, "Folk Hero," 23.

success thus far demonstrates his heroic capabilities. His encounter with Delilah is his final test as judge. Success in this moment would establish Samson as a successful judge and give him elder status in the community. However, Delilah intervenes and asserts power over Samson, which impedes his ability to complete his rite of passage and achieve elder status. In her role as temptress, Delilah fills a liminal space regarding gender norms. Delilah's gender liminality contributes to the role reversal that takes place within the scene; she takes on a more masculine role as Samson is gradually emasculated or feminized. As a temptress figure who seeks to gain power, Delilah constantly asks Samson to give her the knowledge of the source of his strength. Therefore, her ultimate goal in gaining power is use that knowledge to overcome Samson's great strength and humble him. After three failed attempts to gain the desired knowledge, Samson concedes and reveals the secret to his great strength, resulting in his humiliation and loss of power alongside Delilah's acquisition of power.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis of the contents of the Samson and Delilah scene in Judg 16 has demonstrated that this scene is an ANE example of the "Hero and His Temptress" motif, traditionally referred to as the "Potiphar's Wife" motif. The scene in Judg 16 contains the same core events that are present in the other expressions of the motif, and the same characteristics are present in the two main actors of the scene. The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. One, I will examine the points of continuity and discontinuity between the Judg 16 scene and the three ANE tales, demonstrating that Judg 16 should be considered an example of the motif. Two, I will explore the significance of this motif for the interpretation of the Samson and Delilah encounter. Three, I will draw some conclusions regarding the interpretation of the motif in its ANE context.

Samson and Delilah as the Hero and His Temptress

General Elements of the Motif

Based upon the general elements of the three ANE tales, the motif contains two key events: the woman temptress approaches the hero, and the hero rejects her. At its core, the scene in Judg 16 is developed around the woman's approach of the hero and the hero's rejection of her in the form of his lie. Each representative of the motif varies in the

number of events contained within the scene. The sequence of the events, along with the narrative structure and plot, are the stable features required for a scene to adhere to the motif. Of the four tales, Judg 16 is the most elaborate iteration of the motif because it involves an extensive dialogue between the woman and the hero, and it contains the largest amount of trebling or event repetition. In the extended interaction between the woman and the hero, the hero's rejection of her approach is couched in the revelation of his lie. Rather than outright rejecting her advances like the heroes in the ANE tales, the hero in the Judg 16 scene feigns acceptance of the woman's offer. It is not until two events later that she recognizes his response as a lie and is rejected by the hero.

The other point of variation in the Judg 16 motif is the ending. In the other ANE forms of the motif the scene ends when one character leaves the scene in rejection of the other. In the *Tale of Two Brothers*, the hero rejects the woman and leaves the scene, while in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Tale of Aqhat*, the woman rejects the hero's rejection and leaves the scene. In the Judg 16 scene, the hero leaves the scene by force when he is captured. This iteration of the motif contains a reversal of the motif in the fourth repetitive cycle. In the other three tales the hero rejects the woman one or two times then the scene ends. In Judg 16 the hero rejects the woman three times, but the fourth time he concedes to her request. This alternate ending does not disqualify Judg 16 as an example of the motif, rather it demonstrates the flexibility with which the motif can be implemented. The stable features of the motif function as a foil to the distinctive ending of the Judg 16 scene, such that the inverted ending is made more apparent by the contrast.

Specific Elements of the Motif

In addition to the definition of the motif as a woman temptress approaches the hero with a proposition that the hero rejects, there are two specific elements that are included in the definition of the motif: the scene contributes to the hero's rite of passage and the woman functions as a liminal figure. Both of these specific elements are present in Judg 16 scene.

Just like the women in the three ANE tales, Delilah is the initiator of events and the main actor in the scene. She is the one who initially approaches Samson, and she continues to confront him each time he rejects her. Although the narrator places Delilah in a relatively subordinate position with the opening phrase Samson loved Delilah, Delilah's approach of Samson places her in a position of dominance as she attempts to overpower the strong man.[1] In the ANE scenes the women each want something from the men, so they attempt to overpower the heroes through enticement. Like these women, Delilah wants something too; she seeks the knowledge of the source of Samson's great strength so that she can bind him, humble him, and hand him over to the Philistines. She turns her proposition into a question by asking him from where his strength comes and by what means can he be bound. Implied in this question is the offer that Samson come and be bound by her. Unlike the other women, Delilah does not describe the benefits that Samson would receive by conceding to her. However, this is not the first interaction between these two characters. In contrast to the other tales, Delilah has a pre-established relationship with Samson; therefore, her proposition contains the implied benefits of their

[1] See pages 161–62 for a discussion of the phrase Samson loved Delilah and pages 180–81 for a discussion of Delilah's assertion of dominance through her approach.

relationship. If Samson submits to Delilah's request, his relationship with her will endure and grow by the added trust his submission would generate.

Delilah's character and actions in the scene define her as a temptress figure like Anat, Ishtar, and Anubis' wife. Delilah, like the other three women, is a liminal character shrouded in ambiguity. The lack of detail concerning Delilah's nature as a character leaves the audience to supply the required information based upon their general, cultural assumptions.[2] However, as a liminal figure Delilah defies those assumptions by blurring the boundaries between cultural categories and embodying a dual nature. She, like Anat, Ishtar, and Anubis' wife, demonstrates characteristics attributed to both men and women. As the scene progresses, Delilah moves into a position of masculine power so that Delilah becomes the masculinized character while Samson is restricted to the feminine role.[3]

Another key characteristic of the women in this motif is their deceptive use of language. In each tale, the women present their offer in a positive light to construct an image that they believe will entice the heroes into submission. Delilah also demonstrates the ability to utilize language to gain power. Unlike the other women, Delilah does not lie about or conceal her intentions, she openly tells Samson that she intends to bind him. However, she does use her words to breakdown his willpower. Samson refuses to concede to Delilah's advances until the end of the scene when the narrator in Judg 16:16 provides the reason for Samson's submission; Delilah's words overpowered him (כִּי־ הֵצִיקָה לוֹ בִדְבָרֶיהָ כׇּל־הַיָּמִים וַתְּאַלֲצֵהוּ).

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[2] See page 178 for a description of Delilah's ambiguous nature.

[3] See pages 179–81 for a discussion of this gender role reversal.

In each tale the scene involving the hero's encounter with the temptress occurs at a different moment in their narrative trajectory, but each scene contributes in a significant way to the hero's rite of passage. For the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Tale of Two Brothers*, the scene functions to introduce the conflict which initiates the hero's journey and subsequent rite of passage. In the *Tale of Aqhat*, the encounter with the goddess functions as a pivotal moment that disrupts Aqhat's rite of passage.[4] Delilah enters Samson's narrative journey at a climatic moment. Thus, there is a heightened expectation that something grandiose will occur, which serves to intensify the irony when the expectations are inverted.

Understanding heroic tales as rites of passage means the encounter with Delilah should represent the completion of Samson's rite and his full assumption of the role of leader or elder in the community. However, Samson's story depicts an unsuccessful rite and a failure to come of age, casting in Samson the image of an adolescent boy rather than an elder.[5] Samson's failure to come of age is due in part to Delilah, the liminal embodiment of order and chaos, asserting herself into his heroic journey. By entering the narrative at the end of Samson's journey, Delilah is well positioned to escort him into manhood as a successful hero. But Delilah as the temptress functions as the herald of destruction. She breaks down Samson's will power, asserts her dominance, and takes on a masculine role as she captures Samson and hands him over to his enemies. In a way, Delilah is the temptress *par excellence* of the ANE motif. She is the only woman who is

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[4] See pages 143–45 for a more detailed discussion on these themes.

[5] See pages 172–74 for a discussion of the scene as Samson's failure to come to age.

successful in achieving her goals, all the other temptresses are unable to obtain the objects of their desire.[6]

Function of the Motif in Judg 16

Having identified the motif in Judg 16, we must then consider the significance of the motif in the Samson saga. To what end does the author employ the motif? I propose the purpose of the motif in Judg 16 is threefold: to draw attention to the theme of Samson as a Nazirite, to make an assessment of Samson's character, and to make a theological statement.

Each tale may use the motif to highlight a different theme depending on the context of the larger tale. The *Tale of Aqhat* uses the motif to highlight the theme of life and death that pervades the entire text. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* uses the motif to accent the tension between Gilgamesh's heroic desires and royal obligations, which generates his persistent obsession with immortality. While in the *Tale of Two Brothers*, the motif draws attention to one's familial obligations.[7] In Judg 16 the motif demonstrates the importance of Samson's status as a Nazirite and the relationship that status signifies between himself and Yahweh.

From the beginning of the Samson saga, Samson is designated as a Nazirite. Even before his birth, Samson is set apart as the one will begin to deliver Israel from the

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[6] Although Anat is the only temptress to achieve deadly vengeance, she is still unsuccessful in her goal. She desires Aqhat's bow but is unable to obtain it in the initial, motif-containing scene. It is not until her next encounter with Aqhat, two scenes later, that she temporarily possesses the bow before it is broken, leaving Anat bowless.

[7] See pages 141–43 for a discussion of each of these themes.

Philistines. His naziritic status gives him a special relationship with Yahweh, as noted by the times that Yahweh stirs (פעם) and rushes upon him (צלח).[8] Samson's status as a Nazirite, which has been an underlying theme throughout the tale, comes sharply into focus during the Delilah scene. The entire goal of the scene is to discover the source of Samson's strength, which the audience keenly knows is his relationship with Yahweh, symbolized in his naziritic identity. The tension in the scene builds as Samson gets closer to revealing his secret. The movement from binding his body to binding his hair focuses upon his hair as the symbol of his naziritic status and directly contributes to the building tension. The shock comes once Samson reveals his naziritic status to Delilah.

After Samson declares his secret to Delilah, the narrator informs the audience of the change in Samson's relationship with Yahweh. Up until this moment Yahweh was close to Samson, as indicated by how the רוּחַ יְהוָה rushes upon him at moments of trouble. However, in this moment Yahweh removes himself from Samson's presence (סור) and the connection between the two is not mentioned again. Although it is implied that Yahweh answers Samson's prayer in Judg 16:28, there is no explicit mention by the narrator of Yahweh's movement or response. This is a glaring absence when contrasted with the seemingly constant narration of Yahweh's movement and prompting in the narrative prior to this moment.

The narrator uses Samson's moment of truthful confession to make an assessment of Samson. As Delilah shaves Samson, the final negating of his naziritic vow, the narrator indicates that not only did Yahweh leave him, but also that Samson did not

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[8] Judges 13:25 for פעם and Judg 14:6,19; 15:14 for צלח.

understand the full significance of this moment (וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע כִּי יְהוָה סָר מֵעָלָיו). Samson is either unaware of the privileged relationship with Yahweh that his naziritic vow gave him or he undervalues that relationship. Based upon his nonchalant attitude toward the various naziritic obligations, it seems that he undervalued the significance of his vow and its relationship to his strength.[9]

The presence of the motif in this scene situates Samson among the heroes of the ANE. The occurrence of the motif in each of these tales suggests that the audiences had some level of awareness of the other tales or at least an ability to recognize the motif. Through the motif, the author is signaling to the audience that they should interpret the interaction between Samson and Delilah through the lens of the other tales that also contain the motif. Thus, when Delilah approaches Samson the audience is encouraged to think about Aqhat, Gilgamesh, and Bata, and to compare their actions and fates to Samson's. The crucial moment comes when the narrator inverts the motif.

The entire Samson saga contains an air of irony as the narrator alludes to various type-scenes but uses them to subvert the audience's expectations by reversing or altering the scene. For example, Samson's tale begins with the annunciation of his birth to a barren woman. But the situation and even the name of the woman are omitted, bringing the child and his naziritic vow to the center of attention.[10] Biblical heroic tales often

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[9] Prior to this moment Samson twice violates the purity boundaries placed upon a Nazirite by touching dead animals. Samson's acts of consuming the honey found in the carcass of a lion and wielding a fresh donkey jawbone as a weapon indicate that he loosely follows the traditionally assumed naziritic regulations.

[10] Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, JSOTSup 68 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 111–15.

involve a betrothal type-scene in which the hero meets his future betrothed at a well.[11] However, when Samson meets his future betrothed there is no well and no act of ritual hospitality. Samson sees the woman, deems her appropriate in his own opinion, and leads his begrudging parents to get her for him. Along the way, their celebratory meal is the hasty consumption of honey which Samson retrieves from a lion carcass. From the beginning of his story, Samson is presented as the one judge who is well-positioned and advantaged to serve as Israel's savior: he is the child of pious, Israelite parents; he has a miraculous birth; and is set apart as a Nazirite.[12] His prosperous beginnings serve to increase the irony of reversal as he fails to live up to the expectation his origin promised. This pattern of ironic reversal reaches an apex when Samson bows to Delilah's will and inverts the motif.

In all four tales, the motif functions as an assessment of the hero. The temptresses function to lure the heroes into destruction and test their ability to withstand that temptation. Aqhat, Gilgamesh, and Bata all pass the test by resisting the temptation to submit to the temptress. In contrast, Samson is unable to withstand Delilah's approach. Throughout the Samson saga, and the even the entire book of Judges, the narrator remains a neutral voice that tells the stories without passing moral judgements on the judges, even when their behavior is questionable. However, by employing this motif and inverting the ending, the narrator is inviting the audience to make a moral judgement on Samson. The subversion of the motif accentuates Samson's failure to refuse the temptress

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[11] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 51, 61; Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 132.

[12] Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 115.

and, given the theme of his naziritic vow, his lack of loyalty to Yahweh. As the temptress figure, Delilah functions to test Samson's loyalty to his relationship and obligations.[13] In this case, she tests his loyalty to Yahweh via his naziritic vow and Samson fails the test. By placing Samson's status as a Nazirite at the center of the scene, the narrator indicates that "this is more than a story of a strong man enticed by a woman into revealing a secret that is his undoing. It is that of course but it is also the story of a man whose strength lies in his dedication to God."[14]

By using the motif in Judg 16, the writer makes a theological statement. The writer situates Samson among a cast of ANE heroes and sets up Samson, the shining one, the last judge, to be a great hero who saves Israel from their greatest adversary. But he fails in his task because he is unable to remain faithful to Yahweh. In passing judgement on Samson for being unfaithful to his vow, the narrator passes judgement on Israel by proxy.[15] Samson becomes representative of Israel who was given the advantage, via Yahweh's presence, to withstand the temptress – the religious practices of the Canaanites. However, just like Samson Israel failed to be faithful to Yahweh. Thus, the inversion of this motif in Samson's story proclaims to Israel that their salvation comes from Yahweh's strength alone and fidelity to him is the only way to overcome temptresses, in whatever form they are manifested.

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[13] Susan Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 110.

[14] J. Cheryl Exum, "Harvesting the Biblical Narrator's Scanty Plot of Ground: A Holistic Approach to Judges 16:4-22," in *Tehillah Le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey H. Tigay (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 39–46.

[15] See pages 173–74 for a discussion of Samson as representative of Israel.

Interpretation of the Motif

As Robert Culley affirms, the end goal of a structural study resides in the interpretation of the tale.[16] Thus, after examining the component parts of each individual tale and establishing the main features of the motif, it is now pertinent to turn to the interpretive significance of the motif and its features. Here I will consider the possible message conveyed by the motif in all its forms, since the tales, when taken together, can communicate a message that cannot be made by one tale alone.

The interpretive significance of the motif resides in its ability to subvert cultural norms. As a subversive voice, the motif redefines cultural categories by problematizing reality and imagining alternative possibilities.[17] The motif serves to subvert two cultural constructs: the values of hero culture and gender role distinctions.

Hero Culture

Since the protagonist in the motif is the masculine, hero character, the motif overtly engages with the values of the heroic lifestyle. The motif functions as a pivotal moment in the heroic journey which is portrayed as a rite of passage. The woman places a crux decision before the hero and his choice has a direct consequence upon his fate. Each hero faces a decision between the woman's enticing offer and the perceived loss of heroic

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[16] Robert C. Culley, "Structural Analysis: Is It Done With Mirrors?," *Interpretation* 28 (1974): 165–81.

[17] Herbert B. Huffmon, "Gender Subersion in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th RAI, Helsinki, July 2–6, 2001*, CRRAI 47 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 245–53.

status. Should I take the riches and immortality but relinquish my bow? Should I marry the goddess but surrender my heroic fame and glory? Should I sleep with my beautiful sister-in-law but violate my familial obligations? Should I be bound by my lover but relinquish my strength? In each case, the choice made seals the hero's fate. The "correct choice" of overcoming the obstacle of the temptress allows the hero to continue or begin his rite of passage, but the "wrong choice" leads to the loss of the heroic status and termination of his rite of passage.[18]

In her approach and presentation of the decision, the temptress targets the object or trait that defines the hero. Embedded in their culture, each tale presents a different coveted item, but each of the items function to define the hero as such. The temptress presents a challenge that the hero must overcome. However, embedded in that challenge is the subversion of the heroic expectation; the hero's strength will not help him succeed. The temptress functions as an assessment of the hero's socio-emotional strength. By nullifying the hero's physical strength, the motif subverts heroic culture that revels in strength and military prowess. The hero must find another avenue for success by relying on his wisdom and dedication to his task.

The purpose of the subversive voice is not always negative critique; it could be used to praise an undervalued perspective. The effect of the subversion can only be understood within the broader cultural milieu and in the cultural reaction to the subversive voice. Therefore, we can not state with certainty the goal of the subversion in

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[18] The *Tale of Aqhat* is the one case where the hero does not choose the woman's offer but dies anyway. However, his death is not part of the motif scene; it occurs in a later encounter with the woman. Thus, the tale as a whole says something different than the other tales but the motif maintains its structure and significance.

this motif. However, we can identify the possibilities. Based upon the ubiquitous connection between hero culture and strength, it is clear that this motif presents the limitations of physical strength. The motif could point to this limitation in order to praise wisdom and perseverance as valuable traits for heroic figures. Alternatively, it could serve as a polemic against the over glorification of warriors and the social ideals of war and violence.[19]

In addition to being a moment to critique the hero's reliance upon his physical strength, the motif also serves as a moment for the audience to consider the hero's character. The temptress serves as an assessment of the hero's character in the face of danger. Thus, the motif can be used to explore cultural anxieties and fears as each hero demonstrates a different disposition toward danger. Gilgamesh is presented as a hero who fears death. When he is presented with the threat of Ishtar, Gilgamesh avoids her at all costs. Aqhat, when presented with a threat, seems to bluntly accept the possibility of death. He informs Anat that he has no interest in immortality because he knows he will die. He even seems willing to hasten the process by insulting the goddess who has the power to deal deadly retribution. In contrast, Samson acts as though he is oblivious to the reality of death. When presented with a threat, Samson embraces danger with open arms. In confronting and subverting heroic culture and values, the motif presents an opportunity for the storyteller to discuss the human anxieties surrounding death by depicting the hero responding to a dangerous situation.

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[19] This supports Harris' interpretation of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Margalit's interpretation of the *Tale of Aqhat*, since both interpreters view their respective tales as a polemic against the norms and values of warrior society. Rikva Harris, *Gender and Aging in Mesopotamia* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); Baruch Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT: Text, Translation, Commentary*, BZAW 182 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 473–85.

Gender Role Distinctions

Embedded in the motif's engagement with hero culture is a statement concerning gender roles and boundaries. Heroic, warrior culture is traditionally marked by hyper-masculinity and the exclusion of women. By casting its characters as a male hero and a female temptress, the motif inevitably has something to say about gender roles. The difficulty resides in deciphering its message.

The women in the motif are characterized as temptresses who are liminal characters. In their liminality, these women embody a dual nature, challenging the binary oppositions upon which cultural boundaries are often formed. Traditional literature is often a platform to mediate binary oppositions and the trickster character, of which the temptress is a sub-category, is the one who represents and challenges cultural distinctions.[20]

In the motif, the women move into the socially dominant position and assert power in their attempt to subdue the heroes. This movement paints the women as the masculinized character and renders the hero as the feminized character. In the reversal of gender role norms, the motif demonstrates how gender roles are a social construct that need to be performed.[21] The male and female characters are defined by their performed actions. Therefore, the woman characters act like men and take on traditionally masculine

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[20] Claudia V. Camp, *Wise, Strange, and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*, JSOTSup 320 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 99; Naomi Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters, Their Analogues, and Cross-Cultural Study," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 1–13.

[21] Zainab Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 146.

positions. By derailing the social construction of gender roles, the motif can serve as a critique, suggesting that the boundaries need to be redrawn or eliminated altogether. Thus, the motif can claim that women can be just as heroic as men.

Alternatively, the motif can depict, in the negative sense, what happens when gender role boundaries are derailed and chaos reigns. The inversion of gender role norms can take on a carnivalesque nature in which the inversion serves a comedic function.[22] The comedic role of carnival reversals serves as an outlet for societal tension, but in the end supports and affirms the status quo.[23] It gives the participants a safe space to revel in the reversal and its consequences without actually altering reality. The motif's subversive voice could be used in this manner.

The temptresses take on a masculine position and nullify the hero's physical strength. Although, the heroes who are able to successfully defeat the temptress do not escape her clutches unscathed. Each hero takes on some level of damage, physical or emotional, from his encounter with the temptress. Aqhat loses his coveted bow and his life, Gilgamesh loses his beloved companion Enkidu, Bata is emasculated and loses his familial stability, and Samson loses his strength and his connection with Yahweh. These consequences cast a negative light upon the temptress; she is the villain in the scene. Thus, the motif can give voice to the anxiety men may have felt concerning female

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[22] Rikva Harris, "Images of Woman in the Gilgamesh Epic," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller, HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 221–30.

[23] Umberto Eco, "The Frames of Comic 'Freedom,'" in *Carnival!*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok and Marcia E. Erickson, Approaches to Semiotics 64 (New York: Mouton, 1984), 1–9.

power. The motif warns young men, who identify with the hero character, against the dangers of temptresses by demonstrating what can go awry when women are in power.

In its various interpretive possibilities, the motif provides an entrée into the moral world of the ANE. The motif problematizes life decisions by presenting cultural issues in narrative form. The motif provides space to process what it means to be a hero and what role men and women play in that process. Literary motifs can also provide a means for attaching significance to a particular narrative moment.[24] As performance literature that promotes audience participation, the significance of a motif in traditional literature relies heavily upon the audience's reaction to and reception of the motif. Depending upon the cultural values and perspective at the time, a subversive voice could serve to either support or critique social constructs. The "Hero and His Temptress" motif provides a platform for subverting the norms of hero culture and gender role boundaries. However, the message projected from that platform resides in the hands of the narrator and the audience.

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[24] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 60.

APPENDIX: TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Translation of KTU 1.17 15–47[1]

[15][krpnh . tdy .] l arṣ .	[15] Her goblet she pours to the ground,
ksh . tšpkm [16] [l ʿpr .	Her cup she pours [16] to the dust.
tšu . gh .] w tṣḥ .	She lifts her voice and cries out.
šmʿ . mʿ [17] [l aqht . ǵzr .	"Listen indeed, [17] Aqhat Hero,
i]rš . ksp . w atnk	Ask for silver and I will give it to you,
[18] [ḫrṣ . w aš]lḫk .	(ask for) [18] gold and I will send it to you.
w tn . qštk . ʿm [19] [btlt .] ʿn[t .]	But give your bow to [19] Maiden Anat,
qṣʿtk . ybmt . limm	(give) your arrows to *Ybmt-Limm*."
[20] w yʿn . aqht . ǵzr .	[20] Aqhat Hero answered:
adr . ṯqbm [21] b lbnn .	"Mighty is[2] the wood from [21] Lebanon,
adr . gdm . b rumm	mighty are the sinews of wild oxen,
[22] adr . qrnt . b yʿlm .	[22] mighty are the horns of an ibex,
mtnm [23] b ʿqbt . ṯr .	(mighty are) tendons [23] from the heels of a bull,
adr . b ǵl il . qnm	mighty are the reeds from *Gl'il*.
[24] tn . l kṯr . w ḫss .	[24] Give (these) to Kothar-wa-Hasis
ybʿl . qšt . l ʿnt	And he will make a bow for Anat

[1] The presented text is from Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places: KTU*, 2nd ed. (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).

[2] There are a few translational options for the word *adr* due to its ambiguity. The word can be either the adjectival form or the verbal form of the root *adr*. The ambiguity resides in the fact that we would expect it to match the subsequent nouns in gender and number, which it does not. As an adjective, there are two translational options: an attributive adjective or a superlative. As a verb, *adr* is a stative verb. In my translation, I have choses to follow Dijkstra and de Moor and use a stative verb form. The adjectival translation options are demonstrated in the translations of Coogan and Smith, Parker, and Wyatt. Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, eds., *Stories From Ancient Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 40; Meindert Dijkstra and Johannes C. de Moor, "Problematical Passages in the Legend of AQHATU," *UF* 7 (1975): 171–215; Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, WAW 9 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 60–61; Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed., Biblical Seminar 53 (New York: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 272-73.

[25] qṣ ʿt . l ybmt . limm .	(he will make) [25] arrows for *Ybmt-Limm.*"
w t ʿn . btlt [26] ʿnt . *irš . ḫym . l aqht . ǵzr* *[27] irš . ḫym . w atnk .* *blmt [28] w ašlḫk .* *ašsprk . ʿm . b ʿl [29] šnt .* *ʿm . bn il . tspr . yrḫm* *[30] k b ʿl . k yḫwy . y ʿšr .* *ḫwy . y ʿš [31]r . w yšqynh .*	Maiden [26]Anat answered: "Ask for life, Aqhat hero, [27] Ask for life and I will give it to you, (ask for) deathlessness [28] and I will send to you. I will make you count [29] years with Baal, With sons of El you will count months. [30] Like Baal, when he revives, feasts. He gives a feast to the living one [31]and gives him drink. He sings a song in his honor, [32] With pleasant tune they respond. So, I will make [33]Aqhat Hero live."
ybd . w yšr . ʿlh *[32] n ʿm[n . w t] ʿnynn .* *ap ank . aḫwy [33] aqht[. ǵz]r .*	
w . y ʿn . aqht . ǵzr *[34] al . tšrgn . y btltm .* *dm . l ǵzr [35] šrgk . ḫḫm .* *mt . uḫryt . mh . yqḫ* *[36] mh . yqḫ . mt . aṯryt .* *spsg . ysk [37] [l] riš .* *ḫrṣ . l ẓr . qdqdy* *[38] [ap] mt . kl . amt .* *w an . mtm . amt* *[39] [ap . m]ṯn . rgmm . argm .* *qštm [40] [k l .] mhrm .* *ht . tṣdn . tinṯt*	Aqhat Hero answered: [34] "Do not lie Maiden, For to a hero [35] your lies are rubbish. A mortal, what does he get in the end? [36] A mortal gets what is his fate? Glaze is poured [37] on the head, Lye all over the skull. [38] Indeed, the death of all I shall die. I too will die and be dead. [39] Indeed, a second word I will speak: Bows are for [40] warriors. Now will women hunt?"
[41] [b hm g]m . tṣḫq . ʿnt . *w b lb . tqny* *[42] [aṯb .] ṯb . ly . l aqht . ǵzr .* *ṯb ly w lk* *[43] [---] hm . aqryk . b ntb . pš ʿ* *[44] [---] - . b ntb . gan .* *ašqlk . tḫt [45] [p ʿny .* *a]nk . n ʿmn . ʿmq . nšm* *[46] [td ʿṣ . p ʿ]nm .* *w tr . arṣ . idk* *[47] [l ttn . p]nm . ʿm . il .* *mbk . nhrm*	[41] Anat laughed, but in her heart, she plots. [42] Leave me Aqhat Hero. Leave me and go. [43] If I find you on the path of rebellion, [44] In the path of pride, I will trample you under [45] my foot, You fine, clever man. [46] She stands on her feet, And the earth shakes. [47] Then she sets her face toward El.

Translation of GE VI 1–81[3]

[1] im-si ma-le-šu ub-bi-ib til-le-šu	[1] He washed his filth, and he cleaned his equipment.
ú-na-si-is qim-mai-su e-lu ṣe-ri-šu	He shook his hair upon his back.
id-di mar-šu-ti-šu it-tal-bi-šá za-ku-ti-šu	He cast aside his dirty things, he clothed himself with his clean things.
a-ṣa-a-ti it-taḫ-li-pa-am-ma ra-kis a-gu-uḫ-ḫu	In cloaks he wrapped himself, tied with a sash.
[5] GIŠ-gim-maš a-ga-šú i-te-ep-ra-ami-ma	[5] Gilgamesh placed his crown.
a-na dum-qi ša GIŠ-gim-maš i-ni it-ta-ši ru-bu-tú ištar	Upon the beauty of Gilgamesh, Queen Ishtar lifted her eyes.
al-kám-ma GIŠ-gim-maš lu-ú ha-ʾ-ir at-ta	"Come Gilgamesh, you be the groom.
in-bi-ka-ia-a-si qa-a-šu qí-šam-ma	Give your fruits to me, I insist.
at-ta lu-ú mu-ti-ma ana-ku lu-ú áš-šat-ka	You will be my husband and I will be your wife.
[10] lu-šá-aṣ-mid-ka narkabti uqnî ù ḫurāṣi	[10] Let me harness for you a chariot of lapis lazuli and gold,
šá ma-gar-ru-šá ḫurāṣum-ma el-mi-šú qar-na-a-šá	whose wheels are gold and whose horns are amber.
lu-ú ṣa-am-da-ta ūmī ku-da-nu rabûti	You will harness "storm-lions," large mules.
a-na bīti-ni i-na sa-am-ma-ti erēni er-ba	Into our house with fragrances of cedar, come.
a-na bīti-ni i-na e-re-bi-ka	Into our house, when you come,
[15] sip-pu a-rat-tu-ú li-na-áš-ši-qu šēpī-ka	[15] doorway and throne will kiss your feet.
lu kám-su ina šap-li-ka šarrū kabtūtu u rubû	They will kneel to you, kings, lords, and nobles.
[ka-la l]i-qit šadî u māti lu-u na-šu-nik-ka bil-tu	[*all the*] produce of the mountains and lands they will bring you as tribute.
enzātu-ka tak-ši-i laḫrātu-ka tu-ʾ-a-mi li-li-da	Your goats will have triplets, your ewes will bear twins.
mūr-ka ina [b]il-ti parâ li-ba-ʾa	Your donkey under a load will pass a mule.
[20] sīsû-ka ina narkabti lu-ú šá-ru-uḫ la-sa-mu	[20] Your horse with a chariot will gallop gloriously.
[a]lap-ka i-na ni-i-ri šá-ni-na a-a ir-ši	Your ox with a yoke will gain no rival."

[3] The presented text is from A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Cuneiform Texts*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 618–31.

[GIŠ-gim-maš]pa-a-šú i-pu-uš-ma iqabbi
[i-zak-ka-r]a a-na ru-bu-ti iš-tar
[ul-tu-ma ana-k]u a-na ka-a-ši aḫ-ḫ[a-z]u-ki
[25][.....-š]I pag-ri ù ṣu-ba-a-ti
[……] ku-ru-um-ma-ti ù [b]u-bu-ti
[tu-šak-kal-in-ni a]k-la si-ma[t i]lu-ú-ti
[ku-ru-un-na ta-šaq-q] a-a si-m[at š]arru-ú-ti
[…….....l]u-u-ʾ-il
[30][……] lu-u-uš-pu-uk
[…… -ḫal-l]i-pa na-aḫ-lap-tu
[man-nu…a-na ka-a-š]i iḫ-ḫa-az-ki
[…la ka-ṣi-ra]t šu-ri-pu
dalat ár-ka-bi-[in-ni šá la i]-kal-lu-ú šāra u zi-i-qa
[35] ēkallu mu-nap-p[i-ṣa-at (…)] qar-ra-di
pi-i-ru […….] ku-tùm-mi-šá
it-tu-ú mu-ṭ[ap-pi-lat] na-ši-šá
na-a-da m[u-r]a-sa-a[t] na-ši-šá

pi-i-lu m[u-x (x)]x-at dūr abni

[40] ia-šu-bu-ú mu-ab-bi-t[a-at] d[ūr] māt nu-kúr-ti
šēnu mu-na-ši-kát šēpī bēli-šá
a-a-ú ḫa-me-ra-ki i-b[u]r ana da-riš
a-a-ú al-lal-ki [šá ana šamê] i-lu-ú

al-kim-ma lu-up-pi-[iš mi-na-t]a ḫa-ar-mi-ki
[45] šá bu-di-im-ma x ta x[…] i-di-šú
a-na dumu-zi ḫa-mi-ri ṣu-uḫre-ti-ki
šat-ta a-na šat-ti bi-tak-ka-a tal-ti-meš-šú

al-la-lá bit-ru-ma ta-ra-me-ma
tam-ḫa-ṣi-šu-ma kap-pa-šu tal-te-eb-ri
[50] iz-za-az ina qí-šá-tim i-šas-si kap-pi

ta-ra-mi-ma nēša ga-mi-ir e-mu-qi
tu-uḫ-tar-ri-iš-šú 7 u 7 šu-ut-ta-a-ti
ta-ra-mi-ma sīsâ na-ʾ-id qab-li
iš-tuḫ-ḫa ziq-ti u dir-ra-ta tal-ti-meš-šu

[*Gilgamesh*] opened his mouth and spoke, calling to Queen Ishtar.
[*If indeed I were*] to marry you,

[25] [….] my body and my clothing
[……] my food and my sustenance
[*Will you feed me*] bread fit for a god?
[*Will you pour me wine*] fit for a king?

[……] shall I bind?
[30] [……] shall I pile up?
[…….] wrap in a cloak?
[*Who…*] would marry you?
[……*that does not solidify*] ice,
an *arkabinnu*-door [*that does not*] hold back wind and draft,
[35] a palace that smashes heroes,
an elephant [……] its coverings,
a pitch that [stains] the one who carries it,
a waterskin that [wets] the one who carries it,
a foundation stone that […] a city wall of stone
[40] a battering ram that destroys [the walls] of the enemy land,
a shoe that bites the foot of its master.
Which of your lovers lasted forever?
Which of your warriors went up [to the heavens?]
Come, let me count the number of your lovers.
[45] As for him [……] his arm.
To Dumuzi, the lover of your youth:
Year to year you have destined him to weeping.
The many colored allallu-bird you loved.
You struck him and broke his wing.
[50] He stands in the woods and calls, “my wing!”
You loved a lion, perfect of strength,
you have dug for him 7 and 7 pits.
You loved a horse, trustworthy of battle,
whip barbs and lash you have decreed for him,

55 7 bēr la-sa-ma tal-ti-meš-šu	55 seven-league running you have decreed for him,
da-la-ḫu ù šá-ta-a tal-ti-meš-šu	muddy drinking water you have decreed for him,
a-na ummi-šú si-li-li bi-tak-ka-a tal-ti-me	to his mother Silili, peretual weeping you have decreed.
ta-ra-mi-ma re-ʾ-a na-qid-da ú-tul-lum	You loved a shepherd, a herdsman, the chief shepherd,
[šá k]a-a-a-nam-ma tu-um-ri iš-pu-kak-ki	who constantly piled up ashes for you,
60 [u-m]i-šam-ma ú-ṭa-ba-ḫa-ak-ki ú-ni-qe-ti	60 daily he slaughtered she goats for you.
[tam-ḫ]a-ṣi-šu-ma a-na barbari tu-ut-ter-ri-šu	You struck him and turned him into a wolf,
ú-ṭa-ar-ra-du-šu ka-par-ru šá ram-ni-šu	so that his own shepherd boys drive him off
u kalbū-šu ú-na-áš-šá-ku šap-ri-šu	and his dogs bite at his thighs.
ta-ra-mi-ma i-šu-ul-la-nu nukaribbi abi-ki	You loved Ishullanu, the gardener of your father,
65 ša ka-a-a-nam-ma šu-gu-ra-a na-šak-ki	65 who constantly brought you baskets of dates,
u-mi-šam-ma ú-nam-ma-ru pa-áš-šur-ki	daily he brightened your table.
i-na ta-at-ta-ši-šum-ma ta-tal-kiš-šu	You lifted your eyes to him and went to him.
i-šu-ul-la-ni-ia kiš-šu-ta-ki i ni-kul	O my Ishullanu, let's taste your might,
ù qa-at-ka šu-ṣa-am-ma lu-pu-ut ḫur-da-at-ni	put out your hand and touch our vulva.
70 i-šu-ul-la-nu i-qab-bi-ki	70 Ishullanu spoke to you.
ia-a-ši mi-na-a ter-re-ši-in-ni	Me, why do you ask for me?
um-mi la te-pa-a a-na-ku la a-kul	Did not my mother bake? Did not I eat?
šá ak-ka-lu akal pi-šá-a-ti u er-re-e-ti	Am I the one who eats bread of insults and curses,
šá ku-uṣ-ṣi el-pe-tu ku-tùm-mu-ú-a	that I should have reeds as my covering against the cold?
75 at-ti taš-mi-ma an-na-a qa-[ba-a-šu]	75 You heard this [his talking],
tam-ḫa-ṣi-šu a-na dal-la-li tu-ut-[ter-ri-šu]	you struck him, you turned him into a frog/dwarf.
tu-še-ši-bi-šu-ma ina qa-bal ma-na-[ḫa-(a)-ti-šu]	You set him in the middle of his toil,
ul e-lu-ú mi-iḫ-ḫa ul a-rid da-l [u x x x x]	he cannot go up…he cannot go down…
u ia-a-ši ta-ram-mìn-ni-ma ki-i šá-šu-nu t[u-tar-rin-ni]	But me you would love as them? As them you would change me?
80 iš-tar an-na-a ina [še-me-e-šá]	80 When Ishtar heard this,
iš-tar ug-gu-gat-ma a-na šá-ma-mi [i-li]	Ishtar was furious and she went up to heaven.

Translation of P. D'Orbiney 3,4–4,2[4]

jw.f ḥr ꜣtp.f (3,4) m jt bd.t	(3,4) He was loaded with barley and spelt.
jw.f ḥ pr[.t] ḫr.sn	He was coming out with them.
wn jn.s ḏd n.f	Then she spoke to him,
jḫ šꜣw [nꜣ] ntj ḥr rmn.k	"What amount is under your shoulder."
wn jn.f ḏd n.s	Then he spoke to her,
bd.t (3,5) ḫꜣr 3 jt ḫꜣr 2 ḏmd 5	"3 bushels of spelt, (3,5) two bushels of
nꜣ ntj ḥr rmn. j	barley, a total of 5 is under my shoulders."
jy nf[5] ḥr ḏd n.s	Thus, he spoke to her.
wn jn.s [ḥr zdt mdy].f m ḏd	Then she spoke with reference to him, with the words,
wn pḥ.tj (3,6) ꜥꜣ jm.k	"Great strength (3,6) is in you,
ḫr-tw.j ḥr ptr nꜣy.k ṯnr m-mnt	and I am seeing your strength daily."
jw jb.s r rḫ.f m rḫ n ꜥḥꜣw.tj	It was in her heart to know him, as one knows a man.
wn jn.s ḥr (3,7) ꜥḥꜥ	Then she (3,7) rose.
jw.s mḥ jm.f	She was enamored with him.
jw.s ḏd n.f	She was speaking to him,
mꜥj[6] jry.n n.n wnw.t sḏr.w	"Come, let us make for ourselves an hour to recline.
ꜣḫ n.k pꜣy	This will be good for you.
kꜣ jry.j (3,8) n.k ḥbs.w ntf.w	Certainly, I will make (3,8) good clothes for you."

[4] The transliteration presented follows that of Wolfgang Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern: Der Papyrus d'Orbiney und die Königsideologie der Ramessiden*, OBO 195 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 54–55. The hieroglyphic text can be found in Alan Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 1 (Bruxelles: Foundation Égyptologique Reine Élisabath, 1932); Charles E. Moldenke, *The Tale of the Two Brothers: A Fairy Tale of Ancient Egypt* (Watchung NJ: The Elsinore Press, 1898).

[5] Wettengel transliterates this phrase as *j.n=f*. Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 54.

[6] Wettengel transliterates this word as *mj*. Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 54.

<u>wn jn</u> pꜣ ꜥḏd ḥr [*ḫp*]*r mj ꜣby šmꜥw m ꜥnd* *[…] ḥr pꜣ smj (3,9)bjn* *j.ḏdn.s n.f* *jw.s snḏ.[t]w r jqr jqr*	Then the young man became like a southern panther in a great rage on account of this wicked speech (3,9), which she spoke to him. She was very afraid.
<u>wn jn.f</u> ḥr dt mdy.s[7] *m ḏd*	Then he spoke with reference to her, with the words,
ḫr mꜥk tw.j[8] *(3,10) mdy.y m sḫr n mwt* *ḫr pꜣy.t hꜣy mdy.y m sḫr jtf* *ḫr pꜣ ꜥꜣ r.j mnt.f sḫpr.y* *jḫ (4,1) pꜣy btꜣw ꜥꜣ j.ḏd[.t] n.j* *m jr ḏd.f n.j ꜥn* *ḫr nn jw.j r.ḏd f n wꜥn* *ḫr bn jw.j r dj.t pr.f m rꜣ.j n rmṯ (4,2) nb*	"Now (3,10) to me, you are like a mother. As for your husband, he is to me like a father. For he is older than me and he supported me. Oh! (4,1) This great wickedness which you have spoken to me, Do not speak to me again. For I am not going to speak to one person, I am not going to let it come out from my mouth."
jw.f ḥr fꜣj[.t] tꜣy.f ꜣtp *jw.f ḥr šm.t nf. r sḫt*	(4,2) He loaded his load. He went to him, to the field.

[7] Wettengel transliterates this phrase as *md.t m-dj=s.* Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 55.

[8] Wettengel transliterates this phrase as *ḫr-mk tw=t.* Wettengel, *Die Erzählung von den beiden Brüdern*, 55.

Translation of Judges 16:4–22

4 וַיְהִי֙ אַחֲרֵי־כֵ֔ן וַיֶּאֱהַ֖ב אִשָּׁ֑ה בְּנַ֣חַל שֹׂרֵ֔ק וּשְׁמָ֖הּ דְּלִילָֽה׃	4 After this, he loved a woman in the Sorek valley, and her name was Delilah.
5 וַיַּֽעֲל֣וּ אֵלֶ֗יהָ סַרְנֵ֤י פְלִשְׁתִּים֙ וַיֹּ֣אמְרוּ לָ֔הּ פַּתִּ֖י אוֹתוֹ֑ וּרְאִי֙ בַּמֶּ֣ה כֹחוֹ֣ גָד֔וֹל וּבַמֶּ֥ה נוּכַ֖ל לוֹ֑ וַאֲסַרְנֵ֣הוּ לְעַנֹּתֹ֔ו וַאֲנַ֥חְנוּ֙ נִתַּן־לָ֔ךְ אִ֖ישׁ אֶ֣לֶף וּמֵאָ֥ה כָֽסֶף׃	5 The Philistines leaders went up to her and they said to her, “Entice him and see where his great strength lies and how we can overpower him and bind him to humble him; and we will give you one thousand one hundred pieces of silver each.
6 וַתֹּ֤אמֶר דְּלִילָה֙ אֶל־שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן הַגִּֽידָה־נָּ֥א לִ֖י בַּמֶּ֣ה כֹחֲךָ֣ גָד֑וֹל וּבַמֶּ֥ה תֵאָסֵ֖ר לְעַנּוֹתֶֽךָ׃	6 Delilah said to Samson, “Please declare to me where your great strength lies and how you can be bound to humble you.”
7 וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן אִם־יַאַסְרֻ֕נִי בְּשִׁבְעָ֥ה יְתָרִ֖ים לַחִ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־חֹרָ֖בוּ וְחָלִ֣יתִי וְהָיִ֔יתִי כְּאַחַ֖ד הָאָדָֽם׃	7 Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that are not dried out, then I would become weak and I would become like any human.”
8 וַיַּֽעֲל֣וּ לָ֗הּ סַרְנֵ֤י פְלִשְׁתִּים֙ שִׁבְעָ֣ה יְתָרִ֣ים לַחִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־חֹרָ֖בוּ וַתַּאַסְרֵ֣הוּ בָהֶ֑ם׃ 9 וְהָאֹרֵ֣ב יֹשֵׁ֣ב לָהּ֮ בַּחֶ֣דֶר וַתֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלָ֗יו פְּלִשְׁתִּ֤ים עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן	8 The Philistine leaders brought to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not dried out and she bound him with them. 9 While the ambush was waiting for her in the inner chamber, she said to him “The Philistines are upon you Samson!”
וַיְנַתֵּ֖ק אֶת־הַיְתָרִ֑ים כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר יִנָּתֵ֗ק פְּתִיל־הַנְּעֹרֶ֙ת֙ בַּהֲרִיחַ֣וֹ אֵ֔שׁ וְלֹ֥א נוֹדַ֖ע כֹּחֹֽו׃	He tore away the bowstrings, just as a strand of fiber is torn when it draws near to fire. So, his great strength was not known.

10 וַתֹּ֨אמֶר דְּלִילָ֜ה אֶל־שִׁמְשׁ֗וֹן הִנֵּ֤ה הֵתַ֙לְתָּ֙ בִּ֣י וַתְּדַבֵּ֔ר אֵלַ֖י כְּזָבִ֑ים עַתָּ֕ה הַגִּֽידָה־נָּ֥א לִ֛י בַּמֶּ֖ה תֵּאָסֵֽר׃	10 Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now please declare to me how you can be bound."
11 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלֶ֗יהָ אִם־אָסֹ֤ור יַאַסְרוּנִי֙ בַּעֲבֹתִ֣ים חֲדָשִׁ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־נַעֲשָׂ֖ה בָּהֶ֑ם מְלָאכָ֔ה וְחָלִ֙יתִי֙ וְהָיִ֣יתִי כְּאַחַ֔ד הָאָדָֽם׃	11 He said to her, "If they securely bind me with new ropes, with which work has not been done, then I would become weak and I would become like any human."
12 וַתִּקַּ֤ח דְּלִילָה֙ עֲבֹתִ֣ים חֲדָשִׁ֔ים וַתַּאַסְרֵ֖הוּ בָּהֶ֑ם וַתֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלָ֗יו פְּלִשְׁתִּ֤ים עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ שִׁמְשׁ֔וֹן וְהָאֹרֵ֖ב יֹשֵׁ֣ב בֶּחָדֶ֑ר	12 Delilah took new ropes and she bound him with them. Then said to him, "The Philistines are upon you Samson!" (The ambush was waiting in the inner chamber.)
וַיְנַתְּקֵ֥ם מֵעַ֖ל זְרֹעֹתָ֑יו כַּחוּט׃	He tore them from upon his arms like thread.
13 וַתֹּ֨אמֶר דְּלִילָ֜ה אֶל־שִׁמְשׁ֗וֹן עַד־הֵ֤נָּה הֵתַ֙לְתָּ֙ בִּ֣י וַתְּדַבֵּ֔ר אֵלַ֖י כְּזָבִ֑ים הַגִּ֣ידָה לִּ֔י בַּמֶּ֖ה תֵּאָסֵֽר׃	13 Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Declare to me how you can be bound."
וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלֶ֗יהָ אִם־תַּאַרְגִ֤י אֶת־שֶׁ֙בַע֙ מַחְלְפֹ֣ות רֹאשִׁ֔י עִם־הַמַּסָּכֶ֖ת׃ [וְתָקַעַתְּ בַּיָּתֵ֔ד אֶל־הַקִּ֖יר וְחָלִ֣יתִי וְהָיִ֣יתִי כְּאַחַ֔ד הָאָדָֽם][9]	He said to her, "If you weave the seven plaits of my head with a web [*and fasten it with a pin, then I would become weak and I would be like any human*.]

[9] Although this apodosis is lacking in the MT, it is included in the LXX suggesting it may have been in the text but has been lost via *homoioteleuton* in the process of transmission. Based upon the witness in the LXX and the highly repetitive nature of this story the textual emendation should be followed to restore the apodosis. See, Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC 6 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 458; Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, AB 6A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 249; C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes*, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1920), 380–82; J. Cheryl Exum, "Literary Patterns in the Samson Saga: An Investigation of Rhetorical Style in Biblical Prose" (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1976), 171; Jichan Kim, *The*

14 וַתִּתְקַע בַּיָּתֵד וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו פְּלִשְׁתִּים עָלֶיךָ שִׁמְשׁוֹן

14 She thrust the pin and she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you Samson!"

וַיִּיקַץ מִשְּׁנָתוֹ וַיִּסַּע אֶת־הַיָּתֵד הָאֶרֶג וְאֶת־הַמַּסָּכֶת׃

He awoke from his sleep and he pulled out the pin, the loom, and the web.

15 וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֵיךְ תֹּאמַר אֲהַבְתִּיךְ וְלִבְּךָ אֵין אִתִּי זֶה שָׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים הֵתַלְתָּ בִּי וְלֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי בַּמֶּה כֹחֲךָ גָדוֹל׃ 16 וַיְהִי כִּי־הֵצִיקָה לוֹ בִדְבָרֶיהָ כָּל־הַיָּמִים וַתְּאַלְּצֵהוּ וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת׃

15 She said to him, "How can you say 'I love you' but your heart is not with me? This is three times you have mocked me, and you have not declared to me where your great strength lies." 16 Because she harassed him with her words every day and she pressed him, his soul was shortened until death.[10]

17 וַיַּגֶּד־לָהּ אֶת־כָּל־לִבּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מוֹרָה לֹא־עָלָה עַל־רֹאשִׁי כִּי־נְזִיר אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי אִם־גֻּלַּחְתִּי וְסָר מִמֶּנִּי כֹחִי וְחָלִיתִי וְהָיִיתִי כְּכָל־הָאָדָם׃

17 He declared to her his whole heart. He said to her, "a razor has never been upon my head because I am a Nazirite of God from my mother's womb. If I were to be shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become weak and I would become like every human."

18 וַתֵּרֶא דְּלִילָה כִּי־הִגִּיד לָהּ אֶת־כָּל־לִבּוֹ וַתִּשְׁלַח וַתִּקְרָא לְסַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים לֵאמֹר עֲלוּ הַפַּעַם כִּי־הִגִּיד לָהּ אֶת־כָּל־לִבּוֹ וְעָלוּ אֲלֵיהָ סַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּעֲלוּ הַכֶּסֶף בְּיָדָם׃

18 Delilah saw that he declared to her his whole heart. She sent, and she called to the Philistine leaders, "Come up this time because he declared to me his whole heart." The Philistine leaders went up to her and they bought up the silver in their hands.

Structure of the Samson Cycle (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 340–41; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 397.

[10] I have chosen to maintain the idiomatic phrase here, but a non-idiomatic rendering would state "he became worn down as if he would die."

19 וַתְּיַשְּׁנֵהוּ עַל־בִּרְכֶּיהָ וַתִּקְרָא לָאִישׁ
וַתְּגַלַּח אֶת־שֶׁבַע מַחְלְפוֹת רֹאשׁוֹ וַתָּחֶל
לְעַנּוֹתוֹ וַיָּסַר כֹּחוֹ מֵעָלָיו׃ 20 וַתֹּאמֶר
פְּלִשְׁתִּים עָלַיִךְ שִׁמְשׁוֹן

19 She put him to sleep upon her knees, she called to a man, and she shaved the seven plaits of his head. She began to humble him, and his strength left him. 20 She said, “The Philistines are upon you Samson!”

וַיִּקַץ מִשְּׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵצֵא כְּפַעַם בְּפַעַם
וְאִנָּעֵר וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע כִּי יְהוָה סָר
מֵעָלָיו׃ 21 וַיֹּאחֲזוּהוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיְנַקְּרוּ
אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיּוֹרִידוּ אוֹתוֹ עַזָּתָה וַיַּאַסְרוּהוּ
בַּנְחֻשְׁתַּיִם וַיְהִי טוֹחֵן בְּבֵית הָאֲסִירִים׃

He awoke from his sleep and he said, “I will go out like the other times and I will shake myself free.” But he did not know that Yahweh had left him. 21 The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza. They bound him in bronze shackles, and he was grinding grain in the prison house.

22 וַיָּחֶל שְׂעַר־רֹאשׁוֹ לְצָמֵחַ כַּאֲשֶׁר
גֻּלָּח׃

22 The hair of his head begun to grow after it was shaven.

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